

# Perceptions of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games: Legacies for Individuals and Communities from Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Chen, Shushu; Veldhuijzen van Zanten, Jet; Quinton, Mary; Lee, Mark; Ali, Tariq; Heyes, Andrew; Liang, Xiao; Alharbi, Abdullah; Carter, Barnaby; Duan, Zhaoyu; Karamani, Maria

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# **Perceptions of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games: Legacies for Individuals and Communities from Disadvantaged Backgrounds**

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*June 2023*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rationale that major sporting events create legacies such as city regeneration and economic growth has repeatedly been used to justify event bids. Whilst these types of legacies have been researched extensively, the benefits and interests of local communities and particularly those individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (CIDBs) remain relatively understudied.

Analysis undertaken by the University of Birmingham highlights the imperative of devising an inclusive, sustainable, and transformative legacy model for major events, which catalyses the well-being of all individuals and revolutionises their impact on communities, in order to drive profound, positive change within communities.

## BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2022, Birmingham hosted the 22nd Commonwealth Games, the largest multi-sport event to be held in England in 10 years, featuring thousands of athletes and over 1.5 million spectators. Home to more than 180 nationalities, Birmingham 2022 was promoted as a *'Games for everyone'*, and like all major sporting events, significant levels of investment were spent with the ambition to generate economic, social and environmental legacy for a city in which 90% of wards face greater deprivation than the national average.

Communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (CIDBs) refers to a group of people who are socially, culturally or financially disadvantaged in comparison to the majority of society. Through a systematic review and analysis of the academic literature as well as documents such as official bids and legacy and impact reports from major sporting events, it was found that major sporting events rarely benefit CIDBs. While CIDBs were often identified as a priority group who would benefit from the legacy of hosting these large sporting events, the desired positive legacies, whether set or measured, tended to be intangible.



## KEY FINDINGS

Through pre and post-Games focus group interviews with CIDBs, they recognised that hosting the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham promoted integration, increased civic pride and improved city branding.

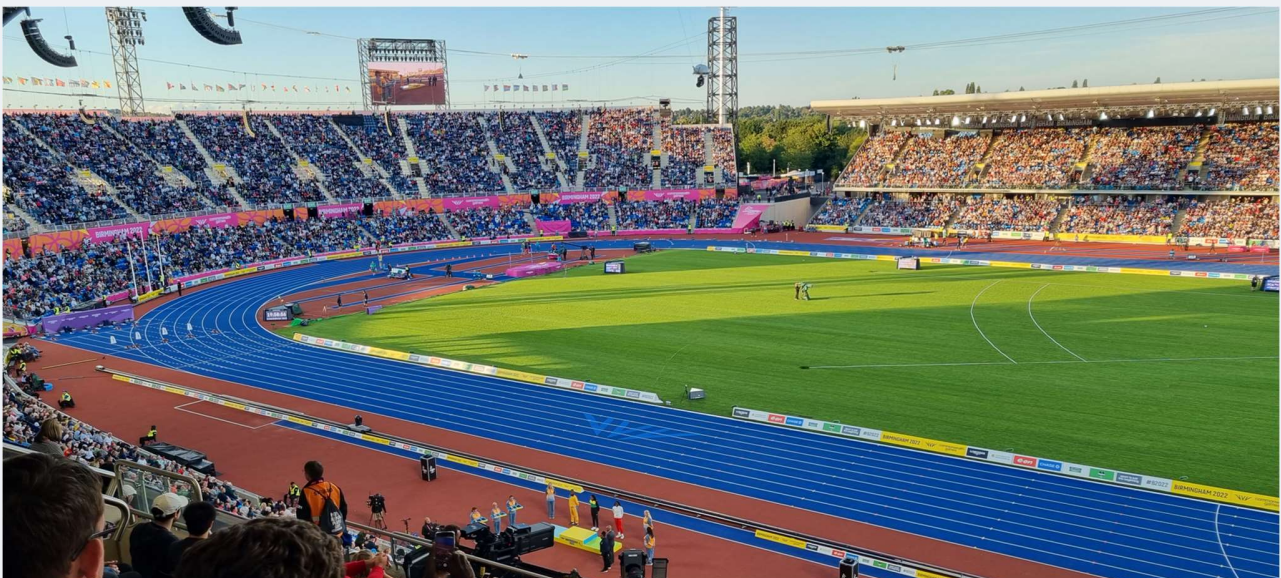
However, to many CIDBs, the Games felt distant and appeared to them to be ‘for the chosen few’. They also voiced their frustration regarding the absence of community engagement, particularly in areas where there were no game sites. They felt that their opinions were largely ignored and there were insufficient channels for them to express their views.

Various barriers and challenges limited the involvement and participation of CIDBs in the Games such as not possessing the adequate IT skills to complete the online volunteering portal application or not being able to afford the cost of a ticket.

CIDBs were not regarded as an integral part of the event-hosting cycle, nor were adequate resources ringfenced for this group to create opportunities for them to engage with the Games in a meaningful way.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Local communities, particularly those from disadvantaged areas, must be listened to and meaningfully involved in all decision-making relevant to major events throughout the process (including planning, bidding, delivery and legacy).
- Additional support in terms of resources should be provided to equip CIDBs with the skills and knowledge to enable them to participate and benefit from the opportunities created by hosting major sporting events such as volunteering roles and jobs.







## Introduction

Over the past decades, the UK has hosted some of the world's most iconic major events (such as the London 2012 Olympics, and the Manchester and Glasgow Commonwealth Games), on which significant levels of investment were spent. Politicians and event organisers tend to justify such substantial costs with headline claims that major-event-hosting can generate economic, social, and environmental legacies for the host region.

Cities such as Birmingham— which is vibrant and diverse with a young population —are constantly seeking catalysts for economic, social, and environmental renewal. A quick look at Birmingham's history reveals its passion for sporting event hosting: the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the 2003 and 2018 Athletics World Indoor Championships, the annually staged All England Open Badminton Championships, and a bid (unsuccessful) to host the 1992 Summer Olympics.

The successful staging of the Birmingham 2022 CWG, amid the three significant challenges (Brexit, Covid, and the Ukraine war), demonstrated Birmingham and the West Midlands' ability to major event hosting. The point to make is that the Birmingham 2022 CWG is not an end in itself. Instead, it marks

Birmingham's transition into a global city that constantly attracts high-profile events, supported by the '[Golden Decade](#)' of major events strategy. This is already happening, as we recently learned the news that Birmingham will be hosting the 2016 European Athletic Championships. But there is established research evidence that legacy does not generate automatically (Chen & Misener, 2019<sup>1</sup>).

Over the last decade, the evidence of major sporting events legacies has been studied systematically, in terms of reviewing the socioeconomic legacies and impacts (McCartney et al., 2010<sup>2</sup>), sport and physical activity participation legacies (Weed et al., 2015<sup>3</sup>), social legacies and impacts (Thomson, Kennelly, & Toohey, 2020<sup>4</sup>), legacies in general (Scheu, Preuss, & Könecke, 2021<sup>5</sup>), and event leverage (Schulenkorf et al., 2022<sup>6</sup>).

However, it remains unknown how individuals (particularly those from disadvantaged communities) can benefit from the events and legacy resources, and how communities and individuals can capitalise on major event opportunities to make positive changes to individuals' health and well-being.

<sup>1</sup> Chen S, Misener L. Event Leveraging in a Nonhost Region: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Sport Management*. 2019;33(4):275.

