

Sport Tourism and Its Territorial Development and Opportunities

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Edited by

Barbara Mazza and Claude Sobry

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



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This book first published 2022

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-8896-3

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-8896-7

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INTRODUCTION

INTERPRETIVE CATEGORIES FOR THE STUDY OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR ACTIVE SPORT TOURISM

BARBARA MAZZA

SAPIENZA, UNIVERSITY OF ROME (ITALY)

This volume is based on a series of reflections that were developed after the completion of the 7th IRNIST Conference. Its goal was to investigate issues related to the territorial development of active sport tourism, which is also known as opportunity sport tourism.

Active Sport tourists travel to a location in order to participate in competitive or non-competitive sporting events; engage in recreational sports; or try out a discipline, such as a leisure interest, during a holiday. The literature has defined and well defined this type of sport tourism (Gammon & Robinson 1997; Getz 1997; Gibson 1998; Pigeassou & Pruneau 1998; Standeven & De Knop 1998; Sobry et al. 2016). More recently, several scholars have underlined its importance for the development of the territory in which the sports activity occurs that they also consider superior to tourism linked to participation in major sporting events (Roche 1992; Ritchie & Crouch 2005; Melo & Sobry 2017).

Active sport tourism has led to economic growth at local creating jobs and favouring the seasonal adjustment of tourism (Bouchet & Bouhaouala 2009). Given its nature, diversification and composition, sport tourism is considered a set of services, and its demand is segmented to reflect the heterogeneity of holidaymakers. This form of segmentation is based on defining the attributes that create the products and, consequently, the positioning of products and brands. The role of an associative, public and/or private sport tourism marketing promoter is to identify which attributes contribute to tourists' overall positive or negative attitude towards the destination that they value.

This dimension of sport tourism - which includes extreme sports, those in contact with nature and the so-called 'slow adventure' (Varley & Semple 2015) - is less expensive, less burdensome at an organisational level and more economically sustainable (Cheung et al. 2016; Choi et al. 2016). Moreover, it can lead to higher spending by international visitors because it tends to increase incentives, activities and the number of short trips taken throughout the year, favouring the economic and environmental sustainability of the territory and urban regeneration (Gibson et al. 2012; Hall 2004; Hinch et al. 2016).

The growing interest in active sport tourism is related to the economic impact and attractiveness of the values and representations it conveys, which are mainly related to the environment, ecology, and concern for well-being. These key elements lead to debates at the heart of the reflection on local and/or national institutional communication, fair trade, and relationship management. Sport tourism represents an opportunity to develop and sustain the socio-economic activities of tourist destinations with specific characteristics and assets related to their heritage and gastronomic and physical offers. It is therefore considered a producer of virtuous socio-economic effects, enabling it to go beyond definitions that have been limited by disciplinary, categorical, or technical points of view (Bouchet & Bouhaouala 2009).

Mestaoui and Touzani (2020) pointed out that the hypermodern traveller maintains a permanent connection to the world, his/her family and even his/her professional environment by using GPS, SMS, e-mail, and websites while creating a safety net with his/her movements, putting a stop to the feeling of adventure, or cutting ties with his/her daily life. Four important issues seem likely to influence the strategic actions of sport tourism providers in the future: branding and smart destination, the social and cultural responsibility of service providers, the hyper-segmentation and hyper-connection of tourists, and the co-creation and co-production of stays by providers and tourists.

During the IRNIST Conference was held in 2021, these issues were discussed in light of the pandemic Covid-19, which has hindered development processes, especially in terms of the realisation and socio-economic impact of sporting events in territories around the world. According to a study conducted by the World Economic Organization and published in April 2020, the lack of sporting events has caused a great deal of economic damage (Byers et al. 2020). Specifically, turnover was 46% lower worldwide in 2020 compared to 2019, and the gross domestic product dropped by an average of 6.1% in advanced economies following the cancellation of sporting events. In fact, only 53% of the originally scheduled

sporting events took place during the 2021. Overall, 84% of host cities complained of adverse effects, and 43% anticipated budget cuts for organising events in 2021. Nonetheless, 27% expressed hope for a recovery in 2021, while 54% thought that recovery would not come until at least 2022.

According to Wilson et al. (2021), the protracted consequences of the pandemic include the loss of income; interruptions of the activities and careers of athletes, including definitive interruptions; the unemployment of many operators; the loss of support from sponsors and volunteers; loss of income and salary reductions; and the risk of reduced membership levels and fees. However, this book offers a vision that looks to the future prospects with a view to recovering from the pandemic. To that end, the objective was to examine typical dimensions of the impact of active sport tourism on territorial development while considering pre-pandemic trajectories as well as aspects of more recently introduced changes and innovations.

