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# CAPE TOWN'S 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP STADIUM LOCATION AND ITS SPATIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS

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Sport stadiums, particularly those built for mega tournaments such as the FIFA World Cup, often pose a major burden on public revenues. As one example, the South African government, despite its agenda of socioeconomic upliftment following political transition in 1994, was heavily burdened with stadium construction for the 2010 FIFA Men's World Cup (Alegi, 2007, 2008; Gunter, 2011; Maharaj, 2011; Molloy & Chetty, 2015). Given the costs associated with these stadiums, a pivotal but less researched question is where to locate these stadiums considering their intended impacts. More recently, the question extends to whether impacts resulting from stadiums built for mega tournaments are environmentally justifiable, especially considering socioeconomic inequalities not just in South Africa but in many parts of the world.

While there is a noticeable body of literature on sport stadium costs and impacts, literature regarding the rationale behind the location of stadiums is more limited. Nelson (2001, 2002) argued that it is not so much a question of whether using public revenue to build stadiums is worthwhile from an economic development perspective (considering that stadiums continue to be built anyhow), but *where* to locate stadiums to ensure the greatest return on investment in public infrastructure. Using a time-series analysis of 25 metropolitan areas in the United States, Nelson found that central business districts (CBDs), the edge of CBDs, or other central locations appear to be best for Major League stadiums because economic gain generally comes from spectators spending money on other leisure activities when visiting a stadium, and that such activities tend to be found in more central locations. Therefore, suburban or peripheral locations are not preferable, as spectators spend less money in these locations. Moreover, stadiums located in suburbs are often associated with blight. Residents often view stadiums as a nuisance, while parking lots that stand empty for most of the week deter retailers.

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Coupled with the question of whether to locate stadiums in CBDs or suburbs is whether the rationale behind the location of stadiums should be urban regeneration or commercial profit (see, e.g., Thornley, 2002, and Tarazona Vento, 2016). One such example is the debate whether the New York Yankees professional baseball team should have stayed with their existing stadium in the economically depressed South Bronx or built a new ballpark in upmarket Manhattan. Both sides of the debate claimed, among other things, that its respective location would result in greater economic gain for the city. Chanayil (2002) evaluated each sides' claims and found that they both employed weak political arguments and had little evidence to support their economic claims. Like Nelson, Chanayil maintained that economic gain is generally limited to leisure spending by spectators, but, unlike Nelson, the effect of this spending would be felt more in the South Bronx. Chanayil concluded that upgrading the existing stadium would have better served New York's urban planning policy and objectives.

Whether located in CBDs or suburbs, or whether the rationale is urban regeneration or commercial profit, the intended effect of stadiums on both commercial and residential property values has also been questioned. Davies (2008) points out that although stadiums can have tangible and intangible impacts on commercial property values in the UK, these are highly variable across different sectors and are rather inconclusive. While stadiums often solicit a "not-in-my-backyard" response from residents (see, e.g., Ahlfeldt & Maennig, 2012), Davies also points out that stadiums can eventually increase residential property values, as well as contribute indirectly to values through the creation of pride, confidence, and the enhanced image of an area.

Although the literature is limited regarding the location of sport stadiums, current literature suggests that the pivotal questions are whether to locate centrally or peripherally, whether the rationale should be urban regeneration or commercial profit, and whether property values can be increased. These questions still require further research. Moreover, further research about the environmental justice implications of locations (i.e., implications for the quality of life of residents living close to stadiums) is necessary.

Cape Town's 2010 FIFA Men's World Cup stadium offers a unique case to study some of the questions above, perhaps not in-depth, but more holistically. The city initially opted for a stadium upgrade in Athlone, a suburb in the economically depressed "Cape Flats" area, for purposes of urban regeneration. FIFA, however, opted for a new mega stadium to be built in the more scenic suburb of Green Point next to the Cape Town CBD and the Table Mountain heritage site. Eventually, the Athlone stadium was upgraded to incorporate a fan park and training facility for the tournament. In contrast, a mega stadium was built in Green Point, now known as Cape Town Stadium. Figure 11.1 shows the locations of these two stadiums.

