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## Exploring the domestic relationship between mega-events and destination image: The image impact of hosting the 2012 Olympic Games for the city of London

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2017.07.001>

PUBLISHER

© Elsevier on behalf of Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand

VERSION

AM (Accepted Manuscript)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

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REPOSITORY RECORD

Kenyon, James Andrew, and Guillaume S.P. Bodet. 2017. "Exploring the Domestic Relationship Between Mega-events and Destination Image: The Image Impact of Hosting the 2012 Olympic Games for the City of London". Loughborough University. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/25821>.

**Exploring the domestic relationship between mega-events and destination image: The image impact of hosting the 2012 Olympic Games for the city of London**

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Acknowledgements: We would like to thank Professors Paul Downward, Ian Henry, Barrie Houlihan, and Benoît Séguin for their invaluable expertise and feedback. We would also like to thank Clare Mackay for her assistance and suggestions in the editing phase of the write-up.

**FINAL ACCEPTED VERSION**

## **Abstract**

Contemporarily, the hosting of mega-sport-events (MSEs) is one of several strategies used by cities and governments to bring about improvements in a place's image and recognition. With that in mind, the overall aim of this study, underpinned by theoretical-methodological social representation theory, was to evaluate the domestic image impact of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games for the city of London, and in doing so, whether any image-transfer (or co-branding) processes occurred between the place and event. In addition to adding to the emergent body of work aimed at using social representation theory to measure place image, the authors are among the first to employ a matched-sample research approach to measuring the impact of an MSE on the domestic perceptions of the host. Employing an abductive research strategy, a survey was carried out among the domestic English population ( $n=156$ ) to identify cognitive and affective image components, in the form of social representations, of London as a city (or its place brand), the Olympics as a MSE, and the 2012 Games as a one-off event. The content and the structure of the pre-and post-event social representations were established (using image elements cited by at least 15% of the respondents), analysed (using hierarchical cluster analysis) and then compared (within- and between items) to determine whether any changes or image transfer occurred. The findings of this research reveal that the pre-event concerns regarding the hosting of the London 2012 Olympics and the potential of the event to negatively impact the city's pre-established image, were, to a degree, fulfilled. Conversely, from an event perspective, respondents perceived the Olympics as a somewhat successful enterprise.

## **Keywords**

2012 Olympic Games; co-branding; mega-events; London; place image; social representations

## **1. Introduction**

In 2012 the city of London hosted the XXX Summer Olympic Games. Considered by its proponents to be the “foremost sporting event in the world, attracting young men and women to compete together in a spirit of honor [sic] and fellowship” (Daly, 2004, p. xvii), the Olympic Games has also been described as “the greatest show on earth” (e.g., Shoal, 2002, p. 596), alluding to its position as a mega-sport-event (hereafter MSE) spectacle and encompassing more than a collection of world sporting championships. Despite their origins, Bodet and Lacassagne (2012, p. 537), among others (see also, Horne, 2007), argue that the importance of the sporting component relating to such MSEs as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup™ “has now been relegated to a second rank, overtaken in the hierarchy of motives by economic, social, symbolic, marketing and diplomatic objectives.” The acquisition of both sporting and non-sporting MEs, consequently, has become an increasingly important objective for countries and cities worldwide, as the perceived beneficial impacts and legacies associated with hosting them are broadly considered to outweigh their significant costs and any potential negative impacts involved. Governments worldwide are also now acutely aware of the potential of MSEs in portraying a certain image of their respective cities and countries to an event’s international and domestic audiences, even extending beyond the actual event (Florek, Breitbarth, & Conejo, 2008), and similar to broadcasters and sponsors, such events are considered to be “valuable promotional opportunities [for host cities and governments] to showcase their attractions to global audiences and help attract tourism and outside investment” (Horne, 2007, p. 83; see also, Preuss and Alfs, 2002).

For London, the capital of England (and the wider United Kingdom), prior to hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, it was already considered to be a thriving global metropolis with a strong international brand (e.g., Anholt & GfK Roper, 2011), and was an is one of most visited cities in the world (VisitBritian, 2012). Despite this well-established, globally-renowned status, the UK Government hoped that hosting the 2012 Olympic Games

would facilitate the management and improvement of London's image, offering the opportunity to address any negative pre-existing associations in both domestic and international perceptions (e.g., Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS], 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). With regards to the latter, even before the city was designated as the 2012 Olympic Games host in 2005, there were questions raised regarding the motivation of the London bid in terms of the potentially limited impact hosting the Games might have on the city's international image. Shoval (2002, p. 585), for example, described London's bid for the Games as "something of a paradox," in that, as it was already considered to be a world city, it therefore lacked "the usual image justifications for wanting to host the Games." However, from a domestic perspective, others believed that the 2012 Games offered a greater opportunity to modify UK residents' perceptions of London. Speaking at the post-Beijing 2008 World Union of Olympic Cities Lausanne Summit, Simon Anholt proposed that:

London's biggest opportunity in 2012 is internal [domestic] branding and not external [international] branding. External perception hardly fluctuates but internally the effects can be absolutely dynamic. The best example was Germany's football World Cup. Like the U.K., the German populations' view of Germany is a little unstable. During the Football World Cup, we saw that the Germans were proud to be Germans. So bigger cities can use this as a platform to send across a message to their own people. (cited in Anholt, Oon, Masure et al., 2008, p. 13).

With Anholt's proposal in mind, it is important that hosts understand the impact that staging MSEs, like the Olympic Games, have on the domestic perceptions of and attitudes toward place and event. A significant consideration here is that the potential effects of hosting MSEs are more likely to be felt by host residents than, say, incoming international tourists. While there is a tendency, for organisers and planners of MSEs to promote the expected benefits of hosting such events, they are in fact imbued with the potential to negatively impact host residents' quality of life (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Ma et al., 2013) – and

consequently their perceptions of place and event (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Kim, Gursoy, & Lee, 2006; Ma, Ma, Wu et al., 2013). These dynamics occur, for example, through disruption, traffic congestion (Fredline, 2004; Fredline and Faulkner, 2002), the increased costs associated with staging the event (Ritchie, 1984; Gratton and Preuss, 2008), and displacement (Traganou, 2010). Interestingly, in the context of the 2012 Olympics, some of these issues represent pre-existing internal perceptions of London that its stakeholders have long been aiming to improve, and which had the potential to be exacerbated by hosting the Games (i.e., that the city is expensive, crowded, and suffers from traffic congestion; Greater London Authority [GLA], 2002; DCMS, 2006). Thus, attempting to understand the perceptions and attitudes toward place and event, and how they change and interact pre-to-post-event, is important in revealing how MSEs are received by resident populations.

