

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

# TOURISM MARKETING AND LOCAL CELEBRATIONS: A CASE STUDY IN VALENCIA'S FALLAS

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Nowadays, cities rival not only compete on the investment's attraction, but also to get things to generate richness and employment to the locals like event management. Furthermore, cities compete to attract citizens.

Their aim is to provide market value trying to adapt the needs of the urban market by improving customer service, generating a commitment to the city and instilling confidence to promote the collaboration and public involvement.

All these proposals are required with a strategic guidance focused in society's long-term community set.

Between the cities there are a lot of competitiveness, called urban competitiveness, whereby a positioning is searched. The most common indicators with respect to positioning are: identity, culture, human and intellectual capital, heritage, traditions and events, weather, infrastructures, natural resources, economy, history, business management, geography, urban planning, architecture and landscape, etc. The sum of all of these attributes grew out of the dismemberment of a key variable: identity.

Identity is presented as a set of perceptions and associations which are characterized straight away the spaces differentiating them with respect to others. Wherefore, "a place identity is a set of elements and attributes that singularize the society that inhabits it, taking into consideration history, traditions and culture, that this identity has been established as of determined social processes" (Camprubí, 2009:76)

In the tourist field, the author claims that the perception of the touristic image is often accompanied by the destination's identity internalization.

A potential strategic positioning with a proven effectiveness and durability is the translation of an historic heritage element of the city in a symbolic icon (Fanjul y Cebollada, 2009).

The tourist is one of the public objectives that are taken into account when making a strategy of creating a value in a city.

Tourist is an important factor that countries and cities use from long time ago since nowadays as a means of economic development. Over the years, the increasingly competitiveness cause marketing techniques application to announce the destination's singularity and position respect to competing cities.

Folgado, Oliviera y Hernández (2011) considered that “the great majority of tourists choose their destinations according to the brand and the perception they apperceive of them” and, consequently, the cities introduce promotion technics through the brand’s image creation trying to highlight their identities and the uniqueness of their destination.

Culture as part of the city’s identity has become according to Binkhorst (2008) an important source to prevent the world’s translation in a “global village”. The author considers that the tourism is an inexhaustible source of experiences through which the individual builds its own narrative.

Rivera (2013) agree that actually, the tourist assume an active role in the process, more independent and greater decision-making power involving even in the selection processes and planning of their itineraries.

Cultural tourism is a trend that according to Mallor et alter. (2013) has become in a challenge for the destinations because of their attractive and their differentiating power.

It creates a commercial response to the individual desire to discover and to live another reality. This type of tourism has a creative dimension since most forms contemporary look for interactivity with the audience.

Nowadays, cities have the willingness to conserve their heritage on account the tourist interest that such cultural wealth.

Liu (2014) ensures that the increase of the culture in the destinations comes pressure differentiation of identities of the areas’ identities and perceptions. Through the cultural tourism development, cities and areas can increase their attractions like destinations to visit, live and invest.

In the case of Valencia, the third most populous city in Spain, tourism has become one of the sectors of its economy. This way, the confluence of Culture and Tourism in urban terrain determine one of the generators of the development being its main bastion cultural heritage (Rausell, 2006). The culture can be considered a backbone feature of the regional, local and urban development. Therefore, it is a decisive factor for the growth, development, employment and location of new investments. In addition, it plays a positive role in the promotion of social integration contributing to social cohesion and the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens.

Traditional events, such as Fallas in Valencia, are part of the intangible cultural heritage that have the cities, living heritage in constant transformation, which is transmitted from parents to children forming peculiarities and sense of attachment that gives character and difference to the territory.

This fact, together with the changes in the lifestyle of western societies, they become a strong attraction for the new concept of tourist, more responsible, better informed, which demand the particular, the surprising, the experiential and distinct offering each place.

An important part of the identity of the society is given by traditions, social customs, rituals and festive events that identify you as a collective in the history. Therefore, the cultural heritage of a society becomes an essential tool for itself, being necessary the recovery, preservation and dissemination to provide it with identity and open new paths linked with the communication and tourism.

The Fallas Festival is a cultural activity which is carried out annually and which distinguishes the city from the rest. They are first and foremost, a neighborhood party. Feast of

streets and squares, districts party that managed to turn into the main event of the city in 1936 with their ritual work nearly a hundred more locations, without losing paradoxically that original character (Cucó, 2008: 67).

The event has been included in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016, it has a strong rooting in Valencian society. Among all the elements comprising the Fallas, the three reflected in this study are: Fallas' Museum, Falla Artist City and Fallas' Monuments (installed in the streets between 15 and 19 of March, day in which they become ashes).

This study arises as research question if the coents incorporate this feast in Valencian tourism promotion in proportion to their potential dimensions.

The first objective is to determinate the values and tools which has the party to be defined as main tourist asset. The second, with evaluate the inclusion of the Global Strategic Plan of Tourism of the Region of Valencia after the declaration as world heritage.

Visiting different museums related to Fallas and socio-economic data are presented as tools in addition to a total of 22 open interviews to various personalities of Valencian society to know their point of view to regard to the Fallas' nomination as a Heritage before the announcement.

On the one hand, elements of the festival shed data meaningful and relevant to become very applicable tools for the tourist product development and, on the other hand, results from open interviews give the impression of personalities both related to the event, directly or indirectly, as those not linked about the obvious inclusion of brand or marketing techniques following the Fallas Festival declaration as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from UNESCO.

Conclusions as expressed in this article are multiple reasons why the Fallas Festival should be part of the Global Strategic Plan of Tourism of Valencian Region and they don't pop up neither Operational Marketing Plan or Tourism White Book of Valencian Community.

Not only demonstrates the economic, although outdated, but also its tourism potential impact, especially during the Fallas' week.

The obtained data show the need for management the Fallas by using marketing tools to learn more and put them on the international map. The outlook before the declaration is to be an impulse to operate but, two years after of the milestone, which in was held with great momentum, the situation has not changed. This fact should reflect the productivity of the festival because it is missing a single moment that is living the festival for empowerment and management as a tourism product.

Fallas are identity for the city, they have a great potential and arouse great interest, especially the Fallas' Monument urban exhibition the main days of the festival. This unique feature helps positioning and differentiation of the tourist offer of the town with respect to others since it makes it unique.

