

Mega-events and Tourism Impacts: Foreign Visitor Perceptions of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa

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ABSTRACT There are several impacts of hosting events that relate to economic and social development aspects. South Africa has used sport tourism to promote the country as a major sports events destination. Research on mega-events tends to focus on economic impacts, including tourism effects. Very few, however, examine visitor perceptions of the event to establish experiences and concerns. This article examines the positive and negative relationships between tourism and the hosting of mega-events with a special focus on the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Africa's first mega-event. Additionally, visitor perceptions derived from interviews undertaken with 4 814 foreign tourists during the World Cup are examined. The results reveal that foreign visitors generally enjoyed their stay in South Africa and perceived the country as a good tourism destination. The article concludes that tourism outcomes related to the hosting of mega-events need to be planned, particularly if more widespread benefits are to be realised within the tourism industry and in local communities. In particular, the positive experiences and images of South Africa as a result of the World Cup should be integrated into an appropriate destination marketing strategy.