

Cultural and event tourism: an interpretative key for impact assessment

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Abstract

In recent years, the theme of the evaluation of impacts for tourism and cultural sectors entered on the agenda of public authorities, policy makers and managers of institutions themselves, for two main reasons: a phase of contraction of public and private resources to cultural activities; the explosion of the number of 'events', causing relatively quickly radical and lasting changes in the territories and in the host populations. The impact assessment has progressively become a key element for the screening of projects/events to be funded and for monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives. In the academic field, this was accompanied by the flowering of a vast literature on the topic of impacts. This paper analyses the evaluation of the impact of events related to tourism and cultural sectors, focusing on the economic impact, with the aim of underlining several important critical issues affecting the impact measurement. The paper proposes a critical analysis of the literature on the subject and an overview of the main approaches developed to measure such phenomena. Besides, there is a section devoted to the analysis of these phenomena referring to Italy.

Keywords: economic impact of tourism, cultural tourism, tourism and growth

Introduction

Referring to several significant phenomena, the economic impact assessment represents an activity that has revealed increasing criticalities over the years, both for academics and practitioners. This can be explained, among others, by the need to go back to common denominator phenomena that present very different characteristics and the need to identify objective measures of the impact. In this regard, the difficulties are mainly attributable to the need to assign an economic value to phenomena for which such translation is not so clear and immediate. In

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addition to this, there is also a problem concerning the identification of the margins within to extend the assessment, often influenced by the same definition of the phenomenon, with the pending error of erroneous attribution of all ancillary items as causally related to the existence of the ‘event’ (Seaman, 2007).

These assessments have also gained an increasing importance as they are used for selecting and monitoring the resources to be allocated to financing many types of activities. Particular attention has been paid to evaluations for cultural and tourism sectors, with the refinement of more sophisticated methodologies based on the importance of these sectors in the economy of a reference area. The studies in this field have deepened the relationship between culture and tourism, with regard to the c.d. ‘tourism of cultural events’ (Sohail and Rousan, 2007), where the cultural adjective can assume a very broad specification. Culture is an important part of the tourism “product” and is one of the variables that can increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of a tourism destination (Hennessey *et al.*, 2014). In addition to their cultural and social values, cultural events have emerged as an instrument for tourism development, tourism seasonality expansion, city image improvement and for boosting regional economies (Rivera *et al.*, 2008). Following McIntosh and Goeldner (1990), cultural factors in the context of tourism include the entertainment, food, drink, hospitality, architecture, and manufactured and hand-crafted products of a destination, and all the other characteristics of a destination, including family patterns, folklore, social customs, museums, monuments, historical structures, landmarks, wilderness areas, landscapes, historic buildings, and artefacts. More generally, following Getz (2008), this paper refers to the cultural dimension as cultural events related to the so-called ‘event tourism.’ In this scenario, this work proposes a review of ‘the state of the art’ with reference to the literature on the impact definition and measurement for tourism, that is, cultural tourism, in particular. The work is organized as follows: section 3 is focused on literature review; section 4 presents some considerations related to the case of Italy, a country in which the weight of the tourism and culture sectors is very significant to the national economy; section 5 proposes some remarks on the main open issues about the topic.

1. Literature review

1.1. Literature review on impact definitions for cultural and event tourism

The “impact literature” is broad and highlights, first of all, a problem related to the exact definition of the same impact term. Indeed, the impact can take on some main configurations, with specific corresponding definitions; mainly, we can distinguish between: economic impact, social impact, political impact, tourism impact and urban and environmental impact. The *economic impact* is predominantly linked to the impact on income, sales, wages, prices, employment, production

structures, revenues taxation, public indebtedness, financial management, infrastructural legacies, the real estate market; the *Social impact* refers to the contributions of specific phenomena in terms of growth of social inclusion, growth of ethnic and confessional integration, growth of civic values, growth of social participation, growth of volunteering, attraction of young population; the *Political impact* considers the effects in terms of growth of prestige and international appeal, an increase in social cohesion and the development of managerial skills; the *Tourism impact* is related to contributions in terms of promotion of a place as a destination, growth of presence and arrivals, extension of visiting periods, attraction of new tourist segments, growth of accommodation facilities, employment growth in the sector; the *urban and environmental impact* includes exemplary impacts in the following phenomena: environmental awareness growth, best practices, infrastructural legacy, territorial transformations, urban renewal, improvement of transport infrastructure, improvement of communication networks.