<sup>2</sup> McCartney, G., Thomas, S., Thomson, H., Scott, J., Hamilton, V., Hanlon, P., Morrison, D. S., & Bond, L. (2010). The health and socioeconomic impacts of major multi-sport events: Systematic review (1978-2008). *BMJ*, 340(may19 4), c2369–c2369. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.c2369>

<sup>3</sup> Weed, M., Coren, E., Fiore, J., Wellard, I., Chatziefstathiou, D., Mansfield, L., & Dowse, S. (2015). The Olympic Games and raising sport participation: A systematic review of evidence and an interrogation of policy for a demonstration effect. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 15(2), 195–226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.998695>

<sup>4</sup> Thomson, A., Kennelly, M., & Toohey, K. (2020). A systematic quantitative literature review of empirical research on large-scale sport events' social legacies. *Leisure Studies*, 39(6), 859–876. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1800804>

<sup>5</sup> Scheu, A., Preuß, H., & Könecke, T. (2021). The Legacy of the Olympic Games: A Review. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 6(3), 212–233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2019.1566757>

<sup>6</sup> Schulenkorf, N., Welty Peachey, J., Chen, G., & Hergesell, A. (2022). Event leverage: A systematic literature review and new research agenda. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2022.2160477>



Key background information worth noting is that Birmingham is a diverse city. With 51% of populations from ethnic minority backgrounds and 90% of wards being more deprived than the national average, any large-scale urban development and transformative capital investment that occurred as a result of major-event-production should take into account the interests of local minorities and disadvantaged groups (Chen et al., 2022<sup>7</sup>). After all, a key mission of the 2022 CWG was to deliver ‘*A Games for Everyone*’.

Through a partnership with the Birmingham Race Impact Group, a multi-disciplinary team of experts from the University of Birmingham worked together on exploring how major events and their legacies can benefit disadvantaged communities.

### **Communities and individuals who are from disadvantaged backgrounds (CIDBs).**

We use the term ‘disadvantaged’ and specifically followed Bonevski et al.’s (2014, p.2)<sup>8</sup> definition, to refer to those individuals who are “*socially, culturally or financially disadvantaged compared to the majority of society*”. In the context of major sporting events, similar to the terms ‘marginalised’, ‘socially excluded’, and ‘underrepresented’, ‘disadvantaged’ individuals, acting as an umbrella term, denotes the groups of populations that are from various vulnerable backgrounds, such as those least skilled (Smith & Fox, 2007<sup>9</sup>), living in deprived areas (Maharaj, 2015<sup>10</sup>), from low socio-economic backgrounds (Wang, et al., 2015<sup>11</sup>), or being socially excluded from societies in a variety of ways (Minnaert, 2012<sup>12</sup>).

Communities can be both place-based and where people share a community identity or affinity. Communities that are disadvantaged can experience a complex web of economic, health, and environmental factors that make it difficult for people living in certain areas or situations to achieve more positive life outcomes in comparison to their non-disadvantaged peers.

<sup>7</sup> Chen S, Yu Y, Baker E. Urban Development, City Planning, and Hosting Major Events: The cases of Birmingham and Guangzhou. *Sport in Society*. 2022; Online First.

<sup>8</sup> Bonevski, B., Randell, M., Paul, C., Chapman, K., Twyman, L., Bryant, J., Brozek, I., & Hughes, C. (2014). Reaching the hard-to-reach: a systematic review of strategies for improving health and medical research with socially disadvantaged groups. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 14(1), 42. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-14-42>

<sup>9</sup> Smith, A., & Fox, T. (2007). From 'event-led' to 'event-themed' regeneration: the 2002 Commonwealth Games Legacy Programme. *Urban Studies*, 44(5-6), 1125-1143.

<sup>10</sup> Maharaj, B. (2015). The turn of the south? Social and economic impacts of mega-events in India, Brazil and South Africa. *Local Economy: The Journal of the Local Economy Policy Unit*, 30(8), 983-999.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094215604318>

<sup>11</sup> Wang, M., Bao, H. X. H., & Lin, P. (2015). Behavioural insights into housing relocation decisions: The effects of the Beijing Olympics. *Habitat International*, 47, 20-28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2015.01.001>

<sup>12</sup> Minnaert, L. (2012). An Olympic legacy for all? The non-infrastructure outcomes of the Olympic Games for socially excluded groups (Atlanta 1996-Beijing 2008). *Tourism Management*, 33(2), 361-370.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.04.005>,

## Summary of Project

This project, in partnership with Birmingham Race Impact Group and supported by Sport Birmingham, aimed to explore the perceptions of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games for communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

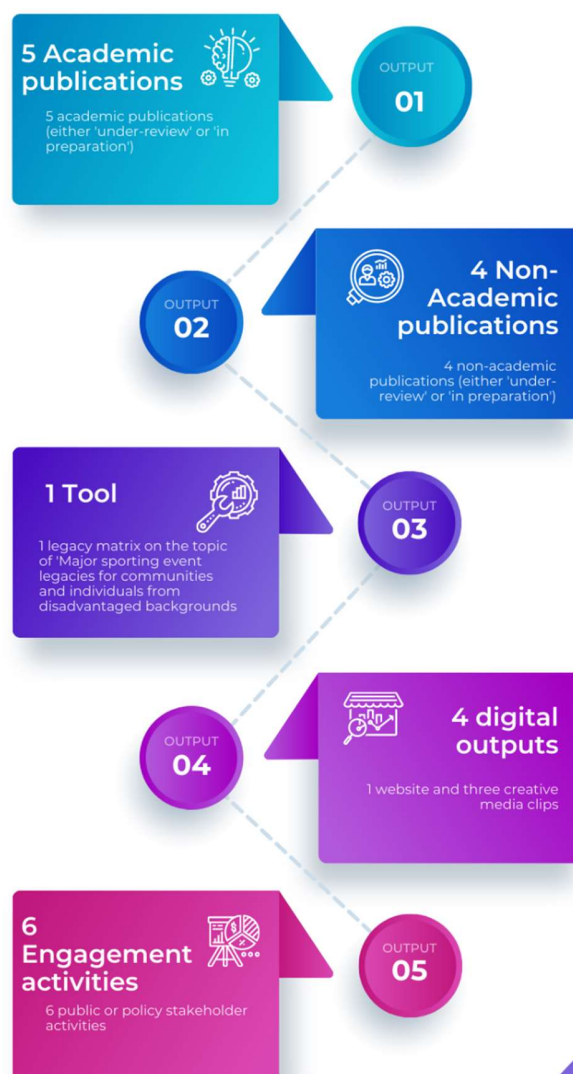
We investigated what 'legacy' means to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and examined their perceived legacy needs and barriers to event engagement. A bank of research outputs was generated from the project, of which the details are outlined in the Appendix.

### Project scope

Our research project aimed to achieve four research objectives:

1. **Review the Past:** We conducted two systematic reviews (both from academic and grey literature) on the relevant topic, examining previous research and evidence on the impact of major sporting events on communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. **The Present Debate:** We carried out a series of focus group interviews (before and after the Games) with CIDBs to understand their views of the legacies of the CWG, barriers and challenges to Games engagement.
3. **The Present Debate:** Digital data analysis (collected before and after the Games from the Twitter platform) to understand the public's view of the CWG globally.
4. **Look into Future:** A list of recommendations were drawn from the project which were then peer-reviewed and transformed to actionable two priorities.

## Significant outputs from the project



[WWW.MAJOREVENTLEGACY.COM](http://WWW.MAJOREVENTLEGACY.COM)



The subsequent figure offers a synopsis of the four research strands. The report below will individually detail the crucial findings of each strand.

# FOUR STRANDS OF THE PROJECT

## STRAND ONE

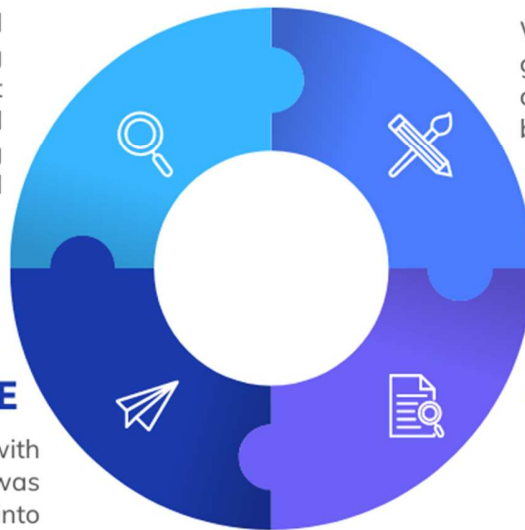
### REVIEW THE PAST

We systematically reviewed the research topic, examining previous research and past games' evidence on the social impact of major sporting events on disadvantaged communities.

