

Research Article

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Local Communities and Sport Activities Expenditures and Image: Residents' Role in Sustainable Tourism and Recreation

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Abstract: The practice of sports by resident communities is a tool for healthy lifestyles, inclusive growth and the promotion of sustainable cities. Nevertheless, the relationship between sport, tourism and recreation still remain an under researched theme. Focusing on the economic pillar of sustainability, this study intends to quantify and analyse the economic costs incurred by families in formal and informal sport practices, as well as the contribution of these activities and related events to the territory's image projection and attractiveness, by overlapping resident's and visitor's perception of sports in the destination. Applied to the municipality of Guimarães (Portugal), this analysis of the sports consumer's behaviour contributes to filling the gap of knowledge resulting from the studies that, as a rule, exclusively evaluate the investments (supply) and/or the expenses (demand) of events and not the regular practice of sport. A total of 179 questionnaires were applied to residents throughout 2017, through the *self-administrate questionnaire method*. Findings reveal that residents see sports as one of the factors contributing to the identity of the municipality, underlying motivations for participation as the search for happiness, health, wellbeing, and fun. Expenditures generate multiplier effects in the local economy, allowing to compare growth scenarios. This analysis is a scientific instrument to support territorial innovation and the decision at the local level of public policies for sustainable

development, in agreement with objective eight of sustainability defined by the United Nations.

Keywords: Sport and leisure; Economics; Sustainability; policies; Public policies; Consumer behaviour; Marketing.

1 Introduction

Nowadays, tourism is considered as one of the driving forces for promoting the coherent development of sustainable, inclusive and economically efficient societies. In 'Transforming our World: The Agenda for Sustainable Development', the United Nations establishes as a main goal that until 2030, policies should be devised and implemented 'to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products'(UN, 2016: 22). Tourism and leisure are thus focal areas in the integration of sustainability pillars – economic, social and environmental – emphasizing the relationship between visitors and local communities who share interests and activities on a given time scale.

It is widely known in the literature that the motivations that lead to the practice of sports make it an activity or tourism product aimed at the development of healthy lifestyles (Getz & Page, 2016; Pomohaci & Sopa, 2018), inclusive growth (Koronios & Kriemadis, 2018) and of sustainable cities (Sherry, 2017). This overlap between tourism, sport and sustainable development means that the association of sport with the impacts on local economies is potentially a win-win relationship, with a continuation of the organization and promotion of the offer of products and services, image projection and tourism promotion, the requalification of human and material resources and an increase in the quality of life of the communities.

It is with this view that 'interest in sports tourism is the result of social changes in values, which are increas-

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ingly focused on experience' (Moško, Ploszaj & Firek, 2018: 4). Consequently, destination managers must know how to manage the quality and identity of these experiences. In this context, without adherence to the practice by local communities, sports, as a tourist product, will not be accepted by the communities, and sport practice could be seen as a product for 'others' and not 'of all', the opposite of sustainable development positioning.

Thus, the management of sport by public decision-makers is gaining particular prominence, constituting a critical factor of governance by the local administration. This article intends to quantify and analyse the importance of the economic pillar of sports practices from the point of view of families so as to integrate it in a multi-disciplinary way, and to contribute to the efficiency and comprehensiveness of local public decision systems with an influence in sports and, consequently, in the sustainability of communities.

Under this assumption, one of the main difficulties is the existing research gap in the analysis of the economic dimension of sport, which is largely focused on the role and effects of sport events such as the Olympic Winter Games (Ren & Mahadevan, 2018) or the Rugby World Cup (Werner, Dickson & Hyde, 2015), and rarely on the economic dimension of sports among residents. This study seeks to contribute to the fulfilment of this gap.

The study of the formal dimension of sports practices, that is, under direct and organized technical orientation presents a good level of dissemination (Swarta, George, Cassarc & Sneydc, 2017). However, assessing its dimension in an integrated way requires going further, including a second perspective, the informal dimension, that is, individualized or under an organizational regime in co-management, which is increasingly expressed in the response to the needs of each citizen. It is in this context that the present study seeks to answer questions such as: What economic value is there in a community where citizens or families periodically spend money and time on sport or are committed with regular physical exercise? Is this relevant for the more detailed knowledge of the local sports and community system? Does knowing this under-researched phenomenon help the decision process of those who have to define policies, design and manage strategies for sustainable and sporting development at the local level?