With regard to the economic impact, reference is predominantly made to the relationship that exists between a specific phenomenon and the economic development of a reference area. The approach to an effective impact analysis first of all implies the unequivocal specification of the concepts of ‘causing event’ and ‘impact’, although with regard to this second point some contaminations maybe unavoidable. In particular, by analysing the main strands that originated the “impact literature”, referring to culture and tourism, we identify the following main founding elements: Event tourism and management (Dwyer *et al.*, 2006; Getz, 2008; Whitford, 2009; Ales *et al.*, 2010; Jones, 2010); MICE Events (Meeting, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions; Dwyer and Forsyth, 1997); Mega events (including sports events) and hallmark events (Jones, 2010; Baumann and Matheson, 2018). A chain of relations between culture and tourism could be ideally defined around the concept of event. The event can be interpreted as a cultural manifestation, in a broad sense, in all the forms it can take; tourism can be understood as a direct impact of the organization and management of the event and, in turn, as the triggering element of many different impacts, including the economic one.

In this sense, the cultural event can be considered as a driver of tourism impact: the result for which cultural events are linked through a positive direct relationship with the dynamics of tourism in a reference area is almost unanimously accepted, as the virtuous link between the trend of the tourism sector and the economy of a region/country (Chappelle, 1985). The analysis could also be carried out according to a sectoral classification of tourism, distinguishing between main categories such as cultural tourism (Bellini *et al.*, 2007; Plaza, 2010; Salazar, 2012), religious tourism (Pengelley, 2009; Perilla and Tomo, 2013; Jaelani, 2017), sustainable tourism (Hamed, 2010; Trofimenko and Diafarova, 2012; Bhuiyan *et al.*, 2012; Mair, 2015), holiday tourism (Naidoo, 2010), business tourism (Ramgulan *et al.*, 2013; Seebaluck *et al.*, 2015).

By investigating the relation between events and tourism, we find that events are an important motivator of tourism, and that they figure prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations. The roles and impacts of planned events within tourism have been well documented and are increasingly important for destination competitiveness: event tourism plays a key role in building a more successful and attractive destination. Tourism is often related to positive economic impacts that take place through advertising the destination and increased tourist visits create more employment opportunities and higher tax income. Equally, ‘event management’ is a fast growing professional field in which tourists constitute a potential market for planned events and the tourism industry has become a vital stakeholder in their success and attractiveness (Getz, 2008). An article by Getz in 1989 developed a framework for planning ‘events tourism’. Prior to this, a distinct approach by type of event was worthwhile: it was normal to speak of special events, hallmark events, mega events and other specific types of events. To date, “event tourism” refers, instead, to an integrated approach to event management and is generally recognized as being inclusive of all planned events for development and marketing. The tourism potential of events is one of the main economic reasons why Governments are so keen to support them: in her analysis of event policy, Whitford (2009) discusses how the popularity of events and the positive association attached to them means they are developed by Governments around the worldwide. Alves *et al.*, (2010) demonstrate that these aspects are important even in small areas, since they can lead to several benefits. Dwyer *et al.* (2006) illustrate several differences between the alternative forms of analysis in event assessment: these include assessing the differential effects of events on the host region, on other regions, as well as at the national level and the ability to estimate inter-industry effects¹. The authors also discuss how event impacts will vary depending on the extent of integration between regional and national resource markets and regional and national product and services markets and how labor markets are modeled. On the same wavelength, Jones (2010) underlines that it is rather difficult to devise categories that fit all the various criteria by which events are judged. The best known typology is probably the one devised by Jago and Shaw (1998), which uses the size and impacts of events as a way to classify them. This typology has three distinct types of events – mega events; major events and minor events.

