

Events and mega-events: an additional approach to promote European and Asian cities in the competitive world urban system.

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AT A GLANCE

The world urban system has traditionally been studied from an economic perspective. However, it is recognized that it is a much more complex system where evidence exists and must be studied to obtain more holistic and interdisciplinary knowledge. It is considered that the cultural parameter in cities acquires a special meaning due to the remarkable convergence between economic and cultural scope, denominated in the specialized literature as "New Economy" or "Cultural Economy" (Stoper and Scott, 2009).

This new context has encouraged urban planners to think not only in terms of the location of manufacturing and competitive production conditions, but also to consider the global cultural evidence, in line with the leisure and consumer society. Among others, cultural events may be highlighted.

At present, there is a growing competition among cities to host such festivals (Roche, 2002; Davis, 2012), however, this competition is adapted to the scale and possibilities of each city, ranging from international mega-events for big cities, to more modest regional fairs for mid/small cities (Maening and Zimbalist, 2012).

These events not only transform and modernize the urban texture, but contribute to the diversification of the tourist product and improve the image of the place that becomes the world cultural capital, at least for a few days (Allen et al., 2002; Davis, 2012). These reasons explain the use of events and festivals as statistical indicators in the approach to the cultural dimension of cities.

RESULTS Functional specialization of the European and Asian cities according to type of event that they host

The location quotient by Sargent-Florence is used to find the functional specialization of European and Asian cities, by urban groups, based on the type of event hosting. Two big types of groups may be differentiated: (i) "multi-events" cities and (ii) cities specialized in a specific event.

Regarding the first, their reputation encompasses a wide range of events. Among others, London, Paris, Tokyo or Shanghai should be noted since they are considered the quintessential global cities in many urban rankings. Alongside them, others such as Berlin, Rome, Montreal and Osaka acquire great international importance linked with mega cultural issues. Indeed, the "multi-event" character of these cities is one of the priority factors that facilitate to scaling the cities regarding other more traditional urban rankings of an economic nature and, therefore, projecting in the global field of culture.

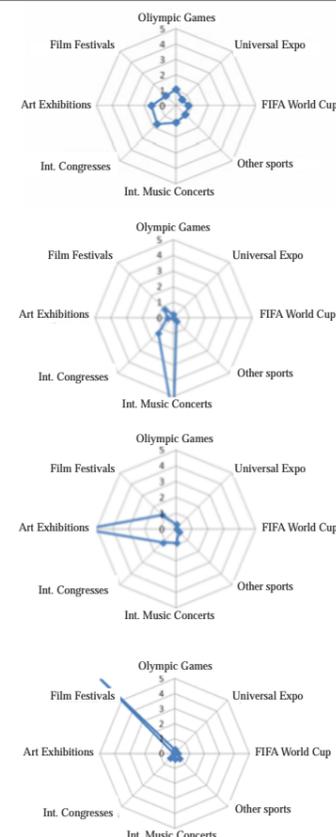
The rest of urban groups include shorter-range cities and unlike the previous group, they are characterized by a higher level of specialization in a particular event, which is what defines further the cultural projection strategy adopted by the city. For example, cities such as Zurich and Salzburg, which adopt a great interest in international music concerts (opera especially), may be highlighted; Bilbao and Florence attracting some of the largest world art exhibitions; Venice, Nice-Cannes and Busan hosting renowned film festivals; among other examples.