Such evaluation is also becoming progressively more important in an environment whereby domestic perceptions and attitudes are triggering the withdrawal and cancellation of applicant and candidate cities' bids to host MSEs. For example, Krakow (Poland), Lviv (Ukraine), Stockholm (Sweden), and Oslo (Norway) all withdrew their bids to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, with each of these citing, among other motives, a lack of resident support for hosting the event (Guardian, 2014). For the same reasons, Boston (United States) and Hamburg (Germany) withdrew their respective bids to host the 2024 Summer Olympic Games, as did the Hungarian capital of Budapest, in which a recent referendum (February 2017) triggered the city's withdrawal from the application process. The end result was Los Angeles and Paris remaining as the sole cities in the running (Guardian, 2017). Hence, through developing an understanding of the domestic perceptions toward the hosting of an MSE, and how these change pre-to-post-event, cities considering bidding to host them in the future are provided with some insight into what they might expect to gain, image-wise, should their bid be successful. Similarly, such investigation will also be useful for the organisations responsible for MSEs, in that they might further their understanding into how the image of a

host interacts with their own image and that of their event. With that in mind, the overall aim of the present study, underpinned by theoretical-methodological social representation theory, was to evaluate the domestic image impact of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games for the city of London. Accordingly, we first sought to establish and then compare the pre- and post-event social representations generated by the domestic English population concerning London as a city (i.e., what can be considered its place image, or brand image), the Olympics as a mega-event (i.e., the Olympic brand image), and the 2012 Games as a one-off spectacle (i.e., the 2012 event's brand image). We then sought to evaluate whether any co-branding processes occurred between these entities (London, the Olympic Games, and the 2012 event), expressed by an image transfer (refer to Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003; Xing & Chalip, 2006), from the event to the place, or vice-versa. That is, we aimed to determine whether there was any transfer in the components that make up these entities' social representations before and after the 2012 Olympic Games took place.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Place image and resident perceptions**

The image of a place has long been known to influence people's touristic decisions and behaviour (e.g., Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Horne, 2007; Nadeau, Heslop, O' Reilly et al., 2008). That is, quite simply, where people choose to spend their money: whether to return to a place they have previously visited or try somewhere new. Place images are complex and abstract, derived from a wide spectrum of information sources (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Gartner, 1993, 1996), and have a host of factors that play a role in their formation (Gunn, 1972). According to Florek and colleagues:

[I]mage consists of cognitive elements (awareness, familiarity and associations with an object), emotional [affective] elements (feelings and emotions towards an object) and behavioural elements (tendency of certain behaviour towards an object). [...] The image concept assumes therefore, that if an individual has an adequate knowledge

about a destination together with positive emotions and valued judgments towards it, he or she is willing to choose it among others. (Florek et al., 2008, p. 203).

In general, the elements that make up a place's image – whether cognitive, affective, or behavioural – can be regarded as positive, negative, or neutral (Gartner, 1993, 1996), and they are formed at both an individual and societal level. The latter represents “a publicly held common mental picture of [a] destination, or [a] stereotype” (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, p. 41). According to Helsop et al. (2010), “Images summarize, standardize, and generalize information from many sources and about many aspects of the image object” (p. 406), a process which, according to Gunn (1972), is achieved through three stages of place image formation. These consist of: an organic image, which is formed from non-tourism market-oriented information (e.g., word-of-mouth); an induced image, which is formed from advertising and promotions; and, a modified-induced image, which is formed through direct interaction with a place. For places whose image is comprised of negative elements, whether they be cognitive or affective, attracting new tourism and business investment necessitates identifying these negative perceptions, attempting to ascertain how these are formed (Gunn, 1972; Gartner, 1993, 1996), and then endeavouring to engender more positive perceptions and attitudes, which in turn, encourages more positive behaviours toward it.

Of the significant body of research concerned with measuring and analysing place image, much of this deals with the external, international awareness of, and attitudes towards places (Florek et al., 2008; Gibson, Qi, & Zhang, 2008; Giraldi, Giraldi, & Scaduto, 2011); that is, essentially, how places are positioned in the global marketplace. Yet, the evaluation of internal, domestic perceptions should be regarded as equally important. For one, much like with international tourism, a place's internal image can influence domestic residents' holiday choices. They may, perhaps, opt for a domestic vacation rather than going abroad, thus providing benefits for local and national economies. Furthermore, “[residents] can directly influence non-residents' organic image through interactions and communication”

(Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou, & Apostolopoulou, 2015, p. 6); that is, the more positive the image that residents hold of a place, the more likely such aspects are to be communicated to others, including potential international visitors. Thus, as place image is made up of cognitive (awareness and associations) and affective (emotive) components, which then prescribe behaviour, our focus in this research was to identify the specific elements of London's domestic image which could be categorised as such. Given London's prominence and offerings to England (and the UK), it is likely that a significant proportion of the country's population have previously visited the city, or will visit it, at least once in their lifetime, and will thus maintain a strong awareness of the city, as well as some reasonably stable pre-established attitudes and feelings towards it. The findings of this research then, through uncovering these domestic cognitive and/or affective components of the city's image, will offer some insights into why the English population might choose (or otherwise) to visit or even live in London, how they might describe it to external visitors and how that might change through hosting an Olympic Games.

## **2.2. The Olympic Games' impact on host resident perceptions**

According to Guala and Turco (2009), "Throughout the history of the modern Olympiad, and particularly during the last twenty years, many studies have investigated the attitudes of the host population with respect to the Games and their impacts" (p. 22). For example, Ritchie and Aitken's (1984, 1985) foundational research in the area explored resident attitudes towards various aspects of the hosting of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary (Canada). Since then, similar research has been undertaken on the 1996 Atlanta Games (United States; Mihlaik, 2000, 2004), the 2000 Sydney Games (Australia; Lenskyj, 2002), the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Games (United States; Deccio, & Baloglu, 2002) the 2004 Athens Games (Greece; Lykoudi & Zouni, 2013), the 2006 Torino Winter Games (Italy; Guala & Turco, 2009), and the 2008 Beijing Games (China; Zhou & Ap, 2009). Yet, as the body of research relating to the perceptions of, and attitudes towards hosting the Olympics

and other MSEs has grown in recent years, the same cannot be said for systematic investigation that deals specifically with the degree to which the perceptions of and attitudes towards the host are influenced by that of the event (Li & Kaplanidou, 2013). Yet this should be regarded as an important line of enquiry, as among other impacts, scholars have long proposed that the success or failure of a MSE, which host residents are more likely to experience, can impact upon the image of the place in which the event is staged (Ritchie, 1984; Hillier, 1998; Fredline, 2004). Furthermore, of those researchers who do explore the relationship between MSE and place image, there is a tendency to focus more on: (a) international opinions and perceptions and (b) the wider country image rather than that of the host city. In the current study, we extend the research in this area.

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games has prompted some recent research aimed at exploring the impact of the event on the image of China: a country which had sought to leverage the Games to present itself as a global leader, “demonstrate its great cultural past” (Preuss & Alfs, 2011, p. 57), and to diminish the perception that it poses a military threat (Manzenreiter, 2010). For example, Li and Kaplanidou (2013) sought to investigate the impact of the event on the perception of China among tourists from the US and found the 2008 Games to have had little impact on the perceptions of the country among the participants; rather, attitudes, whether positive or negative, tended to be influenced by media exposure. Specifically, “those who followed Olympic media coverage tended to have a more positive attitude toward China than those who did not” (Li & Kaplanidou, 2013, p. 254). These attitudes, however, changed little pre- to-post-event. In contrast, Heslop et al. (2010) examined the internal (Chinese) and external (US) perceptions of China pre- and post-Beijing Games and found declines in post-event perceptions in both the Chinese and US-based samples.

Beijing aside, Kaplanidou (2009), along with colleagues (Karadakis, Kaplanidou, & Karlis, 2016), has also sought to investigate the relationship between Olympic MSEs and host

images. While Karadakis et al. (2016) explored images as aspects of host and non-host residents' perceptions and awareness of legacy themes before, during, and after the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, Kaplanidou (2009) focused specifically on investigating "the impact of event image on destination image controlling for the differences between geographic regions" (P. 267). By surveying spectators of the 2004 Athens Games, Kaplanidou (2009) revealed that despite there being no impact on spectators' intentions to revisit Athens in the future, aspects of the event's image, relating mainly to organisation and infrastructure, seemed to positively impact upon the cognitive destination image of the host.