The aim of this chapter is to describe and compare the spatial and environmental justice implications of both the Athlone and Green Point stadium sites. Adopting a critical realist perspective and a comparative case study approach using

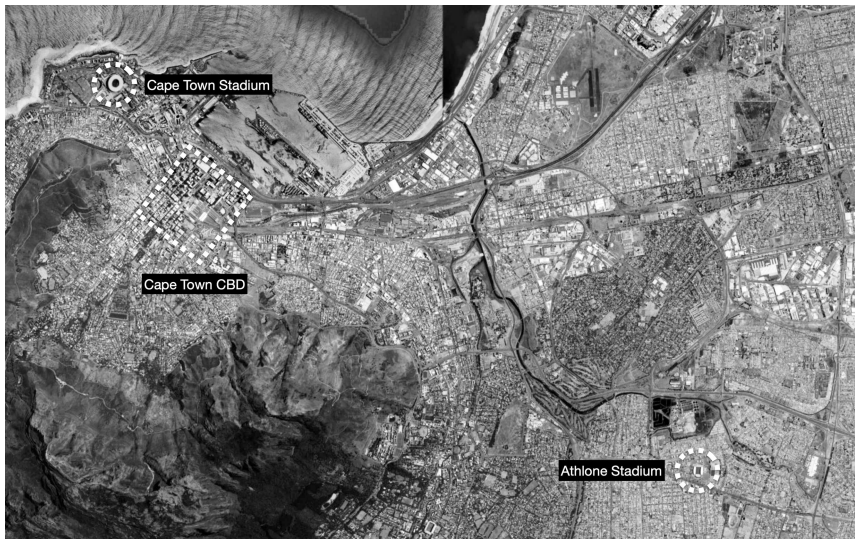


**FIGURE 11.1** Aerial view of Cape Town. (Map data: Google, CNES/Airbus)

secondary sources and field observations, we first outline Cape Town's urban development priorities and objectives prior to 2010, then chronicle the decision-making dynamics behind the Green Point stadium location. Against this background, we then describe and compare both locations and stadiums in terms of their possible implications. The chapter contributes to the literature on the rationale, processes, and possible impacts behind stadium location and provides qualitative observations for further studies.

## Cape Town's Urban Development Priorities and Objectives Prior to 2010

Cape Town currently has a population of about 4 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Around 2010, the population was about 3.7 million given the last census count in 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The demography then included people of mixed-race (42.4%), African (38.6%), Caucasian (15.7%), and Indian, Asian, or other (3.3%). The gross domestic product in 2011 was approximately $13.5 billion, with much of the economy made up of finance, property, insurance, and business services (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Other sectors included manufacturing, wholesale, retail, and accommodation. With Mediterranean-like weather conditions, the areas surrounding the city have a large agricultural economy, which is serviced through the Port of Cape Town, making it one of the busiest in Africa. The city also has an airport with many direct routes to and from international destinations.

Typical of South African cities, Cape Town is spatially fragmented along class and racial divides following apartheid. Since political transition in 1994, various

pieces of legislation have been passed to redevelop and integrate South African cities. The local provincial ordinances predating 1994 were used alongside the Development Facilitation Act (Act 67 of 1995; Republic of South Africa, 1995) to empower provincial governments to make certain planning decisions at a provincial level. The Act intended to fast-track the redress of apartheid spatial planning through the enforcement of the following basic principles:

- Promoting efficient and integrated land development;
- Integrating social, economic, institutional, and physical aspects of land development;
- Promoting residential and employment opportunities close to each other;
- Optimizing use of existing resources such as bulk infrastructure, roads, transportation, and social facilities;
- Contributing to the correction of historically distorted settlement patterns. (Republic of South Africa, 1995)