In order to maximize positive impacts to benefit the quality of life of the community, the study aims to:

(a) Estimate the economic value of the sport sector in its formal and informal dimensions, as well as its contribution to the projection of image and attractiveness, taking

as a case study the Guimarães municipality in the north of Portugal;

(b) Capitalize and disseminate knowledge to be used as a scientific instrument to support territorial innovation and decision support at the level of public policies;

The paper is organized into 6 sections. After the initial description of the research context and goals, section 2 presents the analysis of the recent developments in the sustainable development and sports literature. Section 3 comprises the methodological options and the case study description, followed by the identification of the main results and its discussion, respectively in sections 4 and 5. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the paper contributions regarding sports economic and marketing links to local sustainable development.

2 Sustainable Development and Sports

Since the late 1980s, sustainable development has been at the heart of the development of societies (Liu, 2003). This concern over time coincided with the exponential growth of worldwide tourist flows, which by the end of the 1990s already represented about 674 million international tourist arrivals in the world according to Song, Li & Cao (2018) citing data from the World Tourism Organization.

Tourism and sustainability are, therefore, connected in the same way, taking as reference the definition of the World Tourism Organization regarding 'Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities' (UNEP & WTO, 2005: 11–12). The sustainable form of tourism should be based on the three fundamental pillars of sustainability: the efficient use of natural resources (environmental), respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of the resident (economic) community and fair economic and social impacts on all stakeholders (social). When the impact comes from the demand side, the World Tourism Organization also stresses the importance of ensuring tourists a high level of satisfaction and a significant tourism experience.

Sports establishes this potential connection between visiting and visited communities, with the association between sports and tourism playing a prominent role in the tourism industry, recognized throughout literature; as, for example, in Perić (2018: 18): 'the popularity of sport

events can be attributed to the fact that they generate, depending on their size, significant benefits for host communities on the state, county, city or municipality level. The most obvious impact that sport events have is on the economy and tourism'. The author highlights the synergistic effects generated by sport events, such as the attenuation of seasonality, creation of employment, taxes and inherent taxes, among others.

The importance and relevance of sports as a pillar of education and health in the formal and moral sense of a society has been observed and portrayed through numerous contexts and time periods. Koronios and Kriemadis (2018) refer to the important role of sports in creating bridges between societies, in promoting peace and social wellbeing. Focusing on the role of sport events, the authors advocate the attraction of participants with distinct performance levels, from beginners to professionals, active and passive participants, and thus, its impacts in diverse audiences.

However, despite the importance of sport events, both in tourism and as a sociocultural role (Getz & Page, 2016; Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017; Custódio, Azevedo & Perna, 2018; Moško, Płoszaj & Firek, 2018; Koronios & Kriemadis, 2018), most of the research in this domain focuses on the impacts of mega-events from an economic perspective, with scarce research focusing on smaller sport events or integrated perspectives in which, beyond the visitor, the resident community as a practitioner is also considered (Perna, Custódio, Pereira & Oliveira, 2018). Usually, this process lacks the information and analysis regarding the central role of the resident community: 'as a key stakeholder in this process no form of tourism should be at the expense of the local residents. Event sport tourism should also create opportunities for locals who live in the actual place.' (Perić, 2018: 176).

Other problems detected in the literature focus on the lack of studies that in an integrated way allow to understand the impacts and transfers generated: 'Destination-Marketing Organizations (DMO) should organize and promote such events in close relation with relevant resident communities and not as the bubble phenomenon delinked with the territory in which the event takes place.' (Custódio *et al.*, 2018: 7).

Sports have to provide leisure opportunities for residents and visitors (Chalip & Costa, 2005; Dwyer, Jago & Forsyth, 2016), creating an essential component of the development strategy and, as such, an integral part of the portfolio of initiatives of a destination/ region. However, it is not clear in the literature how small- to medium-scale sport events impact both tourism and the wellbeing of the resident community (Taks, Chalip & Green, 2015;

Kokolakakis, Castellanos-García & Lera-López, 2007). This mismatch results in lack or imprecise information inputs to decision support systems, particularly when the analysis moves away from events and/or organized practices, and tries to find the non-formal component of sports practices that, nowadays, are quite popular in some communities because they oppose the vertigo of competition.