### **2.3. Image change through co-branding**

Since the turn of the millennium, as understanding has developed, place image has experienced something of a "shift towards branding [...] evident in both the practice of place marketing [and] in the most recent academic literature" (Kavaratzis, 2007, p. 699). Broadly speaking, the belief here is that the image of a place shares certain similarities with that of the brands of products (e.g., Coca-Cola), services (e.g., Visa), events (e.g., the Olympic Games) and corporations (e.g., Dow): "[a] place can behave just like a manufacturer's brand, providing an umbrella of trust [and] a guarantee of quality" (Anholt, 2002, p. 26). As understanding of brands has developed, early definitions which focussed purely on the tangible elements – a name, terms, signs, symbols, or designs – have evolved to include previously neglected "intangible brand attributes" (Avis, 2009, p. 2); that is, the social and psychological nature of the brand as well as its physical nature (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990). Like products and services, places are comprised of components that "evoke emotions, bring forth cognitions, and influence behavior [*sic*]" (Gertner, Berger, & Gertner, 2006, p. 107). Thus, the image similarities between places and MSEs have engendered the view that, "the pairing of an event with a destination will benefit the destination to the degree that a desirable aspect of the event's brand transfers to the destination" (Xing & Chalip, 2006, p. 54). Such reasoning is very much the same as that of the commercial sponsors, who, among other

objectives, aim to draw upon the image of the events they sponsor to improve the perceptions and opinions that exist of them and their offerings. Researchers have suggested that such aims are achieved for a place, an event, and a product through an image-transfer process (Chalip et al., 2003; Xing & Chalip, 2006), whereby image elements from one entity, say for example, the Olympic Games, which as established, can be either positive, neutral, or negative (Gartner, 1993, 1996), transfer onto another, say for example, London. This is a two-way process, referred to in the literature as co-branding theory, with image elements transferring both ways, from the event to the place, as well as from the place to the event (Chalip et al., 2003; Xing & Chalip, 2006). With that in mind, we further explored this theory in the context of places and events, and identify whether any co-branding processes, resulting from London hosting the 2012 Olympic Games, could be distinguished in the data collected from the domestic population; that is, the transfer of cognitive or affective components between the strong pre-existing images of both the city and the event (cf. Kaplanidou, 2009).

#### **2.4. Image and social representations**

With the above objective in mind, we employed a theoretical framework that accommodated for variations between the images of places and events. Social representation theory has that ability, as it allows for the examination of distinguishing objects that share commonalities. Drawing on Durkheim's collective representations, Moscovici's (1961, 1984) social representation theory is concerned, broadly, with the shared knowledge, thoughts, perceptions, and opinions generated by an object, held by a group or community, and shaped by that particular group's shared beliefs, opinions, values, and attitudes. The theory deals with the production of common sense knowledge (Moscovici, 1961) – “that is to say, of non-specialists on the subject” (Castel, Lacassagne, & Salès-Wuillemin, 2002, p. 667) – and social representations “enable communication to take place among members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history”

(Moscovici, 1973, p. xiii). In short, when the collective elaboration of an object is communicated by a certain group – that might be, for example, the English population’s collective elaboration of London or the Olympics – that elaboration can then be regarded as a social representation (Bodet, Meurgey, & Lacassagne, 2009).

Social representations conventionalize objects, persons, and events; that is, they locate these entities within a familiar category or context, such that they form a common reality among social groups (Jodelet, 1989; Moscovici, 1984): “[They] emerge, not merely as a way of understanding a particular object, but also as a form in which the subject (individual or group) achieves a measure of definition” (Duveen, 2000, p. 11). Social representations are therefore “shaped by, or depend on, the culture in which they occur” and correspond, according to Flick (1998), to the accepted and everyday communications of a particular social group. Thus, they are comprised of both individualistic and collectivistic properties that are unique to the cultural contexts in which they are constructed (see, for example, Menéndez Alarcón, 2004). Given then that social representations rely on a particular culture “spontaneously generat[ing] its own constructs” (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000, p. 778), adopting the theory addresses the limitations highlighted in the literature (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) with regards to the more structured, traditional approaches of measuring image limiting participants to consider an object in terms of attributes specified by researchers. Social representation theory “recognises the complexities of community representations of phenomena and the role of social networks in their development” (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000, p. 778). These representations both facilitate and are facilitated by knowledge structures, acting as mental shortcuts for processing information in decision making (Kotler & Gertner, 2002); that is, these structures are prescriptive and affect behaviour, just as images do (i.e., the image of a place is known to influence decision making and behaviour towards it; Nadeau et al., 2008). Social representation theory attempts to explore the structures that constitute

people's understanding and perceptions of a represented object by mapping the interactions between these components.

Drawing from this research and theory, in this research, we determined how the cognitive and affective components comprising the images of the entities under investigation (i.e., London, the Olympic Games, and the 2012 event) were structured, how these changed and interacted pre-to-post-event.

## **2.5. Study overview**

With the above objective in mind, we developed the following research questions to guide the present study:

1. How, and to what extent, was the English population's image of London modified by the hosting of the 2012 Olympic Games?
2. How was the overall image of the Olympic Games' brand influenced by London's hosting of the event?
3. How did the English population's image of 2012 Games change pre-to-post event?

## **3. Method**

### **3.1. Participants**

Given the aim of the research, and to ensure as large a sample size as possible, the only limiting criteria for this study were that participants resided in the UK, that they were British citizens, and that they were over 18 years of age. Five hundred and sixty-one participants completed the pre-event element of the research from across the UK, of which 159 completed it post-event, denoting a retention rate of 28.3%. Of those one 159 participants, 3 were located outside of England and were thus removed from the final matched-sample (n=156) in favour of focussing solely on the English context. Prior to the 2012 Olympics, these participants were recruited through: convenience sampling (e.g., directed and general calls for participants via email and social media); random sampling (e.g., flyers containing a link to the research

were handed out by the first author in the centres of two major English cities and one English town); and, snowball sampling (i.e., requesting that participants who had completed the research forward a link to their own contacts). This combination of sampling methods was selected to access as broad a sample of the population as possible. After the 2012 Olympics, participants were contacted directly via email and social media channels, requesting that they complete the post-event element of the research.

[INSERT TABLE 1]

### **3.2. Materials**

Data were collected pre- and post-event through repeated applications of an online questionnaire. This questionnaire, informed by previous research that relies upon social representation theory (Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012; Ferrand & Pages, 1999; Giraldi et al., 2011; Lebrun, Souchet, & Bouchet, 2013; Meliou & Maroudas, 2011) was primarily comprised of three free association tasks designed to access the domestic social representations of each of the entities previously described (i.e., London, the Olympics, the 2012 event). That is, participants were required to provide ten spontaneous associative responses to each inductor term (e.g., “As a British citizen, please give the first ten words that come to mind when you hear the term London”). This type of questioning is based on the assumption that providing a participant with an inductor term and “asking them to freely associate what ideas come to his or her mind gives relatively unrestricted access to mental representations” (Meliou & Maroudas, 2010, p. 118); thus, it mitigates the earlier concerns raised by Echtner and Ritchie (2003). Inclusion of the British citizen designation was designed to activate the mental connection between the respondents and their social identity, ensuring that the inductor terms were being considered from a domestic perspective. The remainder of the online questionnaire contained items designed to ascertain personal characteristics, demographic and geographic information, and quantitative data relating to participants’ engagement with the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. These items focused on

ascertaining whether participants applied for, and received any 2012 Olympics tickets; attended the 2012 Olympics; how much of the Olympic Games did they plan to watch, and then actually watch.