The following questions capture some of the main concepts explored in this volume:

- How can active sport tourism be a strategic resource for territorial development and post-pandemic socio-economic and cultural recovery?
- What socio-economic and cultural opportunities can it generate?
- What innovative economic solutions can help generate new markets and development opportunities?
- How much does sustainability affect the development of sport tourism?
- How does communication help affirm the identity of a sport tourism destination?
- How can it optimise relations between stakeholders in the area and strengthen the relationships between tourists and locals?

By presenting insights to help address these questions, the works in this volume offer new considerations for scholars and further operational opportunities for those working in the sector of active sport tourism.

The first two parts of the volume describe the main models of sport tourism and territorial development while highlighting the application of sustainable solutions as well as key players, such as tourists and locals. Listening to the needs and expectations of these two groups is at the heart of the very definition of a sustainable approach, as we will explain shortly. The last two parts of the volume are dedicated not only to the increasingly central and decisive role of communication in enhancing territorial identity

and branding but also to the identification of technological solutions and innovative offers for the extension of new sport tourism markets.

The theoretical framework used in the volume is discussed in detail below. The first part focuses on the key phenomenon examined in the volume - the relationship between **sport tourism and territorial development** - and investigates implications linked to sustainable development at environmental and socio-cultural levels.

From an environmental point of view, despite the attention paid by the organizers to eco-friendly practices, their application in many global sport tourism events is rather low, resulting in few positive impacts on the environment and communities (Chiu et al. 2020). In contrast, as indicated in Goldblatt's (2011) theory of greener events, events that develop positive ecological impacts are characterised by innovation, conservation and education and must favour the development of ecotourism, sustainable development, fair trade, renewable energy, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and eco-compatibility.

Based on Goldblatt's theory, Giampiccoli and Saayman (2014) developed five sustainable tourism models. First, responsible tourism requires the cultivation of a close relationship with a territory and its economy, culture, and local society in order to promote well-being and economic benefits for the locals. Second, ecotourism is particularly attentive to the conservation of the environment and the well-being of the premises. Third, solidarity tourism encourages fair trade and sustainable supply chains; as such, it mainly favours the economies of developing countries. Fourth, pro-tourism aims to generate opportunities for poor countries and is often facilitated through international cooperation. Fifth, community tourism aims to enhance local products and resources in order to promote the local economy. However, the latter model requires adequate coordination systems, especially at the local level.

These models are ideal for examinations of sport tourism, albeit with significant differences with respect to the size of attractive sporting events and forms of passive/active tourism. To clarify, major sporting events that attract passive and active forms of tourism must, above all, adopt the responsible tourism model. However, they can also consider ecotourism. Holmes (2015) and Macovei (2015) believe that ecological practices are important for the bidding process for many mega-sized events as well as for the identification of stakeholders who already support the incorporation of green concepts into the planning stage of an event. A striking example is the recent commitment at the Beijing Olympics to expanding railway lines to reduce emissions from urban vehicles and to using forms of green technology - such as solar, geothermal, and photovoltaic systems - to reduce

fuel pollution, and for the better management of facilities, and for storage and waste.

Adopting environmentally friendly practices in small-, medium-, large- and mega-sized sporting events means providing economic benefits, reducing waste, minimising the risk of financial losses, and adjusting the price system (Lim et al. 2020). The attention of environment also generates advantages for local communities in terms of economic savings, environmental health, reduced stress on and, often, long-term benefits to public infrastructures and improvements to the host territory's image (Chiu et al. 2020). Small- and medium-sized sporting events, which are more rooted in the territory and therefore attentive to its needs and the needs of local communities, can adopt all sustainable sport tourism models. They can also adopt combinations of the models, which can be particularly effective when sport tourism activity planning is merged with supporting the environment and the local economy and defining the medium- and long-term development prospects for the area. This combination also entails the seasonal adjustment of the offer and adequate management of situations with high concentrations of people who participate in sporting events or gather to engage in physical activity in order to limit the risks associated with excess waste production as well as noise, air and water pollution (Kersulić et al. 2020).

From an economic point of view, smaller and more fragile territories are impacted to an even greater extent than other territories by employment benefits, urban regeneration, and urban development as well as new opportunities in business and the services sector (Deery et al. 2018; Duglio & Beltramo 2017). Mahari et al. (2021) have highlighted limits that emerge due to high costs and expenses for infrastructure construction and management, which can be excessive for small territories, and the consequent risk of increased taxes for inhabitants and increased housing costs for tourists. However, the community tourism model could be applied to identify how international cooperation can be utilised to solve territorial development issues. This model can help improve the management of the number of and flow Sport tourists, the attractiveness of investments and the diversification of proposed tourist activities, leading to an easier acceptance of the project by the local community.