The Western Cape Provincial Spatial Development Framework (SDF) informed the planning and development of the city prior to 2010 (Western Cape Government, 2009). The SDF places sustainable development as the preeminent guiding principle with ecological integrity, social equity, and economic efficiency as its three pillars. At a municipal level, the South African planning system derives its powers and functions primarily from the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000; Republic of South Africa, 2000), which provides the basis for an integrated development plan (IDP), incorporating also a municipal-level SDF. The IDP is the city's overall "business plan" and guides planning and budgeting at a local level. Stemming from the SDF, more detailed development plans for specific areas that require intervention are produced. These policies and planning instruments guide and direct planning and development within the South African city (Van Wyk & Steyn, 2015).

The Cape Town IDP for 2007 included seven focus areas for intervention. Three areas had direct implications for preparing the city for the 2010 FIFA Men's World Cup stadiums (City of Cape Town, 2007). The first focus area included *shared economic growth and development*, which focused on attracting investors, businesses, and visitors, and leveraging their financial impact to assist small business and skills development. This focus area of economic growth was dedicated to preparing for the World Cup in terms of the influx of investment that would also require a suitable environment to enable business to grow. The second focus area included *sustainable urban infrastructure and services*, which centered on universal access to basic services through eradicating backlogs in municipal services, preserving ecological resources, and managing infrastructure effectively. The third focus area included *public transport systems*, which could restructure the city through corridor development and improve public transport.

Considering this legislative and policy framework in the runup to the World Cup, it can be concluded that Cape Town would have been on a strong trajectory toward equitable development and resource allocation to redress apartheid spatial planning.

Planning instruments at the time, however, did not provide a clear directive in terms of stadium development at Athlone or Green Point. These instruments in fact aimed to protect social facilities and greenspaces, especially in Green Point. As demonstrated below, the policy and planning void around stadium development in Cape Town, and unrealistic expectations placed around the World Cup, arguably contributed toward decision-making influenced by power and politics.

## Decision-making Dynamics Behind the Cape Town Stadium Location

The World Cup Local Organising Committee (LOC), mandated by FIFA to organize the tournament, and an official subcommittee of the South African Football Association (SAFA), initially identified the Newlands rugby stadium as the preferred venue considering its optimal seating capacity and minimal upgrades that would have been required. Provincial and local officials, however, indicated their preference for the Athlone stadium because it was closer to the fanbase of the sport and was strategically located along the Klipfontein Corridor as means toward spatial integration. In a 2009 interview with Gert Bam, then-Head of Sport and Recreation in Cape Town, it was indicated that decision-makers "chose Athlone Stadium not just because of football … but it would turn the city around, it [would] impact on this tale of two cities." The strategy was to leverage development for a blighted area in line with the city's IDP (Schoonbee & Brummer, 2010). Based on this reasoning, various government departments within the province began allocating large budgets toward the Athlone stadium in the hope that it would eventually become the official venue for the World Cup.

At the official bid presentation to FIFA on September 30, 2003, the Newlands rugby stadium was still the proposed venue for the Western Cape leg of the tournament. A FIFA delegation subsequently visited South Africa and found that the Newlands stadium was "easily suitable" for hosting a quarterfinal match that required a seating capacity of 40,000. South Africa was officially awarded host nation for the 2010 Men's World Cup on May 15, 2004, with Newlands as the confirmed venue. In July 2005, just over a year after the official announcement, FIFA sent a technical delegation to South Africa to view the prospective sites. After visiting the Newlands rugby stadium, the delegation visited the Athlone stadium (pictured in Figure 11.2) with the then-City Manager of Cape Town, who indicated the city's preference for Athlone. FIFA then indicated that a process would need to be undertaken to change the venue (Schoonbee & Brummer, 2010).

