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# The lasting social value of mega events: experiences from green point community in Cape Town, South Africa

Rutendo Roselyn Musikavanhu<sup>a</sup>, Adele Ladkin<sup>b</sup> and Debbie Sadd<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Marketing and Management, Coventry University, Coventry, UK; <sup>b</sup>Department of Tourism & hospitality, Bournemouth University, Poole, UK; <sup>c</sup>Department, People & Organisations, Bournemouth University, Poole, UK

## ABSTRACT

A growing area of mega event research focuses on the long-term social value of outcomes and the impact of their far-reaching benefits. This paper questions whether mega events present opportunities for interventions through an exploration of the social value of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in the community of Green Point, Cape Town. Drawing on Chalip's (2006) understanding of the liminal social value of events, the main considerations are whether the outcome of feel-good experiences were leveraged to enable community building in the long-term. Following the narrative inquiry approach, stories were collected from community members. The findings suggest community members from Green Point have a mixed perception of the event's lasting social value. These perceptions were influenced by the participants' wide-ranging experiences of the event and subsequent outcomes. The findings have a number of implications for future practice, affirming that the issues and challenges related to leveraging social impacts beyond the existence of a mega event can affect people's perceptions of the social value attached. Looking to future research, this paper calls for investigations that involve repeated exploration of participant experiences over a longer timeframe, suggesting the value of the longitudinal perspective.

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Social value; mega events; leveraging; community experiences

## Introduction

In recent years, significant growth has occurred in the scope of mega event research, with diverse areas of focus (Gursoy et al., 2017 and Preuss, 2019). As a consequence of the recognised far reaching benefits, mega events are increasingly hosted for their capacity to attract growth and generate benefits for the host community (Li and Nauright, 2018). Indeed, it is suggested that a significant aspect of mega events is their ability to engage the host community; bringing people together in celebration, attracting tourists, developing destinations and business (Knott et al., 2017). This resulted in a proliferation of research considering the long-term social value of events and their accompanying impacts (Misener and Schulenkorf, 2016). These long-term positive impacts are frequently reported through the discourse of legacy. Commensurate with other areas of event research, an increasingly evaluated outcome of mega events is the social legacy

**CONTACT** Rutendo Roselyn Musikavanhu  [ad1780@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ad1780@coventry.ac.uk)  School of Marketing and Management, Coventry University, Jaguar Building, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB, UK

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attached to the experience (Gursoy et al., 2017) and it is argued that a key aspect of 'legitimising' the staging of mega events has been this exploration of their lasting social value (Taks et al., 2014). Those experiences that offer social value are not only important, but enhance way of life through informing behaviour in society (Chalip, 2006). The outcomes have been observed to build communities founded on connectedness and humanity (Heere et al., 2013 and Taks, 2015). As such, this paper accepts that people will likely place significance on the experiences that change their lives for the better. Therefore, to understand the social value of mega events it is important for research to consider their long-term social outcomes from the perspective of those affected by the experience.

According to Chalip (2004), Preuss (2007) and Horne (2010); legacy is defined as the ability to leverage benefits lasting beyond the existence of the event. Indeed, the term legacy is used to refer to an event's capacity to achieve outcomes that continue to build communities in the longer term. This process is often attributed to the idea of leveraging, which is concerned with the added benefits that can be accrued outside of the direct outcomes (Taks et al., 2015). In respect of event leveraging, O'Brien (2006, p. 25) emphasises this as *"opportunities, they present merely the seed capital; what hosts do with that capital is the key to realising sustainable long-term legacies."* In this manner *"events are often best employed when they are to accelerate existing plans"* Smith (2014, p.17). The suggestion therefore is that mega events can result in outcomes that offer a means for the host community to make the most of community building through leveraging the benefits generated.

It is important to note that the outcomes people experience are often yearned for and/or looked-for experiences (Chalip, 2006). Moreover, Smith (2014) contends; well-planned events make an important resource contribution to addressing social dysfunction amongst other social ills, particularly in divided communities. As such, the outcomes of feel good experiences, a celebratory spirit and civic pride can be considered essential sources of event value. In their study, Cornelissen and Maennig (2010, p. 99) conclude that a feel good outcome characterises *"the sense of happiness ... wellbeing of the people in the host community ... and feelings of pride or passion evoked."* Such expositions possess the ability to reduce social disparities and the propagation of discriminatory and classist behaviour through investing in the wellbeing of the people (Silvestre, 2009). However Coakley and Souza (2013) caution that positive legacies do not happen spontaneously, neither are they guaranteed. A crucial feature of realising positive social impacts should be the ability to maintain those benefits.

Hosting a mega event presents the opportunity for interventions, especially in relation to impacts upon local communities (Chalip, 2004). Proponents of the experience are of the opinion that intangible social impacts can influence community outlooks and feelings, and the benefits are not only experienced by a few in society but often pass down to all levels within the community (Cornelissen and Maennig, 2010). Mega events are designed to create experiences that are inclusive to the diverse groups of people found in society (Getz, 2012), thus enabling a sense of *communitas* to be facilitated. Likewise, Chappelet (2012) argues the logic of leveraging mega events can facilitate a feel good atmosphere of celebration that improves upon social relations. As such, hosting mega events that result in people feeling a sense of camaraderie can help to make inroads toward lessening negative experiences such as marginalisation.

Despite clear opportunities for intervention, it is not surprising that contrasting experiences exist. Alternative views suggest negative social impacts can have wide consequences; experiences of marginalisation and displacement can effect event criticism, altering community views of mega events. Regarding the Sydney 2000 Olympics, Silvestre (2009) found poor designation and use of public land, increased social disparities, disruption to community way of life, gentrification and community displacement. Correspondingly, Zhemukhov and Orttung (2014) found that developments for the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics in Krasnodar, Russia brought unfavourable changes to the transportation system and it became too expensive for the host community to maintain, yielding an unsustainable socio-economic legacy. Elsewhere, Preuss's (2015) exploration

of the London 2012 Olympics found the gentrification of East London resulted in increases in housing values and higher rentals and the displacement of lower-income families. Likewise, Pappalepore and Duignan (2016) found community members from East London were largely dissatisfied by the demolition of creative spaces and commodification of the locale. In Rio de Janeiro, 275 families out of 800 residing in the Favela area of Barra de Tijuca, were evicted and their homes destroyed to make way for new construction associated with the 2016 Olympics (Phillips, 2016 and Rocha et al., 2017). Those experiences drew criticism from those community members and incited violent demonstrations. The outcomes appear to have affected the working class more so, demonstrating how negative social impacts can increase social division and corrode community welfare, altering community attitudes to the social value of events in the longer term.

