



Sports Economics, Management and Policy  
Series Editor: Dennis Coates

Ricardo Melo  
Claude Sobry  
Derek Van Rheenen *Editors*

# Small Scale Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development

A Cross-national Comparative  
Perspective

 Springer

# **Sports Economics, Management and Policy**

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Dennis Coates

Baltimore, MD, USA

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Ricardo Melo • Claude Sobry  
Derek Van Rheenen  
Editors

# Small Scale Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development

A Cross-National Comparative Perspective

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## Preface

Back in 1995, I was part of a research team employed by the organisers to assess the importance and impact of the European Youth Olympics, held in the city of Bath in the UK. In addition to using the usual metrics of athlete numbers, media coverage, athlete attainment, etc., we also interviewed the key stakeholders – many of whom were linked to national and international sporting committees and agencies. Their responses were unsurprisingly positive as the games were well run – and had successfully introduced future sporting stars to meaningful international competition (Girginov, Gammon, & Robinson, 1996). However, whilst interviewing a representative from the local city council, who was one of the event sponsors, it quickly became apparent that there was disappointment that the event had not generated any significant tourism numbers. The council had hoped that the event would showcase to visitors the many attractions in and around the city – and would therefore generate future tourism receipts. Very few spectators from outside the region came to watch the events, forcing the council to focus their attention on enticing the athletes (numbering 1709) to return as “regular” tourists at some unspecified time in the future.

This was the first time I had considered the synergetic relationship that sport has with tourism – a relationship that still fascinates me today. Whilst the Youth Olympic Games could not be considered a small scale event (like those explored in the following pages), it was far from being a mega event either. Yet, the ambitious and diverse impacts and legacy outcomes that the event was expected to generate draws attention to the contribution that smaller-scale sports events can bring to local and regional economies. But, as the discussions outlined in the following chapters indicate, the positive consequences of hosting small scale sports events are as diverse as the sports that take place within them. Furthermore, the developmental opportunities of events have moved on from the rather blunt economic assessment sought in earlier studies to more nuanced considerations, including social, environmental and economic factors (Lui, 2003; Gibson, Kaplinadou and Kang, 2012). As a result, approaches that aim to identify the impacts of relatively modestly sized events will understandably differ, not only due to the ontological and epistemological assumptions made by the researchers but also due to the methodological approach(s) taken.

Whilst it is intriguing to reflect on the myriad techniques adopted when assessing sport event impacts, it does not help when comparing how impacts vary between different places and different event types. To add to this uncertainty, when considering small scale events, the perceived size of an event is largely determined by cultural interpretations (the experience and values held by the community hosting the event), coupled with the nature of the location (urban, rural, demographics, etc.). For example, a relatively small sports event in a rural location hosted by inexperienced local organisers will be perceived differently from a similar event taking place in part of a city that is run by more practiced organisers. Similarly, participants and spectators will also consider each event differently based upon numerous factors, such as previous experience of similar events, hospitality and destination image (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Clearly, the more positive the experience(s), the more likely destinations will benefit from the many social, economic and environmental consequences that are offered. Such local sustainable development should be a critical consideration for all event organisers – no matter the size of the event (Moyle, Hinch, & Higham, 2018). It is often forgotten that whilst small sports events can be considered a lower risk than their much bigger counterparts, due to relatively low financial investment, the benefits can generate significant long-term impacts. However, to what extent a destination achieves long-term holistic benefits is dependent upon the aims and values of the event and the methodological approach taken to measure them (Anderson and Lundberg, 2013). It has always been problematic to assess a quantitatively driven economic benefit with a qualitative cost associated with social and/or cultural impact to the local community or vice versa. In terms of local sustainable development, the balancing of costs and benefits become even more important when factoring in potential negative consequences to the environment. With such a multiplicity of potential impact assessment techniques, it would be easy to concede that any comparative analysis between similar events is impossible. Nevertheless, if a similar methodology could be utilised by those evaluating the events, it would reveal these important differences more clearly – and in doing so lead to a better understanding on what the likely impacts may be.

Devising a transferable methodology for assessing small scale sports events is the key achievement of this book, and all those involved in the project should be congratulated for providing fascinating data in which to compare and reflect upon. The nine international case studies included in this study make an important step in shedding light on the experiences and outcomes of half marathon events, where a methodological template was utilised by each of the research teams involved. A triple-bottom line approach was taken (incorporating economic, environmental and social factors), which was developed (through the auspices of IRNIST) by the editors and clearly explained in chapter three. The idea of concentrating on a similar event across towns and cities spanning the globe allows for an insightful study that reveals both differences as well as similarities between quite different urban locations.

The editors should be congratulated for not only coordinating this international project, but also for their involvement in more than half of the case studies. There is

little doubt that their direct input helped strengthen the reliability and validity of the data. The final chapter expertly summarises the findings, and highlights the similarities and differences connected to the management and aims of the events, the demographic details of the participants, as well as the nature of the tourism that the half marathon generated. The next stage will undoubtedly be to consider, first, whether any of the data retrieval methods requires refining and, second, to explore the transferability of the methodology to other small scale sports events.

Whilst it is accepted that relatively small scale events have the potential to generate significant impacts to the destinations in which they take place (see Hinch, Higham, & Moyle, 2016), the cases in the following pages underline the importance and utility of adopting a unifying methodological approach to assess them by. In doing so, this book offers destination managers and event planners supportive guidance in getting the most out of their events, whilst drawing attention to vital local sustainable development initiatives. Small scale sports events, much like the ones detailed in this collection, provide opportunities for genuine sustainable development. But this can only be achieved when consideration is placed on not just economic and environmental factors but also on the quality of the life of both the participants and the communities in which the events take place. Until recently, the overwhelming research in sports events has focused upon major and mega events. Their popularity for research is partly due to them being exceptional – not only in their size, complexity and impact, but also in their relative rarity. Smaller-scale sports events are far more common and are regular fixtures in many towns and cities across the world – yet we still need to understand far more concerning the many externalities they bring. This book makes a significant contribution in identifying our understanding of how smaller sports events are managed and their contribution to local development and will be of enormous help to both practitioner and academic alike.

The University of Central Lancashire  
Preston, UK  
September 2020

Sean Gammon

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# Running Tourism and the Global Rise of Small Scale Sport Tourism Events



Derek Van Rheenen, Claude Sobry, and Ricardo Melo

**Abstract** Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors within the global tourism industry. Within this geopolitical context, small scale sport tourism events offer a wealth of opportunities for local host cities and communities. As such, many countries and municipalities within these countries want to capitalize on the local and global opportunities of sport tourism. While many of these locations are interested in the potential economic benefits of these sport tourism events, there is increased pressure on organizers and sponsors to also promote social and environmental sustainability. The aim of this book is to outline the contribution of small scale sport tourism events for local sustainable development in nine countries across three continents. The event, half marathon races, serves as the unit of analysis for comparison, as running tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors within the sport tourism industry worldwide. Findings from this comparative study reveal a collection of best practices for future planning and implementation at the intersection of small scale sport tourism and local sustainable development.

**Keywords** Local sustainable development · Running tourism · Small scale sport tourism events

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## Introduction

Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors within the global tourism industry (UNWTO, 2020). The estimated size of the global sport industry is \$1.7 trillion (MacIntosh, Bravo, & Li, 2019). According to the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC, 2015), visitor spending associated with sport tourism in the United States was \$8.96 billion, with 25.65 million sport visitors annually. According to the UNWTO (2016), Eurosport has estimated that sport tourism is worth US\$800 billion (£610 bn/€710 bn), constituting more than 10% of international travel and tourism receipts. Despite these massive markets, Asia and the Pacific (+8%) led growth in international tourist arrivals in 2016 (UNWTO, 2018). This growth may be in part because of recent events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games, the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the anticipated but postponed 2020 Olympic Games,<sup>1</sup> both held (or to be held) in Japan (Parker, 2019).

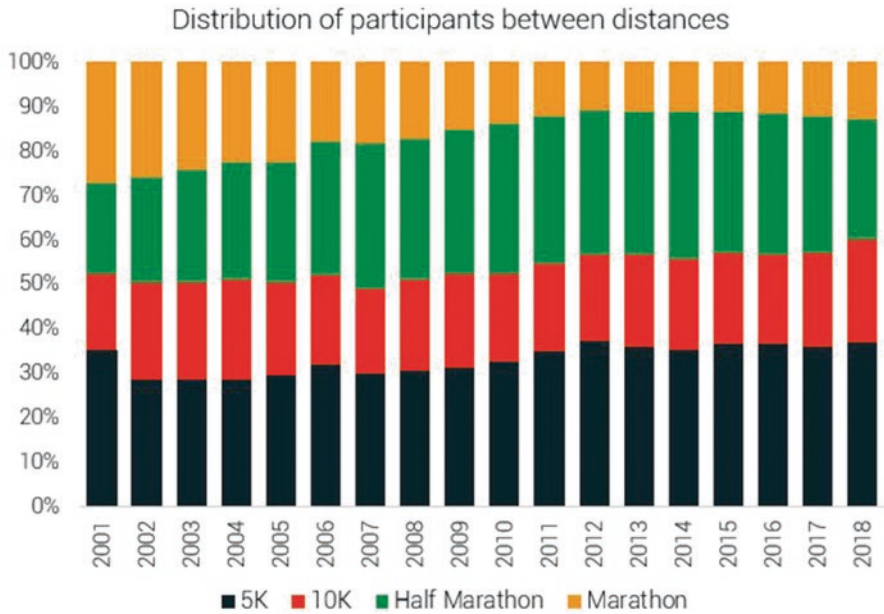
Sport tourism is a polysemic practice, in part, because it is comprised of a wide range of activities and events. When analyzing a specific sub-sector of the sport tourism industry, there is likewise evidence of significant growth. For example, nature-based sport tourism, a unified concept comprising trekking, hiking, climbing, kayaking, rafting, among other activities, is often heralded as the fastest growing segment within all of tourism, with an increase of between 10 and 30% annually (Balmford et al., 2009; Marques, Reis, & Menezes, 2010; Melo, Van Rheezen, & Gammon, 2020).

Running events have increased around the world in the last two decades. As several authors in this volume have demonstrated, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) certify marathon and half marathons globally. Of the 129 countries represented by the federation, the IAAF has certified a total of 467 races worldwide. This international accreditation has led to growth in the number of race partnerships at many events, particularly among competitive runners.

The significant increase in running tourism, however, is due mostly to the expansion of recreational, rather than competitive, running. In the largest global analysis of recreational running ever conducted, covering 70,000 events and nearly 108 million race results from 1986 to 2018 (Andersen, 2019), running has grown by 58% (from 5 to 7.9 million participants) over the past 10 years, although the numbers have declined in the last 2 years. Five-kilometer races and half marathons have the highest number of participants (2.9 and 2.1 million runners in 2018, respectively), while ten-kilometer races and marathons have fewer participants (1.8 and 1.1 million runners in 2018, respectively). Figure 1 illustrates these participation trends by race distance over the last four decades.

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<sup>1</sup>The 2020 Olympic Games to be held in Japan were postponed as a result of the coronavirus-19 pandemic.



**Fig. 1** Distribution of participants between distances  
 Source: Andersen (2019)

There is likewise a difference in popularity of these different races by continent. According to this global study conducted in collaboration with the IAAF, North America is the continent for the 5-kilometer race, Asia for the 10-kilometer and Europe for half marathons. By country, 5-kilometer races are most popular in the Philippines, South Africa, and the United States; 10-kilometer races are most popular in Norway, and Denmark. France, and the Czech Republic have the highest proportion of half marathon runners, while Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain have the most number of marathon runners (Andersen, 2019).

While the increase in running tourism has been dramatic since 2001, event participation has declined by 13% since 2016. Participation in half marathons has declined the most—by 25% in the last 2 years. Also of note, in the period from 1986 to the present, participants have become older on average (35.2 years old in 1986 to 39.3 in 2018); perhaps related to this increase in age, finish times have decreased over this same time period (Andersen, 2019). Despite these global trends, many European countries and cities have witnessed sharp increases in running tourism over the last two decades, recognizing the second global boom in the last half century or so (Pereny, 2015; Scheerder, Breedveld, & Borgers, 2015).

For example, the Raiffeissen Bank Bucharest Marathon (Cernaianu, Sobry, & Melo, Chap. 11, [this volume](#)) had 14,000 runners from more than 60 countries for the race event under review. In a 5-year period from 2012 to 2016, the number of participants at this particular event increased well over 100% (134%). Additionally, while there were roughly 50 road races in Hungary at the turn of the twenty-first



century, that number had risen to 350 by 2017 (Czegledi, Cernaianu, Mischler, & Sipos-Onyestyak, Chap. 8, [this volume](#)). And within 100 kilometers of the city of Prague (Czech Republic) in 2018 alone, there were 900 races of various types and lengths, including 75 marathons and half marathons (Slepičková & Slepička, Chap. 6, [this volume](#)).

One of the reasons why running tourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors of sport tourism worldwide has to do with the increasing diversity of races, including trail running, obstacle races, charity, and folklore running and ultra-marathons, to name but a few of these myriad events. This diversity of events and distances allows for a more customized array of challenges for a wider number of participants. Because participants noted challenging oneself as one of the primary self-reported motivations in running a half marathon across these nine distinct locations, a diversity of challenges will likely continue to sustain and/or increase the worldwide popularity of running tourism.

Increased demand for sport tourism events, particularly small scale sport tourism events, has meant that some of these events are capped at a maximum number of participants. For example, the Phalempin (France) half marathon limits the race to 3500 registered participants, a number that is regularly met annually (Sobry, Mischler, Cernaianu, et al., Chap. 7, [this volume](#)). The city of Phalempin, 13 km south of Lille, has a population of 4500. Similarly, the Mattoni half marathon in the Czech Republic caps its participation at 3600 runners; race registration filled to capacity for the case study under review (Slepičková & Slepička, Chap. 6, [this volume](#)).

The stated rationale for the limited number of race participants is a combination of local capacity, quality of participant experience, as well as the environmental and social impact of the event. While this apparent focus on environmental and social sustainability is welcome news to many scholars and practitioners alike, there appears to be limited economic opportunity for future growth with these events. It is unclear whether revenue generation or profit had ever been a motivating factor of race organizers for these small scale sport tourism events. This is an important finding, as it confirms that the motivation of both the supply and the demand of sport tourism events and activities are varied and more nuanced than often reported.

## **Challenges in Categorization and Accounting in Small Scale Sport Tourism Events**

While the reported increases in running tourism during the twenty-first century are impressive, these data are also fraught with potential challenges in their lack of accuracy. One reason for this inaccuracy is because many nations, regions, and municipalities do not draw distinctions between tourism broadly and sport tourism specifically (see, for example, Mazza, Chap. 9, [this volume](#), and Slepičková & Slepička, Chap. 6, [this volume](#)). When they do, most nations devise their own

metrics for what gets to count as sport tourism. Working definitions of tourism and sport tourism, and their contributions to both global and the gross national product (GNP) of countries worldwide, remain inconsistent, despite efforts to operationalize these definitions. For example, the inclusion or exclusion of indirect benefits and multiplier effects may lead to a lack of precision and exaggeration of the economic impact of a sport tourism event (Barajas, Coates, & Sanchez-Fernandez, 2016; Preuss, 2006; Rojek, 2014; Sobry et al., Chap. 7, [this volume](#)).

The challenge is not only one of accounting and accurate categorization. Sport tourists vary from weekend warriors engaged in a slow and scenic trail run to active sport tourists who travel and compete in small to mega sporting events, recognizing that sport tourists likewise include spectators or fans (Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; Sofield, 2003). Whether referring to mega sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games, or small- to medium-sized sport tourism events and activities, the market appeals to a diverse and widespread demographic. Participants experience these events and activities in qualitatively different ways.

The level and intensity of participant motivation has led numerous scholars to propose typologies of sport tourism and sport tourists (Gibson, 1998; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Pigeassou, 2004; Sobry, Liu, & Li, 2016; Standeven & De Knop, 1999). As such, scholars have described sport tourism in terms of both active and passive participation (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2004; Getz, 1998; Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012).

Passive participation in sport tourism events is considered when people travel to a destination to watch others participate in a sport tourism event. This happens especially in major sports events, such as the Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, and other sports championships or events, but also when people follow their home or local team during a regular season (Gibson, Lamont, Kennelly, & Buning, 2018). On the other hand, active participation in sport tourism events refers to amateurs or elite professionals who travel to a host destination to participate in a sporting event (Gibson et al., 2018). One of the most prominent examples of this particular form of sport tourism events today is running or race events.

Within running tourism as a growing sector within sport tourism worldwide, there is a tremendous diversity of events and activities, with varying distances and levels of difficulty. As such, there is a tremendous diversity of running visitors and tourists, from those participating in a local 5-kilometer race to those who have trained extensively for an ultra-marathon event.

The amount of time spent in a sport tourism activity has also been a source of epistemological imprecision. For example, surfers are often defined as sport tourists, but their travels may extend months and up to a full year on the road (Fluker, 2003). While staying overnight has often been cited as a defining criterion for what constitutes tourism or sport tourism (Nogawa, Yamaguchi, & Hagi, 1996; Van Rheenen, Cernaianu, & Sobry, 2017; UNIRTS, 2010), it is also argued that day-trips or excursions (and returning to one's own residence the same day) may also qualify (and be quantified by scholars and practitioners alike) as a form of sport tourism (Bouchet & Lebrun, 2009; Bouchet & Sobry, 2019; Lapeyronie, 2009).

The United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (IUOTO, 1963) recommended a distinction between the definitions for the terms “visitor,” “tourist,” and “excursionist.” These definitions have remained intact for well over half of century. According to the UN’s IRST (2008, 2.19–2.13), “a visitor is a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed be a resident entity in the country or place visited. These trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips. Tourism refers to the activity of visitors” (2.9, p. 10). To further clarify, “a visitor (domestic, inbound or outbound) is classified as a tourist (or overnight visitor) if his/her includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day visitor (or excursionist) otherwise” 2.13, p. 10).

These distinctions become ever more important when we discuss small scale, local sport tourism events, which often draw participants from local areas as well as from outside of the area. In the nine half marathons described in this volume, many local runners did not stay overnight in a hotel or other tourist accommodation. These individuals woke up, participated in the event (e.g., running the race), and then slept (probably quite well) in their own beds.

## Fluctuations in Topography, Climate, and Seasonality

Many sport tourism opportunities or events depend on a nation’s unique geography and natural climate. For example, Portugal’s climate, coastline, protected areas (23% of its geography) and mostly rural (90%) topography make it an ideal country for the expansion of its sport tourism industry (Melo, Andrade, Van Rheenen, & Sobry, Chap. 10, [this volume](#)). Switzerland’s lakes, plains, and majestic mountains (Alps) support a vibrant sport tourism market (Ardiet, Sobry, & Melo, Chap. 12, [this volume](#)). Bejaïa (Algeria), known as the “Pearl of North Africa,” offers a Mediterranean climate, with coastal access and other natural areas such as parks. Bejaïa also enjoys a historical legacy from Roman times through the Middle Ages, when it was recognized as a beacon of science (Benabdelhadi, Benabdelhadi, & Boulerbah, Chap. 4, [this volume](#)).

Like Algeria, Switzerland, and Portugal, all of the nations represented in this collection boast a diverse topography, comprised of rivers and lakes, mountains, forests, protected parklands, and world heritage sites. Over half of the contributions also have access to a sea or ocean, affording opportunities for nautical tourism, such as surfing, windsurfing, and sailing, among other popular activities.

The sport tourism sector can be volatile, based on a given season, sometimes extremely short-lived. In Northern California, the big-wave event of Mavericks (or Mavericks Titans) is a one-day event between November 1 and March 31, when the wind, surf swells, and size of waves are deemed ideal for the annual event. Such climactic ideals are seldom met, however, especially when the organization of the event is perpetually fraught with “logistical challenges.” The event has been held only ten times since its establishment in 1999 (Savidge, 2019). Beyond this brief

window of time for a singular event, such as Mavericks, surfers travel the world, following the best conditions from one swell and hemisphere to another.

In Europe, water tourism, such as kayaking, canoeing, and white water rafting, may run from May through September. Similarly, skiing and snowboarding are primarily winter sports and rely on annual snowfall and positive weather conditions. These forms of sport tourism vary from 1 year to the next, based on the quality and duration of the season, usually from December through April. Additionally, as has been seen within the case studies presented in this book, seasonality may have significant negative impacts on the environment and local residents. In 2018, nearly four million people visited the Krkonoše mountains in the Czech Republic, a protected natural reserve on the borders of Poland and Germany, forcing local authorities to manage the overflow of tourists (Slepičková & Slepička, Chap. 6, [this volume](#)). Thus, while there is potential growth in an emerging sector or small scale sport tourism event, there may well be significant challenges to environmental and social sustainability despite the economic infusion into the local area.

Specific to running tourism, race events are likewise dependent on climate, particularly temperature. The optimal running temperature is between 4.5 and 10 °C degrees Celsius (40 and 50°F). Temperature has a major impact on both participation rates and finish times. Most race participants can be found in countries with temperate and polar climates, far fewer in tropical and subtropical locations (Andersen, 2019).

## The Global Sport Tourism Industry

While it is well understood that increases in wealth and disposable income—and the growth of leisure—have had positive effects on increased demand within the sports tourism industry, political and economic developments in a given country have had dramatic impacts on both the supply and the demand of this particular market. For example, Czechoslovakia's independence from the Soviet Union in 1989, when the country returned to democracy and a market economy (followed by the separation from Slovakia in 1993 to form the current Czech Republic), altered the mobility and way of life of its citizens. One important outcome of these political developments in the late twentieth century was the exposure to other economies and growing global sectors such as the sport tourism industry.

Similarly, Algeria's political independence from French colonial rule in 1962 led to the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Tourism, a means to assert a distinct cultural identity and support an emerging economic and social infrastructure (Fates, 2009). With the adoption of a market economy 30 years ago, this northern African country has sought to diversify its economy. Tourism has been heralded as an extremely important sector to this diversification and developmental process. In most countries, sport tourism is often marketed as part of a larger local, regional, or national tourism development strategy, although the inclusion of sport tourism into this larger strategy ranges from highly intentional and strategic to what appears

to be haphazard and incoherent. As Benabdelhadi et al. (Chap. 4, [this volume](#)) asserts, sport tourism was mentioned only twice in the 300-page-length National Plan for the Preparation of Tourism 2018–2030.

Mobility in the twenty-first century, connected to the dynamic processes of globalization and modernity, has likewise blurred geographic boundaries and border crossings.<sup>2</sup> This is in part because nature (e.g., mountains, rivers, oceans) knows no political boundaries. A sport tourist may stay overnight in Zermatt (Switzerland), spend the day skiing, and choose to have lunch in Italy (accessible by the ski resort), to return that evening to their Swiss chalet. Some sport tourism events actually traverse national borders a part of their route. The Paris–Dakar motorsports rally originally started in France and ended in Senegal (it has been re-launched as a South American event as a race across Argentina and Chile). The North Face Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc (UTMB) tests participants through the step mountainous trails of the Mont Blanc Massif, passing through France, Switzerland, and Italy for a distance of 168 kilometers (104.4 miles). Yet another example is the 2020 UEFA European Football Championship, commonly referred to as Euro 2020, which was scheduled to be held in 12 cities in 12 UEFA countries from June 12 to July 12, 2020.<sup>3</sup>

Overall, sport tourism participants worldwide tend to be more affluent, educated, and less limited by international restrictions (visas, travel bans, racism, and colonialism). These individuals have always enjoyed greater mobility based on their social, political, and economic privileges. Running tourism has likewise shifted its gender makeup over time. While not reflected in the nine case studies included in this volume, there were more female than male runners in the world in 2018 (50.24%) for the first time in history (Andersen, 2019). In the United States, the gender differences are even more pronounced, where 60% of the participants in road races were women in 2018 (Running USA, 2019).

Within this geopolitical context, small scale sport tourism events offer a wealth of opportunities for local host cities and communities. As such, many countries and municipalities within these countries want to capitalize on the local and global opportunities of sport tourism. Tourism development strategies often explicitly include the promotion of a menu of sporting activities and events that seek to attract a diverse audience at different times throughout the year (Ardiet, 2018; Melo, et al., Chap. 10, [this volume](#); Melo, Garcia, Van Rheenen, & Sobry, Chap. 5, [this volume](#)). These strategies hope to increase the potential economic impact while attempting to limit the negative social and environmental impacts during “high season” and within

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<sup>2</sup>Forms of political populism and the rise in power of xenophobic nationalist leaders in recent years have, in turn, reinforced these boundaries, such as building walls and other types of isolationism, as part of these leaders’ domestic policies.

<sup>3</sup>Like the 2020 Olympic Games to be held in Japan, these international sporting events have been postponed or canceled as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. At the time of publication, the deaths from this virus have reached staggering numbers. In the ten countries represented by contributors to this book, the statistics are sobering and increasing. In alphabetical order the numbers as of July 16, 2020 are: Algeria (1052); Brazil (76,688); Czech Republic (355); France (30,120); Hungary (595); Italy (35,017); Portugal (1679); Romania (1971); Switzerland (1968); United States (138,000).

areas with lower population density. Many small scale sport tourism events do not seek to sanction these events globally, through the IAAF or AIMS, for example, preferring to appeal to a local group of participants and event volunteers. This is particularly the case for less competitive (e.g., primarily recreational) races.

As such, it is worth noting that “small scale events” may be relative to a given context and market, the size of a population, etc. These “minor” events, often held annually, generally receive limited media coverage and are comprised of more athletes than spectators. Relative to larger scale or mega events, there is limited economic activity (Wilson, 2006). As Higham (1999: 89) argued in one of the earliest articles on the tourism development potential of smaller scale sporting events, “from the perspective of local/provisional governments, it is important to recognize the need to attract or develop sporting events that complement the scale, infrastructure and resourcing capacities of the host city.”

Numerous scholars have discussed the potential economic gains, including site recognition and branding of cities, resulting from hosting small scale sport tourism events (Agha & Taks, 2015; Chalip, 2001; Daniels & Norman, 2003; Gratton, Dobson, & Shibli, 2000). Additionally, some have applauded these small scale activities for creating minimal social displacement and limited environmental damage (Collins, Jones, & Munday, 2009; Gibson et al., 2012; Smith, 2007). Conversely, these events have been criticized for negatively impacting the environment and local residents with little to no economic return (Brown, 2006; Hall, 1992; Hiller, 2006; Swart, 1998).

While Gibson and her colleagues (Gibson et al., 2012) analyzed several case studies of small events hosted by a local sports commission in a small US college town, she likewise offers American college sports as an example of small scale-sport events, recognizing untapped potential for tourism development in host communities (Gibson et al., 2003). These authors’ example of the University of Florida (“the Gators”) football games demonstrates the range in size of such events. While a men’s college baseball or women’s softball game may draw few fans, limited media attention, and generate little to no revenue, a Division I college football game can generate a huge fan base (both in the stadium, and through numerous forms of electronic, print, and social media) and significant revenue. As Gibson et al. (Gibson et al., 2003: 183) have acknowledged, “on average 84,000 fans attend home football games in Gainesville, Florida.” It is hard to conceive of the latter example as small scale, despite the fact that the city of Gainesville only had a little over 100,000 residents at the time. This begs the question of how we collectively define size, whether small, medium, or even mega, relative to municipal populations and to participation rates of sport tourism events, whether in person or virtually.

We have a similar quandary of scope within this volume, as the size of the nine half marathons across three continents varies tremendously. The race events in Brazil and Switzerland had just over 1000 participants each, while the Rome and Bucharest (capital cities of their respective countries) running events boasted nearly 11,000 and 14,000 runners, respectively. While the percentage of local runners in the French half marathon was nearly 80% (living within 40 km of Phalempin), less than 12% of the runners in the Rome–Ostia half marathon were local participants.

Because most of these events offered a diversity of distances, the number of half marathon participants was only a subset of the larger events' runners. For example, of the 14,000 runners at the Bucharest event, just a little more than one-quarter (3800) of the participants ran the half marathon (Cernaianu, et al., Chap. 11, [this volume](#)). Similarly, the Rotary Running Festival in Debrecen, Hungary, had over 4500 total participants, competing in nine categories; over 3500 participants ran in the Charity Run (1993 m) while only 353 participants (less than 10%) ran the half marathon (Czegledi et al., Chap. 8, [this volume](#)).

## **Sustainable Development Policies and Small Scale Sport Tourism Events**

Just as there is a lack of consistency in how nations and regions calculate sport tourism as a specific and robust economic sector within tourism more broadly, countries and cities adhere more or less stringently to environmental or green codes of conduct and a genuine ethic of care for nature. A successful green strategy in tourism balances the unique needs and priorities of all stakeholders, including tourists, the local community, the tourism industry, and government agencies (Mazilu, 2013). And yet, as we have seen in the nine case studies presented within this volume, public municipalities and private organizing bodies that manage sport tourism events evidence tremendous variation in the relative attention paid to environmental and social sustainability. Similarly, there was a wide range of public–private collaborations among these case studies, some of which had limited synergies around the promotion of sustainable development (Melo et al., Chap. 5, [this volume](#); Mazza, Chap. 9, [this volume](#)).

As several contributing authors noted in this volume, many race organizers sought to adhere to a green standard, code, or stamp as a part of the event's promotion and implementation, but few actually followed a prescriptive and deliberate plan (Benabdelhadi et al., Chap. 4, [this volume](#); Sobry et al., Chap. 7, [this volume](#)). Some of the event organizers were unaware of the various green guidelines on how best to conduct a sustainable sport event. In several case studies, interviews of race organizers, city officials, and local ministers revealed a complete ignorance of the potential environmental (carbon) footprint potentially created as a result of the sport tourism event.

While the tourism industry has adopted environmentally friendly and green practices—defined as actions taken by service providers to protect and sustain the health and well-being of the environment (Carić, 2018; Yusof, Rahman, & Iranmanesh, 2015)—there are more than 200 distinct ecolabels within the tourism industry. Unfortunately, as Bučar, Van Rheenen, and Hendija (2019) have demonstrated, there are no standardized set of criteria for green certification relative to environmental sustainability practices.

There are, however, numerous efforts to set standards for environmental sustainability globally and within sport tourism specifically. These efforts began in earnest at the end of the twentieth century, following the publication of the Brundtland Report (1987), which argued “sustainable development satisfies the needs of the present generation without compromising the chance for future generations to satisfy theirs.”

Some of these efforts are quite specific in their sustainability goals. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), for example, seeks to enhance the tourist experience without posing risk and/or harm to the social and ecological environment. The Preamble to the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (the “WTO Agreement”) in 1995 included direct references to the objective of sustainable development and to the need to protect and preserve the environment. Today, the organization actively promotes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focusing on several areas, such as poverty reduction, health, education, and the environment (UNWTO, 2020).

More specifically, UNWTO (2018) has emphasized that sport tourism, as a particular and popular segment of the global tourism industry, can help achieve Sustainable Development Goals as a result of its inherent characteristics. The comparative strength of sport tourism lies in its (1) engagement in physical activities, (2) opportunities for social and environmental interactions (e.g., human to human, human and nature, etc.), and (3) high development potential nearly anywhere (e.g., including small scale events or light activities like walking in particular).

Thanks to these unique characteristics, sport tourism can play a vital role in achieving various Sustainable Development Goals, namely, SDG 1 and 8 (jobs and income opportunities, visitor spending, and destination competitiveness), SDG 3 (well-being of tourists and welfare of the locals), SDG 5 (jobs and income opportunities for women’s physical activities and female athletes as role models), SDG 10 and 11 (accessibility of destinations and products), SDG 12, 13, 14, and 15 (enhancing awareness and encouraging environmental measures) (UNWTO, 2020).

Additionally, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, otherwise known as the “Earth Summit,” 182 governments committed to a global action plan that included principles for environmentally sound development according to the concept of sustainable development. In particular, the “Rio Declaration” sought to promote economic development that would intentionally protect the global environment and its/her non-renewable resources.

The Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21 was inspired by the UNCED’s call to action and sets out the basic concepts and realistic measures needed to ensure that these objectives are met. The IOC’s Agenda 21 suggests to governing bodies several ways in which sustainable development and the “greening” of the Olympic Games could be integrated into their national policies. It also points out ways in which organizations and individuals, such as athletes and spectators, should act to ensure that the sporting activities in which they engage, promote, or sponsor adhere to the global goals of sustainable development (IOC, 1999). Many of the cities and



countries included in this volume draw on these guidelines when promoting sport tourism events, although many organizers of these small- to medium-sized running events do not.

In many cases, nations and/or smaller collections of nations uphold their own environmental sustainability standards, whether connected to green codes articulated through sport federations or committees. These domestic and regional standards may be less or more stringent than those proposed by large international governing bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the United Nations (UN), or the World Tourism Association (WTA). For example, as demonstrated by Ardiet et al. ([this volume](#)), all Swiss sport tourism events are subject to the Direction Général de l'Environnement (General Direction of the Environment) for approval or authorization based on national sustainability standards. The Ministry of the Environment has a similar role within the Czech Republic (Slepickova & Slepicka, Chap. 6, [this volume](#)) as a governing agency with oversight of sustainable development.

An excellent example of smaller, international efforts to support and promote environmental sustainability through sport is the joint collaboration of the “Sport for All and the Environment” (SforAE) Project, co-sponsored by five partners and four European countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary). The project is co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union. The premise of the project is to raise awareness about local sustainability by providing best practices and green guidelines for organizing an environmentally sustainable sport event (SforAE, 2019). The guide offers practical ways that event organizers can take to limit the carbon footprint and pollution (air, water, noise) as a result of the event. The green guidelines also promote recycling, waste reduction, and other forms of ecological conservation. These best practices also encouraged the use of public transportation, ample parking for bicycles rather than vehicles that emit CO<sub>2</sub>, as well as the use of local food vendors and other businesses. Contributors to this volume have also provided a number of recommendations for best practices in planning, organizing, and managing small scale tourism events. This book has sought to illustrate a comparative methodology of like events taking place across three continents and nine countries during the same year.

## **The Aim and Structure of the Book**

This edited volume, rich in its range and representation of global researchers and professionals, is the culmination of a work in progress. This work began a decade ago, when the International Research Network In Sport Tourism (IRNIST) was established. IRNIST is an international research network of academics and professional working in the sport tourism field. The purpose of IRNIST is to develop international and interdisciplinary collaborations to create strategies and methodologies, and to disseminate knowledge, in order to enhance local sustainable development.

Over the course of the last 10 years, members of this research community have developed and honed a theoretical framework as the basis of how IRNIST conducts its scholarship. The group remains reflective as an international community of practice, attempting within this project to develop a comparative methodology. As such, we remain steadfast in our efforts to develop ways of defining and studying this scholarly field of inquiry.

Underlying the increased call for comparative study is the desire to learn from others, to better understand the cultural and political circumstances and nuances of different sites hosting a similar event.

In particular, the aim of this book is to outline the contribution of small scale sport tourism events for local sustainable development in nine different countries. For this purpose, we invited contributors (individual, co-authors, or teams of researchers/scholars) to describe the multiple impacts of small scale sport tourism events, taking as an example the half marathon race organized in small- and medium-sized cities in different countries.

We asked contributors to answer the following questions:

1. Describe the sport tourism industry in your country and what are the most important sport tourism sectors or categories?
2. How has sport tourism changed since the turn of the twenty-first century and has there been an increased demand and supply of small scale sport tourism events?
3. What sustainable development policies exist in relation to the promotion of sport tourism events? If so, how have these policies been implemented in each country?

Specifically to the half marathon event under study:

4. What are the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the cities or municipalities hosting the half marathon event?
5. Who were the organizers and/or sponsors (public, private, both?) of the half marathon event? What were the objectives of the race event? Were other tourism activities developed and/or promoted during the time of the event?
6. How many participants were there? How many volunteers were there? What were the demographic profiles of race participants?
7. What were the perceived and actual impacts (economic, social, and environmental) of the half marathon event? How did organizers and sponsors assess these impacts? How did participants (e.g., runners, volunteers) evaluate these impacts?

The contributions to this edited volume represent nine countries, reflecting three continents, including seven from Europe (Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, and Switzerland), one from Africa (Algeria), and one from South America (Brazil). Contributors responded to a call for papers; many are active members of IRNIST.

Structurally, this book is composed of 13 chapters, including this introductory chapter. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of small scale sport tourism events and local sustainable development, while the third chapter presents the comparative methodology utilized for this international research project. The following nine chapters provide case studies of the half marathon event utilizing this comparative

method. The case studies are organized alphabetically, beginning with Algeria and Brazil (Africa and South America), followed by seven European countries, including the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, and Switzerland. The book concludes with a final chapter analyzing current themes in small scale sport tourism and findings across these nine distinct sites. This research project highlights similarities and differences found in this like event in different locations around the world, shedding light on the ways in which small scale sport tourism events are organized and experienced globally. We believe that this contribution to the field provides important methodological advances in comparative studies, improved theoretical knowledge, and a host of innovative practices for those engaged in, and those studying, the intersection of small scale sport tourism and local sustainable development. This book is also a call to action, an immediate need to make substantive change to improve the ways in which we do and study sport tourism. As we experience a global pandemic and the shutting down of business as usual, we must return with caution but also boldness. Simply put, we must build a better world for our children and our grandchildren, a truly sustainable world. In all of our actions, whether small scale or monumental, let there be light (Fiat Lux)!

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# Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development: An Overview



Ricardo Melo, Derek Van Rheenen, and Claude Sobry

**Abstract** Until recently, sport and tourism were studied as two distinct spheres of activity. However, the intersections between these two social phenomena have been gradually increasing, and the growing demand for travel related to sport has created the need for a new tourism segment, referred to as sports or sport tourism. The relationship between sport and tourism has also drawn considerable attention to the potential and real environmental, economic, and sociocultural impacts of these activities, both positive and negative. This chapter provides a review of scholarship to date, with particular focus on the linkages between small scale sport tourism events and local sustainable development. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the evolution of the sport tourism field, highlighting key conceptualizations and categorizations. It then discusses the predominant descriptions and categories of sport tourism events. Next, the chapter analyzes the meaning and practice of sustainable development at the intersection of sport and tourism, with particular emphasis on small scale sport tourism and local sustainable development. Finally, the chapter calls for a comparative methodology to provide a tool for sport tourism scholars globally.

**Keywords** Literature Review · Local Sustainable Development · Small Scale Sport Tourism Events · Sport Tourism · Sport Tourism Events

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## Introduction

Until recently, sport and tourism were studied as two distinct spheres of activity (Glyptis, 1991). Tourism has been defined in many ways and for a variety of purposes (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gylbert, & Wanhill, 2007; Hall & Page, 2006; Murphy, 1985; WTO, 2019). However, from the multiple definitions of tourism, three primary dimensions can be highlighted: a spatial dimension, a temporal dimension, and a variety of activities experienced while traveling (Hinch & Higham, 2001; Van Rheenen, Cernaianu, & Sobry, 2017). In this regard, tourism involves, in combination, travel to a place of non-residence, during a period of time of one or more days, to engage in a specific leisure activity.<sup>1</sup>

In its overarching definition of tourism, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) makes explicit reference to sport, listing it as one of several critical leisure activities (Hinch & Higham, 2001). This direct reference confirms the important linkages between these two economic and sociocultural sectors. The European Sports Charter defines sports as “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels” (Council of Europe, 1992, p. 3). This definition implies a broad notion of sport, encompassing a wide range of activities and multiple levels of competition. Such a perspective can be juxtaposed to narrower definitions of modern sport that focus on institutionalized, highly structured, and competitive, physical activities (Coakley, 2014; Guttman, 1978; Loy, 1968). This broader conceptualization of sport likewise includes novel and emerging practices such as those associated with leisure, recreation, and tourism (Melo & Gomes, 2017a). The definition is also consistent with the ideas of those authors who have argued that a broader definition of sport helps increase the significance of the linkages between sport and tourism (Melo, Van Rheenen, & Gammon, 2020; Sobry, Liu, & Li, 2016; Standeven & De Knop, 1999). These two concepts are clearly symbiotic in that “sports is an activity within tourism and tourism is a fundamental characteristic of sport” (Hinch & Higham, 2001, p. 48).

The intersections between these two social phenomena have been gradually increasing (Melo & Sobry, 2017a, 2017b); the growing demand for travel related to sport has created the need for a new tourism segment, referred to as sports or sport tourism (Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Gibson, 2002; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Melo & Sobry, 2017c; Van Rheenen et al., 2017; Weed & Bull, 2004). According to several seminal scholars (Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Kurtzman & Zauhar, 1993), this sudden interest in sport tourism is due to five reasons: (1) the growing popularity of major sport events; (2) the greater awareness of the health benefits associated with active participation in sports activities; (3) the increasing importance given by government and tourism authorities to sport, due to the impacts on the economy and

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<sup>1</sup> While earlier definitions of tourism limited such activities to leisure or vacation, business travel can also include facets of tourism distinct from one's work.



international relations; (4) more varied sports programming, offering events throughout the year and available to participants and spectators; and (5) the ease of communication and movement of people due to the development of modern technologies and infrastructures.

Sport tourism scholarship has also increased significantly since the middle to late 1990s, evidenced by the sheer number of publications (e.g., articles, chapters, and books), course curricula and program offerings, organized conferences and seminars, and established research networks (Gibson, 2002; IRNIST, 2020; Melo & Sobry, 2017b). With these advances in academic and scientific knowledge, Gibson (2002, 2004) postulated at the turn of the twenty-first century that sport tourism was at a conceptual crossroads. Despite conceptual debates that exist within the field of sport tourism, Weed (2009) argued that the field may well have reached a stage of maturity, citing several markers indicative of this maturation process:

a strong conceptualization of the field; the underpinning of empirical work by appropriate theory; the robust, appropriate and transparent application of methods and methodology; and a clear community of scholars with a sustained interest in the area, served by a supporting and credible academic journal (*The Journal of Sport & Tourism*), and wider body of knowledge. (p. 625)

Though many aspects of sport tourism scholarship will certainly continue to benefit from further exploration and description, it is important at this stage in the field's maturation to embark upon work that is both theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous. This book seeks to embark on this journey and add to the existing literature. As such, this chapter provides a review of scholarship to date, with particular focus on the linkages between small scale sport tourism events and local sustainable development. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the evolution of the sport tourism field, highlighting key conceptualizations and categorizations. It then discusses the predominant descriptions and categories of sport tourism events. Next, the chapter analyzes the meaning and practice of sustainable development at the intersection of sport and tourism, with particular emphasis on small scale sport tourism and local sustainable development. Finally, the chapter calls for a comparative methodology to provide a tool for sport tourism scholars globally. As articulated in the next chapter, this comparative method provides a model to evaluate local sustainable development—economic, environmental, and social outcomes and impacts—of a similar sport tourism event (half marathons) held in nine countries across three continents.

## Sport Tourism

As an emerging field of inquiry, scholars have attempted to define sport tourism (Gammon & Robinson, 1997, 2003; Gibson, 1998a, 1998b; Hall, 1992; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Standeven & De Knop, 1999) seeking to describe characteristics of this social phenomenon (De Knop, 1990; Gibson, 1998b; Hall, 1992; Redmond,

1991). In his meta-review regarding the progress of sport tourism research to date, Weed (2009) stated that “debates over core concepts have included discussions of the way in which the field is described (sport tourism, sport-tourism, sports tourism, sports-tourism), the categorization of sports tourism (usually by the nature of participation on a particular trip) and its nature, and the relationship of sports tourism with tourism and with sport” (p. 617).

Early definitions of sport tourism tended to discuss “sport holidays” rather than sport tourism (Weed, 2009) and, in this regard, Glyptis (1982) described ‘sport holidays’ and ‘general holidays with sport opportunities’. De Knop (1990) identified three types of ‘sports holidays’: the pure sport holiday, the sporadic acceptance of organized sports, and the private sporting activity on holidays. However, the implication of this terminology assumed that day trips or excursions, now considered a significant element of sport tourism, were not considered, and it was established relatively early that it was more appropriate to focus on the concept of tourism rather than holidays (Weed, 2009).

Initial conceptualizations defined sport tourism only as active participation in sport while traveling (e.g., De Knop, 1990; Glyptis, 1982, 1991). Redmond (1991) was one of the first scholars to recognize spectators of sports events as sport tourists, alongside those who participate in sports activities and those who visit sports attractions. Broader concepts were later established, including that of Hall (1992), who defined sport tourism as: (1) major tourist events, including, for example, the Olympic Games; (2) outdoor activities (adventure nature tourism), which include recreational activities in a natural environment, such as canoeing, surfing, or skiing; and (3) health and fitness tourism, which includes, as examples, spa, tennis, or golf activities. Soon thereafter, Gibson (1998b) articulated three types of behavior associated with sports tourism: (1) active sport tourism, which refers to people who travel to take part in sport; (2) event sport tourism, which refers to individuals who travel to watch a sports event; and (3) nostalgia sport tourism, which includes those who visit sports museums, sports venues, and sports-themed cruises.

Midway through the field’s maturation process, there was still debate regarding the use of the term “sport” (e.g., Gibson, 2002) or “sports” (e.g., Weed, 2005; Weed & Bull, 2004, 2009), a debate those outside of the field might call semantic silliness and unnecessary sniping. Actually, the distinction of terms was important. Gibson (2002) argued that the term “sport tourism” was preferred as it recognized sport as “as a social institution rather than the micro view of individual sports” and that the concept of “sport tourism [is] unique from other forms of tourism” (p. 115). On the other hand, Weed and Bull (2004) proposed the use of the term “sports tourism,” as it implied a focus on diverse and heterogeneous activities. As Van Rheenen et al. (2017) noted, the debate seems to have been silenced, or at least mollified, as the primary journal devoted to the subject, first published in 1995 was called the *Journal of Sport Tourism*, later to be renamed the *Journal of Sport & Tourism* in 2006, both adopting the singular tense of sport. It is noteworthy that Mike Weed has also been the singular editor of the latter journal since its inception.

The model proposed by Gammon and Robinson (1997, 2003), based on a participatory and motivational approach, suggested the existence of four categories of

sport tourists. The authors began by distinguishing the concepts of sport tourism and tourism sport. Sport tourism refers to individuals who, actively or passively, participate in a sporting, competitive, or recreational activity, while traveling outside their place of residence. Here, sport is the main motivation for travel, even though the tourist activity acts as a reinforcement or complement to the overall experience. In tourism sport, or what Bouhaouala and Sobry (2017) referred to as opportunity sport tourism, individuals travel away from their homes to participate, actively or passively, in a recreational or competitive sporting activity, as a secondary activity. The main motivation of the trip is to be on vacation or visit a place. In these two distinct domains, the authors classify hard and soft sport tourism.

Hard sports tourists are those who actively or passively travel and participate in a competitive sporting event, such as the Olympic Games, Football Championships, and marathons. Soft sport tourists comprise those individuals who travel and actively participate in a recreational leisure activity, such as golf, hiking, or skiing. This heuristic categorization allows us to better understand the dynamic interactions between sport and tourism and the varying motivations of both participants and spectators of sporting events (Gammon & Robinson, 1997, 2003). Standeven and De Knop (1999) presented a definition of sport tourism in line with that of Gammon and Robinson (1997), describing it as all forms of participation in a sport activity, active or passive, organized or not, which lead to travel from one's place of residence or work. At the same time but in a different continent, this conceptualization of varying participant motivations provides a potential tool for the tourism industry to incorporate, thereby providing a range of services that meet the divergent tastes, demands, and athletic skill levels of tourists (Sofield, 2003).

These epistemological developments surfaced a recurring tension between those who focus on the demand and those on the supply of sport tourism activities and events. This epistemological tension among researchers was perhaps reflective of the historical rift between scholars and practitioners of sport tourism, that is, those studying the maturing field and those engaged in the industry and emerging market (Van Rheenen et al., 2017). Sport tourism, according to Pigeassou (2004), appeared as a tourist activity with an economic impact before being understood as an experience of sports culture. Pigeassou (2004) argued that the contemporary vision of sport tourism is organized into four categories, according to the profile and motivation of the participants: (1) event sport tourism (those who attend); (2) action sport tourism (those who actively practice or compete); (3) the cultural sport tourism (those who are interested in sports history); and (4) sport involvement tourism (those involved in sports organization).

Each of these categories has been explored more fully within the literature. For example, active sport tourism, including participation in active nature sport tourism (Melo et al., 2020),

can be divided into five types of travel: (i) independent travel where nature sports participants take part in informal nature sports activities such as climbing, hang-gliding, surfing or snorkeling; (ii) organized travel where participants hire the services of a touristic company or agency to engage in specific nature sport tourism activities, such as white water rafting; (iii) travel to participate in nature sports competitions such as trail running events; (iv)

travel to develop skills in a particular practice and/or prepare for sports competitions, such as surfing camps and (v) travel where tourists take advantage of nature sports facilities at a holiday destination, though nature sport is not the primary purpose of the trip, such as participating in kayaking, trekking, and mountain biking. (p. 7)

The approach of Hinch and Higham (2001) considered that sport tourism encompasses travel outside the place of residence, for a limited period of time, in order to participate in a competitive sports activity (with a specific set of rules and where it is physical prowess) or playful. This approach is in line with most definitions of tourism, respecting its dimensions (space, time, and activities included), with the difference that in sport tourism the activity is specifically sport. Sport takes the main role in the tourist experience, being the decisive factor in the travel option. As illustrated in Table 1, these authors sought to capture the breadth of definitions related to sport tourism but that had coalesced around consistent themes or parameters. In a recent content analysis of sport tourism definitions over the course of the last nearly four decades, Van Rheenen et al. (2017) identified three main parameters, namely, sport as the motivation for travel, combined with a temporal and a spatial dimension. According to the authors, the predominance of these three parameters provides empirical support for Hinch and Higham’s (2001) proposed three-dimensional definition of sport tourism and framework for future research.

**Table 1** Selected definition related to sport tourism

Dimension	Definition and source
Sport tourism	<p>Travel for non-commercial reasons to participate or observe sporting activities away from the home range (Hall, 1992, p. 194)</p> <p>An expression of a pattern of behavior of people during certain periods of leisure time—such as vacation time, which is done partly in especially attractive natural settings and partly in artificial sports and physical recreation facilities in the outdoors (Ruskin, 1987, p. 26)</p> <p>Holidays involving sporting activity either as a spectator or participant (Weed &amp; Bull, 1997; p. 5)</p> <p>Leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activity (Gibson, 1998b, p. 49)</p> <p>All forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organized way for noncommercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitate travel away from home and work locality (Standeven &amp; DeKnop, 1999, p. 12)</p>
Sport tourist	<p>A temporary visitor staying at least 24 h in the event area and whose primary purpose is to participate in a sports event with the area being a secondary attraction (Nogawa et al., 1996, p. 46)</p> <p>Individuals and/or groups of people who actively or passively participate in competitive or recreational sport, while traveling to and/or staying in places outside their usual environment (sport as the primary motivation of travel) (Gammon &amp; Robinson, 1997)</p>
Tourism sport	<p>Persons traveling to and/or staying in places outside their usual environment and participating in, actively or passively, a competitive or recreational sport as a secondary activity (Gammon &amp; Robinson, 1997)</p>

Source: Adapted from Hinch and Higham (2001)

The maturation process well underway, Weed (2005) cautioned that those studying sport tourism should move away from a dependency on definitions of sport and/or tourism to conceptualize sport tourism as “a social, economic and cultural phenomenon arising from the unique interactions of activity, people and place” (Weed & Bull, 2004, p. 37). Additionally, sport tourism is “related to but more than the sum of sport and tourism” (Weed, 2005, p. 234), thus establishing sport tourism as far more than a tourism market niche or subset of sports management. We may well be at a new epistemological crossroads, moving beyond definitional debates and singular case studies to expand our understanding of sport tourism as an expanding global market and academic discipline. This book seeks to make such an effort, proposing theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous research. As the remaining chapters of this book articulate, local context informs both the production (supply) and consumption (demand) of sport tourism activities and events as social-cultural and economic phenomena. While a number of similar themes emerge in different places among different people engaged in a similar, if not the same, activity, there are stark differences across these contexts as well.

## Sport Tourism Events

The study of events has long existed within several disciplines, manifested in research and theory development; for example, events have been studied by anthropologists, geographers, and economists, among others. Recently, “event studies” has become a distinct field of its own (Getz, 2008). As a research topic, sport tourism events became firmly established in the last decade of the twentieth century, and has been expanding exponentially since 2000 (Getz, 2008). In particular, the volume, range, meaning, and significance of local and global events and festivals have grown rapidly (Page & Connell, 2012). As these authors have mentioned, “Every year, a number of large-scale events of international significance take place, attracting large numbers of participants and spectators, along with their associated entou-rages, increased media interest and ‘armchair’ spectators” (p. 1), from major or mega sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games, to annual sporting events such as the Tour de France, the Super Bowl in the United States, or the World Surf League in Portugal, but also artistic, musical, cultural, and other events, such as the European City of Culture, the Cannes Film Festival in France, the AgitÁgueda in Portugal, Carnival in Rio de Janeiro—Brazil, or San Francisco’s Gay Pride Parade in the United States, among many others. Events have thus become staples of popular culture and the late capitalist economies, associated with the post-modern human experience and meaning making (Hepp & Couldry, 2010; West, 2015).

As such, events are an important motivator of tourism. The roles and impacts of planned events within tourism have been well documented and are of increasing importance for destination or place recognition and competitiveness (Cornellisen & Swart, 2006; Gillis, Oliver & Briggs, 2007; Van Rheenen, 2014). Equally, “event

management” is a rapidly growing professional field in which tourists constitute a potential market for planned events; the tourism industry has become a vital stakeholder in their success and attractiveness. Not all events need to be tourism oriented, however, and some fear the potential negative impacts associated with adopting a marketing orientation for every planned event (Getz, 2008).

Planned events are a spatial-temporal phenomenon, and each is unique because of the interactions among the setting, people, and management systems—including design elements and programming. Much of the appeal of events is that they are never the same, and you have to “be there” to enjoy the unique experience fully; if you miss it, it’s a lost opportunity (Getz, 2008). This acknowledgment recognizes that the “same” kind of tourism event (e.g., half marathons) may be sponsored, promoted, managed, and experienced in qualitatively different ways based on local context.

Existing literature provides numerous classifications of planned events. Events can be classified by type, scale, frequency, location, and ownership or business model (Getz, 2005). In terms of type, the author has proposed the following classification: (1) Cultural Celebration Events (e.g., festivals, carnivals, commemorations, religious events); (2) Political and State Events (e.g., summits, royal occasions, political events, VIP visits); (3) Arts and Entertainments (e.g., concerts, awards ceremonies); (4) Business and Trade Events (e.g., meetings and conventions, consumer and trade shows, fairs, markets); (5) Educational and Scientific Events (e.g., conferences, seminars, clinics); (6) Sport Competition Events (e.g., amateurs/professionals, spectators/participants); (7) Recreational Events (sport or games for fun); and (8) Private Events (e.g., weddings, parties, socials).

Getz (2005) has also classified events in terms of size and value in regard to touristic demand, categorizing them in four typologies: (1) Occasional mega events, which have high tourist demand and high value; (2) Periodic hallmark events, which have high tourist demand and high value; (3) Regional events (periodic and one-time), which have medium tourist demand; and (4) local events (periodic and one-time), which have low demand and low value.

Later, Getz and Page (2016) divided planned events within an event-tourism context in four main categories: (1) Business events; (2) Festivals and other cultural celebrations; (3) Entertainment events; and (4) Sports events. With regard to sport events, which emerge as a specific activity of sports tourism (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 1997), these reveal themselves as a new way of promoting the touristic activity (Getz, 2008; Salgado-Barandela, Barajas, & Sánchez, 2017), and can be classified according to their impact on tourism. Salgado-Barandela et al. (2017) proposed a typology of sport events (Table 2), based on the four types (Type A, B, C, and D) of sport events previously defined by Gratton, Dobson and Shibli (2000), and the Type E category, small scale sport tourism events, added by Wilson (2006). Furthermore these authors divided Type C and D in terms of the irregular and irregular nature of the event (Salgado-Barandela et al., 2017).

