Mega-event infrastructure development and sustainability contestations in the developing context: the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa

Bama Hilary Kennedy Nji and Dr. Tembi Maloney Tichaawa*
School of Tourism and Hospitality
University of Johannesburg, Bunting Road Campus
Johannesburg, South Africa
Email: tembit@uj.ac.za

*Corresponding Author

Abstract

Mega-events are not new, but in contemporary times they are increasingly being hosted in the Global South, and their resultant impacts and legacies are raising new challenges as to the rationale behind their organisation and the legacy impacts they might have. Infrastructural development and sustainability contestations are gaining prominence among participants seeking to deliver sustainable mega-events. In preparations for these ventures the construction of stadiums have often been accompanied by contentious debates about costs involved and post-event sustainability. A plethora of studies have considered the ability of such mega-events to impact either positively or negatively on the sustainability outlook of destinations hosting them. This study delves into the sustainability imperatives of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, focalising on the evaluation of post-event sustainability of stadiums. Grounded within the stakeholder theory and mega-event legacy framework, the study has adopted a critical review process of existing rhetoric and empirical enunciations. The key discussions and stipulations will be articulated in the hope of contributing towards the future investigations towards the development of concise planning, execution and management guidelines of mega-event projects with the resultant leverages to sustainable infrastructure legacy outcomes for such events within the developing context.

Keywords: Mega-event, legacy, FIFA World Cup, sustainability, infrastructure development.

Introduction

Mega-events are not new, and according to Preuss (2015) these events play a catalytic effect in transforming cities thereby making them to be considered to be of critical importance to policymakers, administrators and host communities. In contemporary times they are increasingly being hosted in the Global South, and their resultant impacts and legacies are raising new challenges as to how they are organised and what impacts they might have. By its very nature tourism is embedded within the framework of globalisation, and the important visible dimension of growing globalisation has seen the upsurge in international events tourism in recent decades with a focus on sport events (Tisdell, 2004). In similar fashion, mega-events have become a common feature of a globalised economy which according to Cornelissen and Swart (2006) are linked to socio-economic and cultural domains with relevant political consequences. Sport and sport events interact within the international political economic landscape, and in the present-day, have witnessed their staging veer in the direction of transitional economies (Giampiccoli & Nauright, 2010). According to Ma, Egan, Rotherham and Ma (2011), it is commonplace for governments and event organisers to pursue events in order to develop or regenerate their cities, regions or even countries. Such mega-events they contend can generate substantial positive and negative impacts to host areas (Ma et al., 2010). Tichaawa, Bama and Swart (2015:1384) concur with this
assertion in opining that mega-events are “by their very nature extremely significant, not just because of their visitor component, but also due to them being likely to leave behind legacies on the host community for far longer than just the period within which the events occurred”. Organising these mega-event masterpieces involves huge investments in infrastructure requirements which according to Preuss (2015) remain after the events are over and may become either assets to the community which they could use for their benefit, or a burden to the community stakeholders. Infrastructural development and sustainability contestations are therefore gaining prominence among participants seeking to deliver sustainable mega-events (Preuss, 2015; Tichaawa et al. 2015; Humphrey & Fraser, 2015). The value of mega-events as a stimulus to such developments is evident in the increased inter-urban competition for the right to stage them, particularly in recent years, with sustainable development becoming increasingly integrated into the objectives of their hosting (Cornelissen, Bob & Swart, 2011). According to PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC] (2011) investment in mega-event-related infrastructure can accelerate economic development by as much as three decades.

With a firm reliance on the epistemological approach suggested by Preuss (2014) this study adopts a conceptual approach and delves into the sustainability imperatives of South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, with specific focus on the evaluation of post-event sustainability of stadiums. Grounded within the stakeholder theory and mega-event legacy frameworks, embedded and associated theories such as globalisation, political economy and sustainability will form the bedrock of the discussions while seeking to propagate appropriate conceptual nuances for the development and implementation of sustainable mega-event infrastructure such as stadia in developing regions while taking into cognisance the different perspectives and dimensions of legacy.