Clearly, assessing the lasting social value of mega events for communities is complex. This paper offers an exploration of post mega event social legacies through an examination of the 2010 FIFA World Cup's social value in the community of Green Point. Specifically, it examines the relationships between long-term social legacy and the idea of events building society through feel good experiences. The paper is organised as follows. Beginning with an overview of the recent history of mega event legacies, section 2.1 outlines the conceptual dimensions of the research, drawing on Chalip's (2006) understanding of the liminal social value of events. Section 2.2 presents South Africa's mega event aspirations and reviews the geographical focus of Green Point, evaluating evidence for social value thus far from the event's legacy. Section 3 describes the research methodology. The final section presents the lived experiences of community members on to the long-term social value of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Green Point, Cape Town.

## Context

### *Conceptual background*

According to Chalip (2006, p. 110), *"events are temporary and they happen quickly... small incidents may represent significant phenomena, but the significance may not be apparent at the time."* As such, the outcomes can create opportunities for the development of collective connectedness and feel good experiences. Underpinning this research is the concept of liminality, which has been applied in event studies providing a foundation to understand the meanings people ascribe to their experiences (see McCabe 2006; Chalip, 2006 and Wu et al., 2020). Influenced by Turner's (1967) seminal works on the 'rites of passage,' Chalip (2006) advances ideas on liminality to see the experience of a mega event as a festive celebration that has the ability to build communities, changing behaviours after the event.

Chalip (ibid) posits that a mega event can provide opportunities to strip away old behaviours (e.g. segregation within society), making way for new, more inclusive behaviours (e.g. togetherness). According to Turner (1967, p. 47) *"if our basic model of society is that of a structure of positions, we must regard the period of margin or 'liminality' as an inter-structural situation."* Similarly, Chalip (2006, p. 120) posits: *"liminality enables discourse, and it can bring together groups that might otherwise not come together."* Elsewhere, Wu et al. (2020, p. 2) suggest: *"liminality is a transitory and between space and experience where people detach themselves from social norms and their everyday self."* The sentiment suggests a sense of change between states. People can change perceptions based on their evolving life experiences of a phenomenon during this transitional time. Given the advantages, it is conceivable that *"euphoria, enhanced national pride, and unity"* are leverageable outcomes that can contribute to how people interpret the event's social value (Taks et al., 2015, p.2). Those social impacts can enrich quality of life.

Drawing from Chalip (2006), the use of the term liminality in this paper helps to explore the relationship between a fleeting festive celebration experienced during a specific period of time, and the outcomes that can be felt long after the event has concluded. This interpretation of the event's liminal character suggests the intervening/transitional time between the end of the

mega event, and the gradual manifestation of impacts can result in people engaging in multiple experiences. In turn, those experiences influence meanings that are ever-changing, layered and convoluted. Ultimately, those outcomes which are positive can help the community to undergo the necessary processes of development, resulting in a positive legacy. Therefore, suggesting any positive experiences if not leveraged accordingly, can over time change to become negative; resulting in perceptions that are disapproving of mega events.

Fundamentally, positive experiences are not universal. It is important to avoid an over-simplified appreciation of the nature of social impacts. More often than not, it is a combination of both positive and negative outcomes, tangible and intangible impacts that affect a community's outlook of mega events over time. Tangible social impacts are those that can positively cause community development, for instance, through the creation of useful leisure facilities. Whilst intangible social impacts are those that come in the form of social interactions that raise community pride (Gursoy et al., 2017). To illustrate, the Sydney 2000 Olympics is considered to have demonstrated a sense of camaraderie. Chalip's (2006) exploration of liminality through the involvement of Cathy Freeman – a native Aborigine athlete, found that at the particular time of the event, the experience encouraged connectedness within this society. Additionally, a shared outlook and way of doing things, in particular through group representation which brought a sense of added value. In the example of the Sydney 2000 Olympics a range of experiences influenced a mixed view of event social value. The construction of the Olympic Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre resulted in issues around privatisation of public land, subsequently influencing community action (Owen, 2001). Over time, the changes were not of benefit to the host community who now had to pay to access facilities that were previously at no charge (Lenskyj, 2002). Despite the fact that the leisure centre can be viewed as a social legacy (Cashman, 2006); it was not perceived to have added social value (Toohey, 2008).

As such, the application of liminality can help to understand how the experience of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, albeit fleeting; generated a multitude of impacts that have since influenced perceptions over time. Support for the conceptual premise is drawn from three perspectives; how mega events can be viewed as a means to assert the value of community through fostering festivities that generate a sense of communal identity; the different ways in which the mega event experience is felt by society e.g. through social interactions and the unforeseen, unplanned social impacts and other mega event outcomes. Thus, those long-term social legacies that perhaps brought people together, may have produced a sense of satisfaction, engendering 'feel good' emotions. Viewed in this way, the experience could have been seen to be a facilitator for Green Point's transformation beyond the event's existence. However, the significance of those fleeting moments is a key deciding factor in the catalytic effect on influencing people's long-term views.