### **3.3. Procedures**

Pre-event data was collected between the 1st September 2011 and 31st December 2011, and post-event data between the 12th February 2013 and 12th May 2013. The reasoning here was that these time periods were sufficiently close to the event (held between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 12<sup>th</sup> August 2012) for the respondents to have developed some stable and enduring perceptions, yet sufficiently distant that the immediate pre-event build-up and post-event hype did not interfere with these perceptions. The slight shift and shortening of the post-event data collection period (compared to the pre-event period) was purely a logistical decision.

Upon landing on the online questionnaire home page (hosted by Bristol Online Surveys), participants were greeted with an electronic participant information sheet, as well as an electronic consent form that required their agreement before continuing (both pre- and post-event). In completing the questionnaire, although the participants were asked to provide 10 responses to the free association tasks for each inductor term, they were advised that 7 would be sufficient provided they had thought about the inductor term thoroughly, and “had mentally manipulated it from different perspectives, representing different social views (i.e., what kind of words other people could associate to the object)” (Bodet and Lacassagne, 2012, p. 365).

### **3.4. Data Analysis**

The individual spontaneous responses from participants’ free word association tasks took the form of either a single word or a very short statement (usually containing two or three words). Before the analysis was performed, the data were subjected to two preliminary processes designed to (a) standardize the participants’ responses, and (b) prepare the data for the social representation-based and, later, statistical analysis. Once the data had been through

a preliminary standardising process (i.e., correcting spelling mistakes and/or amending different terms that described the same entity), the subsequent abductive preparation process was concerned with abstracting or generating “second-order concepts [i.e., themes] from these first-order lay concepts [i.e., the participants’ responses]” (Blaikie, 2007, p. 101). This involved grouping the individual responses into themes based on their semantic meanings, with one word (or phrase) representing each theme. For example, for the inductor term “The Olympics,” the following terms were grouped under the category “*medals / prizes*,” “award/s,” “bronze medal,” “gold medal,” “medals,” “prizes,” “rewards,” “silver medal,” and “trophies.” The main reason for this preliminary process in the data analysis, argue Bodet and Lacassagne (2012, p. 366), is that “social representations rely on main concepts rather than very detailed and specific idiomatic terms.” Thus, for the responses that could not be grouped into overarching semantic themes, either through there being no suitable thematic category or through being unable to discern the participants’ meaning behind responses, these were still included in the subsequent analysis, but they were left unchanged<sup>1</sup>.

Once these two preliminary processes had been conducted, the proper analysis began, with the first stage determining what percentage of respondents cited each of the terms included in the analysis, and then constructing the social representation field for each inductor using only those terms cited by at least 15% of participants. Using a 15% cut-off threshold is supported by Bodet and Lacassagne (2012), who reason that the Olympic Games is a highly social object, as could be considered London and the 2012 London Olympic Games for the domestic UK population, in contrast to earlier social representation studies employing word association tasks which used a 10% threshold (see, for example, Bodet et al., 2009; Lacassagne et al., 2004). Such an approach also allows for a manageable list of words whilst

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<sup>1</sup> To increase the internal validity of the study, this abductive preparation process was performed initially by the authors, who then recruited the assistance of two senior academics to establish whether the themes were well-reasoned and the terms in them appropriately placed. Only once a consensus was reached concerning every individual term was the next stage of the analysis performed. This process of researcher collaboration worked to mitigate subjectivity and alleviate potential researcher bias.

still representing common sense knowledge (Jodelet, 1989). According to De Rosa, this first stage of analysis enables us to access the meaning of social representations and “the latent dimensions which structures the semantic universe” (De Rosa, 1988, p. 29). The second stage enables us to reproduce these structures in a visible form, depicted by the networks of the components comprising the social representation. Comprised of three steps, this second stage of the analysis was thus aimed at determining the internal structure of the inductors’ social representation fields, and consisted of uncovering the strength of the connections between the terms contained therein. The first step “required the choice of an index of distance between citations to classify them and the choice of a words-aggregation criterion to create clusters” (Lebrun et al., 2013, p. 365). Using the same method, therefore, as that adopted by Bodet et al. (2009), Bodet and Lacassagne (2012), Lacassagne et al. (2004), and Lebrun et al. (2013), a Kendal’s correlation coefficient was conducted on those terms cited above the 15% cut-off threshold. The next step in this stage of the analysis involved producing a modified similarity matrix (i.e.,  $I-x$ ) from the results produced by the Kendal’s correlation coefficient. This similarity index revealed the proximity between each of the terms in a particular field, with the distance between them determined by the term’s hierarchical ranking in the word association task. In the final step, a hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) was conducted on the modified similarity matrix, and based on Ward’s method and the Euclidian distance, resulted in a dendrogram being produced. In the third and final stage of the analysis, the aim was to compare the social representation fields and structures to determine if any image-transfer had indeed occurred between London and the Olympics, the Olympics and the 2012 event, and the 2012 event and London.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. London's image

#### 4.1.1 Pre-event

Following the 15% threshold then, 18 components comprise London's pre-event social representation field (refer to Table 2). Of these, 14 can be regarded as cognitive components, in that they represent "awareness, familiarity and associations" with London (Florek et al., 2008, p. 203), and 4 are affective, in that they represent attitudes, feelings and emotions toward the city. For the cognitive components, these can broadly be characterised as one (or more) of the following:

1. Entities and institutions contained within the city (physical or otherwise), such as "landmarks and tourist attractions" (cited by 57.1% of respondents), "monarchy" (34.0%), "business, banking, and finance – neutral" (30.8%), "London icons and iconography" (26.3%), and "Government and politics – neutral" (25.6%).
2. Ways of, and problems with, getting in and around the city, such as "transport - London Underground" (39.1%) and "traffic / congestion" (22.4%).
3. Specific reasons to visit the city, such as "tourism / travel" (31.4%), "football" (28.8%), "shopping" (26.9%), and "stage / theatre" (17.9%).

Collectively, and along with "2012 Olympics" (36.5%) – which could relate to either of the first or third characteristics – these components form a discernible cognitive dimension in the internal structure of London's pre-event social representation field, one of two dimensions in total. The other, an affective dimension, is represented by the close connection of the four affective components (together with "history" and "capital city"): the positively-oriented "vibrancy (London lifestyle)" component (15.4%); the two negatively-oriented components of "busy / crowded" (55.1%) and "cost - negative (expensive)" (26.9%); and, the final affective component, "huge" (19.9%). While on the face of it, it might seem that this component is nothing more than a neutral, descriptive term for the city, its strong connection

to “cost - negative (expensive)” does imply something of a negatively-oriented connotation, such that the respondents believe London is big and harbour some negative feelings toward that aspect. Also, worth highlighting is the fact that “busy / crowded” and “vibrancy (London lifestyle)” are the two most closely associated components in the affective dimension, as it suggests these may be dependent on one another.