**Literature review**

*An overview of sport mega-events, their legacies and associated legacy rhetoric*

Citing Damster and Tassiopoulos (2005) and Smith (2010), Kruger and Heath (2013) assert that mega-events feature prominently on the agendas of potential hosts because of their national and/or international recognition and promises of grandeur, extraordinarily high levels of tourism, media coverage and economic impact. Furthermore, they contend that an increasing amount of research focusing on the ‘legacies’ of such events present the argument that these events do not necessarily culminate in positive long-term benefits for the host destination but also engender costs (Tichaawa et al. 2015; Swart & Bob, 2009; Chalip, 2006; Hall, 2006; Preuss, 2009; Jago, Dwyer, Lipman, Van Lill & Vorster, 2010; Preuss, 2015; Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010; Preuss, 2007; Tichaawa & Bama, 2012).

The concept of mega-events has over the last few decades grown to exponential levels both in terms of size and involvement and is consistently being propagated within tourism discourse and academic research circles. Cornelissen and Swart (2006) assert that, such mega schemes are generally initiated and driven by cadres of societal elites and are mostly aimed at satisfying developmentally engineered goals or ambitions around image projection, competitiveness or growth targets. Understood to be complex affairs with specific economic, political and social corollaries, more and more players are venturing into these enterprises as a result of their purported ability to fast track development as well as a means of achieving strategic corporate objectives (Achu & Swart, 2012; Black, 2007; Cornelissen & Swart, 2006; Tichaawa & Bama, 2012; Weed & Bull, 2012). Competition between host destinations is also often fuelled by the fact that these mega-events permit the host country to move swiftly and determinedly on a wide range of activities and issues that would normally have resulted in endless debates (Manjule, 2013; Bama & Tichaawa, 2015, Bob & Swart, 2010). Pundits
often contend that due to the rigidity in the deadlines, the pace of these activities is often fast tracked and therefore increases the pace of infrastructure development (Manjule, 2013).

In definitions of the concept of mega-events, academics have varied in their approach and scope. Roche (2000, 2003), Hall (2006) and Horne and Manzenreiter (2006) consider mega-events as large scale cultural events, of a dramatic character, mass popular appeal, international significance and a significant media coverage; which according to Cezne (2014) suggests that they acquire social, economic, political and cultural significance by engendering meaningful consequences in the host-city, region or nation where they take place. On their part Coakley and Souza (2013) view mega-events as those events planned within a finite period of time and which are massive in term of their size and scale. An apt and concise definition seems to be that proffered by Preuss (2007) and contained in the explanation of Leinhard and Preuss (2014) whereby they consider mega-events as short-term events of fixed duration which are high profile in nature, and which not only produce a sustainable and measureable economic impact but also generate the intangible benefits of civic pride, boosterism and international image building. This definition places mega-events within the threshold of events which by way of their size, receive global attention and prominence. Preuss (2007) contends that stadiums and venue infrastructure are important objects of attention because they often form the major part of the physical or “hard” legacy associated with these events. Mega-events are as such endowed with certain unique characteristics, which Horne and Manzenreiter (2006) highlight as being “discontinuous, out-of-the-ordinary, international, and exceptionally large”. Such characterisation brings to the fore the need for meticulous planning requirements and effective strategies.

The hosting of sport mega-events is deemed to be an important component of promoting development in relation to economic and social aspects in both the developed and developing contexts (Tichaawa, 2013). As such, these mega-events are often preceded by largescale infrastructural developments and upgrades in order to meet the requirements of the event owners (McKenna & Bob, 2010). Such infrastructural development investments including stadium construction are most often ‘state’ funded. Many authors have therefore highlighted that the impacts of these events are usually both positive and negative in nature (Allmers & Maennig, 2008; Bob & Swart, 2010; Cornelissen et al., 2011; Dolles & Soderman, 2007; Dickson, Benson, & Blackman, 2011; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Kim et al., 2006; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Matheson, 2006; Molloy & Chetty, 2015; Pillay & Bass, 2008; Preuss, 2007; 2012; Swart & Bob, 2012; Tichaawa, 2013; Turco, Tichaawa, Moodley, Munien, Jaggarnath, & Stofberg, 2012).