### ***Background: South Africa's mega event aspirations***

The community of Green Point is located in Cape Town, South Africa. It is one of ten communities located within the region of the Atlantic Seaboard, and one of eight regions within the legislative capital city of Cape Town. Green Point mostly relies on tourism related activities and is home to the Cape Town Stadium (formerly Green Point Stadium) that was purpose built for the World Cup (Allen, 2013). In Green Point, tourism initiatives, including events, contribute considerably to local community development and impart benefits to the rest of South Africa (Cornelissen, 2010). At the time of conducting this research in 2016, Cape Town was made up of a diverse cultural and ethnic people characterised by a population of 39.9% Coloured people, 42.6% Black African, 16.5% White and 1.1% Asian population (Small, 2017). (\*Coloured is a term used for mixed race people in Southern Africa). When looking at the literacy rates, 34% of the population had a high school education, and 81.6% of households were living in formal dwellings. However, it is important to note the households living in informal dwellings was more so represented by Coloured and Black African populations (Small, *ibid*). This study recognises the

experiences of community members could differ dependent upon the socio-demographic characteristics of each individual and their background (see [Table 2](#)). More broadly, South Africa has a colonial history steeped in political and social tension. In 1964, South Africa's apartheid history saw the country excluded from partaking and sharing in the FIFA World Cups and the Olympic Games (van der Merwe, 2007). Institutionalised in 1948, this period was characterised by enforced social segregation between racial and ethnic groups (Leach, 1986). However, by 1990, this structure of imposed discrimination and social separation was overthrown, and in 1991, South Africa was readmitted to the IOC and was able to participate in the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games (Ibrahim, 1991). On the backdrop of South Africa's colonial history, the nation was able to bid for and host the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which was considered influential in encouraging the process of nation building and bringing together the diverse social groups across South Africa (Nauright, 2004). The interpretation of this success influenced the view that the 2010 FIFA World Cup would also engender this legacy of rebuilding the divided communities of South Africa, which was observed to be of social value (Cornelissen, 2007).

### *Green point – locality and legacy*

Much like the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the opportunity to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa was seen as a catalyst for societal good. Whilst a number of communities around South Africa shared the responsibility of hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the community of Green Point hosted the second match of the opening day, quarter and semi-final soccer games.

Prior to the choice of Green Point, there was considerable debate and controversy over which of the 10 communities in the Atlantic Seaboard region would host the event. It is important to note that within Cape Town, there are fundamental differences between the various communities. However, a commonality is the vast social inequalities are an enduring source of problems e.g. social disparities causing a sense of divide (Swart and Bob, 2012). Whilst the national government was ultimately for deciding the location, FIFA officials played a significant role in the choice of Green Point (Cornelissen, 2007). Both geography and its history provide Green Point with unique context with the first recording of an official soccer match in Cape Town occurring in Green Point in the early 1900s. For some people, this history justified the eventual location of the event (Baller, 2013). Nevertheless, construction of the stadium was still controversial, and has featured in the event's social legacy debate (Bek et al., 2019). The issue of social segregation between the White, Black and Coloured South Africans and the great disparities between the affluent and the underprivileged across the various communities were important matters of debate (Swart and Bob, 2012). Of significance was the social standing of Athlone, a neighbouring community to Green Point and was more so in need of rebuilding. Hosting the event in Athlone was seen to have the potential to reimage and bring people together (Cornelissen, 2007). As such, it was proposed that some matches would be hosted in Athlone (Swart and Bob, 2012). Indeed, the hope was to address the vast social problems of unemployment and overcrowding in this troubled community. In addition to Athlone, upgrading of pre-existing infrastructure at the Newlands Rugby Stadium had been approved. In a surprising turn of events after the bid had been secured, it was alleged that FIFA influenced the decision to host all of the matches in Green Point (Swart and Bob, 2012). At the time, this was a major concern for the Capetonians.

In the years following the 2010 FIFA World Cup, several studies have been undertaken on the event legacy in Green Point. Maharaj (2015) reported how the privileged have furthered their sense of wellbeing at the expense of others, emphasising the gulf in pre-existing social inequalities. Maharaj (ibid) identifies forced removal of locals from the suburb of Joe Slovo an informal settlement in Langa, Cape Town to outlying areas as a means to clear space for event related development. In the same study, it is discussed how the government had promised local businesses the opportunity to market and sell merchandise during the event. However, Maharaj (ibid) found that local businesses were ultimately excluded.



Allen (2013) found the challenges of leveraging a positive legacy were largely attributed to poor legacy planning which made it difficult to maintain the sense of social cohesion generated. According to Baller et al. (2013), locals felt the choice of Green Point was an attempt to sanitise a past entrenched in segregation. Despite the efforts, a significant aspect of the social changes in Green Point resulted in increased rentals and the displacement of community members, which ultimately affected the idea of community building (Bek et al., 2019) and revealing the idea of poor legacy planning. Undoubtedly, the experiences seem to have left community members feeling that their sense of wellbeing and of belonging had been compromised in the longer-term.

In relation to Cape Town Stadium, it was reported that the purpose built stadium has been largely under-utilised (Molloy and Chetty, 2015). Questions were raised about the necessity of building a new stadium that had the potential of becoming a financial burden in the long-term (Molloy and Chetty, 2015). Similarly, Bek et al. (2019) identify how the Football Foundation of South Africa encountered varied difficulty in avoiding the outcome of a 'white elephant.' One could argue that in as much as Green Point was the more attractive location, neighbouring Athlone could have benefited more from the outcome of tourist footfall, new businesses and regeneration that a new stadium could have attracted. More so considering how soccer is more synonymously characterised with social life in Athlone (Swart and Bob, 2012). Correspondingly, Bama and Tichaawa (2020, p. 139) argue how the location of Green Point *"made it impossible for the city to sufficiently leverage on the construction of the stadium for its urban renewal project."* Undoubtedly, the event's infrastructure legacy is one such problem that highlights the contention over the legacy plans.

Some of the difficulties in fostering positive outcomes have been blamed on the lack of consensus over which community would host the event, drawing attention away from establishing a worthwhile event legacy (Alm et al., 2016). However, while such disappointments must not be discounted, there are counter arguments that present evidence of a positive legacy. Knott et al. (2015) found that those community members involved in staging the event did experience improved quality of life, a greater sense of community pride and an enhanced feeling of a local sense of national identity. Elsewhere, Scholtz and Slabbert (2016) found that community members felt their lives had been enriched and a sense of civic pride had been realised.

Although it was hoped that the event would act as a catalyst for building society in the long-term, and locals had been mostly looking forward to a legacy of *"increased entertainment opportunities ... economic benefits, job creation ... skills development ... sports participation ... public facilities such as roads, parks, sporting facilities"* Swart and Bob (2012, p. 114). The outcomes however did not quite match the expectations of community building. Whilst the discussion in the preceding paragraphs identifies expectations on the social value of the event, Molloy and Chetty (2015) found that over time, many of the outcomes turned out to be 'one-off benefits' which left feelings of frustration.