The LOC, however, seemed undeterred by the developmental ambitions of the province and city. Their continued confidence in the Athlone site was apparent in a letter from then-Premier of the Western Cape, Ebrahim Rasool, to the Chief Executive Officer of the LOC, Danny Jordaan:

> It is clear from what I am able to gather that there is some form of miscommunication between ourselves and the Local Organising

**FIGURE 11.2** Athlone Stadium. (Courtesy of the City of Cape Town)

> Committee. The province and the City of Cape Town have always felt that the development of a dedicated football stadium in Athlone will leave a legacy for generations to come. In addition, the building of the stadium will allow us to leverage much needed transport and other socio-economic developments in the surrounding area … we are expressing a strong preference in this regard. (Rasool, 2005)

During an official meeting between provincial and city officials on September 30, 2005, members of the meeting resolved that Athlone be investigated in terms of FIFA requirements, while it remained the preferred venue. Green Point would be the second option, as mentioned by some FIFA officials during their previous visit, while Newlands would be the third ("Record of the Meeting," 2005). This declaration was the first time Green Point was officially raised as a potential venue. Existing sporting facilities at Green Point were previously earmarked as a possible training venue only.

A feasibility study stemming from previous meetings with officials underestimated construction costs of the proposed stadiums and predicted low tourism benefits for Newlands and Athlone and high benefits for Green Point (Standish, 2005). These predictions opened the door for lobbyists to actively pursue the Green Point site while ignoring the local needs and objectives of the province and the city. Technical objections to the Athlone stadium became more pronounced, citing that seating behind the goalposts would be less valuable in terms of ticket sales. FIFA favored Green Point, citing that Cape Town would be underselling the potential for a world-class venue if Athlone or Newlands was selected (Platzkey, 2007).

During November 2005, then-FIFA President Sepp Blatter visited Cape Town for the first time and had subsequent meetings with the Premier and President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. The day after meeting with Blatter, the Premier was informed that the Presidency proposed that Cape Town host a semifinal match in a 65,000-seat stadium at Green Point (Platzkey, 2007). It appears FIFA intended to sway government officials by offering a semifinal match for Cape Town to justify a new stadium at Green Point built according to technical specifications. Officials subsequently signed the host city agreements shortly before local government elections.

Following the elections, the more centrist Democratic Alliance took over the leadership of Cape Town through a coalition government and supported the leftist proposals to regenerate Athlone. Newly elected Mayor Helen Zille stopped all contracting in respect of the Green Point site and commissioned a new feasibility study comparing Green Point to five other locations. On a current affairs television show, *You be the Judge*, Mayor Zille explained:

> I assumed that if we're going to go into something like this, all the studies would be there, all the mathematics would have been done, all the costings and sums would be there. That has not happened. I really think that we are going into Green Point because Sepp Blatter says: "I like Green Point," not because it is the best thing for South Africans. (eTV, 2006)

A subsequent feasibility study looked at six venues, including Athlone, Green Point, and Newlands. Stadium construction cost estimates escalated to roughly three times what was forecasted just a year earlier (Standish, 2005). Predicted tourism benefits were highest for Newlands, followed by Athlone, then Green Point. Developmental need was highest for Athlone, followed by Newlands, then Green Point. All three sites were considered timeous and ready for implementation in terms of statutory approvals (Bayette Development Consulting, 2006). The final push, however, was the imposition of the requirement of a 65,000-seat stadium for the semifinal. This effectively made the construction of a new mega stadium at Green Point the only "feasible" option. It appears that the technical imposition of Cape Town hosting a semifinal match was the deciding factor tying officials to Green Point, despite the city's development objectives and contrary findings from the latest feasibility study. At significant cost to South African taxpayers, the Athlone stadium was upgraded to a fan park and training facility as a compromise, while a new world-class mega stadium was built at Green Point, known today as Cape Town Stadium. Considering the cost, what are some of the spatial and environmental justice implications of these two stadiums?

## Spatial and Environmental Justice Implications of the Athlone and Cape Town Stadiums

After briefly introducing each stadium, we assess the stadiums along three themes: local planning policy, infrastructure upgrades, and possible social impacts. Stadium costs are indicated in U.S. dollars and at the time of construction.

