

Kamilla Swart



Abstract:

Nation branding legacies in emerging contexts – from 2010 to 2022 (Kamilia Swart Arres and Nusarath Mohamed Kutty)

Sport mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup or Olympic Games are receiving increasing attention as their hosting is regarded a strategy to obtain global distinction. They are considered as one of the strategies to attain worldwide attention and global positioning, especially for emerging countries. Countries try to re-image or re-brand their identities in the global market through nation branding. Sport mega-events gain their significance in the historical, social, financial, cultural and political contexts. They are considered as a soft power strategy to position the country's image internationally. The legacies of these events are evaluated in terms of the impacts earned through the hosting and the extent of the impact on the destination throughout the coming years.

South Africa was the first among the African countries to host the FIFA World Cup in 2010. The creation of the 'Brand Africa' was a real celebrated one among the whole nation branding efforts worldwide. Any studies exploring the legacies of a sport mega-event cannot ignore the South African case which provides one of the best examples of how nation branding opportunities could be utilized. The South African World Cup showcased the country's ability to host one of the biggest global events on the world stage which also fostered a sense of national pride and social cohesion. In view of the examples set by previous successful host nations, especially South Africa, it is evident that the FIFA World Cup is a significant platform to generate attractive nation branding legacies if prepared well in advance and is able to provide visitors fantastic hosting experiences.

Qatar views sport as a means to build a new image for the country which has led them to bid for the hosting of various sport mega-events including the FIFA World Cup. It has helped Qatar to acquire recognition globally as a world class sporting venue with major events, sport sponsorships and state of the art stadiums. Creating a brand identity using sport diplomacy is one of the Qatar's aims to position it globally. Qatar's capacity to host a World Cup has been questioned by various nations. The country has overcome some of those challenges by exhibiting satisfactory preparation levels through well-built stadiums, enhanced transportation and hospitality facilities to accommodate and entertain the international visitors. Qatar has also showcased its ability by hosting the first ever FIFA Arab Cup 2021 relatively successfully. However, spectators' concerns regarding some of the operational aspects have to be paid attention to in order to deliver "amazing" as promised; and in so doing not tarnish the image of the country. Ongoing challenges since the awarding of the bid include developing a clean image in the face of criticism regarding the exploitation of migrant workers whose contributions have been vital in preparing Qatar for the event. This paper focus on how well strategic ideas could be planned in view of the experiences of previous countries like South Africa in order to impress the international visitors thereby contributing to an enhanced image and positive branding of Qatar.

Bio:

Dr Kamilla Swart is Director of the Masters of Science in Sport and Entertainment and Associate Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar Foundation. She is also a Senior Research Associate, School of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Kamilla's research interests include sport and event tourism, particularly mega-events, sustainability, legacy and inclusion in sport. Kamilla's work has been focused on contributing to sport, tourism and event knowledge in the developing context, and in the global South in particular. She initiated the 2010 FIFA World Cup Research Agenda and served as the City of Cape Town's Research Manager for 2010. Kamilla was the project lead for South Africa as part of a five-university partnership project on mega-event legacy and management funded by the European Union. She is currently working closely with the Qatar Foundation 2022 FIFA World Cup Master Program and the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy. Kamilla is Associate Editor for the *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management* and *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*. She is also the Co-Chair of the 2023 World Association of Sport Management Conference to be held in Qatar. Kamilla has been recently appointed to the Steering Committee of the UNESCO Chair on Governance & Social Responsibility in Sport.