It is within this scope that this article tries to estimate the economic impact of sports in the sustainable development of a community, recognizing the importance, but going beyond events, adding the economic and motivational features of the resident population. Many of the factors that influence sports, whether from a tourism perspective or the resident community, originate from personal, social, and cultural factors, which are not well documented in the literature (Getz & Page, 2016). The present work arises from the need to 'examine outcomes and impacts at personal and societal levels, and also in terms of cultural and environmental change' (Getz & Page, 2016: 614).

3 Methodology and case study

The economic impact of sports is estimated according to Turco and Kelsey (Crompton, 1995: 15) as 'the net economic change in a host community that results from spending attributed to a sport event or facility'. Congregating practices and infrastructures, the quantification of these expenses follows Hudson's (2001) guidelines in that the analysis of economic impacts highlights the importance of this as a working tool for the entities responsible for the administration of the territory and for decisions on the use of public funds.

This study is based on the observation of two components of the impacts of sports in the economy, as referred in the *Study on the Contribution of Sport to Economic Growth and Employment* (European Commission, 2012) and in Prebensen, Chen and Uysal (2014). The two specific components are how expenditure incurred by resident and visiting practitioners in the municipality affects the demand and performance of formal and informal sport activities, with or without commercial support (gymnasiums, health centres, public spaces, etc.), and the impact on tourism in terms of the attributes of the perceived image of the destination through sports (qualitative analysis).

With a strong focus on field research and primary data, the research approach is based on a mix of structured and non-structured methodologies, formulating, gathering and processing the data collected by direct

face-to-face *self-administrative questionnaires*. The questionnaire enables to identify the different sport visitors and resident's profile, with the data integrated in a standardized way, using a sequence of semantic differential or Likert scale, dichotomous and nominal questions/scales. Open ended questions regarding expenses were also used. Usually, Likert scales are used to measure cognitive evaluations. A non-structured method was adopted to analyse the association between sports and the territory's image, by applying a quantitative content analysis to identify patterns in the data relative to the image perception (text) through a systematic classification coding process.

The questionnaire was applied to a random sample of 179 sport practitioners and non-practitioner's, aged over 14 years, in the following events and locations: (1) WRC Vodafone Rally de Portugal – Campo de São Mamede, (2) Urban Race Cradle – 3 hours of resistance BTT, (3) Pools Complex of Guimarães and (4) private gyms, between May and June 2017.

The study was carried out in the municipality of Guimarães, which holds a large associative activity, shown in its 338 sports entities and 583 sports facilities/venues (Tempo Livre, 2016). The analysis focuses on the demand side, in order to capture a phenomenon that is not identified in the national statistical system (which is mainly based on the observation of public supply and expenditure). For example, in Table 1, the data from Guimarães available in the Statistical Yearbook of the North Region 2016 (INE, 2017) only focuses on measuring sport expenses:

Thus, this study seeks to go further, identifying the private expenditure and the range of expenses supported by families who, in their daily life, engage in more or in less sport activities.

Simultaneously, in Guimarães there is a remarkable tourism dynamic, with a growth of 30.4% in the demand

for overnight stays and 11.3% in the number of beds in hotel establishments classified between 2013 and 2016 (INE 2014, 2017). As a rule, this pressure on the demand side favours new investments, which may have in sports a vehicle for attracting flows and managing seasonal tourism. The group formed by sports, heritage and culture can have in sports a decisive factor and demand leverage throughout the year, which could bring economic and social benefits by monthly linearization of tourism revenues, mitigating the effects of natural and institutional factors of seasonality sources.

However, the dynamism and social involvement of the municipality of Guimarães with sports require information to optimize the decision-making and the planning of the sector, which is the objective of the present study. This kind of knowledge can only be gathered by a hands-on empirical approach, such as the one applied.