This book project is focused on Type D2 and Type E above, posited by Wilson (2006) and Salgado-Barandela et al. (2017). Small scale sport tourism events are defined as events in which the number of athletes often exceeds the number of

**Table 2** Typologies of sport tourism events

Type of event	General characteristics
Type A	Irregular or regular events that change the venue every time the event is held, one-off, major international events generating significant economic activity, the media interest, more international spectators and competitors, more attraction to non-resident spectators, great competitiveness among countries and cities in order to win the candidacy, and high institutional support (e.g., Olympic Games, Football World Cup, and European Football Championships).
Type B	Regular major spectator events, part of an annual domestic cycle of sport events, generating significant economic activity, the media interest, more attraction to non-resident spectators, little competitiveness among countries and cities in order to win the candidacy, and high institutional support (e.g., FA Cup Final, Six Nations Rugby Union Internationals, Test Match cricket, Open Golf, Wimbledon).
Type C1	Irregular or regular events that change the venue every time the event is held, one-off, generating limited economic activity, international spectators and competitors, less attraction to non-resident spectators, and less institutional support (e.g., World and European Championships in most sports unless previously stated).
Type C2	Regular events, generating limited economic activity, international spectators and competitors, less attraction to non-resident spectators, and less institutional support (e.g., International City Marathons, Stages of World Surf League).
Type D1	Irregular or regular events that change the venue every time the event is held, one-off, generating limited economic activity, no international spectators and competitors, and less attraction to non-resident spectators (e.g., national championships in most sports).
Type D2	Regular events, part of the annual cycle of sports events, generating limited economic activity, no media interest, more competitors than spectators, less attraction to non-residents spectators (e.g., national sports events in most sports).
Type E	Regular events, part of the annual cycle of sports events, generating limited economic activity, no media interest, fewer spectators and competitors, and non-economic reasons for authorization (e.g., local and regional events in most sports).

Source: Adapted from Gratton et al. (2000), Salgado-Barandela et al. (2017), and Wilson (2006)

spectators. These events are developed on a regular basis and, as a rule, receive little media coverage. They are mostly organized using existing capacity and infrastructure, and therefore do not require significant costs or expenses. These events are less invasive to the local population compared to major sport tourism events, but they also have limited economic activity or return on investment (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Gibson et al., 2012; Wilson, 2006).

## Sport Tourism and Sustainable Development

Since the latter decades of the twentieth century, there has been an increased awareness of the negative impacts resulting from the dominant model of development based solely on economic growth and revenue generation. These concerns have led to the search for new forms of development, that is, economic growth fostered in

consideration of both social cohesion and environmental protection (WCED, 1987). The term “sustainable development” may have been mentioned officially for the first time by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), in their published report, *Our Common Future*, where it was defined as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43). Sustainable development is linked to three fundamental dimensions: economic development, social cohesion, and protection of the environment, which are interconnected but also interdependent (Melo, 2013; Melo & Gomes, 2016a).

The concept of sustainable development is based on four major principles (Bessy & Mouton, 2004; Fidélis, 2001; Melo, 2013), acknowledging: (i) a new relationship with time that requires intergenerational solidarity, encompassing the short and long term; (ii) a new relationship with the world and with space, articulating the local and the global, in a transversal and systemic approach; (iii) a new relationship of knowledge, which requires precautionary measures, scientific advances and temporary measures; and (iv) a new mode of governance based on the principle of stakeholder participation of individuals, which combines the ideas of different actors in the decision-making process.

In recognizing the need for local and global strategies to address these concerns, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Brasil), in 2002 in Johannesburg (South Africa), and in 2012 again in Rio de Janeiro (Brasil) where attendees reinforced the concept of sustainable development as a common global discourse and political agenda (Carneiro, Breda, & Cordeiro, 2016; Melo, 2013; Melo et al., 2020). As seen in Table 3, the concept was quickly accepted and promoted by many national and international organizations and governing bodies. The concept was also widely incorporated into sport and tourism development policies and strategies, as well as a growing body of academic literature on the subject (Bučar, Van Rheenen, & Hendija, 2019; Carneiro et al., 2016).

The concept of sustainable tourism has been approached from various perspectives, resulting in a proliferation of definitions. The definition proposed by the World Tourism Organization is “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005, p. 12). The global sport industry also adopted initiatives for sustainable development. For example, the IOC (1999) adopted the “Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21: Sport for Sustainable Development” aiming

to encourage members of the Movement to play an active part in the sustainable development of our planet. It sets out the basic concepts and general actions needed to ensure that this objective is met. It has been inspired by the UNCED Agenda 21, adapted to the characteristics of the Olympic and sports Movement. It suggests general outlines which should guide the activity of the Olympic Movement in the fields in which it can bring an effective contribution. (p. 21)

According to the IOC (2012), sport presents certain characteristics and provides unique opportunities “to promote environmental awareness, capacity building and



**Table 3** Chronology of institutional initiatives relative to sustainable development applied to sport and tourism

Year	Designation	Description
1992	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)/ Earth Summit	These conferences are ongoing forums for international negotiation on environmental matters. It was inaugurated with the so-called “Earth Summit,” a conference held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992. UNCED builds upon the achievements of the UN Conference on the Human Environment, which was held at Stockholm in 1972 and which led to the founding of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Since 1990, the international community has convened 12 major conferences that have committed governments to address urgently some of the most pressing problems facing the world today. The most relevant UNCED were held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002 (known as Rio +10), and again in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 (known as Rio +20).
1995	Charter for Sustainable Tourism	This document, published as the result of the World Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Lanzarote, Spain, in 1995, calls for planning and management of tourism that conserves and protects the natural and cultural heritage, and for tourism to be ecologically bearable, economically viable, socially equitable for local communities, and sustainable for the future.
1996	Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development	This document, published in 1996 by the World Travel and Tourism Council, the World Tourism Organization and the Earth Council, outlines practical steps that governments and private tourism companies can take to implement the goals of the Rio Earth Summit and make the future of the tourism sector and our entire planet more sustainable.
1999	Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21: Sport for Sustainable Development	This document, published in 1999 by the International Olympic Committee, was inspired by the UNCED Agenda 21, and adapted to the characteristics of the Olympic and Sports Movement, aims to be a theoretical and practical guide for all members of the Olympic Movement, to encourage them to play an active part in the sustainable development of the planet.
1999	Global Code of Ethics for Tourism	This document, published in 1999 by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key-players in tourism development, aiming to help maximize the sector’s benefits while minimizing its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage, and societies across the globe.
1999	European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Natural Areas	This document, published in 1999 by Europarc Federation, aims to be a practical management tool that enables protected areas to develop tourism sustainably.
2002	1st European Tourism Forum	This was the first of an annual series of European forums dedicated to tourism, approaching sustainability issues.

(continued)

**Table 3** (continued)

Year	Designation	Description
2007	Agenda for Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism	This document, published in 2007 by the European Commission, aims to guide European tourism stakeholders in their policies and actions affecting the impact of outbound tourism from Europe and in supporting tourism as a tool for the sustainable development of the host countries, with the objectives of delivering economic prosperity, social equity, and cohesion and environmental and cultural protection.
2013	1st IRNIST Sport Tourism Conference	This was the first of a series of conferences organized by IRNIST, dedicated to sport tourism and local sustainable development. The first IRNIST conference was organized in Lille, France, in 2013, followed by Coimbra, Portugal, in 2014; Zagreb, Croatia, in 2016; and Lille, France, in 2016. The 2020 IRNIST conference was to be held in Rome, Italy, but was postponed because of COVID-19.
2015	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	This document, published in 2015 by the United Nations, contains a plan of action, establishing 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets, integrating and balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, environmental, and social—aiming stimulating actions over the year 2030 in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. Sport and tourism were incorporated as important enablers of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda.
2017	Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals—Journey to 2030, Highlights	This document, published in 2017 by the World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Program, aims to build knowledge, empower, and inspire tourism stakeholders to take necessary action to accelerate the shift toward a more sustainable tourism sector by aligning policies, business operations, and investments with the SDGs.
2018	The Contribution of Sports to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: A Toolkit for Action	This document, published in 2018 by the Sustainable Development Fund Secretariat, aims at raising the visibility and understanding of the SDGs, showcasing and promoting the contribution of sports and best sports practices in relation to the SDGs by relevant stakeholders.

far-reaching actions for environmental, social and economic development across society. It also can be a means of achieving peace and reconciliation as a fundamental prerequisite for sustainability principles to be shared and applied” (p. 5).

The relationship between sport and tourism has also drawn considerable attention to the potential and real environmental, economic, and sociocultural impacts of these activities, both positive and negative. These impacts have been an ongoing concern for leisure, sports, and tourism scholars, who have discussed these tripartite impacts in terms of the triple bottom line (Elkington, 1997; Getz, 2009; Dwyer, 2015; Van Rheenen, 2017), seeking to enhance positive outcomes while mitigating the negative impacts (Melo et al., 2020).

The economic dimension of sport tourism has been highlighted by several scholars (Bouchet & Sobry, 2019; Carneiro et al., 2016; Pigeassou, 2004; Pigeassou,

Bui-Xuan and Gleyse, 2003); potential economic impacts of sport tourism have often been centered on the direct expenditure of participants and spectators of sport tourism activities and events that are related directly to the sport activity or event itself. These expenditures include the acquisition of tickets, registration fees to participate in a sport tourism event, the acquisition of the services of a company or a sport tourism guide; the acquisition or consumption of complementary goods and services, like accommodation, food and beverages, and souvenirs (Andersson, Armbrrecht, & Lundberg, 2016; Briedenhann, 2011; Gibson et al., 2012; Melo & Gomes, 2016b, 2017b). Economic sustainability in sport tourism is also related to creating employment opportunities (Briedenhann, 2011; Markwick, 2000; Melo & Gomes, 2017b).

In order to improve economic sustainability, some authors have suggested developing specific measures (Carneiro et al., 2016), namely:

1. increase the number of visitors or their average expenditure (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Roberts & Tribe, 2008);
2. diversify the product supply in order to decrease the seasonality of tourism businesses (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Ma et al., 2011);
3. encourage the industry to buy products from local suppliers and to create intersectoral linkages locally in order to avoid leakages from the community (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Miller, 2001; Roberts & Tribe, 2008); and
4. set appropriate price and taxation levels to avoid potential dissatisfaction with sport tourism development on the part of local residents (Briedenhann, 2011; Fredline, 2005; Markwick, 2000).

Ideally, a positive economic impact can help maintain ecosystem protection, while a healthy ecosystem provides the venue for sustainable market supply and growth (Boley & Green, 2016; Melo et al., 2020).

Environmental sustainability remains one of the most commonly discussed dimensions in terms of sport tourism impact (Carneiro et al., 2016) but perhaps the least studied dimension of sustainability (Hinch, Higham, & Moyle, 2016). Potential negative environmental impacts may occur as a by-product of sport tourism activities, such as noise, water and air pollution, soil erosion, natural landscape destruction, fauna and flora destruction, and the deterioration of monuments and historic sites (Fredline, 2005; Higham, 2005; Markwick, 2000; Melo & Gomes, 2016a; Orams, 2005). These negative environmental impacts are due, in part, to an increase in the human presence and footprint in fragile places, intrusion of visitors into the habitat of certain species, and damage caused by trampling, etc. (Carneiro et al., 2016).

Sport tourism can also promise the possibility of environmental conservation and protection when developed and managed in a sustainable and intentional manner (Melo & Gomes 2016a; Melo et al., 2020). The various sites and facilities developed for these activities (trails, tracks, routes, take-off and landing areas, mooring buoys, submerged paths, shops, parking, etc.) have contributed to sound conservation management practices, thus reducing the exploitative use of the (natural) environment, allowing sport tourism participants to enjoy the activities without harming

it (Melo, 2013). Service providers and sport tourism guides play an important role in the promotion of sustainability, acting as environmental interpreters, role models, and activists (Weiler & Davis, 1993; Pereira & Mykletun, 2012; Melo & Leite, 2020).

The relevance of preserving natural resources and biodiversity has been highlighted in sport tourism scholarship (Weiler & Davis, 1993; Pereira & Mykletun, 2012; Melo et al., 2020), perhaps because of the high dependency of tourism activities on the destination site (Carneiro et al., 2016). A growing awareness regarding the potential negative effects of additional pressure on resources, especially in fragile ecosystems with a high number of endangered species (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006), has led researchers to support actions that will ensure environmental sustainability within sport tourism activities and events (Carneiro et al., 2016). These actions include:

1. limiting the growth and number of participants (Mykletun, 2009; Ponting & O'Brien, 2014);
2. developing strategies that involve the implementation of measures and plans for conserving and monitoring both the quality and use of resources to avoid pollution and the high use of resources such as air, water, and energy due to sports and other tourism activities (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2018; Andersson et al., 2016; Fredline, 2005; Ma et al., 2011; Markwick, 2000; Orams, 2005; Roberts & Tribe, 2008; Wickham & Lehman, 2015);
3. adopting recycling practices and other special measures to avoid water pollution, as well as litter and noise production (Fredline, 2005; Gibson et al., 2012; Ma et al., 2011; Orams, 2005; Roberts & Tribe, 2008);
4. using renewable energy and more environmentally friendly forms of locomotion such as public transport, walking, or cycling (Ma et al., 2011);
5. utilizing existing sports infrastructure rather than building new, single-use facilities (Gibson et al., 2012; Ma et al., 2011);
6. designing environmental education training for employees (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2018; Bagur-Femenías et al., 2015; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006);
7. levying taxes associated with tourism services in order to raise funds to preserve or improve areas with important natural resources (Gibson et al., 2012); and
8. embracing environmental activities that contribute to enhancing environmental quality (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2018; Bagur-Femenías et al., 2015).

Space and land management remain important areas for the conservation of the environment, where sport tourism and conservation combine to create a symbiotic relationship based on sustainability. Beyond these management strategies for environmental protection and conservation, another significant social benefits of sport tourism participation can be achieved through intentional planning and implementation (King & Church, 2020).

The sociocultural impacts of sport tourism can be either positive or negative (Carneiro et al., 2016; Melo & Gomes, 2016a, 2017b). Local residents are likely to perceive negative impacts when an event is associated with crowding (Fredline, 2005; Higham, 2005; Ponting & O'Brien, 2014), increased pressure on existing facilities (e.g., roads, public transport) (Fredline, 2005; Markwick, 2000),

inappropriate behavior of visitors, and lack of security (Higham, 2005), particularly in the case of mega-events. In this regard, some scholars have suggested adopting sustainable management measures that avoid congestion (Carneiro et al., 2016). These measures include:

1. limiting visitor volume, restricting the accessibility to the destination, imposing an entrance fee, establishing visitor quotas, or requiring an accompanying guide for the visit (Deprest, 1997), taking into account the carrying capacity of the destination in order to avoid dissatisfaction on the part of residents (Butler's, 2006);
2. ensuring the safety of both residents and visitors, and to prevent residents from losing access to sites they previously visited (Carneiro et al., 2016).

From a more positive perspective, sport tourism events may bring tangible benefits to tourism destinations and their residents, such as the creation of a positive modification of the sociocultural structure (education, culture, profession, etc.); enhancement and preservation of historical and cultural heritage, sites, local hand-craft manufacturing, including retaining local traditions; increased local pride and community spirit; enhanced accessibilities; construction of basic infrastructures (public water supply, sanitation, electricity network, etc.); creation of new facilities, attractions, and leisure infrastructures; and an increase in the level of interest and local participation in sport activities and events (Melo & Gomes, 2016a, 2017b). This has the potential to enhance social cohesion opportunities, whereby residents are proud to live in this particular location (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Fredline, 2005). Simultaneously, the events may foster an appealing image of the destination to visitors (Andersson et al., 2016).

To achieve these positive outcomes, however, measures must be adopted (Carneiro et al, 2016), including the following:

1. promote local community involvement in the planning and supply of sports tourism services (e.g., as volunteers) (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Fredline, 2005; Ma et al., 2011; Miller, 2001; Roberts & Tribe, 2008; Wickham & Lehman, 2015);
2. increase the pride of local residents (Fredline, 2005);
3. combat social exclusion and isolation through this form of tourism (Ma et al., 2011; Wickham & Lehman, 2015);
4. ensure a fair distribution of tourism benefits (Fredline, 2005);
5. guarantee a high percentage of local employment (Ma et al., 2011; Roberts & Tribe, 2008);
6. ensure job satisfaction, by minimizing part-time and seasonal jobs and offering appropriate wages (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2018; Bagur-Femenías et al., 2015; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Ma et al., 2011; Markwick, 2000; Miller, 2001; Roberts & Tribe, 2008); and finally,
7. promote the creation or maintenance of facilities only if they may be used by residents, even after sports events have taken place (Fredline, 2005).

Although much of the research in the field has been confined to assessing tourism impacts and has focused on specific topics and activities, such as mega-events (Ma et al., 2011; Ziakas & Boukas, 2012), golf (Markwick, 2000), climbing (Bailey

& Hungenberg, 2020), surfing (Mach et al., 2020; Ponting & O'Brien, 2014), and other nature sports activities (Melo & Gomes, 2016a, 2017b; Melo et al., 2020), we hope that the interest in the sustainability of sports tourism will continue to grow (Carneiro et al., 2016; Gibson et al., 2012; Ma et al., 2011; Melo et al., 2020). In this regard, robust, comparative research into small scale sport tourism events is particularly needed within the field, as there is a current gap in the literature. This book attempts to fill this gap.

## **Small Scale Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development**

According to Turco (1997, 1998), communities and governments host sport tourism events for three primary reasons: (1) to offer entertainment to the local population; (2) to increase a sense of pride for the local community; and (3) to increase revenue in the host community. The impact of hosting a sporting event goes beyond the event itself, as many tourists who, after knowing a certain destination in the context of a sporting event, in loco or through the media, will return to visit the place again (Gibson, 1998b).

While many studies in the late twentieth century focused on the benefits of hosting international mega sporting events such as the Olympic Games (Armstrong, 1985; Kolsun, 1988; Lazer, 1985; Ritchie, 1984; Wilkins & Zelinsky, 1970), other studies have been highly critical of the sponsorship and organization of major sport tourism events (Gibson, 1998b; Hall, 1992; Higham, 1999; Sack & Johnson, 1996). For example, in their study of the Volvo International Tennis Tournament, Sack and Johnson (1996) concluded that public investment in infrastructure for this event was extremely high, with the construction of a stadium; after the event, this investment began to have a residual and less than positive outcome from what was initially planned and promised. Hall (1992) warned of the possibility of a “displacement effect,” an effect that leads tourists and residents alike to avoid certain destinations on the days when there is a major sport tourism event. In this regard, Roche (1994) argued that “mega-events are short-term events with long-term consequences for the cities that stage them” (p.1). The consequences are often unintended but run counter to models of sustainable development.

In contrast to hosting major sport tourism events, these authors defended small scale sport tourism events that attract less interest and attention, as they are less likely to have negative impacts or consequences. The ability to realistically scale sport tourism events to be compatible with the infrastructure and resources available in the host community promotes successful tourism development alternatives. Thus, government authorities must invest in the development of sport tourism events and activities as a way of promoting their local destinations (Higham, 1999). This strategy seeks to induce other forms of tourism and increase the competitiveness of the destination (Getz, 2008; Whitson & MacIntosh, 1996).

Most studies on the impacts of organizing sport tourism events focus on the analysis of economic impacts (Gibson, 1998b), assessed through the consumption patterns of participants. In this regard, Crompton and McKay (1994), Doshi et al. (2001), and Daniels and Norman (2003) argued that the economic impact of an event corresponds to the concrete economic changes verified in the host community. For example, Lee (2001) defined an event's economic impact as the net change in the local economy resulting from the sporting event. This impact, according to the author, is composed of the direct, indirect, and the induced effects of the event. Direct impacts result from the acquisition of goods and services purchased by the participants, their friends and family members and spectators (if any); indirect effects include subsequent consumption of goods and services and are sometimes referred to as secondary-level impacts. Induced effects or impacts reflect the increase in income and employment resulting from both direct and indirect impacts.

According to scholars (Crompton, 1995; Duglio & Beltramo, 2017; Sobry, 2003), sporting events can also have a multiplier effect, stimulating and developing the local economy. However, calculating the economic impact of a sporting event is both difficult and subjective. Additionally, potential multiplier effects are often prepared by companies with the aim of demonstrating the viability of an event; as a rule, only positive impacts are considered, without weighing the possible negative impacts, such as congestion, vandalism, and environmental degradation (Lee, 2001).

Although there are few studies that have analyzed the impacts of small scale sport tourism events from the point of view of sustainable development (Gibson et al., 2012), some have revealed that these events tend to provide economic benefits for the host communities, especially in terms of accommodation and catering (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Gibson et al., 2012; Horne, 2000; Walo et al., 1996). It should be noted, however, that at local sport events, the distance traveled to the event location is often less than for larger events. As such these smaller events will attract fewer participants to stay overnight and, consequently, the income from accommodations may not be of significant benefit (Turco, 1998).

Typically, small scale sport tourism events use existing infrastructure and attract visitors who would not otherwise travel to this particular location. Thus, these kind of events have the potential to act as catalysts for economic development and urban renewal (Wilson, 2006). Moreover, small scale sport tourism events can help combat the seasonality of demand, spreading tourism geographically (Getz & Page, 2016). However, in order to promote sustainable economic development, such events must be organized intentionally to ensure a consistent flow of tourists and their travel companions (O'Brien & Chalip, 2008).

Walo et al. (1996) argued that a significant difference between major sport tourism events and small scale sport tourism events is due to the fact that the latter improve the quality of life of the host community. This assumption suggests that smaller sport tourism events will have a positive effect on the local community and its residents' income. The authors warn, however, that even in these situations, there may also be negative impacts on the local community, such as traffic congestion, and environmental degradation.

At the sociocultural level, the development of small scale sport tourism events may contribute to an increase in the quality of life of the local populations, as well as to their sense of community pride (Gibson et al., 2012; Horne, 2000). Gibson et al. (2012) argue that the rise in volunteerism and an existing infrastructure are two essential conditions that maximize the social and economic benefits of hosting small scale sport tourism events. In addition to the listed benefits, most of these types of events are freely accessible to the community, so residents are able to enjoy this local event and corresponding entertainment (Daniels & Norman, 2003).

The environmental impacts of sport tourism events are the least studied in the literature (Gibson et al., 2012). Those that are more prominent in major sport tourism events, such as the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup, are related to the “carbon footprint” (the amount of carbon dioxide we produce daily and the way these gas emissions influence the environment), with the construction of new infrastructures and the concentration of people on the days of the events (Gibson et al., 2012). By comparison, there are environmental advantages in the organization of small scale sport tourism events, as the carbon footprint is clearly less invasive and destructive. Participants tend to be local or regional, existing infrastructures are used, and the flow of visitors is more compatible with the host community (Gibson et al., 2012).

Table 4 summarizes the most commonly cited impacts of small scale sport tourism events within the literature. This list highlights the positive steps taken in promotion of local sustainable development, particularly in comparison with events of greater size (e.g., major or mega sport tourism events).

**Table 4** Potential positive impacts of hosting small scale sport tourism events

Economic	Sociocultural	Environmental
Use existing infrastructure and resources. Require little public investment. Generate revenue in the hosting from accommodation, food and beverage, souvenirs, etc. Combat seasonality of demand, spreading tourism geographically. Builds event loyalty for future (annual) tourism. Promotes place recognition for future tourism.	Attract a flow of participants compatible with the scale of the host community. Promote the involvement of the local population. Provide entertainment to the local population. Increase the feeling of pride of the host community. Improve the quality of life of the local community (income increase, facilities, etc.).	The “carbon footprint” is small because the participants are mostly local or regional. Do not require the construction of new infrastructures. Do not generate a large concentration of people with the resulting problems (noise, traffic congestion, degradation of urban space, waste, etc.).

Source: Adapted from Daniels and Norman (2003), Getz (2008), Getz and Page (2016), Gibson et al. (2012), Higham (1999), Horne (2000), O’Brien and Chalip (2008) and Walo et al. (1996)



## Concluding Remarks

These best practices for promoting local sustainable development, collected over decades, create an ideal plan of action for those organizing, sponsoring, and marketing small scale sport tourism activities and events. We must ask whether these best practices are actually implemented within local contexts? And what are the consequences when they are not? The stakes are simply too high for these concerns to be framed as a set of research questions, applied to a given context and specific event. The following chapter articulates a comparative methodology to study small scale sport tourism events. This methodology provides an accessible tool for scholars and practitioners to share a common language in promoting and then evaluating local sustainable development efforts associated with these events. The methodology, adopted by researchers from nine countries, expands our understanding of small scale sport tourism events beyond singular case studies, thus refining the rigor of the field. This book seeks to promote applied, robust research in support of local sustainable development, while bridging the historical divide between scholars and practitioners.

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# A Comparative Method of Analysing Small Scale Sport Tourism Events: Half Marathons



Derek Van Rheenen, Ricardo Melo, and Claude Sobry

**Abstract** While significant efforts have been made to define the conceptual boundaries of sport tourism, less attention has been paid to designing a method of studying sport tourism events comparatively. As such, the comparative method introduced in this chapter by the International Research Network on Sport Tourism (IRNIST) helps scholars and practitioners evaluate the tripartite (e.g., economic, environmental, and social) impacts of these events on the local community. In comparing a like event across nine countries and three continents within the same year, the method and corresponding findings elucidate a more empirical way to understand similarities and differences across space, as well as to propose best practices relative to future planning and implementation. The proposed approach, while requiring further refinement, enables researchers to recognize trends and patterns of small scale sport tourism events. This comparative method also has the potential to bridge the historical divide between scholars and practitioners, encouraging applied research while building a collaborative relationship in support of economic and ethical sustainability.

**Keywords** Comparative Method · Local Sustainable Development · Small scale Sport Tourism Events

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## Introduction

Scholars have sought to theorize the conceptual foundation of sport tourism as a field or sub-field of research for several decades (Hinch & Higham, 2001; Melo & Sobry, 2017; Sobry, Liu, & Li, 2016; Van Rheenen, Cernaianu, & Sobry, 2017; Weed & Bull, 2012). In his meta-review of the emerging body of literature over a decade ago, Weed (2006) utilized the analogy of a brickyard, comparing the collection of sport tourism studies to a disparate and random assemblage of bricks. He asked whether the extant collection of bricks combined to build a conceptual foundation or coherent edifice of knowledge. Nearly a decade later, Van Rheenen, Cernaianu, Sobry, and Wille (2017) argued that sport tourism as an evolving epistemology requires both bricks and mortar to buttress this distinct edifice, recognizing strong commonalities and coherence within this maturing field.

While significant efforts have been made to define the conceptual or definitional boundaries of sport tourism (*what it is*),<sup>1</sup> less attention has been paid to the problem of research methods or *how* to study sport tourism. Weed's meta-review or evaluation of 80 studies at the turn of the twenty-first century (2000–2003) found a lack of methodological heterogeneity or diversity in sport tourism research. Specifically, nearly three quarters (71.0%) of the reviewed research articles utilized a positivist approach. While these quantitative studies may have been technically sound and provided value to the agencies that funded them, Ryan (2005) questioned the contribution of these studies to the broader body of sport tourism knowledge. For example, many of these studies revealed little understanding of sport tourism participation, behavior, or motivation. Nor have these studies done much to inform future policy.

Without getting into distinctions between empirical or experiential, quantitative or qualitative methods of understanding, this dynamic field of inquiry, an international network of researchers interested in sport tourism (IRNIST),<sup>2</sup> has grappled with the feasibility of proposing a comparative method of analysis. This collection of case or field studies from nine distinct geographic contexts is an effort to offer a possible template of comparative study within sport tourism. It is a modest effort, to be sure, and an opening for a larger and more inclusive dialogue. We hope that lessons learned from this comparative analysis will inform future IRNIST projects.

This research project draws on previous efforts of scholars (Hallman & Petry, 2013; Henry & Ko, 2013; Nicholson, Hoye, & Houlihan, 2010) and groups of

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<sup>1</sup>In a 2014 Twentieth Anniversary Special Issue of the *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, the call for papers asked potential contributors to address the big questions related to sport tourism: what we know, what we do not know, and what we need to know.

<sup>2</sup>IRNIST refers to the International Research Network in Sport Tourism. Established in 2010, the network represents scholars and practitioners from around the world. The network is interested in the varied intersections of sport and tourism and the promotion of responsible local sustainability. IRNIST has held six annual conferences, its most recent in Marrakech, Morocco (April 2019), and is devoted to addressing the cultural rift between scholars and practitioners, as well as the cultural bias in favor of North America, Western Europe, and parts of Oceania—to the exclusion of the “global south.”



researchers such as MEASURE and COMPASS<sup>3</sup> who seek to analyze differences and similarities in sport participation between social groups and social contexts, although their foci have not been sport tourism specifically. This collection of studies is more specific in nature, focused on a singular small scale sport tourism event, half marathons, or road races, hosted and experienced within several distinct locations across several countries and continents.

In order to reveal how the policy process functions on a local level, those actually doing and those studying sport tourism (e.g., practitioners and researchers engaged in sport tourism) need to understand how input variables affect change in output variables. Inputs are the financial, human, and natural resources that combine to develop a proposed activity or event, while outputs represent what is done with the inputs or resources and how they are used to achieve a set of outcomes. In other words, the output is the “data” that proves the activity or strategy occurred (Shakman, 2014). Strategies are the game plan, a series of steps or activities taken to achieve a set of desired outcomes. These outcomes represent both costs and benefits, with the summation of these results producing potential positive and negative impacts. And yet, as Henry and Ko (2013) caution, statistically significant relationships or findings do not *of themselves* constitute explanations of how outcomes or best practices are achieved.

Scholars interested in a more ethical and sustainable approach to sport tourism and event management have proposed the utilization of a triple-bottom line (TBL) orientation to plan, implement, and evaluate what actually constitutes successful or best practices (Adams and Zutshi Adams & Zutshi, 2004; Dwyer, 2015; Getz, 2009). A TBL approach takes into consideration the social and environmental impacts of a business venture in addition to the traditional measure of profit generation, such as return on investment or shareholder value (Van Rheenen, 2017).

The challenge of a TBL approach is not its ethical orientation to do the right thing but its practical application as a reporting tool or methodological approach. This challenge is heightened when scholars seek to compare the tripartite outcomes and impacts of sport tourism events from one location to another. Based on these concerns and challenges, Weed (2006) encouraged the emerging field of sport tourism “to become epistemologically and methodologically heterogeneous and diverse, as befits a multi-disciplinary research area that draws on a range of subject areas for synergistic insights” (22). With that said, comparison across like activities such as sport policy and sport tourism research requires some agreed-upon assumptions and metrics to ensure methodological rigor.

Many scholars are trained with a defined disciplinary approach to study culture and myriad social phenomena. Many disciplines—anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology, among others—conduct comparative research, asking

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<sup>3</sup>Founded in 2010, MEASURE stands for “Meeting for European Sports Participation and Sport Culture Research,” while COMPASS stands for “Community of Providers of Physical Activity and Sport.” Both groups comprise a network of mostly European researchers interested in sport participation issues. They meet once or twice annually, often connected to large conferences focused on these broad topics.

how a unit of analysis in one geographic setting is similar to, or different from, that unit of analysis in another setting. This process of comparison for any number of units of analyses serves as the basis for research findings and interpretations.

For the purpose of this project, the unit of analysis is the small scale sport tourism event rather than national sport systems per se. Geographically, the comparison is local and/or urban rather than national, often focused on small and medium-sized cities or locales, although the collection also includes several major cities. This comparative approach enables researchers and practitioners to recognize variation within, as well as across, boundaries (e.g., nation states), seeking to avoid the pitfall of drawing broad, often superficial, conclusions from such comparisons. These conclusions may both reinforce national stereotypes, as well as infer generalizability where the evidence is simply too limited to make such assertions. Because the small scale sport tourism event occurred at roughly the same time in each geographic locale, this comparison is ahistorical, although the data could be used for future longitudinal or temporal studies, such as comparative studies of the same event over time.

From a policy analysis perspective, then, this comparative approach operates at the micro- or meso-level, understanding the nature and impact within a specific context and related to a particular/common sport tourism event. This is not to say that the analyses or findings do not reflect national or transnational trends and patterns, such as rurality, seasonality, and public-private partnerships. In turn, these themes may serve as the focus of comparative inquiry, particularly as we seek to better understand the impact of small scale sport tourism events on local sustainable development.

A more nuanced comparison of these sport tourism events, such as road races or half marathons, examines structures of organization and sponsorship (public, private, some combination thereof), hosting rationale and motivation, as well as participation profiles, behaviors, and motivations. This includes active sport tourists as well as event volunteers. Additionally, the impact of such events on the local community and the relative engagement with host residents may be of primary, secondary, or even tertiary importance from the sponsor's perspective, particularly if the organizing bodies of the event are external to the local community. But because few sport tourism events would occur without public support and subsidies (Burgan & Mules, 2001; Mules & Dwyer, 2005), local leaders, organizing sponsors, government agencies, and domestic and international sport federations become primary stakeholders and therefore have a moral obligation to promote responsible sustainability and to protect the quality of life of local residents (Fredline, 2005; Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Van Rheenen, 2017).

A sport tourism event *may be* part of a regional or national policy, whether sport-specific or tourism sponsored, but it may also be organized in a more localized or decentralized manner with few national policy implications. The event may be organized with local sustainability development central to its organizational goals and desired outcomes, while other organizers may have paid scant attention to the social

and environmental impacts associated with the event, focused almost exclusively on the economic impact of the event. On the other hand, municipal sponsors of small scale sport tourism events may be motivated more by tradition and community building than revenue generation. As demonstrated in the forthcoming chapters, some of these local organizers do not seem to acknowledge that these events could leverage other forms of tourism in these specific locales (whether during or after the event), while other sponsors are keenly aware of the potential economic value added and multiplier effects of these events for future tourism.

Global sport tourism serves as an important marketing vehicle for both cities and nations aspiring to world-class status (Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). In this capacity, sport tourism has evolved within a global market to help “brand” cities and nations just as multinational corporations sell commodities tied to the concomitant consumption of sporting events. As a result, mega sporting events have been used as a strategic mechanism for nation building and increased market share (Cornelissen & Swart, 2006; Gillis, Oliver, & Briggs, 2007; Van Rheenen, 2014).

On the other hand, scholars have noted that local residents tend to spend less during these mega sporting events and that the location tends to lose or displace visitors who might have come to the city during this time but decide not to due to the mass event (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Matheson, 2002; Solberg & Preuss, 2006). Furthermore, where the city and/or region has financially supported or sponsored a particular event that may have catered primarily to visitors, the money could have been spent otherwise to benefit local residents. It is often difficult to quantify the effect of a municipality’s sport tourism event on future tourism, despite the promise of site or brand recognition.

In addition to differences among organizers and their relative success in promoting future tourism, so too is there variation in the motivation for participation in these small scale sport tourism events. As demonstrated in the nine distinct field studies presented within this collection, some participants report that they will return to these locales in the future for other touristic reasons, while others state that it was only the sport tourism event that drew them to this place, with no incentive to return (except perhaps for the same event again).

This comparative approach offers scholars and practitioners a method to better understand the profiles of participants, as well as the meanings they have co-constructed in relation to these events. The method likewise helps researchers evaluate the economic, environmental, and social outcomes and impacts of these events on the local or municipal community. In comparing a like event across several distinct locations, we are better able to understand similarities and differences across space and propose best practices relative to future planning and implementation. As such, the data and corresponding findings might likewise be used as a benchmark for future longitudinal studies, comparing across time as well as space.

## ***A Proposed Mixed Method Approach***

This comparative study is part of a research project coordinated by the International Research Network In Sport Tourism (IRNIST). All contributors studied a half marathon event in their respective countries. The sport tourism event was to be hosted in a small- to medium-sized city with between 2000 and 10,000 participants. The main purpose of this study was to examine and compare the varied experiences and impacts of a sport tourism event on local sustainable development. The following chapters reveal the demographic profile of the road race participants across several sites and then analyze the real and perceived economic, environmental, and social impact of this sport tourism event from multiple perspectives.

All contributors to the project agreed on a common methodology, with the intention of comparing results from nine distinct cities and countries. Three continents—Africa, Europe, and South America—were represented. The countries and respective cities comprised in this comparative study included Algeria (Béjaïa), Brasil (Guarujá), the Czech Republic (Ústi nad Labem), France (Phalempin), Hungary (Debrecen), Italy (Rome-Ostia), Portugal (Coimbra), Romania (Bucharest), and Switzerland (Vallée de Voux).

The methodological approach included a survey instrument or questionnaire to collect information from key stakeholders involved in the event, as well as structured interviews to gather further data regarding the organizational and management processes of the event, as well as the perceived and actual impact on local sustainable development. Direct observation was the final aspect of this methodology, a means to triangulate all of the collected data.

The data were then analyzed according to a qualitative-quantitative or mixed method approach. Contributors utilized monivariate, bivariate, and multifactorial analyses of the survey instrument. Participant responses were then compared with what was reported by key stakeholders (e.g., the organizers or sponsors of the event) during semi-structured interviews. Researcher observation tested the claims relative to reported impact on local sustainable development. This comparative methodology, organized according to an interdisciplinary and systemic model, was tested for the first time during this international research project.

## **Foundations for Comparison**

All contributors to this comparative project were asked to provide a Fact or Data Sheet for their case study, highlighting national statistics (e.g., country capital, geographic size, population, Gross Domestic Product, Tourism Contribution by percentage to the GDP, sport tourism categories by popularity and percentages if available). The Fact Sheet also requested data on the host location of the sport tourism event (e.g., the name of the city, its geographic size, population, percentage of GDP or Euro/local currency per capita, main professional sectors, and sport tourism

events). Finally, the Fact Sheet asked participants to provide data about the half marathon sport tourism event under study (e.g., the name of the event, the total number of participants, the number of residents participating in the event (percentage of total), the number of volunteers, the type of organization(s) hosting/managing the event (public, private, a combination of the two), as well as the sponsors of the event (public, private, a combination of the two). Additionally, contributors were asked to provide an overview about the sport tourism industry in their respective country, highlighting the importance of small scale sport tourism events nationally. Authors were likewise asked to discuss trends in the sport tourism market in the twenty-first century and how, if at all, these trends intersected with local, regional, and/or national sustainable development policies.

## Survey Instrument/Questionnaire

The general study was based on an anonymous survey instrument or questionnaire established by all nine members of the project. The questionnaire was composed of 40 items, developed initially in English, and then translated in the native language of the country under analysis. The questionnaire was intended to measure multiple variables: the participants' profile, motivation, and overall experience, as well as the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts of the event. The survey included several questions to determine the participants' demographic profile, such as self-reported age, gender, family status, level of education, socio-professional category, and income level. The questionnaire also asked respondents whether this was the first time that they had participated in this particular event or if they had done so previously. We were also interested to know whether the runners came alone or with others, and if so, with how many people and how were they related. Additionally, the survey sought to better understand participant motivation and the overall experience as runners within this sport tourism event. Respondents were asked to rank the importance of several factors in their motivation to participate (e.g., challenge, competition, socialization, etc.).

The structured survey questioned race participants where they resided/lived to assess the distance they had traveled to attend the event. We asked participants what means of transportation (walk, public transportation, car, train, etc.) they used to get to the event. Additionally, the survey asked respondents if they stayed overnight, and if so, for how many nights? If they required accommodations, where did they stay (e.g., at a friend's house, in a hotel, at a campsite)?

Replicating the approach of Daniels and Norman (2003), Gratton, Dobson, and Shibli (2000), and Gibson, Kaplinadou, and Kang (2012), the next section of the survey asked participants to estimate their overall budget—not only for the event itself, but also to include all other incidental expenditures/expenses incurred (race registration, equipment, accommodation, food and beverages, souvenirs, etc.). A series of questions focused on the respondents' activities outside of the race, their

thoughts on the touristic appeal of the town, and the likelihood that they would return to the city or region for touristic purposes in the future.

Utilizing a likert-type scale, several questions sought to determine participant impressions related to the quality of the event, the municipality's level of attractiveness, and the efforts of the organizers to prevent any environmental impact. These final questions sought to illicit participant responses relative to the perceived impact on local sustainable development.

Researchers sought to distribute and disseminate the survey to participants in a number of ways. In the weeks and days leading up to the sport tourism event, researchers disseminated information about the study at local sites, such as schools and race headquarters. Participants were encouraged to complete the survey when they collected their race bibs and registration packets. In some cases, paper copies of the questionnaire were distributed and collected by researchers. Information about the study and the survey link was also posted on neighborhood forums, online magazines catering to running enthusiasts and the event website. In some instances, volunteers handed out flyers in advance and during the event to race participants outlining the objectives of the study with the survey link. Social media platforms were likewise utilized to distribute the survey. Web survey tools, such as Google Forms and LimeSurvey, were developed and sent to the email addresses of all registered participants of the half marathon. Several email reminders with the survey link were sent to all participants the days after the race, soliciting participants to answer the questionnaire.

## **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Authors were encouraged to interview key stakeholders of the organizing bodies sponsoring or managing the event, as well as city officials where the half marathon was hosted. As such, contributing authors interviewed both public and private officials, including mayors, deputy mayors, tourism managers, directors of racing club associations, and executive directors and CEOs of private companies managing these sport tourism events.

An interview guide was provided to all contributing authors. The interview guide prompted a series of questions about the history of the event (years in operation, number of participants, had participation been capped at a particular number and why), the ways in which the event was organized, the sponsors, etc. Interviewees helped researchers better understand the collaborative relationships of the various stakeholders, both public and private, engaged in promoting and managing the event.

One of the primary purposes of these interviews was to reveal the motivations of those entities hosting and organizing the half marathon. These key stakeholders were likewise asked to evaluate the economic, environmental, and social impacts—tangible and intangible—of the event. In terms of economic indicators, what tools do stakeholders use to calculate revenues and expenses associated with the event, potential opportunity costs, profits, and multiplier effects.

The interviews sought to uncover the level of support from the local community, as well as the level of satisfaction with the outcomes of the event. For example, does the event create civic pride, a positive municipal or territorial identity and/or the promotion of other forms of tourism in the short, medium, and long-run? Have local business leaders (restaurants, hotels, petrol stations) been invited to participate in the event during the planning phases, serve as local sponsors or direct recipients of tourism dollars? How do the organizers measure the social-cultural impact of these sport tourism events on the local economy and community?

Relative to environmental sustainability, respondents were asked what measures, if any, were implemented to protect and preserve the local environment? Similarly, researchers asked interviewees how the ecological footprint following the event was calculated. For example, have the organizers of the event prioritized the purchase of eco-labeled products and the consumption of local goods in order to minimize the ecological footprint? Is there a contract or written agreement between the local government and the organizing bodies to ensure sound environmental practices? Are there provisions for non-compliance or damages incurred as a result of the event?

## **Direct Observation**

In addition to collecting survey data from race participants and conducting semi-structured interviews of event organizers and other key stakeholders, researchers from the nine site locations provided direct observation of the sport tourism event under study. An observation guide (please see attached) was provided to all contributing authors. The observation guide drew attention to the planning and design of the event, focused on transportation, parking, the determined race route, and the environmental and social impacts associated with the half marathon and the influx of race participants, spectators, and volunteers. Observation also referred to the day of the event, directly witnessing the organization and management of the race. These observations or field notes were the final set of data for these nine distinct case studies, serving to triangulate these observations with survey and interview data.

## **Limitations and Challenges**

There are significant challenges to developing a common and accessible methodology easily adopted for such a comparative project. Language poses the initial challenge or limitation to this comparative project. While English is the most common shared language among contributing authors and was the language selected for a uniform survey instrument in the research design phase of this study, the translation of this survey into the local language became the responsibility of each author or group of authors. The process led to a revision of the instrument itself, with

questions edited, added, and deleted to better fit the local context. This led to a lack of uniformity in data collection and analysis.

The length of the survey instrument further exacerbated this linguistic challenge. Forty questions were deemed by authors to be too long. It was one of the main reasons cited for low survey response rates from participants. Response rates ranged from a low of 5.5% to a high of 44%, with the average response rate across all case studies just below one fifth (19.25%) of race participants. In the case with the highest return rate from participants, researchers incentivized survey responses with a potential monetary reward. Survey respondents were entered into a random raffle or drawing to win the registration payment for next year's half marathon. Future efforts at adopting this comparative methodology should consider editing the survey instrument to fewer questions. This may help ease the work associated with the translation process as well as increase participant response rates. Incentivizing participants to complete the survey, as evidenced in the Swiss case study, should also be considered.

The guides provided to contributors relative to the proposed structured interviews and direct observations were likewise too lengthy. While they offered tremendous latitude for scholars to select from a series of possible questions, these research documents should be shortened to simplify the data collection process and narrow the focus of analysis. As such, the research design in constructing a comparative method in analyzing small scale sport tourism events is an initial template, an iterative effort at further refinement. An edited and refined set of instruments will make more rigorous the comparative methodology for future research projects sponsored by IRNIST and other sport tourism scholars and practitioners worldwide.

Additionally, the challenge of developing a comparative methodology in sport tourism can be recognized when we consider the three editors of this volume and their disciplinary identities. Claude Sobry is an economist, Ricardo Melo identifies as a sociologist, and Derek Van Rheenen sees himself as an anthropologist, although he adopted a folklore methodology, often referred to as "the comparative method," for his dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley (Van Rheenen, 1999). It is therefore likely that scholars in this interdisciplinary field have particular interest, expertise, and biases based on their scholarly training. For example, when we analyze the economic, social, and environmental impacts of an event, our training may direct us in particular ways to this intellectual exercise.

Thus, while there are significant challenges to developing a comparative methodology for small scale sport tourism events, the potential value of such an effort and the iterative process of refining this comparative methodology promise the discovery of best practices across these events, particularly as it pertains to the promotion of local sustainable development. Such an approach delves more deeply into the current field, expanding our understanding beyond the unique cultural and political circumstances of a given event in a singular, local context. The approach, while requiring further refinement, allows scholars to recognize trends and patterns of small scale sport tourism events. This comparative approach also has the potential to bridge the historical gap between scholars and practitioners, encouraging applied



research while building a collaborative relationship in support of economic and ethical sustainability.

## Future Directions and Forthcoming Chapters

The forthcoming chapters provide richly textured descriptions and analyses of nine distinct half marathon races across three continents. As these contributions will illustrate, there are numerous similarities across this common event in distinct locales. For example, the demographic profile and motivations of race participants (demand) were very similar from one event and one geographic context to another. There are likewise significant differences from one case study to the next, particularly in the organization and sponsorship of the events (supply). There is tremendous variation, for example, in the relative attention paid to potential and realized impacts on local sustainable development connected to these events. These differences and similarities will be discussed in greater detail in the final chapter of this book. As noted in the introduction, the following chapters present the findings of this international research project alphabetically and by continent. Chapter 4 begins in Algeria (Northern African) and Chap. 5 takes us to Brasil (South America). We then traverse to Europe for Chaps. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, landing in the Czech Republic and then traveling to France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, and then Romania. We end our journey in Switzerland, a fine, final destination. The book concludes with a chapter of comparative summation and a call to action, a global effort toward genuine sustainable development.

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# Algeria: Impacts of Sport Tourism Events. The Case of International Half Marathon of the City of Béjaia



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**Abstract** The study of sport tourism in Algeria is characterized by scarcity, and the sporting event is completely nonexistent, given that sport tourism is tourism of event. Therefore, through Bejaia international half marathon, we attempt to understand the nature of the phenomenon at the level of demand and supply, and the effects related to sustainable development on the city. Despite our commitment to the methodology agreed with the international work team, direct observations were also resorted to, and the dialogs were expanded due to the scarcity of information and legal obstacles. The results revealed the existence of a gap between supply and demand, and various opportunities enjoying investment. On the other hand, there is a high focus on improving the quality of organization by organizers and municipal officials with a competent vision, in the absence of measurement indicators for the economic, social, and environmental impacts related to the sporting event.

**Keywords** Algeria · Half Marathon · Small scale Sport Tourism Event · Sport Tourism · Triple Bottom Line

## Introduction

In the midst of the distinction between a pile of bricks and real edifice (Weed, 2005), concepts related to sports tourism still seek to build its knowledge boundaries, by reaching of answers to a range of questions, which may contribute to the

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recognition of sports tourism as an independent scientific field (Pigeassou, Bui-Xuan, & Gleyse, 1999). However, evaluative research on this path through an epistemological approach continues to insist on further analysis and cognitive clarification (Van Rheenen, Cernaianu, & Sobry, 2017). However, there are those who advocate being more practical based on the five basic directions of sports tourism proposed by Kurtzman (Gammon, 2015; Gammon & Robinson, 2003; Kurtzman, 1995, 2005). However, three out of five of the main trends directly affect sporting events. In addition, there are those who consider sporting tourism as event tourism (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2004). With the increased interest in the sporting event academically and governmentally, the trend began towards renewing conceptual perceptions related to the sporting event (Turco, 2012; Wise & Harris, 2017; Melo & Sobry, 2017).

There are numerous effects of the organization of the sports event (Getz, 2009), beginning with the political, ideological, and social influences (Benabdelhadi, 2016; Wahl, 2004). Nevertheless, the event that contributed to the focus of studies on the economic impact of the major events for the subsequent 20 years was the Los Angeles Summer Olympics of 1984, in which the Olympic flame path was sold up, and the economic impact of the event lasted for five years on the city. This was the first case of a profit-making Olympics (Dashper, Fletcher, & McCullough, 2014; Fontanel & Bensahel, 2001; Tomlinson, 2006). However, this momentum has tended to be positive in the proposition (Rojek, 2014), which has neglected the negatives that can be associated with major events, including high economic cost, institutional corruption, falling into the trap of large indebtedness, population displacement to create the required infrastructure (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; Jennings, 2011), (Gratton, 2006; Hiller, 1998). In addition to questioning the credibility of the expected incomes (Preuss, 2006), this disturbing rush to the colorful picture and overlooking negatives was categorized by C. Rojek as the efforts to stack more bricks (Rojek, 2014). Gibson in front of these shortcomings or negatives that characterize the sporting event considers it important to look at a part of the small-sporting market (Gibson et al., 2003), also insisting that there is an untapped opportunity at the level of small-sporting events.

Based on several researches, Higham is one of the firsts to identify the small-sporting event (Higham, 1999), which is known as regular sports competitions during the season: ice hockey, basketball, football, rugby tournaments, national matches, local competitions, master sports (Higham, 1999). Through the above, Daniels and Norman (2003) have been able to support the advantages of Higham's small-sporting events: exploitation of existing infrastructure, low burdens on public funds, low bargain offerings, and low impact on population movement. These advantages, on the other hand, are disadvantages accompanied to organizing large or specific sporting events, or Hallmark. However, the large-sporting events are known by increasing tax pressure on city resources (Ritchie, 2005), as well as the emergence of a perception that the economic impact of a small-sporting event may

be better than a large-sporting event (Agha, 2015). Over the last 20 years, the small-sporting event is studied from many angles, beginning with the economic impact (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Veltri, Miller, & Harris, 2009; Wilson, 2006). Marketing approach: by studying tourist behavior, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Gibson et al., 2003; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Shonk, Greenwell, & Won, 2012). Strategic Approach: Portfolio Study, Stakeholders (Pereira, Mascarenhas, Flores, & Pires, 2015; Bazzanellaa, Petersa, & Schnitzerb, 2019), as well as the social approach based on the study of social impact, the dynamics of volunteers (Taks, 2013; Kerwin, Warner, Walker, & Stevens, 2015). Despite that most of the studies related to the small-sport event are seeking to highlight on its recommendations of the positive effects resulting from the organization of the small-sport event, there is a fear of falling into the trap of exaggeration or disappearance as indicated by C. Rojek (Gammon, 2011; Coalter, 2007).

Nevertheless, the reversal of disappearing is the search for sustainability, which is mentioned by Gibson et al. (2003), by searching for the foundations of the consolidation of the concept of sustainable development on small-sports events level. Moreover the diligence in reducing the levels of academic uncertainty in the sustainability of tourist destinations sports (Hinch, Higham, & Moyle, 2016), which is a support for a wider perception. In addition, on contributing to local sustainable development through sport tourism (Sobry, 2016), which aims to create economic, social, and environmental well-being (Gibson, 2018), the attention to the strategic dimension according to Weed (Weed, 2018) may contribute significantly to the desired goal.

## **Objective of the Study**

This chapter aims to highlight the importance of promoting the organization of half-marathons at the level of small towns, as well as to understand the perceptions of a part of the stakeholders represented by organizers, municipal officials, runners, in the context of sustainability approaches, which focus on the social and economic aspects in addition to the environmental aspect. It is an opportunity on the other hand for the first time at the level of sports tourism, by comparing the phenomenon under study with its European counterparts and Anglo-Saxon, which opens the appetite to support the foundations of comparative approaches in the future.

## The General Framework of the Study

Although more than 30 years have passed since the country adopted the market economy, diversifying the economy outside the hydrocarbons sector, in which the period 2004–2014 knew the infrastructure modernization, human resource development, low poverty rate, and low unemployment, but things are still the same in this regard. Nonhydrocarbon exports were 2.7% and fell to 1.5%. The sector's contribution to GDP exceeded one-third, as if we are talking about a body that has grown dramatically, but its fat is excessive. Thus, the sector became a burden on itself and on those who are under its responsibility. Politically, the discourse that the country must not be under the hydrocarbons dependency and the diversification of the economy rises whenever oil prices enter a chronic decline and vice versa. However, the diversification of the economy became over time inevitable. The tourism sector is one of the strategic sectors that will rely on to diversify the economy. The tourism share of GDP remaining stable since 2006, and began experiencing some kind of slight recovery since 2015 until 2017, from 1.3% to 2%. There is an ambition to raise the ratio from 05% to 06% by 2030.

Algeria has witnessed a remarkable development in the number of tourists foreign and Algerian migrants, totaling in 2008 about 1,747,110, and increased to 2,450,785 tourists visited the country in 2017, registering a growth rate of 20.17% compared to the previous year. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts, the number of foreign tourists reached 1,708,375 in 2017, a growth rate of 29.16% over the previous year. The tourists of the Algerian migrants were about 7,421,010 in 2017, a growth rate of 3.58% compared to 2016. The total tourists are divided into three parts according to the goal of the trip: 14,024,243 tourists engaged in leisure tourism, which represents 86%. For the rest, it is divided between business tourism by 186,233 tourists, and tourism in the framework of work mission estimated at 4899 tourists, representing respectively rates of 14% and 0.29%. The revenue of \$ 140.5 million was achieved in 2017, with the target set to reach 11 million tourists by 2030, with an estimated revenue of \$ 8800 million.

Sports are a form of entertainment, with the exception of the small percentage of professional athletes, as well as some nonrecreational motivations that can be involved in travel, but even these exceptions generally find themselves benefiting from the recreational facilities of their destination (Veal, 2017). The results of the study conducted by Nielsen Sport on the nature of sports consumption in Algeria, give a positive perception of the state of sports in this country, especially as the proportion of young people more than 75%, with two to three have an interest in sports. In addition, 57% are interested in the sports scene on television, 37% are interested in sporting events, with six out of ten sports sponsorships (Lalande, Vivier, & Abdelaziz, 2014). However, it is deeply troubling that exercising sports at university represent 1%. The world champion of 1500 AD Hassiba Boulmerka embodied this concern, "We were 30,000 licenses when I was running, today they

are only 3000 licenses, therefore we are facing a sports system that does not teach nor learn” (Lalaoui, 2015). This was because of a sports system that was not built through a diagnosis of the Algerian sports reality (Benabdelhadi, 2016), So very interesting question raises: Is there a sports system at all (Bouchet & Kaach, 2004). Previous scenarios tend to highlight the gap that exists between a society looking for sporty consumption and a sports system, which is inconsistent with this demand.

With regard to the pairing between tourism and sports in Algeria, there has been political will since the first government was established after independence, where a Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Tourism was established, headed by Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Fates, 2009). This is not a coincidence given the auxiliary interactions of an ideological and economic dimension during the colonial period (Zytnicki, 2013), as well as the use of tourism with sport in support of political struggle and adherence to identity (Benabdelhadi, 2016). At present, it is noteworthy that sports tourism has been referred in the reports of the National Plan for the Preparation of Tourism 2008–2018 only once. Even in the foresight report for 2018–2030 consisting of 300 people, sports tourism was mentioned twice. This neglect was also observed in the regional sessions of tourism in assessing the first phase, so that sports tourism was not addressed in discussions and recommendations, with a focus on cultural tourism, although the interests of Algerians in sports in general and the sports scene ranked third and fourth. Academically, there is no harmony with the interesting figures, there is a lack of explicit highlighting on this aspect, which makes what has been accomplished academically completely inadequate (Sidi Maammer & Maloum, 2008; Siagh, Bengriana, & Benabdelhadi, 2015). Therefore, this study can be considered as the first work that can be seriously built upon in understanding the phenomenon of sports tourism in Algeria.

