

1 Events in post-industrial society

Learning objectives

- **Explain the evolution of leisure time** in post-industrial society and its impact on identity and cultural participation.
- **Analyse the social and symbolic roles of events and festivals** in post-modern sociality and community building.
- **Classify events and festivals** and recognise the managerial and territorial implications of different typologies.
- **Describe the historical development of festivals**, from ritual origins to contemporary cultural formats.
- **Evaluate festivals as tools** for cultural planning, territorial marketing, and tourism development.
- **Assess the social value of events** within the experience economy and sustainable development.

The evolution of leisure time

The concept of *free time* emerged in the modern era around the mid-19th century: the emergence of industrial civilisation decreed a distinction between *quantitative* time (collective time spent in the factory) and *qualitative* time (time 'freed' from work and spent individually). Subsequently, in the post-industrial era, technological and organisational innovation in the workplace led to an expansion of '*time for oneself*', mainly thanks to the deconstruction of space and time brought about by the advent of new information technologies and increasingly flexible and desynchronised work organisation. For Lusetti (1998), the separation between free time and working time has created two fundamental needs in humans: on the one hand, the search for a symbolic universe in which to recognise oneself, and on the other, a renewed need to rebuild meaningful relationships, i.e. a need for conviviality and group cohesion.