## *The Athlone Location and Resulting Fan Park and Training Facility Upgrade*

Athlone Stadium is owned by the City of Cape Town and is located approximately 10 km from the CBD. Originally earmarked by provincial and local authorities to serve as the home base of football in the Western Cape, the city spent approximately $43 million on the stadium before the World Cup and directed further provincial and local budgeting toward upgrades in preparation for the World Cup (Bob & Swart, 2009).

### *Local Planning Policy*

The Cape Flats District Plan indicated no substantial development plans for Athlone Stadium at the time, with the stadium zoned as public open space (City of Cape Town, 2012). The district plan merely elevated the stadium's role to a district-level sports facility that was meant to be enhanced. A popular planning concept at the time to address spatial fragmentation in South African cities was "corridor development." The stadium is located next to the Klipfontein Corridor, while the district plan aimed to prioritize the corridor through the following: (1) maximizing nodal and corridor opportunities, (2) facilitating better access, (3) improving public transport, (4) intensifying development around nodes, and (5) facilitating the development of a range of economic opportunities.

### *Infrastructure Upgrades*

Athlone Stadium was upgraded to a training facility and accommodated the temporary fan park for the duration of the tournament. The upgrades included two new stands, fencing, lighting, media facilities, changing rooms, and a pitch upgrade, all at an estimated cost of $54.5 million (Host City Cape Town, 2011). Considering that the upgrades were within the stadium site and not accompanied by surrounding upgrades to the same extent as in Green Point, benefit to surrounding communities was limited. Released shortly after the tournament, the *FIFA Green Goal Legacy Report* outlined the environmentally friendly upgrades undertaken at the Athlone and Green Point stadiums. At Athlone Stadium, these upgrades included the installation of energy-efficient and water-saving technologies, waste minimization, and branding of recycling signage and bins (Host City Cape Town, 2011).

### *Possible Social Impacts*

While the literature debates the extent to which stadiums positively impact surrounding communities, an indicator of possible social impact is the perceptions communities have of stadiums. Positive perceptions may foster a sense of ownership, belonging, and willingness to remain invested socially and economically in

the surrounding neighborhood. Bob and Swart (2009) surveyed residents around the Athlone and Cape Town stadiums in 2006—four years before the World Cup. Most respondents in Athlone were mixed-race middle-aged males. Respondents experienced World Cup euphoria, were looking forward to the stadium upgrades and the tournament itself, and had high expectations for the upgrades and the tournament bringing economic and social benefits to the community. Post-tournament surveys, however, may still be conducted to gauge current perceptions and any lasting social impacts. Ideally, such a survey ought to have been followed up with a post-tournament study among the same target population.

With the stadium located next to the Klipfontein Corridor, the stadium is strategically placed between the Cape Town International Airport, the Cape Flats, the former African township of Langa, and former "white" suburbs. Athlone Stadium is therefore highly symbolical of South African demography and diversity. Its greater accessibility relative to Green Point also makes it more affordable for lower-income communities relying on public transport, especially in the Cape Flats area. In terms of the Cape Flats District Plan, the stadium may also be a catalyst for economic development along the Klipfontein Corridor. However, further research is necessary to determine any such impact.

## *The Green Point Location and Resulting Cape Town Mega Stadium*

The Green Point Commons was granted to the Cape Town City Council in 1923 by King George and the Union Government as public land for recreation and sport and to officially become a commonage (van Papendorp, 2010). While the city has spread significantly since, the commonage remained and became a popular public feature along the Sea Point promenade. Green Point has exceptional real estate value due to its panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean and the nearby Victoria & Alfred Waterfront—one of Africa's most valuable retail centers. Figure 11.3 shows the newly constructed Cape Town Stadium, located approximately 2.5 km from the CBD.