4 Main results

The profile of those who practice and do not practice sport activities was established in terms of gender, type of employment and household size. Practitioners' analysis also includes a further disaggregation in terms of sport modalities, type of practice, frequency and composition of the group. These data are summarized in Table 2.

Practitioners say that their main motivations for practicing sports are the feeling of happiness and the pursuit of health and wellbeing, to which they associate the perception of sports as being fun. In the case of the informal practitioners, it is important to point out the motivation 'I want to feel well to improve my professional activity', which translates into an association between sports,

Table 1: Expenditure on Sport of the City Council of Guimarães 2016. Source: INE (2017).

	Practitioners
Expenses of the City Council of Guimarães in activities and sports equipment per inhabitant.	20.50€
Total expenses of the City Council of Guimarães in activities and sports equipment	3,166,201€
Aggregate of the expenditure of the City Council of Guimarães in culture and sports as a percentage of the budget.	12.7%

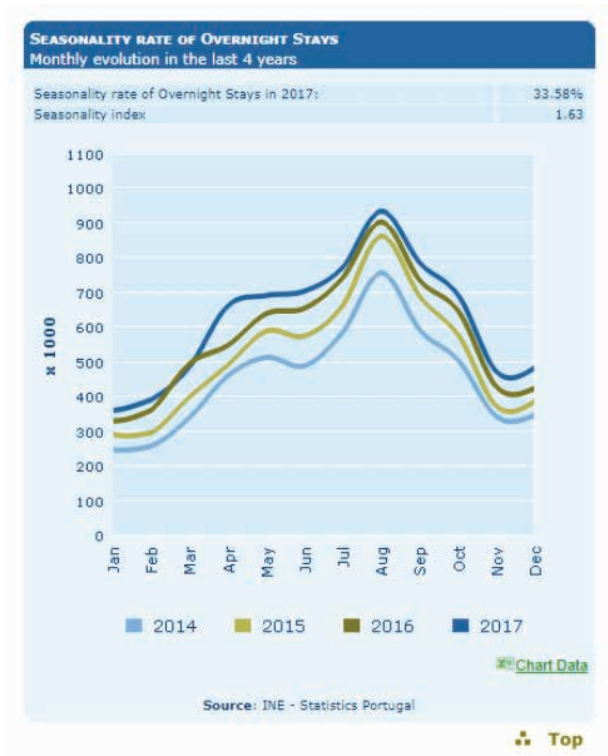


Figure 1: Nights per month in hotel establishments: North Region. Source: CIITT (2018).

Table 2: Characterization of practitioners and non-practitioners. Source: Own elaboration.

	Practitioners		Non-Practitioners
Genre	56.3% Male		55.6% Female
Ages between 16 and 35 years	43.2%		47.4%
Employed	44.2%		61.1%
Size of household	3.3		3.5
	Practitioners		
Most practiced activities	Fitness 34.6%	Cycling 27.2%	Hiking and running 9.6%
Organized sports practices non competitive	48.9%		
Organized sport practices competitive	36.4%		
Indoor practice	59.3%		
Practice 2 to 3 times a week	48.9%		
Group Composition	Friends 33.5%	Alone 31.7%	With children 4.3%

employment and wellbeing, thus revealing the importance of this practice.

The factors that contribute the most towards satisfaction with the infrastructures for sports practice are the following: easy access to the place, cleanliness of premises and access to regular information regarding sports activities in the municipality.

Subsequently, in order to understand the associations between the practice of sport and the municipality’s image, free elicitation of data was considered as a complement and an enrichment to the overall destination image measurement on sport, as suggested by Lin, Chen & Park (2012) and Stepchenkova & Morrison (2008). This is a widely accepted method and it is increasingly used for this type of data analysis. It allows the ability to identify new attributes, confirms the importance of the previous attributes identified by the literature review and helps identify further attribute analysis, if necessary.

As referred in the methodology section and case study presentation, this technique allows to limit the data volume in order to analyse the information in more detail (Burton, 2000; Flick, 2006). Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell (2006) distinguish two styles of

content analysis: quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis (also called semiotic analysis). Quantitative analysis is linked to the physical presence of elements that can be counted and recounted to reveal the surface meaning of the text. In the current research, content analysis was quantitative through semiotic eyes, that is, including underlying meanings of the elements. The coding was undertaken manually, using SPSS software as a support tool.