In terms of socio-cultural sustainability, some studies have underlined impacts related to the quality-of-life improvements, a greater sense of identity, an enhanced feeling of belonging to the territory and social cohesion among locals as well as containment of the risk of conflict between tourists and locals (Getz & Page 2016; Kersulić et al. 2020; Polcsik & Perényi 2021). It is no coincidence that this volume examines infrastructure

and tourist flow impacts at the local level, especially in the most fragile territories, such as in particular islands, as well as the relationships that develop between tourists and locals.

In addition, the first part of this book presents an original way of considering the relationships between different forms of tourism, such as sports and religious tourism. However, the reflection could have been extended to cover the relationship between sports and food and wine tourism and the linkages to psychophysical well-being and thermal, artistic-cultural, and environmental tourism. Along these lines, some studies have addressed the implications that sport tourism generates by favouring non-sports activities in the location (Chaigasem & Leruksa 2020; Malchrowicz-Mosko & Munsters 2018). These innovative approaches are very important but still not very deep, especially from a holistic and integrated perspective that considers the development of territories that offer multiple tourism opportunities. Herbold et al. (2020) stated that future studies must consider economic and social objectives and aspects of culture, sport, and tourism in an integrated way to optimise the social usefulness of various forms of tourism in the context of the regional community and the development of sport tourism. According to Herbold et al. (2020), the goal is to combine the strategic assets of the territory with traditional and innovative sports activities as well as trends related to the market and social capital and those based on faith in order to improve the quality of life and well-being of tourists and locals.

It must also be considered that locals practice sports themselves and actively or passively participate in sporting events; therefore, every sporting event in an area is highly valued by the society that hosts it. Furthermore, sports activities are a venue for offering authentic tourism products (Takata & Hallmann 2021; Smit et al. 2021). In this context, the concept of authenticity involves transferring a local sports identity into a tourism product so that it becomes a fundamental, attractive element for local development and sport tourism. Furthermore, the sharing of interests and experiences strengthens the relationships between tourists and locals and their attachment to the territory; locals strengthen their sense of belonging while tourists strengthen their desire to return to that place (Herbold et al. 2020).

Given that the literature - like it is discussed in detail below - highlights the importance of listening to tourists as well as locals, the second part of the volume presents essays that deepen the **profiling of Sport tourists**. As such, case studies on Sport tourists' expectations of their destination and travel companions and their behaviour when participating in events, such as the Runfest Event, are explored.

Although there is much research on the motivations for travelling and engaging in sporting activities, the profiling of Sport tourists is still underdeveloped in the literature, at least from an organic methodological perspective, due to difficulties associated with using convergent databases and methods of analysis. For example, Jiang et al. (2021) suggested creating an interactive platform to promote opportunities for creating value for each individual event while also communicating the information between sports events organizers and institutional tourism offices in order to better profile Sport tourists from a synchronic and diachronic perspective. Furthermore, the current use of technology - from social media to the online market to big data as well as from management software packages to hospitality services - influences the purchasing decisions and travel behaviour of event attendees (Slocum & Lee 2022; Mamo et al. 2021; Tkaczynski & Rundle-Thiele 2020).

In summary, cooperation and knowledge exchange with tourists allow local organisers in the area to identify new trends; design local development initiatives; and offer convenient, safe, exciting, and sustainable offers for residents and Sport tourists (Philipp et al. 2022). While considering the value of technology, Mathis et al. (2016) conduct a systematic review on the co-creation of the tourist experience and its impact on tourist behaviour and relative satisfaction with tourist loyalty. Co-creation helps participatory sport tourism integrate the demands of the government, sports organisations and tourists while favouring an effective and targeted design of the sport tourism offer. At an economic level, co-creation enables the efficient management of expenses and costs through the acquisition of useful information on the characteristics, expectations, and behaviours of Sport tourists (Getz & Page 2016).

Selamat and Hee (2017) developed a multifactorial approach, consisting of 15 interacting factors, to examine the behaviour of Sport tourists. Table 1 depicts a reworking of the approach to highlight the major influences and impediments that can intervene in sport tourism behaviour and stimulate appreciation of future experiences. These factors can be useful not only for interpreting the cases presented in this volume but also for replicating them in future studies.