Panfiluk (2015) aims to analyze the effects generated by regional events. The article identifies the social and economic effects of mass events, which are organized by public institutions. In determining the social and economic effects, the methodology of New Public Management (NPM) concept was employed. Results show that events contribute to raising the satisfaction connected with staying in the

¹With regard to the impact of tourism in terms of changing the territories of destinations, recently a vein of literature has been developed that explores the theme of cruise tourism (Brida and Zapata-Aguirre, 2017) and rural tourism (Ray *et al.*, 2012).

region and slightly to the growth of direct expenditure. Regional events can be an important tool in creating a positive image of a tourist destination. An important factor in the determination of the amount of expenditures for the organization of events is the analysis of the impact of an event on the satisfaction of the needs of visitors. From the point of view of influence on the development of tourism, special events should be preferred, aimed at meeting the interests of homogeneous groups of tourists, or long-term recurring events listed in the calendar of tourist events. Effective event management requires systematic monitoring of the needs of the visiting tourists, analysis of their interests and of the status of their satisfaction and loyalty attitudes. In this regard, the link between culture and tourism is particularly important, as the organization of cultural events, following an appropriate survey on the preferences of potential visitors can trigger a lively tourist movement, with all the other benefits that may result. It is advisable, however, to pay attention, as some authors have pointed out, to the fact that not all events need to be tourism-oriented, due to some potential negative impacts which may be associated with adopting marketing orientation: Custido and Perna (2008) identify these problems in loss of authenticity, opportunity cost and inflated prices, and community resistance. Focusing deeply on the economic impact, Brida *et al.* (2010) examine the question of causality between tourism and economic growth, investigating the so called “tourism-led growth”. The topic is also deepened in Sanchez-Carrera *et al.* (2008). Bellini *et al.* (2007) report the results of a novel econometric exercise to statistically assess the impacts of cultural tourism on European municipalities. Results show that, among others, tourism specialization has a positive impact on the level of both income and prices, suggesting a positive effect of tourism on productivity. Also, events have other important roles to play, from community-building to urban renewal, cultural development, to fostering national identities—tourism is not the only partner or proponent (Getz, 2008). Ramgulam *et al.* (2013) provide an understanding of business tourism and its contribution to environmental sustainability, discussing the concept of business tourism and capturing the environmental impact of the market. Their findings revealed that there are potential benefits when countries actively pursue business tourism in harmony with environmentally friendly practices. They also embrace the notion of sustainability as a way forward and propose an environmentally friendly happiness valuation model for the way forward.

An extensive literature, begun in the 1990s has questioned the existence of net economic benefits arising from the organization of specific events, particularly referring to mega events and, mostly after the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games (Trillas and Serrano, 2016), to major sporting events. Zimbalist (2015) and Baade and Matheson (2016) have recently summarized this literature; Salgado *et al.* (2017) also systematically focus on sports events. Sartori (2017) observes that hosting mega-events has long been regarded as an opportunity for economic growth, creating long-lasting benefits and attaining international recognition, but recently,

both the scientific community and the public opinion at large have turned much more sceptical about the impact of mega events. To adequately clarify this issue, the author underlines that there is a need to go beyond the simple narratives and “stylized facts”, to undertake some serious scientific investigation, based on verifiable data and testable models. Despite the fact that most recent studies use the same modeling tool, namely Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model, results are sometimes contradictory, thereby hindering the trustfulness of the economic analysis for policy guidance.

In his paper, the author shows that results are different because assumptions are different and because the range of effects considered is different, even when the same model is employed. Furthermore, he advocates for some kind of standardization in the process of model building for the economic assessment of mega-events, because only a transparent and replicable model exercise can serve as a “litmus paper”, to ascertain whether hosting a mega-event is good or bad for an economy. Baumann and Matheson (2018) note that mega-sporting events, such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, are expensive affairs. Host countries often justify the spending required to stage these events by predicting that mega-events will draw large numbers of tourists. Their paper analyzes monthly foreign tourist arrivals to Brazil between 2003 and 2015 and finds that the 2014 FIFA World Cup increased foreign tourism by roughly 1 million visitors.

