

# 2010 FIFA Football World Cup: Resident and Visitor Perspectives

BRIJESH THAPA, HEATHER GIBSON, KYRIAKI KAPLANIDOU & MATTHEW WALKER

There has been a shift in conventional thinking about the various impacts that mega sport events have on the host country. The primary focus of hosting such events is now on the post-event legacies. A number of potential legacies have been identified and include upgraded transportation infrastructure, new sporting facilities, economic benefits, renewed national pride, and the potential to enhance the tourism product of a country. The South African government had an explicit development agenda associated with the 2010 FIFA World Cup, part of which is predicated on “nation building.” Sport has long been associated with building national spirit and generating patriotism among the citizens of the host country. However, for the World Cup, understanding the contribution of the event to the tourism legacy is particularly important; part of this understanding is gaining insights into the experiences of the World Cup visitors and South Africa’s residents.

Within this context, the nine host cities featuring ten different stadia staging the World Cup Games attracted many visitors and created impressions in these tourists’ minds about South Africa’s tourism products. Given the importance of the World Cup for the South African Tourism brand, the purpose of the study was to evaluate destination and event image perceptions as well as tourism behaviors of international tourist spectators at all the host cities/sites in order to assess the impacts of such an event on the country’s tourism development. Data were collected among visitors (N=8,422) at all the nine host cities (Pretoria, Nelspruit, Polokwane,



Johannesburg, Rustenburg, Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Bloemfontein) during the World Cup which provided a major source of information about visitor profiles, market segmentation, perceptions and experiences. Such information has utility with respect to marketing initiatives to attract additional visitors following the event.

In addition to visitors, understanding the social legacies of a mega-event also necessitates a focus on the residents. In particular, there was a need for a longitudinal approach, particularly to assess the change in the resident’s perceptions associated with the World Cup event. The research had multiple phases with the primary goal of identifying the social legacies (e.g., identity, social capital, and tourism) associated with the World Cup. The purpose of this specific aspect of the study was to examine the event’s impacts on attitudes, perceptions and experiences of residents from different socio-demographic groups. Specifically, to investigate: (1) Event Legacy, and Support; (2) Quality of Life; (3) Government Support; (4) National and Ethnic Identity; (5) Social Capital; and (6) Nation Building related to hosting the 2010 World Cup. Data were collected three months prior to the event in mid-June 2010 (N=1,759), while a follow up was conducted in April 2011 (N=2030). The sample consti-

tuted of residents from five host cities (Pretoria, Nelspruit, Polokwane, Johannesburg, and Rustenburg). Findings are currently being analyzed with respect to pre-post World Cup Event. Results will help to inform local and national level policy to facilitate the nation building goals of South Africa.

This project was conducted in partnership between the University of Florida (UF) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in Tshwane/Pretoria, South Africa. The team from the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management at UF was led by Brijesh Thapa along with Heather Gibson, Kyriaki Kaplanidou, and Matthew Walker. The team from the Department of Tourism Management at TUT was led by Sue Geldenhuys along with Willie Coetzee. Nation-wide data collection for both research projects (Residents and Visitors) was coordinated and collected by students and staff members at Tshwane University of Technology.



*Brijesh Thapa is the Director of Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute [www.uftourism.org] and an associate professor in the Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management. The project was funded by the Office of Research, Innovation and Partnership at Tshwane University of Technology along with several host cities in South Africa.*