## **Bejaïa Half Marathon**

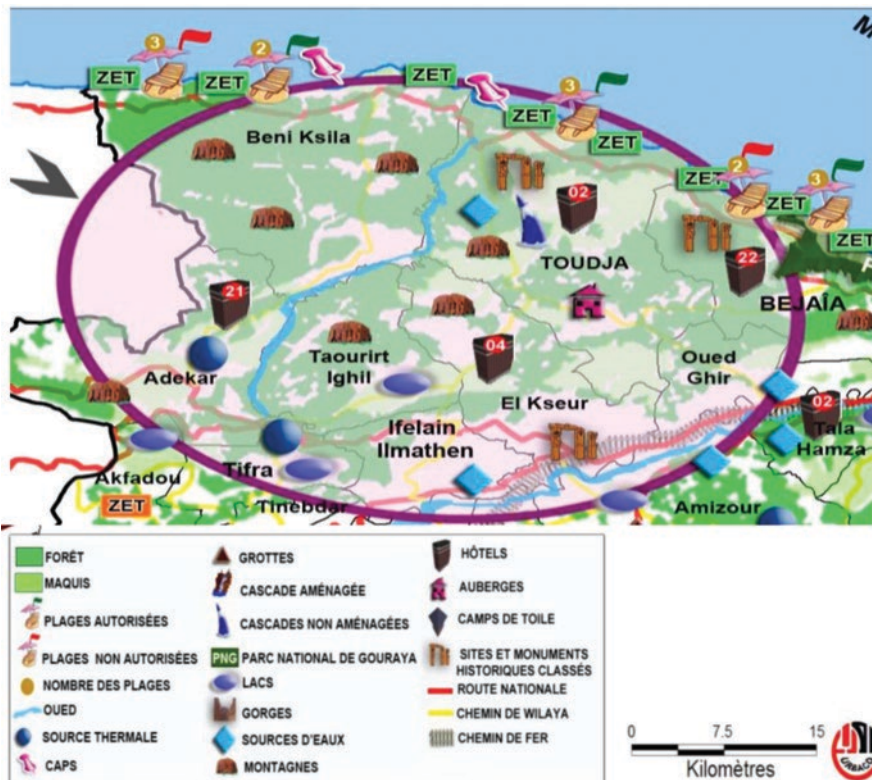
Béjaïa is an Algerian city overlooking the Mediterranean Sea from the north and east, with population of more than 178,000 inhabitant and with density of 1480,5 inhabitants per square kilometer. Béjaïa occupies an area of 1222 hectares and it is about 200 km away from the capital Algiers. According to the Köppen Index, Bejaïa is Mediterranean climate. Due to its geographical location, it is considered the most important industrial pole in Kabylie region, especially in petrochemistry, chemistry, in addition to the traditional industry and tourism. The city is classified as the most visited cities in the country due to its civilization legacy from the Roman era. On the outskirts of the city, there are natural areas such as Gouraya Park, as well as agricultural areas in the plain and Valley of Soummam. Bejaïa has a coastal strip featuring a fishing port and another commercial, as well as an international airport. According to municipal officials, the city is the first tourist destination for expatriates and Bejaïa province attracts six million tourists.

The geographical location of the city of Bejaïa.

### The geographical location of the city of Bejaïa



The main plan for the tourist development of Bejaïa City (2015).





Bejaïa half Marathon in its 11th edition on May 2nd 2016 that was organized by the Association of Bejaïa Club of Mediterranean sports, which is a member of Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). It is among the seven major races approved by the Algerian Athletics Federation (AAF), with the support of the municipality, the provincial administration and the Association of Athletics in the region. Bejaïa half Marathon is an international race with 5344 participants, of whom 500 are women, 1544 participated in the category of 21 km, in which 17 foreign athletes, the rest of the participants were from 48 provinces. There is an evolution compared to ninth and tenth edition, in which the participation of 34 provinces. This evolution is primarily due to the mental image of organizational reputation compared to similar events in other cities, in addition to the improvement of the communication methods. More than 55% were informed by social media and Internet, and 12% by specialized magazines, according to the official organizers, bearing in mind that 36% of the Algerians are interested in the sport of running after football and swimming.

Beside the Bejaïa municipality, 300 volunteers support in organizing the Marathon. Volunteers were in line with the municipality's vision of promoting the city. The organizers and municipal officials believe that their city deserves a better place due to its ancient history and civilization legacy, which they spoke about extensively, especially in the Middle Ages and its position as a beacon of science. They are proud of the famous sociologist Ibn Khaldoun, and the mathematician Fibonacci who studied in Bejaïa and introduced Arabic numerals to Europeans, Leonardo da Vinci who studied mathematics at Bejaïa University. In addition, the commemoration of the Prince of Austria Empire Louis Salvador for the magic of the city in his book entitled "The Pearl of North Africa", which is the first tourist guide for the city. They are also proud of how women were crowding and debating men at the Bejaïa University. Therefore, they believe that the Marathon can contribute to the promotion of the city within the context of a sociocultural approach, while noting the omission of the economic approach that may be embodied by the organization of the marathon that makes us in front of a somewhat traditional look. On the other hand, the marathon organizers confirm they are still looking for solutions to organizational problems. This traditional model reminds us of the Alton May experiences in Hawthorne. Previous perceptions tend more to focus on efficiency rather than effectiveness, neglecting the economic advantages that can be achieved by organizing the marathon, and getting away the levels of maturity of the organizational culture due to the modernity of the experience.

Bejaïa Half Marathon path includes the most tourist attractions in the city.



The tendency of not adopting an economic approach is highlighted by the 02-euro (€2) registration fee. According to the organizers, this revenue is to cover the costs of buying phone chips installed on the participants' shirts to monitor their commitment to the racetrack. The prizes are awarded between € 37,348 and € 3361 for men, between € 18,674 and € 1.439 for women. The prizes are awarded to top ten finishers. Moreover, part of the budget allocated to invite guests, stars, and organizing an international conference in sports medicine on the sidelines of the marathon.

Although the marathon was funded by both public and private sector, the municipality is the main sponsor, especially in this edition. So that the municipality granted permanent headquarters to the association, the infrastructure, logistics support equipment, and organizational tools, in addition to harnessing the municipal human resource.

Beside the municipality, the event is sponsored by 12 sponsors, in which seven are private, local companies, and branches of national companies, as last editions. Three individual sponsors provided funds for organizing the event as well as prizes, the rest have contributed to the provision of equipment. However, sponsoring contracts are renewable annually through negotiation according to the organizers.

The marathon Village is located in a public park, which is the second station for registration of participants. Whereas the headquarters of the association was the first station for registration, but the village site is far from the beginning and the end of the race, more than 2 km. Despite the fact that the village contains commercial and communication spaces, it is limited to the sponsoring companies, especially the local ones. This limitation in the economic partners who exploit the exhibition space does not correspond to the high dynamic of the commercial activity in the city.

Usually the distance between the starting point and the end of the race is characterized by the availability of business booths with activities related to the event and spent leisure time in general. In the case of Bejaïa marathon, the distance is too short, less than 60 meters. The racetrack has a small tribune for the marathon guests, a podium, and no trace of any business.

About the hosting facilities in the city, there are 22 rated and nonrated hotels with a capacity of 1591 beds. In a partial survey four days before the race date, for hotels on a range of 2 km from the starting area, we discovered that reservations were closed the day before the marathon. On the other hand, during the process of the race registration we revealed that there is neither the promotion of the hosting places and the city attractions nor tourist leaflets.

According to the agreement among the partners of this research project, the focus was on the race half marathon organized in small and medium-sized cities, where the number of participants are from 2000 to 10,000 racers.

The Algerian team chose to study the semimarathon of Bejaïa city because it is the most famous and organized compared to similar events in Algeria, according to the race sport professionals in Algeria, in addition it complies the required standards.

A range of research tools have been adopted which we believe can significantly contribute to achieving the goals of the study: a general questionnaire directed to the participants in the race; a semistructured interview with officials of Bejaïa municipality; an interview with the event's organizers; a direct observation of the event site; the behaviors of the event's organizers.

Four days before the event, we met four members: president of the association, financial manager, information and equipment, and logistics managers. The meeting with the new association was held at its headquarters in the municipality stadium, the meeting lasted about 45 hours. The vice president of the association and marketing manager were interviewed for about 45 minutes, the day before the event in marathon village. In addition, we held one-hour interview with the financial manager (municipal officials) at the association headquarters.

Based on an agreement with the project partners, the questionnaire was distributed electronically. In order to get the most answers, we entered into prior negotiations with the organizers to facilitate and support the process, but we were confronted with the problem of Privacy Law and personal information. Finally, it was agreed that the questionnaire would be submitted to Facebook page of the marathon, as well as to support the process by the organizers and the group of participants in the forum of sports medicine. To get more participants in the process, we resubmitted the questionnaire on the most followed Facebook page in the city.

## **Analysis of Participants' Survey**

### ***Special File for Sample***

The size of the random sample consists of 165 respondents (N = 165). The sample represents about 11.44% of the total runners (87.3% men and 12.7% women). About 30.3% of respondents aged between 25 and 34 years old, 23% between 35 and 44 years old, and they together make up 53%, consistent to a large extent with the general national context of sports exercise.

The sample study included only five foreign participants (out of 17 foreign participants in the race), representing: Tunisia, France, and the USA. Due to the imposed regulations by the organizers, we were unable to collect the views of the rest of foreign participants.

Unmarried respondents account for 57% in which 56.4% have a bachelor degree whereas the married respondents represent 37% in which 45.9% have bachelor degree. On the other hand, 91.8% of married men are employees, 67.2% of them are staff, 71.2% of the single respondents are students, and employees earn less than 180 Euro per month. While 43.9% of the married are divided to three equal groups of incomes, the first groups are between 180 and 300 Euros, the second between 750 and 900 Euros, and the third groups have more than 1500 Euros per month.

### **A National Race**

The nonresident participants in the city accounted for 69.7%. Respondents belong to 25 regions. About 22.9% came from the city of Algiers, which is about 200 km away, noting that 48 local regions are participating in the race according to the organizers. In terms of transport, 56.4% of the participants used cars in their transport, followed by the bike with 18.8%, the bus 16.4%. Out of 31 respondents, 13 respondents who used the bike came from places less than 40 kilometers from the Bejaïa city. About 20 respondents of bike users are students and employees most of whom had a monthly income of less than 180 euros. Out of the 27, 19 respondents who used the bus have many characteristics of those who used the bike.

### **Loyalty Is Strengthened**

Majority (63%) of the respondents said that it was not the first time they participated in the race, although 34.5% did not specify the number of participation times, but 49.7% of the respondents participated from 1 to 4 times, followed by 25.2% from 5 to 11 times. It is noted that 70.2% of those who participated more than once moved from areas away more than 40 km. For the number of participations, in the race of 2015, range from one race to 40 races, with the main participating bloc from 1 to 4 times at 46.7%. In addition, 20% who declare that they participated but did not

specify the number of participation. About 78.8% confirmed their willingness to participate again in the race, with 20% still undecided to participate.

### Irregular Travel Group

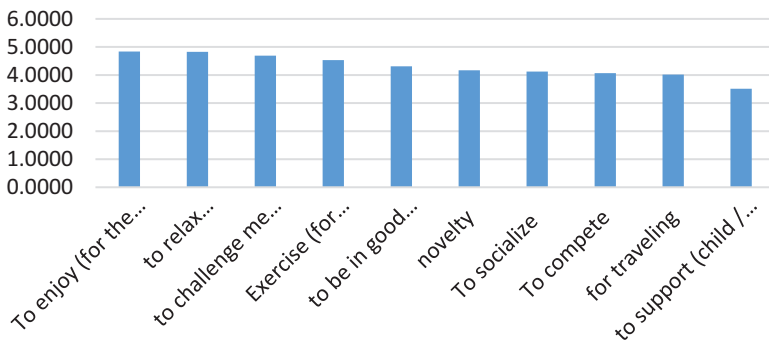
Travelling in groups is the predominant feature of the participants in Bejaïa half Marathon. By numbers, 82.4% of the participants travelled in groups in which 60% with friends, 22.4% with family whereas 15% with club. Therefore, the irregular travel groups were the predominant category of participants. The travel group ranged from one to seventy, but the basic mass of a travel group was between one and four persons account for 44.2%.

With regard to residence, 65.5% of the participants spent at least one night in the city, 87.2% spent from one to two nights, and 7.9% spent three nights. About the place of residence, 43.6% used hotels, 22.4% used homes of their friends and relatives. The reasons for choosing this event has tended to quality regulation by 49.7%, while there is clear neutralizing of the reasons for tourism and the proximity of the place of residence by 14.5% and 10.9%, respectively.

### The Motives of the Participants

According to the preliminary reading of the motives of the participants found 25% did not show their opinions in this section in one hand. On the other hand, the state of ambiguity and complexity characterize the most important axes of this section due to the close convergence of results, based on observing the average scores.

#### The motives of participating in the marathon



We found that the motives of helping others were not within the beliefs of the participants and ranked the last. The ratio of 76% of respondents rated motivation between first and fifth-degree. Unlike Bruno Heurbi, the world champion of a

100 km ultra-marathon and his team members, who were interviewed on the sidelines of the race and the Forum, participated for the third time consecutively in order to help the rest of the racers to cross the finish line. That was on the footsteps of the French marathon champion Dominique Chauvelier idea launched in 1998. The second set of motives of 66% begins with the motive of knowing the traditions, cultures, and protecting the monuments confined between the first and fifth-degree. This is followed by the motivation to search for competition, motives related to the search for the development of social interactions with others, the search for renewal, and at last maintaining health. The third group, which its averages confined between the fourth and fifth degree, we found the motivation to improve performance, the challenge of ability. The second motivation is to find space to relax and change the daily routine. In the last, the search for the enjoyment topped the motives of the sample, see Fig. 01. It is noticed through the participation motives that the most positive package reflects a tendency to achieve self benefits primarily. Comparing the results, especially the first four motives to the Algerian individual's motives for exercising sport in general, we find the convergence of three out of four motives.

### **Participants' Expenses**

Because the nonresidents in the city represent 69.7%, the expenses varied according to the respondents. The accommodation expenses were at the forefront, the food second, and the expenses of the trip came in third place, followed by the equipment, finally, the registration rights that estimated at 2 euros. Noting that 34.5% of the participants overlooked the registration rights, which were unrealistic according to organizers.

Concerning the quantification of expenses, the basic mass of the respondents, estimated at 26.6% spent between 7.53 and 45.16 euros on travel, 18% spent from 5.27 to 30.11 euros on accommodation. Whereas, 33.8% spent from 7.53 to 45.16 euros on eating and drinking, and 16.2% spent from 3.7 to 26.34 euros on commemorative purchases. Noting that no other expenses were covered which is unrealistic.

It is noticeable that there is a discrepancy between the order of expenses and the quantization of expenses, due to the disparity in the number of respondents, that decreased by 34% in the second section.

### **The Tangibility of Participants for the Environmental Protection**

A minority (24.2%) of the respondents felt the efforts of the organizers in mitigating the environmental impacts associated with the event. The efforts were emerged by encouraging residents not to use their car from 7:30 am until mid-day through distributing small flyer to car users a day before the event. In addition, the largest

industrial complex in the city ceased to emit carbon emissions from its chimneys on the day of the event. The complex is a sponsor of the event. While 39.4% did not notice the efforts by the organizers due to the absence of garbage cans throughout the racetrack, especially at the finish line, as the racers benefit from fruits and drinks for recovering energy, there are no places to get rid of waste.

The organizers admit the importance of taking into account the environmental aspect that was the main reason for the lack of improvement in the event classification by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS). Despite the efforts of the organizers to strengthen the organized association, according to the vice-president of the association, the bet will not succeed if the other stakeholders do not realize that interest. It is noticeable that more than 200 m of the racetrack pass near a trench that is characterized by high water pollution, and the random spread of waste, especially plastic. The elimination of such phenomena is the responsibility primarily of the municipality, the organizers, and then the population.

Concerning the use of green card related to the sport event, the information is extremely poor with either the organizers, or the municipality officials about this concept. However, after some brief explanation to improve the environment protection from the effects and residues related to the event, the stakeholders expressed their readiness to adopt this mechanism to improve the event organization in the future editions, but the municipality services did not initiate to clean up the event sites immediately after the end of the event.

### **Marathon as a Supporter of the City Tourist Attractiveness**

The participants who are looking for fun, in addition to relaxing and breaking the daily routine, were more oriented to look for leisure time and eating out as accompanying activities for the sporting event. With an assessment of the organization of the event by 49% between the fifth and seventh grade, we find that there is a clear tendency and attraction of the city through the willingness of 78.8% to participate in the event for another time, and 65.5% shown their ability to participate in any event organized in the city. Moreover, there is a positive tendency of 71.5% to visit the city another time for tourist purposes.

Organizers as well as municipality officials believe that the event can achieve an economic impact in terms of tourism at the local and regional levels, given the distinctive tourist attractions that are abound in the region. However, the municipality officials are unaware of the indicators on which the impact of tourism activity is measured economically, including the Tourism Multiplier Effect Index. On the other hand, there are no multiapproach plans despite the inclusion of the city within the tourism pole of excellence for the central regions.

## Discussion and Conclusion

It is true that one of the main objectives of this study is the attempt of contributing to understand and benefit from the dynamics of the small-sport event model in North America, and work to activate its mechanisms in Europe, but we think it is important to stand on the supportive approach to this model. In the United States, the social structure was built on a liberal basis, with a boom in civilization since the nineteenth century that created a society, which led over time to the development of a profit-oriented sports system (Lobmeyer & Ludwig, 1992). This has created a clear disparity on the economic level, primarily compared to the European side, which is mainly due to the division of European sports models into four models, the closest to the American model being the English and Irish models (Henry, 2009). The diligence of the European Union in overcoming obstacles related to governance systems, structures, and ownership, the financing of championships on the one hand, the negotiations and broadcasting and media rights, and marketing sports competitions on the other hand. All these contributed to support the commercial logic, taking into account the specificity of the national values in EU countries. Moreover, the effects of declining interest in the health dimension and declining rates of sports for the all (Benabdelhadi, 2016), while not neglecting the attempts to approach the concepts, focusing on similarities (Barrie, 2012; Van Bottenburg, 2013). However, we are still talking about an open American model and a restricted European model. We believe that it is important to take into account the historical dimension, and not to lose sight that the American sports model began to accumulate momentum to serve the commercial logic of the nineteenth century. As for Europe after World War II, the European model still needs more time, especially at the level of fusion in the crucible of the common values of the European Union.

As for Algeria, it is clearly approaching the French sports bureaucratic model, but the French model was established in accordance with the elements of French society. Accordingly, this cloning did not take into account the specificity of Algerian society. In addition, this model was inherited by junior staff in the colonial era, with scarcity at high staff level, which led to create lobbies with a strategy of authoritarianism corresponded to what he put forward (Robert, 1990) P.C. Robert. Functional imbalances have expanded over time, as Boubaker Boukhriss puts it (Boukhrisse, 2008), with a marked fluctuation in the general policies of sport, from its focus on amateur sports until 1977. Until 1986, the focus was on the elite, then back to focus on amateur and school sports. Then all the professionalism projects planned so far have failed as part of incoherent schemes run by mindsets that do not believe in the foundations of sports economics. In the context of a sports system belonging to a public system still convinced that independence does not mean decentralization. This was a justification for the permanent intervention of politics in sport, which increased the pace of clientelism in the sports sector. Even the prospect of a hopeful take-off is not shared by the figures provided by the reports of the Global Competitiveness Forum for Algeria 2017–2018. Algeria is ranked 128th according to the index of the Algerian economy openness to private sector, 122nd in



terms of business development, and investment incentives rank 98th (Mebtoul, 2019). The perception put forward by H. J. Gibson since 1998 of the importance of improving the level of coordination between sport and tourism in public policies (Gibson, 1998) is still far from being realized in Algeria. Despite the sports indicators on understanding the phenomenon of sports consumption in Algeria, which is attractive, we find that the interest of Algerians in sports in general outperformed their European counterparts by 7%. Follow-up sports on television were estimated at 5%, Europeans excel in attending professional sports events by only 3%. Algerians watch television more than 6% more than the French does, in addition to the use of social media by 8%. Concerning the influence of sports sponsoring, we are faced with consumers who accept sponsoring, and give great hope to brands that connect through sponsorship, 62% of Algerians tend to care about brands that sponsor sports, 45% have more abstract emotions or love for sports sponsors (Lalande et al., 2014). For example, the first sponsor of the national team in the 2010 World Cup has a passion of pride, while the sponsor in 2014 has the passion of omen, compared to the French who tend primarily to innovative institutions. So we are in front of consumers because of the love of sports, not only the functional benefits of the products of sponsors, but also they rise to more abstract feelings towards them, which makes us in front of an attractive marketing opportunity for investment, needing microeconomic and structural reforms.

Concerning Bejaïa half marathon, from our meeting with organizers and municipal officials, their perception of the impact and economic benefits that the sports event can bring is not clear at the strategic level for the benefit of the city in terms of development. Even tactically it was not discussed that what could be considered contributing to the achievement of economic benefits, through the means of temptation the visitors' spending, or prolong visitor stay and keeping the events, which may contribute to support consumption, strengthening regional trade relations (O'Brien & Chalip, 2008). According to organizers and municipal officials, the sports event can contribute over time to making the city occupy a place that corresponds to its historical and cultural heritage. Therefore, the overall goal does not consider economic benefit as a priority, although the perception tends to create an effective mix of attractions. There are some aspects of this in Bejaïa marathon, which can bring economic benefits, such as exhibition spaces, despite they few in the tourist attractions, as well as the racetrack, which is designed to pass the most important historical landmarks of the city. In addition to programming a tour of the event guests, we believe that this lack of exploitation of tourist attractions is somewhat in line with J. Swarbrooke's argument that the designers of small attractions places rely on themselves in this regard, given the limited resources, and rationalization of spending. All these led to narrow the way for the use of specialized advisers. This creates problems at the level of the perceptions of attractions. On the other hand, they missed opportunities to reap the fruits of the design prepared by professionals (Swarbrooke, 2002). Despite, Bejaïa marathon is reaching the ninth edition, it is not mentioned in the reports of the region's tourism development agency of 2014 and 2015, more attention was paid to the launch of the green marathon across the topography of the region. Therefore, we find ourselves in front of inattention for

an enhanced chance of loyalty, according to the views of the participants, and pay attention to the project is still under study and with absence of supporting quantitative data (Direction du tourisme et de l'artisanat, 2015). Therefore, it is important for the organizers and municipal officials to expand the discussion with the rest of the stakeholders to assess the extent to which sporting events are in leadership position to support the sustainable development of the city. On the other hand, are the basic foundations available to support the economics of entertainment?

For the social impact, the organizers and municipal officials believe that a social legacy was accumulated through past editions, by the increase of participants, whether nationally or internationally, and the loyalty to the event, which confirms the existence of social benefits for the participants. On the other hand, there is a legacy accumulated through a voluntary bloc that was able to gain experience over time, in addition to contribute to health awareness through the Forum organized on the sidelines of the event, and some events in the marathon village. However, the above has not been raised under the strategic vision, in addition to diligence in measurement based on little information. In contrast, accurate social impact measurement is complex, and requires more effort in adopting more indicative measurement indicators (Lee, Cornwell, & Babiak, 2012; Taks, 2013). We believe that an alliance with the local university in this regard is more than necessary. The same approach is important to support at the level of understanding the environmental aspect, according to Ch. W. Schmidt by minimizing the environmental impacts associated with the event, as well as exploiting the popularity of sport to raise environmental awareness in general (Schmidt, 2006). Environmental challenges remain an issue for all stakeholders and their intervention requires direct action. We believe that building interest in measuring indicators at the economic, social, and environmental levels will contribute to raise the level of trust with actual sponsors and attracting new sponsors, and highlighting the persistence of the sponsors of their social responsibility in a convincing way. These will support guiding efforts to a more effective course and improve the exploitation of the opportunities created by the event.

We believe that the organizers, with the support of municipal officials, strive to improve the quality of the organization of the event, with a tendency to adopt efficiency as a performance evaluator, which leads to pressure on the level of resources compared to the desired results. The organization finds itself playing a political role to support its resources (Valéau, Cimper, & Filion, 2004). Nevertheless, it is more dangerous to fall into the trap of the political agency, and thus the political benefits become the predominant. Thus, we believe that relying on the bottom-up strategy is better suited to the case of the Bejaïa Marathon, which increases the sense of ownership of the host community. However, the above requires an approach to nonprofit organizations, based on the consolidation of organizational values and beliefs, which increase the sustainability of human capital, in addition to innovation at the level of products and services, and attention to social change as a major task. In conclusion, it should always be remembered that the rain prize obtained by Noah was preceded by a cumulative effort in building an inclusive ship.

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# Brasil: The Impact of Small Scale Sport Tourism Events. The Case of the 21k Guarujá 2016



Ricardo Melo, Fabiana Garcia, Derek Van Rheenen, and Claude Sobry

**Abstract** Tourism in general and sport tourism in particular are growing in Brasil. This growth is due to the sheer size, diversification, and quality of the country's vast natural resources, and also due, in part, to the organization of major sporting events in the last decade. The organization of small scale sport tourism events, such as road races is also increasing in Brasil. In this regard, this study aimed to analyze one half marathon running event – the 21 k Guarujá 2016, and examine the environmental, economic, and social impacts that occurred as a result of hosting this event. An online survey was provided to a sample of 89 participants, and 59 face-to-face surveys were applied to residents of the city of Guarujá. Two in-depth, semistructured interviews were also conducted: one to the executive director of the private company who organized the running race and; the other to a representative of the Secretariat of Tourism of Guarujá. Notably, this study has provided empirical evidence to support these events and offers a valuable tool for the sustainable development of tourism at the local and regional levels, having the capacity to create loyalty to a particular destination, as well as to reduce the negative effect of seasonality.

**Keywords** 21 k Guarujá 2016 · Brasil · Local Sustainable Development · Running Event · Small scale Sport Tourism Event · Sport Tourism

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## Introduction

Contemporary Brasil has been marked by the historical processes of industrialization and urbanization and by the constitution of a national integrated economic system. The country has developed through multiple interests and at all levels of government, from the global, national, regional, and local territories. In the last three decades, many changes have occurred to create a new socio-spatial process and rearticulating of Brasil, in its most varied and splended formats. The region has become through a construction of geographical knowledge, based on concrete elements (urban network, hierarchical classification of urban centers, detection of management flows, among others), capable of distinguishing regional spaces at suitable scales (IBGE, 2017a).

The regions are categorized from nearby urban centers to meet the immediate needs of populations, including goods and services, jobs and public services such as education, health, and welfare. Large urban centers are responsible for generating income for all of the country. With its economy focused on several sectors of activity, Brasil has the second largest industrial market in America, represented by several important areas of production – the automobile, aircraft, steel, petrochemical, and technology sectors. The service activity also generates great wealth, especially in banking and other financial operations carried out every day with large international investors. With this dynamic and varied set of products, Brasil is called by some economists as an emerging power, forming part of several economic blocs like the BRICS, G20 + 5, and Mercosur. GDP is the seventh largest in the world, reaching US\$ 1.775 trillion. Despite this level of wealth, there is an enormous diversity in relation to the quality of life of its citizens and the generation of employment, being one of the main social problems experienced in the present time (IBGE, 2017b).

Tourism has significant potential to help economically develop the country, especially when we consider the great diversity of ecosystems and cultures. If this emerging industry and vocation are properly channeled, the country has multiple attractive destinations, niche markets, and various products to be offered. The trajectory of the National Tourism Policy began with the institutionalization of the National Program for the Municipalization of Tourism (PNMT) in 1994. Under the coordination of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Tourism, the program was designed to boost the development of tourist activity at the municipal level (Ministério do Turismo, 2013).

With the creation of the Ministry of Tourism in 2003, the Federal Government strengthened the new model of public management, both decentralized and participatory. The Tourism Regionalization Program – ‘Roteiros do Brasil’, launched in 2004, constituted a public policy at the territorial level. This policy was based on the National Tourism Plan 2003–2007, which determined the macroprogramme – Structuring and Diversification of the Tourism Offer. The Program’s premise, considered to be strategic for the achievement of the National Tourism Policy, had a positive impact on the socio-economic results of the territory. Nine years later, new guidelines for the Tourism Regionalization Program (Ministério do Turismo, 2013)

were developed based on the strategic actions proposed in the 2013–2016 National Tourism Plan. These guidelines reinforced the position presented in the evaluation of the Tourism Regionalization Program, of prioritizing actions in the regions and, thus, consolidating a decentralized management by expanding local participation, dialog, and social control.

In order to promote the development of tourist regions in Brasil, the Ministry of Tourism prepared guiding documents with step by step for the technical implementation of the Tourism Regionalization Program, which includes the “Tourism and Sustainability” guidelines (Ministério do Turismo, 2007). These documents present the fundamental principles of Sustainability within the environmental, socio-cultural, economic, and political-institutional spheres, highlighting the role and potential impact of tourism in local and regional development (Ministério do Turismo, 2007). In 2016, the Ministry of Tourism presented the guide “Tourism and Sustainability – Guidelines for Tourist Service Providers”, which aimed to disseminate knowledge and sustainability practices that can be replicated in enterprises, generating positive return in one or more aspects: economic, social, and environmental (Ministério do Turismo, 2016).

The tourism industry is responsible for several types of companies, forming the national tourism product. This product can be divided into food service activities that represent about 41.9%, road transport (16.3%), and recreational, cultural, and sports activities, which registered 13.6% of the total industry. Tourism in the Brazilian economy accounted for US\$6.8 billion in 2016, equivalent to 3.2% of GDP. The total contribution of the sector totaled US\$152.2 billion, 8.5% of GDP. The WTTC estimates a growth of 3.3% until 2027, reaching 9.1% of GDP, equivalent to US\$212.1 billion. According to data from the WTTC, the sector generated more than seven million jobs in 2016, which represent 7.8% of the total volume (Conselho Nacional de Turismo & Ministério do Turismo 2018).

Similar to other large economies, such as China and the United States of America, Brazilian domestic tourism is of tremendous importance, estimating to be ten times larger than the international touristic demand (Conselho Nacional de Turismo & Ministério do Turismo, 2018), representing about 90% of the tourism economy in the country (SEBRAE, 2015a). It is estimated that 50% of Brazilian homes with fixed phones had at least one inhabitant who traveled domestically in 2017, and 92,149,646 flights within the country (including Brazilian residents and nonresidents) (Conselho Nacional de Turismo & Ministério do Turismo, 2018).

A total of 6,578,074 international tourists visited Brasil in 2016 (Conselho Nacional de Turismo & Ministério do Turismo, 2018). Foreign visitors came from South America (56.8%), Europe (24.4%), North America (11.2%), Asia (4.6%), Africa (1.2%), and Oceania (1.0%). The greatest number of foreign tourists were from Argentina, Germany, France, and the United States of America. The main motivation for travel was leisure (56.8%), followed by visits to friends and relatives (21.1%), and business (18.7%) (Ministério do Turismo, 2018). Related to leisure, sun and sea were the highest demand (68.8%) followed by ecotourism (16.6%). The main destinations were Rio de Janeiro – southeast region (32.2%), followed by Florianópolis – south region (17.9%), Foz do Iguaçu – south region (13.2%), and



São Paulo – the country’s main capital (9.1%). An important characteristic in relation to São Paulo is that the primary motivation of the trip was business, this representing the highest income per capita of the analyzed segments. This research also identified that 95% of tourists intend to return to Brasil. Hospitality is the most positive aspect of the evaluation with a total of 98%, followed by accommodation (5.7%), gastronomy (95.4%), and catering (95.0%) (Ministério do Turismo, 2018). Given sport’s irrefutable importance and significance in the field of Brazilian tourism, the next section aims to presenting a big picture about sport tourism in Brasil.

## Sport Tourism in Brasil

Sport tourism is a promising tourism sector in Brasil. For example, Brasil is ranked first among 141 countries in terms of natural attractions by the World Economic Forum (Ministério do Turismo 2016). The sport tourism industry in Brasil includes recreational activities, such as, walking (22.1%), horseback riding (10.3%), bicycle tourism (8.6%), mountaineering (7.7%), vertical techniques (6.9%), rock climbing (6.7%), diving (6.2%), among others. The potential for growth in this important sector is due to several factors: (a) 62% of the national territory has native vegetation, which favors the practice of activities such as tree climbing, trails, climbing, etc.; (b) the country boasts 7408 km of coastal extension, which facilitates the practice of activities such as canoeing, kite surfing, diving, surfing, among others; (c) the country’s biodiversity is the largest in the world, representing more than 20% of the world total; (d) there are more than 230 points of reference indicated for the practice of adventure tourism; (e) more than 3000 companies offer services and products in this modality; and (f) Brasil ranks third among countries that have the largest number of sport tourism enthusiasts, behind only the United States and Argentina (SEBRAE, 2015a).

This is a market predominantly based on domestic demand, which represents around 90% of the volume of tourists traveling throughout the country. The profile of adventure/eco/nature sport tourism participants in Brasil is composed of male (53.3%) and female (46.7%) individuals, mostly between the ages of 18–29 years (38.0%). These sport tourists tend to be single (48.0%), highly educated (58.0%), mostly belonging to Social Class B<sup>1</sup> (56.0%). In Brasil, there are 5,382,468 total customers served per year in this segment, generating a total income of R\$ 515,875,659, with between 15,500 and 22,500 employees involved in normal and high season, respectively. It is estimated that this market will grow in the number of international sport tourists. The segment is growing on average between 15% and 25% annually, and increasing 161% on average in annual spending, from R\$112 to R\$293 (SEBRAE, 2015b).

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<sup>1</sup> In Brazil, the social classification is based on family income and is divided into five classes, from class A which corresponds to the highest social class, to class E which corresponds to the lowest social class.

Brasil has become a frequent site for international mega sporting events, including the Pan American Games 2007 (Rio de Janeiro); the 5th CISM World Summer Games 2011 (Rio de Janeiro); the FIFA Confederations Cup 2013 and the FIFA World Cup 2014 (all over Brasil); and the Rio 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games (SEBRAE, 2015c, 2016a). During the 2014 FIFA World Cup, 12 stadiums hosted 64 games and received 3.4 million spectators, the second largest audience of all 20 World Cup events. In addition to the 3.1 million Brazilians who traveled domestically during the World Cup, Brasil received just over one million foreign tourists from 203 nationalities, who spent in foreign currency roughly US\$1.6 billion (Presidência da República, 2015). Despite the games being hosted in 12 different cities, the World Cup attracted foreign tourists to 491 cities (SEBRAE, 2015c). More recently, the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro brought together about 11,400 athletes (6200 men and 5200 women) from 205 countries, who competed in a total of 42 disciplines. Moreover, during the Summer Olympics, Rio de Janeiro received 1.17 million tourists in August during the Rio 2016 Olympics, according to a survey carried out by the Special Tourism Secretariat/Riotur. Of this total, 410,000 were foreigners (Riotur, 2016).

Popular in European countries, football tourism is growing in Brasil. The sport, which is a national passion, mobilizes more than 150 million fans and generates around 11 billion reais a year. The sport also generates 370,000 direct jobs in the country. Football tourism in Brasil had its rise during the 2014 World Cup, when the mega sporting event was hosted in Brasil. During the event, fans visited clubs, stadiums, museums, and bars associated with the sport. Football tourism involves the displacement of people who travel to watch football matches and to participate in other activities related to this sport. Those participating in the competitions (athletes) are not part of this modality, but spectators represent the football tourist. As such, the football tourist is mainly male (73.0%), mostly over 40 years old (48.0%), with higher levels of education (54.0%), and with higher levels of income. They travel mostly with friends (40.0%), and the highest source of spending is the cost associated with tickets acquisition (55.0%) (SEBRAE, 2016b).

Running tourism is also on the rise in Brasil. Road running gains, more fans in Brasil every day (Salgado & Mikail, 2007). The ease and low cost to participate in the activity, in addition to a growing focus on health, are some of the main reasons for the sport's popularity. The number of runners grow along with the street events, which have helped to expand the sports tourism sector and the Brazilian economy. The Brazilian runner travels primarily to participate in events in other states and abroad, thus creating new opportunities for tourism agencies and operators. It is estimated that road running produces a market of 3.1 billion reais (in a scenario with four million road runners) in Brasil. Part of this market derives from race registrations, sponsorship fees, sales of sports equipment, and other services related to this business model. According to a study carried out by the Spanish consultancy group Relevance, there was a 50.0% growth in the number of race participants in the country from 2011 to 2017 (SEBRAE, 2018).

Brasil attracts runners from all over the world and has hundreds of street events, including 13 official marathons, including the Rio de Janeiro Marathon, and the

Saint Silvester International Road Race in São Paulo. The sector also generates other segments of the economy, such as hotel chains, restaurants, tourism, and local businesses in the cities where the events are held. Running tourism also boosts the creation of new businesses such as sports products and specialized food. Runners who travel to other states or countries to participate in competitions and events also want to know about local tourism opportunities. These events usually take place on weekend, sometimes with categories of race length, and difficulty divided between different days (SEBRAE, 2018).

The profiles of the road runners are as follows: 43.0% are between 25 and 35 years old; the preferred distance is 10 km; 57.0% prefer to run alone; 46.0% do weight training or strength training in addition to running; 44.8% prefer the morning to participate in the activity; 33.0% prefer to run at night; 34.0% do not practice another sport. Although the sport is still predominantly male, Brazilian women are becoming more active in this sport. In 2017, 50.6% of the 29,000 enrolled in the City of Rio de Janeiro Marathon and Rio Half Marathon (42 km, 21 km and 6 km) were women. It was the first time that men were a minority in one of the main street events in Brasil. The trend has motivated more and more exclusive running events for women (SEBRAE, 2018).

Considering the increased importance of sport tourism in Brasil, especially the sport tourism events, and particularly the growth of road races events, the following section presents the case study about the half marathon running event – the 21 k Guarujá 2016.

## The 21 k Guarujá 2016

The *21 k Guarujá* is an annual road race held in the city of Guarujá, Sate of São Paulo, Brasil. This was the third time that the event had been held in the city, organized by a private company named “Educa Guarujá”. The organizer of this event holds a total of five events per year, one in the month of March which is the women’s race, 21 km in August, and a 5 km and 10 km circuit divided into three stages within the city during the year.

The 21 K Guarujá 2016 was held on August 21 with two distances: the half marathon (21 km) and the 10 km. Participation demand for the event significantly increased the year under study compared to previous years. In the first year of the event, there were a total of 350 participants, while in the second year, 430 runners participated. In 2016, there were a total of 1000 participants, with 700 running the half marathon, and 300 participating in the 10 km; 15% of the participants resided in the municipality.

Integrated within the international project supported by the International Research Network In Sport Tourism (IRNIST), the current study followed the same comparative methodology used to collect data in nine countries across three continents (see Van Rheenen, Melo, & Sobry, [this volume](#)). An online survey was provided to a sample of 89 participants (12.7% of the total number of participants) of

the 21 k Guarujá 2016, between August 21 and 31, 2016. In the week after the event took place, 59 face-to-face surveys were applied to residents of the city of Guarujá. Two in-depth, semistructured interviews were also conducted during the week after the event: one to the executive director of the private company who organized the running race and; the other to a representative of the Secretariat of Tourism of Guarujá.

The following part of this section will present a brief description of the State of São Paulo and more specific Guarujá, the city where the case study was carried out. The chapter will then proceed with the presentation of the main results of the study.

### *The State of São Paulo and the City of Guarujá*

The state of São Paulo, located in the southwestern region of Brasil, has a total of 645 municipalities, with a total area of 248,222,362 km<sup>2</sup>. The state has a population of 44 million inhabitants, about 22.0% of the country's total population. São Paulo is the richest state in the country, with the highest GDP, accounting for 32.1% of total wealth. If the State of São Paulo was an independent country, its economy would be the eighteenth largest in the world (Estado de São Paulo, 2017).

São Paulo has great diversification of economic sectors, both industrial and service rendering. In the case of the industrial sector, metal-mechanics, alcohol and sugar cane, textile, automobile, and aviation predominate. The primary services offered include finance and banking. The city of São Paulo is considered the financial capital of the country, where the headquarters of the largest national and international banks are concentrated. In addition to the banks, the city of São Paulo is the seat of the Stock Exchange, considered the second largest in the world in market value (Estado de São Paulo, 2017).

The tertiary sector in São Paulo represents all other forms of service provision. Within this area of the economy we find tourism. Divided into three poles of development, the tourism market includes the capital of São Paulo, the coast and the interior. The main segment of the city of São Paulo is business tourism, which offers approximately 45 thousand events per year and has the largest hotel chain in the country. Formed by the biomes of the Atlantic forest and the cerrado, the city has 22 state parks, the majority of which are natural preservation. One example is the Serra do Mar park, a majestic forest preserved in its original form and, which extends to the state of Paraná. The state's coastline is 622 km<sup>2</sup>, with a total of 293 beaches. These areas offer numerous seaside resorts, the busiest of which are Pitangueiras in the city of Guarujá, and then São Vicente, located in the city of Santos (Estado de São Paulo, 2017).

Guarujá is one of the most important tourist locations within the state of São Paulo. In the 1970s, Guarujá was internationally recognized as the "pearl of the Atlantic". With roughly 143 km<sup>2</sup>, its exuberant nature spreads across 27 beaches and attracts throngs of tourists to the region. Guarujá is part of the metropolitan region of Santos, located on the south coast of the State of São Paulo, about 88 km

from the Capital of São Paulo (IBGE, 2017a, b). It occupies the island of Santo Amaro and is composed of two districts: Guarujá and Vicente de Carvalho.

With a population of 311,230 inhabitants and with a GDP of R\$3,221,211,323 thousand, in addition to nautical, nature, and sport tourism, Guarujá has an economy supported by the petrochemical industry, as well as robust port activity. Indeed, tourism is one of the bases of the economy, attracting tourists mainly in high season; it is therefore considered a seasonal activity. Its beautiful beaches, some of which are urbanized while others are accessible only by footpaths, possess historical constructions dating back to Portuguese colonization. Thus, Guarujá also has tourist attractions that portray the history of the city and its development over time. In addition to running events, the city also attracts other sporting events such as triathlon, surfing, and football championship.

### ***The Participants of the 21 K Guarujá 2016***

Response data from the survey instrument were collected from 89 participants of the 21 k Guarujá 2016 event. Nearly three-quarters (74.2%) of the respondents were male, mostly (60.7%) married, with an average age of 40.6 years old. The results distributed by aged groups indicate a predominance of respondents between the ages of 25 and 34 years (30.3%) and between 35 and 44 years (34.8%). A significant majority (82.0%) had earned a bachelor's degree. About 42.7% indicated that they were employed in private companies. Consistent with higher education levels and current employment, the vast majority (95.6%) of respondents earned above the national minimum wage: 23.6% between 210€ and 630€; 22.5% between 631€ and 1050€; 16.9% between 1051€ and 1470€; and 15.7% above 1470€. These data suggest that the majority of respondents belong to the middle and lower middle class. Almost all (97.8%) of the respondents reported living in the state of São Paulo; the vast majority (91.0%) indicated not living in the city of Guarujá. Of these, 41.6% lived at a distance of more than 40 km from the city.

A large proportion (93.3%) of respondents traveled by car to participate in the race. The majority of these (88.8%) traveled with companions (3.2 on average), mostly (66.7%) with only one other person, often a family member or members (57.0%), friend(s) (29.1%) or team/coach (13.9%). More than two-thirds (67.4%) of the respondents stayed overnight in the city during the event (1.8 nights in average), mostly at a friend's or relative's house (50.0%), at a hotel/motel (28.3%), or a B&B (8.3%).

Survey results found that respondents were very active participants in road races; in 2015, they had participated in 13 races on average; and almost all (87.6%) stated that they had participated in previous editions of this event. The large majority (88.6%) of respondents reported that participation in the race was the main reason to travel to Guarujá; other tourist attractions (37.1%) and proximity to home (28.1%) were the other two major reasons that motivated participants to run this particular race.

Respondents also indicated that the motivation to participate in the race was, in order of importance: to give support or accompany family or friends (mean score of 6.21; in a seven-point scale where 1 corresponds to not important at all and 7 corresponds to totally important); to gain physical exercise (mean score of 6.19); and to compete (mean score of 6.04). On the other hand, the reported motivation to stay healthy (mean score of 3.84) and the novelty of the experience (mean score of 4.28) were the less important to respondents.

The average amount of money each respondent reported having spent in the city during the event was around 155€; the most important expenditure item was associated with travel to the city (average of 62€), followed by food (average of 43€) and accommodations (average of 27€).

Regarding the perceived environmental impact of the sport tourism event, the majority (60.0%) of respondents stated that the organizers of the event made efforts to foster sustainability and took environmental preservation measures as a part of that effort.

In terms of the perceived socio-cultural impact of this race: the majority (56.2%) of the respondents participated in other leisure activities within the city of Guarujá. Over half (51.7%) had gone out for lunch and/or dinner at local restaurants, while some (27.0%) went shopping, among other activities (e.g., participate in cultural activities, visit friends and family, and attend other sporting events).

On average, respondents were mildly satisfied with the general organization of the event (mean score of 4.18 on a seven-point likert-type scale where 1 corresponds to totally unsatisfied; 4 corresponds to neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and 7 corresponds to totally satisfied). In addition, a significant majority (77.9%) of the respondents enjoyed the city and reported that they would return for touristic purposes. The vast majority (95.5%) stated that they would return to the city to participate in other sport tourism events, and specifically to participate in this particular event in the future (83.1%).

### *The Residents of Guarujá*

To collect the residents' perception of the 21 k Guarujá 2016 small scale sport tourism event, this case study conducted a face-to-face survey to a sample of 59 inhabitants. The majority (61%) of the respondents were female; and almost half (45.8%) were less than 25 years old. Regarding self-reported level of education, 35.6% of the respondents indicated that they had received a basic education or less; 32.2% had earned a high school diploma, and 32.2% had obtained a higher education degree. Nearly half (47.5%) reported that they were employed in private companies. And over half (52.5%) of the respondents reported to have a monthly income between 210€ and 630€; 27.1% declared to receive the minimum wage; only 3.4% declared not earning a monthly income.

All of the residents interviewed had knowledge of the event. The majority (72.9%) reported to have participated in the race as an athlete; 16.9% of the

respondents reported to have participated in the event as spectators; 6.8% indicated that they participated in the organization of the event; only 3.4% of those interviewed said that they had not participated in the event.

In general, the perception of the residents interviewed for this case study was that the event had a positive impact on the city. The most valued items (classified on a likert-type scale, where 1 is strongly disagree, 4 is neither agree nor disagree, and 7 is completely agree) were the improvement of the cultural offer during the event (mean score of 6.76), the development of environmental protection initiatives (mean score of 6.51), and an increase in the sense of pride of the inhabitants for the city (mean score of 6.14). On the other hand, the less valued items were the increase of demand for the city's touristic attractions (mean score of 4.03); the building of infrastructures and transportations (mean score of 4.03); job opportunities created as a result of the event (mean score of 4.06); and an increase in the quality of life of residents (mean score of 4.07).

The residents' perception of potential negative economic, environmental, and social impacts of the event was classified with mean scores above 4 points on a likert-type scale (where 1 is strongly disagree, 4 is neither agree nor disagree, and 7 is completely agree). As such, the data demonstrated that residents felt that these negative impacts were not significant. These included economic waste (mean score of 3.73); inconvenience in the use of streets and public spaces (mean score of 3.73); pollution (mean score of 3.66); degradation of the landscape (mean score of 3.64); rising prices and cost of living (mean score of 3.61); deviant behavior such as crime and vandalism (mean score of 3.59).

However, the vast majority of residents reported that the event *did not contribute to*: improving the basic infrastructure of the city, such as roads or access networks (84.5%), increasing the availability of parking lots in the vicinity (94.8%); or increasing the public transport (94.8%). Additionally, the majority of those interviewed stated that the event: did not help to revitalize the local customs and cultural heritage, or to preserve and rehabilitate monuments, buildings, and historical sites (81.0%).

On the other hand, the majority of residents' agreed that the event did helped to raise awareness of the area's image (94.8%); gave the residents the opportunity to attend a major event (98.3%); increased the residents' opportunities to meet new people (98.3%); and contributed to increase the number of tourists who visit the city out of season (84.5%).

### ***The Organizer and the Secretariat of Tourism of Guarujá***

When conducting interviews with the organizer of the event and the representative of the Secretariat of Tourism of Guarujá, the objective was to obtain their respective visions and objectives for the 21 k Guarujá event. In particular, these interviews sought to better understand the interaction and cooperation between organizers and

local authorities, as well as learn about how they perceived the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts of the event on the city.

As demonstrated within these interviews, there was limited to no interaction and cooperation between the organizer and local authorities. The event was carried out solely by the organizer's efforts, who sought sponsors (three companies) to provide goods and services for publicity but no financial payment. There was no engagement by the local authorities (Municipality and Secretariat of Tourism), financial or otherwise; in fact, the organizer had to pay a fee to use the public space, required for the sport tourism event. Additionally, local authorities did not develop any initiatives to promote the local destination during the event. The private organizer of the event requested that the Secretariat of Tourism to publicize the event through the Secretariat's communication mechanisms. However, this did not occur; as such, the organizer was forced to rely on local companies to help publicize the event and the community.

The representative of the Secretariat of Tourism was unaware of key aspects related to the event, such as whether there had previous editions of the event, the scope and objective of the race, the number and type of sponsors, the number of participants, etc. The representative of the Secretariat of Tourism informed the researchers that this event was not part of the annual calendar of the city and that there was no sports-specific calendar for the city. The representative of the Secretariat of Tourism was also unaware of the relationship between the organizers and local merchants, especially restaurants.

In the second half of the interview, we focused on better understanding how the organizing body and the Secretariat of Tourism perceived the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts of this event. In general, small scale sport tourism events have fewer environmental impacts because they do not require major alterations of the city's infrastructure. Our data found that there was no environmental plan or strategy articulated by either the organizer or the local authorities. The only indication of concern for the environment that was noted was the attention paid to cleaning public roads after the end of the race. The organizer's employees collected all garbage and disposables that were discarded during the course, as well as in the race-exposition area. The organizer was unaware of the use of green or ecolabels to ensure sustainability efforts are adopted for sporting events. The Secretary of Tourism was aware of these labels and recognized their importance for sustainability purposes, but none were implemented in the municipality or for this event.

In economic terms, the money needed to organize the event came entirely from race registration fees. There was no financial collaboration between the event organizer and the local government or any other local companies. The only form of support provided to the organizer was sponsorship from three companies, offering their products of water, fruit, and isotonic kits, which were awarded to race winners. The organizer reported earning a profit per event averaging (10%) of the value of the total event revenue. The total cost of organizing the event was R\$ 56,000,00. However, the event organizer stated that in some events they actually lost money. It appears that the primary motivations of the event organizer are their passion for



sports and the need to motivate the population to have a better quality of life. Refreshingly, the motivation does not seem to be in generating revenue or profit.

The representative of the Secretariat of Tourism was not aware of the potential-multiplier effect that a sports tourism event can have on a host destination. He acknowledged that there was no economic data collected or measured relative previous sporting events on the part of the municipality. As such, there appears to be no existing tool used by the city to calculate the economic return of the events that take place during the year within this municipality.

Both entities recognize the benefit that a sporting event can bring to the city, both for residents and for the image and identity of the city as an attractive tourist destination. However, there is no marketing strategy to promote the image of the city, relating to the sporting events presented. The organizer did take the initiative and invite local communication companies to participate in, and promote, the event and the city.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Tourism in general and sport tourism in particular are growing in Brasil. This growth is due, in part, to the organization of major sporting events in the last decade, such as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games. This growth is also due to the sheer size, diversification, and quality of the country's vast natural resources. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Brazilian government prepared measures to improve the quality of tourism, with the goal of increasing the number of both domestic and international tourists (Ministério do Turismo, 2018). With this in mind, the Federal Government also promoted sustainable tourism measures to insure best practices (Ministério do Turismo, 2016).

The organization of small scale sport tourism events, such as road races/half marathons, is increasing worldwide and Brasil is no exception (SEBRAE, 2018). This growth also exposed some of the positive and negative impacts associated with hosting these events. In this regard, this study aimed to analyze one small scale sports tourism event and examine the environmental, economic, and social impacts that occurred as a result of hosting this event. More specifically, we wanted to understand the perceptions and behaviors of key stakeholders, such as the participants, the event organizers, local authorities/government, and also the residents. Therefore, the present research provides an empirical study that seeks to better understand the potential sustainability of these events, attempting to recognize small scale sport tourism events as a possible tool for the development and maintenance of a host destination. For this, we developed a case study of the 21 K Guarujá 2016 that was held in the city of Guarujá, Brasil.

The results of this study allow us to determine the socio-demographic profile of the participants, which are mainly male, with an average age of 40.6 years old, married, well educated, employed, with an annual income above the national average. This profile seems consistent with in most of the studies focused on small scale

sport tourism events (Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012), and specifically in running events (Anderson, 2019).

Although girls and women are participating in increasing numbers, there remains greater male participation in sport tourism events and activities as evidenced by the results of this study. In regard to the age of the participants, the results of this and other studies have found that middle age runners (nearly two-thirds >35 years and one-third >45 years) continue to participate in sport tourism activities, such as these type of running events and activities. However, as this study found, in support of the existing literature, higher education and income levels remain strong predictors for sport tourism participation.

Of the total sample, the vast majority of the participants were residents of the state of São Paulo but did not live in the city of Guarujá. These participants mostly traveled to and from the event by car. This form of transportation accounts for some of the reported expenses, such as tolls, fuel, and parking during the trip. Participants travelling by car likely stopped for food or meals along the road. All of these expenses contributed economically to the region and/or the destination city. However, this positive economic impact must be counterbalanced with the negative environmental impact of car travel and the corresponding ecological footprint created by event participants (Collins, Munday, & Roberts, 2012).

Perhaps because of the natural resources and beauty of Guarujá, one of the most important seaside resorts of the State of São Paulo, “tourist attraction” was reported as the primary motivation for participants who chose to run this particular event. As noted by Saayman and Saymann (2012), the more activities a host destination has to offer sport tourists beyond the event itself, the better the chance of creating demand for the event. Another important motivation for participation in this race, according to respondents, was to support family and/or friends. This finding has been reported in other studies (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2005; Duglio & Beltramo, 2017), where participants of small scale sport tourism events often travel accompanied by family and friends.

Participants of the 21 K Guarujá running race were generally satisfied with the quality of organization of the event. This overall satisfaction may be because the vast majority of respondents had participated in previous editions of the running event. They also expressed their intention to return to participate in future editions of the 21 K Guarujá. This is what Okayasu, Nogawa, Casper and Morais (2016) refer to as event loyalty, whereby a positive affective relationship is purportedly created if participants demonstrate the desire to return and participate year after year at the same event. Besides the satisfaction with the event itself, another important finding is that the vast majority of participants wanted to return to the destination to participate in other sport tourism events or activities. Finally, the majority of respondents were attracted to the host destination and would return to the city only for tourism, as has been described by Gibson (1998).

Sport tourism is one of the most effective means of developing new activities that favor sustainable development (Gray, 1982). To do so, is important to understand the three dimensions of sustainability. From an economic perspective, local actors are critical to sustainable development. These actors must be included in the

planning and implementation of an event, particularly given the lack of governmental resources. All stakeholders must unite around a common goal of bringing income to the city (Drakakis & Papadaskalopoulos, 2014). In this approach, registration fees for the running event and/or private sponsorships are the most common ways of achieving this goal of income generation. In this particular case study, the revenue was primarily obtained through participants' registration fees. But, in analyzing the participants spending during the event, there is also the positive economic impact on the city and region based on the purchase of food and accommodations. This finding supports other studies (Duglio & Beltramo, 2017), which report that spending is primarily focused on accommodations and food.

Most participants reported that organizers of the 21 K Guarujá running race were concerned with the environmental impacts of the event and actively sought to mitigate those impacts. Concerning the residents' perception, most of the respondents perceived that the event caused limited negative environmental impacts. As previously stated, the major negative environmental impact was caused by participants traveling by car to and from the event and the residual carbon footprint created as a result.

From the socio-cultural perspective, analysis of the results determined that residents felt very positive about the outcomes of the event and reported few negative impacts related to hosting the race. These findings lead us to infer that small scale sports tourism events need not bring discomfort or displacement to the local community, supporting what Gibson et al. (2012) have argued, that these events can be destination friendly.

Results collected through questionnaire make clear the importance of this type of event to promote and improve the image of the host destination. However, when we analyze the involvement of local government in the promotion of this particular event, we did not find such positive results. In this study, it was evident that there was no synergy between private organizer and companies and local authorities.

In this sense, we argue that there must be a concerted effort made between those who organize such events and the local or regional tourism agencies or boards. This allows for a more strategic promotion of the city and not solely the event. This case study concluded that this effort was not made between the organizing body of the event and the Secretary of Tourism. This is a striking finding, particularly since this event was in its third edition, with an increasing number of participants over past years. The event is not listed as part of the official tourism portfolio and calendar of the city. This seems like a lost opportunity for the city, as the local government was not able to leverage the event to market and/or create other potential tourist attractions during these days.

Based on the study by Drakakis and Papadaskalopoulos (2014), we have been able to reflect on the importance of the key stakeholders for the development of the destination. When there is no synergy between public and private, it is extremely important to create a network that develops all activity. For example, the organizer clearly described a partnership with other private companies for the event. This

partnership took place through the provision and sponsorship of goods and services, whereby the partner companies offered their products and services in the Expo Race in exchange for the publicity connected to the event.