The studies indicated above have provided a valuable insight into event legacy at Green Point. Previous works (e.g. Knott et al., 2015) have followed the quantitative tradition collecting data in the short term, investigating differences in community perceptions through the use of questionnaire surveys, uncovering quantifiable change in attitudes. The qualitative study presented here examines narrated experiences several years after the event concluded. This affords the opportunity to reveal individual perspectives in detail and uncovers a variety of changing feelings, including triumph, uncertainty, disappointment and frustration. As such, the inclusion of both a temporal element and greater detail on the effects on individuals adds to knowledge.

## Methodology

### Approach

The findings presented are taken from a broader study (see Musikavanhu, 2019), that examined temporal change in community attitudes. Narrative inquiry was used to collect stories, using an interpretivist approach to explore the ways in which people tell and represent their experiences

**Table 1.** Criterion for participant selection.

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Participants had to be members of the community of Green Point and lived in Green Point during the event.	The participant is not a member of Green Point Community, and did not live there during the event.
2	The participants are long-established community residents, people that have lived in Green Point permanently or on a long-term basis and also lived there during the event, with event derived experiences based on attendance, or some level of involvement with the 2010 FIFA World Cup.	The participant has been living in Green Point for a limited period, and cannot articulate any experience from having attended or been involved in the 2010 FIFA World Cup.
3	This research has conducted narrative stories with participants that can recount personal experiences of their thoughts and feelings about the 2010 FIFA World Cup.	
4	The age of the participants was also important, the criteria was set according to the legal working age in South Africa (18–65 years).	The participant is a minor, or was a minor at the time of the event (legal age 18 years) The participant is above the age of 65 and is considered an older person who requires special permission to engage.
5	It was of importance that individuals were representative of both male and female genders so that the data would not isolate views that could be different based on gender influence.	
6	A sample composition characteristic of a diverse ethnic background, varied educational background and dissimilar occupations.	

Source: Authors (2020).

and enabling an investigation of how this affects their perceptions of a particular event (Riessman, 2008). The philosophy of interpretivism assisted the exploration for culturally derived interpretations of the participants’ social life world, giving insight into the way people form personal views through social interactions with others (Prasad, 2005).

Data collection was in Green Point between 19th September 2016 and 9th of October 2016. The participants selected were based on purposive sampling (Patton, 1990). Table 1 establishes the selection criterion justifying decisions undertaken to identify suitable participants. These are individuals who were directly affected by the outcomes of the event. The point of saturation was realised at 17 participants, see Table 2. The participants were also given pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity, while maintaining a human element to the data.

Upon meeting the participant in the agreed location, the researcher began with introductions and then initiated small talk to facilitate easing into the storytelling process. At this point, the researcher recapitulated details found in the participant information sheet, giving the participant a chance to raise questions and answer, or clarify any queries that the participant had. This also gave the researcher the opportunity to outline their personal responsibility in the study, also making clear the participants’ role in the research. The stories were recorded on a small hand-held recorder, and an iPhone recorder as a backup. To begin the dialogue, a single open-ended question was asked. The researcher did not interrupt the storytelling as the goal was to listen to the story, with the exception of subtle note making and probing questions to encourage further storytelling.

**Data analysis**

On return from the field, the transcripts were transcribed, followed by thematic analysis of the complete dataset to identify repeated patterns. To interpret what was told in the narrative



**Table 2.** Participants' socio demographics.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Education	Length of Residency	Occupation
1. Andrew	50s	Male	White	Postgraduate Degree	Since birth	Committee Member of Green Point Neighbourhood watch.
2. Brenda	50s	Female	Black	Diploma	Since birth	Crèche owner that looked after children of restaurant employees during World Cup.
3. Florence	40s	Female	Black	Matriculation	15 years +	Hotel Barrister/Waitress at a 5* Hotel close to the Stadium.
4. Jackson	60s	Male	White	Doctorate	Since birth	Member of Green Point Ratepayers Association and Green Point Association.
5. Jacob	50s	Male	Coloured or Mixed Race	Matriculation	Since birth	Hotel Manager at one of the hotels that hosted the FIFA delegation.
6. Jane	30s	Female	Black	Postgraduate Degree	15 years +	Commentary assistant in broadcasting team of the World Cup matches in Green Point.
7. Jessica	20s	Female	Black	Postgraduate Degree	Since birth	Social Development Consultant for a local NGO.
8. Karoline	50s	Female	White	Diploma	Since birth	Committee member of Green Point Community Events Association.
9. Kristen	20s	Female	Black	Undergraduate Degree	Since birth	Recruitment Agent during World Cup.
10. Laura	40s	Female	Black	Undergraduate Degree	Since birth	English Teacher to foreigners working with FIFA.
11. Mary	50s	Female	Black	Undergraduate Degree	Since birth	Owner of transportation business during the World Cup.
12. Tessa	30s	Female	Black	Postgraduate Degree	15 years +	Event Marketing Research Assistant at a local University.
13. Tilda	30s	Female	Black	Postgraduate Degree	15 years +	FIFA Volunteer in the Protocol Department.
14. Timothy	30s	Male	Black	Undergraduate Degree	Since birth	FIFA Volunteer in Information, Technology and Telecommunications.
15. Tom	30s	Male	Black	Postgraduate Degree	15 years +	Provided financial leverage for members of the community of Green Point starting businesses concerned the World Cup.
16. Ursula	30s	Female	Black	Postgraduate Degree		Lawyer in Competition Department responsible for fining corrupt companies during World Cup.
17. Valerie	20s	Female	Black	Postgraduate Degree	Since birth	Community Member, at the time was a student displaced from student accommodation.

Source: Musikavanhu (2019, p. 148–49).

stories and develop themes, this study followed Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework approach of data classification, familiarisation and interpretation. The approach helped to uphold rigour, coherence and credibility because it provided a clear audit trail of the methods followed in the theming phase. Some of the participants were contacted again to read over their transcripts and the interpretations to ensure that the final stories and conclusions were accurate.