## STRAND FOUR

### LOOK INTO FUTURE

A position statement featured with key recommendations was launched and transformed into implementable action points for promoting social inclusion in the context of major sporting events



## STRAND TWO

### THE PRESENT DEBATE

We carried out seven focus groups in some of the most deprived areas of Birmingham before and after the Games.

## STRAND THREE

### THE PRESENT DEBATE

A large size of digital data (640,000) were gathered from the Twitter platform to understand the public's views of the CWG, before, during and after the Games.



## STRAND ONE - REVIEW THE PAST

A systematic review of the academic literature was conducted which empirically investigated the legacies of major sporting events for disadvantaged individuals between 2000-2022.

Four academic databases [Web of Science (core collection), SPORTDiscus, Scopus, ProQuest – ASSIA] were searched. There were 1,734 records identified, and 82 articles were further assessed for eligibility, which generated a total of **12 articles** included in the review.

Quality assessment was performed for all 12 papers, with an average score of 53.2% (ranging from 30.8% to 76.2%). Research engagement with clear theoretical frameworks is poor.

Research investigation with the support of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary researchers is mostly absent.

‘Disadvantaged people’ in this review meant those people from the backgrounds of *low-income* (n=3), *marginalised* (n=3), *homeless* (n=2), *ethnic minorities* (n=1), or from *deprived areas* (n=3). Research methods used: n (qualitative approaches) = 7; n (quantitative approaches) = 4; and n (mixed methods) = 1.

**The most reported legacy/impact areas** were:

- a) housing and health (n=9)
- b) sport participation (n=4)
- c) job/business opportunities (n=3)
- d) transportation/infrastructure (n=3).

Seven studies highlighted **negative legacy** outcomes, including:

- a) gentrification
- b) eviction from houses or streets
- c) loss of affordable homes
- d) business opportunities decreased;
- e) accessibility to transport, sports facilities or healthcare facilities decreased
- f) employment opportunities unevenly distributed.

Three studies reported limited/short-term **positive legacy** outcomes, including:

- a) an increased sense of local pride
- b) change of sports practice (but only with short-term improvements)
- c) increased participation in sport (short-term) for ethnic minorities
- d) employment and volunteering opportunities slightly increased (but remain unevenly distributed).

Two studies reported both positive and negative legacy outcomes: one study acknowledged the strengthened community and having opportunities for advocacy but reported a series of human rights violations. Another study suggested an increased economic opportunity (related to tourism) and an increased national pride, but reported limited job opportunities, disruption of lives and other crime and traffic-related problems.

We found that past major sporting events **rarely benefit** CIDBs for various reasons. Research quality and theoretical engagement are **unsatisfactory**. The **needs** and **interests** of event hosting and its legacies for CIDBs are **poorly understood**.

*Overall, far too little attention has been paid to disadvantaged individuals and communities in the context of hosting major sporting events. Research quality and theoretical engagement are unsatisfactory. Much of the research up to now is led by a single discipline. The needs of and event legacies for disadvantaged individuals are poorly understood.*

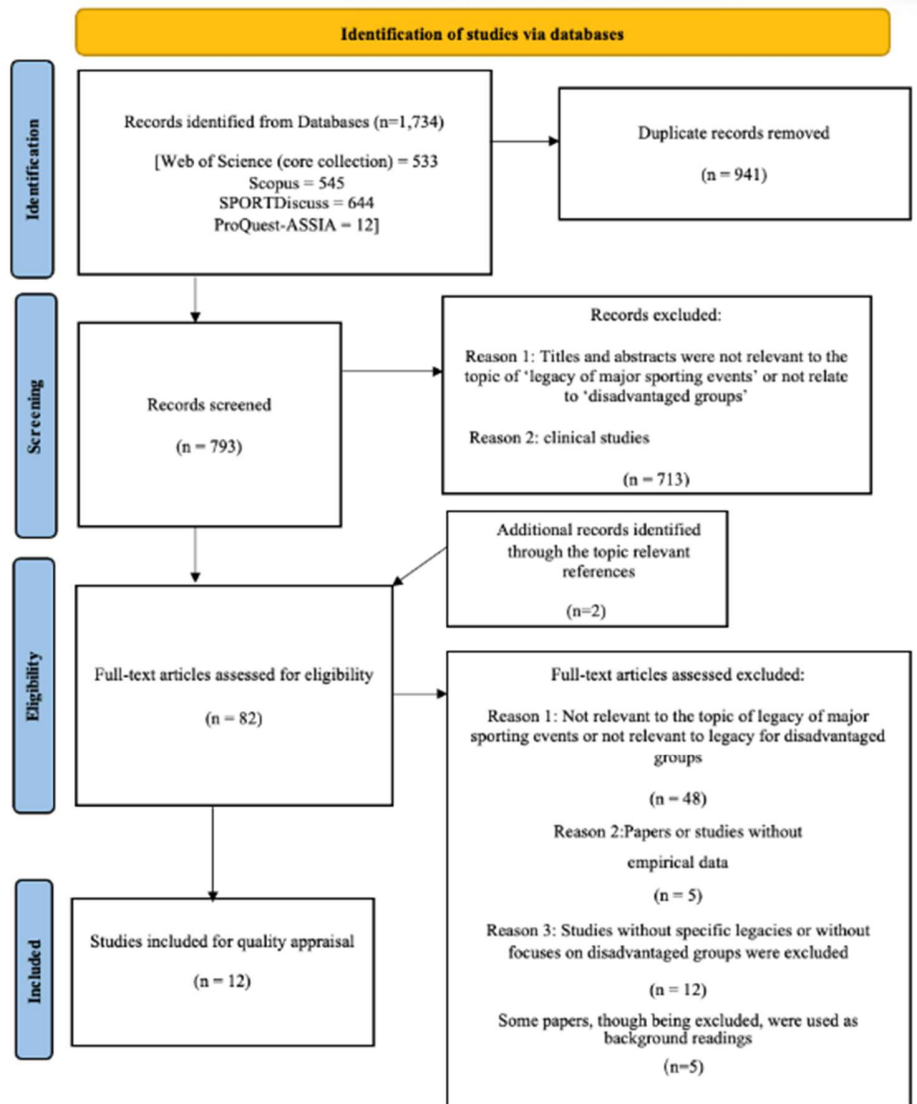


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of the systematic review.

### A review of past event reports

A total of 148 documents - the bid documents and the respective legacy/impact reports published by the organising committees and/or the host nations of the four types of major sporting events hosted since 2000 – were reviewed and analysed.

The aims of this review were to (1) detect whether any past major events have planned any legacy (statement/strategies) for CIDBs or contributed to the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) agenda; and (2) to analyse the extent to which the planned legacy objectives were fulfilled by comparing the ‘plans’ with the related legacy evaluation/impact analysis reported in the official documents.

