Abstract

This thesis is based on a field study examining Durban’s role as host city for South Africa’s 2010 FIFA World Cup and one of its major projects, the central beachfront upgrade. This project is unique in nature as it was designed to accommodate the 2010 FIFA Fan Fest, but also to meet long-term development goals of creating a modern, world-class event beach. The field results presented is a summary of six weeks in Durban interviewing local officials and stakeholders, and offering new insights into their battle with FIFA to secure a healthy future for their city. Despite the prominence of research surrounding the 2010 FIFA World Cup, very little focus was conducted on host cities’ development and place marketing projects, nor capturing the perceptions of both city officials and stakeholders. The main purpose of this thesis was to understand the impacts of the central beachfront upgrade and understand how Durban – a city with a 25% backlog in basic services and a poverty rate of over 44% - managed a careful tightrope balance of competing visions of a host city: to be a corporate engine for FIFA, a tool for entrepreneurship and development, or both. In the past decade, mega-events have been awarded to a growing number of entrepreneurial nations with cities eager to compete. Future FIFA World Cup host cities can learn from Durban’s central beachfront upgrade as a best practice on how to meet entrepreneurial and development goals, all the while meeting agreements with FIFA.

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