In most of the research that has been published on the subject, the focus has been on the ex-post impacts on the hosts, with, in some cases a reliance on popularly accepted models such as that proposed by Chappelet and Junod (2006), in which they noted urban, infrastructural, economic, social, and sporting legacies as being the most prevalent. With the plethora of conjectures, contestations and discussions in the realm of mega-event legacy research, a sanguine consideration of the concept of legacy itself beckons. Cezne (2014) contends that while the sport-media-business alliance is a crucial dimension and critical element in the understanding of the scope and scale of mega-events, it is the fact that these mega-events in contemporary rhetoric are purported to provide valuable promotional opportunities for host regions which explains why interest in hosting them has grown exponentially. Discourse on mega-events can hardly be engineered without considering, debating and evaluating their legacies and consequences (Cezne, 2014; Hall, 2006; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Gaffney, 2013; Matheson & Baade, 2004). Cezne (2014) further asserts that due to the high costs involved with preparations towards the hosting of these mega-events and their potential to impact a hosting region, the idea of the legacy, i.e. the developmental benefits generated with the event, now assumes centre stage.
Scholars have over time began to take a more complex view of legacy and place more emphasis on legacy that extends beyond sport, capital, tourism/commercial and economic elements to incorporate social, cultural, psychological, environmental and political factors (Cashman, 2005; Gold & Gold, 2011; Girginov, 2014; Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Chalip, 2014; Nedvetskaya, 2015; Bama & Tichaawa, 2015; VanWyensberghe, 2015; Preuss, 2007, 2015; Silvestre, 2009; Minnaert, 2012; Chappelet, 2012).

However, efforts to envision, frame and implement sport mega-event legacies tend to be fragmented and lack a comprehensive approach due to incomplete selection of types of legacies, a confusion over what legacy means and how it should be evaluated (VanWynsberghe, 2015; Preuss, 2015). Horne (2007:86) puts forward the contestation that “…‘legacies’…are the greatest attraction but also form part of the ‘known unknowns’ of sports mega-events”. Furthermore, Nedvetskaya (2015) insinuates that it is the complexity of the concept as well as the lack of consensus on its nature that form the main tension between academics and practitioners alike which renders the concept of legacy according to Leopkey and Parent (2012:927) an “elusive, problematic and even dangerous word”.

Mega-event legacy is in itself a multi-faceted conceptualisation, which according to Preuss (2006) can be divided into positive and negative categories. Gratton and Preuss (2008) further identifies the three legacy dimensions of planned, positive and degree of quantifiable structure within the legacy planning; however, it unfortunately does not implicitly recognise how intangible elements can have an even greater impact/outcome or what Getz (2008) refers to as the indirect and subtle intangible impacts analogy of legacy. The gaps prevalent in this categorisation by Preuss (2006) warranted for a closer look at the concept of legacy. According to Gratton and Preuss (2008) a substantial amount of the existing research on mega-event legacy focuses on either the economic effects or the infrastructural changes that often happen within host communities. However, Preuss (2015) underlines that such a consideration doesn’t take into account the full scope of what constitutes legacy. A full understanding of this approach according to many scholars suggests that the concept involves a more complex view of legacy which places more emphasis on socio-economic, environmental and political legacies (Bama & Tichaawa, 2015; Chappelet, 2012; Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Minnaert, 2012; Preuss, 2007; Silvestre, 2009). Preuss (2007) defines legacy thus; “irrespective of the time of production and space, legacy is all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself.” In consideration of the broader dimensions of legacy, Gratton and Preuss (2008:1924) developed a legacy cube with three dimensions of legacy as presented in Figure 1.
According to Preuss (2007; 2015) the legacy cube represents a sanguine evaluation of a mega-event and its associated legacies types. In categorising the impacts mega-events into these three spheres of sustainability, the legacy cube serves as a useful guideline for conceptualising and analysing the legacies of events (Nedvetskaya, 2015). Chappelet and Junod (2006) further note that the legacy cube is intrinsically specific in its presentation of the fact that most studies carried out pre-event by bid committees often focus on only one sub-cube, consisting of the planned, positive and tangible legacies; and as such these pre-event studies often tend to be biased as they are usually commissioned with the purpose to justify the hosting of the event which in a majority of instances leads event authorities during the bid stages to emphasise only on this particular sub-cube. Preuss (2013) asserts that the hosting of a mega-event can be associated with a plethora of legacy imperatives. Chappelet (2003) states that typically, the ‘legacies’ often left behind by these mega-event ventures relate to tourism, the economy, infrastructure, sports facilities, the urban environment, the natural environment, socio-cultural aspects and communications; with Grichting (2013) further asserting that mega-event legacies can be further classified into five broad categories, viz; sporting, social, environmental, urban and economic; as a result of the similarities and cross associations with some of the legacy imperatives.

