

**Rio de Janeiro Residents' Perceptions of Legacy and Support for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games**

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**Thursday, May 30, 2013**

**20-minute oral presentation  
(including questions)  
(Room 415)**

**Abstract 2013-013**

**8:55 AM**

Rio de Janeiro is going to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games (OG). The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is concerned about strong popular support before and after hosting OG (e.g., Preuss, 2004). Sport mega event organizers should know not only the level of popular support, but also the reasons for such support (Ritchie, Shipway & Cleeve, 2009). Social exchange theory (e.g., Blau, 1964) proposes that individuals interact with other entities because they expect to receive some benefits from that relationship. In our context, the specific benefit to the residents in supporting the Olympic Games will be the perceived legacy, a multidimensional construct, defined as structures (benefits) that are consequences of hosting a sport event which remain after the event (e.g., Hritz & Ross, 2010). Accordingly, local residents would offer support to the OG in exchange of positive perceptions of legacy. We also posit that current perceptions of legacy, a future prospect, have to be formed based on the current work done by authorities to prepare for the event. In sum, the better the residents evaluate the work done to prepare for the event, the more positive perceptions of legacy this group is expected to have, and, consequently, the more this group will support the event. Therefore, the objective of this research was to explore and describe the structural relationships among evaluations of the work done by the government, perceptions of legacy, and intentions of support for the 2016 OG in Rio de Janeiro.

In this third stage of a larger study, a multistage stratified sample (neighborhoods, residences, residents) of 900 Rio residents was randomly drawn. There was a replacement of those residents who did not agree in participating. This replacement respected the city population quotas based on four strata: Gender, age, household income, and education. Therefore, exactly 900 residents responded to the questionnaire (53.9% females) who were mostly middle-aged ( $M = 42.9$  years old;  $SD = 16$ ). Roughly half of the sample (53.3%) had at least a high school diploma. Results of this sample have a margin of error of 3% at a confidence level of 95%.

Scales of this study were submitted to a panel of experts who confirmed their content validity. Evaluation of the work of the government was a second-order latent variable, represented by three first-order variables (use of public money, infrastructure, and security) which are represented by five manifest variables (items) each. Perception of legacy was a second-order latent variable, represented by seven first-order manifest variables (economic, tourism, environmental, infrastructural, social, cultural, and psychological legacy) which were represented by three or four manifest variables each. Support was a first-order latent variable represented by five items. The response format for all scales were a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). The measurement model showed good fit indices ( $CFI = .954$ ;  $TLI = .949$ ;  $RMSEA [90\% CI] = .052 [.050; 0.54]$ ). Internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from .766 to .917 and reliability estimates (Raykov's rho) varied from .761 to .918. Regarding construct validity, all scales presented good-enough average variance explained (AVE varying from .50 to .74) indicating that most of items loaded sufficiently high in their assigned constructs. Overall, we had no problems with the measurement model, reliability, and construct validity.

Using SEM, we tested three structural models: The fully mediated model ( $CFI = .910$ ;  $TLI = .906$ ;  $RMSEA [90\% CI] = .067 [.066; 0.69]$ ), the partially mediated model ( $CFI = .914$ ;  $TLI = .909$ ;  $RMSEA [90\% CI] = .066 [.064; 0.67]$ ), and the direct effects model ( $CFI = .957$ ;  $TLI = .954$ ;  $RMSEA [90\% CI] = .047 [.045; 0.49]$ ). The total variance explained in the dependent variable (support for OG) in the fully mediated model ( $R^2 = 69\%$ ) was larger than that explained in the partially mediated ( $R^2 = 64.9\%$ ), and in the direct effects ( $R^2 = 65.3\%$ ) models. Considering the most variance explained, we chose the fully mediated model and tested the indirect effect from the work of government to intentions of support via legacy. This indirect effect was large and significant ( $ab = .83$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). In the same model, the path coefficient from the work of government to legacy was large and significant ( $\gamma_1 = .803$ ;  $p < .001$ ). So was the path coefficient from legacy to support ( $\beta_1 = .823$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). To sum up, all three structural models fit the data quite well. However, the fully mediated model has the advantage over the other two because it explains more variance in

## 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

support and has an indirect effect that was large and significant.

Results of the current research showed that the better the residents of the host city perceived the work of the government, the more they believed in positive legacies of the 2016 Olympic Games for the city, and the more they expressed their intentions to support such event. Results of descriptive statistics showed that people did not evaluate the work of the government as highly positive (MGmon = 4.3; SDGmon = 1.4; MGinf = 4.7; SDGinf = 1.3; MGsec = 4.8; SDGsec = 1.4). This means that either the work of the government in preparation for the Olympic Games has not been perceived as adequate (e.g., slow infrastructural changes) and/or the way this work has been marketed is not satisfactory (e.g., presenting honest budgets). Improvements in both areas should bring more confidence in people about positive legacy and boost their intentions of support.

This study adds to literature in that the mediation between evaluation of the work of the government and intention to support a sport mega event through perception of legacy has never been investigated in previous studies. Additionally, the use of social exchange theory to explain support for sport mega events can shed new light on the literature about this topic. Since legacy is a far distant expectation, people seem to use more tangible clues (such as the work done so far) to form their perceptions of legacy and, consequently, their support to the events. From a practical point of view, these results highlight the importance of (a) the work of the government in preparation for hosting the Olympic Games, and (b) an effective marketing plan to inform people about this work.

### References

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