This number far exceeded expectations, but roughly a quarter of this increase in foreign tourism was caused by the fortuitous advancement of Argentina’s national team, and potential hosts should not count on the event to consistently produce out-sized tourism figures. They conclude that on-field results can greatly influence FIFA World Cup tourism.

Hilgers *et al.*, (2010) consider that the „feel-good effect” was one of the most important impacts of the 2006 football World Cup in Germany. This contribution analyzes the management of such an effect. Appropriate basic organizational and infrastructure conditions in the realms of security, transport, and ecology are of key importance, and the media activities of both public and private sponsors need to break away from their traditionally narrow focus in favour of more socially responsible sponsoring.

The summary review here shows that the term ‘event’ can take very different specifications, which influence the extent of the effects to be included in impact assessments. The impact can, in turn, be declined in many different forms: the economic and social dimensions are very important for tourism.

Table 1. Alternative criteria for the classification of events

Criteria	Event type	
Causing event	MICE Events	Dwyer and Forsyth, 1997
	Mega events	Jones, 2010
	Hallmark events	Baumann and Matheson, 2018
	Event tourism and management	Dwyer, Forsyth and Spurr, 2006; Getz, 2008; Whitford, 2009; Alves, Campon Cerro and Martins, 2010; Jones, 2010
Type of event-related tourism	Cultural tourism	Bellini <i>et al.</i> 2007; Plaza, 2010; Salazar, 2012
	Religious tourism	Pengelley, 2009; Perilla and Tomo 2013; Jaelani, 2017
	Sustainable tourism	Hamedi 2010; Trofimenko and Diafarova, 2012; Bhuiyan <i>et al.</i> 2012
	Holiday tourism	Naidoo, 2010
	Business tourism	Ramgulan <i>et al.</i> 2013; Seebaluck <i>et al.</i> 2015
Type of tourism-related event impact	Destination competitiveness and attractiveness; international recognition	Getz, 2008; Sartori (2017)
	Growth of direct expenditure and productivity in a region	Panfiluk, 2015; Bellini <i>et al.</i> , 2007
	“Feel good effect”	Hilgers <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Size of event impacts	Mega events	Jago and Shaw, 1998; Baumann and Matheson, 2018
	Major events	Zimbalist, 2015; Salgado <i>et al.</i> , 2017
	Minor events	
Geographical scope of event	Host /other region impact	Dwyer <i>et al.</i> , 2006; Alves <i>et al.</i> (2010)
	National impact	
	Inter-industry effect	

Source: author’s elaboration.

1.2. Literature review on impact measurement

The evolution of studies on the impact of cultural and tourism sectors have led to the proliferation of ultra-specialized sector indices, attributable to the following main methodologies:

Table 2. Main methodologies for impact measurement

Methodology	Characteristics
EIA - Economic Impact Assessment	Examines the effect of an event on the economy in a specified area. It usually measures changes in business revenue, business profits, personal wages, and/or jobs.
SIA – Social Impact Assessment	It is the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programs, plans, projects) and any social change processes invoked by those interventions.
TIA - Territorial Impact Assessment	The procedure to evaluate the likely impact of policies, programs and projects on the territory, highlighting the importance of the geographic distribution of consequences and effects and considering the spatial developments.
SEA - Strategic Environmental Assessment	The process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programs and prior to their final adoption, to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to promote sustainable development.

Source: author's elaboration.

The different methodologies deepen a particular dimension for the evaluation of the impact of the phenomena; however, it could be ideally assumed that all these methodologies have the Value Chain as their theoretical framework. The Impact Value Chain is built on the basic logic model by Carol Weiss and Joseph Wholey. This logic tool distinguishes among Input, Activity, Output, Outcome and Impact and gives a precise definition of each of these elements. In particular, it qualifies the impact as “changes, or effects on society or the environment that derive from outcomes that have been achieved”. Borrowing heavily from both EU Standards for Social Impact (GECES report) and the European Venture Philanthropy Association's “A Practical Guide to Measuring and Managing Impact” publication, ‘Input’ refers to resources deployed in the service of a certain (set of) activities, ‘Activity’ refers to actions or tasks performed in support of specific impact objectives, ‘Output’ refers to tangible, immediate practices, products and services

