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Measuring the impact of sport events on sport tourism stakeholder's networks

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Measuring sport events impacts is a subject with a significant academic and management literature. However, this interest has been specially focused on big events (Olympic Games or mega-events) and their economic impact. This is due to the necessity to justify huge expenditure from public funds to finance such events. The legacy of events can affect environmental and social aspects such as the generation of social networks in a destination.

The evidence that a successful event needs an effective and efficient network of stakeholder's is grounded in the common sense, but also on professional manuals and academic studies (Larson, 2002; Stokes, 2004; Getz, 2007; Parent & Séguin, 2007). This web of relations can have, afterwards, its positive effects in other areas like sport tourism destination competitiveness (Scott, Cooper, & Baggio, 2008)(Pavlovich, 2003)(Scott, Cooper et al., 2008)(Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002). The research will be focused on the measurement of characteristics such as density, evaluation of innovation and creativity potential (Granovetter, 1973, 1985) and the description of complexity through the component identification of embedded social relationships (Hite, 2003).

Comparative analysis will be pursued in the future with international events in France (triathlon) and the Alps (stage mountain bike race).

Results

In this communication, only the description of the component of embedded social relationships and the emergence of external ties from both events will be presented. The results show a growing complexity in the stakeholders' relationships and an increase of connectivity with external stakeholders, especially in the one day event, while in the multi stage race the organizing company plays an exclusive central role. Most of the new external ties appear in the sports sector while the tourism sector appears to be less reactive.

On one hand results will be tracked in the following years until a more complete picture can be observed and the introduction of comparative data will improve the information received. On the other hand some management actions will be performed to observe its effects on the resulting data.

Conclusion / Application to practice

If effective stakeholder networks are a key foundation for destination competitiveness, innovation and, finally event success, then special attention should be devoted to creating cohesive relations, dense networks and increasing external ties. This is an important application for both event managers and local stakeholders when pursuing a long legacy of sport events as it requests a special focus on involving key agents in the organisation but also in focusing on creating cohesive relations within them by specific management strategies. When speaking about tourism destinations willing to specialize in sports tourism, this is of a high priority.