

Public funds and residents' perceptions of the 2010 FIFA World Cup: A case study of a non-host area

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Abstract

Studies conducted on mega events reflect a focus on the host community, with minimal attention given to non-host areas. The hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup was anticipated to bring major contributions (social, economic and environmental) to the country. Expectations were high among residents in the mainstream locations (host communities) and those on the periphery (non-host communities). South Africa as a developing nation was privileged to have hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup despite its challenges of service delivery. As a result of the latter, the interpretation, value and meaning of hosting the event by those on the periphery may not be the same as those in the host area as major infrastructural developments take place mainly in the host area. Amid the service delivery protests that took place before the event, this article focuses on how residents in the Cape Winelands District Municipality perceived the expenditure of public funds towards the hosting of the mega sport event. Questionnaires were administered to 1250 households. The results revealed mixed reactions. While residents were concerned about public spending on the event, by and large they did not isolate the costs with the value of hosting. Moreover, some residents perceived the event to have delayed basic services in their area. Specific attention should be paid to these aspects when considering future mega event bids such as the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

Keywords: 2010 FIFA World Cup, public money, service delivery, residents' perception.

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Introduction

Today sport and tourism are amongst the 'developed' world's most sought after leisure experience and are becoming very important economic activities (Chalip & Leyns, 2002; Ritchie, 2005) as well as an integral and major part of tourism development and marketing strategies (Tassiopoulos, 2005). In the history of the FIFA World Cup, 2010 was the first time South Africa and Africa hosted the event. The 2010 FIFA World Cup was anticipated to promote major developments (social, economic and environmental) to the country (Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; Cornelissen & Swart, 2006). Expectations were rising from both those in the mainstream (host communities) and those on the periphery (non-host communities). Despite the benefits associated with hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Atkinson (2009) cautions that these benefits could also be associated with costs at various levels.

Fulfilment of the African dream (successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup) meant commitment from the organising association - South African Football Association (SAFA), the South African government and the South African public. This is in line with the expectations from the world football governing body (FIFA) of having a well-organised and safe event (FIFA, 2010). The South African government provided 17 guarantees to FIFA in ensuring a successful tournament (South Africa, n.d). These guarantees translate to commitment of the government in terms of operations and provision of infrastructure ranging from stadia, broadcast centres, transport, and healthcare to safety and security; demonstrating the country's ability to host the event. As a developing nation South Africa was privileged to have hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup despite its challenges of service delivery. However, the allocation of public funds to the World Cup stimulated critical debates around the country and in some cases outrage. Billions of Rands had to be committed by government for hosting the event (South Africa, nd).

Taking into consideration the nature of commitments by both the organising association and the South African government, it is evident that the South African public played a crucial role towards the successful hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Considering the biased nature of infrastructural developments related to mega sport events, which mainly focuses on urban areas and the host cities in particular, costs linked to the 2010 FIFA World Cup have been criticised (Murphy, 2010). Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules and Ali (2003) caution that success of many events is heavily dependent on local communities as event patronage is important. Prior to the 2010 event, there were violent mass service delivery protests wherein residents of affected communities threatened to disrupt the World Cup if the government did not meet their service delivery needs (Murphy, 2010; Ngonyama, 2010; Karamoko & Jain, 2011).

Informed by Figure 1, Karamoko and Jain (2011) reported that the upward and downward trends in the protests between February 2010 and May 2010 coincided with the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Representing the dissenting voice, one of the organisers of the protest march against 2010 FIFA World Cup spending argues that 'if we have some money for the stadiums, we should have money for any homeless people having to live in a shack' (Murphy, 2010). Despite the 'dissenting voices' over the event in relation to service delivery needs, Ngwane (2010) asserts that nothing was allowed to stand in the way of achieving a successful hosting of the event. As the South African government geared itself to host this event, the expenditure of public funds became a major concern for ordinary citizens (Swart & Bob, 2009; Ngonyama, 2010).