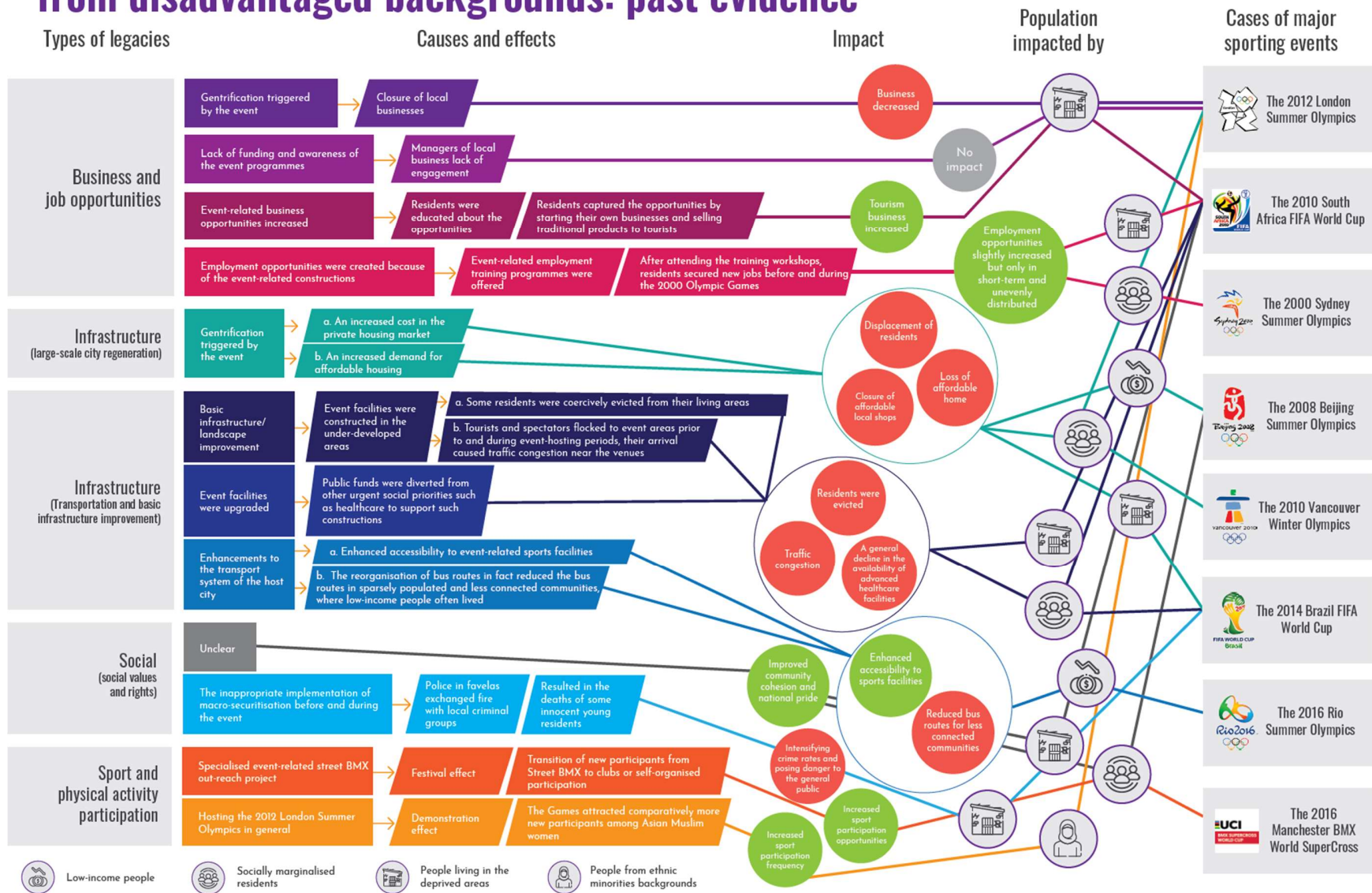
*Overall, most of the past events viewed disadvantaged groups as a target that could be positively impacted by the hosting of the events, but both the actual amount of money invested and the specific goals set were vague, and often the desired positive legacies (set or measured) tended to be intangible.*

*Click the video below to view more details*





# Major Sporting Event Legacies matrix for communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds: past evidence





## STRAND TWO - THE PRESENT DEBATE

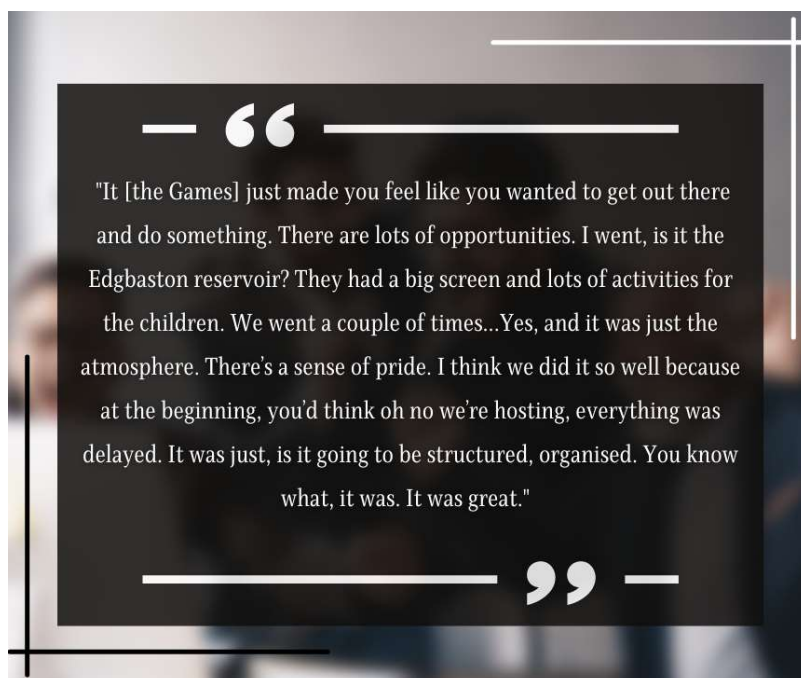
We conducted seven focus groups (each focus group consists of between 4 to 10 participants, living in some of most deprived areas in Birmingham – Aston, Balsall Heath, Erdington, Ladywood, Lozells, Handsworth, Newtown, Perry Barr, and Sparkbrook, as well as with young people who were experiencing homelessness, along with the attendance of senior member staff from community-based organisations) one month before the Games, and followed the same participants six-month-after the Games.

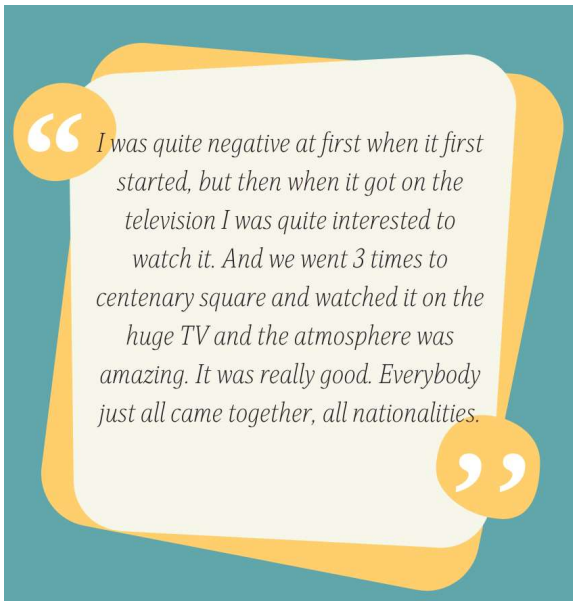
Through pre- and post-Games focus group interviews, we found that the Games **promoted integration** among diverse local residents. Looking back on the Games period, **participants felt a sense of pride** at Birmingham being able to deliver the Games as a sceptical, and many descried how fantastic Birmingham looked on television.

Participants felt that Birmingham's identity as a **diversity of the city was** on show but could have gone further. Participants were disappointed at the lack of diversity in the leadership of the Games and when looking at the stadium audience of the Games, the **diversity, and the real sense of 'A Games for Everyone' was lacking.**

Participants who had **direct engagement** reported a **positive** experience with the games. Those who did not have direct engagement were either indifferent to the Games or felt disenfranchised due to the **lack of consultation** prior to the Games. For some, the Games came and went without sparking significant conversation.