[INSERT FIGURE 1]

[INSERT TABLE 2]

#### *4.1.2 Post-event*

Again, following the 15% cut-off threshold, post-event, 17 elements comprised London’s social representation field. Compared to the pre-event field, 16 remained the same (refer to table 2), “history” and “huge” dropped out, and were replaced instead, by the cognitive component “transport - modes and infrastructure” (17.3%). The structure of this post-event social representation field (figure 2) is again comprised of two over-arching dimensions: one definitively cognitive dimension and one mixed cognitive/affective dimension. The cognitive dimension is made up of similar components to its pre-event counterpart, although “capital city” now features in this dimension. On the other hand, the mixed dimension is comprised of two sub-groupings, one cognitive and one affective, with the latter being made up of the three affective components present in the pre-event field, “vibrancy (London lifestyle),” “busy / crowded” and “cost - negative (expensive),” along with the cognitive component “traffic / congestion.”

[INSERT FIGURE 2]

## **4.2. The Olympic Games (and Movement) image**

### *4.2.1 Pre-event*

The Olympic Games’ pre-event social representation field is comprised of fourteen components, and like London’s pre- and post-event fields, the majority of these are cognitive (10 in total), describing the respondents’ awareness and associations (table 2). Of these

cognitive components, general references to sport (49.4%) and “competition” (33.3%), its events (e.g., “athletics,” 50.6%), its competitors (e.g., “athletes / competitors - general,” 20.5%, and “countries and their emblems,” 18.6%), and its rewards (“medals / prizes,” 57.1%), represent significant features of the Olympic Games’ social representation field, as one might expect. They do not, however, constitute components that can be considered particularly unique to the Games. Even the “Olympic venues and infrastructure – neutral” (24.4%) component is comprised more so of rather general references to sport arenas, stadia, and venues than specific references to the Games-related locations. However, of those elements which can be considered unique to the Olympic Games, its ceremonial aspects (17.3%) featured as part of the pre-event field, as did references to “Olympic emblems and iconography” (34.6%). The latter component groups together such objects and articles as “Olympic flame,” “Olympic motto,” “Olympic rings,” and “Olympic torch.” These objects are traditionally associated with and generally only exist in the Games. Furthermore, “human greatness / achievement” (24.4%) groups together such terms as “achievement,” “excellence,” “greatness,” and “pinnacle,” all terms which Olympic proponents and stakeholders have longed maintained embody the Games, and what makes them a unique event (e.g., IOC, 1999, 2002).

From a structural perspective, the Olympic Games pre-event field is organised into two dimensions. Eight components form a distinct cognitive dimension in the social representation structure (figure 3), combining references that can be considered specific to the Olympic Games (“Olympic emblems and iconography” and “ceremonies”) with those of various other international sport competitions (“countries and their emblems” and “athletes / competitors”). A second, mixed dimension is formed by a combination of cognitive and affective components (six in total) separated into two roughly corresponding sub-groups. The cognitive sub-group collects together descriptive references to “competition” and sport in general, with affective references to “human greatness / achievement.” The wholly affective

sub-group collects together negative attitudes toward the cost and budget of hosting the Olympic Games (18.6%), with positive feelings of “excitement” (19.9%) and “national pride” (16.0%), thus suggesting a trade-off between these affective expectations in the minds of respondents.

[INSERT FIGURE 3]

#### 4.2.2 *Post-event*

Again, 14 components comprised the Olympic Games’ post-event social representation field, 12 of which featured in the pre-event field (refer to Table 2). The two components that dropped out of the field, post-event, were both affective – “national pride” and “cost and budget of the Games – negative” – the latter of which was the only negative element of the pre-event field. Interestingly, these two elements were replaced by references to the event being international (19.2%), which one might have expected to have been a pre-event component, and affective assessments of the Olympic Games being “enjoyable” (18.6%); a semantic category gathering together such positive adjectives as “amazing,” “brilliant,” “fabulous,” and “incredible.” Structurally, the post-event field is again comprised of two over-arching dimensions (figure 4): a cognitive dimension made up of nine components, similar in content to its pre-event counterpart, and an affective dimension comprising five components. The latter groups together three positively-oriented affective components, “human greatness / achievement,” “excitement,” and “enjoyable,” with references to the Games being an “international competition.” Given the overall absence of negative components in this field and structure, a decidedly more positive impression is represented here compared the pre-event social representation of the Olympic Games, implying, therefore, an improvement pre-to-post-event.

[INSERT FIGURE 4]

### **4.3. The 2012 London Olympic Games image**

#### *4.3.1 Pre-event*

Thirteen components comprised the pre-event social representation field of the “London 2012 Olympics” (refer to Table 2), nine of which were cognitive and four affective. The most cited component of the field was “excitement” (32.1%), an affective component, which when considered alongside the fact that “national pride” (27.6%) featured as a significant component, and that both components are closely connected in the field’s structure, reveals a somewhat positive anticipation of the event in the respondents. However, there was also significant mention of the cost and budget of the event in which negatively-oriented attitudes were cited by 29.5% of the respondents (grouping together such terms as “costly,” “expensive” and “ridiculous budget”), as well as more descriptive, neutral associations by 16.7% (e.g., “funding,” “resources,” and “spending”). Of the remaining elements, associations concerning Games-related construction came in the form references to the “Olympic venues and infrastructure – neutral” (30.8%) and “regeneration” (23.7%). “Tourism / travel” (28.8%) and “busy / crowded” (25.6%) represent a people element of the field. Sport-wise, the field contains associations to medals (26.3%), “general sport references” (23.1%) and “athletics” (19.9%). A quarter of the respondents referred to ticketing in their responses, which suffered from some widely-reported pre-event issues (e.g., Guardian, 2012), but in this case merely represented a descriptive associative component. Finally, cognitive references to the commercial aspects of the London 2012 Games comprised 18.6% of the participants’ responses.

The structure of the London 2012 Olympics pre-event field is comprised of two dimensions – each containing two sub-groups – that roughly correspond to the tangible and intangible elements of the event. The tangible dimension contains mostly cognitive components, and its first sub-group is comprised of the cognitive pairing of “medals / prizes” and “athletics,” which represent the closest pairing of components in the field, and the pairing

of “cost and budget of the Games – negative” and “general sport references.” The second subgroup in the tangible dimension consists exclusively of cognitive components and pairs together “tickets – neutral” and “Olympic venues and infrastructure - neutral,” and then connects this pairing to “regeneration.” The more intangible of the two dimensions is also made up of two groups, and the components that comprise these groups evoke a certain anticipatory impression. The first group is formed by the connection between the cognitive pairing of “tourism / travel” and “cost and budget of the Games – neutral,” and the pairing of “commercial aspects – neutral” to the negatively-oriented “busy / crowded” affective component. The intangible dimension is then completed by the most positive segment of the pre-event structure, represented by the pairing of “national pride” and “excitement” (both, as established, are affective components).