An important element of sustainable development is the relationship of the stakeholders to the promotion, implementation, and marketing of the destination. For Carvalho (2009), this dimension of interaction can be considered as the fourth strand of sustainability, one that is institutional in nature. We find here what Rattner (1999) says, that sustainable development should not be based on market strength but rather on local cooperation for global development.

The organizer of the event made clear that the partner companies should be based in the city. As such, these stakeholders had a vested interest in the development of the city such that the local community would benefit. Even local stakeholders who did not cooperate with the organization or promotion of the event may well receive benefits from the event. For example, the restaurant sector was a beneficiary of this small scale sport tourism event, as dining out was the second largest expense reported by study participants. This result supports the study conducted by Savage, Nix, Whitehead and Blair (1991), when they classified several types of stakeholders important for local development, even when they are not directly involved in the particular event.

We therefore conclude that small scale sports tourism is positive for host cities. These events bring visibility and loyalty to a given destination, and they provide an opportunity for the interaction and cooperation between local actors. It is also important to emphasize the need for partnerships between public and private actors to best ensure the success of the event and to maximize the sustainable development for the host destination. This case study demonstrated a lack of synergy between the public and private spheres in the creation and management of the event.

This study has sought to demonstrate the need to more fully examine small scale sports tourism events as a unique research area, as it clearly involves the interaction between activity, people and place, as defined by Weed and Bull (2004). Notably, this study has provided empirical evidence to support the proposition that small scale sport tourism has the potential to attract tourists to cities where these events are held. We conclude from the results of this case study that these events offer a valuable tool for the sustainable development of tourism at the local and regional levels. This tool has the capacity to create loyalty to a particular destination, as well as to reduce the negative effect of seasonality. Perhaps, most importantly, these events do not require massive infusions of capital, relying instead on an existing infrastructure. In order to maximize the benefits, both direct and indirect, to the largest percentage of the local community, it is critical to build synergies and partnerships among key stakeholders, public, and private alike. These partnerships offer the greatest potential for lasting effect, particularly as these synergies strive to foster local sustainable development.

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# Czech Republic: Sport Tourism Development. Between Tradition and New Trends



Irena Slepíčková and Pavel Slepíčka

**Abstract** Sport tourism within the Czech Republic has deep roots and a relatively long tradition. There are no special statistical data on sport tourism but the tourism represents important part of Czech economy with almost 3% contribution to GDP. Sport and tourism are included separately in important stat documents and legislation. Nevertheless, official documents deal with topics important for sustainability of sport and tourism. After 1990, new opportunities for private enterprise led to the emergence of business in sport and tourism. It has helped a lot to develop sport tourism and give offer to many new participants. The cycling and running belong to most popular sport tourism activities. The Mattoni ½ Marathon in Ústí nad Labem was analysed as an example of sport tourism and route races development. The run is highly professionalised, organised by for-profit agency and supported by municipal and regional authorities. This race attracts mainly participants with a higher socio-economic status in the productive age of 30–50 years. The education level and the reasons for taking part in the race indicate that most respondents consciously reflect on their own life. This run with fast-growing popularity is more attended by non-resident than local people.

**Keywords** Commercialisation of Sport Tourism · Half Marathon · SES of Road Races Runners

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## Introduction

Sport tourism within the Czech Republic has deep roots and a relatively long tradition as well, as illustrated by the activities carried out by the Czech Tourist Club (ČKT) founded in 1888 as a volunteer sports association serving primarily the Czech-speaking population of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The end of the nineteenth century produced a plethora of associations of all types, reflecting the political, social and economic changes taking place in the ethnically rich Austria-Hungary (Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles and other nations). Physical exercise and later sports also became one of the areas where Czechs could differentiate themselves from Germans living in Czech lands. Tourist organisations, both Czech and German, organised activities for their members, built networks of chalets that offered modest accommodation for their members and developed a network of marked walking paths. The system of tourist paths in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (which were part of a single country – Czechoslovakia – from 1918 until 1992) is among the best in the world (it currently includes versions for walking, skiing, biking and horse riding). This boom in tourism and sport was also possible thanks to a good economic situation where as much as 60–90% (depending on industry) of the total industrial capacity of the Habsburg Empire (Austria-Hungary) was situated in what is now the Czech Republic. While German businesses initially dominated the economy, Czech entrepreneurs gradually came to the forth and benefited from a growing network of roads, main and local railway lines.

Another important driver of tourism in the Czech Republic was scouting. The first “wild scouts” – the first camping enthusiasts – began appearing in the valleys along the Vltava, Berounka and Sázava rivers close to Prague even before the First World War. They were typically boys from modest families living in tenement houses in big cities “who left the city behind on Saturday afternoon to spend the weekend in the romantic setting of practically untouched nature” (Waic & Kössl, 1992, 9). Tramping gradually reached other corners of the country including the beautiful area of Český ráj in East Bohemia, and also South Moravia. Like scouting, the “tramping” fashion was inspired by the American Wild West tradition, and to a certain extent, the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) but the two movements had little else in common. Tramps refused to organise and valued freedom and liberty. The tramping phenomenon survived in the Czech environment for many decades, and for many of its, aficionados became a true lifestyle. Their love of wondering the country side both on foot in canoes has left lasting marks in their favourite destination. First, they would camp in tents but eventually many started to build simple huts, often concentrated in the same areas, which became known as tramp settlements. In addition to camping, playing the guitar and singing “tramp” songs by the campfire, the tramp lifestyle eventually includes a variety of sports, especially walking, volleyball, canoeing and box. Tramps would organise settlement competitions that attracted even “non-tramps.” To a certain extent, tramping survives to this day including traditional sports events (football tennis, volleyball).



With growing affluence and better transport services, many tramp huts were turned into more comfortable lodges, some of which were modernised to serve as second or even primary residences over the past few decades. Second homes are a traditional feature of the Czech culture, stemming partly from the tramping tradition and partly from the habit of bourgeois populations to spend summer vacations in rented apartments in the countryside after WWI. Later, this phenomenon was also driven by the limited international travel opportunities during the socialist era as well as more general global trends and a desire to run away from city life (Vágner & Fialová, 2011). In conclusion, individual domestic tourism, often including sports activities, has more than a 100-year-old tradition in the Czech Republic, mostly in rural areas. It was originally driven by improvements in transport infrastructure and today is strongly tied to private car ownership.

This brief introduction shows that there is a strong tradition of travel, sport and travel for sport in the Czech Republic, which has survived even at times when it was very difficult for Czechs to visit “the West.” After WWII, Czechoslovakia became part of the socialist block with limited contacts with capitalist countries. However, some of the tourism and sport tourism trends that started to appear west of the former Czechoslovakia’s borders in the 1970s and 1980s soon after appeared in Czech country and even flourished to the extent possible given the sociopolitical and economic conditions of the time. As an example, we may look at Sportturist, a specialist travel agency founded in 1970 (it existed until 1999 when it was sold) by the volunteer sports organisation Československý svaz tělesné výchovy (Czechoslovak Sports Association) (Lidovky.cz, 2010). The agency organised sport-focused trips both abroad, especially to the former Yugoslavia, and domestically. It offered aerobics, water ski activities, etc. Travel, in general and for sport, experienced a veritable boom after 1990 when the “exit permits” for travel to the West were abolished, visa-free agreements were signed with many countries, and market economy was introduced, opening up opportunities for tourism and travel business.

## **Current Situation in Tourism and Sport Tourism in the Czech Republic**

### ***Tourism – Important Part of Czech Economy***

Here, we shall focus on those forms of sport tourism that have a traditional place in the Czech Republic and that, in our opinion, are increasingly popular. As a concise, systematic literature on this topic is not available, we will work based on relevant sources and official documents developed by leading tourism and sport tourism organisations as well as our personal experience and knowledge.

The first important fact that must be mentioned is the position that tourism holds within the Czech economy. According to official data of the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), tourism’s contribution to GDP has been a fraction under 3% in recent years

(2007–2016). The latest available final annual data are for 2016 when tourism contributed 2.8% to GDP, i.e. CZK 139 bln or approx. EUR 5.4 bln. The industry employed 231,000 people, which represents nearly 4.4% of the total employment rate of the Czech Republic, including 190,000 employees and 41,000 self-employed workers (Lejsek, 2018).

As tourism satellite account by industry says, sporting and recreational services represent 11.4% of characteristic products and the share of these services on the total account has been more or less constant since 2012. According to the CZSO (Český statistický úřad, 2019), this account employs 2746 people, or 1.2% of all people working in tourism. However, we must keep in mind that users of sporting and recreational services may use services and products of other tourism accounts as well such as transport, accommodation, etc.

It is, therefore, clear that sport- and recreation-focused tourism has found a stable position in Czech society both as the reason why people travel and as an important part of the national economy. However, the methodology used by the CSZO to monitor tourism data does not use the term “sport tourism.” A number of expert publications (e.g. De Knop, 1990; Hinch & Higham, 2004; Pigeassou, 2007; Weed, 2006; Melo & Sobry, 2017) tried to define sport tourism. All of them cite sport, either active or passive, as the main characteristic of sport tourism and the main reason for travelling out of one’s place of residence, typically spending at least one night in the destination. However, improved travel infrastructure means that people may travel for sport even without an overnight stay (e.g. to participate in a public running event, to attend a team’s football match abroad). At these occasions, people often use sports services, many basic services (accommodation, catering and travel) as well as services in other industries such as culture.

The importance of sport tourism can also be illustrated by the interest in the industry shown by public authorities on the central, regional and municipal level. In the Czech Republic, tourism is the responsibility of the Ministry of Regional Development, which provides methodologies and coordination for tourism actors. The Ministry’s main tool is the medium-term strategic document “State tourism policy concept of the Czech Republic for 2014–2020” (Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj, 2013). The Ministry directly controls several organisations including CzechTourism, whose task is to present the Czech Republic as an interesting destination internationally and domestically.

The country’s attractiveness can be illustrated by the fact that the Czech Republic boasts 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. All of them are in the cultural category. Mainly spa (Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně and Františkovy Lázně) and castles and chateaux (Karlštejn Castle, Český Krumlov and the Lednice–Valtice area) from different historical eras attract visitors.

The capital city of Prague has always been the most visited location welcoming 7.9 million tourists a year, including 6.7 million foreigners and 1.2 million Czech tourists (Prague City Tourism, 2019). Prague is attractive mainly because of its historical centre, culture and social life. However, the Czech Republic offers much more than culture and history to its local and international visitors, including many beautiful nature areas far from bustling cities. Tourism potential of each region is

included in its Strategic Territorial Development Plan. These plans were developed based on the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2014–2020 (Ministerstvo pro místní rozvoj, 2013).

The content analysis of “Strategies of development in period 2014–2020” of 13 Czech regions (Slepičková & Slepička, 2018), i.e. all regions excluding the city of Prague showed that only one strategic document – that of the region of Liberec – used the term sport tourism. However, this does not mean that they would ignore sport tourism completely. The documents treat sport and tourism separately. In terms of links between sport and tourism, 8 out of the 13 regions mentioned opportunities for tourism as well as “nature” and other natural heritage (forests, water). As for specific sports activities, 11 regions are aware of the potential contribution of cycling to tourism and include the construction of cycle paths in their strategic plans (also to improve cycling possibilities for local inhabitants). Many regions also have good conditions for hiking, hippo tourism, golf, nature trails and, in regions bordering on our neighbouring countries to the north and southwest, for cross and downhill skiing.

More evidence of the importance of sport for the development of tourism in the Czech Republic comes from the activities of the Czech Tourism Agency. Palatková, Tittelbachová, and Valská (2012) analysed tourism marketing targeting foreign visitors and found potential in several markets (Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Germany). These are the countries surrounding the Czech Republic, and there have been busy cross-border relationships. Many Poles and Germans (especially from former East Germany) visit Czech mountains. However, the authors note that, in strategic terms, the Czech Republic might not be a sustainable destination in the long run due to weather uncertainty where sunshine is not guaranteed for hiking in summer and snow for skiing in winter. The authors also mentioned motorsport and tourism, which has been a stable combination in tourism and a worldwide trend. They mention motorsport events of international importance and partnerships with major sport organisations. This study also looked at international sport events. In terms of economic results, the highest potential is seen in sports such as ice hockey, football, motorsport,<sup>1</sup> golf and tennis. These sports are popular in countries where the Czech Republic is a popular destination and where the population has a relatively higher purchasing power. The most important markets in this respect are Germany and other neighbouring countries as well as Western Europe and the USA.

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<sup>1</sup>The Czech Republic Grand Prix in Brno is a motorcycling event for motorcycles of various categories that have been held since 1950. For many years, it has been one of the biggest and most visited sports events in the Czech Republic, attracting approx. 200,000 motorcycle enthusiasts. It is a part of World Grand Prix series (MotoGP) (Autodrom Brno, 2019).

## *Popularity of Sport Tourism*

As discussed above, sport tourism has flourished in the Czech Republic since the 1990s both due to the introduction of a market economy and global trends in travel. New opportunities for private enterprise led to the emergence of small and large business in sport and tourism. This includes travel agencies but, most importantly, sports equipment retailers, accommodation, catering and sports services. After a huge boom in the 1990s when the travel market counted up to 2000 travel offices, there are currently some 800 travel offices (with bankruptcy insurance) and approx. 1000 travel agencies active in the Czech market. However, Czechs prefer individual travel. According to a CZSO study (Kovářová, 2019), a total of 12.9 million people above 15 years of age took long private trips (four or more nights) and 20.3 million people took short trips (three nights or less) in 2018. Domestic destinations were more popular – 7.8 million long trips and 18.5 million short trips (including weekend stays in lodges and cottages). Unfortunately, the study did not specify the purpose of the trip – i.e. it is not clear whether sport was the main reason for some of the overnight trips. In addition to individual tourism, Czechs may use the services of travel agencies (CK), many of which offer specific sport trips. An example of a specialised agency is CK Adventura (founded in 1990 and offering active vacations all over the world). Other major travel agencies are CK Tour Sport and Czech Sport Travel (trips to sport events and nostalgia tourism) as well as many big and small agencies offering ski and cycling vacations in attractive locations abroad and in the Czech Republic.

Travel agencies offers as well as many Czech and European expert publications show that one of the most popular forms of sport tourism, especially in the Czech Republic, is cycling. According to Eurostat (2018), 35.5% of the Czech population over 15 years of age is practising cycling. This trend is supported by the construction of cycle paths, suitable natural and urban locations and a private sector with retail sale of sport equipment and renting and leasing of recreational and sport goods (Slepíčková et al., 2017). Cycling has become part of any people's summer vacations. The most attractive destinations include South Bohemia with beautiful nature, many ponds and cycle paths at different levels of difficulty. In the 1990s, cycling options were introduced by businesses in mountainous regions in an effort to attract customers for accommodation and catering services originally used only in winter for skiing.

Hiking, naturally, has a strong tradition in the Czech Republic both as an individual activity and as an activity organised through the Czech Tourist Club. In terms of time requirements, there are basically two basic forms of hiking. First, there are one-day trips often organised by particular units of the Czech Tourist Club. Participants, typically senior citizens, use bus and train services (with attractive fare reductions) to visit interesting destinations where they hike for 5–20 km or even more and then return home in the evening. The typical destinations for longer hiking trips are Czech mountain ranges. The first place in terms of popularity for summer and winter stays definitely goes to Krkonoše (North Bohemia bordering on Germany

and Poland). A portion of the mountain range is a protected nature reserve. In 2018, the Krkonoše National Park and its protected area were visited by 3,786,575 people who spent a total of 11,867,019 person-days there, i.e. 4.8% more than in 2017<sup>2</sup> (Správa KRNAP, 2019). Most visitors were Czech tourists. The second most visited mountain destination is Šumava at the south of Bohemia. To satisfy the increasingly varied demands of visitors, local authorities and businesses set up “attractions” (small viewing towers, treetop paths, etc.) and offer basic tourist services.

Another reason for visiting mountains, other than summer and winter hiking, is skiing. Skiing opportunities as well as hiking and cycling can be found in other mountain ranges, too (Beskydy, Jeseníky, Jizerské, Lužické, etc.). It is safe to say that Czechs are avid skiers. It has been said that, per capita, they rival Nordic countries. There are approx. 400 ski resorts throughout the Czech Republic (downhill and cross-country, including small slopes outside of main mountain ranges). The total length of slopes is some 700 km, and each year, people spend some 9,000,000 ski days there. 35% of skiers come from abroad (Germans, Dutch) (Holub, 2017). Sport services naturally follow the growing trend and offer ski schools, equipment hire and repair.

Another very popular sport involves Czech rivers and summer months. Water tourism is constantly gaining in popularity, specially canoeing, kayaking and rafting on rivers, which have their roots in the early days of “tramping.” The most popular rivers include Vltava (the longest Czech river), Sázava, Ohře, Otava and Lužnice. The needs of water tourists are met primarily by small businesses that offer boat hire and transport, camps and accommodation. However, water tourism has been threatened by low water levels (several very dry last years). Another problem is “overpopulation” of rivers and environmental risks that have been highlighted in several regional Development Strategies. Water is involved in another popular Czech pastime – fishing which may be loosely considered part of sport tourism. 250,000 people have fishing licences (Český rybářský svaz, 2019). Speaking about sport tourism development, we must note that self-employment is a highly popular form of business in the Czech Republic. Individual entrepreneurs are able to relatively quickly respond to changing demand, including changes in sport tourism.

Sport events are a special form of sport tourism. The biggest global trend in mass public sport events with competitions for elite athletes concerns running. Running is no longer a competitive athletic discipline tied to traditional sports facilities and clubs. In the 1960s and 1970s, various sports and physical activities started to be promoted and presented to the public as a means to prevent civilisation diseases. Running gained popularity as an easy physical activity that did not require special equipment or skills (nowadays, running courses are being organised to teach the basic running skills). Thanks to K. H. Cooper’s research, running or jogging has been used as an aerobic activity suitable to improve the health of “modern” people. This has been helped by an “informalisation” process where people became less and less embarrassed to engage in sports in public outside of sports clubs. This (r)

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<sup>2</sup>Figures based on mobile operators’ “big data” (Správa KRNAP, 2019).

evolution has been greatly beneficial for running and launched the first wave of running longer running events and, most importantly, marathons (Scheerder, Breedveld, & Borgers, 2015).

The global running boom reached former Czechoslovakia, too, and amateur running was popularised as part of physical training programmes for the general public as well as a growing number of open running events attended by members of sport clubs and amateur runners alike. The Czech Republic has become one of the world's running superpowers in terms of mass events. In Prague, the first marathon was held in 1963. Brochures for amateur runners provided advice on individual training with the aim of increasing physical fitness and improving health. According to the above authors, the second wave of the running boom came to the Czechia at the turn of the millennium and continues until today. The running business is highly developed, offering sports equipment and supporting running events in the form of competitions, training and advice. Running's "emancipation" from the space of amateur sport clubs and the for-profit sector's involvement in the production of goods and services for runners thus represent a positive example of sport privatisation and professionalisation where this trend has helped to spread physical activity throughout the population.

With the current boom in running, however, comes the organisation of numerous races by various organisations, many of which have found success in the organisation of sport and running events for the general public as well as cross-country skiing events and other sports. Finding precise figures on the number of events organised each year is difficult. For example, according to the [www.behej.com](http://www.behej.com) website (běhej.com, 2018), there were 900 races of various types (road, cross, running with dogs, relay, etc.) and lengths (from 3 to 111 km) held within 100 km of the capital city of Prague in 2018 alone, including 75 half marathons and marathons.

### *Sport Tourism and Sustainable Development*

Issues of sustainable development have gained increasing public attention due to climate and population changes, loss of arable land and growing social inequalities. The Czech Republic is following up on the U.N.'s 17 Goal of Sustainable Development adopted in 2015. The government prepared its Strategic Framework 2030 (Rada vlády pro udržitelný rozvoj, 2017), which is administratively and technically supported by the Ministry of the Environment. Sustainable development is based on the combination of three pillars – social, environmental and economic – and is aimed at maintaining the quality of life not only for the present but for future generations, too. Sport or sport tourism is not specifically mentioned in this document. Nevertheless, the main framework for sport tourism – individual recreation and sport as well as organised sport events – is set in the Act on Nature and Countryside Protection (Česká republika, 1992) and other related legislation (Water Act, Waste Treatment Act, etc.). Rules and principles for each location are specified in more detail in "Protected Landscape Areas Plans" and other documents (Agentura

ochrany přírody, 2019). Recreation and sport in these areas are monitored by tourism coordinators as part of regional development (defined differently in different regions). The coordinators also co-operate with the Nature Conservation Agency (under the Ministry of the Environment) and the Czech Tourism Agency. This shows that there are basic rules in place and relevant institutions comment on and participate in activities related to sport tourism.

The fact that these activities have become necessary to sustainable development may be illustrated on several cases where sport and sport events had to be controlled or regulated. With growing disposable income in the population, improving transport infrastructure, technologies and business in sport and sport services, recreation and sport tourism has become increasingly accessible to the general public. This means that huge numbers are participating in sport tourism activities, even numbers that may at times jeopardise the environment in which the activities take place. In their analysis of strategic development plans, two regions mentioned the problem of overpopulation and noise generated by sport and tourism. Some natural areas, including Adršpašské skály (sandstone rocks) at the Czech-Polish border, see excessive tourist numbers (especially from Poland) on par with world-famous towns with UNESCO heritage sites such as Český Krumlov. This leads to negative consequences for the environment and there have been calls for a regulation on the number of visitors. There has also been damage to sandstone rock climbing locations in the Czech Republic. For example, the Český ráj location, known for its beautiful rocks and cliffs, now attracts lay climbers who lack any training that would teach them to respect nature.

In the case of sport and recreation activities, we must mention the issue of overpopulation of some Czech rivers. Vltava is especially popular among water tourists. Many services have sprung up around this type of sport tourism including boat rental, repair and transport, camping, accommodation, catering and restaurants. What was originally a pastime for a handful of people who enjoyed the quiet and calm of rivers, clean nature and enjoyment of their own physical abilities has now become a form of mass, consumer entertainment. In 2017, 250,000 went boating on the Vltava river. Due to the seasonality of this form of tourism – from May to September – as many as 10,000 set out from the small town of Vyšší Brod on the busiest days (Snížek, 2019). Unfortunately, many take this as an opportunity to consume alcohol, which has consequences for camp sites and the tourists themselves with several cases of drowning. Czech lawmakers responded to these problems by banning boating while under the influence of alcohol.

Similarly, snow scooters are causing problems in, i.e., Jizerské Mountains and other areas, bringing noise, destroying fauna and flora and causing nuisance for hikers, tourists and skiers who want to enjoy nature. The biggest Czech mountain range (Krkonosé) has also been fighting large visitor numbers, especially during the winter season. Some traditional events have agreed to limit the number of participants. An example can be the “Jizerská 50” cross-country event that was held for the 53rd time in 2019 in memory of Czech mountain climbers who died during an earthquake in Peru. The number of participants has been limited to 6600. Similarly, “Krkonoská 70” – a 70-km team race on the Krkonosé ridges – now has a limit of

70 patrols of 5 skiers. When the race was first organised 64 years ago, teams had 10 members and there were as many as 1000 participants. Plus, there are dozens of organisers.

Speaking about skiing, we must mention the issue of “night time skiing.” On the one hand, there have been efforts to limit the impact of public lighting on the environment as mentioned in the Strategic Framework 2030 document. On the other hand, ski resorts are pressuring public authorities to grant them licences for evening skiing (an example could be the current renovation project in the Ještěd ski resort in North Bohemia). Cross-country skiing events – both of international importance and mass events – are also in fashion now. Unfortunately, they mean “an invasion of heavy machinery and trucks” into the mountains in order to bring snow down to the valleys (in one case as far as the Prague Castle Square) in order to build tracks.

Whenever sports events, small or large, are held, the organisers must get numerous permits from various responsible institutions. They must respect relevant laws and legal regulations concerning, for example, waste treatment, traffic limitations and parking capacities, the right to use public and private spaces, health insurance, etc. Since some events have decades-long traditions, these procedures have been well established and both the organisers and authorities are well versed in all the requirements.

An innovation in the area of organisation of mass sport events, which is closely related to sport tourism, comes in the form of the “Green guidelines how to conduct a sustainable sport event” co-funded by Erasmus + Programme of European Union. As part of this programme, mass sport organisations in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland are reviewing selected events in their countries, share their experience and collaborate on the definition of rules for environmental sustainability of sport events (SFORAE, 2018).

## **Mattoni ½ Marathon in Ústí nad Labem**

### ***Town of Ústí nad Labem***

As already mentioned, the Czech Republic has seen a great running boom. In 2015, there were over 1300 races with 133,000 participants in the Czech Republic (Český atletický svaz, 2015). Marathons and half marathons enjoy a particular popularity and take place either as special events or as part of running series. One of the popular examples is the relatively new event in the town of Ústí nad Labem. The race stands apart to some extent thanks to its location – the city with its recent history and development.

Ústí nad Labem is a medium-size city with 93,000 inhabitants and the seventh biggest town in the Czech Republic. It is situated in the northern part of the country of the River Elbe, less than 20 km from the German border and approx. a 1-hour drive from the capital city of Prague. According to the document “Development



strategy of the city of Ústí nad Labem 2015–2020,” the regional centre and the region of Ústí in general have been through a troubled period of the past 30 years. In the mid-nineteenth century, the region and the city became a prosperous industrial area. However, political and economic changes after 1989 greatly weakened the role of industry in the city, leading to a loss of jobs and a sharp spike in unemployment. Disappearing work opportunities also led to a drop in population numbers. As a result, Ústí nad Labem has been described as the centre of “a structurally disadvantaged region.” Nevertheless, the situation started to improve in 2000, followed by a period of re-industrialisation. The town’s location on main transport routes (road, rail and river) as well as heavy industry remains the main drivers of its development to this date but also represents certain limitations to its further growth. Examples of industry-caused issues include heavy truck traffic causing pollution in the centre of the town as well as a continuing heritage of environmental damage due to heavy industry. A crucial milestone in the town’s recent history was the foundation of the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in 1991, which has attracted an educated population to the city and helps keep it there. Ústí nad Labem also boasts interesting natural features and cultural heritage (MEPCO, s. r. o., & Oddělení strategického rozvoje Magistrátu města Ústí nad Labem, 2014).

As a “structurally disadvantaged region,” the region of Ústí generated approx. 5.7% of the country’s total GDP in 2016. The region has the lowest productivity, calculated as GDP per employee, and the highest and most persistent unemployment rate among all Czech regions. There are many socially excluded areas. In 2016, regional unemployment rate reached 7.8% (compared with the national average of 4.9%). The average gross wage was CZK 24,853 (approx. EUR 950), which is below the national average (CZK 27,589) (Český statistický úřad, 2018). The CZSO does not give figures for the city alone but the situation there is clearly much better than in other parts of the region, especially thanks to the local chemical industry and the fact that Ústí nad Labem, being a region capital, is home to many administrative offices and a university.

The City of Ústí nad Labem holds a number of important traditional sport events including the Boxing Grand Prix (held since 1968), the Grand Prix North Bohemia (karate), the Ballroom Dancing Grand Prix Ústí nad Labem and an International Dance Festival. These events attract both athletes and fans from other parts of the country and from abroad. Despite its short history compared with the above events, the Mattoni ½ Marathon is now one of the main attractions that help raise the town’s profile and serve as its presentation.

### ***Organisation of 6th Annual Mattoni ½ Marathon***

As part of the Road Race project, we studied the 6th annual Mattoni ½ Marathon in Ústí nad Labem, which took place on 17 September 2016. The race was initiated by Carlo Capalbo, an Italian who settled in the Czech Republic in the 1990s. In 1995, Capalbo took charge of Prague Marathon, nowadays known as International Prague

Marathon (PIM)<sup>3</sup> and he founded the eponymous company PIM s.r.o.<sup>4</sup> The Ústí nad Labem half marathon is part of the RunCzech series organised by PIM s.r.o. in partnership with Tempo Team Prague s.r.o., another company in which Capalbo<sup>5</sup> is an executive, partner and investor. These two companies are responsible for organising the running events under the RunCzech brand.

RunCzech organisers work with numerous partners and sponsors who support the running events. There are “titular” partners (Volkswagen, Adidas, Sportissimo, Birell, O2) including Mattoni (mineral water company), whose name appears in the name of the Ústí event. The race also has official partners, official media partners, media partners, partners and institutional partners (including the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport of the Charles University, the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University, the Czech Olympic Committee and the Czech Sport Association). The RunCzech series and the Ústí half marathon were thus supported by more than 80 organisations (Prague International Marathon, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, the Mattoni ½ Marathon has become an important running event. It is the seventh event in the RunCzech running league and has received the Golden Mark of Quality of IAAF. The organiser Tempo Team Prague, s.r.o. has signed a partnership agreement with the City of Ústí nad Labem for 2016–2020. In 2016, the city contributed CZK 600,000 (EUR 23,000) from its budget towards the organisation of the half marathon and provided diverse other services (police, medical service, etc.) (Statutární město Ústí nad Labem, 2016). An original feature of the marathon is a 3-km part of the race that runs through the area of the Spolchemie factory.

Organisers and partner organisations make use of various media and social networks. Online registration and result tables are a matter of course as is information about various aspects of the race. According to organisers, the capacity of the race was 3600 in 2016 and it was reached several weeks before the event. The half marathon can also be run as a relay of two- or four-member teams where each member runs a given portion of the marathon. The event was also attended by elite runners including many African athletes. Before the 2016 event, the men’s record was 1:00:38 and the women’s record was 1:07:17 (PIM, 2016). The race was broadcast live on the Seznam.cz website (in 2017, the same event was broadcast on national TV). The event included a Marathon Music Festival where bands and DJs entertained runners along the route. RunCzech also regularly works with charity organisations, namely, in the case of the Ústí marathon, the Plamínek naděje charity fund. The weekend-long programme also included the “dm family run<sup>6</sup>” (capacity: 2500 runners) and the “Spolchemie Czech handbike cup.” Based on registration data, there were participants of 36 nationalities; 66% men and 34% women; mostly university graduates (58%) and secondary school graduates 34%. There were 645

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<sup>3</sup> Thus popularising the former Prague marathon which took place for the first time in 1963.

<sup>4</sup> s.r.o. company = limited (liability) company (Ltd.)

<sup>5</sup> Capalbo is also the Czech Republic’s representative at the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) where he serves as the president of the road running event committee.

<sup>6</sup> dm – the company Drogerie markt

volunteers working at the event. The main race – the Mattoni ½ Marathon Ústí nad Labem – was launched by the city’s Lady Mayor (who herself participated in the “dm family run”).

## *Participants*

The result table lists the times of 2238 participants but a total of 3577 runners taking part in the race. The organisers kindly provided the researchers with participant e-mail contacts. The runners were asked to fill electronic questionnaires available in a Czech and an English version on a special website.

The questionnaires were filled in the few days immediately after the race. Fully filled questionnaires were returned by 491 participants (2/3 men, 1/3 women), or 22% of those listed in the results table. One third was local residents. Respondents considered themselves to be “locals” if they lived in the city or within 60 km of the city. This is probably due to the fact that many people commute to the city for work and thus considered themselves “locals.” More than 60% of runners travelled over 60 km to attend the Ústí race and half of this group travelled more than 100 km. This is a testimony to the good promotion of the event. Most participants travelled by car (67%), while others travelled by train (22%) and bus (4%). City residents, naturally, came by foot (6%).

Approximately a half of the runners participated in the Ústí event for the first time, which is not surprising given the event’s short history. The race was the main reason for travelling in 96% cases. More men than women also mentioned the quality of the race organisation as a reason to attend (39%, 27% women). Proximity to their place of residence was mentioned by 27% of respondents and the results to a large degree correspond with the distance travelled to the race. Tourist attractions at the place of the event were considered unimportant (95% respondents). However, nearly a third of all respondents also cited other reasons such as social relations. This certainly relates to the fact that 46% of respondents travelled to Ústí with family members and 26% with friends. One fifth came alone and only 2% as part of a sports club.

The socio-demographic profile of respondents corresponded to that provided by the organiser based on information stated in runner registrations – the majority of participants attained higher and highest educational levels (Table 1). Given the

**Table 1** Educational level of participants (%)

	Men	Women
Elementary, vocational school without academic diploma	7.1	5
Secondary with academic diploma	36.3	31.5
University – BA	10.5	20.5
University – Mgr., PhD.	45.1	39.1

average age of respondents, we may assume that most of them have completed their education and were active in the labour market. Most respondents, both men and women, were in the 30–39 and 40–49 age categories. There were relatively few respondents younger than 25 years of age (7.3%). The oldest male participant was 72 years old and the oldest female participant was 71 years old.

Data on education align with data on employment and revenues. Three quarters of participants were salaried employees, 10% businessmen, 5% self-employed and 1.7% unemployed. More than one half were married people (65%) and only 23% were single and 10% were divorced or widowed. Their income was in the higher tiers for the Czech Republic. Less than a fifth of respondents fell to the first 5 deciles with the lowest income; otherwise, all participants had income above the national average and the earnings of a half of the respondents even fell to the top two deciles. For a half of the respondents, the race fee of CZK 850 (EUR 33) was the biggest expense in relation to the race. Many respondents participate in the entire running series of which the Ústí event is part, which means they pay race fees at other events, too. The data show that most respondents (and participants in general) were adults (only 2% were students) with a stable social situation and higher socio-economic status.

It is certainly natural to wonder why people nowadays enjoy running so much and why they participate in mass sport events. Some questions were focused on this topic. In Table 2, most of these motives are shown in order of importance. Majority of them were of higher importance. The only exception was “to visit other places (to learn more about traditions and cultures of others),” where answers tended to be closer to the negative end of the scale.

The results indicate that for most participants, running is a challenge and a fun way to spend their free time. This is especially true for women who are not so much involved in such races as men are. This might be why the results indicate a great effort to test one’s abilities and to try something new for women (totally and very important make up 85%, compared with 77% for men). More rational reasons rank lower, including “to exercise and maintain and/or enhance own physical fitness,”

**Table 2** Motivation of participation (mean)

To challenge my self	6.24
To enjoy	6.00
To exercise	5.93
To relax	5.66
To be healthy	5.65
To compete	5.35
Novelty	4.83
To socialise	4.76
To support other people	4.51
To travel	3.62

Note: Scale from 1 to 7; 1 not at all important, 7 totally important

“relaxation and getting a break from everyday routine” and “health support.” Competition placed only sixth is slightly more important for men (totally and very important make up 55% compared with 49% for women). Many participants wanted to try something new, whether a half marathon in general or this specific race in particular. Women were twice more likely than men to rate this motivation as totally or very important. Options regarding the socialisation aspects of the event focused on interactions with other people (participants, family and friends) and their support were much more important for women.

### *Impact of Half Marathon*

Answers to the above questions already indicate some of the impact on the city and its environment. Thanks to the professional organisation, promotion in the media and support from the city, the Mattoni ½ Marathon has had a positive impact and opens up many opportunities for the future. What attracts participants is mostly the event itself and the route of the race, rather than the city as such. ¾ of respondents stated that they would attend other runs or sport events in the city and as many as 80% intend to participate in the next half marathon. However, nearly 60% of respondents have no intention to return to the city as tourists seeking nature or culture. This corresponds to our finding that only very few respondents took their visit to the city as an opportunity to pursue other activities like culture, museum, amusement park. Most people went out to eat (52%); others went shopping (20%) and visited relatives (18%).

The Ústí marathon is organised by a private company registered in Prague, which means that the city has no tax revenue from the event. On the contrary, as was already mentioned, the city gave a CZK 600,000 subsidy to the event and the region of Ústí nad Labem contributed another CZK 800,000. The total budget of the event is approx. CZK 8.5 million (EUR 327,000) (Maršálková, 2016). The economic effects on the city and local business can be only roughly estimated. The event attracts not only runners but also audiences and participants in other runs held throughout the weekend. Only 16% of our respondents stated that they spent a night in Ústí and only half of those stayed in a hotel (overnight accommodation was among the least important expenditures). Food was, of course, a necessity, too. Judging by the amounts stated by respondents and the total number of participants, we estimate that all participants spent a total of approx. CZK 450,000 on accommodation, over CZK 1000,000 on food and CZK 1000,000 on travel. Since 60% of runners came from distances of more than 60 km, they did not have to buy fuel in the marathon's location. Expenditure on marathon merchandise was minimal. In total, we estimate that runners might have spent some CZK 1,500,000 on accommodation and food. This estimate is in sharp contrast to the figures provided by organisers who claimed that during the event held a year earlier, participants and visitors spent over CZK 21 million (Prague International Marathon, 2016). This figure seems too high to us, although we must take into account the money spent by

people accompanying the runners and members of the organising team as well as the CZK 3 million in race fees (revenue for the company Tempo Team s.r.o.). There are several methods for calculating the economic effects of sport events (Puronaho, 2000) and many of them emphasise the fact that, on the other hand, local residents tend to spend less during such events and that the location tends to lose visitors who might have come to the city but decide not to due to the mass event. Furthermore, the city and the region financially supported the event and the money could have been spent in different ways to benefit local residents. However, the presentation of the city in the media thanks to the Mattoni ½ Marathon may eventually attract more visitors to the city and the region and ultimately increase tourism revenues in general.

The financial cost of participation is an important factor for runners, too. Respondents stated that travel was the most costly expenditure (Table 3), followed by registration fees and food. Given the location of the city of Ústí and the overall size of the Czech Republic, most participants were able to attend the race without having to stay overnight. However, with the exception of registration (CZK 850), the average expenditure per respondent was relatively small (travel 385 CZK, food and beverages 295 CZK, accommodation 182 CZK).

The organiser's long experience and partnership with the city served as a strong guarantee that adequate attention would be paid to environmental protection both in preparation for, during and after the race. Only 63% of respondents shared their opinion on this matter in the questionnaire. Those who did had a mostly positive opinion on this matter. They named primarily and were satisfied with the refuse removal, mobile toilets. Nevertheless, several of them proposed the necessity of better waste collection and sorting. Something probably most appreciated by local residents were traffic restrictions in the city centre (location of the run) and the consequent drop in emissions. The organisers themselves put strong emphasis on cleanliness and environment protection. This may be demonstrated by figures concerning materials, food and beverages prepared for the 2017 event (Prague International Marathon, 2017). During this event, the organisers use 406 traffic signs, 28,256 safety pins, 43,147 cups, 25,247 sponges, 3700 thermal blankets, 6900 medals, 3645 m of fencing and 96 mobile toilettes. Participants are given approx. 1400 kg of bananas and 1000 kg of oranges. In this context, we'd like to

**Table 3** Importance of respondents' expenditures related to the ½ marathon (mean)

Travel	2.02
Registration	2.59
Food and beverages	2.70
Equipment	3.97
Overnight	4.26
Others	5.50

Note: Scale from 1 to 6; 1 the most important, 6 the less important

stress that the waste and other materials must be properly disposed of after the race, in which the organisers pay a lot of attention to, but more generally that the production and transport of these items require material and energy sources both on site and elsewhere. Some respondents (3.5%) mentioned the use of recyclable materials as one of their concerns. However, most respondents felt unable to judge issues of environment protection or did not pay attention to these matters. But in general, participants enjoy high level of event organisation, and its support in terms of information availability.

## Conclusion

The Mattoni ½ Marathon Ústí nad Labem has become a prestigious event for the city. Race launch by the Lord/Lady Mayor, financial support from the city and regional budgets, a memorandum of long-term partnership with the main organiser – all of this helps to promote and build up the event. Each year, the capacity of both the main event and additional races increases. Thanks to long-term experience of organisers in the Czech Republic (and more recently abroad as well), these private businesses guarantee professional services, skills and a stable organisation and financial backing. There have been built-up long-term sponsorship relations with companies that do business in the Czech Republic and internationally, with media and institutional partners who help (under cooperation agreements) find volunteers for the events.

Similar to other public races, we can see that Mattoni half Marathon attracts mainly participants with higher socio-economic status being in working age of 30–50 years. The fact that very few of people with lower socio-economic status and of residents take part in this running event arises some questions. First, the city and region give quite high subsidy to the half marathon. But in fact this public finance is largely used for non-local people. Additionally, these people do not consider coming again to this locality as tourists. So, financial gains of the town and local entrepreneurs might be arguable. Second, the economic and social situation of region and city of Ústí nad Labem is improving, but still not so favourable for all. People with higher cultural and social status are able to reflect on their own life and adopt healthy lifestyle habits. We think that city should pay attention also to the underprivileged people who may face many obstacles of both subjective (lower cultural capital) and objective (higher cost) character and don't participate in race.

On the other side, the race can be described as a “family” or “social” event because a large number of participants come with family members or friends. It might, after all, be the reason why the organiser offer a family run as well. So it means that for participating people the event brings pleasure, space for social contacts even though it is not the main reason they come to the city.

There were also findings being less positive in terms of the environment. The race is popular with non-residents, undoubtedly, thanks also to easy access from many parts of the country and from abroad. On the one side, the residents welcome

the reduction of car traffic in inner city; on the other side, nearly 70% of respondents arrived to the location by car. Unfortunately, individual car travel and sport tourism go hand in hand in nowadays both on the local and on the global level. It could be useful to think about some “green” ways of transportation especially for people from more distant places.

However, we note some problems linked to the examined half marathon; we can conclude that the half marathon has become a prestigious sport event for the city. Although we did not talk to city or regional officials, we believe that the event and its media coverage strongly boost the city’s and region’s image, showing that this location troubled by economic and social problems has a lot to offer both to visitors and to local citizens. Holding concerts along the race route and having the route cross the “city symbol” – a chemical plant – are surely part of clever strategy and an indication that the event has a bright future.

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# France: The Socioeconomic Impact of a Half Marathon. The Case of Phalempin as Part of an International Study



Claude Sobry, Sarah Mischler, Sorina Cernaianu, Orsolya Czeglédi, and Ricardo Melo

**Abstract** Phalempin is a small town (4500 inhabitants) located 13 km south of Lille, north of *France*) now mostly a dormitory suburb. The territory includes a small forest part of the half marathon. On July 19th, 2016 was run the 32nd edition of the traditional road running, one of the most famous and recognized sport event in the region, organized by two associations with the support of the municipality. Since 2014 the event gathers 3500 participants, the maximum number of runners allowed by the organizers. Three hundred and fifty volunteers help to organize the event. The study is organized mostly around a questionnaire given to all the participants, an interview with the Mayor of the town and two deputies and another one with the organizers. The sample respondents to the questionnaire was  $N = 591$ , 16.9% of the runners, 76.6% of men, 28.4% of women, all French but one from Belgium.

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It appears in the results that it is mostly a local race, the loyalty must be developed, and the major motivation is to challenge oneself and pleasure. The expenditures are very low. The wide majority of the respondents underline the quality of the site and of the natural environment. If one of the question was « is it possible to develop tourism in Phalempin thanks to the half marathon?» the answer is clearly no because of the lack of hotels and restaurants, and participants don't come to discover the region, very few spending one night in the town, mostly at friend's. The Major considers that developing tourism is a mere far-off perspective and the organizers work « *for the love of sport* ».

**Keywords** France · Half marathon · Road-running

## Introduction

If the French government targets 100 million tourists, sport events being a tool to bring foreigners in the country, every week between spring and autumn tenth of road races are organized, marathons and half marathons, by associations, municipalities and private societies. The Phalempin half marathon is one of those races organized yearly. The goal of this chapter is to show the interest of organizing a half marathon in a small town for all parties involved, runners, organizers, and town officials. The study followed a perspective of sustainability, thus addressing the economic, social, and environmental aspects. It was also the opportunity to introduce a comparison with the Anglo-Saxon works about the impact of small scale events on a community. It will be interesting to maintain this comparison for the future works of the program.

For many years, sport tourism in France becomes a substitute to mass tourism. France is rich in many exceptional sites in which it is possible to practice sporting activities. It allows the sport tourism operators to meet the expectations of customers looking for personalized touristic-sports proposals, whether they emanate from a national or international clientele. We must remember that France remains the first country in the world in the number of tourists welcomed, with 82.6 million visitors in 2016 and around 89 million (+8%) in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

The French tourism ministry wants to reach 100 million tourists in 2020. Why not but, very important, between 2000 and 2016 the number of tourists has increased only 7% in France when it is 27% in Italia, 41% in the USA, and 63% in Spain.

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<sup>1</sup>When this chapter is written the final numbers are not yet known. These are the estimations of the WTO published at the beginning of 2018. Sources: Le Monde 15.03.2018; Challenges.fr 03.04.2018; INSEE 03.04.2018. This number must certainly be taken with precaution. It counts not only the tourists at the usual meaning of the world but also all the people crossing France, including the long-distance truck drivers.

Moreover, France, the world tourists' first host country is ranked only the fifth concerning the incomes produced by tourism.

In parallel, after a long lean period, France obtained the organization of international competitions: Canoeing World Championship (2017), the Ryder Cup (2018), the Gay Games (2018), the Women's Soccer World Cup (2019), the Rugby World Cup and the World Alpine Skiing Championship (2023), and, the highlight, the summer Olympic Games in 2024, without forgetting the Women's Handball European Championship (2018), the judo, basketball, and the ice hockey world championships, the track and field and the artistic women's gymnastics European championships (2020). It is interesting to note that a report<sup>2</sup> on the use of major sporting events for tourism development was submitted to the Prime Minister, at his request, in July 2018, highlighting the government's interest in the potential economic impact of these sporting events rich in economic and media spinoffs.

Tourist and sporting activities can be grouped according to their place of practice; the French territory offers a variety of possibilities: the mountain and all practices related to snow, the sea and all forms of nautical activities, all outdoor activities, whitewater, hiking or equestrian, cycling, climbing, golf, or air sports.

In 2017, there were 27.8 million hikers in France, 12.7 million swimmers and 11.8 million cyclists to retain here only athletes outside clubs, unlicensed. Between the traditional races, from 5 km to the marathon, the folk races, the Mud days, without forgetting the growing trails in recent years, there are several dozen hiking races that are organized every weekend, throughout the year, and that drain tens of thousands of participants of all ages and fitness.

Tourist and sporting activities can be grouped according to their place of practice, the French territory offering a variety of possibilities: the mountains and all practices related to snow, climbing and hiking, the sea and lakes with all forms of nautical activities, all outdoor activities, whitewater, equestrian, cycling, golf, or air sports. The same could be said of cycling patents, or ski raids, more seasonal, without forgetting all the fixed hiking, walking, cycling (road or mountain bike), hiking (horse riding is the third federation in number of licensees behind football and tennis, with a majority of women, 83%), etc.

## **The Popularity of Long-Distance Running and the Renewal of the Offer**

Over the last few years, multiple running disciplines have appeared. They do not always require a stadium, like trail and ultra-trail running, folklore running, and obstacle races. Obstacle races were created in the United Kingdom in 1987 by Billy

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<sup>2</sup>21 mesures pour optimiser les retombées touristiques des grands événements sportifs organisés en France. Mission conduite par Benjamen DIRX, Patrick DOUSSOT, Lauret QUEIGE. Mission parlementaire du 4 avril au 19 juillet 2018. Rapport remis au premier ministre le 19 juillet 2018.

Wilson (the *Tough Guy Challenge*) and were later imported into France with the *Frappadingue* in 2010; by 2015, France counted 131 obstacle races. There are multiple types of events, like the *Mud Day*, or the *Color Me Rad*, more “fun,” and shorter. North America is also fond of these new types of races, and the number of participants across the Atlantic went from 250,000 in 2010 to four million in 2013.<sup>3</sup>

By organizing these new types of running events, the sports events companies and the regional track and field federations aim to seduce a new, younger crowd, and to attract more female runners than traditional road-running. In 2012, France counted six million runners,<sup>4</sup> of which 2.1 million (35%) were women; in 2015, among the 9.5 million runners, there were four million women, almost 42%. Running is popular among the 15–24 years old.

Between 2012 and 2014, the number of runners in this category increased by 183%, going from 1,296,000 to 3,672,836. We can assume that this increase is mostly due to these new running disciplines as the participants are 25 years old on average, against 45 years old for the participants in more competitive events like the Paris marathon. However, the number of runners increased in all categories except for the seniors (over 50 years old), which showed a slight decrease.

Although these festive and trail running events are pretty recent, they have not replaced the traditional road-running events, and the 10 km, half marathons, and marathons still attract many athletes.

## The Phalempin Half marathon

Phalempin (France) is a municipality of 4500 inhabitants. It is located in the Hauts-de-France region (north of France), 13 km south of Lille, close to the former mining district, in an area with a high density of population. This town has no longer any economic activity, a tile mill, the European market of endive, and some farms. It has gone from being a rural territory to being a dormitory. It includes a small forest (670 ha) (according to the mayor, it would be France’s most visited forest) which is part of the semimarathon, the only sport event in the town.

The Phalempin half marathon is a traditional road-running event. The 32nd edition of the race was held on July 19th, 2016. It was the only running event in the region that day. The race is organized by the organization *Entre Ciel et Vert* and the Phalempin Athletic Club, with the support of the municipality. It is certified by the FFA (Federation Francaise d’Athletisme – French Athletics Federation) and it is

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.runnersworld.comnewswire/2-charts-show-growth-of-non-traditional-races>

<sup>4</sup> The estimates vary depending on the study but the tendency remains the same. In a study led by BVA in January 2017, 13.5 million French respondents declared having practiced running at least once during the 12 months prior to the study. It represents a 12% increase compared to 2012. The study recognized three categories of runners: five million would run at least once a week, 3.9 million would run occasionally, and 4.6 million would run as a side activity to another sport. Source: *La Lettre du Sport* n°902, 14 April 2017.

qualifying for the French championship. Before 2014, the event used to gather between 2500 and 3000 participants. Since then, this number increased to reach 3500 participants, which is the maximum number of runners allowed by the organizers. For them, this increase is due to the general popularity of running, the organizational and environmental qualities of the event, and the “state of mind” in which the race is organized.

Three hundred and fifty volunteers help organize the event. Although it is rather famous and attracts inter-regional and international runners, the vision of the organizers might seem somewhat outdated. They only aspire to the ideas of “satisfaction of a job well done,” “integration in the municipality,” and “togetherness.” They do not strive to generate any profit, and in case there is any, it is invested in better equipment for the following events. This way, the registration fees (14 euro) are very low compared to other races. Similarly, the prizes are considerably lower than those of other events: both men and women categories get 190 euro for first place and 150 euro for second place. Contrary to many other events, the Phalempin half marathon does not dedicate part of its budget to invite guest stars.

Several sources finance the race. Part of the budget comes from public subsidies: 10% comes from the municipality, another 10% comes from the departmental council, and 4% comes from the regional council. However, these subsidies tend to decrease. The rest of the budget comes from sponsors (16%) and registration fees (60%). Besides financial support, the municipality also helps for logistics by providing equipment, trucks, infrastructure, like the gymnasium that is used as a reception area, and technical and administrative staff for 2 months. The federation of municipalities provides the barricades.

There are eight sponsors, which are either local businesses or companies that have a local branch. They participate mostly by giving prizes or by providing equipment (number signs, shirts, drinks, etc.). They all contribute individually and there is no common organization. The number of sponsors tends to increase but it is still limited.

The start and finish areas, which generally feature local businesses offering products linked with the event, are reduced to a few stalls in the gymnasium as there are only two kilometers between the start and the finish lines. Thus, there is no commercial activity in relation to the event. The relations with the economic partners are extremely limited.

There is no promotion of the local hosting facilities or tourism during the registration process. In fact, there are no local hosting facilities as Phalempin is only a few kilometers away from Lesquin, which is the location of the Lille airport and features all the service industry facilities that come with an airport. Tourism is not promoted either. However, both the organizers and the mayor believe that this field could be developed, maybe through the federation of municipalities.

## Method

The French research team decided to study the Phalempin half marathon because it was close to the University of Lille<sup>5</sup> and corresponded to the required criteria but the size of the town.

The general study was based on a questionnaire established by all members of the project. It allowed leading a quantitative study for different events. We planned a semi-structured interview with the representatives of Phalempin and another with the organizers of the race, followed by a nonparticipatory observation based on the observers' knowledge of road-running and its organization, as they were runners and organizers themselves.

For the interview with the organizers we met with four members of the organization board a few weeks prior to the event, at the home of the President of the organization in Phalempin, for about 2 h. We then interviewed the MP and Mayor of Phalempin and two of his deputies on the day of the event, just after the start of the race, in the town hall, for about 50 min.

In order to get as many respondents as possible we posted the questionnaire online, and we worked on several levels to motivate the runners to participate in the study. A few days before the race, we posted a message on the event's website explaining the researchers' interest in the race; the day prior to the race two persons were in charge of giving out flyers presenting the objectives of the study to the runners who came to get their registration kit bag. They briefly explained the aim of the study to incite them to fill in the questionnaire. This process came as a back up to the work of the dozen volunteers who were distributing flyers along with the registration kit bags, and encouraged the runners to answer the questionnaire. The same two persons distributed more flyers on the finish line. Finally, the day after the race, we posted a message on the event's results web page inviting the athletes to click on a link that directed them to the anonymous questionnaire.

We did not pass a questionnaire to the inhabitants for reason of methodological validity.

## Results

### *Profile of the Sample*

The sample was constituted of 591 respondents (N = 591) selected at random. This number corresponded to 16.9% of all registered runners, and to 18.8% of the 3140 finishers. There was a majority of men, 71.6%, for 28.4% women. They were mostly middle-aged; 74.4% were between 25 and 49 years old and only 6.9% were under

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<sup>5</sup> Initially, the study was meant to focus on the Lille marathon but it was cancelled in 2016, like the famous *braderie* during which the race took place, for security reasons due to the terrorist attacks.



25 years old. Men were 40.63 years old on average, against 38.52 years old for women. These statistics match the ones observed for traditional races on the national level.

Almost all of the respondents (590) were French. Only one foreigner (Belgian) filled in the questionnaire. These numbers might be due to the fact that the questionnaire was written in French only. According to the organizers, about 30 participants were foreign, essentially from Belgium, England, and Germany.

Most of the respondents were married (76.8%). They usually had a high level of education: 48.9% had at least a Master's degree, 30.8% had a Bachelor's degree, and only 6.1% had not graduated High School; 80.5% of them were employed. The majority (22.2%) earned between 2000 and 2500 euro per month, and 41.5% earned between 1500 and 2500 euro per month.

### ***A Local Race***

Several elements clearly highlighted the local aspect of the race: 56.9% of the respondents declared having joined the race because they lived close by, although 96.6% of them did not live in Phalempin. The majority (96.3%) did not spend the night in Phalempin or anywhere nearby, while 78.8% of the respondents declared living less than 40 km away from Phalempin. They mostly came by car (94.9%); 3.1% respondents came by foot, and 0.7% by bike. The discovery of a new site was absolutely not a major motivation (levels one and two: 54.4%, levels six and seven: 10.6%, on a scale comprising seven levels going from one: *not important*, to seven: *most important*).

### ***A Loyalty to Develop***

The sample did not show any feeling of loyalty to the event; 333 respondents (56.3%) were there for the first time, while 258 of them (43.7%) had taken part in the race before. Among them, 84.5% had participated between one and five times, and 57.8% between one and three times. The respondents were usually used to this type of race as 48.5% declared having ran between one and five half marathons in 2015, and 72.5% up to ten races, against 10.7% who had not ran any kind of event that year. The respondents said at 97.3% that they would be willing to participate in the event in the future.

## ***Togetherness***

Most of the respondents came accompanied (68%) and 57.6% of them by between one and five people. Most of them came with one or several members of their family (31%), or with friends (28.6%). Only 8.5% were there with members from their club. This number matches the one regarding motivations, as it is not a race that attracts a lot of clubs. This information emphasizes the fact that the athletes were mostly “nonorganized” or “auto-organized,” and that the participants to the race were generally not members of a club.

Among the 3.7% of participants who spent one or two nights in Phalempin or in the area, 90.9% did so at a friend’s or a relative’s house. It highlights the importance of the sense of relations and togetherness of the race, and confirms its local aspect. It appears in the motivations, as 41.7% of respondents declared having joined the race following a friend’s advice. Only two respondents said they spent the night in a hotel.

## ***Motivations***

The analysis of the motivations is interesting and unsettling. Social interaction was not a major motivation: the criteria “*meeting other people*” (socialization) was mostly rated on levels four and five (45%), and most of the answers (79%) rated it between one and five. The discovery of a new place, a new culture, and tourism were not major reasons for entering the race either. The respondents were divided when it came to participating to support friends and family (cheer), as 38.5% rated this criteria between one and three (not important), and almost 30% rated it between five and seven (most important). Twenty-five percent declared being strongly motivated (levels six and seven) by the possibility to participate in a sports competition; this number goes up to a third of the respondents (33.5%) if we also include level five. The majority of respondents (70%) were there to challenge themselves, to push their limits, or to benefit their health (54% graded this last criteria between five and seven). It appeared that the notions of effort and challenge were part of the fun as 53.7% rated “*for pleasure*” on level 7, and this number goes to 89.2% if we include levels five to seven. Whatever its origin, pleasure was the major motivation to participate in the event, with an average grade of 6.07/7 (see Fig. 1). We might explain it partly due to what we noticed concerning the quality of the environment and of the organization, two elements that were actively part of the runners’ comfort and of the pleasure they might find in their effort.