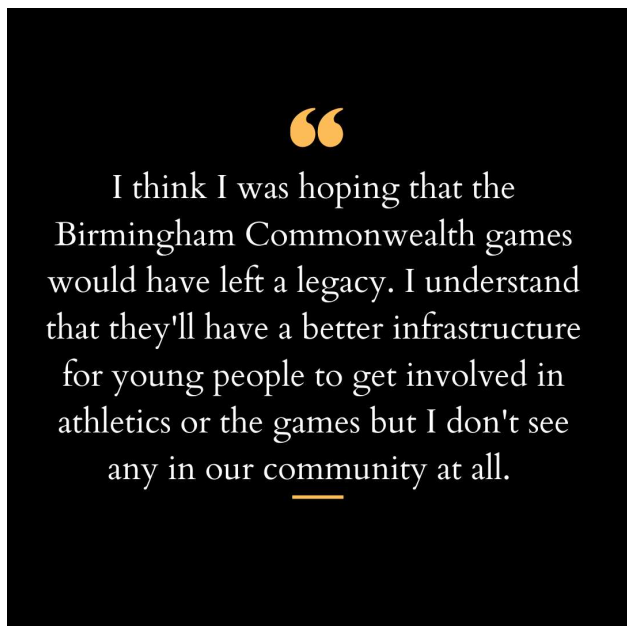
- Participants' perceptions of the Games were the **ability of 'sport' to bring people together** from diverse backgrounds, **a sense of pride at the chance to put Birmingham on the map** and showcase the diversity of the city.





- A major aspect of the expected social legacy was the **ability of the Games to drive social interaction**. Those participants that had a direct engagement had a positive experience with the games, such as watching the opening ceremony, the dress rehearsal, sporting events, or festivals during Games time.

- The participants recognised the **benefits of the new facilities** such as the Alexander Stadium and Sandwell Aquatics Centre in terms of hosting large events in the future. However, these **facilities were not considered local enough** to utilise and also are predicted to be prohibitively **expensive to access**. In the context of the cost-of-living crisis, the prohibitive cost of facilities and the lack of paid opportunities were seen as **major barriers to engagement**.



The **importance of community was reiterated throughout** the focus groups with a belief that community groups and champions can help the Commonwealth Games legacy but act as a bridge between the Games and the disadvantaged areas.



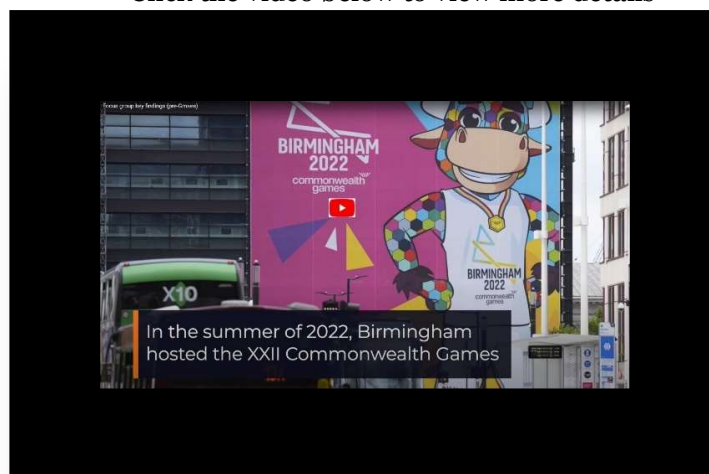
I think we had the Games, we hosted, great, and we felt it, we enjoyed it, it encouraged us to get into sports but people can't afford within these communities to pay for it. ....

I suppose to come back to the opportunities, we don't know where to find opportunities...where we're from, we don't get to know about anything and we don't know how to access as well ...[even if we] go on Google and type in what? you just can't.

- Although sport is seen as a way to bring people together and drive community cohesion, the Games was seen as a **missed opportunity**. Some participants had to **turn down volunteering** opportunities due to the limited time to take away from paid employment, lack of financial reimbursement, and the cost of travelling to volunteer. This was despite seeing volunteering experience being as being beneficial for job prospects post-Games.

*Overall, the findings from this strand urge us to re-visit the assumptions underlying the logic of hosting major sporting events. Hosting a major sporting event can only act as a 'catalyst for change' when basic provisions related to sports, society, and culture are in place. Otherwise, it remains a mirage that is yet to be seen. Tokenistic intentions for inclusion are likely to exacerbate feelings of exclusion. The relevance of hosting the Games diminished for CIDBs, as they were not given a meaningful role in shaping or influencing the decision-making process*

Click the video below to view more details



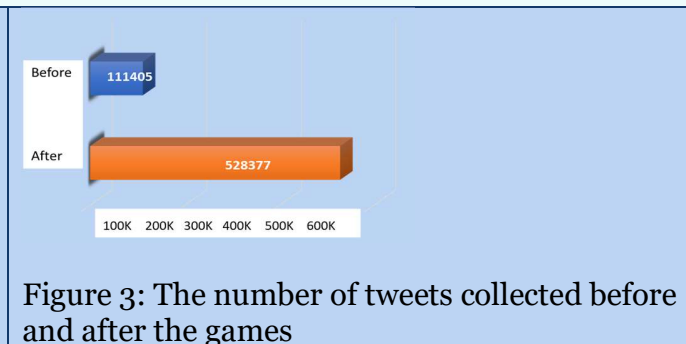
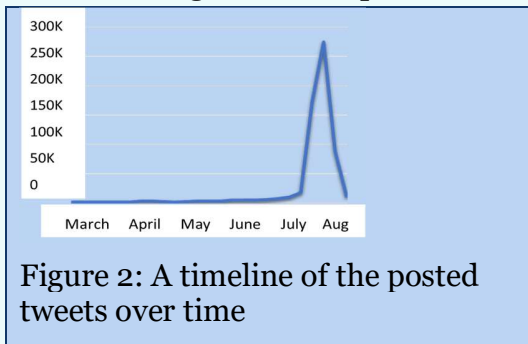


## STRAND THREE- THE PRESENT DEBATE

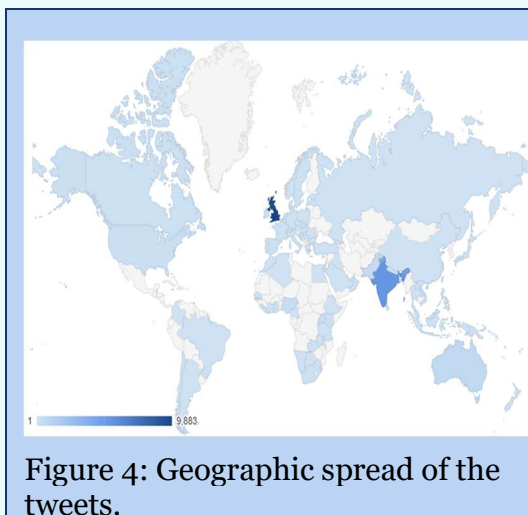
An innovative aspect of this project was the cross-disciplinary effort to examine public perceptions of the CWGs. Specifically, as a proof-of-concept trial, we leveraged recent advancements in social data science and machine learning techniques. We utilised digital textual data to gain significant insights into the global perceptions and legacies of the Commonwealth Games. By employing sentiment analysis, topic modeling, and clustering, we identified a series of game topics, legacy concerns, and event experiences. We acknowledge that users of Twitter typically do not come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A total of 640,000 tweets from 1 March (four months before the Games) to 25 August 2022 (two weeks after the Games) were collected, cleaned and analysed.

- The two figures below present a timeline of the relevant tweets collected from Twitter:



- The geographic spread of the tweets globally (amongst the users who chose to share publicly): The number of tweets originating from the UK surpassed the combined total from all other countries. Furthermore, nearly half of these UK-based tweets were posted from Birmingham.



Country	No. of Tweets	%
United Kingdom	9883	52.5%
India	5340	28.4%
Australia	669	3.6%
Pakistan	418	2.2%
Nigeria	289	1.5%
United States	215	1.1%
Uganda	210	1.1%
Kenya	188	1.0%
Malaysia	187	1.0%
South Africa	175	0.9%

Table 1: The top ten countries where the tweets were posted.

- The two figures below displayed the most frequent words used in tweets before and after the games. Positive emotion words were used more in tweets posted during and after

the games than in those before the games, such as 'win', 'gold', 'silver', 'congratulations' and 'proud'.