As with all research, the study has limitations. It may be considered a weakness that the community stories were collected in 2016. However, the data still provides insight into the participants' retrospective feelings about their experience and in addition, gaining insight into their pensive thoughts that show how those views have evolved over time. Although the data was collected in 2016, the contextualised character of the stories offer different insights that make a unique and valuable contribution to seeing the longer-term effects of the 2010 FIFA World Cup's social legacy in Green Point. What is important is that the findings complement other comparative studies (e.g. Knott et al., 2015; Bek et al., 2019; Bama and Tichaawa, 2020), drawing similarities between the findings. As such, the worth of the findings in this study remain useable, and the idea of leveraging social legacy continues to be a matter of debate. Although the findings are specific to the context of Green Point and the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the evidence can be useful elsewhere.

## Findings and discussion

Empirically this paper draws upon a set of detailed narrative stories which collectively provide a rich, if somewhat bounded, dataset. The stories reveal the extent to which people from the community of Green Point felt the 2010 FIFA World Cup was a catalytic experience that was of social value to the building of their community over the 6-year period since the event conclusion. The emergent themes derive from the interpreted data, the patterns are identified from the range of attitudes and experiences shared by the participants. The patterns in turn inform the themes which have been condensed to give the participants' stories a particular meaning. The findings are presented by way of 3 themes that offer a comprehensive illustration of the many different views that community members shared, ranging from their hopes, lived experiences and insight into their post event perceptions of the social outcomes:

- Theme 1: Fleeting Sense of Social Value;
- Theme 2: One-Off Benefits;
- Theme 3: The Leveraged Social Benefits.

### **Theme 1: fleeting sense of social value**

The literature recognises that a key aspect of 'legitimising' the staging of mega events is the event's ability to engender a lasting social value (Taks et al., 2014). Yet, it is observed through Jane and Tessa that after the 2010 FIFA World Cup concluded, way of life in Green Point continued as before:

*"After the World Cup, a lot of things just kind of went back to normal." – Jane*

*"What do we do with all of this? So, the post event era now... There must have been some kind of long-term analysis about how this would be beneficial... Logically thinking, there must have been some kind of analysis that showed if we host this World Cup there must be some kind of benefit that will supersede the cost that we are actually incurring to build all these things and to facilitate this event, that this will actually go on to benefit these people." – Tessa*

Jane and Tessa's accounts provide insight into the experience of short-lived social impacts, and the subsequent feelings of disappointment. What is clear is the concern around poor planning to leverage long-lasting beneficial outcomes. Timothy recognises how the racial and ethnic divide were a source of division, he also identifies the social value of mega events in bringing people together:

*"I think for me it was actually the first time I saw people united, whether they were Black, White or Coloured, the event was something that really brought people together. I think at that particular time, the event did bring about a sense of unity, but at the moment I think things have kind of gone back to the way they*

*were... there's racial issues, and prejudice is springing up... It makes me feel worried... where are we going as a nation?" – Timothy*

Through Timothy's account, it is clear to see how at the time of the event, as far as the idea of liminality is concerned, the World Cup influenced social interactions. The experience offered Timothy a moment of detachment from his everyday life, creating feel good experiences. However, the concern in the concluding remarks is whether hosting an event is an effective vehicle for facilitating social interactions that can continue to occur after the event is over. Timothy's sentiment is echoed in Brenda's story who had assumed the feel good experience would be long-term:

*"Before and during the World Cup we were so excited, we were excited to see what was actually going to happen. It was an experience I will never forget... It was always very busy and the people were very happy, you would always hear people singing, people taking, it made us somehow unite. You could see people of different races talking together, chatting together and laughing together it was such a happy atmosphere, I just wish it would have continued like that because you would see everyone very excited... Even the love itself, it made us feel united. Afterwards, it was a bit empty here..." – Brenda*

Brenda cites how in recent times, a sense of separation had gradually influenced social behaviour in Green Point, illustrating how the sense of inclusion was somewhat fleeting. Her changing views make it known how over time, the experience of togetherness was momentary. In a similar way, Tilda's story depicts how that feeling if inclusion quickly came to pass:

*"It was almost as if, like that whole situation when you put a bandage on a wound, and it's a momentary thing and South Africa returns to being South Africa again this whole dream of an event." – Tilda*

Tilda's account unfortunately implies that hosting the event was an ineffective vehicle to catalyse resolution of the social problems in Green Point, giving the sense that she was not satisfied. Again, the concluding remarks raise the question of event social value and the longevity, or the duration of the social impacts experienced. This suggests a weak link may exist between hosting a mega event and the expectation of lasting transformation. Brenda's story reveals community expectations as connected to the value that community members attach to leveraging positive impacts:

*"I just wish it would have continued like that because you would see everyone very excited... Even the love itself, it made us feel united. Afterwards, it was a bit empty here..." – Brenda*

An unmistakable sense of disappointment is evident, which appears to have begun settling in because of the short-lived experiences. Tom's story also queries the long-term social value of the event:

*"Everyday issues still exist you know... all these underlying South African social issues. You know race relations went back to normal." – Tom*

Looking to both participants' views, their idea of social value was attached to the event's ability to help Green Point realise an enduring sense of unity. However, it is evident that if event legacies are not sufficiently planned they have a reduced opportunity to leverage outcomes beneficial to the community in the long-term. As a result of inadequate planning, social issues such as social division are not quite addressed, and when a number of years pass by, it becomes difficult for the experience to be seen in a positive light.

