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Analysis of Tourists' Perception During 2014 World Cup in Brazil

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze, in a comparative way, the perception of national and international tourists regarding the impacts generated by the 2014 FIFA World Cup on tourism in the host cities, in the period of the event. The methodology of data collection was a survey research, conducted in the period from June 12 to July 14, 2014 in all 12 host cities of the event, with a total of 2678 domestic and 872 international respondents. The research objectives are to detail the travel characteristics, the respondent profile, and perception of the positive and negative impacts of the event. As a result it will be possible to analyze the characteristics of tourists who travel to attend sporting event in Brazil and profit the experience as a reference for the Olympics and for the country as a whole. The data indicate that for domestic tourism the World Cup had a family atmosphere and for international tourists it was an opportunity to attend the event and also to know the country. From the perspective of both, the Brazilian and foreign, the stimulus to tourism and the possibility of increasing the visibility of destination are the main positive aspects to host the World Cup in the country. The negative aspects are more specific to foreigners, issues related to travel, such as distance between the host cities, high prices, lack of tickets, public transportation, disorganization, followed by the issues raised in the first place by the national respondents, which are related to excessive public spending and financial mismanagement.

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1. Introduction

Mega sporting events are part, in the current global context, of governments' instruments to stimulate the creation of opportunities for the country, in addition to being seen as a political decision of great importance. According to Preuss (2006) "the largest events are enormously expensive to arrange, but in return bring global media exposure with effects and a value that cannot be achieved in any other way" (p. 1). These opportunities relate both on how to boost the economy as to increase international visibility, since once hosting a mega event, all nations involved or not with the event pay more attention to the host country of the moment.

Prior to the World Cup in Brazil there was an uncertainty related to the success of the event and it all changed during the event, as it turned to be a peaceful, with massive family participation event. Brazilians, who were against it, forgot the anger in order to seize the ongoing moment in the country, and show to the world why Brazil is considered the country of soccer. Thus, the research reported in this article was focused on tourism perspective, with the aim of showing the impressions of Brazilians and foreigners about the event, the infrastructure, the perceptions of the country's image and trip characteristics.

Due to World Cup's global dimension, with a strong participation of both Brazilians and foreigners, the research aims to understand comparatively the perception from the point of view of these actors specifically, and measure how the result was generated, regarding the reinforcement of aspects that may be considered relevant to the achievement of the Olympics in 2016 in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

2. Literature Review

Megalopolis are in global competition to attract economic activities for their cities (Sassen, 1996 apud Preuss, 2006, p. 7), being a mega event the ideal opportunity to win certain disputes. According to Allen (2003), mega-events are "those which the magnitude affects entire economies and has repercussions on global media, justifying the great competition that countries are submitted to host a big event like the World Cup" (p.17). The nations realize that they have an unique opportunity to get global exposure, in order to boost its economy in a way that would not have gotten in years.

According to Preuss (2006) there are three reasons why a mega event is important not only for the country but also for sporting entities involved. The author mentions that "a positive legacy avoids public blaming of the international sporting body and provides evidence why the event had been good for the host city/country." (p.2) Secondly, "it justifies the use of scarce public resources for permanent or temporary event infrastructure ensuring that all necessary event structures for the event are ready on time" (p.2) and third, "a positive legacy motivates other cities/nations to bid for future events" (Solberg & Preuss, 2006 apud Preuss, 2006, p.2).

The measurement of mega event legacies should begin from the changes that happen in host localities of the event, noting that the legacy is variable from one location to another, and also depends on the period in which is done, these changes are necessary to accommodate the event, so that the economic impact becomes a permanent infrastructure for the local community. Furthermore, "cities have different structural strengths and weaknesses when winning a bid competition. Therefore, some cities have to build more structures while others can stage an event without major investments" (Preuss, 2006, p.4).

With the growth of events area and the recent interest on mega sports events in the world, a few years ago it started to emerge several studies about sports mega-events, establishing this area of study. However most of the studies have a common object, such as economic impacts and tend to be mostly optimistic or extremely negative. It is also current the use of benchmarking as a technique for research on mega-events, whose goal is to "search for best practices that lead to superior performance in different places or fields" (DaCosta; Miragaya, 2008, p.42).

3. Methodology

This study was conducted through a primary research, with quantitative basis and a survey for data collection, which is "an investigation about the characteristics of a given population by means of collecting data from a sample of that population and estimating their characteristics through the systematic use of statistical methodology" (OCDE, 2005).

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