Table i-1 Multifactorial approach combined with analysing the behaviour of Sport tourists

Factor	Influenced by	Limits	Implications
Perceived value	Value for money	Unfulfilled expectations (the gap between perceived value and experienced value)	Quality of the experience and attachment to the place
Satisfaction	Attractive elements of the destination and the sport tourism offer	Negative experiences	Increases in perceived value and brand image
Destination appeal	Attractive elements of the destination and the sport tourism offer and the availability of recreational and sporting activities	Inefficient services and inadequate offer compared to expectations	Intention to return
Loyalty	Satisfaction, quality of service and perceived value	Possible risk of danger (e.g., crime or physical, psychological or cultural situations that can create inconvenience to the tourist in the place)	Increases in perceived value and the intention to return. Activated word of mouth.
Image	Storytelling about the destination and past visitors as well as the relevance of that information	Unfulfilled expectations and possible risk of danger	Loyalty
Experience	Consistency with knowledge acquired before arrival and/or any memories of past experiences	Inadequate offer with respect to individual and group needs	Increased satisfaction

Emotion	Consistency with expectations	The intensity, both positive and negative, depends on the specifics of the sport tourism activity	Increases in perceived value and the intention to return. Activated word of mouth.
Culture	Consistency with expectations	Negative experiences	novelty in the offer
Perceived risk	Presence of sport tourism packages	Unwillingness to return (not considered a limitation in adventure sport tourism)	Increased need for prior knowledge and evaluation of the destination
Knowledge	Interest in collateral offers to the primary one	Lack of acquired information	Encouraged to visit the destination
Attitude	Experience and perceived image of destination	Past scepticism resulting from previously perceived or experienced value	Intention to return
Subjective norm or perception of social references, e.g., behaviour of others, behaviour with respect to sustainability	Culture and knowledge	Dissonance between perceived value and subjective norms	Influences the choice of destination and/or activities at the destination
Control of perceived behaviour	Time devoted to travel	Travel deterrence	Intention to return
Psychological well-being	Benefits related to well-being present in the sport tourism offer	Negative experiences or dissuasion from traveling	Intention to return
Religion	Consistency with subjective norms	Travel deterrence	Intention to return

The third part of the volume addresses **communication, branding and sport tourism** and is dedicated to the management of communication, which is a strategic aspect of sport tourism, especially when combined with brand image logic and digital conversation. Although the reflections in this book focus on sports as a brand for the affirmation of the identity of a territory (as in the cases of Iesi and Turin), new forms of communication in sporting tourism are explored through the case of a bike blogger.

The pandemic has prompted a significant acceleration in the development of digitalisation and generated hybrid events that have accelerated the use of sophisticated technological solutions, such as artificial intelligence, geolocation, cloud computing, cyber security services (Kersulić et al. 2020). Although the digitalisation of events and the wider use of technology have greatly increased the number of fans has attended virtual events, the economic recovery will only occur with the return of the public to physical events and international tourism. Technologies can complement a physical event but not replace it. Chevance et al. (2021) stated that targeted in-person events will be increasingly important in the post-pandemic context.

Ilevbare and McPherson (2022) wonder whether hybrid events should resemble traditional events as much as possible or serve as an additional component with a strong playful value. Meanwhile, Daniels and Tichaawa (2021) demonstrated that, during the global pandemic COVID-19 quarantine, individuals developed strong feelings of nostalgia for attending sporting events and expressed their need to be able to return to destinations and extolled memories related to past live participation experiences. In light of such sentiments, the post-pandemic period must be characterised by the relaunch of destinations that host sport tourism.

It is important to highlight how a sporting activity is relevant to the territory that hosts it on a communicative level and not just demonstrates why the local community or tourists should be interested in it. This change of perspective is fundamental to the definition of future business and communication models. Furthermore, hybrid sporting events are likely to be part of the new normal in sport tourism and will require new and specialised knowledge.

Regarding the value of the brand, there is now widespread awareness that a recognised brand contributes to the competitive advantage of a place or destination and its sporting tourism proposal, including whether it is unique or combined with multiple offers that span an entire year (Hanna et al. 2021).

Some recent studies have underlined a correlation between an emphasis on identity and the personality of a destination and the self-congruence of tourists (Yang et al. 2022; Cardoso et al. 2019; Zavattaro 2019; Papadimitriou

et al. 2018; Shankar 2018; Sirgy et al. 2018). They evaluated the tourist's expectations based on the perceived image of the destination and identified the following behavioural intentions: (re)visiting, engaging in word of mouth, extending travel motivations with respect to the primary offer that generated the travel choice and bonding with a place. In this sense, the brand must be very close to the image it wants to communicate as well as composed of cognitive, affective, conative and symbolic attributes that allow for the recognition of identity (Ruiz-Real et al. 2020; Shankar 2018). Likewise, the communication content produced for websites and digital platforms must be consistent with the brand, integrated by the various stakeholders and partners involved and convergent with respect to the content created by bloggers, media, locals, and tourists. However, this rarely happens because these actors have different communication objectives (Yang et al. 2022; Daniels & Tichaawa 2021; Giannopoulos et al. 2020). In fact, they may create different narratives that can confuse tourists. Thus, the authors cited recommend using cooperative branding to affirm the importance of convergence, at least on the attributes that substantiate the content.