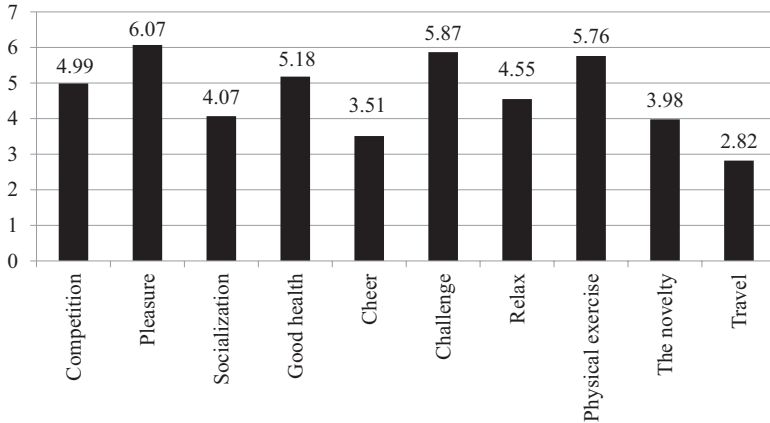


Fig. 1 Motivations (average)

### Participants' Expenditures

Eighteen percent of the respondents claimed that they did not spend anything to join the race. However, this statement is hard to believe; indeed, 96.6% were not from Phalempin and 94% drove their car to the event, and therefore had to pay for gas in addition to the registration fee (except, possibly, for the few club members).

Among the rest, 48.6% declared having spent up to 20 euro, which corresponds to the registration fee plus a short trip; 25% said they spent between 21 and 50 euro, and 8% said they spent over 50 euro. The total expenditure for the runners who declared their expenses was 14,712 euro. If we add to that the mere registration fees of the 106 respondents who claimed not to have spent anything, it is an extra 1484 euro, for a total of 16,196 euro.

When asked about expenditures again, this time including the people who came along with the runners, 39% of the respondents claimed not to have spent anything, which once again seems impossible, be it only for the aforementioned reasons. Twenty-one percent said they spent less than 20 euro, 22% between 20 and 50 euro, and 17% more than 50 euro. Extrapolating these numbers to all participants is of course impossible.

### Environment

According to Gibson, Kaplinadou, and Kang (2012), “the study of the environmental impacts associated with event sport tourism is the most underdeveloped aspect in the existing literature.” One aspect that is for the least poorly analyzed is the carbon footprint of these events, especially for bigscale sport events. Collins, Jones, and Munday (2009) conclude that “small scale events have a lower carbon footprint

as the majority of participants tend to be drawn from the local (nontourists) and regional visitors,” which corresponds exactly to our case. This approximation of the social and environmental impacts comes from the fact that the three elements of sustainable development are not estimated following the same unit; as long as these three aspects will not be analyzed with a common unit, the estimation of the economic value will always remain the most important (Andersson & Lundberg, 2013).

### ***Importance of the Site and of the Natural Environment***

Landscape and settings are important travel motivators (Franch, Martini, Buffa, & Parisi, 2008) and are “central in sport” (Moore, Richardson, & Corkill, 2014). The natural environment is a central element to outdoor recreation (Mullins, 2009), as it affects the participants’ experience (Hinch & Higham, 2011). In Phalempin, both organizers and participants enjoy and praise the fact that the local environment offers optimal running conditions, mostly because of the forest, but also due to the general rural environment of the Pévèle, which is an essentially agricultural area.<sup>6</sup> About 82% of the respondents attributed a six or a seven to the quality of the environment. It is undoubtedly also due to the climate; the North of France is renowned for its oceanic climate, which means that it is a rather rainy area. Dewailly (1985) calculated that it rains every other day on average, and added “*thankfully there are nights.*” During the race we studied, the weather was sunny and pleasant. It was perfect for a long run and it unquestionably influenced the participants’ experience positively. The area being flat, it attracts athletes seeking performance (it is a qualifying race for the French championships). It is the quality of the environment that was the most praised by the participants.

### ***Efforts of the Organizers and Town Representatives to Preserve the Environment***

Besides the quality of the natural environment, we must also mention the efforts of the organizers who did their best to reduce the environmental impact of the event. Sixty-eight percent of respondents mentioned these efforts. It means that 32% of them did not find anything noticeable, or that they considered the services in this respect as average, basic, and nonremarkable. Among the participants who had a positive opinion of the organizers’ environment friendly actions, more than 95% appreciated the presence of trash cans next to the aid stations. However, some of

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<sup>6</sup>The Pévèle area is 30 m above sea level. Its name comes from the Latin *pavula*, which means *pasture*.

them mentioned the fact that there was nowhere to dispose of the trash between these areas. Other noticeable environment-friendly actions included the use of paper cups and paper bags at the finish line, water from the public distribution system provided by the sponsor *Eaux du Nord*, a single sponge for the whole race, and the absence of lids on bottles at the aid stations. The runners also liked the audio and visual messages encouraging environment preservation.

The organizers really strove to keep the environment clean. They inserted a message in the widely distributed advertising brochure asking to use the available trash cans to avoid littering and help protect the forest. Portable toilet units were installed near the starting line even though it was located in a natural environment; it is too rare a facility, even during races that take place in an urban environment - and we can imagine the inconvenience for the residents. The municipality provided vehicles and staff to clean up after the race. This cleaning up right after the end of the race is one of the prides of the mayor and the organizers.

### ***Means of Transportation***

Most participants had no other choice but to drive to Phalempin, which caused parking issues. Two respondents emphasized the issue of traffic jams to get to the town. They suggested a few solutions, like free shuttles from the Seclin train station, located five kilometers away, or even from Lille, or a cheaper registration fee for carpooling. Of all the people we spoke to, participants, organizers, and town representatives, nobody mentioned the carbon footprint of such an event, as they only seemed to focus on the visible environmental elements.

Some respondents thought that littering should be prohibited, thinking mostly of the many orange peels and energy gel packets discarded by the runners. Many condemned the use of plastic water bottles during the race, especially as they were barely used before being thrown away on the ground for lack of trash cans. These critics echo the desire of the organizers to set up a “green label” that would include all of the ideas mentioned: promoting carpooling, setting up shuttles, disqualification for littering, etc. They just lack information on this topic.

### **Touristic Attractiveness of the Organizing Municipality**

Seventy percent of respondents said that they would be willing to participate in another sport event organized by the municipality. However, 61% were not seduced by the town itself and would not come back for tourism purposes only. Neither the organizers nor the mayor plan on using this event, which is the town’s major social event to increase tourism. The mayor considers the opportunity for promotion, not for Phalempin as it is too small, with no service industry, and with for sole asset a

forest that is already over-exploited for tourism, but for the whole federation of municipalities. Still, there is no plan for commercial or socioeconomic development.

## **Discussion: Criticism of the Anglo-Saxon Analysis of Small Scale Events**

The Anglo-Saxon sport tourism researchers (Dwyer & Fredline, 2008; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Misener & Mason, 2006) often consider sports events as a way to promote and to commercialize a destination. For Gibson et al. (2012), *“a small scale sport event portfolio consistent with a community’s infrastructure and human and cultural capital may be a viable form of sustainable tourism development.”* Higham (1999) confirmed this approach, declaring that *“smallscale events often have a positive impact on the host destination, because they typically use existing facilities, and attract local, domestic, and international participants.”* It is indeed the case for the Phalempin half marathon. Still, France probably has a different approach, as the interviews with the mayor and with the organizers clearly showed that the objective of organizing the race was anything but economic, and that the very idea of exploiting it to stimulate the local service industry and to develop tourism was a mere far-off perspective.

Neither the organizers nor the mayor know what is the event’s impact on the municipality; it is thought to be low, which does not seem to bother them. Phalempin features other events organized by other organizations. Moreover, the regional basketball league has settled in the town, which is seen as a factor for attractiveness. And yet, the municipality still considers the half marathon as the event of the year as it is seen as part of social relations. The organizers declare that they work on the race *“for the love of sport.”* The noticeable difference between the works of sport tourism experts and the local reality shows the gap between logic and culture. For instance, the French National Olympic Committee is hostile to the development of organisms like the North American Sports Commissions, as they believe that sport should not be considered as a means to develop a related economic activity (here tourism). The sport movement is not willing to give away the tiniest part of its prerogatives, even if in 1998 Gibson already wrote that *“at a policy level, there needs to be better coordination among agencies responsible for sport and those responsible for tourism.”*

Contrary to North America, Europe has until recently always considered that there should as little interaction as possible between the spheres of sport and economy. If today this perspective has changed, the European vision for popular sport is still strongly conservative. There is a very neat division between *“spectator sport,”* which unquestionably generates an important financial flow, and *“sport for all,”* which many think should be free or at least accessible to the majority. Although it is the case for the Phalempin race, many other events organized by private companies require high registration fees.

This study revealed that the Anglo-Saxon analysis of the impact of small scale sport events does not totally apply to the current French situation. It is due to a different history of the relations between sport and economy. Across the Atlantic, “sport for all” and amateur sport in general are seen as an input in the production of the tourism industry, which uses sport to boost its economy. For the most part, this system works due to private funding. Thus, sport is part of a whole industry that aims to create economic activity, wealth, and jobs.

In France, this kind of sport practices remained a leisure activity until recently, existing and surviving via a few sponsorships and public funding, with no economic objective, and staying on a local scale. Some municipalities have started to adopt a more professional and economic approach of these events and tried to evaluate their impact, but it is still not a common approach. A minority of them, especially the ones based on tourism, try to multiply small scale events during the tourism season in order to attract tourists and to generate activity for local businesses. The situation is slowly changing due to the financial pressure faced by the municipalities. It leads them to limit their funding of sports events, which in turn causes some of these events to disappear. They are also pressured by the evolution of social expectations and the demand for novelty and innovation, in particular coming from the younger generations. It leads the volunteer organizers of traditional sport events to give way to professionals, who bring, besides new ideas, sponsors and equipment that is only affordable or profitable if used for national and/or international competition.

As this study is part of an international project, it will be interesting to observe whether the same conclusions can be drawn for every country, or whether there are noticeable differences.

## Conclusion

The results of the survey conducted with the runners and the interviews with the organizers and the mayor revealed that the Phalempin half marathon is one of the most famous and recognized sport events in the region. It is a local race that does not attract many people from other regions or countries. The participants appreciate the quality of the organization, even if they think that it is average. The rural, wooded environment is part of the event’s success.

The direct and indirect economic impacts on the municipality are very low. It is due to both a lack of hosting infrastructure (hotels, restaurants), combined to a lack of interest of the organizers and town officials regarding the economic aspect. They do not use the race as an opportunity to promote the local cultural heritage or to encourage the runners to come to Phalempin and the surrounding area for tourism. In fact, most of the respondents precised that they did not intend to return to Phalempin for tourism purposes.

The organizers, who do their best to organize the event year after year, are facing two risks. Today, the event has attained the maximum number of participants due to the popularity of running. However, it is facing competition. Several other local

races are becoming more popular each year (the *Course du Chicon*, the *Course des Terrils*, the Touquet half marathon, the *Route du Louvre*, etc.). So there are two possibilities: either the current popularity of running will fade and the athletes will turn to other disciplines to challenge themselves, be healthy, etc., or they will be interested in the ever increasing amount of new running events like obstacle races, trails, folklore races, etc. These factors might be detrimental to the Phalempin half marathon, whose only goal is to bring life to the town and to convey a feeling of “togetherness,” to quote the mayor and the organizers.

Although the area features many road-running events, each organizing team works individually for their own event. They only interact when they need to agree on a date for their event with the Hauts-de-France track and field federation. It could be interesting to consider organizing the road-running events at least on a local level, within the federation of municipalities or the Pévèle area, and to set up a challenge for runners participating in multiple races.<sup>7</sup> We could think of a ranking system depending on the number of races in which an individual, a couple, or a team participates, etc. It would also be possible to coordinate two events over one weekend, on the Saturday and Sunday afternoons. It would motivate some of the participants to stay on site and generate business for the local service industry. An overnight stay might also mean that one or several other individuals would come to accompany the participant, which would increase the potential economic impact. Furthermore, it could be an opportunity to advertise the touristic potential of the area. We could also think of linking a race with another local event during the weekend (a walk to discover the touristic or unusual sites, a food-tasting walk, etc.), with food and festivities at night. This format is already offered by many long-distance events (triathlons, trails). It would be necessary to create a format that would not be detrimental to the runners' condition, while conveying a festive and convivial feeling. For the organizers, it would be a way to get in touch with sponsors as a group: instead of presenting one file for each event, they could group several events into one file. The sense of “togetherness” they seek would apply to the federation of municipalities. If this set of coordinated events gets a “green label,” then the three aspects of sustainable development, social, economic, and environmental, would be taken into account. The initiative of developing a new potential for collaboration with fields other than sport would generate a positive local dynamic.

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# Hungary: The Socioeconomic Impact of Urban Running Events on Local Tourism and Regional Development in Debrecen



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and Nikoletta Sipos-Onyestyak

**Abstract** The number of running races in Hungary has significantly increased during the last few years, while competitions are becoming more and more diverse. To better understand the impact of these for the host town, a survey study has been carried out in Debrecen, Hungary, following a half marathon in April 2017. One quarter of the 1028 participants ( $n = 257$ ) responded to our questionnaire. The proximity of the race seems to be important for the runners, whereas a unique offer of the event (including registration options for different distances and programs for accompanying friends and family members) acts as a trigger for sport tourism. The social and economic impacts of the race turned out to be significant for the host town, whereas environmental impacts were barely detectable. A relatively high purchasing power of the participant runners coming mostly from the surrounding region and neighboring countries and their involvement in the running event and in some tourism-related activities generate important economic benefits for the town.

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However, the importance of small scale sporting events is not yet totally understood and leveraged by the organisers and the local authorities. A better use of these might be an important element of the local sustainable development.

**Keywords** Hungary · Small scale events · Sport tourism running

## Introduction

“Within the domain of tourism, “running tourism” might be one of the fastest growing area in the next few years as running races not only contribute to a healthier lifestyle and to awareness raising, but have a positive economic impact and provide [to Hungary] a positive image on an international scale”<sup>1</sup> – said Mihály Varga<sup>2</sup> in 2016 at the presentation of a report on the domestic economic impact of running races in the capital. Since the introduction of the 2004–2006 National Development Plan, the number of sporting events is increasing in Hungary. These may now receive state funds, as supporting physical activity participation has become a national strategic goal aiming at the well-being of the population (Ács et al., 2016; Ács, Hécz, Paár, & Stocker, 2011).

Therefore, the number of running races is increasing all around the country, and the growing demand for these result in an increasingly important impact in the fields of (sports) economy and tourism. In most of Hungary’s bigger cities, professional and leisure sports are supported by the local government.

Hungary’s geographical features provide excellent opportunities for sport tourism. Walking and hiking have long traditions, waters are central for leisure and sports, bicycle paths are merging everywhere in the country. Mild weather, hilly areas and open access nature sites attract local population and (international) tourists.

Since the 2000s, mass sporting events, mostly hiking, running and cycling, are becoming more and more popular. Many of these events, mostly organised in the capital, have grown to attract tens of thousands of people annually, including visitors from abroad. Besides mass sporting events, Hungary, and Budapest in particular, hosts a growing number of international (mega) sporting events, such as a FINA Swimming World Cup in 2019 or the UEFA Euro 2020. In line with the national development strategy, the Hungarian government have established a national agency to attract and organise international sporting events (Sportesemények Szervezéséért, Lebonyolításáért és Sportszolgáltatásért Felelős Nonprofit Korlátolt Felelősségű Társaság).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.origo.hu/gazdasag/20160301-turizmus-futoturizmus-varga-mihaly-budapest-egeszseg.html>

<sup>2</sup> Minister of Finance in Hungary.

Mass sporting events organised in Budapest contribute largely to the economy, but also to the image building of the country. That is why they are wittingly used for national and international communication purposes in Hungary, whereas their economic and social impacts are widely studied. Even though sporting events are organised all over the country (typically in/around bigger towns and/or at natural areas with particular geographical features for outdoor activities), only the capital has the infrastructure and the resources to organise mass events. While the attention of the media and academics often turn to mega events, small scale events are scarcely studied in Hungary. Our attempt is to provide information on this question through a case analysis of a road half marathon in the town of Debrecen. The town is known for its cultural and leisure attractions and it has become an important centre of sport tourism owing to diverse professional and amateur sport events attracting both domestic and international participants.

## **Sport Tourism and Sustainable Development in Hungary**

Sport tourism is an interdisciplinary field of science that has turned up owing to an emerging demand since the second half of the twentieth century. In this context, sport appears as the prime motivation for traveling and as a professional activity aiming at the organisation of these travels (Marton, 2015). By the turn of the millennium, stakeholders of the demand side have become important element of sports financing, whereas sports organisations are trying to include more and more discretionary incomes. At the same time, technological development makes traveling more and more easy and available for an increasing part of the world's population. These processes are in favor of sport tourism, what is also reflected in the growing number of scientific researches that acknowledge the different stakeholders of the sports market. According to Hinch and Higham (2011) participants of sports tourism can be categorised in three different groups: (1) active sport tourists, whose main travel motivation is sports participation; (2) event-based sport tourists, where attending a sports game is a major element of traveling; and (3) tourists who travel to visit sports venues, museums or to meet sport celebrities. Although sport tourism research's primary focus may still be large-scale events, an increasing attention is given to smaller competitions.

Hinch and Higham's (2011) first category includes sporting events with a large number of amateur sports participants, such as street running races. Their social importance goes beyond the sports participation of masses, as it also includes volunteers, local communities, organisers and the local media. Researches highlighted that the analysis of sport tourism incomes of small scale sporting events organised in smaller towns is still a relatively untapped area (Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012), whereas existing (national) literature focus primarily on international sport event participation of spectators. For example, Laczko and Stocker (2018) analysed the average spendings at sporting events in Hungarian towns and revealed that spectators coming from abroad spend on average 26,250 HUF daily (~80 EUR), whereas

domestic visitors staying overnight spend on average 8000 HUF (~25 EUR) or about 3000 HUF (~10 EUR) if they don't have other programs besides attending the event.

Organising international sporting events being a national priority, apart from the analysis of the economic, environmental and social impacts, Hungarian literature takes into consideration the questions of sport, sport policies and technological development for the analysis of national and international sporting events (Stocker & Szabo, 2017).

Regarding sport and sustainable development, Wilson (2006) analysed the economic impacts of local sporting events, where he defined these as small scale events, where the number of participants may be superior to that of the supporters, being most often recurrent events, organised annually, without considerable media attention or economic activity. However, Csobán and Serra (2014) showed in their analyses of fencing events that small scale events may as well contribute considerably to local sustainable sport tourism.

Sustainability in Hungary, just like on an international scale, is increasingly important; however, it has been adopted only recently in practice. After the Earth Summit of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, in Hungary the Committee for Sustainable Development has been established with the aim to define the intervention areas and coordinate the implementation of new measures in Hungary in accordance with international agreements.

On the political level, the basic principles of sustainable development have not been generally accepted in Hungary; economic development often prevails on environmental protection (greenfield projects, highway constructions, decreasing green spaces in urban areas, etc.). Today, a large majority of ventures have no interest in the sustainable use of natural resources or to diminish their pollution emissions. Therefore, very few measures are implemented to protect natural resources and to preserve the natural environment. Besides the respect of legal and economic regulations, awareness raising among the population would also be necessary.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding the contribution of sport entities in this question, the Hungarian Olympic Committee issued its booklet on Sport and Environment in 2016. It analyses the sustainability aspects of the 16 sports that constitute a priority for Hungarian sport finances through the analyses of the possibilities of diminishing the environmental impacts of these sports. The aim of this booklet is to involve all stakeholders, especially decision makers of these sports, to better understand sustainability issues and opportunities to be able to best contribute to the implementation of sustainability measures. Similarly to former measures, these considerations aim primarily the protection of the environment, while the social benefits of sports are still not fully taken advantage of (Földesiné, 2005).

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.ff3.hu/helyzet.html> (retrieved on 17 Nov 2018).

## The Popularity of Long-Distance Running and Its Growing Variety

In Hungary, running has started to gain popularity since the 1970–80s. The first marathon distance street running event was organised in Budapest in 1984, which was the first one to open for non-licensed runners. The same year, Budapest has joined the Italian “Vivicitta” street running series, while in 1986 the first “Earth Run”<sup>4</sup> was held there. In all cases, the organiser was the Futapest Sports Association. Besides these, ultra-marathon races started to emerge, and since the 1990s, cross-country competitions have also occurred. Since 1983 both the number of organisers of road or trail races and the number of participants have been noticeably increasing (Perényi, 2015). While at the end of the 1990s, approximately 50 running races were organised in Hungary; in 2017 this number has exceeded 350. The biggest ones – usually organised in the capital – are of several thousands of participants, whilst bigger country towns reach easily at least 1000 of runners per race. As for the number of organising agencies, a heavy increase is observable. In bigger towns, certain (sports) associations or local companies managed to stand out from the other organisers, and gained a quasi-monopoly position in the market of the community’s running races. In Budapest the Budapest Sportiroda Ltd. (BSI) (formerly Futapest Sports Association) is undoubtedly the biggest organising agency, whereas in Debrecen, the Debreceni Kilometerek Association is the main organiser of mass running events. The organisers are often supported by the local government; however, the level of engagement of these may differ from one town to another. In some places, they heavily support the events and, in some cases, even take part from the organising activity (for example in Székesfehérvár), or they support the event by lending their infrastructure and/or equipment to the organisers (like in Debrecen).

Lately, Hungary seems to be catching up with the international tendencies, providing an increasing diversity of races, including a growing number of out-of-stadium disciplines – such as trail running, ultra-trail running, folklore running or obstacle races. Also, more and more women are getting involved in these events.

## The Impact of Running Tourism in Hungary

The tourism impacts of diverse sporting events may vary largely. In Hungary, running races tend to become more and more spectacular and increasingly important for the region where they take place. The impacts of the events depend, among many factors, on their size, recognition and accessibility. Obviously, internationally renowned running races, usually organised in the capital, generate more important economic benefits, than smaller competitions, which are mostly frequented by local populations (Gibson et al., 2012). However, the importance of these latter ones is

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<sup>4</sup>To celebrate Earth Day (April 22).

not negligible, especially as these might have a significant potential for growth. Organisers of these smaller events may, thus, get inspired from the tendencies observed at the bigger ones.

After the surveys of 2012 and 2014 run by themselves, in 2015 the BSI engaged KPMG Consulting to carry out a study on running tourism in Budapest and its economic impacts on a national scale. The report focuses on the three biggest marathons and half marathons organised by BSI in Budapest: Wizz Air Budapest Half Marathon in September and SPAR Budapest Marathon in October.<sup>5</sup> These races are, today, Hungary's biggest leisure sport events, according to the KPMG in terms of number of participants. In 2015 the total number of runners registered for the three races exceeded 70,000, corresponding to a 21.5% increase compared to 2014. During the three races almost 17,500 "running tourists"<sup>6</sup> visited Hungary from 80 different countries. Relating to the events, approximately 65,500 guests' nights were spent in Budapest (according to KPMG's estimation), mainly in three and four starred hotels, hostels or in rented apartments. Almost half of the "running tourists" were first time visitors in Hungary 2015, and 70% of them declared a willingness to return to the Hungarian capital within the next 5 years (KPMG Consulting Ltd, 2015).

The two races attracted almost 8000 domestic running tourists,<sup>7</sup> who confirmed to have considerably more expenses relating to the event, than what they would have spent normally. In this way, a new kind of demand is being created in the domestic market. The spending of Hungarian tourists identified in the study exceeded 150 million HUF (approx. 500,000 EUR). Most part of it was spent on accommodation, transportation and fuel. Besides them, approximately 14,000 runner visited Budapest from abroad. According to the report, relating to the half marathon, the average spending per capita exceeded 120,000 HUF (~400 EUR), whereas in case of the marathon, this amount was around 180,000 HUF (~600 EUR). International participants to the two races have spent more than 3 days on average in Hungary, while their cumulated overall spending relating to their visits is estimated around 2.3 billion HUF.

The cost of organising was about 280 million HUF (~850,000 EUR) for the two events. Sponsors cover most of it: approximately 240 million HUF (~750,000 EUR). Among the costs of organising (wage costs, race-day installations and services, ensuring technical background for the event, prizes, etc.), the most important elements for both events were the race-day expenses, about 30% of the total expenses. For the domestic economy, these events generated an estimated amount

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<sup>5</sup>More info about these events on the official website of the organisers: <https://runinbudapest.com/>

<sup>6</sup>The study refers to all the registered runners and the people accompanying them who declared to have arrived in Budapest especially for the race from abroad with the major motivation for visiting Hungary being participation at the running event, or to accompany a participating runner.

<sup>7</sup>The study refers to all the registered runners and the people accompanying them who declared to have arrived in Budapest especially for the race from their Hungarian residence with the major motivation for traveling being participation at the running event, or to accompany a participating runner.

of 880 million HUF (2,750,000 EUR) of income in taxes and other contributions. (KPMG Consulting Ltd, 2015).

Besides the economic impacts, the report outlines the image-building capacity of running events, their presence in the media, their social and cultural benefits and their potential importance for the development of small and medium businesses. However, the report did not include any analysis of the environmental impacts of the events.

## Debrecen, the Hosting City

With its population of a bit above 200,000,<sup>8</sup> Debrecen is the second largest city in Hungary, and the third biggest of its surface area (approx. 462 km<sup>2</sup>). According to the IMF's World Economic Outlook Database of October 2016, Hungary's GDP per capita is 11,903 USD. We do not have any reliable information on Debrecen's GDP per capita. According to the Hungarian Central Statistics Office (KSH), in 2016, the average gross salary of those who are employed full time was around 250,000 HUF<sup>9</sup> (approx. 800 EUR).<sup>10</sup> According to unofficial data,<sup>11</sup> average gross salary in Debrecen is estimated around 350,000 HUF (approx. 1100 EUR)<sup>12</sup> for the same year.

Debrecen is one of the most developed cities in Hungary. In the past, it used to rely on handicraft, food industry and agriculture. Today, the most important sectors are agriculture, health and education. The University of Debrecen (approx. 30,000 students)<sup>13</sup> provides workforce for the pharmaceutical and biotechnological industry (Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. and Gedeon Richter Plc.), to IT companies, etc.

Debrecen might be considered as the sport epicenter of Hungary regarding the number of sporting events compared to the number of inhabitants or via the analysis of the importance of youth development (Gösi, 2012). International sporting events are regularly organised in the town. In 2000, the city's local government set the objective to support international sporting events as prescribed in its sports strategy.<sup>14</sup> In this context, the Debrecen Sportcentrum Kht.<sup>15</sup> was created with the aim to manage sports infrastructure. One of its priorities is to contribute to the organisation of sporting events on a local and also on a regional, national and international scale.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://www.ksh.hu/>

<sup>9</sup> Source: [http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat\\_evkozi/e\\_qli032a.html?back=/stadat\\_ker](http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_evkozi/e_qli032a.html?back=/stadat_ker) (retrieved on 25/11/2019).

<sup>10</sup> Approximative number calculated on 2016 EUR-HUF exchange rates.

<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://www.fizetesek.hu/partner/region/debrecen>

<sup>12</sup> According to unofficial data, average gross salary in Debrecen is estimated around 350,000 HUF (approx. 1300 EUR) for the same year.

<sup>13</sup> Source: <https://unideb.hu/>

<sup>14</sup> Source: [https://www.debrecenisportcentrum.hu/index\\_en.php](https://www.debrecenisportcentrum.hu/index_en.php) (retrieved on 09/08/2018).

<sup>15</sup> In English: Debrecen Sports Center Providing Public Benefit Company.



Accordingly, Debrecen already hosted international and world events,<sup>16</sup> as well as national championships and other regular events.

The success of these events indicates that Debrecen's image, sports infrastructure, tourism, catering and leisure services are making the town suitable for future sports tourism investments (Borbély & Müller, 2015). They argue that promoting sporting events and sport tourism improvements may contribute to the development of the city image and increase its tax incomes. The success of organising sporting events relies on different factors, among these, to meet the objectives of the event and to achieve the stakeholders' and target groups' satisfaction. However, from the organisers' point of view, it seems that the most important is still the financial profitability of the event, and to a lesser extent, the satisfaction of the corresponding national and international sport federation. In order to promote recreational and leisure sports, in 2015 the "Sportolj Debrecen!"<sup>17</sup> campaign was launched in Debrecen to encourage the local populations to participate in physical activities, get to know different sporting activities and engage in them on a regular basis either on an amateur or professional level.

## The Rotary Running Festival

As for local running races, the first bigger spring event is the Rotary Running Festival. In March 2018 it was organised for the eighth time by the Debreceni Kilometerek Sports Association (DKSA)<sup>18</sup> with the Rotary Club Debrecen. DKSA was established in 2011 with the main objective to gather those who are interested in leisure sports in Debrecen and its surroundings by providing them with high-quality sporting events. The mission of the association is to enhance the general health and well-being of the local populations through the promotion of an active and sporty life, healthy lifestyle, the development of available sporting possibilities and broadening the range of healthy recreational activities in the town by organising competitions, sporting and leisure events. The association pays particular attention to involve participants with disabilities to their events. Since 2011 both the number and the range of events organised by the association are expanding: while during the first year, only two events were organised (Rotary Half marathon and St. Nicholas Day Aquaticum Run), in 2012 this number grew to nine and the following year some 15 competitions were held.

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<sup>16</sup> Since 2001, Debrecen Sports Center has organised more than two dozens of world competitions in nearly 20 sports, among others, the World Youth Championship in Athletics, the World Gymnastic Championship, the first European Men's and Women's Individual Gymnastics Championship, the sixth European Women's Handball Championship, the European Short Course Swimming Championship, the European Pentathlon Championship, the World Short Track Speed Skating Championship.

<sup>17</sup> Source: [https://www.debrecenisportcentrum.hu/index\\_en.php](https://www.debrecenisportcentrum.hu/index_en.php) (retrieved on 09/08/2018).

<sup>18</sup> Source: <http://www.debrecenikilometerek.hu/> (retrieved on 31/07/2018).

To understand the context of this rapid development, the other sporting events in the region are important to be mentioned. Regarding its surroundings within a distance of 50 km, in 2018, three half marathons can be found: in Derecske (22 km from Debrecen) in April, in Nyíregyháza (49 km away) in March, and in Püspökladány (50 km away) in October. Regarding further distances, semi-marathons in Szolnok, Miskolc, Eger and Békéscsaba might also be available for the population of Debrecen. Therefore, the Rotary Running Festival faces numerous competing races; however, their distribution in both time and space provides a complementarity among them.

Regarding the Rotary Running Festival, besides the three race distances, its most popular event is the Rotary Charity Run with a distance of 1993 metres, referring to the year of reestablishment of the Debrecen Rotary Club. Pre-schools and schools, foundations, sports associations and work communities are often present at the team competitions, the entrance to which is free of charge. More dedicated runners can participate in longer distances in nine categories.<sup>19</sup> Besides the half marathon, 10 (1/4 marathon), 30 K (3/4 marathon) and 42 K (marathon) distances are also available. In 2016, 1028 runners participated in these distances (above the charity run), and 920 of them finished the competition (1/4 marathon: 378; 1/2 marathon: 353; 3/4 marathon: 37; 1/1 marathon: 152 runner).

According to the main organiser of the event, the charity part of the race aims fund-raising purposes as well as the physical and social well-being of the participants. It does this through the capacity of community building (team formed by coworkers, classmates, etc.) and the promotion of a physically active lifestyle. The main objective of the longer distances is the same, but also to serve the needs of the more experienced joggers/runners.

## Data and Methods

Following the guidelines of the shared methodology, in Hungary, the VII Rotary Running Festival (April 2, 2017), a multi-distance urban running race has been chosen. Although the focus of the project was on half marathons, taking national differences into consideration, multi-distance races could also take part of the project, provided that the majority of the participants engage in the half marathon distance. Debrecen has been chosen for being a city that meets the methodology design criteria, but also because we were curious about the impacts of a mass running event in a city known for its larger scale international events.

As specified in our shared methodology, questionnaires were distributed among the participants on the race day and on-line during the evening following the event. Answers were accepted not later than 7 days after the race. In both cases, organisers

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<sup>19</sup> Individual marathon, ekiden marathon, 3/4 marathon, half marathon, minimarathon (shorter distances for young age-groups), wheelchair marathon and half marathon and hand-bike marathon and half marathon

were ready to help us distributing the questionnaires and ask the participants to fill them out, in order to collect a maximum number of responses.

The paper-based questionnaires were returned by 76 participants, whereas the on-line version was filled in by 181 of them. The total number of 257 questionnaires corresponds to one quart of the total number of participants (1028). It is important to emphasize, that most of the respondents were registered on the half marathon distance – as the speakers specifically asked them while announcing the organisers' request to encourage runners to participate in the survey.

We had to give up on the questionnaire for the inhabitants and the interview with the municipality due to organisational issues. As for the interviews with the organisers, as the main organiser helped us, some pieces of information were gathered in an informal way, but owing to a close collaboration, the interview would have been biased (as the organiser was also part of the Hungarian scientific team).

## Results

### *Respondents' Profile*

The most popular event of the 2017 edition of the running festival, besides the Charity Run, was the half marathon event. The number of participants in this latter course includes 353 runners and one person in wheelchair. 33% of the half marathon (117) were women. In the quarter-marathon distance, more women than men participated (58%), while the whole marathon was chosen by only 20 women (19%). However, among the respondents of the questionnaire, women are overrepresented by 56% of the answers. The half marathon provided 7 male and 5 female age categories. Regarding the participants, the oldest runner was 82 and the youngest 16 years old.

Majority (71.3%) of the respondents declared to be either married or in a relationship. 71.2% of the sample have a higher education degree. More than 60% of them work as an employee, 10.6% are students, and 21.5% in a management position. As for their revenues: 46% have a monthly net income above 200,000 HUF (650 EUR).<sup>20</sup> Only 18% earn less than 110,000 HUF a month; however, among them there are also students, jobseekers and those who don't have a regular income.

Regarding the expenditures, the registration fees vary according to the distances and the date of registration (according to five registration intervals with registration fees growing as we're approaching the date of the race). For the half marathon, the early bird registration fee was 4000 HUF (~12 EUR), while same-day registration would cost 6500 HUF (~20 EUR).

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<sup>20</sup>In 2019 the average gross earnings in Hungary were 297,017 HUF (~ 900 EUR) (source: [http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat\\_hosszu/h\\_qli001.html](http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_hosszu/h_qli001.html), retrieved on 31/07/2018).

Many of the runners are regular participants of running events: 15.5% participated during the previous year in more than ten races, while another 61.1% participated in more than one running race during 2016. Only 9.9% declared not to have participated in any competition during the previous year, while 13.5% participated in only one race during the preceding year.

### *The Scope of the Event*

Responses to diverse questions (such as the place of residency, motivation for the visit, spendings, transportation use, etc.) suggest that the Rotary half marathon is primarily a local event. 55.6% of the respondents live in Debrecen, while another 17.3% not further than 40 km from the town. Respondents also confirmed that the proximity of the race was an important motivator for participation. As for the remaining 27.1% runners arrived mostly from Budapest, Miskolc, Nagykanizsa, Sopron (Hungary), and Nagyvárad (Romania). They typically came for bigger Hungarian towns from the neighbouring Romania, and have travelled on average 300 kilometres to Debrecen. Nevertheless, only 7.2% of the respondents stayed in Debrecen to participate in the race: 10 of them spent one night, while another six of them have spent two or three guest nights in the town. Commercial accommodation facilities (hotels, hostels, etc.) were used by 18 participants, corresponding to 7.2% of the respondents.

To travel to the race venue, most of the participants (71.4%) used their personal vehicle. However, some of the local runners came by bike (7%), by walking (14.1%) or by using the local public transportation system (3.9%). Only 2% traveled by train, and four respondents came from abroad on plane (1.6%).

Regarding the tourism interest of the event, among the reasons for participation, tourism possibilities were only mentioned by four of the respondents. On the other hand, the quality of the organisation and the accessibility (closeness) of the race turned out to be important factors. The former one motivated 48.2% of the respondents for participation while the latter one was chosen by 63.4% (see Table 1).

Regarding the other response options, some runners were attracted by the different distances; a relatively large number of respondents had decided to participate after having been encouraged by colleagues, relatives or friends. For more dedicated runners, the date was an important factor, as it turned out to be an event that fits well in their race calendar. However, the most often cited primary motivation was simply the pleasure of running. 83% of the respondents scored 6 or 7 on a 7-points Likert scale for the quality of the organisation, while only 4 of them gave 4

**Table 1** Motivation for choice of participation

	Quality of organisation	Proximity	Tourism	Other
Number of occurrences	124	163	4	28
% of total responses	48.2	63.4	1.6	10.9

or below. In line with these findings, the survey revealed that 67.7% of the respondents are not first-time participant to the event. Regarding the “freshmen”, 55.6% of them live in Debrecen and 30% of them hadn’t participated to any running race during the previous year.

### ***Running as a Community Experience***

The general tendency among respondents revealed that the running festival is a community event. 66.7% of the respondents came accompanied, and for 75.3% of them their travel parties included between 1 and 5 people. The accompanying people were most often family members (43.3%) and/or friends (18.9%). Bigger groups of friends were also present at the event, 8.2% of the respondents declared to have arrived with a group of 10 or more. Besides, the diversity of distances allowed accompanying people to participate in an event that corresponds their physical fitness. Therefore, the willingness of the organisers to engage more people in physical activities can also be considered as successful.

Even though participating turned out to be a social event, organised running communities were underrepresented in our sample. The number of those who are member of a sport club or association was very low, whereas only 2% respondents declared to be accompanied by club members and/or a coach.

All these might suggest that participating in mass running events is above all a leisure activity. Accordingly, even though the challenge seemed to be an important motivator among respondents, the leisure character of the event may be further confirmed by the pace of the runners: Only 12 of them (3%) managed to accomplish the half marathon distance (~21 km) in less than 90 min, even though the 31–50 age group is overrepresented in the sample.

### ***Motivation***

Participation motivation was studied along nine response options, including potential motivators, such as the pleasure of participation, health, challenge, etc. Each option had to be evaluated on a 7-points Likert scale according to the level of importance the respondents attach to these. The results are interesting and diverse, suggesting that the participants are driven by different motivations (see Table 2).

The most common motivators were the “pleasure to participate” and the “physical activity” itself. More than 75% of these respondents considered these as “very important” to them, whereas lower (6 and below) scores were scarce on these options.

On options like “to support (a friend or a family member)”, the “novelty” (of the event) and “to travel” (to Debrecen as tourism destination), scores varied considerably, suggesting that our sample is not heterogenous on these dimensions.

**Table 2** Motivation for participation (average)

Motivation	Pleasure to participate	Socialising	For my health	To support runner	For the challenge	To relax	For the physical activity	For a novelty	To travel
Importance/7	6.7	5.3	6.2	4.6	6.4	5.5	6.6	4.6	3.8

Almost 88% of the respondents reported to have been highly motivated by a challenging race. This may most likely be explained by the diversity of distances, providing customised challenges for most participants.

Respondents also considered that sports and running's positive effect on health is an important motivator. These questions scored between 5 and 7 in 92% of the cases.

Social relations, meeting with friends, creating new relationships were important factors for some, however, almost 15% of respondents attached only a low importance to these questions.

Typically, those who didn't attach a high importance to form social relations as motivators for participation, tended to mark higher scores on the "challenge" dimension.

The study also revealed that the runners yearned to break the everyday routines through participation in sports / sporting events. Therefore, the leisure character of the event is further confirmed.

### *Expenses of Participants*

Regarding the economic impacts of the half marathon we focused primarily on the expenses of the participants relating to the event. Even though only about 60% of the respondents answered this part of the questionnaire, the obtained data still allow us to presume some tendencies.

A small minority (8.4%) of the respondents claimed to have not spent any money relating to the event. Also, regarding the cumulated expenses for all the travel parties, 24.5% of the respondents reported not having spent anything relating to the event. We assume that in this case, respondents disregarded the registration fees, which in most cases were paid in advance. One quarter (27.7%) of respondents claimed to have spent between 0 and 5000 HUF (~between 0 and 15 EUR), that would cover the registration fee and a shorter trip to the venue. 31.6% spent between 5001 and 10,000 HUF (~ between 15 and 30 EUR), which might have included a cheaper accommodation too. Expenses over 25,000 HUF (~80 EUR) were mentioned by 8.4% of the respondents. While itemising this amount, registration fee, accommodation and eating out were mentioned the most often. The biggest cost, for 42.5% of the respondents was the registration fee, and for 29.6% of them was the cost of traveling. Those who mentioned accommodation and eating out as well, typically claimed overall expenses over 15,000 HUF (~45 EUR). Interestingly, 33.5% of the respondents mentioned equipment as one of the most important cost for the event.

## *Environment*

According to Gibson et al. (2012) the analysis of the environmental impact of sporting event tourism is the least researched axis regarding the existing literature on impact studies. Unfortunately, measuring the ecological footprint of sporting events is a relatively poorly developed area, although larger scale events may have a considerable impact on the environment; enough to think of the carbon dioxide emission relating transportation to and from the event. With respect to this, Collins, Jones, and Munday (2009) draw attention to the considerably less significant environmental footprint of smaller scale events – just like the one in our study – owing to the proximity of the residency of participants to the event venue.

For the analysis of the environmental impacts, it is important to highlight that the scenery and the landscape may act as important motivators for the choice of destination (Franch, Martini, Buffa, & Parisi, 2008), therefore they may have a central role for sport tourism participation (Moore, Richardson, & Corkill, 2014). A principal element of outdoor recreation is the natural environment (Mullins, 2009), as it is likely to influence the experiences of participants (Higham & Hinch, 2009). In Debrecen, 88% of respondents found the quality of environment very good (by scoring at least 6 on a 7-points Likert scale). In addition, in 2017 weather conditions were also favourable for the successful organisation of the event.

Besides the quality of the natural environment, it is important to pay attention to the organisers' aspirations to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the race. Although 74.6% of the respondents found that the organisers haven't proposed any environmentally friendly solution, this result may not necessarily indicate a lack of measures but may as well imply that in terms of environmental consciousness, the event was considered as "average" without any particular initiatives. It is important to highlight, that none of the respondents expressed criticism against the environmental perspective of the event. However, those who found that the organisers made noticeable efforts to comply with environmental conservation issues (25.4%), most often mentioned segregated trash disposal possibilities and the continuous waste collection at the refreshment zones. Furthermore, the runners appreciated, that the race was easily accessible by means of public transportation and by bike, whereas storage facilities were also offered for personal non-motorised vehicles. Some highlighted the possibility of online registration, and other online opportunities (online payment, photo sharing, etc.) as environmentally conscious initiatives.

The organisers made a special attempt to promote the possibilities to access to the event via public transportation. Even so, 71.4% of the respondents came by car. The majority of those coming from closer or further locations used their personal vehicle; however, as the organisers defined in advance the parking options, the increased traffic didn't affect the more sensitive natural areas, such as the Nagyerdo (Grand Forest of Debrecen).

The organisers didn't make special attempts for measuring the carbon footprint of the event; however, they spoke about a possible awareness raising campaign to draw participants' attention to the environmental pollution linked the race (such as



using personal vehicles, waste production, etc.) and the possibilities to diminish these. For example, at the start and finish zones and the relay zone, 12 mobile toilets were installed, and the cleaning up has started immediately after the race ended, with the help of the cleaning services of the city hall.

### *Tourism Attractiveness of the Host City*

The large majority (95.3%) of respondents indicated that they would return to Debrecen during the following year for the Running Festival, while 91.4% of them intend to participate in other sporting events in the city. However, 22.2% of the respondents wouldn't return to Debrecen solely for tourism. While interpreting this result, it shouldn't be forgotten, that the vast majority of the participants are residents of Debrecen or a close by town, therefore they may not consider Debrecen as a tourist destination (Table 3).

Regarding the participation in other programs relating to the event, it has been revealed that 51.4% of the respondents don't participate in any other activities. Nevertheless, 15.9% of the respondents mentioned eating out in restaurants, whereas 25.3% of them participated in some kind of leisure activities (such as going to an adventure park or to a water park), 7.8% visited family members, while 8.6% mentioned shopping. Those who declared to participate in other activities, typically mention more than one activity, whereas others either indicated to do nothing else or didn't respond to this question.

The study also revealed that for runners arriving from outside Debrecen, the city's tourism offers and attractivity are an important element. These respondents were majorly interested in after-race recreational activities, restaurants and leisure opportunities and services for accompanying travel parties. Tourists to Debrecen are offered a broad range of cultural and leisure activities, therefore promoting these, along with the available guest nights options may become important questions for race organisers in the future.

**Table 3** Participation in other activities in Debrecen relating to the running festival

Participation in other activities in the city (%)	Nothing	Visiting family	Cultural activities	Leisure activities	Shopping	Eating out	Cinema
%	51.4	7.8	3.9	25.3	8.6	15.9	2.3

## National Comparisons

The Rotary Half marathon and Running Festival is definitely an important and popular event on the regional level, in particular because in Nyíregyháza, the closest larger town, there are no regular yearly running events. Even though in 2015 the BSI organised a Vivicitta event in Nyíregyháza, and in 2017 the third Electrolux Halfmarathon and the Spring Running Festival (Tavaszcímű Futóverseny) were held in the city (in Nyíregyháza Sóstó), we couldn't find any half marathon event for the season 2018/19.<sup>21</sup> Since, in Debrecen there are at least two other regular annual events including a half marathon, although these are offroad races. However, it is interesting to compare these in a nutshell. Our comparison is completed by results from the Wizz Air Budapest Half Marathon, the biggest half marathon event in Hungary, to highlight differences between courses organised in the capital and in the second largest town in Hungary (Table 4).

**Table 4** Comparison of half marathons in Debrecen and Budapest

Name of the event	Rotary Half Marathon Debrecen	G4 Offroad Half Marathon, Debrecen	Decathlon Half Marathon, Debrecen	Wizz Air Budapest Half Marathon Budapest
Organiser	DKSA, Rotary Club Debrecen	DKSA, Decathlon Debrecen	DKSA, Decathlon Debrecen, Hajdú Sports Association	BSI
Date	March / April	May	September	September
Available distances besides half marathon	Individual Marathon, Ekiden Marathon, ¼ Marathon, Minimathon (5.2 km), Children Run (2.5 km), Charity Run (1993 m)	¼ Marathon, Minimathon (5.2 km), children run (2.5 km)	¼ Marathon, Minimathon (5.2 km), children run (2.5 km)	Half Marathon duo Half Marathon trio
Total number of participants	4562 (1028 + 3534 charity run)	358	576	16,278 (10,324 individual +1048 in duo +643 trio)
Number of half marathon participants	353	123	124	10,324
Entrance fee (basic fees)	4000–6500 HUF 12–20 EUR	3500–5500 HUF 11–17 EUR	3500–5500 HUF 11–17 EUR	8000–23,000 HUF 25–70 EUR

<sup>21</sup> Source: [www.futonaptar.info](http://www.futonaptar.info), a popular website among runners to get informed by running events.

It seems that the DKSA holds a monopoly position on the local market of running races and backed by distinguished partners and sponsors for the organising. Their three half marathon races cover the running season in Debrecen's hereabouts. Regarding the distances, the broadest range is offered by the Rotary Festival, including marathon, relay events, charity run, that are not part of neither the G4 nor the Decathlon off-road events. At the same time, the auxiliary events of the Budapest Half Marathon may have a similar public than the charity race in Debrecen, and these extra events contribute largely to the overall number of participants. The difference in the number of participants between Budapest (approximately 1.7 million residents and the second largest Hungarian town, Debrecen (approximately 200,000 habitants, 550,000 in the region) is flagrant. However, if we add the 3534 charity runners, the Rotary can also be considered as a mass event. The other two half marathons in Debrecen attracted 258 and 567 participants, which are approximately one quarter and half of the Rotary's numbers respectively. If we only consider the number of half marathon participants, the Rotary Half Marathon's participants are almost three times the number of the G4 and the Decathlon races, whereas it is only 3.4% of those who are registered in Budapest.

The popularity and size of the events affects the registration fees as well. While in Debrecen it is possible to register on the race-day; the BSI won't offer this option anymore in Budapest (due to the already large number of participants, which requires special attention from the organisers). Students and the elderly (over 65 years), and also regular runners (BSI regular runner cardholders), may benefit from a reduced entry fee to the events of the BSI, whereas in Debrecen differences in the registration fees are only defined by time periods. At both events, finishers' bag, a shirt and a medal for those who complete the registered distance are offered, but welcome bags are only provided in Debrecen. In 2018, after the eighth edition of the event, we may state, that on the regional level, the Debrecen Rotary Running Festival is a prime example of successful sporting events with a broad range of offers and with some sport tourism opportunities of which the organisers haven't yet taken full advantage.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The Anglo-Saxon literature of sport tourism research (Dwyer & Fredline, 2008; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Misener & Mason, 2006) focuses most often on the contribution of sporting events to the host city's economic development and image building. On the other hand, according to Gibson et al. (2012), small scale events are likely to adapt to the host town's infrastructures and human and cultural resources, and are also suitable to develop sustainable tourism at their venue. This view had already been pointed out by Higham (1999), highlighting the fact that these events may have a positive effect on the venue, because these typically use existing infrastructure, while attract all local, domestic and international participants.

This is also true to the Rotary Running Festival in Debrecen, though most of the foreign participants came from close by neighboring countries.

According to the organisers, regarding the economic point of view, the event was not focusing on profitability; its main objective was to integrate new partners from local service providers and businesses, whereas the perspective of tourism development did not make an essential part of the organising process. Even though many question relating sports can be used as an economic tool (whether linked to tourism or not) for reaching financial objectives. Gibson showed in 1998 already, that on the strategic level, sport and tourism organisations need to be better synchronized to achieve mutual goals (financial or others). In the United States, typically “sport for all” and amateur sport operates as a contributor to the tourism industry, therefore sport may be considered as a generator of the economy, a separate industry, that is based on private financing and that creates economic activity, well-being and employment.

However, in Hungary, amateur sport still falls within the category of leisure activities, using some sponsoring and state financing, but relying primarily on the principles of crowdfunding, without any particular economic objectives, mainly remaining on the local level. Some of the local governments, including that of Debrecen, have already started to take into consideration the potential economic impacts of mass sporting events. That is, partially, why leisure and mass sport events are most often organised during the tourism season, as these are viewed as tourism attractivities and are used to contribute to the viability of local businesses.

Our study revealed, that the Rotary Half marathon in Debrecen is one of the most popular running events in the region, that serves primarily the local populations, who are willing to participate in running events and have the purchasing power to enter these competitions, whereas runners from other parts of the country and from abroad are scarce.

Those, who answered the questionnaire, praised the quality of organisation of the event. However, we couldn't find a positive correlation between this result and their motivations for participation, suggesting that the organisation of the event may be of high quality, but it does not represent an attractivity itself for its public. At the same time, reaching to masses via the charity run is definitely a unique element providing a personal image to the event and extra workload for the organisers.

Regarding the direct and indirect economic impacts to the local government are so far minimal; however, with the reinforcement of the tourism aspect of sporting events, an important economic potential may be emerging for the communities, which may be worthwhile to take advantage of.

Our study also revealed, that the organisers take into consideration the environmental aspects of sustainability, and these are reflected in the organisation of the event, an approach that the organisers are willing to keep, or even reinforce, for the future editions of the run.

Finally, regarding the social impacts, the participants declared that they do not consider the run as a social event. Nevertheless, they arrived typically in groups of 2–6 people, which may suggest its importance for communities. Also, as respondents

tend to complement their activities with other leisure programs, the social character of the event is further confirmed.

A deeper understanding of the socio-demographic profile, the motivations and the attitude of the participants creates also an opportunity to improve the event and/or (better) benefit from it for different purposes. The study revealed that most of the participants are more or less regular runners and that most of them live close to the event venue. As a local event, it has a great potential for (local) community building and other social and marketing purposes. Based on our findings, we would make the following recommendations for sporting event organisers and other stakeholders of these events.

1. As the event inherently contributes to the creation of social links, these aspects could be reinforced and further utilised through challenges proposed for existing or newly formed groups and with specific communication strategies designed for them.
2. Environmental awareness seems to be important for the organisers, therefore a) more protection measures could be provided and elucidated and b) communication could be reinforced on these for awareness raising among the participants, the accompanying people and the spectators.
3. In most cases, participants' spendings covered mostly the registration fees and in some cases accommodation and/or restoration. As other tourism related expenses were scarcely reported, we might consider that the events potential for enhancing tourism activities is not fully exploited. Therefore, we would recommend to consider linking the event to other local (cultural) events and/or to communicate more about the venue as a touristic destination.

Our study offered an insight to a Hungarian case study through the analysis of road running in Debrecen. However, to draw general conclusions on the current trends in road running in Hungary, the study should be extended to different parts of the country and should include a broader variety of events in terms of the type, size and date of the running race and also the distances and disciplines offered.

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# Italy: Sport Tourism Events. The Case of the Rome-Ostia Half Marathon



**Barbara Mazza**

**Abstract** This Italian case study of the Roma-Ostia Half Marathon was carried out with the aim of looking at the socio-economic impact of the event on the local territory and its contribution to the development of communities. In Italy, there are 70 marathons and 271 half marathons distributed throughout the year, mainly thanks to the Italian climate. The Roma-Ostia Half Marathon is the oldest marathon, and the one with the largest number of participants (almost 12,000). The whole survey analysed the host city and event characteristics, concentrating on social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects. The study shows that, although this sporting event is very much appreciated by the participants (58%) and evidently pays attention to the protection of the environment (60%), it does not sufficiently promote opportunities for tourism (21%). Local development could also be better improved by reinforcing the relationship between the team organization and the public administration. Unfortunately, in Italy (and not only in this country) a strategic planning of this type is lacking. Among the positive aspects that emerged from the research were the sense of belonging and pride of the event (88%), and the number of tourists it attracted (93%).

**Keywords** Half marathon · Socio-economic impact · Sporting events · Territorial relations · Tourist attraction

## Introduction

The case study on the Roma-Ostia Half Marathon presented here aims to examine the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impact of half marathons on the host territory. While many international studies of the sector mainly concentrate on the impact of large and mega running events of considerable attraction, few studies focus on smaller sporting events, which, however, are just as useful as larger ones, in terms of contributing to the growth of a territory (Pigeassou, Gammon, &

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Kutzman, 2002; Gratton, Shibli, & Coleman, 2005; Tarfanelli, 2010; Moretti, 2015; etc.). In Italy, there are 271 half marathons held each year. What is the impact of this type of sporting event on the country? In this research, the Rome-Ostia Half Marathon was chosen for study, as it is the largest, with the most participants, and is also the oldest, having been held for over 40 years (Italy Half Marathon, 2016). It represents an excellence that offers valuable indications of the socio-economic value of half marathons in Italy.

Half marathons often activate powerful processes between organizers, local authorities and stakeholders to support the economic, cultural and environmental growth of the territory. Half marathons are accessible to participants on a national and international level, and can fuel economic activity in support of the local commerce and tourism.

The methodological approach adopted here follows that used by the entire international research group, involving interviews with the organizers, a questionnaire to the participants and a questionnaire to the inhabitants (see Van Rheenen, Melo, & Sobry, [this volume](#)). In Italy, the case study chosen was the half marathon of Rome-Ostia, which takes place regularly every year and has now reached its 42nd edition. The race took place on 13 March 2016.

In this chapter, for the sake of brevity, only the results of the questionnaire to the participants are presented, only the most interesting aspects being reported, while the interviews with the organizers and the questionnaire to the inhabitants are reported as an in-depth tool. In the 2016 edition, 10,714 athletes participated and the number of respondents was almost 20% (2,139). After the appropriate checks, some questionnaires were eliminated, due to an excess of missing answers, with the number of valid cases reaching 1910 questionnaires, equal to 17.8% of participants (STD = 0.942). The information collected was then analysed according to a qualitative-quantitative approach. The principal results of the univariate, bivariate and multifactorial analysis of the questionnaire are presented below. The main indications provided by the athletes were then compared with what was declared by the organizers during the interviews, to provide a complete picture of the value attributed to the event and its impact on the territory. The survey allowed the negative and positive aspects of the half marathon to be identified, and to place it in the national and international scenario.

