

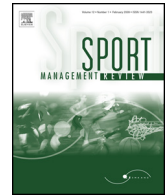


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Sport Management Review

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/smr](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/smr)



# Exploring the domestic relationship between mega-events and destination image: The image impact of hosting the 2012 Olympic Games for the city of London

James Andrew Kenyon<sup>a,\*</sup>, Guillaume Bodet<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences / Centre for Olympic Studies and Research, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom

<sup>b</sup> Laboratoire L-VIS (EA 7428), Université de Lyon, Université Claude Bernard Lyon-1, France

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 2 June 2016

Received in revised form 27 June 2017

Accepted 1 July 2017

Available online xxx

#### Keywords:

2012 Olympic Games

Co-branding

Mega-events

London

Place image

Social representations

### ABSTRACT

Contemporarily, the hosting of mega-sport-events (MSEs) is one of several strategies used by cities and governments to bring about improvements in a place's image and recognition. With that in mind, the overall aim of this study, underpinned by theoretical-methodological social representation theory, was to evaluate the domestic image impact of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games for the city of London, and in doing so, whether any image-transfer (or co-branding) processes occurred between the place and event. In addition to adding to the emergent body of work aimed at using social representation theory to measure place image, the authors are among the first to employ a matched-sample research approach to measuring the impact of an MSE on the domestic perceptions of the host. Employing an abductive research strategy, a survey was carried out among the domestic English population ( $n = 156$ ) to identify cognitive and affective image components, in the form of social representations, of London as a city (or its place brand), the Olympics as a MSE, and the 2012 Games as a one-off event. The content and the structure of the pre-and post-event social representations were established (using image elements cited by at least 15% of the respondents), analysed (using hierarchical cluster analysis) and then compared (within- and between items) to determine whether any changes or image transfer occurred. The findings of this research reveal that the pre-event concerns regarding the hosting of the London 2012 Olympics and the potential of the event to negatively impact the city's pre-established image, were, to a degree, fulfilled. Conversely, from an event perspective, respondents perceived the Olympics as a somewhat successful enterprise.

Crown Copyright © 2017 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

In 2012 the city of London hosted the XXX Summer Olympic Games. Considered by its proponents to be the “foremost sporting event in the world, attracting young men and women to compete together in a spirit of honor [sic] and fellowship” (Daly, 2004, p. xvii), the Olympic Games has also been described as “the greatest show on earth” (e.g., Shoval, 2002, p. 596),

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [J.A.Kenyon@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.A.Kenyon@lboro.ac.uk) (J.A. Kenyon), [guillaume.bodet@univ-lyon1.fr](mailto:guillaume.bodet@univ-lyon1.fr) (G. Bodet).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2017.07.001>

1441-3523/Crown Copyright © 2017 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. All rights reserved.

alluding to its position as a mega-sport-event (hereafter MSE) spectacle and encompassing more than a collection of world sporting championships. Despite their origins, [Bodet and Lacassagne \(2012, p. 537\)](#), among others (see also, [Horne, 2007](#)), argue that the importance of the sporting component relating to such MSEs as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup™ “has now been relegated to a second rank, overtaken in the hierarchy of motives by economic, social, symbolic, marketing and diplomatic objectives.” The acquisition of both sporting and non-sporting MEs, consequently, has become an increasingly important objective for countries and cities worldwide, as the perceived beneficial impacts and legacies associated with hosting them are broadly considered to outweigh their significant costs and any potential negative impacts involved. Governments worldwide are also now acutely aware of the potential of MSEs in portraying a certain image of their respective cities and countries to an event’s international and domestic audiences, even extending beyond the actual event ([Florek, Breitbarth, & Conejo, 2008](#)), and similar to broadcasters and sponsors, such events are considered to be “valuable promotional opportunities [for host cities and governments] to showcase their attractions to global audiences and help attract tourism and outside investment” ([Horne, 2007, p. 83](#); see also, [Preuss & Alfs, 2002](#)).

