Journal of Sport & Tourism

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjto20

Theorising the Relationship between Major Sport Events and Social Sustainability

Andrew Smith

a University of Westminster, UK
Published online: 01 Dec 2010.

To cite this article: Andrew Smith (2009) Theorising the Relationship between Major Sport Events and Social Sustainability, Journal of Sport & Tourism, 14:2-3, 109-120, DOI: 10.1080/14775080902965033

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14775080902965033

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions
Theorising the Relationship between Major Sport Events and Social Sustainability

Andrew Smith

The triple-bottom line of economic efficiency, environmental integrity and social equity is meant to be used to measure progress towards sustainable development. As major sport events are now used as part of public policy, these events and their legacies have been subjected to related analysis. However, as with more general evaluations, the scrutiny of major events has tended to neglect the social dimension. Major events projects are often justified with reference to their role in addressing urban inequity and promoting collective identities, whilst also criticised for their questionable ethics. This suggests more attention to social sustainability is urgently required. In this paper, the aim is to assess whether major sport events meet the social needs of present and future generations. The intention is not merely to reveal the social outcomes resulting from previous events, but to review theoretical perspectives through which those effects can be understood. This facilitates understanding of why certain effects occur, rather than merely if they occur.

Keywords: Mega-events; Cities; Regeneration; Social Theory; Community; Equity

Introduction

Many host cities now use rhetoric associated with ‘sustainable development’ or ‘sustainable regeneration’ to justify investments in major sport events. These events are defined as those of international significance deemed capable of realising media coverage and economic development for the host city. Examples include international multi-sport events such as the Olympic, Commonwealth, Asian and Pan-American Games, as well as the world championships of popular sports. The physical rehabilitation of sites and the potential for new inward investment associated with such events is something that other literature has explored in depth. However, although several authors have discussed the social impacts of events (Chalip, 2006; Fredline et al.,...
2003; Misener & Mason, 2006), little attention has been devoted to their social sustainability. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to assess the relationship between major sport events and social sustainability in host cities. The intention is not merely to reveal the social outcomes resulting from previous events, but to highlight theoretical perspectives through which those effects can be understood. This should facilitate understanding of why effects occur, rather than merely if they occur. The focus is major sport events that cities stage on a one-off basis, in particular the Summer Olympic Games. The Olympics is used as a key reference point not merely because it is the world’s most significant sport event, but because its rites and rituals have been used as the template for other sport events (Roche, 2000). The tourism dimension is not explicitly discussed here, but implicitly acknowledged as a key feature, justification and outcome of the type of sport events outlined above. This is in keeping with Deery et al.’s (2004) controversial conclusion that sport tourism is sport event tourism.