Jessica identifies how hosting a mega event presented the opportunity for an intervention, she gives insight into some of those social issues that required intervention:

*"South Africa is known for its high levels of crime. So, you found that there were high levels of security around that period when the World Cup happened. Shortly after, it changed." – Jessica*

Despite experiencing some positive changes, Jessica articulates the benefits were a brief experience of joy that quickly faded away. The inability to leverage lasting positive outcomes is

illustrated here as bringing about a sense of discouragement. Valerie's account holds the assumption that hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup was meant to develop Green Point:

*"The pitch was always we are going to benefit... what I remember at the end of the World Cup, was national pride... But aside from that, I don't remember anything really great being said in terms of how we have improved or developed... If you want to innumerate that, how would you?" Valerie*

However, by contrast, the range of negative of experiences appear to have influenced Valerie's mixed understanding of the event's social value. Beyond intangible social impacts such as feelings of national pride, Kristen expected the event to generate other added tangible social impacts. However, her story raises concerns about longevity:

*"Afterwards, in terms of the event it was almost like as soon as the event stopped, everyone started thinking... was the stadium too expensive, and was all the upgrading too expensive? I think people got in their minds that they were going to get so much more than they did... I just felt mixed feelings." – Kristen*

Undoubtedly, Kristen feels there was little long-term social value, and the accompanying impacts of the stadium have had a limited influence on encouraging community building. Although the interpretation of liminality implies the different outcomes of events ought to catalyse a transitional period for people to experience feel good impacts, the interpretation of the fleeting sense of social value is distinct in Laura's story:

*"I don't think that those were sustainable jobs, after the World Cup, then what? There was nothing else for all those people to do. But for that moment it was beneficial for a lot of families... but I don't know what they did afterwards." – Laura*

In observing Laura's account, one can make assumptions that her idea of the relationship between hosting a mega event and the social value generated should help to improve the lives of community members. However, the evidence shows that job opportunities declined shortly after the event, revealing limited transformation to quality of life. Returning to the idea of mega events presenting catalytic prospects, Tilda brings up how the 2010 FIFA World Cup was an opportunity to develop sporting facilities in Athlone:

*"Post the World Cup, because the euphoria kind of died down, we began to see the impacts and implications... the stage came down... why did we have to build a stadium that was going to be a sitting duck when we could have refurbished Athlone stadium? The disparities... there were big arguments about it between the locals as well as the city council... I just started to see the flip side of the event... I don't think there is much community interaction with the stadium, I certainly haven't had a lot of interaction apart from two or three soccer matches." – Tilda*

Again, the critique in Tilda's story unfortunately upholds the existing debates, depicting how the locals had seen the event as a catalytic opportunity that could have helped to build the community of Athlone in a similar way to the 1995 Rugby World Cup. She feels that Athlone could have benefited more from the transformation that a new stadium could have attracted.

## **Theme 2: one-off benefits**

The key aspects of liminality – the in between space – provide a basis to understand how a mega event experience can influence collective connectedness and feel good experiences (Chalip, 2006). However, in spite of the recognition of the positive role of mega events in community building, Mary feels that little to no progress was made over time:

*"I was expecting that the event would bring people together, in terms of being one on a long-term basis. However, there is a little bit of racism that is still going on... I thought the World Cup would change perceptions... to some extent things remained the same as they were before." – Mary*

Those 'feel good' emotions did not last. Mary's description of people's behaviour in Green Point provides clarification on how certain negative habits have persisted, emphasising patterns

of segregation and differences in this society. Valerie's story gives insight into being displaced from her place of residence, which unfortunately seems to have deepened the feeling of not belonging to Green Point:

*"Afterwards I can't even say anything that was memorable or outstanding that happened... As a student, I didn't want to go home... I wanted to stick around... but suddenly they had, almost in an army state sort of way, forced the students to get out of university residency, they were chasing up on people and it was very clear that we had to get out so they could clean up the apartments and get in tourists... looking back at it now, it was pretty awful because students are also the backbone of this area, this is a student city overall but we meant absolutely nothing in the context of the whole World Cup, we felt excluded. To be honest, I assumed that I would feel more part of the World Cup... I expected to be more involved and to see more and experience more, but I don't think my expectation materialised the way I wanted."* – Valerie

Similar to Valerie, Florence shares insight of other experiences of forced removal in Green Point:

*"After the event the street beggars came back... During the event, there was not even one beggar. I felt so bad because those people wanted to benefit from the event too but they were put away... it was to the advantage of the event."* – Florence

Undoubtedly, the event brought about significant social changes that resulted in the displacement of community members. As seen through Tessa's account, these experiences left some people feeling that their wellbeing had been compromised in the longer-term:

*"So, this developed area is almost like a barrier. You see that there is housing on the frontline but as you travel back there, you will still find townships upon townships so it's almost like a façade is being placed for the appearance of this community... It is not right to forcibly remove people. Even when that was happening during the event... why is there no moral compass to say displacing people is not right? More so because it is a World Cup, is it not actually an accelerator to correct the things that people are actually trying to hide? To a lot of us, this housing and displacement situation was frustrating."* – Tessa

Again, the idea of poor legacy planning is evident and can be seen through the surfacing issues around the event's long-term housing outcomes. Tom's story identifies further issues relevant to the event-led experience of gentrification:

*"The World Cup intensified gentrification, it's now even beyond affluent, it's now a foreign thing, and a lot of Europeans have moved here and bought accommodation since the World Cup. So, you will find that in Green Point, for a lot of those locals, they will have to move out of Green Point because those are really unaffordable properties now."* – Tom

The increase in housing value clearly resulted in the displacement of lower-income members of the community. Echoing Tom's sentiments, Karoline also identifies how Green Point has become a good destination to buy property, she also makes known how the locals really cannot participate:

*"Green Point probably has some of the highest growth and upsurge in value of property than any other areas in Cape Town... What is happening is that we have many developers who would not have given a look in our area before and now they are saying wow we want to move here... my overall feeling is that the land has at least been regenerated"* – Karoline

Tom and Karoline reveal how the social value of the event was at the cost of others. There is evidence of increased social disparities, disruption to community way of life and marginalisation of some community members. Jessica illustrates how it was hoped the event would help to make inroads toward lessening negative experiences such as marginalisation. However, it appears that for others, the pre-existing issues that the underprivileged experienced went ignored:

*"I do not think there was ever a full breakdown to the average person of what the benefits of the World Cup were... My concerns are around the poorer people, the follow through afterwards... there are people that still stay in shacks, so what are the benefits... unemployment is still high... it is about the long-term."* – Jessica

It is clear the event influenced corrosion of community welfare and poorly affected community views of the event in the longer-term. Andrew follows up by raising the growing sense of social dysfunction, suggesting there was little planning to ensure the outcomes of feel good experiences, a celebratory spirit and civic pride could be leveraged to last beyond the event to effect lasting social change:

*"My experience after the World Cup in the past few years ... the general sort of diligence around the authorities has diminished ... and we have now got a lot of problems. There has been a huge raise in rates and a big drop in the quality of care."* – Andrew

