

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Edinburgh Napier University		
Unit of Assessment: Unit of Assessment 24 - Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism		
Title of case study: Promoting Policies for Sustainable Mega Sport Events		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Eleni Theodoraki	Associate Professor and PI	2008 - 2020
Professor Jane Ali-Knight	Professor	2011 - ongoing
Dr Maktoba Omar	Reader	1999 - 2016
Dr Todd Louise	Associate Professor	2011 - ongoing
Dr Constantia Anastasiadou	Reader	2005 - ongoing
Dr Nathalia Tjandra	Associate Professor	2013 - ongoing
Dr Ivana Rihova	Lecturer	2010 - ongoing
Ms Maren Viol	GTA	2011 - 2016
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Mega sport events, such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup, have significant long-term effects on host nations. Therefore, embracing sustainable development is crucial. Research by Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) evaluated the effects of contemporary mega sport events, as well as the role of key stakeholders in ensuring sustainable event legacies. The research findings informed the direction of UNESCO's 2017 Action Plan in mega sport event policy. This led to sport ministers from 97 states committing to using mega sport events for infrastructure improvements, sustainable tourism and behavioural change campaigns. Ministers and organisers also took steps to foster transparency, good governance, and rigour in evaluation of mega sport event effects.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Mega sport events can have both positive and negative long-term effects on host nations. The issue of legacy is widely documented in academic literature and the media, and remains a topic of debate. Balancing rapid development of event infrastructure, whilst encouraging long-term sustainable social benefits is a familiar tension. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of comprehensive evaluation of mega sport events as a holistic concept. Existing studies predominantly concern the effects in particular periods, in defined geographical settings, or to isolated sectors in society. The roles of stakeholders in the production of long-term sustainable effects are also under-researched. This previously limited understanding has led to missed opportunities for sustainable development via mega sport events, and worse, has contributed to planning mistakes and undesirable legacies.</p> <p>This research sought to create significant and transnationally relevant impact from findings. As such, the studies gathered evidence from a range of events across a number of countries. The research reported here investigated these events in Greece [O1] the European Union area [O2] Qatar and Bahrain [O3, P2], Italy [O4], Germany [O5] and internationally [P1, O6]. The research was undertaken at ENU, in collaboration with colleagues in other institutions. Multidisciplinary, international research involved collaborations with Dr. Mahfoud Amara, Dr. Dan Musinguzi and Dr. Girish Nair in Qatar, Professors Laura Michelini and Genaro Iasevoli in Italy, Dr Sarah Snell in England and Ms Claire den Hertog in the Netherlands. The two principle aims of the research were:</p>		

1) To map the impact evaluation practices of event stakeholders.

Dr Theodoraki acted as consultant to the Athens Organising Committee for the 2004 Olympic Games. In 2009, she analysed official communications from the bid and organising committees, to understand how they evaluated and disseminated the long-term effects of this event [O1]. The research observed that the institutional structure behind the bid and host committees had great influence on its communication of long-term impacts. Obligations on behalf of the organising committees to the host nation and International Olympic Committee (IOC) also shaped communication efforts and influenced the legacy evaluation frameworks that were later employed.

In 2012, Dr Theodoraki analysed the effectiveness of indicators used to evaluate the economic impacts of pre-Olympic and pre-Commonwealth Games training visits to host cities [P1]. This revealed a plethora of different approaches to evaluation of long-term effects beyond the standard economic indicators and informed the research project funder on the potential of the Commonwealth Games to create economic impact in the pre-event stage. Following this, a similar study explored legacy evaluations of European City of Culture (ECoC) events [O2]. The research analysed evaluation documentation from events between 1985-2015, to illustrate the evolving character of evaluation from the different stakeholder perspectives. The findings revealed how methodologies are increasingly redefined and standardised over time by stakeholders, for greater rigour in evaluation. The work also captured an increase in requests for incorporating legacy plans in event bids, to improve positive long-term effects and avoid negative ones.

2) To explore the relationship between stakeholders, events, and long-term impacts

Research led by Dr Amara (Qatar University), with Dr Theodoraki, sought to explore how sports related projects such as the Doha Asian Games and Bahrain Formula 1 have led to regional development in the Arabian Peninsula [O3]. It identified the use of sporting values for increased brand awareness, the connection of global and local activity of stakeholders, and the role of royal families as key to the success of the overall operating network.

In 2013, Dr Theodoraki evaluated stakeholders' perceptions of the potential and challenges to ensuring social behaviour change via the upcoming Qatar FIFA 2022 World Cup [P2]. The research found that there is high potential for social improvement in rapidly emerging professional localities. In anticipation of the event, stakeholders have high expectations for social improvement, but challenges have also been experienced by those who face conflicting priorities. In particular, the tension between meeting existing policy targets, and the event requirements, versus long-term legacy goals has created barriers.

The relationship between large scale events and business outcomes was further explored in research led by Professors Micheline and Iasevoli (LUMSA University in Rome), with Dr Theodoraki [O4]. This focused on the Rome International Film Festival and measured whether attendee venue satisfaction had an impact on sponsorship outcomes, such as recall and purchase intention. Attitudes to sponsors were found to be influenced by venue satisfaction, and the authors also developed a new model of event sponsorship evaluation that considered the role of attendee venue satisfaction.