[INSERT FIGURE 5]

#### *4.3.2 Post-event*

Post-event, 16 elements comprised the “London 2012 Olympics” social representation field, of which only eight were present in the pre-event field, thus representing the most significant pre-to-post-event change out of the three inductor terms (refer to Table 2). This field also contains the greatest proportion of affective components (half of the field) out of all the recorded social representations. The pre-event elements to drop-off the post-event social representation field included: “tourism / travel,” “tickets – neutral,” “busy / crowded,” “regeneration,” “commercial aspects – neutral” and “cost and budget of the Games - neutral.” What is interesting about the latter is that both neutral (cited by <1%) and negative (16.7%) references to cost of the 2012 Games were cited significantly less post-event (a reduction of about 30% accumulatively). Among those components that replaced the above terms, perhaps most interestingly, are the attitudinal components that the event was both “enjoyable” (cited by 49.4% of participants) and a “success” (36.5%). The post-event inclusion of references to “human greatness / achievement” (26.9%) and “Team GB” (35.3%), which when considered

alongside GB's relative accomplishments at the 2012 Games (reflected by an increase in references to "medals / prizes" pre-to-post-event [46.8%]), offers some potential insight in to why the event was perceived as both enjoyable and successful, domestically. Similarly, as do references to the Paralympic Games (15.4%) which was also a new post-event component, and increases in citation to "national pride" (39.1%). Games marketers might also be interested in the post-event inclusion of "inspirational" (16.7%) and "inclusivity" (16.0%) given that these represent two of the main themes that underpinned the brand identity of the 2012 Games (e.g., LOCOG, n.d. cited in Ferrand, Chappelet, and Séguin, 2012). Finally, of the post-event additions, references to legacy (21.8%) were also not present in the pre-event field.

In similar fashion to the majority of the social representation structures presented in this analysis, the structure of the London 2012 Olympics post-event field is also comprised of two dimensions: one cognitive and one affective. Whereas the cognitive dimension mainly contains components relating to the sporting aspects of the Games, the affective dimension is comprised mainly of positive attitudes and assessments relating to its delivery and staging.

[INSERT FIGURE 6]

## **5.0 Discussion and conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the domestic image impact of hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games for the city of London by comparing the pre- and post-event social representations generated by the domestic English population concerning London as a city, the Olympics as a mega-event, and the 2012 Games as a one-off spectacle. Supporting the image concept generally, the social representations generated were all comprised of both cognitive and affective components, although with the exception of the post-event image of the London 2012 Olympic Games, these were predominantly made up of the former. For example, with regards to London's place image, although the majority of components comprising both the pre- and post-event social representations are cognitive and often

descriptive in nature – highlighting, for example, the city’s prominence, its uniqueness, its foremost institutions, its cultural offerings, and its appeal to residents and visitors alike – the presence of a significant affective element in the image structures supports previous perspectives and research on the place image concept (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Hallmann, Kaplanidou, & Breuer, 2010). That 16 components (both cognitive and affective) endure pre-to-post-event suggests then that the English population maintains a relatively stable and enduring awareness of, and attitudes towards London. These cognitive and affective image components also offer some insight into the behaviour the resident English population might exhibit toward the city; that is, their reasons to go there.

But that is not to say that there were no discernible changes in the generated social representations pre-to-post-event. In the pre-event structure, for example, “London underground” and “traffic / congestion” were part of an exclusively cognitive dimension that grouped these components in close proximity to the 2012 Olympic Games. That these components are structured in the same pre-event grouping then is an interesting finding, as it suggests a strong mental connection between them in the minds of the respondents, and implies that they thought the Games could be disruptive to their everyday lives in this respect. Post-event, these two transport-related components are added to by a third, all of which then shift to becoming part of the structure’s affective dimension. With this in mind, and given that the pairing between “traffic / congestion” and “cost - negative (expensive)” represents two of the most closely connected components in the entire post-event structure, this is suggestive of something of a change in attitudes toward London’s transport infrastructure. Post-event, recall relating to London’s internal and external transport evoked, or was in some way connected to, negative attitudes and feelings toward the city. This is an interesting finding, as it would appear to contradict previous research that suggests a positive impact of MSEs on host image (e.g., Kaplanidou, 2009; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005), at least in the contexts of domestic perceptions and the Olympic Games. Instead it corroborates the potential for MSEs to

negatively impact upon residents' perceptions of the host's image (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Ma et al., 2013), especially with regard to issues such as traffic congestion (Fredline & Faulkner, 2002). From a managerial perspective, that these specific negative associations and attitudes are components of both London's pre- and post-event images may come as something of disappointment to the city's managers and stakeholders as these are perceptions that not only have they long been aiming to improve (e.g., GLA, 2002; DCMS, 2006), but were hoping that by hosting the Olympic Games this would facilitate said improvements (e.g., DCMS, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). For the future then, while the perception of the city's traffic issues might prove somewhat more difficult to dispel, London's managers and stakeholders may perhaps consider placing a greater emphasis on the city's more affordable attractions, accommodation, and amenities in its internal marketing output. Based on this research, it would certainly appear that, for the world's major cities at least, hosting an Olympic Games might not be conducive with facilitating such image improvements in the domestic population, despite the now almost ubiquitous claims to the contrary in the bid documents of applicant and candidate cities. Thus, those responsible for the Los Angeles and Paris 2024 bids may want to keep in mind the findings of this research when devising their own bid and/or legacy aims and literature. Further research on the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, hosted by another of the world's major cities would provide additional insight in to the findings uncovered by this research.

Interestingly, despite the pre-to-post-event structural changes to London's social representations, there was no evidence of the transfer of components, aside from references to the event itself, from either of the Olympic-related inductors to London's place image. Such findings conflict with the co-branding assumption that, "the pairing of an event with a destination will benefit the destination to the degree that a desirable aspect of the event's brand transfers to the destination" (Xing & Chalip, 2006, p. 54) – at least when dealing with the domestic population's perceptions of its capital. This research, therefore, supports the

work of Smith (2005), who found that previous re-imaging and branding strategies involving sport and sports events in the UK were eclipsed by the pre-existing and established reputations of these cities. Equally, these domestically-oriented findings are consistent with the internationally-oriented findings of Li and Kaplanidou (2013), who found the 2008 Beijing Games to have had little impact on the perceptions of China. What this finding suggests then is that not only is it a challenge for “world renowned cities to redefine their [international] image through the Olympics” (Anholt, 2008, p. 13), but that such a strategy might struggle to make a domestic impact also. A recommendation for the future research mentioned above, therefore, would be to explore both the domestic and international perceptions of the 2020 Olympic Games’ host to allow a direct comparison of any image change the event brings about.

Looking at the event image impacts, both the Olympic Games and the 2012 event experienced notable pre-to-post modifications, both to their content and structure, with the latter, in particular, experiencing the most considerable change to its image. It is interesting to note therefore, that given that cognitive and affective image components are said to influence behaviour, a shift in the perceptions toward considering an MSE in a more positive light is likely to improve the behaviours toward it (Florek et al., 2008). This might, for example, be as simple as residents choosing to attend the MSE in the future. Alternatively, Zhou and Ap (2009) suggest that “a host community that is positively disposed towards the development (or event) will enhance the spectators’ and tourists’ experiences and contribute to a destination’s overall attractiveness” (p. 78).

Pre-event, the “London 2012 Olympics” social representation field seemed, in part, to reflect the anxieties and concerns the respondents held about hosting the Games, suggesting that residents are very much aware of the potential of MSE to negatively impact upon their quality of life (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Ma et al., 2013). However, such concerns were much less apparent post-event. For example, that “enjoyable,” “national pride,” and

“success” were all significant components of the affective dimension in the post-event social representation structure reinforces the work of Kavetos and Szymanski (2008), who found evidence of “feel-good” or “happiness” benefits to arise from hosting MSEs. It is also worth highlighting that the presence of “national pride” as a significant component in the pre-event field may, in part, reflect the work of London’s Olympic bid campaign which sought, through repetitive articulation in the domestic media, to encourage the resident population to “back the bid” and “make Britain proud” (refer to Mackay, 2012). Overall though, the findings relating to the “London 2012 Olympics” support numerous authors’ works that suggests, “that as time goes on, residents, despite their host or non-host capacity, tend to focus on the non-material, intangible, and indirect legacies” (Karadakis et al., 2016, p. 205; see also, Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Kaplanidou, 2012). This can be seen, for example, in the change in structure, pre-to-post-event, in which the latter groups numerous intangible, affective components together with cognitive references to legacy.