Unsurprisingly, community members hope that such festivities offer opportunities for interventions: the ability to reduce the social problems within their communities. It is clear that when those expectations are not met, especially in the long-term, disappointment settles in:

*"The disappointments have been that we are fiercely saddled with this massive maintenance bill and that is a real problem. Our worry is that there will be further erosion and commercialisation of public open space."* – Jackson

Over time, the outcomes that turned out to be one-off benefits have left Jackson feeling frustration, thus overall, influencing a mixed sense of event social value. Similarly, Jane's story reveals further drawbacks:

*"After the World Cup, a lot of things just kind of went back to normal. I missed the night life and seeing people out together, I missed seeing people not being scared, you know in South Africa sometimes walking outside especially at night you feel kind of nervous because of the things that do happen, I mean I have been robbed at gunpoint before so I am very much wary of these things. But during the World Cup, it felt like everyone was just friends."* – Jane

This insight shows how an experience that was initially positive but was poorly leveraged, can result in the feeling of a 'hangover', whereby the aftermath of a one-off extravaganza of an event can result in irritability and disappointment in the time after.

### **Theme 3: the leveraged social benefits**

Despite the criticisms presented through the previous themes, there are a multitude of positive outcomes that also take place when a community hosts a mega event. Jackson's account illustrates the longevity of togetherness experienced as a result of the Green Point Park, a space developed for social interactions to take place during the 2010 FIFA World Cup:

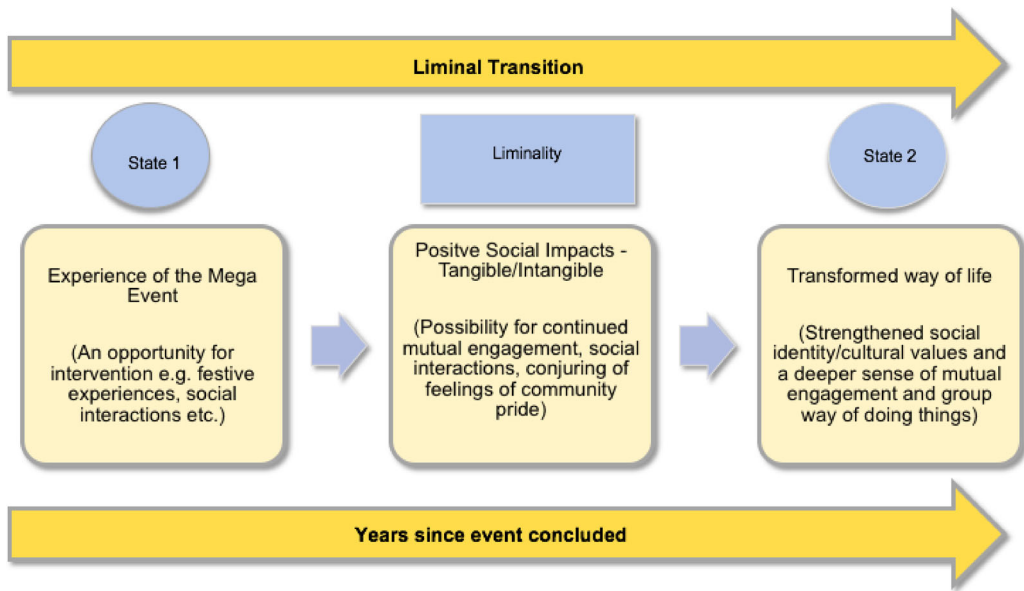
*"There have been spinoffs ... Look at this park its lovely, and the planting along Green Point Park it is great, and I think it has revived a sparkle, an edge and liveliness to Green Point, I think the event contributed to the uplifting of Green Point as an area ... – the urban park that everybody loves, as you can see it right now how busy it is, Green Point looks better ... I personally love the idea that people can come and use the new facilities here, I love the fact that the park can accommodate people who do not obviously have the money to go to some place they have to pay for ..."* – Jackson

His story reveals how the legacy of the park has created a social space that is making it possible for an enduring sense of celebration, impacting upon group relations and community building. The reader is able to see how the experience facilitated changing behaviours in the time period after the event. Similarly, Karoline feels that the on-going experience of togetherness in the park spaces is helping to cultivate some meaningful relations that have lasted beyond the event:

*"We have all benefited from the upgrade and I will forever be grateful for that ... and we do have a lovely park (Green Point Park) ... It is fantastic that you do not have to pay for entrance into the park, and there is so much diversity there. Even the bio-diversity park has interesting stuff."* – Karoline

The parks are a space that everyone can come together and use at no cost. It appears that the social value of the park is not only attached to group unity, but Karoline also feels the park





**Figure 1.** Mega events as liminal ceremonial events.  
Source: Authors (2020).

has also raised a continuing sense of community pride. As explained earlier in the paper, this sense of oneness is important to South Africa. The 1995 Rugby World Cup was influential in encouraging social togetherness and Karoline asserts that hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup also brought togetherness in this diverse society. An important angle to Jessica's story enlightens the emergence of communal identity:

*"There was a bit more unity between South Africans... I think it says a lot about the impact an event can have. The social cohesion observed through the 2010 World Cup and how it seemed to reconcile and unite people in that moment... so I suppose in a way, social cohesion was achieved – the event brought people together and the atmosphere created was for everyone to enjoy even if you were underprivileged... and I believe it was only because of the event that was happening..."* – Jessica

Although apartheid had brought about social division, a prominent feature of the 2010 FIFA World Cup was the emergence of enriching social interactions between the different people. Jessica's story helps to reveal the transformative impact to bridge social problems and build a sense of social cohesion in Green Point. The interpretation of this evidence links to an enhanced feeling of a local sense of community pride.

## Conclusion

This paper sought to investigate whether any of the long-term social outcomes related to the 2010 FIFA World Cup have generated lasting social value in the community of Green Point over time. The stories shared indicate that within Green Point, a multitude of experiences occurred, depicting a mixed sense of event social value. In some instances, the positive experiences were not experienced by all, and for some, they were short-lived.