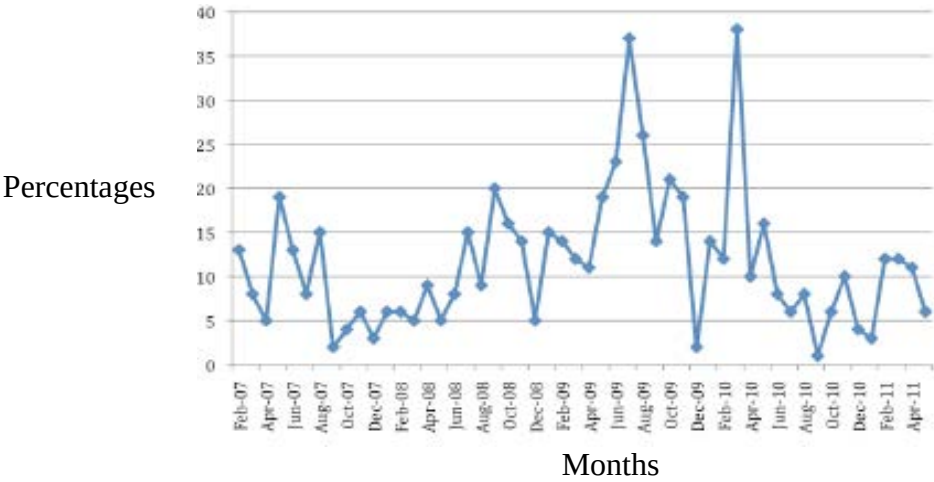


Figure 1: Protests per month: February 2007 to May 2011 (Karamoko & Jain, 2011: 6)

The government convinced citizens that the World Cup will assist in expediting service delivery in the country (Cornelissen & Swart, 2006; Maharaj, 2011). Highlighting the 2010 FIFA World Cup as an opportunity of a lifetime which all South Africans should seize, Maseko (2006) projected that the event will speed up programmes of service delivery and address infrastructural backlogs. The latter became a point of contestation and resulted in dissenting voices, particularly in communities whose service delivery needs had not been met. Ngonyama (2010) refers to this voice as the ‘voice from below’ whose voice echoes that billions of Rand to host the ‘elitist’ World Cup which constitute a misdirection of resources needed to meet a wide range of pressing social needs. As noted by Wildeman (2012), open budget decisions by government demonstrated its willingness to be accountable to the people. Wildeman (2012) further argues that transparency in budget decision-making processes means that citizens have access to information about how much revenue is collected and how it is allocated to different types of spending. In a democratic South Africa, providing the public with comprehensive and timely information on the government’s budget and financial activities, empowering the people and allowing them to judge how their government is managing public funds are essential.

The Cape Winelands District Municipality (CWDM) (which includes popular tourist towns such as Stellenbosch and Paarl) is located in close proximity to Cape Town, which hosted the first five round matches, one round of sixteen, a quarter final and one semi-final of 2010 FIFA World Cup (FIFA, 2009). The CWDM was faced with developmental challenges ranging from infrastructure, lack of funding for 2010 initiatives and inter-town rivalry in the District (CWDM, 2007-2011; 2009). It is therefore important to ascertain how residents perceived the use of public funds in relation to the preparation and hosting of the event. Ascertaining these perceptions was also influenced by the CWDM 2010

FIFA World Cup planning initiatives, wherein the CWDM positioned itself to capitalise on Western Cape 2010 by creating a community benefit legacy, aligning its thrust to those of the Western Cape Province, which were (Swart & Lombard, 2009):

- Integrated long term strategic co-ordination for CWDM;
- Infrastructure development;
- Community mobilisation;
- Marketing and communication; and
- Systemic budgeting for the above.

In line with the background provided on the 2010 FIFA World Cup and how the CWDM positioned itself in hosting the event, the purpose of the study was to ascertain residents' perceptions on spending of public funds linked to the hosting of the World Cup.

Methodology

Prior to the implementation of the project and formalisation of the study, consultation took place with the CWMD 2010 FIFA World Cup co-ordinator and senior officials to introduce the research study and to gain the necessary approval for the study. Anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed prior to the completion of the questionnaire and verbal consent to complete the survey was solicited from the respondents. It was also explained to the respondents that their participation in the survey was voluntarily. A pilot survey was conducted to test the questionnaire and identify potential problems that could have impacted on the quality and validity of the results. Questionnaire items focussed on residents' awareness of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and their perceptions of and attitudes towards several aspects of the event, including public expenditure and infrastructural development.