that result from the undertaken activities, ‘outcome’ refers to changes or effects on individuals or the environment that derive from the delivery of products and services. Across the ‘Impact Value Chain’, by using a differential analysis methodology, it is possible to find some relevant financial indicators that compare the existing scenario with the alternative solution whose impact is on evaluation. Financial quantification across the chain should be qualitative, quantitative and strictly financial: the first one includes the qualitative evaluation of impact, the second one refers to impact measured by using robust measurement framework and the last one is focused on the societal financial value of impact.

Focusing on the economic and financial evaluation of impact, the economic impact analysis implies a virtuous relationship between the injection of economic resources in a territory/sector/event and the reaction that this input determines. There are three levels through which this relationship is achieved: Direct impacts, Indirect impacts and Induced impacts. Direct impacts include effects directly attributable to expenses occurring within the reference territory; indirect impacts consider the subsequent rounds of spending (in the local area) generated by direct impacts/expenses; induced impacts, finally, evaluate the increase in economic activity generated by local consumption due to the increase in wages and salaries. Generally, Induced impacts also take into consideration taxation and the fiscal dimension.

A widespread practice in assessing the economic impact of event tourism is based on the so-called “multiplier effect”. The quantitative analysis allows the estimation of the overall economic impact of a tourism-cultural event caused by the variation of expenses in an economic system through the estimation of the so-called multiplier of expenditure. The multiplier is given by the relationship between the total expense related to the ‘event’ and the expenditure directly linked to the ‘event’. The magnitude of the multiplier depends on the economic characteristics of the tourist destination and the nature of the event. From the literature, it appears that the multiplier value for different destinations, regions and nations is between the maximum value of 1.73 and a minimum one of 0.34.

Gasparino *et al.* (2008) propose a rather general classification of the impacts of tourism on urban economies, distinguishing among impacts through market interactions, impacts that do not involve market interactions and key issues that affect the size and sign of the impacts. Starting from a partial equilibrium analysis, the authors point out that there are perhaps more misunderstandings about multiplier analysis than about almost any other aspect of tourism research (Archer, 1982). Multipliers measure the present economic performance of the tourism industry and the effects of short-run economic adjustments to a change in the level of tourist expenditure.

Klytchnikova and Dorosh (2012) point out that global experience reveals that tourism can have significant direct benefits at the local level by generating employment and improving wages, and several indirect effects such as stimulating

growth in tourism-related activities (for example, services, transportation, and handicrafts). The authors underline that the true size of the tourism sector, more accurate than a partial picture provided by national accounts, can be measured by using Input-Output (I-O) and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) tables. These methods can provide reasonably accurate estimates of the contribution of the sector to the overall output, incomes, jobs and sales. I-O tables decompose GDP into a matrix of inputs and outputs. The Tourism Satellite Accounts approach was developed by the World Tourism Organization with a view of implementing a universal measurement methodology for the tourism industry and the tourism sector. They also refer to Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models, which represent the dynamic approach for this kind of analysis and then use a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) multiplier model that provides estimates of the disaggregated direct and indirect effects of an increase in tourist expenditures on the local economy and on households with specific income and skill levels. The model translates an increase in tourism expenditures at the aggregate level into regional impacts, by using information from surveys of tourist expenditures, consumption, expenditure and employment patterns of Panamanian households, and the general structure of the economy.

The analysis of the main empirical studies on the topic enables us to state that, summarizing at the most, the assessment for tourism and culture sectors uses two main approaches for measuring the economic impact: the Spending approach (EIA methodology), focused mainly on financial aspects, trying to measure the direct and multiplying effects deriving from an “event”; the Evaluation approach (Contingent analysis, CV), aimed at measuring the wider benefits people derive from tourism and culture, and ‘translate’ them into a monetary value.