## **Sport Tourism Events in Italy**

Sport tourism is a strategic lever for the development of a territory, as it fuels the flow of tourists, converges the interest of increasingly differentiated groups of users around the organization of events, and encourages the development of new businesses, while strengthening existing ones (Gibson, 2013). Although not yet recognized by world statistics, in the present era, this segment of tourism has enormous potential for growth, increasingly going beyond a niche and involving people on a



mass scale, in the logic of experience economy (Newland & Aicher, 2018; Pine & Gilmore, 2000).

Available data also confirm the exponential growth of sports tourism. According to the National Association Sports Commission (2017), more than 30 million sports tourists worldwide generate a turnover of \$10.47 billion, a growth of 10% compared to 2015. According to the latest survey of the Ipk (2016) (commissioned by ITB of Berlin), over the past five years, sports holidays among Europeans alone have increased, involving 9 million tourists – 12% of European tourism. People with a higher propensity to sports tourism reside in continental Europe: Austrians (26% of about 10 million travellers), Czechs, Belgians, Poles and Germans, while only 3% of Italians (about 31.5 million travellers) consider sport as the main reason for a holiday (Eurobarometer, 2016). Conversely, Italy is second only to Austria, in being able to attract sports tourists, but with a considerable percentage gap (18% vs. 42%), as Italians are not among the most active (with only 28.5% of Italians practising sport). Based on the main dichotomy given by the classic definitions (Pigeassou et al., 2002: 204; Gibson, 1998a, b; Gammon & Robinson, 1997), the active tourist chooses a holiday to compete in a sport, seeing themselves as an amateur competitor or considering the chosen sport as an additional holiday attraction, especially with cultural and beach holidays.

According to the National Research Institute (Istat, 2017; see Table 1), only 28.5% of Italians practise sport, while tourism accounts for 4.2% of the national GDP, the European average standing at 4.1% (OECD, 2016). So, does Italy adequately exploit opportunities for sports tourism, given the potential.

Considering Italy's resources in terms of culture, climate and natural beauty, this is not a very positive result. In the period 1997–2016, the tourist incidence grew at an average annual rate lower than that of the country's GDP (2%), while, in the same period, the world tourist revenues measured in euro grew by an average of 5.6 per 100 a year, those of Spain and France (Italy's main European competitors) reaching 4.5% and 2.3%, respectively. These trends record a decline in the market

**Table 1** Italy (facts in 2016)

Capital	Rome
Geographical size (km <sup>2</sup> )	301,338 km <sup>2</sup>
Population (million)	60.59 million (in 2015 – last national census, ISTAT)
GDP (euro per capita)	1.716,238 million euro.
Annual net earning average (€)	29,380 euro
Sport participation index	28.5% (CONI_ISTAT 2017)
Tourism contribution for GDP (%)	4.2% (of national GDP)
Most important sport tourism categories	SKIING, CYCLING, TREKKING, SAILING, SURFING / WINDSURFING, TENNIS, MOUNTAIN CLIMBING, SUB / DIVING, HORSE RIDING
Most important sport tourism events developed	Football, skiing, running, cycling, tennis, rugby, horse riding

shares of traditional destinations in favour of emerging countries: Italy's share, second only to the United States in the 1980s, remained stable in the first half of the following decade, but gradually decreased to reach a minimum of 3.3% in 2015 and 2016. In the last two years, the weak growth in international tourism revenue (1.9% per year, on average) follows that of the number of travellers in Italy. On a daily average, the increase in expenses was entirely offset by the decrease in the average travel time (from over 5 days at the end of the 1990s to 4.2 in the last five years, the calculation including hikers), leaving the average expenditure per traveller unchanged (Banca d'Italia, 2017).

Given this negative trend, is Italy adequately exploiting possible opportunities in tourism? As stated above, according to the National Research Institute (Istat, 2017, see Table 2), tourism accounts for 4.2% of the national GDP, while the European average stands at 4.1% (OECD, 2016). Unfortunately, there is no specific data on sports tourism, since in the main statistics, they are aggregated in an "other" item

**Table 2** Rome Area (facts in 2016)

Name	Rome area
Geographical size (km <sup>2</sup> )	2.43501 (Rome:128,736)
Population (million)	Municipalities involved by half marathon (IX: Eur and X: Ostia): 408,301 (179,034 Eur and 229,267 Ostia)
GDP (euro per capita)	133,718 mln € (2015 = 9.6% of national gdp)
Annual net earning average (€)	24,306 € (2014)
Main professional sectors	Real estate activities, business services and other entrepreneurial and professional activities 15.7 education, health, social assistance 14.1 trade 12.8 other collective and personal services 12.5 public administration, defense 10.1 hotels and restaurants 7.2 industry 6.4 information and communication services 6.0 transportation and storage 5.9 constructions 5.0 financial and insurance activities 3.8 agriculture, silviculture and fishing 0.8 (Ufficio statistico Roma Capitale, 2018, 2017)
Other races in the city	La corsa del giocattolo, Corri con la Befana, Trofeo Lidense, La corsa di Miguel, Trofeo Cinecittà Due – Carrefour, Corsa del ricordo , Rock & Run, X M ilia, Corriamo al Collatino, Talenti Run, La corsa di San Giuseppe, San Paolo Race, M aratonina della Cooperazione, Roma Tre Ville Run, R oma Appia Run, 1° maggio lavoro..in corsa, Corri Bravetta, Cecchignola in corsa, Per antiqua itinera, R in Corriamo la pace con Emergency, Race for Children, Vale..Correre, Corsa podistica, AlbaRace, M ezzaMaratona di Roma, La corsa de' noantri, Ostia in corsa per l 'ambiente, Roma by Night Run, Roma by Night Run –Stracittadina, CorriRoma, Cardio Race - La corsa del Cuore, UltraRoma 50 km, R oma Urbs Mundi, Roma City Trail, C hristmas dream for Africa. (LazioRunners, 2018 = 31% in the region)
Other sport tourism events	Running, tennis, rugby, horse riding, athletics and swimming

which is 14.8% overall. The main sports that generate tourism in Italy are: skiing, running; cycling, trekking, sailing, surfing / windsurfing, tennis, mountain climbing, sub / diving, and horse riding. Some of these include some of the most popular national and international sporting events: skiing, running, cycling, tennis, rugby, horse riding and football.

In this study, the focus is on running. In relation to this sport, specialized organizers and travel agencies provide packages that allow participants to partake in competitions around the world, while satisfying their various tourist needs, with visits to the most important capitals, particular cultural sites or enchanting seaside resorts and naturalistic excursions in the most evocative places, etc. To complete the picture in Italy, in 2015, there were 887,000 foreign sports tourists, equal to 1.8% of all foreign tourists to Italy. The sport tourists generated over 3 million overnight stays (1.6% of total foreign overnight stays), with an average stay of 3.5 nights and a total expense of 355 million euros (1.6% of total foreign expenditure) and they spent an average of 115 euros daily (CISSET-Bank of Italy, 2016).

Smaller sporting events attract visitors consisting of participating athletes, staff, carers, friends and family. In this regard, some studies have shown that the trend of sports tourism is to travel in groups, and these groups are proportionally more numerous in small events (Choi, Shonk, Bravo, & Choi, 2016; Getz & McConnell, 2014; Melo & Gomes, 2017).

According to a 2017 survey conducted by the Piepoli Research Institute on behalf of the Italian Athletics Federation (Fidal), 74% of Italian runners go on sports holidays to follow football matches (49%), or to practise winter sports (22%) or water sports (7%), or, naturally, to take part in marathons (8%). Some 80% travel with friends, especially on weekends (43%) and stay 3 days or more (24%). Italian runners especially plan the trip on the web (72%), and during the holiday, take the opportunity to visit exhibitions and museums (57%), take walks (47%), and go on excursions (55%).

Therefore, the sporting event in general and the race in particular, facilitates tourist influx and increases local reputation, while favouring the urban and economic growth of the territory. In order to be effective in the long term, the main stakeholders (national institutions, regional promotion agencies, etc.) need to share a common local development policy to improve access, increase user-friendliness, and maximize the tourist attractions of the area where an event is held. The literature discusses Stakeholder theory, project management techniques and strategic planning to start an integrated, systemic and holistic process, in which all the actors involved - organizing committees, institutions and stakeholders - participate and are co-responsible for achieving the objectives and providing effective management of market relations (Djaballah, Hautbois, & Desbordes, 2015; Freeman, 2010; Hautbois, 2017). The involvement of local administrations, for example, should not only promote the event but also encourage the legacy to be spread throughout the territory, to improve the quality of citizens' lives, while safeguarding the environment. All the interested parties, especially those looking for an economic benefit, must—according to the theory of social exchange (SET) of Sirmon et al. (2007: 275)—participate in the development of the event and encourage dynamic

management of resources to pursue the expected profit in a process of continuous adaptation between the parties. Rosemann and Vom Brocke (2015: 105–122) identify six elements involved in the relationships between the actors: strategic alignment, governance, methods, information, technology and people and culture. Bucher and Winter (2010: 93–114) add four factors for development and success: the degree of services provided, professionalism in process management, the impact of those responsible and the use of appropriate methodologies. Sobreiro et al. (2015: 157) indicate an operating model composed of 8 phases: (1) definition of the mission and the vision of the organization; (2) identification of strategic objectives, (3) stakeholder assessment, (4) estimate of business capacity, (5) verification of the concerns and objectives of the parties concerned, (6) negotiation of the operational objectives between the parties based on business capacity and the definition of strategies, (7) delimitation of the priorities of the improvement areas and (8) planning and drafting of an action plan. Still referring to planning approaches, we can add a further and ninth phase – monitoring the results achieved, compared to the expected results. This would allow required corrective measures to be identified. A tenth item concerns the measurement of the positive and negative impacts obtained, not estimated in the definition phase of the objectives. Every dimension that affects the territory – economic, occupational, market, cultural, reputational, infrastructural, urban, public, environmental, etc. – has direct and indirect, contingent and permanent consequences, not only on tourists but also particularly on the citizens of the host territory, and the territory itself. For this reason, careful monitoring is required, along with periodic feedback and continuous updates (Bosnjak, Brown, Lee, Yu, & Sirgy, 2016; Kim, Jun, Walker, & Drane, 2015; Mazza, 2007; Veal, 2017).

For sports tourism to be a tool to promote the sustainable growth of a territory, it must be a lasting form of tourism, capable of maintaining its qualitative and quantitative values, gratifying the expectations of residents and tourists, enhancing the quality of the tourist experience, with no harm to the environment (Pellegrini, 2009). The World Tourism Organization has specified some guidelines for applying the principles of sustainable development to the tourism sector, to meet “the current needs of tourists and host regions, while protecting and improving the prospects for the future. Sustainable development, thus ensuring the protection of the quality of life of local populations, must integrate the management of all resources in such a way that the economic, social and aesthetic needs can be met, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and living systems” (WTO, 2003).

As far as the Italian situation is concerned, there are no structural policies to support sport tourism either in social and cultural terms, or in terms of economic and environmental sustainability. A document from the Ministry of the Environment (2009) carefully identifies both the weaknesses and opportunities of tourism, and its potential impact on biodiversity, and outlines objectives and policies to be implemented. It also underlines how present measures in this area are still contradictory, and therefore ineffective. Unfortunately, even today, the situation does not seem to have changed, as demonstrated by the present study.

The world of sport posed the problem of defending the natural environment as early as 1994, during the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway. It started from the need to foresee – as an Olympic legacy – the creation of “green” games, and to adopt ecological measures in the construction of new facilities, to reduce the impact of sporting events on host territories and to use sport as a means of environmental awareness (Trendafilova et al., 2014).

Recalling the 1994 provisions, in 1995, a special commission was set up aimed at assessing the relationship between sport and the environment: in 1999, it allowed the Italian Olympic Committee and United Nations Environment Program (Unep, 2015) to draft together the Agenda 21 of the International Olympic Committee. The document provides the guidelines and the ways in which sports activities and the life of sportspeople can contribute to sustainable development, and indicates how a Green Code can be adopted. These guidelines provided by the Code aim to encourage and spread the adoption of a series of rules of conduct to protect the environment by sportsmen, spectators and sports organizations. In particular, the athletes are required to: respect nature, environment (green areas, city, territory) and the heritage of sports facilities and equipment; collaborate in an adequate management of sports services; eliminate waste in the consumption of water and energy; avoid polluting and dispersing waste into the environment; prefer public and economic means of transport and choose recyclable clothing and environmentally friendly equipment. Sports organizations, on the other hand, are required to: encourage sport in nature; adopt environmental criteria in the construction and management of sports facilities; control water and energy consumption and promote environmental values, in the selection of clothing and equipment, and in the management of relations with the sports industry, schools and the media. Finally, spectators are expected to: respect the fans and the athletes of the opposing side; not damage sports facilities and equipment; not disperse waste in the environment and prefer public and ecological means of transport.

Likewise, in the tourism sector, environmental sustainability is considered a strategic approach to revitalize local supply, improve livability through the construction and promotion of urban or cultural areas in which the tourism product is focused on “green” and “ecological” guidelines (Fainstein, Hoffman, & Judd, 2003; Rath, 2007; Robinson & Novelli, 2005). This allows, on the one hand, the promotion of sustainable development, the improvement of accommodation facilities for tourists and the recreation for residents, and on the other, it supports and encourages the population and local governments to work for the protection and conservation of environmental and cultural assets, as well as spreading and consolidating ecological knowledge and awareness in the territory (Zhang & Lei, 2012). Therefore, the network of local actors should concentrate their organizational and management efforts on ecologically sustainable medium/long-term projects. Unfortunately, according to the fourth report on competitiveness in the travel and tourism sector, published by the World Economic Forum (2011), it appears that Italy ranks 27th in the world rankings and 20th in the European ranking (with Switzerland, Germany and France at the top). The strong points of Italy include cultural resources and tourist infrastructures (8th), while the drawbacks are due to non-transparent rules and

regulations (84th), which pay little attention to sustainability and the environment (129th), and produce a situation with low propensity for welcoming tourists (91st).

Furthermore, as a response to increasingly higher global competitiveness in the tourism sector in general, and in the sports sector in particular, many authors underline the ethical need to actively protect the environment as the added value of a destination. To minimize the environmental impact, renewable sources need to be increased, with investment low impact development. This foresees: optimizing logistics, recycling materials, increasing the life span of products, encouraging the consumption of local food products, and, stimulating “slow” and zero-kilometer consumption, using the train as the main travel tool or, alternatively, bio-compatible solutions (Angeloni, 2013; Dickinson, Robbins, & Lumsdon, 2010).

## The Rome-Ostia Half Marathon

The metropolitan area of Rome, made up of 15 municipalities, hosts the Rome-Ostia Half Marathon. It covers a territory equal to 0.8% of the Italian population. According to the latest ISTAT census of 2015, in Italy 2.864,348 people (equal to about 0.5% of the entire Italian population) are involved, and 2 municipalities are directly involved in the competition – IX (Eur) and X (Host). The GDP of the Rome metropolitan area is €133,718 million (in 2015, equal to 9.6% of the national GDP – see Table 3). The annual average of earnings is equal to €24,306 (2014), 5000 euros lower than the national average. The area is mainly dedicated to administration and services. The first three main professional sectors are: real estate activities, business services and other entrepreneurial and professional activities (15.7%), education, health, social assistance (14.1%) and trade (12.8) (Roma Capitale. Ufficio statistiche 2017; 2018). Some of the most important sports events organized in the area include various international events in running, tennis, rugby, horse riding, athletics and swimming. In particular, the area hosts as many as 31% of the running competitions organized throughout Italy (LazioRunners, 2018). These races serve to: increase the identity of the community, promote the history of the territory and stimulate socialization and aggregation among people.

**Table 3** Rome-Ostia Half Marathon (facts in 2016)

Name	Roma-Ostia half marathon
Type of organization (private, public, both)	Private
Sponsors (private, public, both)	Private
Total number of participants	10,714
Scope and objective of the race (fund raising, charity, promotion of the city, promotion of brands, etc.)	Sport event. It is part of the international IAAF (Gold Label) and national FIDAL calendar
Number of volunteers	500
Number of inhabitants participating in the race (% of total)	11.9%

The case study chosen is the most important half marathon organized in the area. It is managed by a private family-run company (Roma-Ostia Srl), which operates in close collaboration with a sports association (Bancari Romani), active in the runner's world and rooted in the territory. The company works all year round to manage the event, dealing with technical, administrative, logistic-organizational and communication issues. In the last three editions, the number of participants has been more or less stable, around 11,000, but the organizers recorded an exponential and constant growth from 2000 to 2013, claiming numbers doubled in this period. In proportion to the overall increase in the number of athletes, the presence of foreigners has also increased (12–13% – equal to about 1500 units). This is thanks to word of mouth, especially in Europe where athletes tell others of their Roman experience, relating both the technical value of the race and the quality of the organization. In contrast, the number of local participants is only 11.9% of the total of participants. In the last few editions, about 500 volunteers per year were engaged, with 120 at the start, 150 along the route and 250 on arrival. In an area of about one kilometre – volunteers were responsible for the management of prizes and medals, the delivery of T-shirts and slickers, refreshments and the depositing area of bags, etc. Among the volunteers, 150 came from civil protection, with the company paying the remaining portion.

According to the organizers, the main mission of the event is setting up the race itself, and for this reason, the management efforts are only concentrated on sporting and technical aspects. Notably, the race is considered a very taxing and tiring track for athletes, but, for this reason, it is an important challenge for any runner. Since the race has a good reputation from a purely competitive point of view, little thought is given to combining the race with supporting events aimed at entertainment or the enhancement of local aspects, unlike with other similar events in the world, where attention is given to these areas. There are only some collateral activities, such as the performance of a local band of a neighbouring town (e.g. Frascati) at refreshment points.

For the same reason, there are no packages to encourage combining the race with cultural initiatives during the stay. Although the organizers are aware that at least one-fifth of the participants remain on site for at least 3 days and 2 nights for tourist reasons, nothing is organized related to this. The organizers explained that once some tourist activity was organized, with guided tours and sightseeing bus tours being provided, but since the demand was low, the service was discontinued. While this is guaranteed during the Rome Marathon, probably, on the half marathon, the participants prefer to organize themselves.

The respondents to the questionnaire were mainly men (84%), and the interviewed quota is quite representative of the participant percentages (men 81%, women 19%, data provided by the organizing committee). The average age among participants is 46, the prevalent age group being between 40 and 49 (39%) and the majority of athletes (89%) being aged between 30 and 59. This figure is in line with the general trends in the world of running. According to an American research of 2016 commissioned by Brooks, a leading company in the field of running, for the research company Equibity (2016), the average age is 43 for men and 39 for women.

The typical profile of the European sports tourist is a 43-year-old man who lives with his family, and has a good spending power (IPK International on behalf of ITB Berlin, 2015).

The interviewed runner lives in the family: 75% are married or cohabiting and only 18% are single. In this case, they are women (63% vs. 37% of men) and young people under 30 (76%). Almost half of the sample has a bachelor's degree (42%), and 14% of participants have a post-graduate degree. The highest levels of education are concentrated in the age group between 30 and 39 years (45%). Some 71% are employed and have an average income of between 1500 and 2000 euros per month (31%). Added to these are 14% who are self-employed and, despite not declaring a higher income bracket, have a higher socio-economic profile, being mainly made up of graduates (18.6%) in the age group over 50 years (15.4%). Although having higher qualifications (46% graduates vs. 39% of graduates) and carrying out more independent activities than men (+16%), women have lower incomes (up to 1.500 euros per month 47% vs. 23% of men), unfortunately in line with Italian and European estimates.

The majority (79%) consider the race the main reason for moving from home; one-fifth (21%) consider it an additional reason and, therefore, participate to have the excuse to travel. Only one-third of the sample participated for the first time, clearly indicating that a good majority is very loyal to the race (STD = 0.45. See Fig. 1).

Among two-thirds of the “seniors”, half have already participated 1–3 times, 35% 4–10 previous events, 12% 10–20 editions and a 3% 20–42 times (STD = 0.942). While 11% of newbies have never participated in any other competition, most of

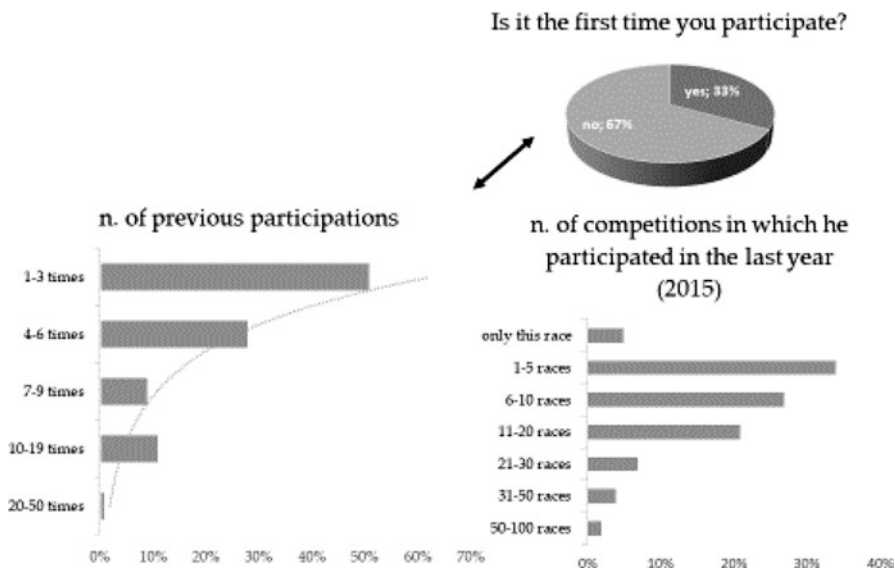


Fig. 1 Loyalty



them participated, just the previous year, to five other events (42%), if not 10 (25%), 20 (16%) or even up to 50 (6%). The seniors live the half marathon circuit to the full, so much so that a mere 3% attend only the Roma-Ostia, 31% attending five other events in the previous year, 28% to 10, 25% to 20 and 13% to between 30 and 50.

Of those taking part for the first time, 85% only come for the race itself, though with subsequent participations, people also begin to consider the holiday aspect. Depending on the number of participations, taking part exclusively for the competition proportionally decreases: from 79% (to 75%, to 69%) to 57%, depending on the number of times of participation. As indicated in the literature, a well-organized event encourages continuity and the desire to return for future editions. Furthermore, the more you return to the same event the more opportunities you have to combine sport and tourism. Over half of the participants (58%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the event, and if the city were to organize other sporting events, 92% said they were willing to come back for the event. They particularly appreciated the management and technical aspects of the Rome-Ostia half marathon. The interviewees mainly participated (without particular differences between beginners and seniors being noted) due to the quality of the organization, and for its prestige, creating a certain emotional bond (41%), and for the type of route (27%), allowing participants to train in view of other competitions (12%). The remaining ancillary reasons (20%) included the proximity from home (16%) and tourism (only 4%) (See Fig. 2). The low value attributed to this last reason is influenced by the fact that the share of those arriving from abroad or from other Italian regions is less than one-third of the entire sample of respondents.

With regard to the presence of foreigners, the level of representativeness of the sample (2% of the total) is somewhat below the level declared by the organizers (12%). Regarding the geographical distribution of the interviewees, 69% live in the

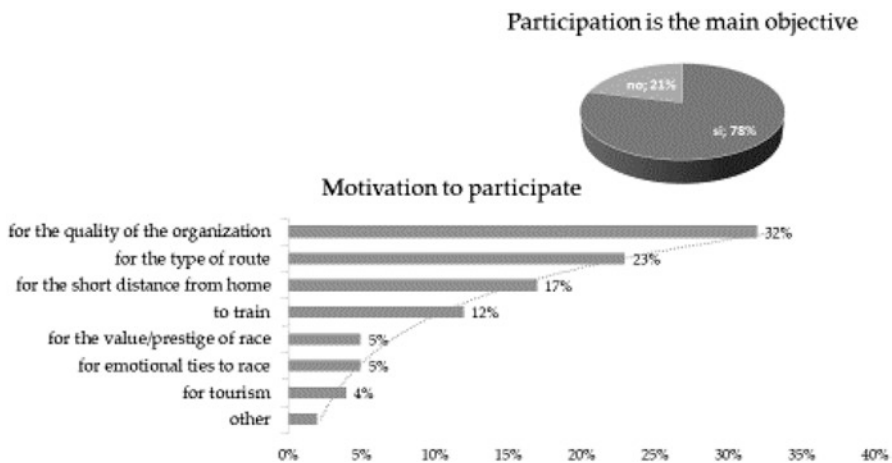


Fig. 2 Participate in the event: a motivated choice

city or in the surrounding areas, no more than 40 km from the headquarters, while the remainder comes from further away: 2% comes from the provinces of Lazio and day-return transfers, 27% from other Italian regions, and only 2% from abroad, in particular from European countries (76%).

Clearly, travelling from abroad requires logistic and organizational considerations: those arriving from abroad (88%) or from the most distant regions of Italy (65%) travel mainly by plane, train or bus (often provided by the sponsoring sports company), while participants from neighbouring regions (69%), from the same region, and from the metropolitan area of Rome (44%) prefer using a car. Alternatively, they choose public transport (39%).

The distance also influences the stay of at least one night (57%), and encourages the combination of participation in the race with other activities, thus extending the period of up to 2–3 nights in over a third of cases (38%). This period coincides with the stay of a typical short holiday, as indicated by all official statistics at national and international level. As little as 5% remains an entire week. The preferred accommodation for over half of the respondents (55%) is the hotel, but, when possible, the hospitality of friends and relatives is preferred (28%), while other types of solutions are less common. Non-resident participants limit the hotel stay to no more than one night in over one-third of cases (65%), almost half stay 2 nights (47%), over one-third 3 (35%) and 28% organizes for the whole week. Participants stayed in the territory for 3 (46%) or more nights (48%) as guests of friends or relatives (see Table 4).

In line with the literature, most of the participants tend to travel accompanied compared to those who came alone (63% vs. 36%,  $STD = 0.942$ ). In detail, 58% of residents and 77% of non-residents arrived accompanied. With more than one person involved, costs are obviously higher, and increases proportionally with the length of stay: 77% participants staying 1 night were accompanied, 80% staying 2 nights, 73% staying 3 nights and 88% staying the entire week (see Table 5).

Preferred supporters are predominantly family members (50%, the core consists mostly of 1–3 members, 76%), followed by friends (49%), and companions of the company (23%). Over half of non-residents with family stay at a hotel (53%), 30% with friends and relatives, 14% in a bed & breakfast, 2% in holiday homes and 1% in camping, staying 1 night in almost half of the cases (45%), 2 nights in a third

**Table 4** The permanence ( $STD = 0,886$ )

Means of transport	Stayed	He has not stayed	1 night	2 nights	3 nights	4–8 nights
<b>By plane</b>	97%	3%	38%	31%	23%	8%
<b>On the train</b>	81%	19%	51%	36%	9%	4%
<b>On the bus</b>	23%	77%	83%	11%	4%	2%
<b>By car/camper</b>	24%	76%	66%	26%	4%	4%
<b>By metro/bus</b>		100%				
<b>On motorbike/scooter</b>		100%				
<b>On foot or by bike</b>		100%				
<b>Total</b>	28%	72%	57%	28%	10%	5%

**Table 5** The accommodation

No. of nights	Hotel/Motel	Bread & Breakfast	Holiday homes, apartments, residences, Airbnb	Camping	House of friends or relatives	Total nights
<b>1</b>	<b>65%</b>	12%	1%	1%	21%	<b>56%</b>
<b>2</b>	47%	<b>18%</b>	2%	2%	31%	29%
<b>3</b>	35%	<b>18%</b>	1%		<b>46%</b>	10%
<b>4–8</b>	28%	8%	<b>12%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>48%</b>	5%
<b>Total</b>	55%	14%	2%	1%	28%	

(33%), 3 nights in 15% of cases and only 8% for the whole week. As the presence of family members ups expenses, the length of stay is shortened.

Given the above results, the participants of the half marathon appear mainly athletes and only partially sports tourists.

### ***The Economics, Environmental and Social Impact of the Rome-Ostia Half Marathon***

To examine the economic aspects, the research differentiated the clusters of residents and non-residents; the two groups obviously having a different impact on the factors under consideration. A total estimate of the overall budget can be made to identify the items on which the athletes prefer to spend their money.

Looking at the highest peaks, “**equipment**” (23,310–98,170 euros) is in first place. Probably, this is influenced by participant passion for the discipline and the desire to improve performance, and also by the awareness that the equipment is useful and can be further used. The “**journey**” (40,246–95,750 euros per capita) is in second place, especially for non-foreign residents, with “**other activities**” (18,840–€ 33,570) being in third place. This indicates the propensity of foreigners to combine sports and tourism. The further you come, the more you take advantage of the trip for tourist reasons. To a lesser extent, residents living in adjoining areas take advantage of combining participation in the race with trips, leisure activities and visits. The item “**accommodation**” (21,621–67,650 euros) is instead limited only to the category of non-residents, but indicates an important and significant potential for the hospitality sector. The trip produces benefits to the territory provided the different actors (organizers, institutions and sector of production of the sector) provide local offers that encourage tourism with participation in sporting events. Similarly, as prolonging, the stay would be positive for the catering sector (27,857–59,185 euros), investment in communication strategies and marketing of the territory is required to attract non-residents, and especially foreigners. Buying souvenirs remains residual and does not reach, in total, even 10,000 euros (see Table 6).

**Table 6** Average spending (MR%. STD = 3012)

Expense item	Habitants		Inhabitants		TOT.
	Euro	V. %	euro	V. %	
<b>Travel</b>	11.517	14.4%	56.485	<b>34.4</b>	67.998
<b>Accommodation</b>	–	–	41.909	<b>25.6</b>	41.909
<b>Food &amp; beverage</b>	9.534	11.9%	33.986	<b>20.7</b>	43.520
<b>Equipment</b>	45.315	<b>56.8%</b>	15.425	9.4	60.740
<b>Souvenir</b>	257	0.3	4.232	2.6	4.489
<b>Others</b>	13.225	16.6	12.980	7.9	26.205
<b>Overall average</b>	79.848	32.7	164.017	67.3	243.865

Overall, therefore, the participants invested a budget of 104,487 to 362,835 euros (with an average expenditure per person 55 to 190 euros), but the general expenditure for the participation of the half marathon is actually much more, as most of the athletes are accompanied by family members, friends and company partners. The expenses of the groups amount to a range from 468,045 to 1,805,150 euros, with an average surplus of 1572 percentage points higher than that of individual athletes. If the per capita share of individual participants is removed from this total, the expenditure of companions is shown to be between 363,558 and 1,442,315 euros. This is an interesting share since it concerns the tourist sector alone.

The items related to the “journey” of the athletes should be separated from the total figure, as they do not bring direct economic benefit to the territory. Some 77% of non-residents and 58% of residents were accompanied, predominantly (respectively 63% and 48%) by 1–3 people. Multiplying this number of participants by three (average number of escorts) and the average travel expense identified for the two categories gives an average estimate of the expenditure per group combined with each athlete. Travel expenses increase to 10,206 euros for residents and 82,530 euros for non-residents. Consequently, the net revenue remains between 313,106 and 1,264,035 euros. The income generated only by the athletes is worth an average of almost a billion euros: a figure that could be used to invest in local production projects and to create interesting and innovative offers in view of future editions. Despite the considerable potential of the sporting event to generate a good return, this appears not to be the case due to a lack of proper investment in the host territory.

Another dimension needing attention when planning activities of sports tourism and local sustainable development strategies concerns respect and protection for the environment.

During the research, a section of the questionnaire was dedicated precisely to verify participants’ perception concerning the measures taken by the organization to protect the environment. Since the half marathon does not make use of sports facilities but takes place on the road, no construction of ad hoc systems is required. Rather, the environmental issues requiring attention are anti-pollution and waste collection measures, recycling of resources and enhancement of local production. Among the measures implemented by the organization, those most appreciated by respondents were those protecting the environment from pollution, the positioning

**Table 7** Environmental protection measures taken by the organization (MR%. STD = 0,8,26)

	Habitants	Inhabitants	TOT.
Proximity to public transport stations (metro, bus, train)	<b>81%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Presence of chemical baths	<b>66%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>24%</b>
Collection of waste and support for the cleaning of the environment	<b>45%</b>	32%	15%
Use of shuttle buses	37%	<b>41%</b>	14%
Recycling	19%	<b>20%</b>	7%
Use of local suppliers of food and beverages	<b>14%</b>	12%	5%
Re-use excess supplies	<b>7%</b>	5%	3%
I do not know	1%	1%	2%
Total	72%	28%	<b>100%</b>

of the points of departure and arrival of the race in areas adjacent to public transport stations (30%), and the widespread presence of chemical toilettes (24%) along the entire route. These particular measures were even more appreciated by residents (respectively, 81% and 66% vs. 72% and 58% of non-residents, see Table 7).

Firstly, the responses show a widespread awareness of the interviewees on the subject in question, so that only a 2% could not answer, because perhaps not attentive to the issues in question. Secondly, there was a greater sensitivity among the over 40s (40–70 years) who generally recorded the highest percentage values in each response item, while the under 40s - especially young people in the 18 and the 29 years – are more attentive than others to the issue of recycling (14% compared to the total value of responses which stands at 3%). Finally, being more sensitive to local conditions, the residents underlined the organization’s commitment to cleaning-up the environment, with an effective collection of waste (45%). To a limited extent, but still higher than non-residents, residents, perhaps due to their knowledge of local products and brands, also noted the organization’s commitment to the recycling and valorization of the zero kilometer, through the use of local suppliers of food and beverages (14%), in addition to the re-use of excess supplies (7%). With regard to safeguarding against pollution, non-residents also appreciated the use of shuttle buses (41%) to accompany them when traveling from venues to the hotels, and one-fifth of them complimented the commitment of the organizational staff in the separate waste collection points made available.

During the interview with the President of the Half Marathon, it emerged that the “Green Code” had not been adopted, and that the code is not generally implemented in running events in Italy. In another interview, the President of the Rome Marathon confirmed that the “Green code” was not widespread in Italy and in the sports sector in general. This, of course, does not mean that events and sports events are not attentive to environmental protection and preservation, especially during the race. Indeed, even the answers provided by the participants confirm a positive orientation of the organization. However, widespread use of the code could lead to the recognition of best practices, rewarding them through a special “green stamp”. This could be a first step in further stimulating the dissemination of “ecological” knowledge and

awareness, something which sport has been promoting for the last fifteen years: above all, it could become a useful reputation tool to encourage organizing committees to operate in favour of a greater synergy with local institutions in favour of common sustainable development projects.

In addition to protecting the environment, an organization that encourages sustainable development should put itself at the service of society and be sensitive to the livability and growth of local communities, paying attention to integration, inclusion, cultural enhancement, and supporting initiatives and activities that can involve citizenship and promote the local economy. These aspects were discussed with the President of the Half Marathon and confirmed during the interviews with the participants.

To testify the social the commitment of the Half Marathon and cooperation with all the different stakeholders, the President pointed out the organization's involvement in charity activities, especially those in favour of the disabled: the organizing committee has long collaborated with several non-profit associations (including: Sant'Egidio, Comen, Sport without frontiers, and various Italian non-profit organizations) in order to provide hot meals to people in difficulty, and to encourage free participation of disabled people in the race (around 130–140).

Equally important on a social level is the strategic role of the event in developing a sense of belonging and identification on the part of the community with the half marathon. The President emphasizes that the event, along with the Rome Marathon, is eagerly anticipated by athletes and inhabitants alike, both categories living the event intensely. For example, local inhabitants competing in the race consider it as a sort of “derby” – they check the results to see if they have ranked better than their competing relatives, friends, colleagues and company partners. In general, they are all-proud of the event and, especially when they hear about it in the newspapers and even more during their travels, they are proud of “being part of it” and that it is a “thing of their own”.

Confirming these statements, as already emerged during the description of participant profiles, more than half (58%) is satisfied or very satisfied with participating in the competition, with two thirds being “regular” actors of the event, participating in several previous editions, 92% intent on returning. This consolidated loyalty is confirmed during the year, so much so that the community on Facebook is made up of a number practically equivalent, if not higher, to those who then sign up for the event (interview with the President of the Half Marathon).

Taking part in the Half Marathon is almost considered a party, an anticipated appointment throughout the year (see Table 8): without significant differences in gender or age, the competition is thus fun (94% of all participants) and a chance to test one's abilities (81% of all participants). The residents like the opportunity to exercise and improve their physical condition (84%) in a situation that offers the opportunity to relax (63%) and socialize (63%), while non-residents emphasize the advantage of trying a different experience (61%) and traveling and visiting new places (59%).

**Table 8** I consider it important to participate in the event for: (MR%. STD = 0,934)

	Habitants	Inhabitants	% N. Respondents on the total
Having fun	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>94%</b>
Challenge myself	<b>82%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>81%</b>
Exercise and improve physical condition	<b>84%</b>	78%	81%
Relax	63%	<b>68%</b>	64%
Socialize	58%	<b>60%</b>	59%
Try a new experience	46%	<b>61%</b>	50%
Health reasons	47%	40%	45%
To compete	42%	42%	42%
Travel and visit new places	28%	<b>59%</b>	36%
Support a friend and / or relative	28%	26%	27%
Total	28%	72%	<b>100%</b>

**Legend:** the percentages indicate the number of respondents who consider each item fairly or very important and the percentage of the number of respondents is calculated on the total number of respondents

Two thirds of the residents see the event as a chance for fun and socialization (63%), meeting and staying with friends and relatives, while non-residents, in addition to the race, eat out (64%) and visit the city (60%) during their stay. As further confirmation of the tourist potential inherent in a sporting event (already emerged in the literature and in different parts of the research), two-thirds of non-residents (63%) also say they were impressed by the host city, and were willing to return just as tourists.

At the end of the questionnaire, an open question was asked aimed at tracing the strengths and weaknesses of the territory with respect to tourist hospitality opportunities. Firstly, it is interesting to note that in a web survey, the usual percentage of respondents to an open question is rather low, usually no more than 10%, while in this case it was almost one-fifth (19%). In addition, initially designed only for non-residents, it was decided to leave the possibility of response also to residents, as their privileged point of view can be equally important in highlighting the potential and limitations of the territory. Notably, the latter explicitly outlined the limits (69%), while non-residents mostly underlined positive elements (57%).

In general, both categories of respondents (68%: 63% residents vs. 71% non-residents) underlined the value of the host city Rome, for its uniqueness, beauty and wealth of tourist, cultural and especially, artistic and historical sites to visit. A 10% of non-residents also considered the municipality of Ostia a pleasant place, with its sea front and beautiful promenade. An equivalent share (10%) attributed added value to the reception and quality of the organization (also in this case, especially by Italian participants, 12%).

Among the negative factors, almost half of non-residents (48%) said that, in the absence of new incentives, they might opt for other destinations in the future. The other negative aspects indicated by one-third (35%) of non-residents, concern

problems typical of the territory and local hospitality – chaos, decay, dirt and delinquency – which can discourage a return to the capital. They considered the tourism infrastructure poor or even of poor quality (13%), and not very welcoming (4%).

## Conclusions

The case study highlighted some potential for growth due to a solid, attentive and committed organizational committee, while it also indicated some limitations by a lack of a relational network to support economic and socio-cultural development deriving from the event. In fact, the participants are very loyal to this event, most participating in more than one edition. However, the expenditure on the part of the participants has little impact on the development of the territory. This is partly a result of a reduced participant spending power, but mainly due to a lack of a network capable of exploiting resources to enhance the territory, as evident from interviews with the organizers.

This prevents opportunities provided by the sporting event from being exploited, to start a sustainable and virtuous local development project, especially desirable given the socio-political conditions of the territory, and the need to redevelop and enhance the enormous historical, cultural and tourist potential of the area, as declared by the participants.

As indicated by the literature, the concept of sport and the sporting event as a lever for local sustainable development is fully confirmed by the present research, but given the results, sports tourism development in the area appears to be rather thwarted in the absence of project synergy initiatives. The dialogue between institutions, organizers and stakeholders is a fundamental requirement to fully exploit the sporting event for local and tourism development. In some areas in Italy, local consortia have been created to work on sports tourism projects. In these best practices, the network listens and gratifies the expectations of residents and tourists, promotes the image of sport in the host location, protects the quality of life of local populations, without harming, indeed even enhancing the social, cultural and environmental values of the territory, and improving the prospects for the future. This is the right way forward to enhance the half marathons as a strategic tool of the host territory.

Unfortunately, the comments made by the participants are rather timely and well represent the Italian scenario in general. There is no doubt that Italy is characterized by cultural wealth, large historical and artistic heritage, a number of fairs and world exhibitions and the presence of a significant number of international sporting events. The city of Rome alone hosts every year events of excellence for many sports - the Rome Marathon, the International Tennis Open, Piazza di Siena, the Golden Gala, and the Six Nations rugby. Moreover, few other destinations in the world offer such a vast and heterogeneous combination of history, culture, artistic treasures,



landscape, sport, fashion, design, food and wine as Italy. For this reason, it should be first in each world ranking on tourist destinations, both nationally and internationally. However, it only comes sixth place in the world ranking UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) (2015) and, as reported by Federalberghi, is even in decline. Further, in Europe Italy is twelfth for its offers of hotels. The main problems are bureaucracy, difficulty in attracting investments, poor maintenance of tourist facilities and transport infrastructure, personnel not adequately trained to face strong world competition, limited ability to fully understand the demand and develop competitive tourism products, and a lack of price competitiveness (Angeloni, 2013: 125–141). These problems need to be addressed and resolved to re-launch a sector that only represents 10.2% of national GDP (Ontit, 2016) at the moment, despite its potential.

Based on these considerations, some recommendations for the various stakeholders involved in the organization of events can be summarized, as follows:

1. Organizers need to more effectively attract investors and create a closer relationship with local businesses to increase local development. The organizers need to promote local networks and to strengthen a sense of “ownership” by the different stakeholders with regard to the events;
2. Through their increased returns, companies could then also invest in improving accommodation facilities and thus generate a virtuous circuit to attract tourists;
3. In this study, the municipality was found to be completely absent, mainly for political reasons. In general, as already mentioned, the scarce support by local institutions is a widespread problem due to a lack of sensitivity on the part of policy makers, or a lack of resources and economic funds. In accordance with the analysis of some good practices in major events, this study shows the benefits for the administrations in terms of image, visibility and economic returns when supporting sports initiatives. Given the general lack of awareness, the organizers need to explain the advantages to the municipalities, encouraging them to become protagonists of the organizational network, so as to improve institutional-citizen relations, and the quality of the services offered, and to capitalize on the value of the territory;
4. Finally, for academics, studying cases of sporting events, which support local development, is important, since such cases can significantly help define effective public policies. This book, both in the development of a common methodology and in comparing different cases in various parts of the world, exemplifies the value of this type of approach. In Italy, few such studies are available, and greater commitment in this direction is required.

This study of the half marathon has some limitations. Although 20% of the participants answered the questionnaire (already a statistically representative threshold), an even greater number of answers would be desirable. One of the main problems is how to sensitize people to participate in scientific research. In the future, the researcher needs to further actively encourage participation of the participants

and the inhabitants. On this occasion, this was done through numerous solicitations, especially through the organizers' newsletter and at the Village of the Half Marathon, but in the future, we need to begin even earlier, disseminating the research objectives, from the moment registrations are open to the race.

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# Portugal: Small Scale Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development. The Case of the *III Running Wonders Coimbra*



Ricardo Melo, Carla Sofia Andrade, Derek Van Rheenen, and Claude Sobry

**Abstract** Tourism is a strategic industry for the Portuguese economy, with a continual growth since the beginning of the twenty-first century. The sport tourism sector is also rapidly expanding, highlighting in particular golf, nautical sport tourism and nature sport tourism. Sporting events are also considered strategic opportunities for tourism in Portugal, especially the small scale sport tourism events, particularly, running events or races, as those who have had the greatest growth. Despite these developments, few studies have analyzed the impact of small scale sport tourism events and their potential for local sustainable development. In an effort to fill this gap in the literature, the present study focused on the III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra. An online survey was provided to a sample of 345 participants of the event. An in-depth, semi-structured interview was also conducted to the executive director of the company who organized the running race. Demographic and participation profiles of the runners, as well as, economic, environmental and sociocultural impacts were analyzed. This study concluded that, organizing such small scale sporting events on a regular basis can serve as a catalyst for local sustainable development by ensuring the use of existing resources, the involvement of the host community and a consistent flow of visitors.

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## Introduction

*Tourism* is a *strategic* industry for the *Portuguese* economy, with a continual growth since the beginning of the twenty-first century. In 2016, the contribution of tourism consumption to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Portugal was 12.6%; in 2017, that percentage had increased to 14.1%. In 2018, tourism contributed 14.6% to the country's GDP (Statistics Portugal, 2019). This growth can be explained by several factors, including a positive image of the country, its culture and heritage, a safe environment, good climatic conditions with natural diversity, and the hospitality of the Portuguese population (Tourism of Portugal, 2007, 2013, 2017). Public policies and private investment can both be credited with this positive image. The tourism industry in Portugal has been recognized internationally as the European and Worldwide Best Touristic Destination by the World Travel Awards for the last three consecutive years (2017–2019).

In Portugal, sport tourism is an important sector within the larger industry. For example, three sporting products are included in the top ten strategic products of the Portuguese tourism strategic policy: (i) golf; (ii) nautical tourism, which includes physical activities such as surfing, windsurfing, sailing and other nautical sports and (iii) nature tourism, which includes both soft nature sports such as trekking and hard nature sports such as rafting, kayaking, hiking and climbing (Tourism of Portugal, 2007, 2013).

Portugal is recognized as a major golf tourism destination (Hudson & Hudson, 2010) and this activity assumes a significant position in the country's tourism opportunities (Gomes, Gustavo, Melo, & Pedragosa, 2017). Globally, golf enjoyed an annual growth of 12–15% in the last decade, while there were 2.1 million travellers in 2011, and experts estimate that there will be three million golf tourists in 2020 (Tourism of Portugal, 2013). Tourism and real estate as satellite activities of golf in Portugal (Hudson & Hudson, 2010) generate a significant set of indirect and direct benefits, including within an expanding job market. This partnership has led to an increased number of golf courses and affiliated enthusiasts. In 2013, there were 88 golf courses and 14,198 affiliated players, 24.1% of whom are foreign nationals, but with a second home in Portugal (Gomes et al., 2017). The competitiveness of Portugal regarding golf tourism is related to the country's favourable climatic conditions that allows enthusiasts to play the sport throughout the year. There are likewise a range of these golf courses, with different configurations and varying levels of difficulty. A significant number of signature golf courses (e.g., Robert Trent Jones Jr., Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Arthur Hills, Nick Faldo and S. Ballesteros) can be found in Portugal. Many high-quality golf courses are concentrated in the Algarve and Lisbon regions, with several competitive golf courses include on the PGA

tournament circuit. Algarve and Lisbon were selected Golf Destination of the Year and Golf Resort of the Year (2006, 2007 and 2009) by International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) (Tourism of Portugal, 2013). Portugal also won the World's Best Golf Destination for five consecutive years, from 2014 until 2018 (last edition) by the Golf World Awards.

The extensive coastline of approximately 943 kilometres (667 km around the Azores archipelago and 250 km along the Madeira archipelago) helps to make Portugal one of the most exclusive parts of the European Economic Area. The ocean is, thus, a natural resource and reassurance, placing Portugal in the centre of an active economic market associated with the sea, including for the purposes of nautical sport tourism (Gomes & Cunha, 2017). The recognition of the value of the sea for sport, tourism and recreational activities has led to a reconfiguration in the type of economic activity in these coastal areas. For example, there has been a reduction in fishing and a marked increase in nautical sports and other tourism activities. The value of these activities has been recognized at the national and international level (Gomes & Cunha, 2017), and has led to the development of several strategic efforts, such as the *National Strategy for the Sea* (Presidência do Conselho de Ministros, 2014), the *National Strategic Plan for Tourism* (Tourism of Portugal, 2007, 213, 2017) and the *Hypercluster of the Economy of the Sea* (SaeR/ACL, 2009).

The implementation of these strategies have materialized in businesses, activities and events in which sport is the central factor: (1) the creation of high performance centres for surfing along the Portuguese coastline; (2) the promotion and organization of sport events such as the America's Cup 2012, the Extreme Sailing Series 2012, the Volvo Ocean Race 2012, 2015 and 2018 and the World Surf Circuit; (3) the creation of nautical sports destinations related, such as surfing in Peniche and Ericeira, as well as the big waves in Nazaré; and (4) the creation of businesses dedicated wholly to surfing and diving (Gomes & Cunha, 2017; Melo & Gomes, 2017). Nautical tourism represented almost three million travelers, approximately 1.2% of the total amount of visits made by Europeans to the country, with a market growth from 8.0 to 10.0% per year (Tourism of Portugal, 2006b).

Nature-based tourism is often presented as the fastest growing segment within the tourism industry, with an increase of between 10.0% and 30.0% per year (Balmford, et al., 2009; Bell, Tyrvaïnen, Sievanen, Prbstl, & Simpson, 2007; Marques, Reis, & Menezes, 2010; Mehmetoglu, 2007; Melo, Van Rheenen & Gammon, 2020). Further, it is estimated that 10.0% to 20.0% of all global international travel is, directly or indirectly, related to the enjoyment of and interaction with nature or the environment (Centre for Responsible Travel, 2015). Besides its majestic coastline, Portugal presents geomorphologic and climatic characteristics that have allowed for the development of a wide range of nature sports activities, which can be experienced under optimal conditions throughout the year. Portugal has extensive rural topography (90.0% of the territory) and natural spaces formed by environmentally protected areas (23.0% of the territory), encompassing the sea and its beaches, rivers and other aquatic spaces, along with mountains and cliffs. Worldwide, it is not easy to find such a variety and density of geography to develop nature sports activities (Melo & Gomes, 2016).

With this in mind, nature sports are now recognized as a potential and growing market for tourism development (Tourism of Portugal, 2006a). In almost all the regions of the country, the investment into this unique sector has led to the creation of a network of trekking routes, mountain biking (MTB) trails, training centres for trail running and rock climbing schools, among other areas of growth. Data from the Statistics Portugal (2019) also show the growing tendency of the private sector to offer nature sports opportunities in Portugal, as the number of companies operating in the nature and nautical tourism sectors grows. Data from 2004 until 2013 demonstrate an annual growth in almost all industry indicators, particularly in the number of companies, the number of staff and an increase in revenues (Gomes et al., 2017). It has been estimated that nature-based tourism in Portugal produces a market of 22 million tourists per year, with an average annual growth of 7.0% (1997–2004), representing 9.0% of the total number of visits made by the European travellers (Tourism of Portugal, 2006a).

Sporting events are also considered strategic opportunities for tourism in Portugal (Tourism of Portugal, 2017). Every year thousands of sporting events are organized around the world, from “mega events” that attract thousands of visitors to small scale local events that attract a small number of visitors (Sofield, 2003; Van Rheen, Sobry, & Melo, *this volume*). Portugal is accompanying this growth trend. Since the turn of the century, the country has received the bid to host several worldwide sporting competitions, such as the 2004 UEFA European Championship. Other major, medium and small scale events have been organized and sponsored throughout the country, reflecting multiple sports, such as football (e.g., 2014 UEFA Champions League Final), surfing (e.g., one stage of the World Surf League in Peniche for the tenth consecutive year, beginning in 2009), trail running (e.g. Madeira Island Ultra Trail, since 2009), and road races (e.g., International Half Marathon of Lisbon, since 2013).

With the increasing interest in sport tourism events, several studies (e.g., Armstrong, 1985; Beioley, Crookston, & Tyrer, 1988; Brown, Chalip, Jago, & Mules, 2002; Crompton, 2004, 2006; Hudson, 2001; Kasimati, 2003; Lazer, 1985; Preuss, 2005, 2007) have analyzed these major sport events, highlighting the positive economic impact of hosting these kind of events. For example, a recent study investigated the organization of a sample of 17 large-scale sporting events (e.g., Football Champions League matches, Volvo Ocean Race Lisbon, and Half Marathon of Lisbon) in the city of Lisbon, Portugal, between September 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015. The study estimated that these sporting events in Lisbon combined to contribute an economic impact of 100 M€ during the 1 year period (Municipality of Lisbon and INDEG/ISCTE, 2016).

In addition to the economic impact of these events, the social and environmental impacts of these sporting events began to be studied (Weed, 2009). In this regard, several authors (e.g., Hall, 1992; Roche, 1994; Sack & Johnson, 1996) criticized the development of large-scale or mega sporting events from a sustainability perspective, focusing on the negative environmental and social impacts experienced by host or resident populations. In addition, several authors (e.g., Daniels & Norman, 2003; Getz, 2008; Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012; Higham, 1999; O'Brien & Chalip,



2008; Walo, Bull, & Breen, 1996) suggested that small scale sport tourism events could provide a more sustainable form of development for local and regional communities.

Following this perspective, the current study, integrated in an international project supported by the International Research Network In Sport Tourism (IRNIST), followed the same comparative methodology used to collect data in nine countries across three continents (see Van Rheenen, Sobry, & Melo, [this volume](#)). An online survey was provided to a sample of 345 participants (16.0% of the total number of participants) of the III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra, Portugal, between October 18–31, 2016. An in-depth, semi-structured interview was also conducted to the executive director of the company who organized the running race in December 2, 2016.

## The III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra

### *The City of Coimbra*

The *III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra – the Race of Knowledge* is an annual road race held in the city of Coimbra, Portugal. The current case study examines this running event, which was held on October 9, 2016. Coimbra is a municipality that belongs to the Center Region; it is the capital of the district bearing the same name. Coimbra is the fourth largest urban centre in Portugal (after Lisbon, Porto and Braga), and the population of the municipality in 2016 was 134,348, occupying an area of 319.40 km<sup>2</sup> (PORDATA, 2019). The GDP per capita of the Region of Coimbra in 2016 was 15706.6€ and the business volume generated was 9757 M€ (Statistics Portugal, 2019). The business volume generated within the Municipality of Coimbra in 2016 was 2627 M€, which corresponds to 26.9% of the total of the Center Region and 0.8% of Portugal in total (Statistics Portugal, 2019). The tertiary sector is the most important within the Center Region, generating an economic volume of 2207 M€. This amount corresponds to 83.2% of the total income generated (Statistics Portugal, 2019). Within this region, the largest employer is the health sector, corresponding to 15.0% of direct total jobs and 6.0% of indirect jobs, with a business volume of 230 M€ (PORDATA, 2019).

Historically, Coimbra is a university city, where the University of Coimbra resides. It is one of the oldest universities in Europe and one of the largest in Portugal. The university was founded by the Portuguese King D. Dinis in 1290, moving back and forth from Lisbon to Coimbra several times, before finally settling in Coimbra in 1537. The education sector, especially higher education, is extremely important in Coimbra; in 2016, 34,614 students were registered and 2612 professors were employed at higher education institutions within the city (PORDATA, 2019). Since 2013, the University of Coimbra -Alta and Sofia – has been named a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Since then, the tourism sector in Coimbra has grown,

especially cultural tourism, and also other types of tourism, such as sport tourism. Data from Statistics Portugal (2019) report that in 2016, 572,651 tourists visited Coimbra, with an average stay of 1.5 nights.

### *Sport Tourism Events in Coimbra*

The promotion of sport tourism events in the Region of Coimbra has also increased substantially in the past decades. Numerous sporting events have been organized, ranging from international, national, regional and local events. Several international competitions were held in 2016, such as three Judo European Cups (U21, Junior and Cadete European Cup Coimbra) and the 2016 ICF Canoe Sprint World Cup 3 at the Nautical Centre of Montemor-o-Velho. Other national and regional level events were also held within the Coimbra region, including several trail running events (e.g., *Trail de Contínbriga Terras de Sicó* and *Trilho dos Abutres*). Mountain biking (MTB) competitions are frequently sponsored at both the regional and local level (e.g., *Raid BTT Lagoas de Mira*, *Rota das Adegas*) organized by local associations and clubs.

The European Universities Games were held in July 2018 and organized in the city of Coimbra. This is Europe's largest higher education sporting event of the year, and the largest multisport event ever organized in Portugal. Over 4000 participants from Europe's leading universities came to compete in 13 sports between July 15–28 (EUSA, 2019).

Mirando do Corvo, a municipality within the Region of Coimbra, hosted the *Trilhos dos Abutres* – World Trail Championship from June 6–9, 2019, a joint sponsorship between the *Associação Abutrica*, the Portuguese Athletics Federation, the International Trail Running Association, and the International Association of Ultrarunners. This race follows a circular route with a total distance of 44 kilometers, and a vertical climb of 2150 meters. The most competitive part of the race took place on June 8 and brought together the world's elite runners to consecrate the new world champions in men's, women's and teams. This elite competition boasted more than 500 athletes from 52 countries. The open competition, which represents the completion of the ninth edition of the *Ultra Trilho dos Abutres*, took place on June 9 and hosted around 1000 athletes. In addition to mobilizing a total of 1500 athletes, the event received over 20 thousand visitors throughout the 4 days of the World Trail Championships (*Trilhos dos Abutres*, 2019).

