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Tourism and Geocities: Geographical Implications

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Abstract. This study analyzed geographical implications of first race of 34th America's Cup on Naples. According to our results, America's Cup contributed to create a positive image of Naples as touristic destination. Results of this study indicated that both male and female enjoyed American's Cup in Naples. These results can be used by policy-makers in planning future turistic events in Naples.

Keywords: economic-geography, tourism, geocities, sport

Introduction

Since the 90s, many studies have been focused on the effects of sport events on the host city (Chalip et al., 2003; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Waitt, 2003; Zukin, 1995; Pearce, 1982). These studies have attracted the interest of economic-geography researchers (Korstanje, 2012 ; Gartner, 1989; Ritchie & Smith, 1991). Sport events can affect quality of host residents' life, support the realization of infrastructure that are used after the event and increase opportunities of recreational activities for the community (Litvin & Fetter, 2006; Gartner & Hunt; 1987). These events can also strengthen local traditions and cultural identity. These events can also influence destination image promoting its beauties, evidencing efficiency of local services and reinforcing its traditional reputation (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004; Goodrich, 1978; Sinclair, 2005; Roche, 1994).

However, touristic events not only reinforce the image of the city but also the reputation of managers and policy-makers that support them in several ways (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Despite of the relevance of geographical aspects, several studies evidences only the economic effects

(Richardson, 2012; Paddison, 1993; Roche, 2000; Richardson & Crompton, 1988). This study try to fill literature gap examining geographical effects of a touristic event (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Chon, 1990; Zhang et al., 2009; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). At the aim to evaluate implications of a touristic event on a City, we analyzed the effects of the first race of America's Cup on Naples.

Some journal evidenced that regional and national policy-makers supported the 34th America's Cup at the aim put under the global reflectors Naples' beauties. Previous races of this sailing competition, in fact, had reinforced the image of Valencia-Spain (2010, 2007), Auckland-New Zealand (2003, 2000), San Diego-California (1995, 1992, 1988), and Fremantle-Australia (1987, 1983). Thus, following the process used in literature we tested the the effects of the first race of 34th America's Cup on Naples.

Methods

On-site survey is believed to be an appropriate method to evaluate geographical implications of America's Cup. The respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and put forward practical suggestions or any other perspectives they would like to share about the event and the host destination. The questionnaire included demographic information and Likert-type questions related to the attributes. Respondents were given the list of attributes in order to measure the performance of each attribute. The survey asked respondents to assess the performance of the attributes during the visit at Naples using a five-point Likert scale.

Results

A sample of 88% Male and 12% Female were collected. The age group most represented in both groups was 20–29 years. The majority of female and male tourists had achieved an education at university level.

Table 1. Socio-demographic variables

	Male Percent (88%)	Female Percent (12%)
Age		
20-29	44.0	41.0
30-39	29.0	33.0
40-49	16.0	16.0
50 and above	11.0	10.0
Educational level		
Primary	2.0	1.0
Secondary	5.0	3.0
University	53.0	44.0
Graduate/postgraduate	40.0	52.0

We used a one-sample t-test to evaluate the relevance of each attribute in the process of evaluation of Naples as touristic destination. The mean scores for all attributes were significantly higher than the scale's midpoint, which means that Naples performed well in all the attributes. According to our results all tourists enjoyed offerings provided by Naples. Although the perceptions of male and female tourists were primarily similar, different views on Naples's image attributes did emerge and these differences are worthy of discussion.

Table 2 Performance

	M (SD) Male	M (SD) Female
Climate	3.74 (0.98)	3.58 (1.05)
Natural attractions	3.41 (0.94)	3.71 (0.84)
Entertainment	2.88 (0.85)	1.77 (0.88)
Shopping facilities	2.91 (0.82)	2.05 (0.84)
Sports facilities	1.35 (0.81)	1.74 (0.91)
Local transportation	0.10 (0.84)	0.02 (1.06)

Results of this study indicated that both male and female enjoyed American's Cup in Naples. The majority of respondents have had a good image of Naples for its natural beauties and climate. These results can be used by governments in planning and implementing future turistic events in Naples. Future events could be organized paying more attention to a territorial marketing strategy establishing strategies to promote transport and sports facilities. This study suggest that Naples has to work on a territorial brand creating a geographical image that could survive behind the single event.

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