From a total of 105 words chosen by respondents, the analysis reveals three main key categories (patterns) in the data expressed by residents' that best describe the association between sports and the city (municipality) image, illustrated in Table 3.

When sports practice or audience fans fit into actions framed by events organized in the municipality, both residents and visitors attracted by these events show a very positive assessment. The former, through the legacy/expected impact of the event, the latter through the quality/satisfaction of the experience and visit to Guimarães, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 shows a positive overlapping between visitors' satisfaction and residents' expected impacts/most relevant legacies. For instance, if visitors express a positive image of Guimarães, the residents also clearly state their expectation for the improvement of the municipality's image perception abroad. Additionally, if visitors declare that they will return and will recommend visiting Guimarães to friends and family, the residents simultaneously state that sport will improve the economy and tourism in the municipality.

It should be further noted that the events under study, when experienced by visitors, generate a perceived image of Guimarães where sports are associated with heritage and culture, an image context in which visitors also highly appreciate the hospitality of the population, the conser-

vation of public spaces, urban cleanliness, security and gastronomy.

Regarding the economic variables, the average monthly expenditure on sports by residents is € 45.57, unsurprisingly higher among formal practitioners (€ 48.66) and lower among informal practitioners (€ 42.17). Since formal practitioners represent 63.5% and informal 35.5%, these figures will highly influence the final scenario of the total annual expenditure of families on sport practices. Also, when broken down by type of expenditure, the three main instalments are the monthly enrolment, clothing and footwear, and the various equipment, with obvious differences between formal and informal practitioners, as Table 5 illustrates

The average monthly expenditure in sports was also analysed according to the geographical location of the expenditure (within and outside the municipality boundaries) and type of commerce (expenditure channel). It is estimated that 74.8% of the formal practitioners and 89.1% in the informal practitioners carry out the expense in stores located within the municipality. These figures carry an immediate potential multiplier effect to the local economy by the local internalization of expenditure, as opposed to a possible 'import' if the supply did not exist or was essentially secured by online platforms.

Visitors attracted by sport events that last less than one day (without overnight stay), spend on average € 36.43. This value can be considered quite reliable and able to be replicated in future one day visits, namely due to the fact that visitors perceived Guimarães as a city with a positive image, a fact that influenced the high level of intention to return, as shown in Table 4. However, the major challenge will be the very significant growth potential if attractions of sport events lasting more than one day are considered together with the increase of expenditure in

Table 3: Three main associations between sports and the image of Guimarães. Source: Own elaboration.

Category	Example of suggested words	Percentage of total references
Pride	Fun, dedication, well-being, health, passion, ...	59.0%
Eclecticism	Diversity, sharing, embracing, ...	12.4%
Safety	Security, professionalism, ecological, ...	11.4%

Table 4: Main Impacts Perceived by Residents and Visitors: Visit Satisfaction Measures of Main Impacts.

Residents		Visitors	
Expected Impacts / Most Relevant Legacies	Average (1 min to 5 max)	Measures of Satisfaction with the Visit to Guimarães	% Average
Increased sports practice (among residents)	4.23	Change of Guimarães' image for the better	40.0%
Economic and tourism development in the municipality	4.20	Maintain (positive) image of Guimarães	60.0%
Improvement of the perception of image abroad	4.16	Intention to return to Guimarães in the next 3 years	95.2%
Increased pride and sense of belonging to the community	4.10	Recommendation to visit Guimarães to friends and family	76.2%
Increase and improvement of infrastructures related to leisure	4.05	Posting videos and/or photos of the events on social networks	85.7%

Table 5: Average Monthly Expenditure in Sports: Total and by Typology of Expenditure of the Formal Practitioner vs. Informal. Source: Own elaboration.

Total Expenses and Expense Categories	Practitioners	
	Formal	Informal
Monthly Expense (euros)	48.66 €	42.17 €
	[45.57 € in average]	
Monthly Fee	43.0%	34.6%
Clothing and Footwear	25.7%	18.7%
Other Equipment	17.8%	25.1%
Other Expenses (includes travel, ...)	13.4%	21.6%

the municipality, for example, in accommodation, catering and shopping.