The fourth and final part of the volume concerns **the future of sport tourism** and mainly includes contributions that discuss the innovation and development of products and services offered to promote mass and luxury sport tourism. This approach can strengthen local markets and affirm new and emerging markets.

Shariffuddin et al. (2022) and Gammelsæter (2021) and Herbold et al. (2020) indicated that a destination that aims to realise its potential by maximising sport tourism opportunities must meet the following requirements: provide innovative services, characterise the place as a high-quality destination in order to attract national and international tourists; enhance the role of sporting activities in the area; ensure the efficiency of services, sustainability and better support for and access to the activities offered than competing destinations; and support the development of local businesses and the enhancement of related products. With regard to sporting activities, Happ (2021) highlighted the need to enhance the image of the destination by linking it to the sporting specificities of the place as an expression of identity; connecting the sporting offer to perceptions about local quality of life; expressing the orientation of the population towards sports; and highlighting directly relevant elements, such as accessibility, price, and, above all, the atmosphere, which can be fun, comfortable, in contact with nature, dynamic, exciting, luxurious and/or prestigious, depending on the specificity of the offer.

Now, all that remains is to wish readers happy reading in the hope that the reflections contained in this book will be of interest to everyone whether they be curious or passionate readers, students, scholars, experts, or professionals in the sport tourism sector.

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PART ONE

SPORT TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1

SPORT TOURISM, ISLAND TERRITORIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: APPROACHING A CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN

OLIVIER NARIA

UNIVERSITY OF LA RÉUNION (FRANCE)

DEREK VAN RHEENEN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY (USA)

RICARDO MELO

UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA (PORTUGAL)

CLAUDE SOBRY

UNIVERSITY OF LILLE (FRANCE)

Abstract

In 1992, Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio acknowledged that islands face specific geopolitical, environmental, economic and social problems. More than other territories, they highlight the challenges of sustainable development and its objectives of economic and environmental conciliation to formalise action plans (Barbados, 1994; Johannesburg, 2002; Rio 2010; Mauritius, 2004; Samoa, 2014). Their situation as island territories in a globalised world forces them to rethink their modes of development and governance in depth. In view of these challenges, tourism and sports tourism can constitute an opportunity for economic development for these islands. The objective of this paper is to show how it is possible to valorise the

resources existing on these island territories in a sustainable development objective. Based on this case study, the aim is to define a conceptual and methodological approach in order to analyse the relations between sports tourism and sustainable development on an island scale.

Keywords: Island territories, sport-tourism, sustainable development, vulnerability.

1.1 Introduction

Since 1992 and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, islands are considered as facing specific geopolitical, environmental, economic and social problems. More than other territories, they highlight the challenges of sustainable development and the imperatives of economic and environmental conciliation to formalise action plans (Barbados 1994; Johannesburg 2002; Rio 2010; Mauritius 2004; Samoa 2014). Their situation as island territories in a globalised world forces them to rethink their modes of development and governance in depth.

In this respect, the islands of the Indian Ocean, whether they have a French, British or Dutch heritage, present specific problems linked, on the one hand, to the elements of determinism and the island environment and, on the other hand, to the historical and economic trajectories of these territories. In view of these challenges, sports tourism can constitute an opportunity for economic development for these islands.

However, few studies have been carried out and they mainly focus on the sport tourism offer (Bouchet & Gay 1999) and its structuring in a sustainable development perspective in Reunion (Bessy & Naria 2005). However, in view of the development indicators published by the World Bank (2013) and the resulting challenges, sports tourism activities are relevant tools to contribute to the sustainable development of these islands. Several speeches and actions mention sports tourism in the structuring of Indian Ocean tourist destinations: from the first initiative of the Indian Ocean Tourism Alliance (1975) to the IOC Regional Tourism Programme (1997) to the concept of the Vanilla Islands of the Indian Ocean (2013). However, no document refers to the organisation of these activities in the territories and the development perspectives. The objective of this paper is to study how sports tourism contributes to the sustainable development of the Indian Ocean islands.

The paper first examines the sports tourism market in the Indian Ocean islands by identifying the characteristics and development strategies of the