Social needs are recognised as the least explored element of Brundtland’s widely accepted definition of sustainable development (UNCED, 1987). This is unlikely to change in the near future as the world’s attention becomes fixed on economic problems and climate change. Arguably, isolating its social dimension challenges the integrity of the holistic concept of sustainable development. This is done here merely for the sake of simplicity and to help rectify the deficient attention that this aspect has received in the literature. It is not demonstrative of any attempt to denigrate, or deny links with, the other key aspects of sustainable development (environmental integrity and economic efficiency). In most general texts on sustainable development, the social needs of present and future generations are discussed in terms of equity, ethics and rights. Butler (1998) suggest that equity and ethics are the only elements of the sustainable development discourse that differentiate it from more established movements advocating managed growth – such as economic conservatism. As such, matters of equity and ethics remain less understood and less widely accepted. Here, equity is regarded as denoting fairness – social justice and equal access to opportunities – whilst ethics refers to the conduct required to promote human welfare. With regard to rights, recent government policy tends to prefer the rhetoric of citizens’ own responsibilities, rather than to risk raising expectancy about fundamental ‘rights’. Beyond international agreements such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights and national legislation such as the UK’s Humans Rights Act, the rights of human beings are usually referred to as a function of the right to participate in decision making. Therefore, the vision of a self-sustaining urban community is one where people play a key role in its planning, design and stewardship (Raco, 2005). Initiatives to empower people in this way can be interpreted as ethical, equitable and therefore socially sustainable; but more cynical observers see them in conjunction with the objectives of neo-liberal governments – who want communities to sustain themselves so they are not a burden (Raco, 2005). This is evident in the UK Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan, which aims to create communities that can withstand and adapt to the changing demands of modern life (ODPM, 2003).
Superficially, it would seem that short-lived, one-off sport events have little to offer the long-term sustainability of urban communities. Vanity projects conceived as monuments to political regimes (e.g. Montreal’s 1976 Olympic Games) seemingly epitomise unsustainable development, as their financial legacy compromises the ability of host communities to meet their own needs. But recent literature on major events identifies their potential to generate a range of positive social effects including: reinforcing collective identities; uniting people; improving self esteem; increasing civic pride; raising awareness of disability; inspiring children; providing experience of work; encouraging volunteering, increasing participation in sport; and promoting wellbeing/healthy living (Misener & Mason, 2006; Smith & Fox, 2007; Atkinson et al., 2008; Kellett, 2008). Nevertheless, whilst major sport events may generate positive social effects, there is little evidence to indicate whether this is the case. Many existing studies merely compromise reviews of potential social effects, including those which attempt to value them using contingent valuation methods (Atkinson et al., 2008). Furthermore, the sustainability of these effects is debatable. Sustainable development requires long-term benefits that are distributed equitably, and on both these criteria the social effects of major events are questionable. Critical accounts also accuse events of causing negative social outcomes that undermine any positive effects levered. These effects may also be inequitably distributed. The aim of this paper is to review these arguments by analysing various theories that help us to understand the social sustainability of events. Although the discussion focuses on sport events, many of the ideas are applicable to other major events with comparable traits; i.e. high profile, temporally constrained occasions involving large numbers of external participants/spectators and the rapid construction of new venues in a concentrated area.

**Events as Agents of Neo-liberalism, as Spectacles and as Forms of Social Control**

There are a number of theoretical perspectives that can be used to help understand the role of major events in achieving social sustainability. These range from broad perspectives, such as the supposed shift from a modern to a post-modern society (Hiller, 2006), to more specialist explanations for the role major events play in localised social change. Within critical theory, major sport events are usually deemed to be representative of a prevailing neo-liberal ideology in which cities are forced to compete with each other for investment. From this perspective, major events are seen as phenomena aimed at impressing outside interests, whilst placating residents via the provision of entertaining distractions. Events act as tools of hegemonic power that shift attention away from everyday social needs and cover up ‘real’ social problems. In this sense, major events are said to act as ‘smokescreens’ or ‘carnival masks’ (Harvey, 1989a), behind which the inherent social unsustainability of some urban communities can be hidden. Those subscribing to this viewpoint would probably dismiss the coalescing effect that events can have on communities as merely pacification. And although events may create and sustain a collective identity, this may be part of a deliberate attempt to undermine existing identities, particularly those that threaten the interests of political and business elites (Waitt, 2004). Accordingly,
Olds (1998) sees the social unity created by events as artificial, especially if it is used to push through urban (re)development which would not normally be accepted. The views expressed above are typical of those who theorise events as ‘spectacles’. This term was used most famously by Debord (1994) who wanted to convey the way everyday life was being reduced from active participation to passive consumerism. In this light, the oft-cited ‘identity making’ role of events could be seen as one that is more related to consumption – with the commercial imperative and associated sponsorship encouraging people to see themselves as consumers or aligned to a certain brand. Coalter (1998) answers these criticisms by arguing that even if events are commercially orientated, they can still provide satisfying forms of social membership and identity. But major sport events are perhaps demonstrative of the way in which public expressions of collective joy have been turned into forms of commercial leisure, consumption and entertainment. According to some, the residual effect is the de-politicisation and massification of people who become merely passive consumers of imagery. This is a slightly different take on Bakhtin’s (1984) conception of the carnivalesque, in which public events are permitted to allow temporary and controlled outpourings of festivity, thus reducing the likelihood of demands for more comprehensive social transformations. However, both theories see events as obstacles to, rather than catalysts for, more progressive social relations.