Mega-events and the conceptualisation of their associated sustainability imperatives

Mega-events often come with a buzz and excitement that is usually purported to provide a transformation agenda to cities and host destinations into world stages (Grichting, 2013). Darkey and Horn (2009) assert that the hosting of international mega or major sport events in particular and their associated tourism activities, presents the host country and its region with a unique opportunity to boost economic growth and social development. Grichting (2013) further indicates that mega-events have been known to lay down roadmaps and act as catalysts for how and where urban development takes place by helping to leverage improvements and permanent amenities. Consequently the prominent contestation of many researchers’ discourse revolves around the ability and the penchant for hosting these events in a sustainable manner. With the realisation that the hosting of mega-events cannot continue without an assured roadmap or blueprint to ensure sustainable outcomes came the introduction of the concept of sustainable development as noted by Doudouras and James (2004). Though an ageless and fundamental concept, sustainability in its contemporary discourse is undoubtedly the current management buzzword, based on simple common
sense and as Doudouras and James (2004) stipulate, sustainability simply means acting in a way, which does not undermine one’s ability to sustain one’s activity into the future.

Today, with greater participation by countries in the Global South in the mega-event enterprise, sustainability has become the key application often referred to in mega-event circles, and the concept of legacy is closely aligned with the notion of sustainability; with mega-events sustainability assuming the three pronged approach of the social, economic and environmental measures towards measuring the sustainable nature of such events (Grichting, 2013). Doudouras and James (2004) contend that sustainable development requires an integration of the ecological imperative to stay within the carrying capacity of the planet, the economic imperative to provide an adequate standard of living for all, and the social imperative to develop forms of governance that promote the values people want to live by. Furthermore, they opine that while environmental and social issues were previously ignored in earlier events, they have become central to realising any holistic sustainable developmental agenda and that ultimately today, the purpose of hosting mega-events goes far beyond the sport and the spectacle (Doudouras & James, 2004). It is important that the event maximises positive evolutions and sustainable developments while minimising adverse environmental impacts. In the context of this article though, greater focus will be placed on the socio-economic dimensions of sustainability with regards to stadium infrastructure and the associated imperatives.

According to Chappellet and Junod (2006) urban legacies pertain to those structures that have been constructed for the hosting of a mega-event but that are not directly used for sporting purposes such as upgrades to existing transport infrastructure, buildings and other key points. Host destinations often leverage on their hosting as a catalyst for carrying out investments that would not necessarily be available to them at other times. In the same light, infrastructure legacies comprise of the infrastructure that is put in place for the hosting of an event but that are not directly linked to the sporting aspect of the event. Because of the difficulty to distinguish between such types of legacy outcomes, Baumann and Matheson (2013) contend that such refers to the infrastructure put in place which would often not be necessary if the event was not being hosted. The potential benefits therefore from investments in a city’s infrastructure could outweigh the short-term recognisable outcome and thereby leading to Preuss’s (2007) suggestion that politicians should attempt to use the hosting to leverage the needed investment in infrastructure that would not happen otherwise.

Maennig (2007) further stipulates that the iconic architecture of the stadiums act as a catalyst for urban regeneration within cities, resulting in accelerated development. And in cases where the stadium itself inspires a personal experience of leisure and enjoyment, the ‘feel good’ effect would result in social cohesion and increased local and national pride (Maennig 2007). In his opinion therefore, the development of these iconic stadiums and their precincts is often aimed at promoting social cohesion during and after the event. Thus, the social benefits of infrastructure are important aspects to consider. In the case of South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Bama (2012) notes that the country was earmarked to receive new infrastructure in the form of stadiums which in the most part would be multipurpose facilities that would be available to locals after the event and aid to reducing the infrastructure backlog in terms of event facilities within the country.