Of concern regarding the event's legacy is that some community members are still feeling disadvantaged so many years later. Questions have been raised about the prolonged inability to establish lasting closeness. Some of the relationships fostered appear to have weakened, and after some time, many of those have dissolved. As such, these rapid changes are having a serious effect on the idea of building a communal identity. Although social interactions increased at the time, for many of the participants, the feeling of belonging was brief and transient. Thus,

they have deemed the long-term transformative social value to be inadequate. In this sense, the 2010 FIFA World Cup was limited in addressing social dysfunction, disparities and other social ills. It is clear to see how further experiences that have unfavourably changed way of life are influencing event criticism, and may further negatively impact the social value of the experience. Central to Chalip's (2006) conceptualisation of liminality is how people can change perceptions based on their evolving life experiences. This conceptual premise has framed this paper's examination of altering community attitudes to the social value of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Green Point. The general criticism of short-lived impacts is at the heart of this paper's understanding of how changing circumstances can influence dissatisfaction, deepening over time.

Despite the challenges, Chalip's (2006) ideas on liminality and the participants' experiences offer insights into how the event did create opportunities for lasting connectedness. The present study confirms previous findings (see Knott et al., 2015, 2017) and contributes additional evidence to suggest a community building legacy was leveraged. According to Turner (1967), cultural and social order is never complete. It can be said that where we exert effort to make changes to social life, there is possibility for transformation, albeit not faultless in its execution. An unexpected outcome of Green Point Park is the value of physical social spaces, and the instances of change and or transformation experienced through continual social interactions and the subsequent feelings of togetherness. Indeed, the significance is how a lasting sense of feel good experiences, a celebratory spirit and civic pride have been leveraged to positively impact upon some people's daily lives beyond the event's existence. Thus, by principle, it may be determined that through this sense of transition, a liminal phenomenon can produce a positive 'other' that is different between the former and the present. This indicates the development of inclusion and of a lasting social value.

Agreeing with Chalip (2006), the positive experiences demonstrate how a mega event can facilitate a sense of liminality/change between states. Turner (1967) also illustrates this point as the ability to form alternative structures, which in the context of mega events, this study recognises as a liminal phase between what was, and what is now. In this study, it can be seen through a change in communal identity realised through an experience that "*bring (brought) together groups that might otherwise not come together*" Chalip (2006, p. 120). For some of the participants, this was an essential source of event value. This feeling of closeness was sustained, thus confirming a longer-term sense of relationship was fostered. As such, pointing to the relevance of liminality in its ability to offer this study a means to explain the liminal character of mega events, illustrating how the transitional time between the end of the mega event can be leveraged to produce further feelings of togetherness and belonging which are essential to community building. The consideration of the lasting social value of the 2010 FIFA World Cup offers some evidence of a liminal phenomenon, and how this may be associated with the creation of a new or alternative reality to way of life. The seasonal change from what life was like before, and the rite of change of social life in a particular place, exhibit changeable new social structures.

However, while such accomplishments must not be discounted, they are comparatively small when compared to the negative experiences over time. Although the views of the participants were mixed, it is clear to see that mega events can have a transformative impact on the community. Undoubtedly, the participants' stories have shown that time is a main factor that impacts upon community feelings. To an extent, it may be considered that the 2010 FIFA World Cup was not a very practical way to build the community of Green Point on a long-term basis because the experience was not altogether sustainable. More specifically, it seems that the lack of enduring transformation has influenced a change in attitude toward a decreased sense of appreciation for mega events. Several conclusions emerge; suggesting the mismanagement of long-term impacts did affect people's experiences which, in turn, can be detrimental to fostering a sense of support future mega events in Green Point.

Theoretically, the research supports the use of liminality as a useful means to view the experiences of mega events to build communities, changing behaviours at the time of an event and

beyond. The state of liminality and 'coming out the other side' leads not to binary oppositions of change/no change or positive/negative impacts but rather the potential for a mix of outcomes that are also continually subject to change. The liminal state is not a one-off occurrence but rather as individuals and communities adapt to the short and long term legacies, new opportunities may be created. The sense of change between states therefore does not necessarily have a shelf-life but is part of continuous evolutionary change.

This can be seen in the transition from intangible to tangible legacies. The use of mega events as a means to create a new image and regenerate communities has been observed elsewhere (e.g. Barcelona 1992 Olympics). The physical beautification of the community through Green Point Park yielded a shared community resource used in different ways and is a safe space for people to meet and socially engage. Therefore, acting as the 'social glue' that continues to play a vital role in the social life of Green Point. The context of the 2010 FIFA World Cup demonstrates how mega events can be used to influence redevelopment and, in this case, with justification, the community of Green Point has enjoyed significant value found in the social benefits of public open spaces. These tangible outcomes have been driven by the intangible legacies of social interactions and ongoing mutual sense of togetherness, thus creating a tangible legacy off intangible social legacies. As illustrated in [Figure 1](#), application of this can help to explore other possible outcomes of legacies, whereby mega events can be regarded as liminal ceremonial events that present opportunities for interventions or a sense of possibility. The transitions of legacies from the intangible to tangible e.g. the varied social impacts associated with Green Point Park have in a way, become a rite of passage that has positively influenced community development, strengthened social identity/cultural values and a deepened sense of group way of doing things.

Finally, as it is revealed that time is important when assessing how mega events influence changes to social behaviour and human action, a follow-up study is underway, exploring the long-term legacy of the event 10 years on. The longitudinal perspective is still uncommon in mega event studies and this future work addresses the need for repeat studies to more effectively explore the variety of community experiences of mega events.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes on contributors

Rutendo Roselyn Musikavanhu is a Senior Lecturer and Course Director on the Civil Services Programme in the School of Marketing and Management, within the Faculty of Business and Law at Coventry University. Her research interests cover community support for mega events, social impacts, legacy planning, and sustainability of mega events.

Adele Ladkin is a Professor of Tourism Employment at Bournemouth University. She is a specialist in tourism human resources focusing on human capital development and addressing the human resource challenges of the tourism labour force.

Debbie Sadd is the Head of Department for the new Department of People and Organisation within the Faculty of Management at Bournemouth University, where she teaches Strategy and Leadership on both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Her research interests include the social impacts of events, urban regeneration opportunities from events, stakeholder management, and legacy planning.

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