In terms of the “Olympic Games” image, perhaps the most interesting development to stem from the findings of this study is that it supports the work of Bodet and Lacassagne (2012) who, in their post-event evaluation of the international (UK-based) image of Beijing and the Olympic Games following the 2008 event, found that, contrary the IOC’s own research into the perceptions of the Olympics, the unique underpinning values of the movement were not central features of its brand image. According to the IOC (1999, 2002), the associations most often made with the Olympic Games are high standards, international cooperation, excellence, world peace, and the event being a source of national pride (Ferrand et al., 2012, p. 58). Furthermore, they engender such perceptions “friendship, multicultural, honourable, trustworthy, unity, dignified, participation, global, peaceful, striving, respectful, integrity, fair competition, determination, patriotic, being the best, dynamic and celebration” (IOC, 2002, cited in Maguire et al., 2008, p. 75). While such terms might indeed be central features of the Olympics’ branding strategy (e.g., IOC, 2006; Seguin et al., 2008), and how

the IOC wishes the Games to be perceived (Ferrand et al., 2012), such terminology is largely absent from the perceptions garnered from this research. What is also worth highlighting about these perceptions is that they conflict with the view from the literature that the sporting element of the Olympic Games has been superseded by economic, social, and marketing objectives (Bodet and Lacassagne, 2012; Horne, 2007); for the domestic English public, at least, sport still features as one of the most significant components of the Olympic Games' brand image.

Finally, from an image-transfer, or co-branding, perspective, while there are some similarities between London's image and the pre-event social representation field of the 2012 Games – specifically, the terms “busy / crowded” and “tourism / travel” were elements likely acquired from London, rather than the other way around, and potentially relate to pre-event concerns – there is no movement of elements between London and the overall image of the Olympics. The finding is similar to that of Bodet and Lacassagne (2012, p. 372) who also found “no explicit terms from Beijing, except for the city itself, were directly transferred to the Olympic Games.”

With the above discussion in mind, perhaps over time, even direct reference to the 2012 Olympic Games might cease to be a part of London's image, exclusively, and be amalgamated into, or replaced by more general references to sport, thus demonstrating the dynamic nature of social representations (Moscovici, 1981, 1984). One only has to look, for example, to the fact that neither the 1908 nor the 1948 Olympic Games, also hosted by London, were cited by a single participant, pre- or post-event, although, this might be explained by the relatively young average age of the sample. Interestingly, aside from exclusive references to football and the 2012 Olympic Games appearing in both the pre- and post-event social representations of the city, wider references to sport did not (having been cited by 9% and 8% of respondents respectively). This is in spite of London being the home to numerous national and international sport venues and stadia. With many of these locations

utilised during the 2012 Olympics (e.g., the O2 Arena, The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Lord's Cricket Ground), this raises the possibility that the city's hosting of the Games may, in the long-term and from an image perspective, have achieved nothing more than temporarily displacing other references to sport, more generally, in the domestic population's perceptions of London; or, more likely, that the event will have given them a temporary focus for their sport-oriented perceptions of the city.

Overall, although London maintains some positively-oriented cognitive and affective image components, the findings of this research reveal that the concerns expressed pre-event in the literature (e.g., Shoval, 2002), that the hosting London 2012 Olympics had the potential to negatively impact the city's pre-established image, were to a degree realised, in the sense that attitudes towards the city's transport infrastructure worsened following the event. Yet, from the event perspective, the elements comprising London's image combined with the overall positive post-event social representation field of the 2012 Games, suggest that the respondents perceived the Olympics as a somewhat successful enterprise. Despite these findings, however, questions are raised as to what more Olympic organisers can do to ensure that the event impacts upon the domestic image of the host in a more positive and meaningful way, thus achieving the oft-cited aims of candidate and applicant cities' bid documentation. Our findings suggest, that from a domestic perspective at least, the cost of the event, post-event use of venues, and the Games' commercial aspects might be ideal places to start and represent some pre-existing concerns about the Games (see for example, Lenskyj, 2002). Alternatively, and informed by the co-creation perspective of Olympic marketing (see Ferrand et al., 2012) and the community ownership perspective of event management (see Getz, MacDonald, & Parent, 2015), greater consideration might be given to the domestic population in terms of maximizing their involvement as stakeholders in the Games. Consequently, through feeling like they play a larger role in the planning, preparation, and staging of the Games, host residents may be more willing to accept some of the Games' less positive

impacts, and emphasise and/or memorise the more positive ones (see for example, Hartman & Zandberg, 2015).

Despite the contributions of this research, it is worth keeping in mind that it is limited in a number of ways, and the findings should therefore be considered in the context of such limitations. Although the aim of the sampling strategy was that as diverse a sample as possible was collected, given the fact that survey was conducted entirely online, the average age of the sample was relatively young, and therefore the results cannot be said to be fully representative of the English population. However, given that young people are a key target group for the IOC (e.g., Ferrand et al., 2012), the research can still be considered useful in this regard. In terms of the methodological limitations, it is important to reiterate at this point that the terms contained in these analyses – i.e., those describing semantic groupings of words and phrases – are the result of two layers of pre-analysis – a standardisation procedure, and an abductive procedure. What this resulted in is a cluster of similar, but not identical terms. Terms were also separated due to their connotations, for example “cost and budget of the Games – negative” and “cost and budget of the Games – neutral.” Thus, it is possible that concepts were weakened and consequently missed being included in the social representation field.

Finally, the aim of the authors is produce further work that segments the data collected according those influences which have been shown in the literature to impact upon cognitive and affective images; for example, geographic location (Kaplanidou, 2009; Karadakis et al., 2016), sporting interests and participation (e.g., Bodet & Coleman, 2011), media exposure (e.g., Li & Kaplanidou, 2013), and levels of national pride (e.g., Ferrand et al., 2012; Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield et al., 2002).

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**Table 1**  
Descriptive statistics of the participant sample (n=156)