According to Preuss (2004), the thematic consideration of mega-events as drivers of urban transformation is a contemporary one, and cities such as Barcelona, Manchester, London, Rio de Janeiro, and Beijing have been transformed through hosting international sport events. Furthermore, he asserts that the activities needed for the preparation and hosting of these mega-events are often on such a scale that it enables the hosting of the event to act as a catalyst for urban redevelopment, in the process enabling changes which might normally take several decades to complete (Preuss, 2004). Such redevelopment and transformation
strategies often leads governments and cities to commit massive fiscal resources to facilitate such processes (Swart & Bob, 2012). These massive investments of public resources in the planning processes according to Tichaawa (2015) are often justified on the basis of the multitude of positive impacts that the event is likely to generate, including economic spin-offs, destination profiling and re-positioning, creating spaces for social interaction and the substantial symbolic meaning they portend. In the context of developing economies, where the majority of the population are usually impoverished and unemployed such a situation in the eyes of critics often exacerbates the already dire conditions of the communities (Tichaawa & Bama, 2012). Critics of these ventures are always quick to suggest that the investments committed to these ventures could have been put to better use because their sustainability is most often questionable and not guaranteed (Bond & Cottle, 2010; Molloy & Chetty, 2015).

Cezne (2014) citing Hall (2006) stipulates that the infrastructure requirements needed for the hosting of such mega-events are usually perceived to be integral to the stimulation of further economic development, therefore contributing to the business vitality of the host city and showcasing the region’s ability to compete in a globalised market. According to Horne and Manzenreiter (2006) mega-events also serve as generators of economic and social development and, among other things, have the potential to boost tourism, create employment and improve local infrastructure while simultaneously reducing social exclusion and crime. Coakley and Souza (2013:584) concur with this notion by indicating that when combined together, the traditional sport-for-good rhetoric and a sport-for-development rhetoric are often employed by governments in order to justify the spending of public money as “an investment that will foster economic development that will offset their costs”. A broad spectrum of mega-event legacy scholars further contend that a varied set of intangible legacies are linked to the narratives related to these mega-events such as: the host’s increasing power and prestige, social cohesion, optimism towards the future and sense of pride among citizens (Braathen, Mascarenhas & Sorboe, 2014; Darnell, 2012; Curi Knijnik & Mascarenhas, 2011; Tavares, 2011). Conversely, there is the school of thought which opines that when talking of legacy and development in the context of sport mega-events, “which social groups actually benefit, which are excluded, and what scope is there for contestation of these developments, are three important questions that are often ignored” (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006:8; Gibson, 2012).

Discussions and contestations on mega-events and infrastructure legacies

Cezne (2014) contends that a historical review on mega-events highlights how they have for long managed to transmit powerful messages, playing a multitude of both explicit and implicit roles. Considered as crucial means for showcasing industrial progress and modern societies, the author, citing Hall (2006) highlights the significance of sports mega-events for urban and regional growth and place competition. Consequently, Cezne (2014) notes that the global reach of these events has set the stage for an articulation of partnerships involving sport governing bodies, the communication industry and different business sectors. Planning for and ultimately hosting these events relies on considerable public, private investments involving often protracted preparation processes.

According to Hall (2006) the infrastructure requirements for such events are perceived to be integral to stimulation of further economic development, thereby contributing to business vitality and showcasing the host’s ability to compete in a globalised market. Coakley and Souza (2013:580) note that research “shows that neither legacies nor positive developmental outcomes occur automatically for the host of mega-events”. Furthermore, they postulate the argument that delusions and illusions about the sport-for-development rhetoric won’t lead to legacies and development. Such outcomes should thus be seen as grounded in political processes, starting with the bid preparation and lasting until the aftermath of a sports mega-
event. Apt examples in their opinion reside in the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, whereby most stadiums they claim have until now consistently remained empty and underutilised since the conclusion of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, despite huge investments towards their construction and the additional maintenance costs required thereafter, due to a lack of planning to make them useful to local communities (Coakley & Souza, 2013). To this end disturbing figures such as those reported by Bond and Cottle (2010) highlighted as follows;

FIFA requires host countries to provide at least eight modernised stadia with a seating capacity of between 40,000 and 60,000. In 1998 France hosted the event at a cost of $700m for stadia construction. In 2002 South Korea and Japan are said to have spent $2bn and $4bn respectively on stadia while in Germany the stadia cost only $2.2bn. South Africa has however, spent ($2.5bn) on the World Cup stadia.