As well as pacifying citizens, major events are viewed in a more sinister fashion by those commentators who see them as key elements of ‘the revanchist city’. This radical viewpoint sees events not only as ways of placating the masses, but as forces with which to suppress and control those not deemed to be ‘the right sort of people’. This is explicitly acknowledged by Tufts (2004, p. 5) who states that the ‘Olympics are also very much implicated in the revanchist city, playing a crucial role not only in processes of accumulation, but also the social control of marginalised groups’. This provides a darker version of the commonly held view that when events are used to restructure cities, it is usually the most disadvantaged that usually bear the brunt of any punitive costs. Olds (1998, p. 5) interprets major events in this manner, seeing them primarily as catalysts for long-term redevelopment planning with certain groups paying the costs in terms of ‘displacement, negative health effects, the breaking of social networks and the loss of affordable housing’. In this sense, events may exacerbate urban social divisions, rather than heal them. The potential for negative social consequences is now so well recognised that those representing the rights of citizens are now seeking related assurances before events are even awarded to host cities. Fearing negative consequences if Toronto’s bid for the 2008 Olympic Games was successful, local labour organisations insisted on guarantees of affordable housing provision, protection against eviction and the guarantees of civil rights for the poor and homeless before any support was given (Tufts, 2004). Newman’s (1999) research into Atlanta’s Olympic Games provides further justification for concerns about the effects of events on vulnerable residents. He found that low-income residents (most of whom were black) largely regarded the Games as another excuse for business leaders to reshape the city. These were the citizens most disrupted by the preparations for the Games and, rather than enhanced social sustainability, the outcome was a ‘legacy of distrust’. These perspectives view major
sport events as convenient excuses to force major changes upon urban residents, with opponents derided as conservative, myopic or even unpatriotic.

Research suggesting the most disadvantaged are affected most negatively by events seriously challenges their social sustainability. These findings contradict a key message in rhetoric surrounding major sport events – which often refers to benefits for disadvantaged people. Waitt’s (2003) study of the Sydney Games is one of the few that actually compares the social impacts of events to the beneficiaries’ socio-economic position. Waitt’s (2003, p. 212) research revealed that – contrary to expectations of the organisers – ‘it is not the most socio-economically disadvantaged who are most enthusiastic about the event’ as ‘no statistical difference in levels of enthusiasm could be found when the sample was differentiated by surrogate measures of class’ (education, occupation, income). However, it should be noted that ethnic minority groups were more enthusiastic – perhaps encouraged by the inherent internationalism of the event. Engaging individuals from ethnic minorities was also a positive outcome of the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne (Kellett et al., 2008). But these effects were levered by specific initiatives pursued in parallel with the Games. Unfortunately, it seems that where no efforts are made to direct effects, they may gravitate to those who least need them. Evidence suggests that areas already exhibiting high social capital and a strong sense of community are more likely to benefit from major events. For example, research into the 2002 Winter Olympics concluded that ‘residents who expressed a high level of attachment to their communities are more likely to view hosting a mega event as beneficial’ (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006, p. 618). This suggests that, rather than being an outcome of events, social capital is an important prerequisite that influences who benefits. More conventional forms of capital may also be required to unlock social development opportunities. Those able to access events, and the social benefits that come from attendance, are obviously more likely to view them positively. If public funds are used this represents a significant opportunity cost for those excluded. As Tranter & Keefe (2004, p. 182) remind us, adopting an event strategy ‘typically marginalises significant sections of society that are not interested in the events or lack the financial means to experience them’.

Some of the negative social effects of major events can also be understood via reference to theories regarding the privatisation of public space, the rise of entrepreneurial urban governance and the related ‘rolling-back’ of the state. Whilst those who conceive major events as ‘spectacles’ see them as exemplifying the privatization of culture, events also involve privatisation of public space and public facilities. For example, due to the upgrading of various facilities to stage Sydney’s Olympic events, local people experienced reduced access to, and control of, community facilities (Owen, 2002). Similar effects were felt in Sheffield, UK, where local swimming pools were closed to fund high-spec facilities for the 1991 World Student Games (Foley, 1991). Even when community access is retained, it can be prohibitively expensive. This is especially true, when, as is often the case, these facilities are privatised once a major event has been staged. Broudehoux (2007) thinks this is currently happening in Beijing. A related negative social outcome is the redistribution of funding from social programmes to allow
event projects to be funded. For example, the development of Homebush Olympic Park for the Sydney Olympic Games meant that Auburn Local Government Authority was required to transfer rateable land to an adjacent council in exchange for land comprising part of the Park. The budget shortfall that this created meant that some local community and youth services were suspended (Owen, 2002). Shifting local government priorities from reliable sources of income and the provision of social services to speculative event projects provides a good example of what Harvey (1989b) terms the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism in urban governance.