Road race events increase each year within the Region of Coimbra. This tendency is marked by the emergence of several informal running groups and a growth in the number of running races in the country. As an example of this informal community of practice, Night Runners Coimbra is an informal group of people led by professors of the Sports and Leisure department from Coimbra Education School. Established in 2013, the Night Runners Coimbra organize an informal running race every Wednesday afternoon, with an average participation of 200 runners. These informal trends have also led to a growing tendency to organize formal events. In

2016, were organized at least seven road running events along the year in the city of Coimbra (Run Portugal, 2019).

### ***Organization of the III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra***

The *III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra* was organized by GlobalSport Ltd., a private company that sponsors sporting events in Portugal. This event is part of the EDP Running Wonders circuit – road races in cities with heritage sites recognized by UNESCO. The Running Wonders website stated that the EDP Running Wonders Race aims to foster the sustainable integration of human beings with culture and the environment. In the promotion of an active and healthy lifestyle, the event seeks to develop participant experiences that successfully integrate the practice of physical activity with environmental sustainability and cultural heritage (Running Wonders, 2016).

The *EDP Running Wonders* events take place in five distinct locations throughout the year: Douro Vinhateiro in May, Guimarães in June, Viseu in September, Coimbra in October, and Évora in November. Except for the EDP Running Wonder of Dão in Viseu, all of these races occur in world heritage sites. This exception represents the manifestation of the support of Running Wonders for the desire of the people of Viseu to see its historic centre recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Centre. All of these races included a half marathon (21 km), a mini marathon (10 km) and a walking (5 km) event (Running Wonders, 2016).

The third edition of the EDP Running Wonders Coimbra had a total of 2155 registered participants, including 1053 in the half marathon and 1102 in the mini marathon. There was no official accounting for the number of walking participants. This number exceeded the number of participants registered in 2015, according to the organizer of the event, an increase as a result of the marketing plan implemented by the company and the event's promotion both nationally and internationally (Running Wonders, 2016).

The executive director of the company stated that the event involved a number of local entities, such as the University of Coimbra, the Academic Association of Coimbra, scout associations, student associations, professional schools, academic groups and running groups of the city. In total, there were 140 volunteers, mostly local, who helped with signage of the course and the distribution of race kits to participants.

The event had no public funding. The exception to this lack of funding was the financial contribution from the Municipality of Coimbra and the Center of Portugal Regional Tourism Entity for the payment of television coverage from local stations. During the 3 days prior to the race, news reports and interviews were conducted. On Saturday and Sunday, October 8 and 9, 2016, the *Paço das Escolas* at the University of Coimbra provided live broadcasting. On Sunday morning, there was a live broadcast of the entire race for two and a half hours. In addition, the Municipality of

Coimbra collaborated with logistical support, human resources, transportation and post-race clean-up of public spaces utilized during the event.

The event was primarily supported by sponsors, as participants' registrations represented only 10.0% of total revenue. The sponsors of the race in Coimbra are the same in all running races of the Running Wonders circuit. There were seven financial sponsors and 15 non-financial sponsors, who provided vehicles, insurance and other products. The company's main sponsor is EDP – Energies of Portugal, which is also a naming sponsor. There are also six official sponsors, who have a greater reputation than the rest, with receive publicity, at the starting and finishing lines and on the official t-shirt of the event. The remaining partners are mentioned in the website's digital communication, social networks and newsletters. Of the non-financial sponsors, AVIS is the most prominent that provides payment in kind; the company offers more than 150 vehicles throughout the year, a significant financial savings for event organizers.

### *Demographic and Participation Profiles of the Runners*

Response data from the survey instrument was collected from 345 participants of the *III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra* event and showed that the respondents were mostly married (61.2%), male (72.8%), adults with an average age of 41 years old (40.9% between 31–40 years). The sample was primarily composed of individuals with higher levels of education (71.1%), employed (74.2%), with an income between 1001–1500 Euros (30.7%) or more than 1500 Euros (29.6%). The vast majority of participants were residents of Portugal (97.7%), mostly living outside the Municipality of Coimbra (60.6%).

According to the data, the majority (62.0%) of respondents participated in the event for the first time. The vast majority of participants travelled by car to the event (85.5%) and were accompanied (82.6%), by family members (48.7%) and/or friends (47.0%). The data found that an average of 3.8 companions (standard deviation of 3.9; maximum 35 and the minimum 1) accompanied event participants.

Only 69 of the respondents who stayed overnight in the city identified the number of overnight stays. The average stay for this group of respondents was 1.2 nights, ranging from 1 to 7 nights. Of the 66 responses obtained in relation to the type of accommodation, 39.4% of respondents reported that they stayed in a hotel/motel, 37.9% chose to stay with family or friends, 12.1% stayed in a pension or residential accommodation, while 3.0% chose a campsite to stay overnight. Of the respondents who chose the option "Other" – 12.1%, of these reported having been housed in a hostel (5 respondents, out of 8).

In order to more fully understand the motivating factors underlying the reason(s) for choosing the event, from the most important (1) to the least important (4), respondents' reported that proximity to the event was the most determining factor (with a mean of 2.31), followed by the quality of the organization of the event, (with an average of 2.34). The geographical proximity indicated as the main motivating

factor for the choice of the event is in line with the fact that the majority of respondents did not stay overnight (77.1%). The least important factor, with an average response of 2.78, was for tourism.

Regarding the reasons for participating in the event, respondents highlighted having fun, getting physical exercise, the challenge, enhanced health, and participation as a way to relax. All of these factors received an average of more than 5 on a likert-type scale (where 1 is not important and 7 is very important). Less important reasons for participating in the race were taking a trip to know the destination, the support and accompaniment of friends or family and the novelty, all with an average score of less than 4. With an average score between 4 and 5 were competition and socialization. The data demonstrated that participation in the event was the main motivation for the trip, indicated by 70.0% of respondents.

### *Economic Impacts*

Participants were asked to rank order the greatest amount (1) to the least amount of money (6) spent during the event. The data show that travel was the most significant expenditure (average of 3.23), followed by the registration fee (average of 3.27) and food (average of 3.28). It should be noted, however, that all of these expenditures had an average rating of between 3 and 4; we can therefore conclude that there was a wide dispersion of responses to this survey question, confirmed with standard deviations ranging between 1.35 and 1.99.

With regard to the costs associated with travel, accommodation, food and souvenirs, the data show that travel expenses were the most significant. Respondents incurred travel expenses in the total amount of €12,494.50, corresponding to 50.9% of total expenses incurred (in these 4 categories). With regard to food expenses, these expenses totalled €6991, representing 28.5% of total expenses. Accommodation costs totalled €3856, corresponding to 15.7% of overall expenses. Souvenirs, totaling €1206, accounted for 4.9% of total charges.

The average amount spent per respondent on the trip to the event was € 36.21, the food assumes an average of € 20.63, the accommodation entailed an average value of € 11.17 and expenses on the purchase of souvenirs on average were of € 3.49 per participant surveyed. Overall, the total expenses of the respondents, benefitting the city of Coimbra, equalled € 15,287.00, representing on average an expense of € 44.31 per respondent. Table 1 below shows the projections of expenditure for all participants (2155). It also presents the projection of expenses to approximately double the participants (5000) if one chooses to organize another similar event. In this way, we have a greater prediction of the direct economic impact that the event provides and of the potential that it could have in the future, if and when replicated.

For the evaluation of the economic impact of the event we chose to calculate the direct economic impact based on the participants' expenses, as advocated by Barajas, Coates and Sanchez (2016). In line with Lee and Taylor (2005), direct expenses should be considered as the starting point for calculating the impact of a

**Table 1** Expenditure projection [*in euros*]

Items	Expenditure projection		
	[N = 345]	[N = 2155]	[N = 5000]
Travel	12.494,50 €	78.045,36 €	181.079,71 €
Food	6.991,00 €	43.668,42 €	101.318,84 €
Accommodation	3.856,00 €	24.086,03 €	55.884,06 €
Souvenirs	1.205,50 €	7.530,01 €	17.471,01 €
Total of expenditures	24.544,00€	153.329,82€	355.753,62€
Total of expenditures in the city	15.287,00 €	95.488,36 €	221.550,72 €

small scale sporting event. The next step, if we were able to calculate all of the economic impacts associated with this event, would be to incorporate indirect and induced impacts. For this, there are several economic models developed that require the collection of data not performed in the present study. In addition, many authors emphasize that the determination of the economic impact of a sporting event is very difficult to assess and a subjective accounting, leading to lack of precision, the use of inappropriate multipliers and the risk of exaggeration in the study estimates (Barajas et al., 2016; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Saayman & Saayman, 2014).

Our analysis of the results verifies that the direct economic impact of the 2016 event to the city of Coimbra was approximately €95,000. If this event, or another with similar characteristics, was held twice a year and was promoted in order to increase participation, we project that these events could have a direct economic impact on the city of approximately €221,000.

## ***Environmental Impacts***

Respondents were asked about the measures related to environmental preservation adopted by the organization of the event; 314 respondents (91.0%) considered that environmental preservation measures were taken while 31 (9.0%) answered that they were not assured that such measures were taken by event organizers.

It is generally understood that the company promotes a set of measures, with the objective of minimizing the negative environmental impacts resulting from the event. Some of these measures include the use of public transportation to and from the event, recycling all trash and bottled water produced during the event, the promotion of recycling workshops and tree planting in the days leading up to the event, and the use of cork on the medals and gateways of departure and arrival (data obtained from interview and direct observation).

In addition to the performance of the event organization, it is also necessary to analyze the environmental impact based on the behaviour of the participants. For example, according to Collins, Roberts and Munday (2012), these behaviours include the means of travelling to the event, food and accommodation options, the average length of stay, the type of accommodation chosen, the recycling practices

adopted by participants and complementary activities chosen during the event. These authors conclude that the form of displacement for the event is the factor that contributes most to the ecological footprint of the participants. In this study, participants travelled on average 734 km, and the most used means of transportation were the train (65.6%) and the car (22.6%), the latter with an average occupancy of 2.6 people.

In order to analyze the “carbon footprint” related to car travel to the event, we calculated the average number of kilometres travelled per participant, taking into consideration the average occupancy rate per vehicle (Collins et al., 2012). According to those respondents who travelled by car (295 participants), we estimate that the total number of kilometres travelled was  $\pm 48,854$  km. This translates to an average of  $\pm 166$  km ( $48,854$  km / 295 participants) kilometres travelled by car. When considering the average occupancy rate per vehicle (2.6 people per car), we then calculated a total of kilometres travelled by the group of respondents to be 18,790 km ( $48,854$  km / 2.6). Therefore, on average, each respondent travelled  $\pm 64$  km ( $166$  km/2.6) to and from the event. Because this was a local and regional event, where the average number of kilometres travelled was relatively low (64 km), the participants’ carbon footprint was minimized. This supports the contention that there are potential advantages in the organization of these type of small scale sporting events, as argued by Gibson et al. (2012).

### ***Socio-Cultural Impacts***

Respondents were also questioned about other activities experienced during the event besides participation in the actual race. Going out for lunch or dinner was the most noted activity, reported by 214 respondents (62.0%). Shopping was the second most common activity during the event, reported by 79 respondents (22.9%). Sixty respondents (17.4%) reported having visited relatives during the event. Less frequent activities included participation in recreational activities (10.1%), visits to museums (7.5%), visits to theme parks (6.4%), participation in cultural activities (2.0%), and participation in other sporting events (2.0%).

Finally, the data show that 98.0% of respondents liked the city of Coimbra, 97.0% intend to participate in future editions of this particular event and 92.0% intend to participate in future organized races in the city. When asked if they intend to return to the city for tourism, 63.0% of respondents confirmed this intention.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Portugal and the country has been recognized globally as the Worldwide Best Touristic Destination for three consecutive years (World Travel Awards). The sport tourism sector is also rapidly expanding

as a significant part of the national tourism industry in Portugal, highlighting in particular golf, nautical sport tourism and nature sport tourism.

Event sport tourism is also one of the newest strategies of governmental tourism policies; this market is also in expansion. Despite these developments, few studies have analyzed the impact of small scale event sport tourism in Portugal.

In an effort to fill this gap in the literature on small scale sports tourism events and the potential for local sustainable development, the present study focused on the III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra. This event meets the requirements of the small scale event sport tourism advocated by Gibson (1998b), defined as an event where the number of athletes generally exceed the number of spectators and, as a rule, receive little media coverage. Through a survey administered to participants of the half and mini marathon, as well as an interview with the head of the organizing company, this study examined the participation profile and socio-demographic characteristics of race respondents. The study also sought to determine the economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts resulting from the event.

Many authors have argued that small scale sports tourism events can support local sustainable development, providing positive inducers of economic growth while minimizing negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Getz, 2008; Gibson et al., 2012; Higham, 1999; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008; Walo et al., 1996). This literature suggests that these events attract fewer participants, and are therefore less invasive to the host community; additionally, these events are more compatible with the infrastructures and resources available in the host community, and do not entail large public investment. Small scale sport tourism events have the potential to provide economic benefits to the host community, including income generated through participant expenditures on accommodations, food and beverage. This, in turn, improves the quality of life of the local population by increasing income to the area. These events likewise attract visitors who otherwise would not travel to the location. This may also increase the sense of pride of the local population by providing them with entertainment and an influx of enthusiastic visitors. Because the events are small scale, there will be less negative environmental impacts due to the lower use of motor vehicles during the event. The data from our study corroborate these conclusions.

This case study found that the direct economic impact to the city of Coimbra was roughly 95,000 Euros. Several studies confirm that promoting small scale events tends to provide economic value to the community and that the majority of participants' expenses result from accommodation and food (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Walo et al., 1996). The results found in the present study report similar findings, although these events rely on a majority of local participants and single day travelers, such that accommodation costs may not be very significant. As reported by Turco (1997, 1998) in these type of local sporting events, the distance travelled is smaller, so the capacity to attract participants to stay is also smaller, limiting the positive economic impact. An accurate projection of the economic impact of an event is critically important to the local tourist entities and host community in the decision making process, particularly as these decisions relate to the construction of



sports facilities and the development of an effective infrastructure (Barajas, Salgado, & Sánchez, 2012).

In spite of the environmental preservation initiatives adopted by the organizing company for the event, such as, encouraging the use of public transportation and sustainable raw materials, the truth is that it was not possible to minimize the “carbon footprint” related to participants’ travel. This is because the main form of travel to the event was by car and the majority of the respondents reside outside the Municipality of Coimbra, on average more than 40 kilometres away from the event. In addition, the Portuguese automobile fleet continues to be, in its vast majority, composed of vehicles that use fuel (gasoline and diesel). This study did not verify participants’ potential use of vehicles that use electric energy, but this is an area to consider in future studies. This finding is evidenced in other studies which have emphasized that despite the environmental concerns internalized by the organizers of small scale sport tourism events, these efforts cannot overcome the “carbon” caused by the displacement of participants (Gibson et al., 2012).

Even so, the environmental impact is not nearly as significant when compared to major national and international sporting events, where the average number of kilometres travelled per participant is inevitably higher. Another major environmental problem associated with sporting events has to do with the construction of infrastructures (Gibson et al., 2012), but in the event under analysis we verified that the existing infrastructures were made use of (the use of public roads in the city, for example), so the environmental impact is also low in this area.

In socio-cultural terms, the event was not found to be overly disruptive to the local population and community. This was due, in part, to the number of participants, who did not generate the negative effects often associated with a large concentration of people (traffic congestion, urban space degradation, waste, noise, among others). The event was well received among the local community (population and entities). The fact that it benefited from television coverage and the promotion of *III EDP Running Wonders* circuits increased the media attention to the event. Consequently, there was an increased level of civic pride experienced within the local population, thanks to the notoriety achieved.

Among race participants, the organization of the event received interest, whereby the vast majority of sport tourists reported an intention to repeat participation in future events or simply return to the city for touristic purposes. The intention to return in future editions of this event and/or other races organized in the city should be taken into account by the municipal authorities and the organizing entity on the decision to host the event in the city again or on a regular basis. In this respect, Gibson (1998a) concluded that hosting a sporting event promotes tourism beyond the event itself. This is because attending an event or watching a sports event on television can motivate a visit to the host destination at a later time. Despite this assertion, with the exception of meals outside of the home, most of the respondents in this study did not experience complementary activities in addition to the participation in the event. These results do not differ from other studies which have concluded that sport tourists spend little on complementary activities to the sporting event (Daniels & Norman, 2003; Gibson et al., 2012).

This case study also found that the participants in this running race were mostly male, with an average age of 41 years. The majority of respondents were married, highly educated and employed, with a monthly income of more than 1000 Euros. The vast majority of participants were residents of Portugal, but mainly outside the Municipality of Coimbra.

These results are consistent with those of the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2018), whose statistics on European Union physical sports activity point to the following results: there is (1) greater sporting activity among males, (2) a decrease in sports participation with advancing age, (3) greater sports practice by individuals with more training and (4) less sporting practice by people with less financial stability. Gibson et al. (2012) obtained similar results with respect to the profile of participants of the six small scale sports events she and her fellow authors studied, concluding that participants had an average age of 42 years, economic stability and higher levels of education. Similarly, Daniels and Norman (2003) reported on the Cooper River Bridge Run event that the average age of participants was 40 years.

The data collected on the participation profile allow us to conclude that the vast majority of respondents travelled by car to participate in the event. This behaviour probably does not result from lack of environmental awareness on the part of the participants, but from the difficulty of travelling to Coimbra on public transport, since political priorities at this level have neglected alternative options. The respondents participated mostly accompanied and for the first time in the race. On average, each participant was accompanied by 3.8 people, mostly with friends or family members. Most respondents did not stay overnight in the city; those who did stayed for an average of 1.2 nights, mostly staying in a hotel/motel or at the home of family and friends.

The motivation to participate in this event had primarily to do with wanting to run the race for physical exercise and to have fun. The close proximity of the race to participants' homes was also important. Again, these findings are similar to the conclusions of other studies on the participation profiles of small scale sport tourism events (Danielson & Norman, 2003; Gibson 1998a; Gibson et al., 2012). For example these type of events often attract visitors to the organizing city who otherwise would not travel there (Danielson & Norman, 2003; Gibson et al., 2012); and that the main motivations for participation are competition, fun and socialization (Gibson et al., 2012). Eurobarometer data (European Commission, 2018) on motivation for sporting practice are also in line with the conclusions of our study: for Europeans the most common reasons for engaging in sport or physical activity are to improve health, to improve fitness, to relax, have fun and improve physical performance.

The analysis of this type of data may prove to be an important tool in the decision-making process of local entities, when considering the hosting of future sporting events. The profile of past and potential participants can also prove to be a useful tool for the tourism industry, allowing providers to incorporate a variety of services adapted to these projected profiles. This allows tourist entities to adapt to the growth of sport tourism as a means for economic development and long-term social and environmental sustainability.

Parallel to the development of the present study, the current tourism development strategy in Portugal (2017–2027) is focused on the satisfaction of tourists and on the respect and involvement of the host residents (Tourism of Portugal, 2017). The objective of our study fits nicely within the larger strategic plan for Portugal. In particular, we believe the next decade will witness the increased promotion of sport tourism events that appeal to different audiences, are offered at different times throughout the year and will be organized in territories with lower population density.

Given the current strategic challenges for national tourism, in Portugal, the overall satisfaction with the organization of this particular event and the positive economic impact it has had on the city of Coimbra, we believe it makes sense to continue to promote this event in the city. This may also be a part of a larger strategy to promote the city's tourism overall, as recommended by Chalip (2001). The involvement of local entities and engaged volunteers allows the event to have a local feel and to promote civic pride. This may increase the quality of life of the local population, while generating revenue for the city.

The event also has the potential for growth, given the growing demand for these type of sporting events, coupled with its existing membership in the *EDP Running Wonders* circuit. Because the circuit includes races in cities with heritage sites recognized by UNESCO, this event projects a positive image of this historical and beautiful city. In short, organizing such small scale sporting events on a regular basis can serve as a catalyst for local sustainable development by ensuring the use of existing resources, the involvement of the host community and a consistent flow of visitors.

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# Romania: Bucharest International Marathon. The Impact of Half Marathon Race from an Environmental, Economic, and Sociocultural Perspective



Sorina Cernaianu, Claude Sobry, and Ricardo Melo

**Abstract** The Bucharest International Marathon is the most important street running event in Romania. The main purpose of the study was to examine the profile of runners who participated at this event and to highlight the impact of this road race in the territory from economic, environmental, and sociocultural perspective. The research was based on a common methodology elaborated by the International Research Network in Sport Tourism (IRNIST). In order to have results that are comparable to those of other countries, only the half marathon race of this event was analyzed. The data analysis was based on 148 valid questionnaires. The research has highlighted several aspects of the runners' profile: average age 36.8 years old, high level of education, married or living with a partner, earn between 500 and 1000 euro per month, which is above the average salary. Taking into consideration the fact that more than 95% of the runners wanted to participate again in the future editions of this sport event, we therefore concluded that they appreciated the organization of the races, the ambiance and not only. This kind of benefits for the population seems to have been very important despite the small economic impact of this event.

**Keywords** Bucharest International Marathon · Road Race · Romania · Socioeconomic Impact · Sport event

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## Introduction

Sports tourism by its diversity (participation in a sporting event, being a spectator at a sport event, leisure activities (golf, fishing, mountain biking, etc.), visiting places of memory and sports history) offers multiple development possibilities, in relation to natural resources, topology, climate, history, the region concerned, etc. The development of such activities requires investments in specific equipment but can also use those existing and thus enhance local wealth, architectural, or other, resulting in significant economic and social benefits.

A South Eastern European country, with a population of 22,273,309 inhabitants (National Institute of Statistics, January 1, 2016) and an area of 238,397 km<sup>2</sup>, Romania has a very varied and diverse sport tourism potential and has natural and environmental assets that would enable it to enter this market.

Bucharest, the capital of the country and the largest economic center of Romania, with a population of 2,107,500 inhabitants in 2016 (INS, 2016), is the city with the most sports facilities in the country. However, according to data from a European Commission survey in 2015 concerning how the inhabitants are satisfied about sports facilities (such as sport fields and indoor sport halls) in the city, the people living in Bucharest declared that they were very satisfied (10%) and rather satisfied (34%) compared with Luxembourg and Helsinki, where the population's satisfaction rate was very high (84%).

Major sporting events are not very numerous in the city, the Bucharest Marathon and Bucharest Half Marathon being one of the most important. However, national championships in different disciplines, matches of the local football leagues, tennis tournaments, as well as other running events attract more and more participants every year.

Due to the sports infrastructure being in continuous development, a series of sporting events have been organized over the years in Romania. A ranking of the 61 Romanian sport federations shows us that football is by far the most popular sport in the country if we refer to the number of license-holders (48.05% of the total license-holders) (see Table 1). In Romania, there are five stadiums with a capacity

**Table 1** Number of license-holders in the evidence of national federations, taking part in the competitive system (INS, 2016)

No.	Romanian sport federations	Number of license-holders by federation	%
1.	Romanian Football Federation	118,040	48.05
2.	Romanian Basketball Federation	22,957	9.35
3.	Romanian Chess Federation	15,965	6.5
4.	Romanian Karate Federation	7345	2.99
5.	Romanian Athletic Federation	7299	2.97
...	...	...	...
61.	Romanian Squash Federation	109	0.04
	<b>Total</b>	<b>245,644</b>	<b>100</b>

INS (2016)



of more than 30,000 seats, the largest of them being the National Arena in Bucharest (55,634 seats). This stadium accommodated the final Europa League (2012), being the first European Cup final hosted by Romania. Another important international event will be UEFA Euro 2020. Four games of this tournament (including the quarter finals) will be hosted by this arena.

Basketball is the second most popular sport in Romania with 22,957 license-holders. In recent years, several international competitions were organized of which the most important were: the European Women Basketball Championship (2015), event co-held in Hungary and Romania, hosts cities being Oradea and Timisoara, and the European Men Basketball Championship (2017), hosted by four countries—Turkey, Finland, Israel, and Romania.

Also, the 3 × 3 basketball tournaments have become very famous in the country, attracting thousands of participants every year. Besides the national basketball circuit 3 × 3 Sport Arena Streetball Tour organized every summer, there were organized some international competitions: Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Challenger (since 2012) and FIBA 3 × 3 Europe Cup—men and women (2014, 2016 and 2018) in Bucharest.

Chess, so-called mind sport, the third in national ranking, is highlighted especially by the organization of national competitions over the board. The World Senior Chess Championship, an international event, with 366 participants, was organized in 2019, in Bucharest. Correspondence chess tournaments at national and international level are organized, too.

Running races in Romania attract more and more participants from year to year, whether we speak about road running, cross country, trails, triathlons, fun run, track running, obstacle racing, tower running or other; 127 important running events were organized in 2019 (Asociația Club Sportiv Elite Running, 2019).

Tennis is very popular in the country, especially among amateurs. Several events were organized: Davis Cup meeting (2013), in Brasov, between the representative of Netherlands and Romania, Czech Republic vs Romania Fed Cup meeting (2016) held in Cluj-Napoca, and from 1993 until 2016, the Romanian Open (BRD Nastase Tiriac Trophy)—part of the ATP Tour, competition that was relocated to Budapest. With 11 tennis courts, the central one with 5000 seats, the BNR Arenas hosts starting with 2014 the BRD Bucharest Open (part of WTA Tour), an event organized by the Romanian Tennis Federation and considered the biggest tennis tournament in Romania.

BT Arena in Cluj-Napoca, the multipurpose sports hall with a capacity of 7227 seats, hosts various sport events: European Artistic Gymnastics Championships (2017) and FIBA Under-17 Women's Basketball World Cup (2020). Also, some demonstration matches at a worldwide level are played every year in this arena during sports festivals.

If we talk about winter sports, Romania is not an important destination yet from this point of view (Cernaianu & Sobry, 2017) and does not have a well-developed infrastructure as in the countries of Western Europe. However, the European Youth Olympic Winter Festival (2013) was organized in Brasov, which is the first Olympic European event held in Romania, hosting more than 900 athletes from 45 countries.

Concerning sport tourism, there is no established ranking at the national level. We can consider that football, basketball, running, and tennis are the sports branches for which many national and international competitions are organized, attracting a large number of spectators.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the profile of the runners who participated at the Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon—half marathon race—and to highlight the impact of this road race in the territory from an economic, environmental, and sociocultural perspective.

## Road Races in Romania

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) awards an International Course Measurement Certificate to all marathon and half marathon races which comply with certain criteria “in order to be considered eligible for top lists, entry standards, world rankings and world records” (<https://www.iaaf.org/records/certified-roadevents>). At the top of the list is Australia with 69 races, followed by the USA (60 races) and Japan with 52 races. Of the 120 countries, Romania is situated in the first third of the rankings (the 40th) with only 7 races of a total of 1086.

The seven IAAF certified races correspond to the four most important sporting events in Romania: Brasov Marathon (two races), Volkswagen Bucharest Half Marathon (one race), Raiffeisen Bucharest Marathon (two races), and Wizz Air Cluj-Napoca International Marathon (two races) (see Table 2).

The Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) brings together 467 member races in over 120 countries, including four full members in Romania: Wizz Air Cluj-Napoca Marathon, Brasov International Marathon powered by Telekom Sport, Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon, and Volkswagen Bucharest Half Marathon. The courses are measured by an accredited AIMS/IAAF measurer.

**Table 2** The IAAF certified marathon and half marathon courses in Romania (IAAF, 2019)

No.	City	Name of the race	Event
1.	Brasov	Brasov Half Marathon	Half Marathon
2.	Brasov	Brasov Marathon	Marathon
3.	Bucharest	Raiffeisen Bucharest Half Marathon	Half Marathon
4.	Bucharest	Bucharest Half Marathon	Half Marathon
5.	Bucharest	Raiffeisen Bucharest Marathon	Marathon
6.	Cluj-Napoca	Cluj-Napoca International Half Marathon	Half Marathon
7.	Cluj-Napoca	Cluj-Napoca International Marathon	Marathon

Adapted from IAAF (2019)

## Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon

The Bucharest Marathon, the largest mass sport event organized by the Bucharest Running Club Association (BRC) in partnership with the Romanian Athletic Federation (FRA) and Bucharest City Hall, and in cooperation with media partners, is the first Romanian marathon accredited, internationally recognized, and affiliated to the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) and International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). Starting with the first edition in 2008, with a few hundred runners, in 2016 the 9th edition of the event brought together over 14,000 runners from more than 60 countries who competed in many races during this event: marathon, half marathon (10 km), popular race (3 km), jogging with strollers, teens race (3 km), and kids races (0.9 km/1.4 km) (Mihai, 2016).

Within the same competition, the FRA organized the National Marathon Championship—Senior, Youth, and Junior and the National Marathon Veterans Championship.

Other important races organized in Bucharest by the BRC are the Bucharest Half Marathon and Bucharest 10 k & Family Run, which bring together teams formed by kids, parents, grandparents, and friends (no more than 15 persons in a team).

A number of NGOs with volunteers raise funds and receive part of the runners' registration fees.

As the organizers of this event said, the purpose was “to create a good social and economic impact on local community.” At the same time, this event supports many social, educational, humanitarian, and ecological causes for which the participants run and donate, such as for sick and hospitalized children, for autistic children or other persons in difficulty, for environmental programs with the mission to grow forests on degraded public fields or to help increase the area of the Athletes' Forest, etc. As specified in the event regulations, “All children aged 18 years or younger should bring recyclable materials (paper, plastic bottles, etc.) when registering for the race; funds raised from recycling such materials will be donated for tree planting in the Children's Forest (*Padurea Copiilor*)” (Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon, 2016).

**Table 3** The dynamics of participation at the Bucharest Marathon, half marathon race, by gender (ENDU, 2016)

Year	Male	Male (%)	Female	Female (%)	Total
2012	901	76.29	280	23.71	1181
2013	1202	74.34	415	25.66	1617
2014	1552	71.03	633	28.97	2185
2015	1718	68.64	785	31.36	2503
2016	1949	70.59	812	29.41	2761

Data processed from [www.endu.net/en/events/bucharest-marathon/results](http://www.endu.net/en/events/bucharest-marathon/results)

As can be seen in Table 3, it is noticeable that the number of participants at the Bucharest Marathon, half marathon race, between 2012 and 2016 increased by 133.78% over the 5 years), both for women and men. However, the number of participating women represented no more than one-third that of men.

In terms of nationality, the majority are Romanian. If in 2012 about 25% of athletes were foreigners (given that the total number of participants was low), the next year the percentage decreased to 10.14% and varied around this value, with a slight increase in the number of foreign runners (see Table 4).

Starting with 2008, IAAF introduced a classification of the races (Gold, Silver, and Bronze Label) for marathon, half marathon, and other races (traditional road race distances). In 2018, the marathon race obtained the status of IAAF Road Race Bronze Label, which placed it among “the world’s leading road running events” (IAAF, 2017).

A series of concerts were organized during the two days of this sporting event. Also, the event was livestream.

The amount of 50 prizes awarded was 30,000 euros. Also, sponsors and event partners offered hundreds of amazing prizes involving products (Mihai, 2016).

The organizer club of this event (BRC) has created an Internet platform which brings together more than 1000 active volunteers involved in sport events and projects in Romania. About 700 volunteers registered on the platform, referees and coaches of the Romanian Athletics Federation, and 200 public institution employees like police agents, healthcare professionals, etc. helped to organize the sport event well.

At the hydration points and refreshment check points, energy beverages and food were made available to the runners; 38,500 liters of water, 4800 liters of energy drink, and 4 tons of fruit were offered by sponsors (Mihai, 2016).

For each race, the organizers established a maximum number of participants. According to the regulations of this event, the maximum number of runners by type of race is presented in Table 5.

The registration fee varied between 22 euro and 43 euro, depending on the date of payment. No participation fees for people with disabilities.

**Table 4** The dynamics of participation at the Bucharest Marathon, half marathon race—participants from Romania and other countries (ENDU, 2016)

Year	Romania	Romania (%)	Other countries	Other countries (%)	Total
2012	887	75.11	294	24.89	1181
2013	1453	89.86	164	10.14	1617
2014	1988	90.98	197	9.02	2185
2015	2270	90.69	233	9.31	2503
2016	2473	89.57	288	10.43	2761

Data processed from [www.endu.net/en/events/bucharest-marathon/results](http://www.endu.net/en/events/bucharest-marathon/results)

**Table 5** The maximum number of runners, by type of race

No.	Race	Maximum number of runners
1.	Marathon	1400
2.	Half marathon	3800
3.	Marathon relay	750 teams, namely $4 \times 750 = 3000$
4.	Fun race	2200
5.	Teen's race	2000
6.	Kids' race	3300
7.	Jogging in diapers SAMAS	350

Adapted from Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon (2016)

Sports equipment and nutrition products of different brands were set up in an area specially designed for sale. Also, charities and NGOs promoted by this event were present (Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon, 2016).

Romanian athletes, world, European, and national champions at various sporting events, promoted the practice of sports and invited people to participate at the Bucharest International Marathon.

## Methodology

A half marathon race was studied, based on the common methodology elaborated by IRNIST. Because the tools were not fully prepared at the time of the Volkswagen Bucharest Half Marathon, which took place in May 2016, we did not have the opportunity to conduct the research on this sport event. Therefore, the Bucharest International Marathon was chosen, which took place on October 8–9, 2016. This marathon is the most important street running event in this country. In order to have results that are comparable to those of other countries, only the *half marathon race* of this event was analyzed.

The questionnaire was developed in English and in Romanian, assessed by IRNIST members involved in the project, transposed in Google Forms, and sent by e-mail to the half marathon participants with the help of the organizers. During the event, the runners were informed about the study at the Sport Expo point, where they picked up the race kit, which also contained a flyer with a short description of the research.

A semi-structured interview with the Director of BRC Association was conducted and a nonparticipatory observation was undertaken focusing on the organization process during the sport event.

## Results and Discussion

The data analysis was based on 148 valid questionnaires out of 153 received from the respondents. The sample ( $N = 148$ ) of 2761 runners of half marathon race consisted of 68.24% men with an average age of 38.24 years and 31.76% women with an average age of 33.72 years. For all the respondents, the average age was 36.8 years. Of the respondents, 92.57% were Romanian, while the rest (11 runners) came from countries such as Switzerland, France, Germany, Greece, Austria, Slovakia, Republic of Moldova, and only two participants from the American continent. If we compare with the rate given by the organizers (89.74% foreigners), the difference is not significant.

Concerning marital status, the majority of respondents (60.81%) were married or lived with a partner. Of them, 49.32% had a bachelor's degree, 35.81% a master's degree, 2.7% a PhD, and 0.68% postdoctoral studies, which showed a very good level of education.

Regarding the work situation, the data showed us that 75.68% were employed, 10.81% self-employed, and 4.73% were company owners. According to Government decision No. 1017/2015, the gross minimum guaranteed base salary at national level starting from May 1, 2016 was 1250 RON (278 euro), with a net value of 925 RON (206 euro) for full-time employees. The average monthly nominal gross earnings in 2016 was 2887 RON (642 euro), having a net value of 2046 RON (455 euro) (NIS, 2016). Taking into account these values, we observed that the majority of the respondents (77.5%) earned above the national average salary, 15.3% between the minimum wage and the average salary, and 0.9% below the minimum wage. The rate of respondents without income was 6.3%. According to another class division, 37.2% earned between 500 and 1000 euro/month while 20.9% had a salary more than 1500 euro/month.

Data about participation in this event showed that the majority (62.84%) were not running for the first time, 82.98% of them had participated earlier, one to five times. When asked how many road races they had run the last year (2015), the answer obtained was an average of three races.

Out of a total of 141 participants who had answered the question, most of them had come to the sport event by car (52.48%, 74 respondents) while 16.31% by metro (23 respondents) and only 4.26% on foot (6 respondents).

Only 26.35% had come alone to this event. Those who were accompanied had come with 3.54 persons on average, most of them being family members (33.1%) or friends (30.4%).

As most of runners lived in Bucharest (61.49%) or not so far, the percentage of participants who had an accommodation was only 23.65%, with an average of 2.16 nights. Among them, 41.67% stayed at a hotel/motel, while 47.22% at friends or relatives.

The main reasons for choosing this sport event were because it was not too far from their home (41.22%), followed by the quality of the organization (33.11%) and

“other reasons” (23.65%), which included it being the biggest Romanian sport event of the year (4.73%) and to push their limits (5.4%).

The majority of runners (87.83%) considered that the pleasure to participate in this event was extremely and very important. At the same time, this event represented a factor of socialization for 58.78% of participants who responded to the survey, but to a greater extent, “to be healthy” seemed to be important for about 90% of runners.

The items concerning the motives with a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important) are represented in Fig. 1, which shows that the major motivation to participate in this event was the pleasure it provided, with an average of 6.28 points. We have to underline that “challenge the abilities” (6.17 points), “be healthy” (6.11 points), and “maintaining and/or enhancing the physical condition” (6.09 points) recorded a large average on this scale. According to this figure, “travel” (visiting other sites/destinations; learning about other traditions and cultures; visiting and defending the heritage) was the last reason that led them to Bucharest, with an average of 3.21 points.

Regarding positive elements such as environment preservation, only 39.9% considered that the organizers propose such aspects. The runners stated that one of the causes for which they ran was that part of the registration fee was being directed to *planting of trees—cause of sustainability* (28.57%). The availability of garbage bins (22.87%), collecting plastic bottles (14.3%), and eco-friendly toilets (8.57%) also represented positive elements cited by the participants.

Only 45.27% of the total runners of the sample (67 participants) declared they did something else, not just participate in the event/race. These activities, other than participation in the sporting event, are listed in Table 6. The majority of them ate out (68.18%) and went shopping (28.79%), but other leisure activities were part of their

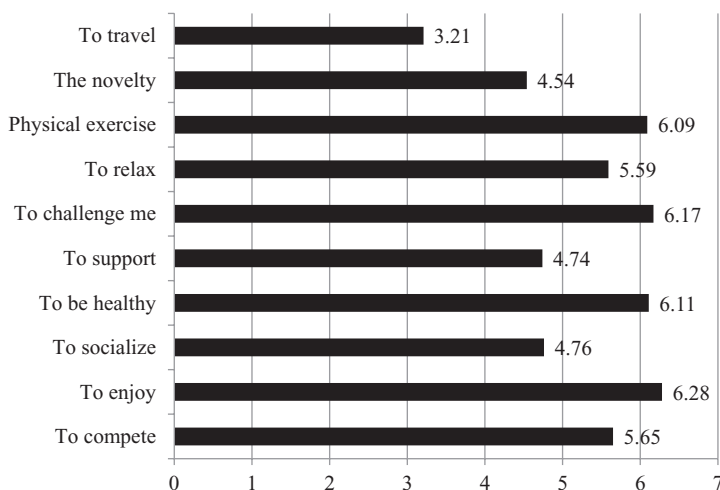


Fig. 1 Primary motives to participate in the race—averages

**Table 6** Activities other than participating in the race

Did you do anything else, not just participate in the event/race? (multiple answer)	No.	% of 66 responses
Eating out	45	68.18
Shopping	19	28.79
Visit the family	16	24.24
Go to the cinema	11	16.67
Participate in cultural activities	7	10.61
Visit a museum	7	10.61
Other	7	10.61
Attending another sport event	6	9.09
Attending a show	6	9.09
Visit an attraction park	5	7.58
Participate in leisure activities	4	6.06

program too, like going to the cinema, visiting a museum, attending a show, etc. On average they spent 93.7 euro in general, in the city, from which 35.77 euro was for food and beverage.

The equipment is also important for runners; 134.8 euro on average was spent by the participants. We do not count this amount because it can be used for other sport events.

Not all the participants declared their expenses. If we multiply the minimum fee registration with the number of respondents, we get 3256 euro, but some of them spent more because they were registered later. We do not count the money spent for the equipment because it can be used for other races, but we observed that the participants invested on average about 135 euro.

The largest part of the sample would like to participate again in this event (97.97%). Also, if the city will organize other sport events, most of them said they would come to participate (95.27%).

## Conclusions

Several important facts and figures were shown by this analysis which helped us to draw some discussions and conclusions. The number of participants to this sport event increased from year to year, on the one hand due to the very good organization, and on the other hand due to the international accreditation and affiliation to AIMS and IAAF, which attracted a series of high-level runners.

The research has highlighted several aspects of the runners' profile: average age 36.8 years, high level of education, married or living with a partner, earning between 500 and 1000 euro per month, which is above the average salary.

This event, although of great significance for our country, brought together mostly participants from Bucharest and the surrounding area. Their expenses in the



city are generally focused on food, shopping, and habitual activities, taking into consideration their place of residence. Also, the fact that about three-quarters of the respondents came accompanied at the event may have been perhaps an opportunity to spend time together in the city during this event. Concerning the accommodation, the economic impact was low—no more than 2.2 nights on average for no more than 13% (of the sample) who stayed at hotels or other type of accommodation, except at friends' or relatives'.

However, socialization is not at all important in comparison with relaxation, health, and pleasure to compete. Although Bucharest is an important tourist destination, visiting historical and touristic places was not an attraction for the participants.

The environmental responsibility of the organizers was appreciated by the participants. The races took place on the road, the green area was protected, the information was printed on recycled paper, and special containers were provided for waste collection. Very important were the causes for which the adult participants ran, *planting of trees*—cause of sustainability being one of them. At the same time, collection of recyclable materials by the children aged 18 years or younger with the same purpose to plant trees in the Children's Forest is a way of involving the younger generation in environmental sustainability.

Taking into consideration the fact that more than 95% of the runners wanted to participate again in the future editions of this sport event, we therefore concluded that they appreciated the organization of the races, the ambiance, and others. This kind of benefits for the population seems to have been very important despite a small economic impact of this event.

Bucharest is a big and nice city with plenty of historical monuments and agreeable places. Even if most of the participants came from Bucharest itself or from nearby towns and villages, it could be interesting to include some touristic elements on the e-site to convince the participants to spend time not only running but also visiting some touristic sites, going to a restaurant, etc. The race itself, broadcasted by TV channels, could cross the city, passing in front of the most interesting monuments. Most of the sport event organizers do not work with the local touristic bodies. Why to attract thousands of people and not trying to keep them in the city a few more hours after the race. As Gibson (1998) says, "at a policy level, there needs to be better coordination among agencies responsible for sport and those responsible for tourism".

Despite the fact that the sample size was not representative of the chosen population, we tried to conduct the study, this being part of an international project. Although the participants were informed through many ways (by email, with a flyer in the race kit, the permanent presence of a person at the organizers' stand during the event who informed the runners about the research), however the rate of answers was low. In our opinion, the lack of respondent participation was due to another study based on a survey that the organizer contracted with a specialized company and distributed in parallel with ours.

Another limitation of this study could be the length of the questionnaire, requiring 40 items to be filled in.

Future researchers must choose an event where their study will be singular and otherwise be informed on time. The use of social network to explain the purpose of the survey and the data collection method could improve as well the response rate. Adjusting the length of the questionnaire can be another necessary measure to increase the number of respondents.

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# Switzerland: Small Scale Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development. The Case of the 12 and 24 Km of the Vallée De Joux – the Tour du Lac



Rémi Ardiet, Claude Sobry, and Ricardo Melo

**Abstract** Through this case study, we show how implementing a running race in a small Swiss Valley can foster sustainable tourism and local development on the economic and social terms with a limited environmental impact. Results show that there are significant expenditures spent by the participants, at least a part of which benefits the local population. Moreover, the running race is included in a broader local strategy of the municipalities that encourage the implementation of small sporting events in order to build a positive image of the valley. Last but not least, this case study shows how collaboration between the different stakeholders can also be crucial to implement a long-term profitable local strategy around sporting event and tourism.

**Keywords** Local development · Running race · Sporting events · Sport tourism · Tourism

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## Introduction: Sport Tourism in Switzerland

Switzerland is often imagined as the wonderland of outdoor sports. With its mountains, lakes and plains, the country offers a very wide range of different terrains for outdoor sports. Not to mention the indoor sporting facilities that are probably among the best in the world: tennis courts, football fields, swimming pools, ice-rinks, sports hall, gyms etc. There are around 32,000 sport facilities available and accessible to almost everyone in the country. At least in and around the major economic poles, there are numerous different kinds of high-quality sport facilities. In fact, according to a study made by the Swiss Confederation, there are over 20,000 sports clubs in Switzerland and 2.7 million sports licenses, which means that almost 31.8% of the 8.4 million inhabitants belong to a sports club.<sup>1</sup>

The sport economy in Switzerland represents a small margin of the global economy of the country. Indeed, sport contributed for 1.8% in the gross domestic product (about 15 billion Swiss Francs) and provided 2.5% of the total jobs in the country (about 80,300 jobs) in 2005. For the same year, sport tourism represented 27% (2.16 billion Swiss Francs) of the sport market and 33% of the jobs related to sport. However, sport tourism is the most important business segment in the sport market, among nine others (sport facilities, business, sporting goods producing, public administration related to sport etc.).<sup>2</sup>

On the one hand, the outdoor overall terrain in Switzerland is one of the most conducive to outdoor sport practices. On the other hand, the Swiss inhabitants do have a real tendency to practice a wide range of different sports. Indeed, half of the population practices in a physical activity at least once a week.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, in terms of transportation, Switzerland is a small country where you can easily travel, either inside (for the nationals) or outside-in. The country is very well served in terms of public transportation. Airports (Geneva, Basel, Zurich, Bern etc.) are well linked to other European cities, and ground transportation is also very good. Huge investments have been made in the past decades to increase the public transportation services, in particular in the railway system. This makes Switzerland a great location for outdoor sporting events.

These elements combined provide a fertile ground for sport tourism growth. It is the case both for the nationals and for the tourists coming from abroad. The sport tourism sector in Switzerland is an important part of the global tourism activity in the country but business tourism remains the main tourism sector. Sport tourism in Switzerland has increased in the past decades, firstly thanks to the winter sport tourism, since Switzerland hosts very well-known ski resorts in the world (Zermatt, Verbier, Davos, Saint-Moritz etc.). The alpine swiss ski resorts have an international customer base, with tourists coming from all over the world. (United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia, China, the US etc.). Secondly, eco-tourism in Switzerland

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<sup>1</sup>Data provided by the Swiss Confederation.

<sup>2</sup>Swiss Confederation data.

<sup>3</sup>SportObs data.

is also growing these past decades, thanks to the implementation of global sustainable development politics at every level of the administration. The Swiss federation is in charge of elaborating a global sustainable development strategy for the country that is applicable in the regions (or “Cantons”) as well as in the municipalities. This provides a fertile ground for eco-tourism development. The third section in sport tourism that is increasing is the small sporting events sector. It is closely linked with the sustainable development strategy: instead of hosting major international or global sporting event, several touristic areas have decided to implement local sporting event policies, in order to foster local economic and social development, as well as protecting the environmental ecosystems. SlowUps is the most iconic example there is: it is a sporting event where roads are closed to motorized vehicles and open to pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized vehicles. It is open to everyone, free and there are animations and stands, often from local associations on the whole route.

Now that we have briefly presented the sport and sport tourism context in Switzerland, we are going to introduce the region where the event we studied takes place. We will see that it is a unique region with its own characteristics.

### **The *Vallée de Joux* (Valley of Joux)**

We are going to focus on the specific area that is designated by the studied event. The *Vallée de Joux* is a specific and unique part of the country that shall be presented on its own. The *Vallée de Joux* is a 25-km long valley located in the Swiss Jura mountains, about 50 km away from Geneva and Lausanne. The place is constituted by mountains that are 1000 m high on average. There are also three lakes in the *Vallée de Joux*: the lake of *Joux*, the lake *Brenet* and the Lake *Ter*. The French border runs along the north and west part of the valley.

The place is a well-known spot for outdoor sports. In winter, skiing is one of the main leisure activities, especially Nordic skiing. In summer, the valley is valued and recognized as a little paradise for Nordic walking, trail running and mountain biking, among others. Pedestrian paths are well marked in the forest and mountain bike paths are also well marked in the whole valley.

Three main municipalities regroup most of the 6900 inhabitants in the valley: *Le Chenit*, *Le Lieu* and *L'Abbaye*. Those three cities include all in all ten villages, such as *Le Sentier*, *Le Brassus*, *Le Lieu*, *Le Pont*,...<sup>4</sup>

The place is well-known for being the birthplace of the Swiss horology. In fact, some of the most renowned Swiss watch brands still have factories in the valley: Audemars Piguet, Blancpain, Breguet, Patek Philippe, Vacheron Constantin and Jaeger-Lecoultrre and other related firms.

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<sup>4</sup>Data provided by the local economic development association (ADAEV).

The specificity of the *Vallée de Joux* is that it is an important industrial hub for the watch making industry. It is the main characteristic of the region. The industry is so important that there are more than 8000 jobs for the whole valley. There is not enough population in the region to “fill in” all the workplaces. Therefore many workers come from across the border every day (about half of the jobs are occupied by French people).<sup>5</sup>

The industry represents about 75% of the jobs and the unemployment rate is at its lowest being only of about 2%. The agriculture sector is also an important historical part of the economic activities of the valley. The economic impact of agriculture is very low but its impact on the culture of the region is still very important.

Now that we have presented briefly the region, we will see how sport tourism has been developed throughout the years.

## **Sport Tourism and Tourism Strategy of the *Vallée de Joux***

As we mentioned previously, most of the development strategy of the region is oriented toward the watchmaking industry. However, with its beautiful lakes, gorgeous forests and accessible mountains, the elected representatives of the *Vallée de Joux* know that the region has other assets than its mono-industry.

In this respect, the region is ideal for the practice of different nature outdoor sports such as hiking, mountain biking, trail running, nautical activities and many others.

The awareness of this fact rose up in the different influential actors' minds in the early 1980s. They started to think about how sport could be a great added value to the region, besides the watchmaking industry. Moreover, the territory was in competition with Lausanne and Geneva to attract workers to its factory. For that reason, they needed to offer good workplace quality and decided to implement in the middle of the *Vallée de Joux* a Sport Center that would offer great opportunities to both the inhabitants and the workers to practice their respective sport activities. The Sport Center is financed by its own activities (entries, lessons, summer camps etc.) but is supported financially by the municipalities when needed, for example, the renovation of the gym and the wellness was supported by the municipalities.

The Sport Center *Vallée de Joux* originally opened to the public for the first time in 1992 is the first proof that the officials of the region were aware of the development opportunities that sport can offer to their area. In one sentence, the Sport Center consists of a swimming-pool, an ice-rink, a gym hall, a gym, six tennis courts, a skate-park, a restaurant, accommodations for more than 150 persons and a brand new wellness and many other infrastructures. At first, the complex was

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<sup>5</sup>Data provided by the local economic development association (ADAEV).

created as a way to attract workers from outside the region (keep in mind that the Vallee de Joux is in competition with two very attractive cities: Lausanne and Geneva). Nowadays, the Sport Center is thought as one of the main assets of the Valley, for the inhabitants of course and also for tourism.

In the early 2000s, thanks to the impulsion of the director of the Sport Center, a sport event department was launched. Nowadays, this department organizes a dozen of small scale sporting events in a year and is one of the partner of the race we are going to study later on. It organizes for example a Trail Running race in October that gathers about 1000 participants mainly coming from the surrounding regions. The department has also been involved as organizer in the weekend of Triathlon in June. (celebrating their 20 years of existence in 2019) The two-days event includes an XTERRA which is a brand of off-road triathlon races known worldwide on the triathlon scene and brings a lot of international athletes in the region (36 countries represented in 2017) and a short distance triathlon on Sunday, mostly for the locals.

Throughout the implementation of this sport event department the municipalities are trying to promote the region and attract tourists through small scale sporting events.

Last but not least, the tourism office and the Sport Center are working together on a daily bases. It reached the point where it was decided to bring the tourism office inside the Sport Center, to encourage synergies between the two entities.

From the tourism perspective, the strategy of the tourism office can be summarized by presenting the three different kinds of targets they are trying to attract in the region. The first and main target are tourists called “leisure tourists”, mainly from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. These tourists are often coming for the week and are here to enjoy the calm, beauty and tranquility of the region. This targets also includes the hikers/mountain bikers that come for one or several nights in hotels and hike/mountain bike around the valley on the pedestrian or MTB-marked paths. The second target is constituted by business clients that come here to establish contracts with the watchmaking industry. The third and last target clients are the “excursionists” that come for a day to have fun on the frozen lake in winter or mountain bike, hike etc.

The average duration of the stay is 1,64 nights in the hotels. This is quite low but besides ski resorts it corresponds to the tendency of the tourism market in Switzerland. The total amount of overnight stays in 2017 in the Vallée de Joux was up to 20,000 nights, with about half of it spent in the Sport Center’s accommodations.

Through this presentation, we can foresee that sport is becoming more important as a tool of the overall development strategy. Indeed, the small scale sporting events is one of the component of the strategy that the economic development society of the Valley (*ADAEV*) is pursuing.

## **The Race: The *Tour du Lac***

The organizers of the Tour du Lac is a public association “*Footing Vallée de Joux*”, which is an association that gathers runners from the Valley. It is financed by the annual subscription of its members, the revenues that come from the registrations of the race, as well as both public and private sponsors. Private sponsors have a greater importance than the public ones. Among the private sponsors, there are watchmaking companies or firms that are linked to this industry. The main private sponsor is Audemars-Piguet, categorized as a “gold” sponsor. Other swiss companies are sponsoring the race such as Rivella, Pierre Deroche, CMV (a local bank), Dubois Depraz (watchmaking), Travys (train) and Migros (large retail).

In 2016, it was the fifth edition of the Tour du Lac. It gathered in total 1065 participants on the two main races, equally distributed on the two distances that are proposed by the organizers: a 24- and a 12-km race. The 24 km starts and ends at the Sports Center. The 24 km goes all the way around the lake of Joux. There is also a 12 km that starts from half point and ends at the Sport Center as well. Kids races are also organized and gathers about a 100 kids. The Footing Club fulfills two main objectives by organizing the race: increase the number of members for the association and promote the region through attracting a population that lives in the surrounding areas of the Valley. The touristic purpose is clear in the minds of the organizers. Concerning the finances, the association gathers public and private funds. In the public sponsors, municipalities do help the association financially. We do not have the information from the organizers on which private company is financing the event but it is of public notoriety that BCV (private bank) Audemars Piguet do finance the event at least in part. The Sport Center is also associated, since the finish line and post-race meal and celebrations do take place in their facilities.

A total of 140 volunteers participate in the organization of the race. Most of them are locals and are also members of the association. According to the organizer, about 120 inhabitants race in the 12 and 24 km.

## **Methodology of the Study**

This study is part of an international project fostered by the International Research Network in Sport Tourism. The project is to gather several different studies on small scale sporting events from different countries. The purpose is to analyze how different races have different—or similar—impacts on the region hosting the running race and proceed to a comparative study.

To conduct the study, the researchers created an online survey that was sent by email to all the participants the day following the race. Moreover, the link of the



survey was posted a few days before the race on the website, with an explanation of the purpose of the study.

In order to have a representative study, it was decided to send it to participants of both distances. Two reasons motivated this choice: firstly, the organizers considered beforehand there was no significant difference of population between the 12 and the 24 km. Secondly, the results of the survey would be more interesting if we included both distances, either for the organizers and for our study.

The questionnaire was divided in several parts which included different aspects of the race. What we were interested in was mainly their socio-demographic profile and their view of the economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of the event. In order to know more, we questioned them on their gender, age, family situation, level of education, socio-professional category and income. We also wanted to know where they came from. To do so, we asked them if they were from the region and how far they lived from the race.

In a second step, we asked participants what means of transport they used and if it was their first participation. After that, we interrogated the participants if they came along or with other persons and if they did not come alone, how many people did they bring with them. We also asked them if they spent one or several nights away from home. If it was several nights, how many and in which kind of accommodation did they stay?

The third part of the survey was focused on their expenses: Did they spend money and what for? (accommodation, food and beverages, souvenirs, others). Daniels and Norman (2003), Gratton, Dobson, and Shibli (2000), Gibson, Kaplinadou, and Kang (2012) approaches were followed to estimate the expenditures and the economic impacts of the race.

The fourth and last part of the questionnaire was focused on their overall experience as runners. This included miscellaneous questions on different subjects (quality of the race, impression related to the region, tourism possibilities, motivation for the race, other activities done besides racing).

From the 1065 participants, the survey gathered 469 responses. With 44%, the response rate was very high. Participants were motivated to answer with a potential reward. A random draw would offer one respondent a free registration for next year's race, which motivated participants to answer the survey.

We also conducted several semi-structured interviews. One of the interview was a member of the town's council in charge of tourism. We also had the chance to interview the director of the Tourism Office. Finally, we could briefly interview the organizer of the race.