### *Local Planning Policy*

Upon the announcement of the Green Point Commons as the official site for a new stadium, residents and other stakeholders raised several objections. Residents mainly used the commons for its golf course and bowling field and arguably had little interest in a football stadium (De Vries, 2016). Residents formed the Green Point Common Association (GPCA) in 2006 to oppose the construction of the project. The majority white and affluent constituency argued that resources should instead be directed to poverty eradication programs, addressing unemployment and the fight against HIV/AIDS. The GPCA also advocated for the protection of a "last remaining green lung" of the city, which the proposed stadium would adversely affect. Residents directly affected by the stadium were concerned that a

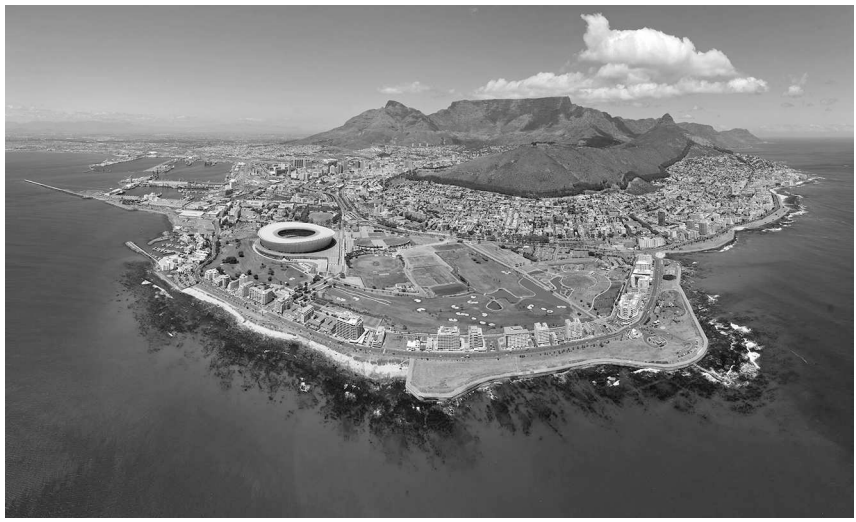

**FIGURE 11.3** Cape Town Stadium. (Courtesy of the City of Cape Town)

change in council policy would have negative impacts on their quality of life by virtue of the Green Point Park deteriorating and their property values subsequently decreasing. The strongest opposition to the stadium, however, came from the Cape Town Environmental Protection Association (CEPA), which threatened high court action and protests to stop the commons from becoming the official site. CEPA shared Mayor Zille's sentiments concerning the selection of a site, alluding to a top-down decision-making process from a foreign entity as opposed to a sovereign decision-making process in terms of local planning policy. The affidavit in their High Court interdict stated: "It is thus scarcely an exaggeration to say that the entire process has been stampeded to an undignified consummation, in the interest of satisfying a deadline arbitrarily imposed in distant Zurich" (Jarvis, 2007). As a compromise, the city eventually included the development of an "urban park" as part of getting approval for the stadium. A portion of the Green Point Commons was then rezoned from public open space to a designation that would allow for the development of the stadium, associated infrastructure, and the urban park as required by the community (Essop, 2007). Apart from the rezoning, the city had little in terms of other planning policies or instruments to guide the development of the new stadium.

## *Infrastructure Upgrades*

The newly constructed Cape Town Stadium cost approximately $586 million at the time, and an urban park built to satisfy residents added another $77 million. A further $993 million was spent on the precinct, including upgrades to local roads and sporting facilities, and to the CBD road and public transport network (Host

City Cape Town, 2011). While these upgrades formed part of the 2010 Tournament Legacy projects, many were probably accelerated toward completion due to the new stadium in Green Point. City officials arguably did their best leveraging the new stadium to improve the inner city as well. With environmental activists having kept a close eye on developments in Green Point, the *FIFA Green Goal Legacy Report* outlined several more environmentally friendly upgrades for Green Point compared to Athlone. These included installing energy-efficient and water-saving technologies; identifying alternative sources of water for the commons; minimizing waste and creating branding of recycling signage and bins; establishing recycling drop-off points in the CBD and along the Atlantic seaboard; developing pedestrian, cycling, and public transport infrastructure; and several other eco-friendly and landscaping projects (Host City Cape Town, 2011). These environmental upgrades were certainly a step in the right direction to help mitigate the tournament's carbon footprint considering Cape Town's water scarcity and unique and sensitive biodiversity. Moreover, the new stadium and associated upgrades appear to have increased residential property values around Green Point, with average increases after the tournament approximately 5–6% higher than the rest of the city (Engar, 2016).