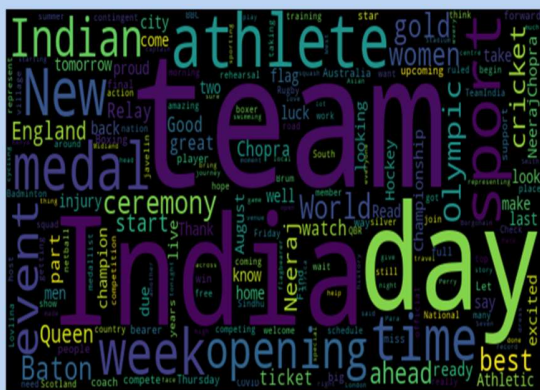


Figure 5: The most frequent words (before the Games).

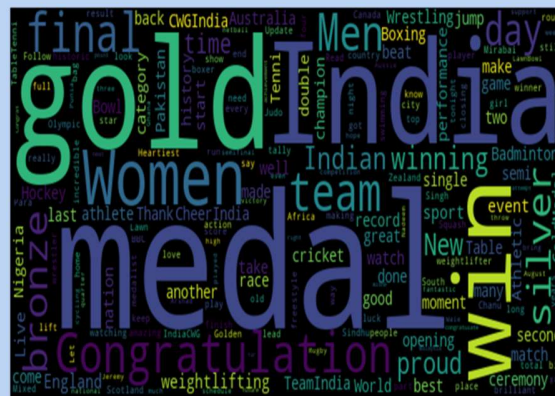


Figure 6: The most frequent words (after the Games).

- We found a positive global reception, with the percentage of favorable views increasing from 37% pre-Games to 48% post-Games. An example of a tweet considered positive is shown in Figure 7, while Figure 8 gives an example of a negative tweet.

Only a small percentage of the global population expressed negative opinions towards the games. Meanwhile, the percentage of positive opinions increased from 37% before the games to 48% after the games. **This suggests that the event was successful in fostering more positive sentiments.**



Figure 7: An example of a positive tweet.



Figure 8: An example of a negative tweet.

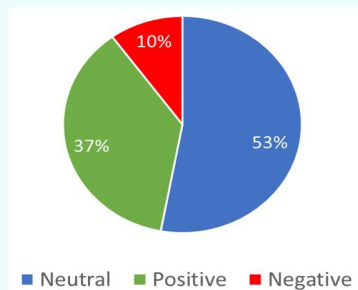


Figure 9: The results of the sentimental analysis of the tweets collected (before the Games).

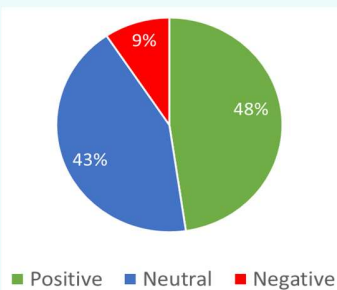


Figure 10: The results of the sentimental analysis of the tweets (after the Games).

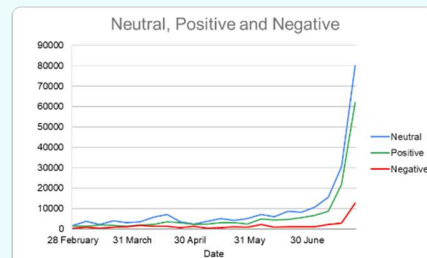


Figure 11: The shift in sentiment expressed in Tweets over time.

- We categorised the legacy-topics according to Preuss’s (2015<sup>13</sup>) legacy framework and found a total of 19 legacy aspects that are consistent with the legacy framework (see Figure 12).

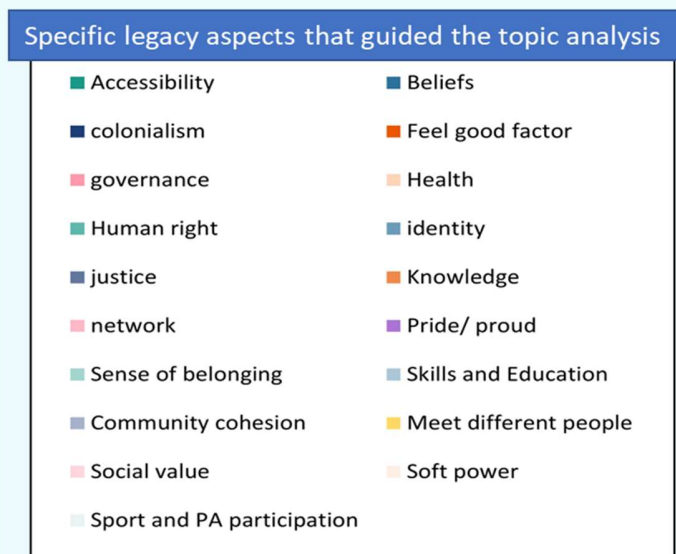


Figure 12: The specific legacy aspects that guided the topic analysis.

- The total number of tweets that were eligible for topic analysis was 11,188, and Figure 13 shows the percentages of tweets by topic. The highest percentage was for ‘health’, followed by ‘community cohesion’ and ‘sport and physical activity (PA) participation’, while the lowest percentages were for ‘governance’, ‘social value’ and ‘soft power’.

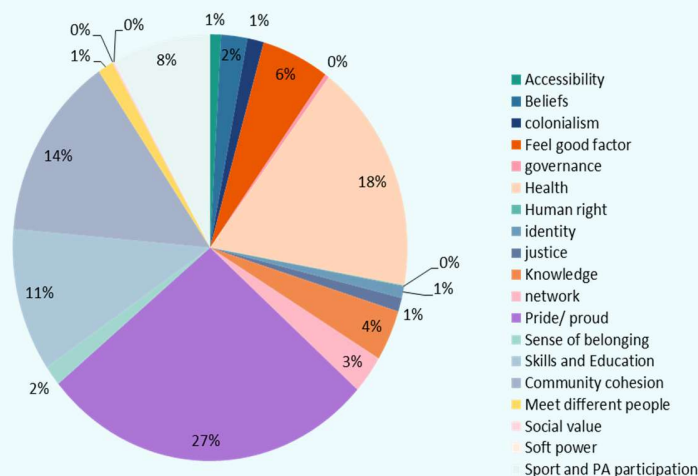


Figure 13: The percentages of tweets by topic.

<sup>13</sup> Preuss H. A framework for identifying the legacies of a mega sport event. Leisure Studies. 2015;34(6):643-64.



*Overall, our analysis of Twitter data offers a comprehensive understanding of global perspectives regarding the Commonwealth Games. Notably, users from the UK, India, and Australia were the most active in discussing the event, compared to those from other countries. The general sentiment surrounding the Games was positive, with users expressing more favourable views during and after the event than before it began.*

*Interestingly, 'soft' legacy aspects, such as the 'feel good factor,' 'values,' and 'pride,' were more frequently discussed than 'hard' legacy aspects (e.g., infrastructure and facilities). The top three discussed legacy aspects - namely, 'health,' 'community cohesion,' and 'sport and PA participation' - underscore the Games' potential to promote healthy lifestyles and regular physical activity. They also highlight the potential of using the Games for community unity and a celebration of togetherness. This research reaffirms the importance of such events in fostering global camaraderie and supporting public health.*







## STRAND FOUR - LOOK INTO FUTURE

### Where are we now? What are the current issues and challenges?

Our research examined the scientific literature, bid documents and reports of major sporting events, and carried out focus groups in some of the most deprived areas in Birmingham. We found that:

- > CIDBs were used as the justification for bidding to host major sporting events. Yet, these communities were not necessarily included in the planning of the events and legacies.
- > Legacy commitments for CIDBs in major sporting events were often short-term and small-scale.
- > In general, past major sporting events failed to be transparent or held accountable for their legacy promises made relevant to CIDBs.
- > Amongst events that have created benefits for CIDBs, legacies happened at the expense of other issues, such as through forced relocation or gentrification (an influx of wealthy households to low-income urban neighbourhoods which increases property values).
- > CIDBs experienced difficulties in taking part in the events (such as volunteering and watching the events), felt excluded by the events, had limited awareness of legacy opportunities and resources, and there was a lack of training (i.e., skills development) to ensure equal opportunities in accessing the events.
- > Little action has been undertaken to address the above challenges and issues.