For London, the capital of England (and the wider United Kingdom), prior to hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, it was already considered to be a thriving global metropolis with a strong international brand (e.g., [Anholt & Roper, 2011](#)), and was one of the most visited cities in the world ([VisitBritain, 2012](#)). Despite this well-established, globally-renowned status, the UK Government hoped that hosting the 2012 Olympic Games would facilitate the management and improvement of London’s image, offering the opportunity to address any negative pre-existing associations in both domestic and international perceptions (e.g., [DCMS, 2006](#)). With regards to the latter, even before the city was designated as the 2012 Olympic Games host in 2005, there were questions raised regarding the motivation of the London bid in terms of the potentially limited impact hosting the Games might have on the city’s international image. [Shoval \(2002, p. 585\)](#), for example, described London’s bid for the Games as “something of a paradox,” in that, as it was already considered to be a world city, it therefore lacked “the usual image justifications for wanting to host the Games.” However, from a domestic perspective, others believed that the 2012 Games offered a greater opportunity to modify UK residents’ perceptions of London. Speaking at the post-Beijing 2008 World Union of Olympic Cities Lausanne Summit, [Simon Anholt](#) proposed that:

London’s biggest opportunity in 2012 is internal [domestic] branding and not external [international] branding. External perception hardly fluctuates but internally the effects can be absolutely dynamic. The best example was Germany’s football World Cup. Like the U.K., the German populations’ view of Germany is a little unstable. During the Football World Cup, we saw that the Germans were proud to be Germans. So bigger cities can use this as a platform to send across a message to their own people. (cited in [Anholt, Oon, Masure, Alcober, & Furrer, 2008, p. 13](#)).

With [Anholt’s](#) proposal in mind, it is important that hosts understand the impact that staging MSEs, like the Olympic Games, have on the domestic perceptions of and attitudes toward place and event. A significant consideration here is that the potential effects of hosting MSEs are more likely to be felt by host residents than, say, incoming international tourists. While there is a tendency, for organisers and planners of MSEs to promote the expected benefits of hosting such events, they are in fact imbued with the potential to negatively impact host residents’ quality of life ([Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010](#); [Ma, Ma, Wu, & Rotherham, 2013](#)) – and consequently their perceptions of place and event ([Gursoy & Kendall, 2006](#); [Kim, Gursoy, & Lee, 2006](#); [Ma et al., 2013](#)). These dynamics occur, for example, through disruption, traffic congestion ([Fredline & Faulkner, 2002](#); [Fredline, 2004](#)), the increased costs associated with staging the event ([Gratton & Preuss, 2008](#); [Ritchie, 1984](#)), and displacement ([Traganou, 2010](#)). Interestingly, in the context of the 2012 Olympics, some of these issues represent pre-existing internal perceptions of London that its stakeholders have long been aiming to improve, and which had the potential to be exacerbated by hosting the Games (i.e., that the city is expensive, crowded, and suffers from traffic congestion; [Greater London Authority \[GLA\], 2002](#); [DCMS, 2006](#)). Thus, attempting to understand the perceptions and attitudes toward place and event, and how they change and interact pre-to-post-event, is important in revealing how MSEs are received by resident populations.

Such evaluation is also becoming progressively more important in an environment whereby domestic perceptions and attitudes are triggering the withdrawal and cancellation of applicant and candidate cities’ bids to host MSEs. For example, [Krakow \(Poland\)](#), [Lviv \(Ukraine\)](#), [Stockholm \(Sweden\)](#), and [Oslo \(Norway\)](#) all withdrew their bids to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, with each of these citing, among other motives, a lack of resident support for hosting the event ([Guardian, 2014](#)). For the same reasons, [Boston \(United States\)](#) and [Hamburg \(Germany\)](#) withdrew their respective bids to host the 2024 Summer Olympic Games, as did the Hungarian capital of [Budapest](#), in which a recent referendum (February 2017) triggered the city’s withdrawal from the application process. The end result was [Los Angeles](#) and [Paris](#) remaining as the sole cities in the running ([Guardian, 2017](#)). Hence, through developing an understanding of the domestic perceptions toward the hosting of an MSE, and how these change pre-to-post-event, cities considering bidding to host them in the future are provided with some insight into what they might expect to gain, image-wise, should their bid be successful. Similarly, such investigation will also be useful for the organisations responsible for MSEs, in that they might further their understanding into how the image of a host interacts with their own image and that of their event. With that in mind, the overall aim of the present study, underpinned by theoretical-methodological social representation theory, was to evaluate the domestic image impact of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games for the city of London. Accordingly, we first sought to establish and then compare the pre- and post-event social representations generated by the domestic English population concerning London as a city (i.e., what can be considered its place image, or brand image), the Olympics as a mega-event (i.e., the Olympic brand image), and the 2012 Games as a one-off spectacle (i.e., the 2012 event’s brand image). We then sought to evaluate whether

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6576078>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6576078>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)