Bearing this in mind, Horne and Manzenreiter (2006:10) are of the opinion that, in the case of sport mega-events, there is a common practice for potential hosts of these mega-events during the bid preparation and planning stages to “underestimate costs, overestimate revenues, underestimate environmental impacts and over-value economic development effects”. This paper therefore delves into the theoretical underpinnings that accompany such discourse in the hope of laying down a framework of guidelines to be used to further investigate the sustainability of the event infrastructure that have been left for South Africa after the 2010 FIFA World Cup so as to provide countries in the Global South with sustainability precepts which could be applied in preparations to host such mega-events; especially in consideration of the challenges that have been highlighted in the media in the light of similar events that have been hosted by countries in the Global South such as the 2002 FIFA World Cup that was co-hosted by South Korea and Japan, Brazil's hosting of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and their involvements in future ventures such as Brazil's preparations for the 2016 Olympic Games, and even more so, when reminded of the fact that the City of Durban is in preparations to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The 2010 FIFA World Cup and stadium sustainability contestations

Countries in developing and transition economies, have in recent decades progressively chosen to pursue the hosting of high-profile sport events as potential growth strategies, as well as to precipitate development and achieve their strategic corporate objectives (Bob & Swart, 2010; Tichaawa, 2013; Bama & Tichaawa, 2015; Emery, 2002; Weed & Bull, 2012). Robbins (2012) asserts that such hosting continues raising new challenges as to how they are organised and what impacts they might have. FIFA in May of 2004 awarded the rights to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup to South Africa, a decision that was greeted with euphoria throughout South Africa and indeed the African continent (Nkemngu, 2012). Thereafter the country became engulfed in preparations for the successful staging of the event (Donaldson & Ferreira, 2007), and which, it was hoped, would leave a lasting legacy for South Africa, especially its host communities (South Africa, 2007). Nine cities were earmarked to host games during the event and by so doing; ten stadiums (five brand new and five renovated), state-of-the-art multi-purpose stadiums were envisaged. The five upgraded stadiums are the Royal Bafokeng Stadium in Rustenburg, Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein, Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria; Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg and Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg. The five new facilities include the Mbombela Stadium in Nelspruit, the Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane, the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban, the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium in Port Elizabeth and the Cape Town Stadium in Cape Town (FIFA, 2010b).

Amidst all the preparations towards successfully hosting the event, huge contestations in media circles were rife, with certain media quarters viewing the investments (especially in stadium infrastructure) as wasteful, labelling them as white elephants. For example, in the
case of the Cape Town Stadium, Leiman and Wienburg (2007) asserted that the stadium would be unsustainable, and a gross waste of economic resources, which should have been diverted to other more sustainable projects and socio-economic development issues, such as poverty alleviation and the fight against the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The stadiums and other facilities were completed and the event successfully hosted between the 11 June and 11 July of 2010, with then president of FIFA, Mr. Sepp Blatter giving South Africa a summa cum laude (90% success rate) scorecard on hosting the event successfully (Maennig & Du Plessis, 2011).

The long-term sustainability of sport mega-events is often closely adjudged and connected to the subsequent use of event infrastructure especially the stadiums. The issue is especially relevant to the 2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums’ context. Post the 2010 FIFA World Cup event, these mega projects or mega structures have been touted in certain quarters as unsustainable and even dubbed as “white elephants” (Cottle, 2010). For example, it is reported that the Nelson Mandela Stadium in Port Elizabeth is required to generate revenues in excess of R20 million per annum in order to be self-sufficient and not become a burden on local tax payers (Menezes, 2010); the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban requires an estimated R30 million in annual costs (Robbins, 2012), while the highest burden however is anticipated to be the Cape Town Stadium whose management consortium SAIL / Stade de France relinquished their rights to manage the stadium indicating that it would cost about R46.5 million in annual maintenance costs (Bond & Cottle, 2011). However, the City of Cape Town reported in 2013 that for the 2012/2013 fiscal year the running costs were almost R48m, but included R26m for “depreciation”, bringing the annual actual “expense” therefore to about R22m for the year in question (International Online News [IOL], 2013). Furthermore, the Mail and Guardian (2013) highlighted that Durban’s Moses Mabhida Stadium made a reported loss of R34.6 million in 2013 and the Cape Town Stadium makes a loss of about R40 million each year.