### What are the key recommendations going forward?

To enhance policy-making and maximise inclusivity for CIDBs in the hosting of major sporting events, the following recommendations are put forth. These aim to optimise the legacies of such events for CIDBs and represent potential solutions for achieving these outcomes.

#### Recommendations

- 1 The nature of 'disadvantage' needs to be recognised and the specific targeted CIDBs in each event context must be carefully identified.
- 2 CIDBs should be considered as an integral part of the event throughout the hosting cycle to ensure legacy inclusivity.
- 3 Dedicated event leverage, sufficient financial backing, and resource commitment for CIDBs are needed.
- 4 It is important that the host governments establish long-term, sustainable, legacy governance arrangements that specifically prioritise CIDBs.
- 5 Additional support in terms of resources should be provided to equip CIDBs with the skills and knowledge to enable them to participate and benefit from the opportunities created by hosting major sporting events such as volunteering roles and jobs.

Often, research projects conclude once the lessons learned are documented. However, we went a step beyond to ensure that our recommendations are applicable across various contexts, and specifically actionable in Birmingham.

To achieve this, we hosted a workshop with a panel of 15 internationally renowned academics from ten different universities around the world (South Africa, Canada, Australia, China, Europe, the UK and the US), who have undertaken similar projects in the past, to review and refine our recommendations. In the workshop, the relevant evidence/recommendations from past events were reviewed and peer feedback was sought on the drafted recommendations to ensure their validity.

**14<sup>th</sup> Sep Major event legacy for disadvantaged communities and individuals**

**2002** Manchester Commonwealth  
**2008** Beijing Summer Olympics  
**2010** Vancouver Winter Olympics  
**2012** London Summer Olympics  
**2014** Glasgow Commonwealth  
**2014&16** Brazil World Cup and Summer Olympics  
**2022** Birmingham Commonwealth

**Part 1: Learning from the past**  
We would like to invite national and international well-known academics who have researched the topic of legacies for disadvantaged people in previous events to attend this workshop, together with academics from the University of Birmingham.

**Part 2: From inter-discipline to cross-discipline**  
Legacies are multifaceted - ranging from economic (jobs, employment, social skills, educational, community cohesion), to environmental benefits (infrastructure and access to facilities). Yet most of the existing research on this topic remains single-disciplinary-focused.

**Workshop Format**  
Hybrid  
Location & Zoom link

**Agenda (morning)**

- 8:30-9:00 Arrival & Networking
- 9:00-9:15 Research Team, University of Birmingham, UK
- 9:15-9:25 Dr Judith Mair (virtual), University of Queensland, Australia
- 9:25-9:35 Prof Andrew Smith (virtual), University of Westminster, UK
- 9:35-9:45 Dr Mike Duglan, University of Surrey, UK
- 9:45-9:55 Dr Themis Kokolakis, Sheffield Hallam University, UK
- 9:55-10:05 Prof Laura Misener (virtual), Western University, Canada
- 10:05-10:20 Break
- 10:20-10:30 Prof Jackie Kennelly, Carleton University, Canada
- 10:30-10:40 Prof Helen Bao (virtual), University of Cambridge, UK
- 10:40-10:50 Prof Kyriaki (Kiki) Kaplanidou (virtual), University of Florida, US
- 10:50-11:00 Prof Brj Maharaj, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- 11:00-11:10 Prof Lorraine van Blerk, Dundee University, Scotland, UK
- 11:10-11:20 Dr Barbara Bell, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK
- 11:20-11:25 Break
- 11:25-12:45 Roundtable Discussion
- 12:45-13:30 Lunch & Networking
- 13:30-16:30 Afternoon session

After the academic workshop, a list of five recommendations was condensed to two for Birmingham (see below), to ensure that the expertise of local sports practitioners and talents can be recognised as well as the communities’ input needed for delivering the next 10 years of the Birmingham event hosting strategy<sup>14</sup> were valued.

## The most prominent priorities:

- Local communities, particularly those from disadvantaged areas, must be listened to and meaningfully involved in all decision-making relevant to major events throughout the process (including planning, bidding, delivery and legacy).
- Additional support in terms of resources should be provided to equip CIDBs with the skills and knowledge to enable them to participate and benefit from the opportunities created by hosting major sporting events such as volunteering roles and jobs.

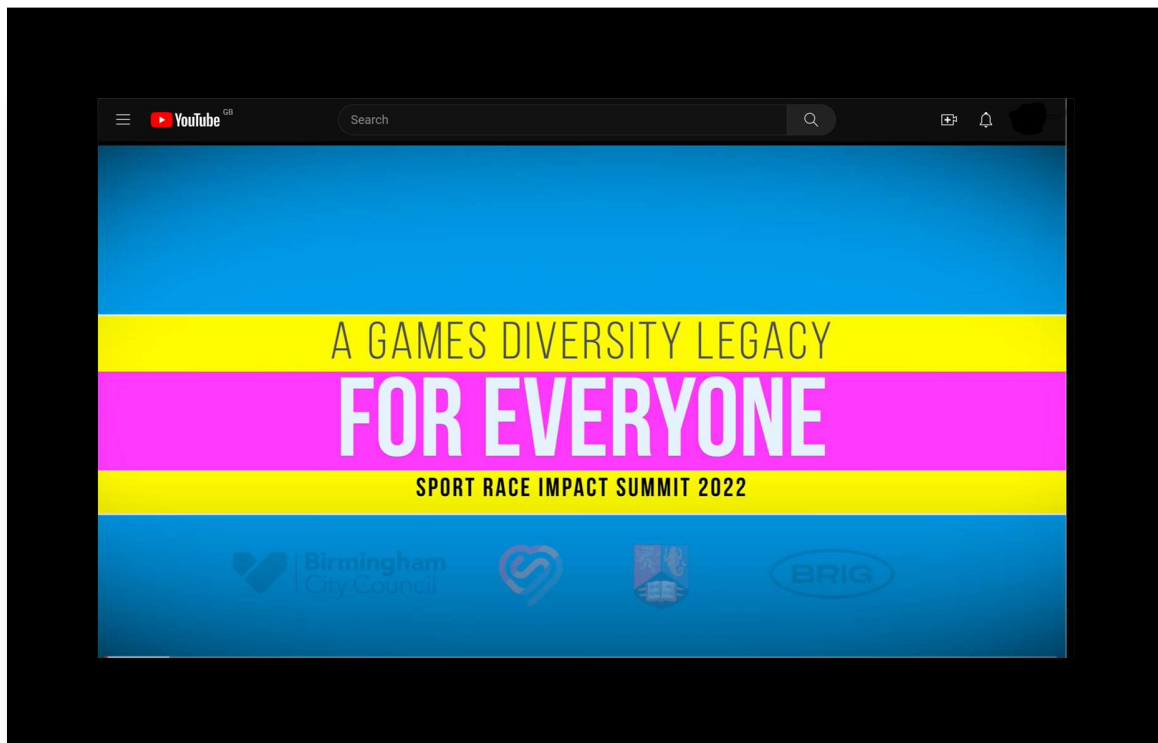
<sup>14</sup> Birmingham City Council (2021). *Birmingham Major Sporting Events Strategy: 2022-2032*. Available [here](#). (Accessed: 18 May 2022).

These two priorities were then launched at the ‘A Games Diversity Legacy for Everyone Sport Race Impact Summit’ organised and delivered by the project team, working in partnership with the Birmingham City Council, Sport Birmingham and BRIG.



This Games Summit was a day-long workshop that brought together over 80 delegates including sports practitioners, community workers, race activists, local and national policymakers, and the CWG Organising Committee. The aim was to validate the practical relevance of our recommendations and discuss how these refined suggestions could be transformed into executable, deliverable, and implementable actions for future events.

Click the video below to view more details





## Research impact

Our research activities have made significant contributions to both social and academic impact by directly contributing to policymaking at the local level, influencing professional practices, and building knowledge impact through various events and collaborations.

### Social Impact:

Our project has played a key role in shaping policy at the local level, with our recommendations feeding directly into the development of the next editions of Birmingham City Council's sport and physical activity strategies. By ensuring that our research findings are incorporated into these strategies, we contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive environment for disadvantaged communities in the context of major sporting events and physical activity initiatives.