A total of 1250 questionnaires were administered to the residents in the CWDM, using stratified random sampling, splitting the groups into strata, taking into cognisance the low, medium and high income areas to provide broad representation of the respondents. Individual respondents were selected across the five municipal areas (Langeberg, Breede Valley, Witzenberg, Drakenstein and Stellenbosch) that constitute the CWDM, with an equal proportion of 250 respondents. Face-to-face interviews were conducted. Resident surveys were conducted a month prior the event, until 30 May 2010. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as a tool for coding, inputting, interpreting and analysing the data collected.

Results

Demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that they were mostly males (62.9%) and a few females (37.1%). Even though the respondents were selected randomly, the results reflecting males as the majority of the respondents is not surprising, as the majority of soccer followers and spectators in South Africa are males.

In terms of age, the respondents that took part in the study were 18 to 74 years old. The majority of the respondents were from the youth category between the age group of 18-30 years (47.6%) and the middle age group between 31-40 years (28.3%), representing 75.9% of the respondents. Very few respondents (0.6%) were over 70 years of age. Most of the respondents (60.8%) were Coloureds, followed by Black Africans (30.5%), Whites (6.8%) and Indians (0.5%). The results are a reflection of the demographic profile of the respondents in the CWDM as Coloureds are the most dominant racial group in the area (64.9%), followed by Africans (19.9%), Whites (14%) and Indians (0.2%) (Community Survey, 2007).

Awareness of the event

Most of the respondents (96.3%) were aware of the fact that South Africa was hosting the World Cup, and 95.8% of the respondents were able to correctly identify the event as the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Residents' perception and attitudes towards the expenditure of public funds

As shown in Table 1, the issue of expenditure of tax payers' money in hosting the World Cup event is a contested terrain. While 48.4% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the event was a waste of money, some of them (34.9%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In ascertaining whether the money spent on the 2010 FIFA World Cup was too much and such that it could have been spent on other activities, similarly 47% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement while 35% agreed or strongly agreed and a further 17.3% provided a neutral response.

Table 1: Participants' responses concerning expenditure of public funds in hosting 2010 FIFA World Cup

Questionnaire items (n=1250, in %)	SA	A	N	D	SD
The 2010 FIFA World Cup will be a waste of public money	8.8	26.1	16.7	32.6	15.8
Too much money was and is being spent on the 2010 event that could be spent on other activities	9	26.7	17.3	32	15
I feel that the use of public funds in support of this event is acceptable	8.4	24.6	27	31.7	8.3
The event will cause delays of basic services in the poor areas	12.9	31.4	19.7	30.4	5.7

SA = Strongly agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly disagree

When respondents were asked if they felt that the use of public funds in hosting the event was acceptable, again the results were mixed. Some of the respondents (40%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement but 33% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. These results were supported by the assertions made by some of the respondents (44.3%) as they were concerned that the event will delay basic services to poor areas, while 36.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Infrastructural development

In terms of infrastructural development the majority of the respondents (68.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that infrastructural development was taking place mainly near the stadium. There was also a high level of optimism amongst the respondents as 63.9% indicated that the facilities constructed for the 2010 FIFA World Cup can be used by local residents in the long-term while a significant percentage of the respondents (25.4%) were uncertain about the long-term use of the soccer facilities by residents (Table 2).