After defining the key variables and expenses of the respondents, an individual expenditure function was

established for residents practicing sport activities in the municipality, which was defined as being dependent on five variables:

Equation 1: Function of Individual Expenses of Practitioners

$$f_{(total\ individual\ expenditure)} = age_{(f,i)}, expenditure_{(f,i)}, type\ pf\ expenditure_{(f,i)}, expenditure\ place_{(f,i)}, expenditure\ channel_{(f,i)}$$

f = formal practioners and *e i* = informal practioners

After establishing the practitioners' age, expenditure, type of expenditure, expenditure place and expenditure channel, for either formal or informal practitioners, it is possible to extrapolate the data for the entire municipality; the current scenario of total economic impact in terms of direct expenditure on sport practice of residents reaches 67.9 million euros per year. In this group, the formal practice accounts, on average, for 66.7% and the informal practice for 33.3% (Table 6).

In terms of prospects, simulating the development of sport activities in a growing population (new practitioners), and under the assumption of constancy of the cost typology, it is possible to present two scenarios over a 5-year period:

- a) Moderate growth: number of practitioners increases 5% within a given time period, with the aggregate impact reaching 71.3 million euros per year;
- b) Optimistic growth: number of practitioners increases 10%, resulting in an aggregate impact of 74.7 million euros.

In sum, the study of this particular municipality suggests that if there are deviations from the current scenario, these will be close to the optimistic impact scenario.

5 Discussion of Results

In light of the objectives of quantifying and studying the economic value of the sport sector in terms of demand, of integrating the formal and informal dimensions, as

well as understanding how sports contribute to the image and attractiveness of the municipality of Guimarães, the results show a strong link of this practice with the goals of sustainable development of societies, in particular 'Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all' (UN, 2017: 21 cited from 'Transforming our World: The Agenda for Sustainable Development'.)

The study of the motivations of sports practitioners in sports and tourism led to a considerable emphasis in the community of the municipality of Guimarães in search for happiness, health and well-being, to which sports is perceived and associated with fun. Informal practitioners, while also claiming that 'I want to be well to improve my professional activity', consider sports, employment and wellbeing as relevant to this practice. Social interaction is a crucial factor in creating positive human development, according to Hoye, Nicholson & Brown (2015), whose absence may lead to isolation, loneliness and alienation of goals. According to these authors, the role of sports in the development of social and community bonds is unquestionable, and impacts on well-being, increased self-esteem and better physical and mental health. As a leisure activity, Eime, Sawyer, Harvey, Casey, Westerbeek & Payne (2015) report that sports have an increased potential of improving the mental and physical health of individuals in relation to any other leisure activity, thus empowering individuals who become more involved in society and motivated in their personal lives. Both trends are present in the Guimarães case study.

As the historic centre of Guimarães is a World Heritage Site since 2001, it is also relevant to note that when events involve sports activities, the perceived positive image of

Table 6: Estimation of the Annual Expenditure of Families on Sport Practices. Source: Own elaboration.

	Formal Practice		Informal Practice		Total
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
Current Dimension	44,198,894 €	46,465,504 €	22,017,197 €	23,146,284 €	67,913,939 €
Moderate Growth Scenario	46,408,838 €	48,788,779 €	23,118,057 €	24,303,599 €	71,309,636 €
Optimistic Growth Scenario	48,618,782 €	51,112,054 €	24,218,917 €	25,460,913 €	74,705,333 €

Guimarães strongly connects sports with heritage and culture, a local identity integration that is an added value in terms of marketing and tourism destination competitiveness.

Indeed, it is a well-known fact that events could be a source of several positive impacts on a destination, in which image impacts are perhaps the most difficult to quantify due to the usual focus on economic benefits of increased number of visits and potential exposure to new markets. The study of Guimarães reveals a positive contribution of sports to overcome this limitation, identifying heritage and culture as main attributes within the articulation of sports, events and image, in line with the procedures for the perception of the image as ‘a subjective interpretation of attributes and associations made by a person’ (Arnegger & Herz, 2016: 79).