In 2018, the research team at ENU explored the impact potential of commemorative events on host cities [O5]. Using the example of the 20th and 25th anniversaries of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the research explored the role of these events in encouraging 'event tourism'. The study concluded that such iconic-historic events should be recognised as significant contributors to tourism and host economies. In 2020, ENU award winning research explored how coherent brands can be successfully co-created by multiple stakeholders [O6]. Subsequently, the Olympic Games was used for context as an event with multiple stakeholders and a strong brand identity, in order to understand problems, solutions, and best practice for brand managers. It found that brands like the Olympic Games are best managed via negotiation between competing stakeholders, and by utilizing a number of online and offline engagement platforms.

This also emphasises the role of stakeholder networks in understanding long-term effects of mega sport events.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

O1-O6 have been published following rigorous peer review. **P2** is competitive, peer-reviewed funding.

- **[O1] Theodoraki, E.** (2009). Organisational communication on the impacts of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 1, (141-155). ISSN 1940-7963

DOI <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407960902992191>

- **[O2] Theodoraki, E.** (2015). Evaluation and legacy of the European capitals of culture: event owner and event hosts' perspectives. *Economia della Cultura*, XXIV n. 2. ISSN 11227885. DOI: 10.1446/78865

- **[O3] Amara, M., & Theodoraki, E.** (2010). Transnational network formation through sports related regional development projects in the Arabian Peninsula. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2(2), (135-158). 1940-6940. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2010.488060>

- **[O4] Michellini, L., Iasevoli, G., Theodoraki, E.** (2017). Event venue satisfaction and its impact on sponsorship outcomes. *Event Management*, Vol 21 (2) ISSN 1525-9951. DOI: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.napier.ac.uk/10.3727/152599517X14942648527536>

- **[O5] Viol, M., Todd, L., Theodoraki, E., & Anastasiadou, C.** (2018). The role of iconic-historic commemorative events in event tourism: Insights from the 20th and 25th anniversaries of the fall of the Berlin Wall. *Tourism Management*, 69, 246-262. ISSN: 0261-5177. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2018.06.018> Submitted to REF2.

- **[O6] Tjandra, N., Rihova, I., Snell, S., den Hertog, C., & Theodoraki, E.** (2020). *Mega-events brand meaning co-creation: the Olympic case*. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-08-2019-2539> (Academy of Marketing Award, 2015).

- **[P1]** Economic impacts from pre-games training related activities of national teams attending the London 2012 Olympic and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, 1 Mar 2011 - 31 Jul 2012, Scottish Enterprise, Funder Award Reference: SPO132855, Contract research, PI, £5,000.

- **[P2]** Qatar National Research Fund - Leveraging the 2022 Qatar World Football Cup for the promotion of green and active living. A multiple stakeholder evaluation of strategic options, 11 Jan, 2013 - 31 Mar 2016, Qatar National Research Fund, Peer-reviewed funding, PI, £156,500 (£40,512 to ENU).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research by ENU led to a clearer understanding of previous mega sport event planning and evaluation practices. It highlighted important and successful examples, as well as recognising the vital role played by networks of stakeholders in legacy planning. It also applied key findings to potential future plans to further improve sustainable social development.

Identified findings directly impacted **public policy**. The international scope of the findings, and close engagement with UNESCO, [text removed for publication], ministries and public sector organisations, led to implementation of policies, systems and reforms at a number of levels of sports governance. Main beneficiaries were; UNESCO and sports ministries in UNESCO member states, [text removed for publication], organising committees of mega sports events in the UK, public sector organisations in China, the Qatar Ministry of Public Health, and the Qatar Olympic Academy. The **indicators of reach and significance of impact on public policy** are found in: a) acknowledgements in UNESCO reports **[C1, C2]**, and b) evidence of influence on debate in public policy and practice through distinctive contributions to expert panels and advice to government (at local, national or international level). **[C3, C4, C5, C6, C9, C10]**. The research has also led to awards and notable media recognition **[C7, C8]**.

Impact on International Sport Policy Development

International sport policy development has been influenced by research findings on event evaluation practices [O1, O2, O3]. Findings on best planning and evaluation practice informed the UNESCO-led sport ministers 2017 Action Plan on managing the long-term effects of sport events, and the role of these events in sustainable development. The Ministers meeting at the Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI), held in Kazan (13-15 July 2017) expressed their *'gratitude to all involved experts [Dr Theodoraki] for their commitment and contributions.'* [C1]. Ministers also confirmed that: *'the consultations with the three expert Working Groups, as well as the establishment of a virtual working space for the working groups, made possible the further development of the sport policy follow-up framework'* [C1].