Additionally, our research has contributed to a change in professional practice by demonstrating how efficient collaboration between researchers and practitioners can lead to meaningful outcomes. We have been invited to participate in community events such as the Community and Network event led by Edgbaston Cricket Foundation, enabling us to engage directly with a wide group of practitioners beyond our network and share our expertise on how research can inform and improve their work. This collaboration has led to enhanced understanding and more effective practices among professionals in the field.

## Social & Academic Impact



### Academic Impact:

Our project is building knowledge impact through various knowledge exchange events and prestigious invitations. Notably, our team participated in the UK and Australia Diplomacy event held in Edinburgh, where we shared our findings and insights with other experts and stakeholders, contributing to the global conversation on the role of major sporting events in promoting social equity.

Moreover, our research has received international recognition, as evidenced by our upcoming invitation to present to the Paris 2024 Olympic Committee team. This prestigious invitation highlights the academic impact of our work, demonstrating its relevance and potential to influence the planning and organisation of future international sporting events.

We transformed the interest group into a full working group on "Major Event Legacy for All." This expansion further enhanced the academic and knowledge impact of our online presence by providing a structured framework for collaboration, research dissemination, and policy advocacy. The successful setup of the working group's online presence (<https://www.majoreventlegacy.com/groups>) served as a testament to our commitment to expanding the project's impact. Through this platform, we aim to foster a global community dedicated to ensuring that the benefits of major events are accessible and inclusive for all, regardless of their background. By connecting professionals, researchers, and stakeholders from around the world, the platform encourages knowledge exchange and collaboration, strengthening the capacity of its members to address the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities in the context of major events.







## Conclusion

In conclusion, our study reveals the existence of two distinct levels of inequity that hinder CIDBs from benefitting from the hosting of major events, namely legacy opportunity inequity and legacy outcome inequity. These findings challenge the assumption that legacy opportunities are accessible to all.

Our comprehensive research underscores that CIDBs are often less likely to reap the benefits of major sporting events and are more susceptible to experiencing negative impacts due to these events. Our findings emphasise that CIDBs should be central to legacy planning and implementation, requiring a shift in policy-making and a focused attention from event stakeholders.

It is incumbent upon all event stakeholders to consider how these major sporting events can genuinely benefit CIDBs. This involves incorporating their needs and interests throughout the entire process of event production and legacy creation. In addition to financial support and direct resource allocation, a legacy governance model tailored for CIDBs is crucial for sustained benefits. Ultimately, our goal is to facilitate positive changes and lasting benefits for CIDBs in the wake of major sporting events.



- 1 WE CANNOT ASSUME THAT LEGACY OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE.
- 2 CIDBS NEED SUPPORT TO CAPITALISE ON MAJOR SPORTING EVENT OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE POSITIVE CHANGES TO THEIR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

## Future plans

Building on the successes of our work, we plan to further strengthen and expand our relationships with local and national policy stakeholders, sports organisations, charities, and community groups to maximise the impact of our research, which in turn enables us to deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics at play in disadvantaged communities and develop evidence-based interventions to promote long-term, sustainable change.

We thank you for your support of our project

## Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the following organizations for their invaluable support in this project: BRIG, Sport Birmingham, St Basils and the Youth Advisory Board, Saathi House, MECC, Witton Lodge Community Association, Afro Caribbean Millennium Centre, Legacy West Midlands, and Narthex Sparkhill.

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Rehabilitation Science &  
School of Computer Science  
University of Birmingham  
UK  
[www.majoreventlegacy.com](http://www.majoreventlegacy.com)

## Appendix: Significant outputs from the project

### Academic publications:

- Liang, X., Chen, S., Quinton, M., Veldhuijzen van Zanten, J., Duan, Z., Carter, B., Heyes, A., & Lee, M., (2022). The legacy of major sporting events for disadvantaged communities/individuals: a systematic review. *PROSPERO* 2022 CRD42022336493 Available from: [https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display\\_record.php?ID=CRD42022336493](https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?ID=CRD42022336493).
- Liang, X., Quinton, M., Veldhuijzen van Zanten, J., Duan, Z., Carter, B., Heyes, A., Lee, M., & Chen, S., (under-review). The legacy of major sporting events for disadvantaged communities/individuals: a systematic review. *European Sport Management Quarterly*.
- Chen, S., Quinton, M., .....& Veldhuijzen van Zanten, J. (in press). Propositions and recommendations for enhancing the legacies of major sporting events for disadvantaged communities and individuals. *Event Management*.
- Heyes, A., Alharbi, A., Carter, B., Karamani, M., Lee, M., Liang, X., Quinton, M., Veldhuijzen van Zanten, J., & Chen, S. (2023). Legacies of the 2022 Commonwealth Games for Birmingham Communities and Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: evidence from the qualitative data. Conference proceeding: *the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual European College of Sport Science Congress*, Paris, July 4-7, 2023.
- Liang, X., Quinton, M., Veldhuijzen van Zanten, J., Duan, Z., Carter, B., Heyes, A., Lee, M., & Chen, S., (2023). The legacy of major sporting events for disadvantaged communities/individuals: a systematic review. Conference proceeding: *The 4<sup>th</sup> World Association for Sport Management Conference*. 5-8<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Qatar University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

### Non-academic publications:

- Chen, S., (2022). 'A Games for Everyone': Legacy of major sporting events for disadvantaged people and communities. Blog piece published by the University of Birmingham. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/2022/a-games-for-everyone>
- Chen, S., Liang, X., Quinton, M., Veldhuijzen van Zanten, J., Duan, Z., Carter, B., Heyes, A., & Lee, M., (2022). Position statement on 'major sporting events legacies for disadvantaged individuals and communities'. Presented at the BRIG Sport Race Summit – A Games Diversity Legacy for Everyone. 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The University of Birmingham.
- Sport Birmingham & University of Birmingham. (in preparation). 10-Year Birmingham Race Equality Plan (sport theme).
- Policy briefing. (2023). Social impact and legacy of major sporting events [https://www.majoreventlegacy.com/files/ugd/30c79f\\_dcb3543531044e5791f6ca51b0493a6a.pdf](https://www.majoreventlegacy.com/files/ugd/30c79f_dcb3543531044e5791f6ca51b0493a6a.pdf)

### Tool:

- **Matrix:** Major Sporting Event Legacies for communities and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds: past evidence (see page 14).

### Digital outputs:

- Website: [www.majoreventlegacy.com](http://www.majoreventlegacy.com)
- Creative media clip (grey literature review): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzApwCR\\_9rE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzApwCR_9rE)
- Creative media clip (focus groups): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t\\_XG83IVMY&t=20s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t_XG83IVMY&t=20s)
- Creative media clip (public engagement workshop): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UU6geF7jw9k>

### Engagement activities:

- Hosted an international academic workshop. (2022). Major event legacy for disadvantaged communities and individuals. 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The University of Birmingham. (approx. Number of attendees = 30).
- Hosted a public engagement workshop in partnership with BRIG, Sport Birmingham and Birmingham City Council. (2022). *Sport Race Summit – A Games Diversity Legacy for Everyone*. 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The University of Birmingham. (approx. Number of attendees = 80)
- Invited presentation. (2022). Our work was presented at the Stronger Communities Stakeholder Panel Meeting, invited by the Equalities & Cohesion Team of the Birmingham City Council. 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022. Council House (approx. Number of attendees = 25).
- Invited presentation. (2023). Our work was presented at a Community Sports Networking event, hosted by Edgbaston Cricket Foundation. 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Edgbaston Cricket Stadium (approx. Number of attendees = 40).
- Invited presentation. (2023). Our work was presented at a research seminar organised by Edinburgh Napier University. 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023. Edinburgh Napier University (approx. Number of attendees = 15).
- Invited to attend a policy consultation workshop. (2023). Developing a whole system approach to Physical Activity, organised by Birmingham City Council. 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023. MAC. (approx. Number of attendees = 60).