With such widespread contestations, the big question would be, if developing economies as exemplified get minimal or negligible benefits from their hosting of these mega-events while incurring such massive debt footprints; should they continue to bid to host these mega-events, and if so, what justifications do they put forward, especially in the light of the massive fiscal commitments often required for planning these mega projects, which in the opinion of critics should be channelled to other projects of greater import to the local communities (Cottle, 2010), a scenario which has also been termed the “winner's curse” by Andreff (2012:45) whereby a host community or region, becomes financially worse off as a result of winning the bid and hosting the mega-event. Furthermore, when considered in the backdrop of the information received from other developing countries such as South Korea who in the aftermath of the 2002 FIFA World were required to demolish certain stadiums due to their unsustainability (Saayman, 2008; Cottle, 2010) and with early indications from Brazil highlighting the same trends of unsustainable stadium management (Cezne, 2014), it hugely beckons towards strategic and focussed reconsiderations for developing economies vying for the rights to become recognised as global citizens of stature through bidding for and hosting of sport mega-events (Humphrey & Fraser, 2015).

In addition, one would need to look no further than the 2010 FIFA World to garner the views from media rhetoric and other scholars with regards to the huge fiscal commitments usually spent on preparations for these mega-events especially in building of stadiums and other event-related infrastructure (Humphrey & Fraser, 2015; Schoonbee & Brümmer, 2009; Brümmer, 2010; Mail & Guardian, 2013). With specific reference to the Cape Town Stadium, the government spent R4.5 billion in the completion of the edifice and as previously highlighted, since the end of the event in 2010, it was estimated that maintenance costs for the stadium will cost the tax payer about R46.5 million per annum (Cottle, 2010; Bond & Cottle, 2010). Understandably then when media rhetoric tends to consider such investments
as a waste of tax payer money especially in the light of the fact that the stadium itself is purportedly unable to generate such income to sustainably function as previously highlighted.

Concluding remarks

Molloy and Chetty (2015) assert in concurrence with Preuss (2007) that stadiums and venue infrastructure more generally are important objects of attention because they often form the major part of the physical legacy and account for a major proportion of the costs of hosting mega-events. Furthermore, Black (2007), and Cornelissen (2004) noted the potential of such a mega-event to act as a vehicle of legitimisation, a civic and national booster, as well as a signaller of a change of direction, indicating that South Africa has developed into a very strong and influential global player within the domain. In assessing the legacy of event infrastructure such as stadia, Tichaawa (2013) citing Bob and Kassens-Noor (2012) and Preuss (2013) notes that there is a need to sustain post-mega-event legacies for a significantly longer period of time, thereby necessitating that such legacy effects should be evaluated for at least a period of over 20 years. Given that the FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa in only in its sixth anniversary (2016), isn’t it therefore premature to conclude that infrastructure that was prepared for, and utilised during the event have become unsustainable? Bob and Swart (2010) further highlight that very few events have been evaluated for this period of time and therefore it is unclear whether long-lasting legacies can be associated with sport events. The intention of this paper has been to contribute towards such legacy studies by setting the context for more studies aimed at understanding the nuances of infrastructure/ stadium development in emerging economies in order to develop guidelines that can be used for future planning of such events in developing regions.