London
Paris
Tokio
Shanghai
among others

Zurich
Birmingham
Dublin
Salzburg
among others

Edinburgh
Porto
Bilbao
Florence
among others

Venice
Bern
Nice-Cannes
Busan
among others



"Multi-events" cities

Cities specialized in an specific event (Selected case studies: music concerts, art exhibitions and film festivals)

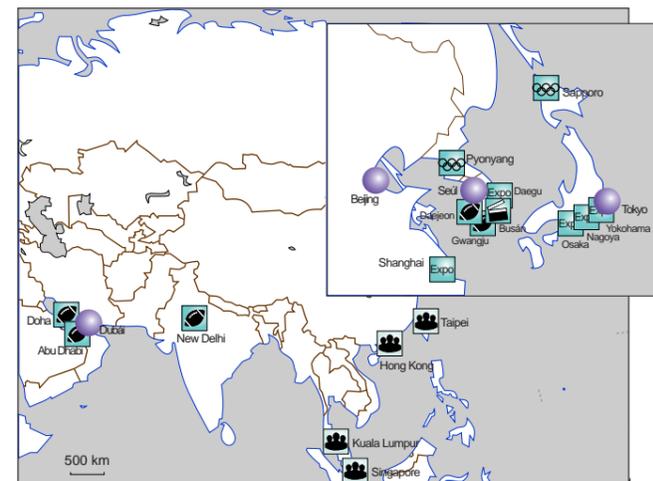
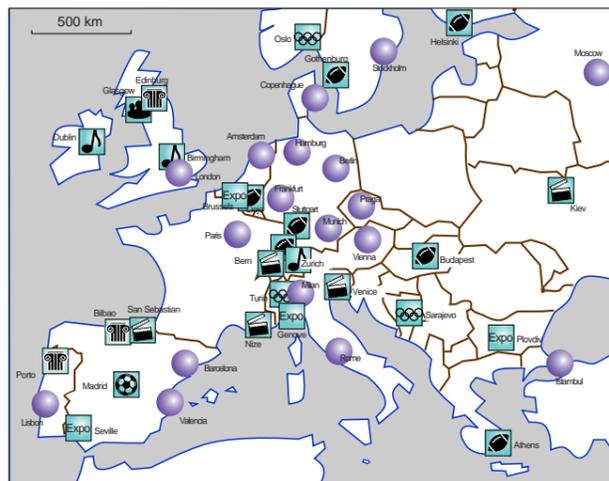
OBJETIVES

- To demonstrate how events and mega-events play a key role in the current territorial organization derived from cultural globalization
- To identify functional strategies of a cultural nature, based on the events and festivals that are carried out by urban planners in cities.
- To map the functional specialization of cities according to the type of events they host.

METHODOLOGY

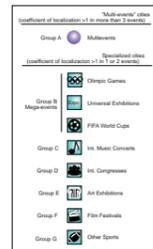
- Documentation and selection of information: more than 30 urban rankings grouped into 8 event categories.
- Normalization process. Z index.
- Assignment of discriminant weights: Mega events 25%, rest of events 15%
- Functional specialization of cities: Sargent-Florence localization coefficient.
- Grouping of cities by large groups of functional specialization. Cluster analysis.
- Cartographic synthesis of the functional specialization of cities according to the type of events they host.

RESULTS Events and festivals in European and Asian cities: a general overview



From the geographical point of view, a light is thrown on how the distribution of events acquires a higher interest in Europe rather than Asia. The shift in economic power that is taking place in Asia-Pacific does not translate into the development of strategies associated with cultural services, at least not with the intensity that advanced services are represented in so-called emerging countries. Many of their cities, especially in China and India, seem to prioritize economic over cultural criteria in their positioning in the urban hierarchy.

Therefore, although in some ways the distribution of these activities reinforces the reputation of the northern cities, it is necessary to continue investing in them as strategies of revitalization, citymarketing and urban branding, to open new opportunities for other cities around the world urban system, either as secondary cities (from the scale point of view) or as cities of the South (from the geographical point of view).



CONCLUSSIONS

These events have become an important factor in the process of cultural globalization of cities and, therefore, they are believed to be valid in the empirical approach to the cultural dimension. In our opinion, they are representative of the cultural industries that help cities, among other things, to stock up on the symbolic, experiential, leisure and, ultimately, cultural capital which are vital to the competitive success of the "new economy" or "cultural economy".

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