An alternative to seeing major events as agents of neo-liberalism and its associated traits (commercialisation, entrepreneurialism, privatisation), is to view major events as challenges to this dominant ideology. Accordingly, a different assessment of the role of events in a neo-liberal world is provided by Black (2008, p. 471) who sees bids for major sport events as ‘one of a relatively small number of positive, interventionist levers that remains’ for the public sector in the neo-liberal era. Hence, events may yield more influence for democratically elected governments, thus contributing to social sustainability. Whilst this may appear positive, pessimists would argue that if major events are now coveted by governments as ways to exert authority over their territories, this merely highlights how far the state has been ‘rolled back’. Others see events as useful ways of mobilising visible challenges to dominant ideologies, as evidenced by the protests that accompanied the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. Gotham (2005, p. 235) suggests that local actors can use major events for ‘positive and progressive ends’ by launching a radical critique that exposes class and racial inequality. A somewhat paradoxical positive effect of major events is that they usually create so much opposition that this could build relationships within communities. Where events inspire the formation of local social networks to challenge organisers, they could be said to be increasing social capital.

Events as Sources of Hope, Symbols of Change and Prototypes for a New Way of Living

As well as broad theoretical perspectives, other authors provide nuanced ways of understanding the powerful social effects of major events. Interestingly many of these theories provide a basis for explaining some of the positive social effects of events. Anderson & Holden (2008) identify that it is not necessarily the event itself which provides the stimulus for noted effects such as increased pride, confidence and optimism amongst a host cities’ residents, but the anticipation of the event. Positive social effects are more likely during an event’s ‘pregnancy’, than its aftermath as feelings of anticlimax may occur post-event. Cashman (2006 – in a book tellingly entitled The Bitter-Sweet Awakening) suggests that Barcelona and Sydney both struggled in the post-Games period despite their Olympics being revered as the most successful of the modern era. This suggests we should see major sport events less as events, and more as advent. The discourse of regeneration has always been dominated by vague promises about a new future, yet to arrive. The result is hope, and it is from this feeling that many of the supposed intangible benefits of major
sport events derive. Alongside highlighting the importance of advent, Anderson and Holden’s analysis is useful in that it emphasises the role of an event in providing a crystallising point for a range of contemporary developments, future projects and vague promises. This can allow people to feel that they have moved away from a past era, which may have been dominated by social problems. Of course, the danger of relying on hope is the inevitability of disappointment.

The conception of events as strategic symbols to communicate a paradigmatic shift towards a new era has close links to Jansson’s (2005) mode of understanding the role of major events. Although Jansson’s analysis is dedicated to a major housing fair (in Malmo, Sweden), his ideas are applicable to the social effects of major sport events.

Jansson suggests that Goffman’s (1967) concept of fatefulness provides a useful tool for understanding the often extraordinary influence of major events. He suggests that these public spectacles can both produce, and act as a response to, fateful moments in a city’s development. This is because, as well as providing a potent symbol of renewal, they provide a turbulent point of ‘maximum visibility’. This interpretation is reinforced by Leeds’ (2008, p. 476) justification for major events; ‘there is no substitute for a rigid deadline combined with extensive public exposure of the results.’ Events can communicate to residents that an important threshold has been reached, from which there is no turning back. And because events are often used in conjunction with other new developments in cities, they provide both a stimulus for, and visible demonstration of, a new direction for a city. This may make urban residents feel that the event is a fateful moment in their lives, as well as in the life of the city. As Jansson (2005) states, this may encourage social renewal, as people feel empowered to start afresh and feel part of the transformation of their city. Of course, this argument could also be reversed to argue the opposite. It is this same sense of fatefulness attached to events that can be used to push through harmful changes that would otherwise be blocked. And if the event is unsuccessful the new era becomes as tainted as the past from which a city may be trying to escape.