Dr Theodoraki also participated as expert at the UNESCO event on Match Fixing and Corruption in Sport, Doha, Qatar in September 2015. She articulated a report she had authored on event assessment for Transparency International [C3], drawing on previous research findings [O1, O2, O3]. At the event, she brought awareness to international government representatives on the problem of mega sport event mega assessment [C2]. This supported the development of a network of policy agents committed to address the weaknesses on event evaluation and governance frameworks. UNESCO noted afterwards *'We should also like to express our gratitude to the speakers and experts [Dr Theodoraki] attending the meeting. The interest that they showed throughout both days of the meeting, together with their expert opinions, fuelled the discussion and highlight the various key measures in the fight against manipulation of sports competitions.'* [C2].

[text removed for publication]

Impact on Sustainability Assurance of Mega Sport Events in the UK

The research informed an assurance policy for sustainable events which was implemented for the London 2012 Olympic Games. This has led to a more sustainable legacy from the games through to present day. Dr Theodoraki was a core-commissioner member of the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012. Her research on mega sport events [O1, O3, P1] informed the commission's: a) recommendations to organisers and government departments and b) evaluations of their Olympic Games related sustainability plans. Based on the commission's recommendations, organisers took remedial action, and guidance was issued to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee. In all, [fourteen reports](#) were published by the Commission.

The Independent evaluation of the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 acknowledged that *'[Theodoraki] had very significant expertise in the area of events' assurance and the events' industry.'* and also noted *'CSL 2012 added greatly to the credibility of London 2012 and should be a model for future Olympics and other mega sporting events, like the Commonwealth Games, FIFA World Cup and Rugby World Cup'* [C5]. Ex-Mayor of London, and current UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, on the role of providing expertise on the sustainability of the London Olympic Games, noted *'By being at the forefront of public commentary and assurance of the 2012 programme, you [Dr Theodoraki] have maintained a spotlight on London's commitments and on our delivery against these. Your personal contribution to the Commission has been substantial, providing expertise in the area of event management and I commend you for your intellectual commitment, and for giving up your personal time in this endeavour.'* [C6].

Impact on CPD in Ministries and Sport Organisations in Qatar and China

The research findings on leveraging the FIFA 2022 World Cup for social behaviour change [P2] and on the impacts of various mega sport events and large-scale cultural events [P1, O1-O6] were widely covered in the media [C8]. This led to professional development and research dissemination programmes in Doha, in 2017, 2018 and 2019, hosted by the Qatar Olympic Academy. Approximately 20 participants attended each year from National Olympic Committees and National sport federations in Qatar, Yemen, Oman, UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Qatar Olympic Academy then acknowledged Dr Theodoraki *'in recognition of outstanding contribution and service to sports and athletes in the state of Qatar.'* [C7].

In 2019, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Municipality of Chengdu in China requested Dr Theodoraki to deliver professional development sessions to delegations of senior event managers. She was requested to cover her research to provide advice on the potential for social leveraging of forthcoming mega sport events hosted in China [C9]. [text removed for publication]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [C1] Acknowledgement of membership role of UNESCO expert working group. Kazan 2017 Final Report. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259362>
 - [C2] Acknowledgement of membership role of UNESCO expert working group. Doha 2015 Final Report. [Final report - UNESCO Digital Library](#). List of participants in separate file.
 - [C3] Engagement with campaign and pressure group of Transparency International leading to publication of research synopsis on event management in Transparency International's Sport: Global Corruption Report. https://www.transparency.org/files/content/feature/3.3_MegaEventImpact_Theodoraki_GCRSport.pdf
 - [C4] [text removed for publication]
 - [C5] Acknowledgement of core-commissioner role in the Independent evaluation of the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012: Final Report: <https://www.cslondon.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/03/CSL-Evaluation-Final-Report.pdf?id=CSL-Evaluation-Final-Report.pdf>
 - [C6] Acknowledgement by ex-London Mayor, UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson.
 - [C7] Award of Certificate of Appreciation for CPD role from the Qatar Olympic Academy.
 - [C8] Media coverage of related research and its contributions.
- Television**
- Russian 24 TV. Interview on long-term effects of the FIFA 2014 Brazil World Cup, 5 June 2014. Min 4.35. Screenshot provided separately.
- Newspapers**
- The National-Arab Emirates. [Joint bid to identify positive legacies of FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Qatar research plan designed to help to enable development](#). 1 May 2014.
- Construction Week. [Researchers in sustainable Qatar World Cup legacy. Stenden University Qatar to explore green and active living in project](#). 12 Apr 2014.
- Arabian Business [Qatar Researchers to find 'Sustainable World Cup Legacy](#) 10 Apr 2014
- Gulf Times. [QNRF Grant for Stenden University](#). 9 April 2014.
- Australian Leisure Management. [Qatar Government backs massive investment in sport and related infrastructure](#). 15 April 2014.
- The Peninsula-Qatar. [FIFA 2022 World Cup Sustainability Research](#). 10 April 2014. Page 6
- TheConversation.com. [There would be no shame in Brazil ditching the Olympics](#).. 8 May 2014.
- The Scotsman. [It's game on when it comes to keeping sport clean](#). 7 April 2016.
- [C9] Acknowledgment of contribution and invitation from Ministry of Commerce and Municipality of Chengdu in China.
 - [C10] [text removed for publication]