As referred above, formal practitioners spend more per month (€ 48.66) when compared to informal practitioners (€ 42.17), and this could be explained by the probable higher requirement and technical specificities of their gear and clothing. However, it is especially relevant to note that both types of practitioners, formal and informal, carried out the majority of their expenditure in physical stores located in the municipality (values above 75%), which results in a strong potential multiplier effect for the local economy by the internalisation of expenses.

These figures, when aggregated, make it possible to gauge their importance to the local economy, both in absolute terms – € 67.9 million in annual household expenditure – and by the relative contribution to a more regular economic activity during the year. Bearing in mind the potential for growth by new practitioners and/or informal to formal transitions, and even without affecting behavioural change scenarios within each profile, these results still have a growth potential that can reach 10% within a 5-year period. However, it is difficult to compare these values since there is a scarcity of comparable studies with other similar examples/case studies at local level.

6 Conclusion

The resident in the municipality of Guimarães perceives sports as one of the factors contributing to the identity of the municipality. Pride, eclecticism and safety are some of the main attributes of sports emphasized by the local respondents, whose motivations highlight the search for happiness, health and wellbeing, and fun. The statement ‘I want to be well to improve my professional activity’

indicated by many of the practitioners, sums up positive implications that far exceed the limits of sport practice.

With expenditures mostly carried out in the municipality itself, there is a win-win relationship between sport practice and the local economy, whose positive impacts in favour of the quality of life of the community tend to generate a stable sector, strongly connected with the territory and with perspective growth. This conclusion is supported by the two aims of this paper: first, the identification of the economic value of the sport sector in the formal and informal dimensions by families, including the attributes of the projection of the image of the municipality through sport; and secondly, the dissemination of economic information to support the decision for the pursuit of the efficiency of local public policies for sport development.

By revealing the economic value of sports based on direct observation of local consumer’s behaviour, until now considerably under researched, the data obtained with this paper will help governance stakeholders to achieve the right decisions, namely, to design and manage strategies of sport development at the local level.

This study also contributes to filling the gap of knowledge regarding sports economic value and image perception of the host territory, proposing an integrated approach between economics and marketing non-existent at local level, since the most common methodologies until now applied a strictly economic approach (unidimensional), and usually focused only on the supply side (investments and infrastructures costs), and rather less on the demand side (families expenditures to support the regular practice of sport). In the municipality of Guimarães, the practice of sport by families is supported by a set of expenses, constituting a new expenditure that only happens because these practices exist.

This phenomenon and respondents’ profile constitute a step towards the application of the principles of sustainable development defined by the UN (2016) at a local scale without neglecting global trends and objectives, particularly, as mentioned above, the Sustainable Development Objective 8 (UN, 2016), which focuses on promoting an inclusive and sustained growth, based on productivity and job creation. Therefore, in the case under analysis it is possible to conclude that betting on formal and informal sport will play a positive and disseminating role.

The study presents limitations linked to the exploration of an under researched phenomenon. Its methodological and conceptual choices are debateable, and the conclusions reached cannot be compared given the lack of similar studies at the municipal level. Thus, the main future challenges of research would be to investigate possible correlation between some variables, testing

hypotheses to be explored (e.g., practitioners socio-economic profile influence on the positive/negative image free elicitation data), and to develop the application of similar studies to other municipalities. This would allow to broaden scientific knowledge about sport, tourism and leisure conducive to be used as an instrument to support policy making for territorial innovation at the level of public policies for sustainable development.

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Bionote

Fernando Perna has a PhD in Applied Economics from the University of Algarve. He is a specialist in the study of the relationship of tourism with the regional economy and processes of sustainable development. He has coordinated national and international research and education projects (EU, China, Cape Verde, Algeria) focusing on the study of the impact of tourism, recreation and leisure activities and infrastructures on the comparative competitiveness of territories and destination economies, as well as training and capacity building for tourism and sustainable development. He is a member of the Directive Committee of the Centre for Research, Development and Innovation in Tourism (CiTUR). He is the author of publications in journals of international circulation and member of the scientific committee of international conferences in the fields of economics, management, planning and tourism.

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