A final theoretical perspective that sheds light on potentially positive effects is that of (mild) environmental determinism. In the urban literature on social sustainability, the emphasis tends to be more on the qualities of the physical environment, rather than on the rights of urban dwellers. This assumes social sustainability can result from good urban design. Social identities can be established/reinforced/expressed through the provision of changes to the fabric of urban areas that host events. Although ‘flagship’ developments often associated with events are sometimes dismissed as merely being for the attention of outsiders, this is not necessarily the case. Major events usually bequeath public spaces in which communities can literally come together. Examples include temporary spaces, for instance the fanzones that have appeared at recent international football tournaments, or permanent legacies such as Calgary’s well-used Olympic Plaza, built to host the medal ceremonies at the 1988 Winter Games (Hiller, 2006).

Providing new environments to engineer social sustainability is also linked to events in that there is a noted historical tendency for major events to promote experimental models of urbanism. Since its reintroduction in 1896, the Olympic Games has
provided cities with an opportunity to establish prototype communities. This trend can be traced back to Pierre de Coubertin's desire to create a modern version of Olympia in which to host the Games. Coubertin stated that he wanted a modern Olympia to be: a grandiose and dignified ensemble; which was designed in relation to its role; which fitted in with the surrounding area; and which was neither too concentrated nor too diffuse (Liao & Pitts, 2006). These criteria for a new urban area seemingly influenced the design of subsequent Olympic quarters and Olympic zones, some of which now remain as successful residential areas (e.g. in Moscow, Munich, Helsinki). And Liao & Pitts (2006) feel that Coubertin's urban agenda had parallels with other ideas for social utopias, including Fourier’s phalanstere; a cluster of buildings in which people work together for mutual benefit.

Athletes’ accommodation provides the most obvious opportunity for experimental urban design that promotes social sustainability. The example that has been analysed most extensively is the Olympic Village in Barcelona, constructed for the 1992 Games. Both Hemphill et al. (2004) and Valera & Guardia (2002) have attempted to assess the sustainability of this development. Although these analyses purport to measure its sustainable credentials generally, both pay commendable attention to the social dimension. Valera & Guardia (2002) conclude that the neighbourhood has gained a distinctive image amongst its residents and that this was derived from the (event-related) publicity used to promote it as a residential area. So the area fulfils one criteria of social sustainability: it has a strong sense of place. This highlights a key advantage of events communities: it may be easier forge an identity for new developments, enhancing their social sustainability. Barcelona’s Olympic Village was planned to encourage social interaction; it was organised in blocks, with inner courtyards and gardens for public use. However, the onerous work commitments of affluent residents have contributed to somewhat distant relations between neighbours (Valera & Guardia, 2002). Although the community may not be cohesive, the opportunities, facilities and services provided for residents contribute to Hemphill et al.’s (2004, p. 770) conclusion that Barcelona’s Olympic Village ‘displays a high degree of adherence to sustainability principles’. Thus, it provides a socially sustainable community for those lucky enough to live there, but also a high profile model for future developments to emulate.

Although major events may assist social sustainability by promoting innovative urban design, or by bequeathing a new community to a city, there are several problems noted with communities built as part of events. An important aspect of social sustainability is equity. This means allowing people from different backgrounds to access opportunities provided by events. Unfortunately, building innovative self-contained communities tends to provide high profile examples of ‘Master Planned Communities’ which seem to attract people who want to put distance between themselves and the urban poor (Costley, 2006). This social inequity of housing legacies results in part from requirements of event organisers for high standards and segregated spaces. Cape Town’s bid for the 2004 Olympic Games included a commendable social orientation, but the city soon realised that delivering a sustainable housing legacy would be very difficult. High standards set by the International Olympic Committee meant that construction costs would have made the new housing more costly.
than needy residents could afford (Hiller, 2000). This, plus the related motivation to use events as urban prototypes, often produces ‘high spec’ and thus high priced residences. There are also other reasons why event planning often fails to deliver a sustainable mix of different housing. For example, the requirement in many event budgets for the sale of redeveloped land to help pay for expensive events means there is a disincentive to use such initiatives to provide low-income housing or mixed developments. This was one failing of Barcelona’s Olympic Village. Originally, the plan was to use this as social housing, but the escalating costs of staging the Games meant that their private sale proved too tempting for municipal authorities.