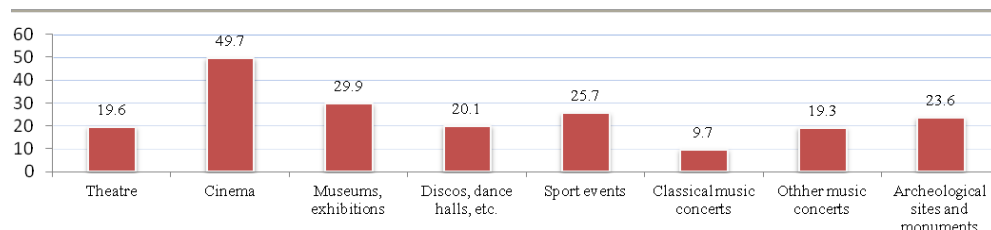
Social Return on Investment (SROI) is another methodology belonging to the evaluation approach. SROI can be considered a cost-benefits analysis that assigns a monetary value to the social and environmental benefit that has been created. Social effects are the ‘object’ of the analysis but the attempt is to ‘financialize’ their values.

2. The case of Italy

In further developments of this study, we intend to deepen the assessment of economic and social impact of tourism and culture link on a specific reference country, that is, Italy.

Over the years, Italy has been consolidating its supremacy as one of the most coveted world destinations in absolute value and a motivation for this success is undoubtedly culture (Tassi and Marino, 2016; Ernst & Young, 2016). The historical-artistic heritage it owns, its reputation at the international level and the attractiveness of the ‘Italian style’ values can be considered the main critical factors of this success (Figure 1 and Table 3).

Figure 1. Participants to events and entertainment, 2015, per 100 persons aged 6 and over, at least once during the year



Source: Istat, Italy in Figures 2016.

Table 3. Number of visitors of museums and similar state-owned and not state-owned institutes, 2015, absolute values and percentage compositions*

	State-owned**	Not-State owned	Total***	State-owned**	Not-State owned	Total***
TYPE						
Museums, galleries and/or collections	15,665,676	43,932,327	59,598,003	33.2	69.3	53.9
Archeological sites and parks	7,456,601	4,095,947	11,552,548	15.8	6.5	10.4
Monuments or monumental compounds	24,025,875	15,390,839	39,416,714	51.0	24.3	35.6
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA						
North	6,248,448	32,174,154	38,442,602	13.3	50.7	34.8
Centre	31,442,427	19,486,608	50,929,035	66.7	30.7	46.1
South and the Islands	9,457,277	1,758,351	21,215,628	20.1	18.5	19.2
ITALY	47,148,152	63,419,113	110,567,265	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Istat, Italy in Figures 2016.

* values refer to 4,815 units that completed the questionnaire

** museums belonging to the Ministry of culture

*** the overall number of visitors comes from registered or estimated data

The link between tourism and culture is very strong and the relevance of the two sectors in the national economy also justifies the growing interest in the academic field.

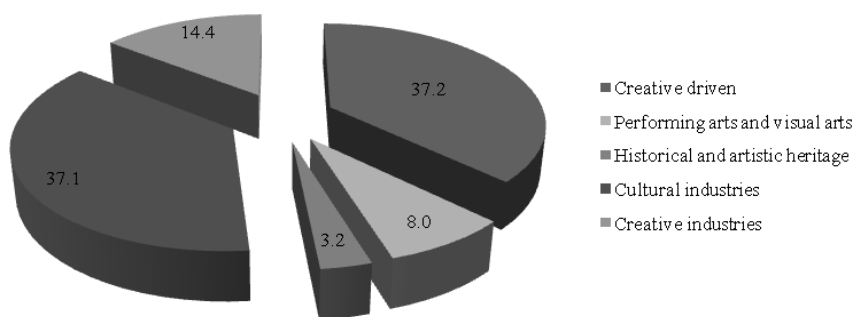
In Italy, the first studies on the economic impact of the tourism and culture sectors were mainly concentrated on the tourism sector (Costa and Rispoli, 1992, Costa and Manente, 1993, Manente, 1999 and 2000), on sports events and Universities (Rispoli, 1991; Moretti, 2003); contributions in the cultural field are

more recent. This is partly justified by a problem in terms of definition of “culture” and related items/events (Santagata *et al.*, 2007; Paiola, 2008; Bollo and Sani, 2013).

