

Legacy perceptions among Qatari nationals: What legacies will the 2022 World Cup bring?

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Aim of abstract/paper – research question

Qatar has been awarded to host the 2022 World Cup. For the Middle East this event can bring a number of changes in the region for sport and urban development. Given that the event was awarded very early in Qatar (2010) by FIFA, the planning time is significantly large for the country to be ready. Thus, the residents of the country will witness preparation efforts for about 12 years. It is with this mindset, that this study wanted to understand the Qatari population perceptions about the expected legacies of the event.

Theoretical background or literature review

According to the event legacy literature, a number of changes take place in the host country of a mega event that can be leveraged or not to become legacies (Kaplanidou, 2012). Legacy categories include but are not limited to economic changes (tourism, urban development), environmental, socio-cultural and sport development (Kaplanidou et al., 2013; Preuss, 2015). Given the first time a mega event is hosted in the Middle East, this study aimed to explore the top of mind perceptions of the legacies associated with the event among Qatari nationals.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

Data were collected in October 2014 from Qatar Nationals using a systematic sampling approach based on mail addresses provided by the local electricity company in Qatar. The Social and Economic Research Survey Institute (SESRI) in Qatar trained interviewers to collect the data. In total, 2,398 Qataris were contacted and 1,058 completed the survey (response rate=44%). Questionnaires were administered in administered face to face using interviewers. The main question that aimed to elicit the responses of Qataris asked them to list the three most important long term changes (legacies) that come to mind when they thought of the hosting of the 2022 World Cup. The answers were in Arabic and were translated by research associates at the Social and Economic Research Survey Institute in Qatar.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions**

In total, 4,088 words were provided for this question. The research staff at SESRI coded the answers into legacy categories and research associates from an American University validated the coding and made changes if necessary. A new category of "other" was created where there was ambiguity about the meaning of the provided words.

The results showed that the following 18 categories described the expected legacies among Qatari nationals for the 2022 World Cup: Infrastructure, Population diversity, Job opportunities, Economic development, Sport Facilities and

Sport Development, Urban development, Inflation, Development of Tourism and Attractions, Socio-cultural general, Social impacts negative, Social impacts positive, Transportation development, Traffic, Insecurity and safety concerns, Local, regional & International popularity of Qatar, Other (not belonging to other categories), none or unclear response and Don't know. The dominant themes in the first word mentioned by Qataris were about infrastructure (19.1%), urban development (11.4%), Traffic (10.1%), Don't know (7.6%), Economic Development (7.5%) and Local, Regional and International popularity of Qatar (7.3%). Similar saliency of themes followed the other two word mentions but the category Don't know was raising in percentage with every iteration.

From these result sit seems that Qatari nationals see long term legacies primarily in terms of infrastructure but also the temporary impact of traffic obscures their long term evaluation of the event benefits. Certainly the tourism development of the country is identified as a legacy but more alarmingly, the category "Don't know" was quite high which suggests that in the early planning stages of the event, the residents and in this case the nationals of the host country are not aware of the event benefits and any planned legacies. Thus, emphasis should be placed in creating awareness and engaging the locals more in the country's efforts to achieve long term goals that the Qatar government and the 2022 Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy have put in place.

References

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