Conclusions

Much of the prior analysis questions the social sustainability of major sport events. It seems that many major sport events have made a negative contribution to the social sustainability of host communities. This has little to do with their sporting qualities, but more to do with their status as large-scale events. Notwithstanding the forced physical dislocation of people from host sites, major events cause social dislocation. Local people may struggle to find meaning, a sense of identity and a sense of connectedness in their own neighbourhoods as spaces are transformed by major events (Misener & Mason, 2006). Although events may be a source of hope and a symbol of a new era, most of the positive social effects of events seem short-lived. New urban communities bequeathed by events may constitute longer lasting effects, but to believe they will be socially sustainable requires faith in environmental determinism and the widespread dissemination of successful models. This, plus the unresolved question of what to do with existing communities where people already live, seriously challenges the value of such approaches.

Unless innovative leverage projects are undertaken, social effects from major sport events are usually consigned to a transient ‘feel-good’ factor. This seems an inadequate agent of social sustainability. Most research that reveals the presence of a ‘feel-good factor’ asks residents about the positive effects of an event generally. These studies rarely ask individuals whether they now feel better as a result of the event, or assess how long these feelings last. Thus, some measures of social effects are merely evaluations of events’ success as urban propaganda projects. If the ‘feel-good factor’ could be transformed into a ‘do-good factor’ whereby people make sustained efforts to assist their own communities and act more responsibly then events’ social sustainability would be significantly enhanced. Ultimately, major events have a poor record in terms of social sustainability because – following a neo-liberal philosophy of competing for footloose capital – they often involve the regeneration of communities, rather than regeneration in communities (Raco, 2004). As Olds (1998) states, major events attract new people, new facilities and new money to cities at a rapid pace. This disrupts and disadvantages existing communities and contradicts socially sustainable principles that advocate incremental growth and meeting existing needs, rather than merely dislocating problems elsewhere.
These negative conclusions need to be balanced with some important qualifications. First, the analysis here has concentrated on the Olympic Games – a mega-event that is more likely to be socially disruptive than smaller equivalents. Many smaller events are less commercialised, less sanitised and less publicised, whilst more accountable to local stakeholders, and therefore they cannot be regarded as dubious spectacles in the way larger equivalents can. Indeed, O’Sullivan & Jackson (2002) suggest medium-sized events are more sustainable than larger ‘big-bang’ equivalents. Second, the analysis has been restricted to the social impacts of events, rather than the impact of social initiatives pursued in conjunction with events. Recent research conducted by Chalip (2006), Smith & Fox (2007) and Kellett et al. (2008) suggests that major sport events can assist the social sustainability of existing communities if accompanied by leverage initiatives. Well designed, socially orientated projects can use opportunities for funding and publicity provided by major events to promote social sustainability. For example, Kellett et al. (2008) outline initiatives attached to the Melbourne Commonwealth Games that were used to progress regional acceptance of social diversity. And although many of the negative social effects of events have little to do with their sporting content, it is often sport-related qualities that provide the basis for this type of event leveraging. For example, sport’s popularity, publicity and associations with well-being, celebrity and ethnic diversity can be crucial in successful initiatives. However, even these strategies are vulnerable to the transient character of events. Smith & Fox (2007) reveal that using an event as the focus of leverage projects can endanger their longevity because support for the projects wanes once an event has been staged. Therefore, the benefits of social leverage, much like social effects generally, are perhaps underestimated during the build up to events, but rather overestimated in the long term. This, plus the questionable record of major events in distributing positive and negative effects equitably, provides a significant challenge to the social sustainability of major sport events.

References