## *Possible Social Impacts*

As indicated above, a pre-tournament survey was conducted among residents around the Athlone and Green Point stadium sites in 2006. Most respondents in Green Point were Caucasian middle-aged males. While respondents perhaps did not experience the same level of World Cup euphoria compared to those in Athlone, perceptions of the new stadium developments were nevertheless positive, although the tournament itself was perceived as incurring wasteful expenditure. Concerns were also raised about a possible increase in traffic and noise pollution. Furthermore, perceptions around economic and social benefits were unrealistically high (Bob & Swart, 2009).

As far as we could find, two post-tournament surveys have been conducted in Cape Town. First, Tichaawa and Bama (2012) surveyed residents in Green Point three months after the tournament and found that most respondents had a positive perception of the World Cup and were satisfied that it had a legacy of improved infrastructure. Thus, while there was fierce objection to the construction of a new stadium initially (De Vries, 2016), the compromise of an urban park and associated infrastructure upgrades—despite their massive cost—seemed to have turned perceptions toward a positive sense of place. Second, Swart and Jurd (2012) conducted a survey among residents in informal settlements in Cape Town three months after the tournament. These residents had a positive perception of the tournament in terms of its perceived impact on local sport and social development. Still, the economic benefit of the tournament was not perceived to be shared across the socioeconomic spectrum.

## Conclusion

In Cape Town, the spatial and environmental justice around the 2010 FIFA Men's World Cup centered around the location of the official stadium. International literature prior to 2010 argued that locations near CBDs offered the best returns in terms of leisure spending by spectators. Considering South Africa's segregated past, Cape Town's city development priorities and objectives, however, had a strong redistributive, restorative, and developmental trajectory prior to the World Cup. City officials, therefore, identified the Athlone stadium as the preferred venue considering its symbolic and strategic location in the Cape Flats and along the Klipfontein Corridor. FIFA, however, insisted on a new mega stadium in Green Point next to the CBD and Table Mountain heritage site, despite objections by city officials and residents. Eventually, the Athlone stadium was upgraded and included a fan park and training facility for the tournament, while the official Cape Town stadium was built in Green Point. The Green Point stadium development included an urban park to satisfy residents and major infrastructure upgrades in and around the precinct, enabling city officials to leverage the construction of the stadium as best they could. An environmental report lists various eco-friendly initiatives for both the Athlone and Green Point venues and especially for the latter. Post-tournament surveys among residents in informal settlements suggest a positive symbolic impact but skepticism around shared economic benefits. Residents in Green Point felt the tournament was a success and appreciated the urban park and infrastructure upgrades. Residential property values in Green Point were also impacted positively.

While these findings suggest a degree of environmental justice, the gains are arguably very small compared to the costs involved, especially considering the developmental challenges that the country and city faced at the time and still face today. The city acquired a world-class stadium, but it was placed in neither the football nor rugby heartland of Cape Town, and that in addition to the original construction is now posing a major cost in terms of maintenance. Subsequent scholarship on the World Cup's impact on host cities in South Africa has also pointed out that infrastructure upgrades served little to integrate marginalized areas, while inequalities in the housing sector more likely worsened (Steinbrink et al., 2011). Although the literature suggests that central stadium locations offer better economic gains, the location of Cape Town Stadium on the more secluded side of the CBD places it further from most of the city's population and at least two or more public transport modal switches away from lower-income communities. Its spatial justice is therefore questionable.

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