Furthermore, cognisance must be borne of the contention; veritable as it is, that prior to the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, many researchers indicated the need for using the event to close the infrastructural backlog the country was facing in terms of the supply of stadium infrastructure of the stature that could be utilised towards the further development of sport in its different formats especially considering that most of the facilities constructed or renovated for the 2010 FIFA World Cup are multi-purpose facilities (Tichaawa & Bama, 2012; Bob & Swart 2009). To this end, Agha (2013) contends that sport stadia are seen to be economic catalysts and therefore, should theoretically lead to positive economic impacts for the local economy. Given the time, and in consideration that the Premier Soccer League (PSL) is still in its infancy, there is still the potential in the near future, given the fact that certain of the teams (such as Ajax Cape Town adopting the Cape Town Stadium, Chippa United adopting the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates using the FNB Stadium etc.) in these leagues already utilising these facilities for their home and away venues. This bodes well for the future as growth in the structures of these sport teams and more the attraction of more media sponsorships will see the attractiveness of the league grow and adoption of more of these venues which lends credit to the view that over time, these stadiums may become sustainable. In addition these facilities have been known to host other types of activities as well such as the Cape Town Stadium hosting multiple concerts in the years following the end of the 2010 FIFA World Cup (Tichaawa & Bama, 2012). However, beyond the scope of this paper there are nuances that most stadiums around the world are unsustainable if considered purely in the context of the hosting of sport events, but where they leverage their sustainability is often on commercialisation opportunities in and around the stadiums. The Amsterdam Arena in Holland provides a perfect example of how commercialisation opportunities have been leveraged in order to render the stadium and its related infrastructure sustainable by incorporating entertainment facilities and a shopping complex, which includes a large cinema and two of Holland’s principal concert halls (Schrama, 2013). The challenges related to the sustainable management of 2010 FIFA World Cup stadiums such as the Cape Town Stadium seems to reflect a neglect of strategic thinking in the development of strategic plans in the run up to the 2010 event.
To remain relevant and be recognised as a worthy player within the global economy and political landscape in this era of globalisation the participation of countries in the Global South over the past few decades has been prominent. This is also true regarding their involvement in the mega-event enterprise (Cornelissen & Swart, 2006). As such, developing economies in a quest for growth, recognition and expansion strategies have been an integral component in mega-event bid agendas in contemporary times. However, in view of consistent reporting by both academics and media circles that these involvements rarely ever portend and positive outcomes for the countries of the Global South, there is now a beckoning to the question of whether developing nations should pursue alternative strategies in terms of infrastructure development agendas for these mega-events. Should the event owners perhaps consider allowing countries in developing regions the options of building a fewer number of stadiums? Should the stadium sizes be reviewed? Had South Korea built five less stadiums in preparations for the 2002 FIFA World Cup, the immense costs of demolition spent after the events would maybe have been saved the country’s treasury and tax payer. In the event of reducing the number of stadiums, can FIFA host the games over longer period of time to allow for the fewer venues to be implemented effectively?

Existing literature brings to the fore the conclusion that legacies are likely to be multifaceted and views on legacies complex and contested (Whitson et al., 2006). Bob and Swart (2010) citing Cornelissen (2004) contend that much of the research in the area of large-scale sporting events is structured around the economic, social and political circumstances of the developed world and as a result cannot be mirrored or applied to the developing context. Additionally, they assert that although African countries have either bid to host or hosted such events in recent times, there is still a lack of research and analysis of mega-events in the context of developing countries, which therefore in the context of the current article proposes a strategic objective to carry out further research into this phenomenon. Accordingly, Bob and Swart (2010:77) note that,

the 2010 FIFA World Cup was never about the hosting of a tournament, but rather about building a legacy for the country and the continent - a legacy in terms of, amongst others, infrastructure development, economic growth, skills development, job creation, nation building and brand awareness.

Furthermore, and purely based on the premise that a plethora of the existing information in the field of sport tourism and mega-event legacy research has been conducted in the developed context, this research it is hoped lays the framework for further in-depth investigations of an empirical nature of mega-event legacy contestations in the Global South. In this light this article stems from theoretical underpinnings born out of another study currently underway which seeks to empirically investigate the sustainability imperatives linked to South Africa’s World Cup stadiums. The study in perspective seeks to provide an indication of the infrastructure related sustainability challenges highlighted in the run up to the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, and to consider how they might inform both local and international stakeholders in planning for future events. Achieving the aims of the study and using selected stadia as case studies the investigations will focus on the following research objectives:

- examining the infrastructural legacy expectations of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup;
- assessing and evaluating South Africa’s ability to derive sustainable infrastructural legacy benefits from the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup;
- evaluating the infrastructure legacy implications of South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World; and,
proposing a framework of guidelines and recommendations and for implementation based on research findings aimed at promoting sustainable mega-event infrastructure development for future events particularly in developing economies.

Preuss (2007, 2015) in concurrence with Bob and Swart (2010) and Bob and Kassens-Noor (2012) note that legacy impacts of mega-events need to be evaluated over a considerable period of at least 20 years. Furthermore, Preuss (2013, 2015) also highlight that it is important to identify the positive legacies of an event so as to capitalise on it while at the same time identifying the negative legacies and avoiding them if countries are to fully leverage on the legacy imperatives that mega-events portend. This article hopes to have impinged on this further and as such advanced the research agenda with regards to legacy imperatives of mega-events in the developing context.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to University of Johannesburg for research funding.

References


Braathen, E., Mascarenhas, G., & Sørbøe, C. M. (2014). Cities of exception: The role of mega sports events in the BRICs countries, with particular focus on Brazil before the FIFA 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics. World Tensions: Critical perspectives on BRICS.