In recent years, the literature on the subject has been developed; from a methodological point of view, however, the studies are often limited to the analysis of specific cases and use of a qualitative approach, through questionnaires/surveys.

Also, the growing interest in the academic field is justified by the relevance of the sectors in the Italian economy: according to the most recent data (2016) provided by Unioncamere, Ministry of Cultural Activities, Heritage and Tourism, Symbola, the total culture field in Italy accounts for € 250.0 billion of added value (16.7%) and 1,495 thousand employees (6%). Cultural and Creative “core” sectors account for 89.9 billion euros (6.0%); Value added created in the rest of the economy weighs for 160.0 billion euros (10.7%). the “multiplier effect” is estimated in 1.8.

Figure 2. The value added of the Cultural and Creative System in Italy



Source: Unioncamere, Ministry of Cultural Activities, Heritage and Tourism, Symbola.

In the 882 municipalities with Unesco sites, 40% of the cultural core companies are concentrated (incidence on the total of the enterprises higher than 1.7 times compared to territories without UNESCO sites). The level of use of tourist facilities (presences for beds) is 1.6 times higher than other territories (29.6% against 18.8%). There is a close and virtuous relationship between culture and tourism: cultural tourism spending represents 38% of tourism spending in Italy, reaching 44% in the art cities.

The economic impact of the extended tourism sector (2015) is particularly appreciable in the subsequent measures: Economy Travel and tourism, 167.5 billion euros; Incidence on the internal GDP, 10.2%; Tourist employment, 2,900 thousand employees (11.6%). In the 2015 list of world tourist destinations, most frequented by foreign tourism, Italy holds the 5th position on number of arrivals and the 7th position on revenues. According to data by Italian Institute of statistics, art towns account for 26.6% of total nights spent by Italian tourists and 38.3% by Foreigners.

In section 2, we stated that, in a nutshell, it is possible to distinguish among methodologies for impact assessment in the two main strands of spending approach and evaluation approach: Guerzoni (2013) proposes an impact assessment for a series of typical Italian festivals by using the spending approach; as an effective example of the application of the evaluation approach, instead, refer to Castellani *et al.* (2013). The evaluations in Guerzoni (2013) give very different results for the various events, with multiple values ranging from a minimum of 2.04 to a maximum of 10.32. The variability of this evidence can be traced back to some main reasons, such as the reputation of the event, the place of the event and seasonality.

Recently, many researchers and practitioners have been focusing on the economic impact assessment of museums, as a stable cultural institution in contrast to occasional or just cyclical cultural events, which generally attract near neighbourhood or non-resident public.

Conclusions

This paper analyses the evaluation of the impact of events related to the tourism and culture sectors, with a special focus on the economic impact.

A review of the ‘Impact literature’ has been proposed, distinguishing by type of impact and nature of the event that determines it. The main methodological approaches have then been presented, with specific attention paid to the culture and tourism sector (Spending and evaluation approaches).

The case of Italy has therefore been presented, to give an impression of the real potential of deepening these topics, referring to a country whose economy is strongly affected by the culture-tourism link.

The study enables us to highlight some important critical issues in estimating the economic impact of an event related to the tourism and culture sectors: there is a problem concerning the availability of data, both in quantitative (little information) and qualitative terms (non-homogeneous data); there is a problem concerning the obligatory nature of impact analysis: in some cases, in fact, impact analyses are mandatory by specific regulations, in others, they are just optional; very often, impact methodologies use too complex measures to be applied, and very weak in terms of communicability of results to non-professionals audiences. Besides, there is a problem related to the inadequacy of the different methods of impact analysis to return an assessment in a single, clear and concise measure. With reference to the cultural sector, there is also a defining problem of cultural “good/ event”. In our opinion, the attempt to solve these issues by introducing new measures that are more and more suitable to special cases could determine the risk of over-assessment of peculiarities, thus compromising the replicability of methods and the reliability of results.

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