Thanks to those two methods, we were able to conduct a quantitative and qualitative research that would hopefully give us a good overview of the race and interesting results.

## Results

### *Demographic Profile of the Participants*

The sample that answered the survey was composed of 54.8% of women and 45.2% of men. Most of the respondents were married (49.8%) and considered highly educated (58% with at least a university degree). A large margin were employees (79.2%), others were spread out in different categories (students, business owners, retired etc.). 19.3% of the respondents earned between 5000 and 6000 Swiss Francs (4450 Euros and 5350 Euros), 21.4% between 6000 and 7000 Swiss Francs (5350 Euros and 6230 Euros). The average salary calculated from the data collected is estimated at 5396 Swiss Francs, which represents about 4800 Euros.

A large majority of the sample from the survey was from Switzerland. However, a large margin was not from the region. (92.3%) Indeed, 652% indicated that they lived more than 40 km away from the race. Most of them came by car (79.7%) while only 6.9% used the train. 12.5% of the respondents said they shared their car with at least one other participant. Only 22.6% of the sample came alone, whilst 77.4% came at least with one person. (51.5% attended with a family member, 37.7% with a friend). 38.2% were accompanied by one person, 18.5% by two persons and 19.1% came with three companions.

70.8% raced there for the first time, while 29.2% were running the *Tour du Lac* for the first time. Only 7.5% of the respondents stayed overnight according to the data collected and most of them stayed for 1 night (54.1%). A small margin stayed at the hotel (13.2%) or at the camping (11.3%), while 39.6% indicated they stayed at a friend's house.

To be able to understand why the participants choose this event, they had the choice between four answers and they could also mention something else that was not proposed. The first reason why the runners chose this race was because it was close to the place where they live (32.3%). The quality of the organization was also mentioned by 14.7% of the respondents and 6% indicated they chose this race because there were tourism opportunities. The rest of the respondents answered "others". The distance and the beauty of the region is often mentioned.

Respondent's responses indicated that the race was the main reason of their trip to the Vallée de Joux, (76.3%) though, interestingly, 23.7% indicated they did not come for the race as the main purpose of their trip.

In regards to the reasons of participation in the event, having fun was mentioned as the first reason (41.3%). Others responses highlight mainly the challenge of racing (21%), physical exercise for health issues (14.3%) and taking part in a competition (14.3%).

**Table 1** Estimation of the participant's expenditures, in Euros

Items	Expenditure estimation		
	[N1]	[N2]	[N3]
Travel	8250.60 €	27.50 €	29,251.34 €
Food	8303.72 €	25.01€	26,636.93 €
Accommodation	1705.61 €	4.86 €	5175.01 €
Souvenirs	104.01 €	0.34 €	355.37 €
Others	1133.99 €	3.84 €	4093.89 €
Total of expenditures			65,512.54 €

N1 corresponds to the number of respondents that answered the question

N2 is the total expense of the respondents (found in N1) divided by the number of respondents. (different for each kind of expenditure, depending on the answer. Sometimes the respondent did not answer to every kind of expenditure.) This gives us an average spent per participant, for each category of expenditure

N3 is N2 (the average spent by respondent) multiplied by the number of participants (1065). This gives us an insight about how much people spent in each category. Adding all the expenses of each category will give us an estimation of the total direct economic impact

## *Economic Impacts*

Since we are in a comparative study, all the data has been remastered in Euros instead of Swiss Francs. The economic impacts have been measured through the survey with several precise questions on different. The participants were asked what their expenses were concerning travel, food and beverages, accommodation. Eventually, we asked the respondents to indicate what was their total expense related to the event itself. Unfortunately, all the respondents answered all the different questions, which is why some numbers may vary. For instance, 298 answered the travel expenses question, while 332 answered for the food and beverages question. Still, we were able to estimate the event's total direct economic impact on the region. The data collected shows that the first two expenditures were travel, followed closely by food and beverages (Table 1).

The data clearly shows that the first expenditure item is the travel, with on average 27.50 Euros spent per participant. In total, 29,251.34 Euros were spent by participants on travel, which represents 44.65% of the total amount of money spent by the participant. Food and beverages represented 40.66% of the expenditures of the participants, with 26,636.93 € spent in total on this item.

Thanks to the questionnaire and through estimations, we were able to calculate that the total direct economic impact of the event on the region was 65,512.54 €. If you divide this number by the total participants, this represents an average spent by participants of 61.50 €. These figures do not include registration costs (about 30 € for both 12 and 24 km races), which would add up and increase the economic impacts significantly.

These figures are not a strict representation of the reality. However, they are definitely reliable and give us a good insight of the direct economic impact of the event in 2016. We will discuss the results in the discussion and conclusion part.

## ***Environmental Impacts***

The survey asked the respondents on the measures related to environmental preservation and sustainable development that the organizers adopted for the event. The respondents had the freedom to write their answers and unfortunately most of them indicated they did not know.

However, in a place such as the Vallée de Joux, the environment is one of the main concern of the different authorities. Indeed, in Switzerland, each organization of a sporting event is subject to a deep analysis of the states' environmental services, the *Direction Générale de l'Environnement* (General Direction of the Environment). Before the race, the organizer has to apply for an authorization from this state department, among others. The role of this department is to verify that the event does not harm the environment in any way possible. In this context, it is already possible to assure that the race is environment-friendly, or at least does not cause any trouble to nature in general.

We can also tell from the organizer's standpoint that several measures were taken to reduce the environmental impact of the race. Before the race, public transportation is encouraged and the participants of the 12 km were freely transported by train from the Sport Center (which is where the 24 km starts and where registration, bib pick-up, finish line for all the races and post-race events took place) to the start line. Moreover, all aid stations were the only "trash zones" on the course. It means that if a runner was seen dropping a gel for example on the path, he could potentially be disqualified. Of course, all the plastic bottles and glasses were recycled.

## **Socio-cultural Impacts**

The respondents were also asked if they enjoyed other activities besides racing alongside the event. Most of the respondents said they went to the restaurant (36.9%), while 18.1% visited their families. 10.6% took part in a leisure activity, which remains unknown. As we have seen previously through the questionnaire, the impact of the race on hotels and camping was not really significant. In fact, few of the respondents indicated that they stayed for one or several nights (7.2%) in the region, and the ones that did mostly stayed at a relative's house.

When asked the question if they already attended the event, 29.2% of the respondent answered they did. Interestingly, other studies on sporting event have the same ratio of people coming back to the event (Ardiet, 2018). This shows how a community can be built around sporting events in such a region.

Also, through the interviews we conducted, we can definitely confirm that the *Tour du Lac* has a real "social utility" (Barget & Gougnet, 2007). Indeed, this sport event is creating social links and is a real link builder between the populations. On the one hand between the participants (same people are attending the same different sporting event throughout the year) and on the other hand between the volunteers

that are part of the organization. Moreover, the 130 volunteers are almost all locals that work together to implement this race. It shows that such a race can foster social connections inside the local community, as well as outside.

### *Tourism and Image Outcome*

According to the semi-directive interviews we conducted, the race brings more visibility to the region. It brings people from outside the region and the quality of the organization brings a good image to the area.

These affirmations are also verified through the questionnaire: 65.2% of the respondents indicated that they came from more than 40 km away and 70.8% of the participants were newcomers.

Moreover, respondents were very satisfied by the quality of the organization: 97.4% indicated that they would participate again. Also, when asked if they had enjoyed the *Vallée de Joux* and if they would come back just for tourism purpose, 93.8% answered yes. In addition to that statement, 88.6% said that if other sporting events were organized in the area, they would participate.

### **Recommendations**

Thanks to the study, we can propose several recommendations that would be beneficial for the different stakeholders involved in one way or another in the race. We will not provide recommendations in this part in terms of technical organization of a sport event but more on a macro level. The purpose of the recommendations that follow is to foster a global sport tourism policy at the scale of the region and to improve overall quality of the event to satisfy participants, in order to attract other participants and increase the economic benefits.

First of all, there is a lack of direct collaboration between the tourism office and the race organizers. The race organizers could propose several accommodation and race entry packages through a collaboration with the tourism office that gathers all the lodgers, that would benefit to the region in terms of economic impacts. Moreover, the tourism office has no physical presence during the race which could be interesting in terms of marketing and branding for the destination. As far as we know, the only link between the two entities (organizers and tourism office)—as often in these kind of small sporting events—is only an accommodation website page where there is the link of the tourism office's website.

Secondly, besides the lack of collaboration between the organizers and tourism office, we can also point out from our study the lack of relationship between the local administration and the organizers. Of course the municipality helps with logistics and provides authorizations, but there is only a very tiny financial support from the administration. A bigger financial support could potentially help race organizers

improve the event (in terms of overall quality and communication), in order to increase participants and in the end economic and social impacts. This point is crucial especially in such a region where the economic development lies on a mono-industrial sector, the watchmaking industry.

A third recommendation that can be done is to foster collaboration between the organization of the Tour du Lac and the organization of the slowUp that takes places the day after. Synergies of logistics and communication could be implemented since the customer base attending both events can be noticeably similar.

As a matter of fact, there is obviously a great knowledge in the region in small sport events organizing but there are few places and times where organizers are all gathered. The experience sharing is close to non-existent, even though organizers know each other and exchange in informal ways. We are convinced that a formalization of meeting between all the different sport events could help improve the quality of all the events, while encouraging collaborations between organizers as well.

Finally, as mentioned before, there are many different small scale sport events that are organized in this region, but they come from different individual initiatives, and there is a lack of a global strategy on how to use small scale sport events as an asset for the region, which once again relies on the watchmaking industry—for the most part—for its economic development. Synergies could be fostered and collaboration at different levels would benefit the organizers (sharing facilities and equipment, collective purchase of equipment which could lower overall costs of organization thanks to economies of scale, experience sharing etc.) and other stakeholders as well, in particular the tourism office which is yet not involved enough.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the questionnaire and the semi-directive interviews suggest that the event is part of a global strategy of the area. The study reveals that it is at least at some points a successful strategy.

There are important economic impacts for such a small region in terms of inhabitants: 65,512.54 € are spent in the region thanks to the race. This does not include registration costs. To be really inclusive, we could have also included the organizations costs. The results are debatable because of the nature of the survey. It is always hard to rely only on the participant's responses that cannot be verified.

Secondly, we have seen that environmental impacts are lowered as much as possible and socio-cultural impacts of the event exists through the stimulation of social cohesion. Moreover, the number of participants is increasing every year. In 2016 there were 1065 participants. Two years later, there were 1600 participants, which shows that the race is attractive. It is also a good indicator of the success of the sport tourism strategy of the region. Other similar studies have been conducted on other small scale sporting events (Ardiet, 2018). They showed that the implementation of a portfolio of sporting event in such a region was definitely beneficial, almost from

all points of view. The study was focusing on four other sporting events organized by the Sport Center that occur throughout the year. (XTERRA Switzerland, Triathlon, slowUp and Trail running event). It showed that the economic and social benefits of small scale events could be prominent for the local community.

To come back to our study, it is also important to notice that the day after the race there is the slowUp that takes place. The principle of the slowUp is simple: it consists in closing the road around the lake (23 km) to motorized vehicles and opening it for soft mobility ways. The slowUp occurs every year at the same date. It brings up to 25,000 people in the region. There are no registration fees and you can start from where ever you want on the track. A lot of different kinds of animations are proposed by sponsors or local associations to the participants along the way.

This is very interesting to mention in our study when you analyze the weekend throughout the sport tourism perspective: On Saturday, there is a popular local running race that attracts 1000 competitors in the region. On Sunday, an open event to everyone brings together families and friends to have a good time on a bike, by foot or on rollers.

In total, more than 25,000 people come to the Valley and spend their money, thanks to sporting events that are organized. Without the events most of them would not have been there and the tourism opportunities would be much smaller than it is nowadays.

This kind of weekend is also a very good example of how you can build a “branding” for a region. The Valley of Joux, besides the heart of watchmaking industry, is trying to increase its nature-sport-friendly image through the implementation of a large portfolio of sporting events organized by local associations and the Sport Center. So far, it looks like the different local actors are satisfied and try to foster the sporting event initiatives.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The first and main limit of the study is that it relies on a survey where firstly the answers of the respondents cannot be verified and secondly the representativeness of the respondents can be questioned, even though the response rate was particularly high, thanks to the methodology used to foster participation in the study. Moreover, the economic impacts have been extrapolated, and it is only an estimation that does not correspond to an absolute truth.

Secondly, because of the time and means that were limited for this study, we could only interview three different stakeholders. More interviews would have probably give a broader and better understanding of the event.

The last limit is that the questionnaire analyzed mixed responses from both races (the 12 and the 24 km), which prevents us from a detailed analysis of both populations, which may be significantly different.

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# Conclusion: Current Trends in Small Scale Sport Tourism Events and Local Sustainable Development. A Comparative Approach



Ricardo Melo, Claude Sobry, and Derek Van Rheenen

**Abstract** This book aimed to outline the importance of sport tourism, particularly the contribution of small scale sport tourism events for local sustainable development. This final chapter synthesizes the findings and current trends of nine countries across three continents that participated in this international research project. As illustrated in the nine case studies, sport tourism has increased in importance over the last two decades, representing one of the fastest growing tourism sectors. Of the most important sport tourism activities, scholars cited nature sports, cycling and football tourism as the most popular categories. Authors also highlighted the areas of greatest growth among sport tourism events, recognizing small scale sport tourism events, such running events or races, as exceedingly popular. The growth of sport tourism around the world has also brought both positive and negative impacts to local communities, their economies, environment and social life. In response to negative impacts, local and national governments in most of the countries presented in this book are aware of these potential problems. The analysis carried out in this chapter compares the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the cities or municipalities hosting these half marathons, the characteristics of the event's organizers, demographic profiles of race participants and perceived and actual impacts of such events on the local community. Finally, the chapter presents some concluding remarks and future directions in small scale sport tourism events research.

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**Keywords** Comparative approach · International research project · Small scale sport tourism events · Local sustainable development

This book aimed to outline the importance of sport tourism, particularly the contribution of small scale sport tourism events for local sustainable development. Nine countries, across three continents, took part in this international research project. Each case study described how sport tourism is positioned in their respective country, documenting the most important sport tourism sectors or categories, and how sport tourism has changed since the turn of the twenty-first century. In particular, contributors sought collectively to determine whether there has been an increased demand and supply of small scale sport tourism events globally.

As illustrated in the nine case studies, sport tourism has increased in importance over the last two decades, representing one of the fastest growing tourism sectors. Of the most important sport tourism activities, scholars cited nature sports, cycling and football tourism as the most popular categories (see Table 1). Authors also highlighted the areas of greatest growth among sport tourism events, recognizing small scale sport tourism events, such as running events or races, as exceedingly popular. As Wilson stated (2006), worldwide, each weekend a sport event of some type takes place, such as professional football matches, semi-professional tennis matches or amateur trail running, and “no matter what type of event it may be, there will be an event organizer, competitors, spectators and officials” (p. 57). With the growth of sport tourism, particularly sport tourism events, there has likewise been a heightened concern with sustainable development.

The growth of sport tourism around the world has brought both positive and negative impacts to local communities, their economies, environment and social life. In response to negative impacts, local and national governments in most of the countries presented in this book are aware of these potential problems. As such, they have begun to adopt international guidelines to promote sustainability, such as the sustainable development goals (UNWTO, 2020), sustainable tourism principles and goals (WTO, 2004; WTO & UNDP, 2017), and sports for sustainable development principles and goals (IOC, 1999; SGD Fund, 2018), among others.

As we observed in Chapter 1 of this volume, running events have witnessed some of the greatest growth around the world in the last two decades, particularly to the expansion of recreational, rather than competitive, running. In this regard, we choose to analyze half marathon running events for our nine case studies. This final chapter will synthesize the findings and current trends across three continents. We compare the geographic and socio-demographic characteristics of the cities or municipalities hosting these half marathons, the characteristics of the event’s organizers, demographic profiles of race participants and perceived and actual impacts of such events on the local community. Finally, the chapter presents some concluding remarks and future directions in small scale sport tourism research.

**Table 1** Countries (facts in 2016)

Country (facts in 2016)	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
Capital	Algiers	Brasilia	Prague	Paris	Budapest	Rome	Lisbon	Bucharest	Bern
Geographical size (Km <sup>2</sup> )	2,381,741	8,514,876	78,865	5,516,951	93,000	301,338	92225.6	238,391	51.6
Population (million) <sup>a</sup>	40.6	206.1	10.6	66.7	9.8	60.6	10.3	19.7	8.4
GDP per capita (US Dollar) <sup>a</sup>	3946.4	8712.9	18463.3	36962.2	12992.4	30936.1	19978.4	9567.1	80172.2
Average annual income (US Dollar) <sup>b</sup>	4060	9140	20,249	41,080	14,780	33,730	21,990	11,290	84,410
Sport participation index (%) <sup>c</sup>	55.0	37.9%	35.0	49.0	34.0	26.0	35.0	5.0	50.0%
Tourism direct contribution to GDP (% of total GDP) <sup>a</sup>	3.4	3.1	2.6	3.6	2.5	5.4	6.3	1.4	2.5
Most important sport tourism categories	Football tourism Running events Swimming	Nature sports tourism Football tourism Sport tourism events	Hiking Cycling tourism Downhill cross-skiing	Winter sports tourism Hiking Cycling tourism	Spa tourism	Nature sports Cycling tourism Tennis events	Golf Nautical sports tourism Nature sports tourism	Running events Football tourism Tennis events	Ski resorts Sport tourism events Nature sports tourism

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country (facts in 2016)	DZ ( <i>n</i> = 165)	BR ( <i>n</i> = 89)	CZ ( <i>n</i> = 491)	FR ( <i>n</i> = 591)	HU ( <i>n</i> = 257)	IT ( <i>n</i> = 2139)	PT ( <i>n</i> = 345)	RO ( <i>n</i> = 148)	CH ( <i>n</i> = 469)
Examples of important sport tourism events organized in 2016	Sahara Marathon African Championships (Fencing)	Rio 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games Grande Prémio Brasil Caixa de Atletismo	Ostrava Golden Spike International Prague Marathon FIS Cross-Country World Cup Nové Město na Moravě	Tour de France Ryder Cup (Golf) Women's Soccer World Cup	Modern Pentathlon World Cup Series Formula 1 Hungarian, Budapest Marathon	UEFA Champions League Final L'Evento Golfistico Dell' Anno	World Surf League in Peniche, 6th International eighth Madeira Island Ultra Trail Cycling Tour of Algarve	Volkswagen Bucharest Half Marathon Federation Cup, Open UEFA Europa League Final	Tour de Suisse, WTS Triathlon Men's & Women's Alpine and Cross Country Skiing World Cup

Notes: *DZ* Algeria, *BR* Brazil, *CZ* Czech Republic, *IT* Italy, *FR* France, *HU* Hungary, *PT* Portugal, *RO* Romania, *CH* Switzerland

<sup>a</sup>Source: World Bank at <https://data.worldbank.org>

<sup>b</sup>Source: [Worlddata.info](https://www.worlddata.info/average-income.php) at <https://www.worlddata.info/average-income.php>

<sup>c</sup>Practicing sport, fitness or recreational (leisure) physical activities at least once a week. Source: Eurostat for European Union countries (2014) at [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics\\_on\\_sport\\_participation](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_sport_participation); Algeria, Brazil and Switzerland used national statistics

## The Host Cities: Size Matters

These small scale sport tourism events were held in nine cities across three different continents (see Table 2). These municipalities vary in size. Some are very large, with more than 1.5 million inhabitants, such as Rome and Bucharest, the capitals of Italy and Romania, respectively. On the other hand, there are small-size cities such as Le Chenit, with only 4605 residents, 50 km away from Geneva (201,818 inhabitants) and Lausanne (140,000 inhabitants), the second and fourth largest cities in Switzerland, respectively. Phalempin, France, is also a small city, with 4500 inhabitants, located 20 km away from Lille, with a population of 232,741 residents (if considered the Métropole Européenne de Lille, the region has a population of 1,182,127, making it the fourth largest urban area in France). The other five case studies included in this research project are considered medium-size cities, between 93,248 inhabitants (Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic) and 311,230 inhabitants (Guarujá, Brasil).<sup>1</sup>

The different size of the cities hosting these half marathons influences the size of the event. In the largest cities, more than 10,000 runners participated: 10,714 at the Roma-Ostia Half Marathon and 14,000 at the Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon. In small-size cities, such as Le Chenit (Switzerland), 1065 runners participated, while in Phalempin (France), 3500 runners. This is a significant number of event participants given the city's size, attributed perhaps to its close proximity to Lille. In the other half marathons hosted in medium-size cities, the participation numbers ranged between 1000 runners in Guarujá (Brasil) and 5848 runners in Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic).

These sport tourism events are mostly domestic. There were a very small number of international participants in many of these events, with only 2.3% in the Portuguese case, for example. There were more international runners in the half marathons hosted in the largest cities, namely, in the Roma-Ostia Half Marathon in Italy (12.0% declared by organizers), the Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon in Romania (10.4% from 60 countries declared by organizers), as well as the Rotary Running Festival in Debrecen, Hungary (10.7% of questionnaire respondents).

In general, however, these half marathon events around the world attracted mostly citizens living in the municipality or the region (living no more than 40 km from the city). On the other hand, small- and medium-size cities, such as Bejaia (Algeria), Guarujá (Brasil), Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic), Coimbra (Portugal) and Le Chenit (Switzerland), attracted mostly people from outside of the city boundaries, living more than 40 km away from the host city. One exception was Phalempin (France), which attracted mostly local runners who lived within 40 km from the city, due again to its close proximity to Lille. In this regard, all the half marathon case studies included in this international research project had primarily a regional or national scope, experienced at the local level.

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<sup>1</sup>By Brazilian standards, the city of Guarujá is considered small.

**Table 2** Half marathons (facts in 2016)

Country	Half marathons	DZ ( <i>n</i> = 165)	BR ( <i>n</i> = 89)	CZ ( <i>n</i> = 491)	FR ( <i>n</i> = 591)	HU ( <i>n</i> = 257)	IT ( <i>n</i> = 2139)	PT ( <i>n</i> = 345)	RO ( <i>n</i> = 148)	CH ( <i>n</i> = 469)
Name of the city	Béjaïa	Guarujá	Ústí nad Labem	Phalempin	Debreceen	Rome	Coimbra	Bucharest	Le Chenit	
Geographical size of the city (Km <sup>2</sup> )	120.22	144.79	93.97	7.93	461.25	1,285.00	319.40	240.00	99.25	
Population (n)	187,065	300,761	93,248	4500	204,000	2,869,461	134,348	1,844,000	4605	
Name of the event	Semi-marathon International de la Ville de Béjaïa	21 k Guarujá 2016	Mattoni 1/2 Marathon	Phalempin Half Marathon	Rotary Running Festival	Roma-Ostia Half Marathon	III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra – The Race of the Knowledge	Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon	Tour du Lac	
Type of organization	Association	Private company	Private company	Association	Association	Private company	Private company	Association	Association	
Sponsors	Both public and private	Private	Private	Both public and private	Private	Private	Private	Both public and private	Both public and private	
Total number of participants	5344	1000	5848	3500	1028	10,714	2155	14,000	1065	
Number of participants in the half marathon	1442	700	2848	3500	353	10,714	1053	2761	473	

Country Half marathons	DZ ( <i>n</i> = 165)	BR ( <i>n</i> = 89)	CZ ( <i>n</i> = 491)	FR ( <i>n</i> = 591)	HU ( <i>n</i> = 257)	IT ( <i>n</i> = 2139)	PT ( <i>n</i> = 345)	RO ( <i>n</i> = 148)	CH ( <i>n</i> = 469)
Scope and objective of the race	Promotion of the city/region	PROMOTION OF THE CITY/REGION	Profit, promotion of the city/region and of sport participation	Social pleasure	Charity and promotion of sport participation	Part of the international IAAF (Gold Label) and national FIDAL calendar	Profit and promotion of brands	Promotion of good socio-economic impacts on community and fund raising	Promotion of the city/region and the organizing association
Number of volunteers	300	-	645	350	-	500	140	700	130
Number of inhabitants participating in the race (% of total)	23.0	15.0	26.0	3.4	-	11.9	37.1	64.9	24.8

Notes: *DZ* Algeria, *BR* Brazil, *CZ* Czech Republic, *IT* Italy, *FR* France, *HU* Hungary, *PT* Portugal, *RO* Romania, *CH* Switzerland

In nearly all of the cases, the car was the main mode of transportation for participants traveling to and from the event, particularly in the small- and medium-size cities, such as, in Phalempin, France (94.0%), Guarujá, Brasil (93.3%) and Coimbra, Portugal (85.5%). Runners of the half marathons also travelled accompanied mostly by family or friends. As we develop later in this final chapter, this reliance on motor vehicles poses negative social and environmental impacts relative to pollution, traffic, overcrowding and parking.

## **The Organization of the Half Marathons: Annual Events Organized by Both Public and Private Entities**

The half marathon case studies included in this book were organized by different types of entities. Five of the events were organized by sport associations (in Algeria, France, Hungary, Romania and Switzerland) and four were organized by private companies (in Brasil, Czech Republic, Italy and Portugal). The sponsors at most of these sport tourism events were primarily private companies, with the exception of Algeria, France, Romania and Switzerland, which had both private and public sponsors.

The organizers noted several motivations for why they decided to host these half marathons. These included fund raising (Romania), charity (Hungary), profit and the promotion of brands (Czech Republic and Portugal), the promotion of the association organizing the event (Switzerland), the promotion of the city and the region (Algeria, Brasil, Czech Republic, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland), adherence to a national tourism calendar (Italy), promotion of sport participation (Algeria and Brasil) and for social pleasure and community building (France). These findings demonstrate tremendous variability in sport tourism organization, both in the motivation to host these events and in the method of implementation.

All of the half marathons were planned events organized on an annual basis, but with varying degrees of historical precedence. The III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra (Portugal) is the youngest race (third edition in 2016) while the Phalempin half marathon (France) is the oldest event (32nd edition in 2016). Some of these events can also be referred to as hallmark events (Getz & Page, 2016), as they recur each year in the same place, drawing an association between event and place. Periodic events in the same location can also develop ongoing relationships with the community and build a pool of loyal volunteers who return to the event each time it is held (Smith, Baum, Holmes, & Lockstone-Binney, 2014).



## **Demographic Trends: Mostly Male, Middle-Aged, Well-Educated and Affluent Participants**

The results of this research project revealed some demographic trends in half marathon road race participation. Data obtained in eight of the nine studies demonstrated that the majority of participants were male. These results are in line with the trends presented in the RunRepeat Report (Andersen, 2019), where globally female participation (around 45%) in half marathons is lower than male participation. However, as we stated in the introduction of this book, it is estimated that female participation in running events is increasing in all categories (5 k, 10 k, half marathons and marathons). In total, female participation has risen from under 20% in 1986 to just above 50% in 2018, and in 5 k the female participation is almost 60%, where for the first time in history there are more female than male runners (Andersen, 2019). It must be highlighted to accentuate this current trend that in the Tour du Lac Half Marathon in Switzerland, a country with traditional gender discrepancies in running participation (Andersen, 2019), there were more women than men running at the event.

The average age of participants in all nine case studies was between 35 and 45 years, a finding in line with the RunRepeat Report (Andersen, 2019), which has estimated that individuals between the ages of 30 and 50 years predominate participation in running events globally. The average age has increased from 35.2 years in 1986 to 39.3 in 2018, a statistically significant increase in participation by age. Perhaps because of this trend towards older participants, respondents in nearly all countries were mostly married, as evidenced in France (76.8%), Italy (75.0%) and Hungary (71.3%). The only exception was Algeria, where 57% of participant respondents were single.

Overall, most participants in the nine half marathons self-reported as being highly educated, employed, with annual incomes above their national average. This means that most participants belong to the middle and upper middle classes in each country. This trend has been found in previous studies about active sport tourists, such as in nature sports (Melo & Gomes, 2017a, 2017b; Melo, Van Rhenen, & Gammon, 2020), golf tourism (Hennessey, Macdonald, & Maceachern, 2008; Hudson & Hudson, 2010), bicycling tourism (Buning, Cole, & Lamont, 2019; Ritchie, Tkaczynski, & Faulks, 2010), among others. The results of the nine case studies presented in this book support Gibson's (1998) findings that defined active sport tourists as primarily male, affluent, college educated and able to travel long distances to participate in their favourite sports activities or events. These individuals are likely to engage in active sport tourism well into retirement, and tend to engage in these activities regularly. In this regard, as Kidd (1995) has suggested "despite the myth of sport as the great equalizer, participation is still heavily dependent upon the financial resources and cultural capital that class background brings and this is structured by gender, ethnicity, and race." (p. 232). As such, these socio-demographic characteristics can be viewed as social determinants to participate in both running events specifically but also sport tourism activities globally. Some of

these social determinants help us to better understand the profile of participation in small scale sport tourism activities and events.

## **Profile of Participation: Active Athletes Motivated by Pleasure and Challenge**

The majority of participants in the nine half marathons were active runners who had participated in more than one half marathon in 2015. However, a larger number of respondents of the Tour du Lac (Switzerland) and III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra (Portugal) were first time event participants. This finding may be due to the fact that these are younger races, the fifth and third edition of the sport tourism event, respectively. The majority of participants in all sites traveled to the event with family or friends.

In almost all cases, the majority of respondents declared that participation in the half marathon was the main reason to travel to the host cities. They participated in the half marathon primarily to enjoy themselves (for the pleasure it provides), to challenge their abilities (to put themselves to a test) and to seek exercise (for maintaining and/or enhancing their physical condition or wellness). Previous studies have noted that the motivation of runners varies with their level of experience, age and gender (Masters & Ogles, 1995; Ogles & Masters, 2003; Zach et al., 2017; Ziegler, 1991). For example, experienced runners were more motivated by social and competitive reinforcements, while mid-level experienced runners were primarily motivated by personal performance enhancement and psychological rewards. First-time or rookie runners sought to enhance self-esteem more than more experienced runners (Masters & Ogles, 1995). In terms of age, younger participants (20–28 years) were more motivated by personal goal achievement than were older marathon runners ( $\geq 50$  years); conversely, older runners were primarily motivated by general health, weight concerns, life meaning and social affiliation with other runners (Ogles & Masters, 2003). Regarding gender, males reported being more competitive than females (Deaner, Masters, Ogles, & LaCaille, 2011), while women felt that running had a positive effect on self-image and that their lives were enriched because of running (Ziegler, 1991).

## **Tripartite Impacts of Small Scale Sport Tourism Events**

### ***Sociocultural Indicators***

Host destinations can derive diverse benefits from organizing sport tourism events, particularly when they are held in existing facilities (Kim, Jun, Walker, & Drane, 2014), as in most of our case studies, where city streets and roadways were

repurposed to become temporary sports arenas (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Thus, a portfolio of sport tourism events can be developed consistently with a community's available infrastructure, such that human and cultural capital allow for a viable and sustainable tourism development (Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012).

Analysis of volunteerism in sport tourism events is a key sociocultural indicator and a growing phenomenon seen across the globe (Kerwin, Warner, Walker, & Stevens, 2015). Sport tourism organizations and events are heavily dependent on volunteers for their operations (Costa, Chalip, Green, & Simes, 2006; Doherty & Carron, 2003; Green & Chalip, 2004; Smith, Baum, Holmes, & Lockstone-Binney, 2014). This includes not only mega-events such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA's World Cup, but also local, small scale sport tourism events such as the case studies presented in this book. Indeed, event organizers in all of the presented case studies relied on local volunteers. This varied from 130 volunteers at the Tour du Lac (Switzerland) to 700 volunteers at the Raiffeisen Bank Bucharest Marathon (Romania). Involving volunteers in sport tourism events has become a critical component of event success, as they provide a basic (and free) form of labor (e.g. handing out water and prize bags, set-up and clean-up), and can also be a great source of expertise needed for the organizations (Ringue, 2012). Volunteers add enthusiasm, community support and contribute to visitor satisfaction (Ralston, et al. 2005). As demonstrated in several previous studies (e.g., Costa et al., 2006; Green & Chalip, 2004; Kerwin et al., 2015; Warner, Kerwin, & Walker, 2013) the inclusion of volunteers in small scale sport tourism events often increase the sense of community pride in a local site or destination. Volunteers also make sense economically, cutting the operational costs of the events (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). According to Sport England (2003), "voluntary contribution to sport is of such a scale that when quantified it outstrips all other voluntary activity and dwarfs the amount of paid employment in sport." (p. 2).

Another important positive sociocultural indicator of organizing a sport tourism event, such as the half marathon road race, is the event's acceptance within the community (Lee, 2013). In this regard, it is important to understand and assess the attitudes of residents toward tourism (Lee, 2013); namely, if stakeholders are allowed to actively participate in the event planning process, it is more likely that such initiatives will be successful in the long term, contributing to local sustainable development (Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009). With this idea in focus within this comparative study, the number of residents participating in these races was analyzed. The results varied between a low of 3.4% at the Phalempin half marathon (France) to a high of 37.1% at the III EDP Running Wonders Coimbra (Portugal). As such, local participation in events is an important factor to consider in the planning and implementation of these events in the future.

Regarding the participation in other activities beyond participation in the sport event itself, Gibson, Willming and Holdnak (2003) found that sport tourists are interested in little else but the event; it is hard to entice sport tourists to take part in other community activities. This was also found in the nine case studies where results show that, except for eating out and visiting family or friends, participants did little else at the host destination.

However, results of the nine case studies demonstrated that participants were highly satisfied with the event organization, reporting the desire to participate in future editions of the races and also visit the host destination just for tourism. In this regard, these results are in line with empirical evidence indicating that sport tourism events should be viewed as a potential mechanism to market and promote a host destination and foster community building (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). This socio-cultural trend is also very important when considering the future economic impacts of small scale sport tourism activities and events.

### *Economic Indicators*

Our research found two main kinds of organizers of half marathon events: associations and private companies. All of them have two sources of funding, private sponsors and public support. The number of sponsors and partners varies, from just a few to a whole range of “gold sponsors” or “historical sponsors,” and from local, national and international companies. Most of them provide material assistance (cars, informatics) and/or goods and services (welcome pack, arrival gifts, water, fruits, etc.). All of the organizers received some assistance from the municipality. To varying degree these cities helped to underwrite the operating budget and/or infrastructure to host the event, such as roadways and venues (sport halls), equipment (trucks, barrier, etc.), municipal staff and broadcasting (television, social media).

The operating budgets of these nine half marathons were very different, reflected in the size and capacity of the host destination, the number of participants, the number of volunteers, etc. From the organizers’ point of view, the most important indicator for success may well be economic (e.g., were the financial objectives met), these differences suggest that participant experience will be qualitatively different, as well as the relative importance of social, economic and environmental indicators and their corresponding impacts.

In general, registration fees for the event comprised a relatively small part of overall spending (except for in the Czech Republic). In all instances, the two most important elements of the respondents’ expenses were food/beverage and accommodation, although responses to the latter varied widely. Where participants were mostly locals, living less than 40 km from the event destination. The expenditure for accommodations was very low. Most of these participants traveled just for the race, some spending one night with friends or family. In some cases, the biggest races held in national capitals (e.g., Italy and Romania), many participants traveled from far distances and spent one or more nights in the city. As illustrated in Table 3, the highest number of nights spent in the city as a result of this sport tourism event was in Romania with 2.2 nights; Italy and Brasil were next highest, with 1.8 overnight stays. Not surprisingly, these three locations also reported the highest expenditures per capita, with Italy the highest (192.3 Euros), followed by Brasil (155.0 Euros) and Romania (138.9 Euros) (Tables 4 and 5).

**Table 3** Sociodemographic characteristics of the half marathons participants

Country	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
<b>Gender (%)</b>									
Female	12.7	25.8	33.9	28.4	56.0	19.0	27.2	31.8	54.8
Male	87.3	74.2	66.1	71.6	44.0	81.0	72.8	68.2	45.2
<b>Age (Average)</b>									
Age	-	40.6	39.7	40.0	37.7	44.5	41.0	36.8	-
<b>Marital status (%)</b>									
Single	57.0	20.2	23.8	17.3	25.1	18.6	31.3	33.1	19.4
Married/living with partner	39.4	68.6	65.2	76.8	71.3	75.1	61.2	60.8	72.7
Divorced/separated	2.4	7.9	10.3	5.6	3.6	5.7	7.5	6.1	7.7
Widow/er	1.2	3.4	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.2
<b>Level of Education (%)</b>									
Basic education or less	10.9	3.4	7.2	6.1	4.8	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Secondary education	19.4	14.6	35.9	14.2	24.0	4.0	22.9	11.5	22.4
Higher education	51.5	47.2	13.9	30.8	35.8	42.3	41.7	49.3	51.6
Post-graduate studies (Master or Doctorate)	18.2	34.8	43.0	48.9	35.4	53.6	35.4	39.2	26.1
<b>Working situation (%)</b>									
Employed	47.3	60.7	76.5	80.5	60.6	70.9	74.2	75.7	79.2
Company owner	11.5	12.4	8.5	4.2	21.5	4.4	5.2	4.7	3.2
Self-employed	9.7	13.5	7.0	5.8	4.1	14.1	8.7	10.8	5.8
Student	21.2	1.1	3.1	4.7	10.6	2.0	4.7	1.3	4.5
Unemployed	3.6	3.4	1.6	1.5	0.8	2.4	4.3	3.5	2.6
Retired	3.0	6.7	0.7	2.9	1.6	4.1	1.7	2.0	2.8
Home duties	0.6	2.2	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.9	0.0	1.3	1.3

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Country	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
Other situation	3.0	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.2	0.7	0.6
Income (%)									
Without income	35.1	4.5	0.0	-	-	3.2	5.2	6.3	-
Below the minimum wage	26.1	0.0	1.6	-	-	1.5	2.3	0.9	-
Minimum wage	16.9	0.0	4.0	-	-	4.7	11.9	0.0	-
Between the minimum wage and the average salary	7.2	23.6	31.3	-	-	44.1	14.5	15.3	-
Above the average salary	14.5	71.9	63.1	-	-	46.5	66.1	77.5	-
Resident of the municipality (%)									
Yes	30.9	9.0	30.9	3.4	55.6	10.0	39.4	61.5	7.7
No	69.1	91.0	69.1	96.6	44.4	90.0	60.6	38.5	92.3
Not in the town. Where? (%)									
In the Country	97.0	100.0	99.0	99.8	89.3	97.8	97.7	92.6	-
Outside of country	3.0	0.0	1.0	0.2	10.7	2.2	2.3	7.4	-
Distance to place of the event (%)									
Less than 40 km	29.7	58.4	26.0	78.8	72.9	49.4	46.1	66.2	34.8
More than 40 km	70.3	41.6	74.0	21.2	27.1	50.6	53.9	33.8	65.2

Notes: DZ Algeria, BR Brazil, CZ Czech Republic, FR France, HU Hungary, IT Italy, PT Portugal, RO Romania, CH Switzerland

**Table 4** Profile of participation of the half marathons participants

Country	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
Participation in the event (%)									
First time	36.4	12.4	49.8	56.3	32.3	33.3	62.0	37.2	70.8
Companionship (%) <sup>a</sup>									
Alone	17.6	11.2	22.4	32.0	32.3	32.1	17.4	26.3	22.6
With family	22.4	50.6	46.2	31.0	43.3	22.5	49.6	33.1	39.8
With friends	60.6	25.8	26.0	28.6	18.9	26.8	47.8	30.4	29.2
With the club/coach	15.2	12.4	1.8	8.5	2.0	18.6	2.0	6.1	3.4
Others	3.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	3.5	0.0	2.3	4.1	5.2
Number of companions (n)									
Average	4.0	3.2	1.8	2.3	9.1	2.7	3.8	3.5	—
First motive to choose this event/race (%)									
For the quality of the organization	49.1	10.1	35.2	29.9	48.2	32.4	26.7	33.1	14.7
Because it's not too far from home	10.3	28.1	26.7	56.9	63.4	17.4	27.8	41.2	32.3
Because of the touristic possibilities	11.5	46.1	4.7	0.0	1.6	4.3	12.8	2.0	6.0
Other(s)	29.1	15.7	33.4	13.2	10.9	45.9	32.8	23.7	47
Primary purpose of the trip to the city (%)									
Participation in the event	87.2	88.6	96.4	89.8	39.9	78.9	70.0	45.7	76.3
Main reasons to participate in the half marathon (average) <sup>b, c</sup>									
To compete	4.0	6.0	5.3	5.0	—	4.0	4.3	5.7	13.9
To enjoy	4.8	4.7	6.0	6.1	6.7	6.1	5.9	6.3	41.3
To socialize	4.1	5.9	4.7	4.1	5.3	4.7	4.8	4.8	1.1

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Country	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
To be healthy	4.3	3.8	5.6	5.2	6.2	4.0	5.1	6.1	1.5
To support (family/friends)	3.5	6.2	4.5	3.5	4.6	2.9	3.7	4.7	0.9
To challenge me	4.6	5.4	6.2	5.9	6.4	5.6	5.4	6.2	21.0
To relax	4.8	5.5	5.7	4.6	5.5	4.8	5.1	5.6	1.5
To exercise	4.5	6.2	5.9	5.8	6.6	5.5	5.8	6.1	14.3
For the novelty	4.1	4.3	4.8	4.0	4.6	4.2	3.9	4.5	2.6
To travel	4.0	5.0	3.6	2.8	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.2	1.9
Overall event evaluation <sup>d</sup> (n)									
Average	5.6	4.2	6.2	6.2	6.3	6.0	5.8	6.1	6.1
Number of road races in 2015 (n)									
Average	3.4	13.0	2.9	5.0	5.6	15.7	7.4	3.0	–

Notes: DZ Algeria, BR Brazil, CZ Czech Republic, FR France, HU Hungary, IT Italy, PT Portugal, RO Romania, CH Switzerland

<sup>a</sup>Multiple possibilities

<sup>b</sup>Measured in a seven points scale: 1. not at all important; 4 nor less nor more important; 7 totally important

<sup>c</sup>Switzerland used the percentage of the main motivation – only one answer allowed

<sup>d</sup>Measured in a seven points scale: 1. extremely dissatisfied; 4. Nor dissatisfied nor satisfied; 7. Extremely satisfied



**Table 5** Impacts of the half marathons

Country	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
Environmental measure undertaken (%)									
Positive	24.2	60.0	31.0*	68.2	25.4	75.2	91.0	39.2	-
Travel (%)									
By car	56.4	93.3	67.0	94.9	71.4	51.7	85.5	52.5	92.2
By Plane	5.5	0.0	0.4	0.2	1.6	6.2	1.2	4.3	0.0
By bus	16.4	3.4	4.0	0.0	3.9	22.6	1.2	2.1	0.0
By train	0.0	0.0	21.7	0.3	2.0	11.0	1.7	0.7	6.9
By motorcycle	0.0	1.1	-	0.8	0.0	2.7	0.9	0.0	0.0
By bike	18.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	7.0	0.4	0.0	2.1	0.9
By foot	0.0	0.0	6.3	3.1	14.1	2.4	9.5	4.3	0.0
Others	2.9	2.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	34.0	0.0
Overnight (%) <sup>a</sup>									
Yes	58.2	67.4	16.1	3.7	7.2	28.1	17.4	23.7	7.5
Number of nights <sup>b</sup> (n)									
Average	1.0	1.8	1.5	1.1	1.6	1.8	1.2	2.2	-
Accommodation <sup>b</sup> (%)									
Camping/RV	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	3.0	0.0	11.3
Hotel/motel	69.1	24.6	52.1	9.1	12.5	54.8	39.4	41.7	13.2
Bed and breakfast	0.0	7.2	-	0.0	75.0	14.2	7.6	2.8	3.8
At friend's/ relative's home	22.4	43.5	31.5	90.9	12.5	28.1	37.9	47.2	39.6
Other	5.5	19.2	16.4	0.0	0.0	0.8	12.1	8.3	67.9
Most important expense items (%)									
Travel	26.6	6.7	46.2	13.6	21.4	16.8	29.9	9.4	14.8

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

Country	DZ (n = 165)	BR (n = 89)	CZ (n = 491)	FR (n = 591)	HU (n = 257)	IT (n = 2139)	PT (n = 345)	RO (n = 148)	CH (n = 469)
Food and beverage	18.8	11.2	4.0	12.7	11.9	16.6	7.8	8.9	15
Accommodation	33.3	46.1	37.9	13.7	43.5	16.5	21.7	27.3	1.8
Registration	3.6	4.5	8.7	14.7	–	16.1	20.0	10.3	63.1
Sport equipment acquisition	17.3	30.3	0.2	–	–	17.8	7.8	33.3	0.0
Others	0.0	0.0	3.0	45.3	23.2	16.2	12.8	10.8	5.4
Overall money spent with the event (€)									
Average	71.2	155.0	–	55.2	44.0	192.3	111.2	138.9	61.5
Overall money spent in the town (€)									
Average	33.7	58.8	–	24.9	40.3	62.3	44.3	93.7	–
Participation in other activities in the city <sup>c</sup> (%)									
Visit family or friends	13.2	15.7	14.3	64.5	7.8	35.7	17.4	24.2	18.1
Cultural activities	14.5	17.0	2.5	0.0	3.9	16.7	6.0	10.6	0.6
Leisure activities	21.3	56.2	5.0	1.1	25.3	6.2	10.1	6.1	10.6
Shopping	23.5	27.0	2.5	4.4	8.6	9.0	22.9	28.8	1.9
Eating out	33.3	51.7	12.0	15.6	15.9	20.9	62.0	68.2	36.9
Attend another sport event	22.7	12.4	0.0	1.1	1.2	0.9	2.0	9.1	4.4
Visit a museum	9.9	5.4	0.0	0.0	2.3	2.8	7.5	10.6	0.6
Visit an attraction park	14.8	5.6	0.0	1.1	3.9	0.5	6.4	7.6	0.6
Attending a show	9.4	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	2.0	9.1	0.0
Went to the cinema	3.4	5.6	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.8	2.0	16.7	0.0
Others	38.8	0.0	0.0	12.2	1.9	5.9	0.0	10.6	0.0

Return to participate in the next editions of the event (%)										
Yes	98.8	83.1	76.5	97.3	95.3	92.2	97.0	98.0	97.4	
Return to participate in other sport tourism event (%)										
Yes	73.4	95.5	–	70.2	91.4	71.5	92.0	95.3	88.6	
Coming back just for tourism (%)										
Yes	86.7	77.9	43.7	38.9	77.8	52.3	63.0	42.6	93.9	

Notes: *DZ* Algeria, *BR* Brazil, *CZ* Czech Republic, *FR* France, *HU* Hungary, *IT* Italy, *PT* Portugal, *RO* Romania, *CH* Switzerland

<sup>a</sup>Percentage (%) of those living more than 40 k of the city

<sup>b</sup>Percentage (%) of those who stated that overnight in the city

<sup>c</sup>Multiple possibilities

\*66.4% don't answered, cannot say or didn't think about it

The overall economic impact on host cities varies and is generally significantly less than what organizers espouse, especially when the event is organized privately. The organizers of the race in Phalempin (France) had no idea of the economic impact of the event and did not seem to care about any financial return. Organizers of the Usti nad Labem (Czech Rep.) race announced an economic return far higher than the evaluation carried out by the authors of the chapter. These authors argued, “[our] estimate (CZK 1,500 000) is in sharp contrast to the figures provided by organizers who claimed that during the event held a year earlier, participants and visitors spent over CZK 21 million” (Slepičková & Slepička, [this volume](#), p. 107) (Tables 4 and 5).

In Hungary, the most important factor for organizers was that the economic performance of the event met its financial objectives. And yet, researchers argued, “regarding the economic point of view, the event was not focusing on profitability; its main objective was to integrate new partners from local service providers and businesses, whereas the perspective of tourism development did not make an essential part of the organizing process” (Czegledi, Cernaianu, Mischler, & Sipos-Onyestyak, [this volume](#), p. 147).

The potential linkages between the sport tourism event and local sustainable development was well understood by the researchers engaged in this international project. However, many of these authors found that race organizers often did not utilize the event to promote local tourism, such as in Algeria, where “the events potential for enhancing tourism activities was not fully exploited” (Benabdelhadi, Benabdelhadi, & Boulerbah, [this volume](#), p. 148), mainly due to a lack of a network capable of exploiting resources to enhance the territory [...] The organizers needed to promote local networks and to strengthen a sense of ‘ownership’ by the different stakeholders with regard to the events (Mazza, [this volume](#), p. 151), as well as “a lack of direct collaboration between the tourism office and the race organizers” (Ardiet, Sobry, & Melo, [this volume](#), p. 213).

A lack of synergy between stakeholders was often found, either because of a myopic (often economic) approach or a lack of awareness among local politics of the possibilities of using sport to more fully develop tourism. Collectively, these global results support similar findings by Daniels and Norman (2003), who concluded that sport tourists spend little on complementary activities to the sporting event. These findings are also in line with Gibson et al. (2012) who reported that the most common activities complementary to participation in the event are having lunch or dinner out, shopping and visiting relatives. The case study in France seems to be unique, simply a race for the sake of a race, seemingly motivated without any economic or touristic intentions. The annual hosting of this localized community event represents a kind of “old fashion,” Coubertinian philosophy of sport, perhaps refreshing in contrast to modern sport’s overemphasis on commercialized sport and the profit motive.

## ***Environment Indicators***

To analyze the results concerning environmental indicators in this comparative project, it is necessary to separate what occurred at the event site and how participants traveled to and from the site as part of this tourism experience. According to Gibson et al. (2012) and Hinch, Higham and Moyle (2016) the analysis of the environmental impact of sporting event tourism is the least researched axis regarding the existing literature on impact studies. Unfortunately, measuring the ecological footprint of sporting events is a relatively poorly developed area, although larger-scale or mega sporting events may have a considerable impact, even if we focus solely on the carbon dioxide emission produced by transportation to and from the event. As such, Collins, Jones and Munday (2009) drew attention to the considerably less significant environmental footprint of smaller scale events, like those in our study, owing to the residential proximity of participants to the event venue.

With regard to the environmental impacts at the site of these nine half marathons, all of the organizers stated that they had implemented measures to protect the environment in advance, during and after the event had taken place. Only in Algeria did city services not initiate clean-up of the event site following its completion. All the other organizing bodies developed specific strategies to protect the environment, such as mobile toilets near the start and finish line(s), designated areas to collect garbage, recycle plastic bottles, etc.

The Swiss case study was unique, presenting perhaps a best practice in environmental sustainability because “in Switzerland, each organization of a sporting event is subject to a deep analysis of the states’ environmental services, the *Direction Générale de l’Environnement* (General Direction of the Environment). Before the race, the organizer has to apply for an authorization from this State department, among others” (Ardiet et al., [this volume](#), p. 212).

In several case studies, the idea of a “green label” was acknowledged by the organizers but most did not seem to know how to obtain such a label, what had been proposed globally or in their country relative to green certification, or it was simply too laborious to obtain such certification. In two cases, the organizers seemed to never have heard of such global environmental sustainability efforts. For example, in Algeria, “concerning the use of a green card related to a sport event, the information was extremely poor with either the organizers, or the municipality officials about this concept” (Benabdelhadi et al., [this volume](#), p. 67). Similarly, in Italy, “the President of the Rome Marathon confirmed that the ‘Green code’ was not widespread in Italy and in the sports sector in general” (Mazza, [this volume](#), p. 165).

On the participants’ side, the awareness of environmental issues and, above all, of the efforts made by the organizers in this field was much more widespread. In Italy, researchers found that “the youngest, under 40s, especially young people in the 18 to 29 years – are more attentive than others to the issue of recycling” (Mazza, [this volume](#), p. 165). Many participants across all of the sport tourism events criticized the lack of waste collection facilities.

It was emphasized several times that participants did not notice intentional efforts made by the organizers relative to environmental sustainability. In Hungary, “although 71.7% of the respondents found that the organizers had not proposed any environmentally friendly solutions, the event was considered ‘average’ in terms of fostering without any particular environmental sustainability...It means that 31% of them (respondents) did not find anything noticeable, or that they considered the services in this respect as average, basic and non-remarkable (Czegledi et al., [this volume](#), p. #). In two cases, however, Portugal and Romania, a portion of the registration fees was directed to planting trees, one cause for the runners to participate to the race.

The second area regarding environmental indicators focused on how participants traveled to and from the event site. According to Collins, Roberts and Munday (2012) the means of transportation for the event is the factor that contributes most significantly to the ecological footprint of the participants.

Except for Algeria, all of the organizing bodies seemed to make participants aware of environmental issues before the race, in particular regarding the desired method of travel to the starting lines. Several sites offered public transportation as an alternative to the car or located the starting and finishing lines close to public transportation systems. In Hungary, “runners appreciated that the race was easily accessible by means of public transportation and by bike, whereas storage facilities were also offered for personal non-motorized vehicles” (Czegledi et al., [this volume](#), p. 143). In Italy, non-residents also appreciated the use of shuttle buses (41%) to accompany them when traveling from venues to the hotels” (Mazza, [this volume](#), p. 165). Also, in Portugal, participants appreciated “the environmental preservation initiatives adopted by the organizing company, such as, encouraging the use of public transport through agreement to discount the price of trains tickets, availability of buses departing from Lisbon and Porto” (Melo, Andrade, Van Rheenen, & Sobry, [this volume](#), p. 185). Finally, in Switzerland, “before the race, public transportation was encouraged. The participants of the 12 km were freely transported by train from the Sport Center (which is where the 24 km starts and where registration, bib pick-up, finish line for all the races and post-race events took place) to the start line” (see Ardiet et al., [this volume](#), p. 212).

In spite of these genuine efforts by race organizers, most participants traveled by car. As noted in Portugal, “the truth is that it was not possible to minimize the ‘carbon footprint’ related to the participants’ travel, since the main form of travel to the event was by car” (Melo, Garcia, Van Rheenen, & Sobry, [this volume](#), p. 185). In Hungary, researchers wrote that “the organizers made a special attempt to promote the possibilities to access to the event via public transportation. Even so, 70% of the respondents came by car” (Czegledi et al., [this volume](#), p. 143).

Overall it appears that environmental protection measures were integrated into both the organization of, and participation in, these sport tourism events, with the exception of Algeria. Best intentions often have serious limitations; however, as we have demonstrated across nearly all of the sites under study, there are glaring examples of poor environmental sustainability practices. While nearly all of the organizing bodies used a similar recipe to adhere to the Association of International

Marathons and Distance Races' (AIMS) expectations, a very low bar it seems, an international governing similar to the Swiss example or the Sports Commissions within the United States could publish a global guide for organizers to adopt these best practices and adapt them according to their unique social and environmental contexts.

## Concluding Remarks

In 2020, as small scale sport tourism activities and events expand globally, it becomes ever clearer that these activities and events must promote local sustainable development. In a compelling treatise on the significant role of sport in addressing climate change, Goldblatt (2020) argued that modern sports – from cricket to American football, tennis to athletics, surfing to golf - face serious disruption from heatwaves, fires, floods and rising sea levels. In 2019, the Rugby World Cup was disrupted by unprecedented pacific typhoons. The New York triathlon, as well as multiple horse races, were also cancelled in 2019 because of a heatwave in the Northern hemisphere. In early 2020, the Australian Tennis Open was disrupted by the smoke blowing in from the country's devastating bush fires. As Goldblatt (2020) notes, however, "Sport is not just a victim of change, but an important contributor too...Sporting events are responsible for massive levels of aviation, carbon-heavy stadium construction, and mountains of unrecycled garbage, all making a significant contribution to the catastrophe now engulfing us" (p. 3).

The IOC, FIFA, and the more innovative global and national federations, leagues and clubs, have begun to take notice and even, on rare occasion, act. But time is not on our side. The UN has now included sport in its global climate action framework and is aiming for carbon neutrality for sport by 2050. And yet, only a tiny fraction of the world's thousands of sporting bodies, federations, tournaments, leagues and clubs have signed up to the UN Sport for Climate Action Framework; even fewer have actual carbon targets and plans to deliver on these commitments.

Far more urgently, Goldblatt (2020) has proposed that by 2030, any global sports events or tours that are not carbon neutral be cancelled or postponed. Additionally, sports federations that cannot adhere to these standards be excluded from the Olympics. Finally, as more and more sport tourism events are proposed around the world, another potential response is to intentionally control this growth and have fewer of these events and competitions. A *laissez-faire* approach to global concerns—social, economic and environmental—is no longer a viable strategy.

Though we recognize that small scale sport tourism events and activities may "comply with the principles of sustainable tourism more so than mega sporting events" (Higham, 1999, p. 87), such assertions do not mean that organizers, sponsors and participants of these smaller events are any less responsible for fostering and ensuring local sustainable development. Researchers and practitioners interested in sport tourism need to modify their approaches and adapt their analyses to

the new global reality. While local sites and destinations offer unique experiences and opportunities to sport tourists, genuine sustainable development must become the new reality rather than empty words and wishful thinking.

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