Table 2: Participants responses concerning infrastructural development

Questionnaire items (n=1250, in %)	SA	A	N	D	SD
Infrastructural development are taking place mainly near the stadium	21.4	46.9	18.2	10.2	3.3
Facilities created for this event will can be used in long-term by residents	17.8	46.1	25.4	8.6	2.1

Discussion

The results of this study reflect a district-wide awareness regarding South Africa's hosting of 2010 FIFA World Cup. Whilst the hype was created in hosting the event and mobilising community support, AT Kearney (2012) argue that effective mobilisation efforts should go beyond publicity in order to effectively engage communities in identifying social and economic programmes that could have the biggest impact at the local level. The latter assertions are key, especially when government is spending a lot of public funds in hosting a mega event in the plight of huge disparities in service delivery in the country. Taking the level of awareness beyond publicity to a level of engaging with communities in identifying their social and economic programmes may assist communities in understanding the event impact practicalities and link them to the possibilities that their social needs may be addressed as event impacts may not be witnessed by all. The latter may justify if spending public funds is substantiated or not and whether benefits from the event translate to acceptable public spending. While Gursoy (2006) notes that community backing of a mega event is affected directly and/or indirectly by five determinants of support (the level of community concern, eco-centric values, community attachment, perceived benefits and perceived costs), Conrad, Cassar, Christie and Fazy (2011) argue that citizens

input in preparation for a mega event leads to an understanding of factors that enhance or undermine support for the event.

On one hand, the views of those who are in disagreement with the statement that the event was a waste of public money could be based on the fact that the occasion presented to the country to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup was an opportunity of a lifetime, despite the anticipated costs of the event. These results suggest that to some respondents the costs of the event were not viewed as an isolated issue of funds but linked to the value of successful hosting of the event, as a considerable percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the use of public funds in support of this event is acceptable. On the other hand, the views of the respondents who were in favour of the statement that the event was a waste of public funds could be linked to their assertion that too much money was spent on the 2010 FIFA World Cup which could have been spent on other development initiatives. Similarly, the respondents viewed the amount of public funds for this event as unacceptable. Comparing the contradicting views of the respondents on the statements in question, these results bring to the fore realities of a developing nation wherein priorities of a society are not common. These are the realities of hosting mega sport events in developing contexts which should be considered.

As noted by Desai and Vahed (2010), funds allocated to World Cup stadia would have built an estimated 90 000 new houses per annum over the period of 2006 to 2010. For citizens who have been waiting for the last sixteen years for basic services from promises made by the democratic government, when they become knowledgeable about the costs the country incurred as a result of hosting the event, they may not understand why their quest for better service delivery has not been fulfilled.

Given the strong contestation of the expenditure of public funding, with a considerable percentage of the respondents agreeing that the event will cause delays in basic service delivery in the poor areas, Pillay and Bass (2008) contend that it is problematic to assume that income as a result of the World Cup will materialise to advance the pro-poor agenda of service delivery and social redress.

It is not surprising that the majority acknowledged that infrastructural developments have taken place mainly near the stadium. It is worth noting that the setting where these infrastructural developments have taken place is in an urban setting, thus reflecting uneven developments as the areas in urban settings are better developed compared to those areas in rural settings. The latter could translate the benefits and impacts related to infrastructural development and service delivery as skewed and accelerated in urban areas. As a result, the value of the event and understanding of the value of hosting the event and its underlying impacts may be viewed differently by those living in rural settings.

Despite the concern raised by the respondents on infrastructural developments, the question of the use of facilities created for the 2010 FIFA World Cup by residents in the long-term may depend on accessibility and affordability, as the facilities may also be used by tourists. The latter is likely to influence the costs of using these facilities, reinforcing concerns raised by some of the respondents.

Conclusion

As FIFA has opened the hosting of the FIFA World Cup to developing countries, it is important that governments in these countries set their priorities accordingly and have responsive approaches in a possible wake of dissenting voices over such events in the quest for better service delivery. Considering the amount of money spent to host such event, if non-host areas like the CWDM fail to realise the positive impacts linked to hosting the mega sport event, the South African government is likely to be criticised by many citizens calling for the prioritisation of their service delivery needs over such events in the future. Perhaps this was considered when government decided not to support a 2020 or 2024 Olympic bid.

Violent mass-demonstrations have presented themselves as the last attempt to make the government listen to its citizens. Service delivery protests may affect the brand image of the country and impact negatively on the country's position of being a destination to host mega sport events. It would be interesting to examine whether spending of public funds over the hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup would be viewed differently by government and residents in the long-term.

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