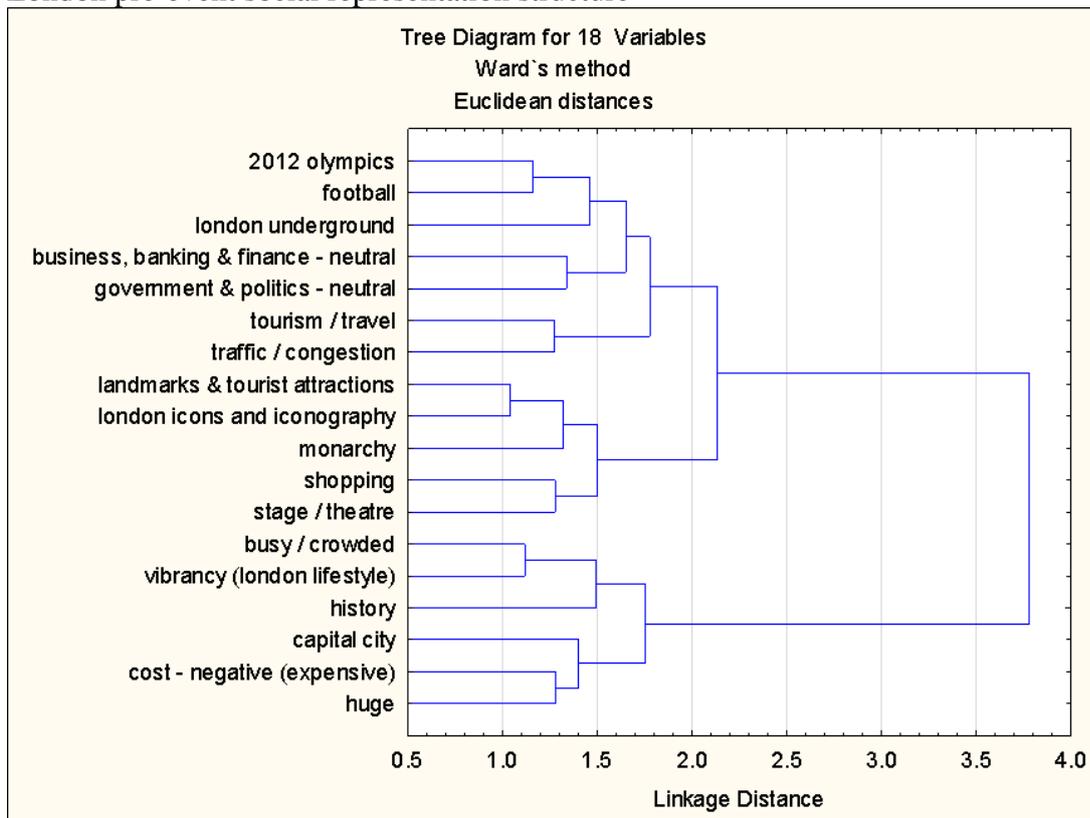
<b>Average Age</b>			<b>Education</b>				
<i>Pre:</i>	31.9	±13.6	<i>No Qualifications</i>	n	%		
<i>Post:</i>	33.3	±13.5	<i>GCSEs or Equivalent</i>	1	0.6		
			<i>A-Level or Equivalent</i>	13	8.3		
			<i>Foundation or</i>	47	30.1		
			<i>Undergraduate Degree</i>	47	30.1		
			<i>Postgraduate</i>	48	30.8		
			<i>or Higher Degree</i>				
<b>Gender</b>			<b>2012 Attendance</b>				
	n	%	<i>Applied for tickets (pre)</i>	n	%		
<i>Male:</i>	77	49.4	<i>Acquired tickets (pre)</i>	66	42.3		
<i>Female:</i>	79	50.6	<i>Attended an Olympic</i>	22	14.1		
			<i>event; paid or free-</i>	51	32.7		
			<i>to-attend (post)</i>				
<b>Geographic location</b>			<b>Time spent watching the 2012 Olympic Games per day (pre = planning; post = actual)</b>				
<i>East Midlands</i>	n	%	<b>Pre</b>		<b>Post</b>		
<i>East of England</i>	19	12.2	n	%	n	%	
<i>Greater London</i>	13	8.3	0 - 30mins	26	16.7	19	12.2
<i>North East England</i>	19	12.2	30m - 1hr	35	23.4	20	12.8
<i>North West England</i>	2	1.3	1hr - 1½hrs	27	17.3	26	16.7
<i>South East England</i>	40	25.6	1½hrs - 2hrs	22	14.1	21	13.5
<i>South West England</i>	25	16.0	2hrs - 2½hrs	10	6.4	18	11.5
<i>West Midlands</i>	14	9.0	2½hrs +	36	23.1	52	33.3
<i>Yorkshire and the Humber</i>	12	7.7					
<b>Employment Status</b>							
<i>Full-Time Employment</i>	n	%					
<i>Full-Time Student</i>	78	50.0					
<i>Other</i>	51	32.7					
<i>Part Time Employment</i>	3	1.9					
<i>Retired</i>	15	9.6					
<i>Unemployed</i>	3	1.9					
<i>Voluntary</i>	5	3.2					
	1	0.6					

**Table 2**  
Pre/post social representation fields of inductor terms (% cited)

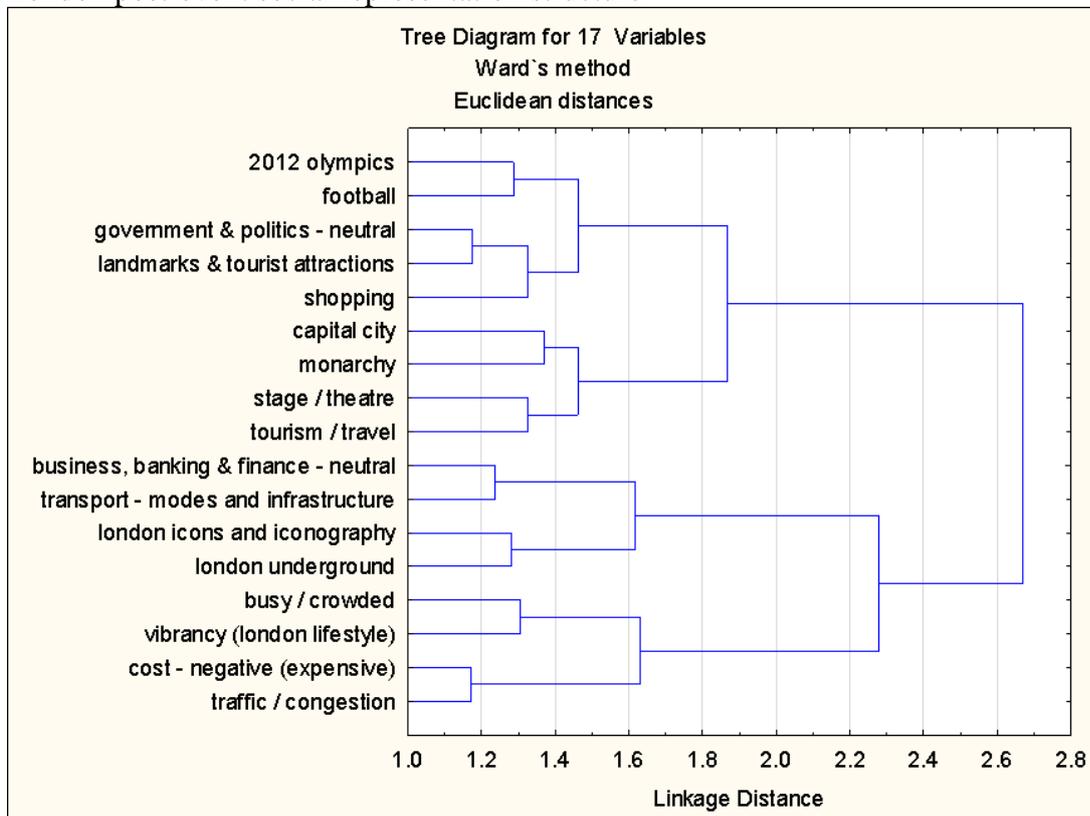
	<b>London</b>		<b>Olympic Games</b>				<b>London 2012 Olympics</b>				
	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	
Landmarks & tourist attractions	57.1	Landmarks & tourist attractions	57.1	Medals / prizes	57.1	Medals / prizes	58.3	Excitement	32.1	Enjoyable	49.4
Busy / crowded	55.1	Busy / crowded	55.8	Athletics	50.6	General sport references	55.8	Olympic venues & infrastructure - neu.	30.8	Medals / prizes	46.8
Capital city	50.6	Capital city	45.5	General sport references	49.4	Athletics	43.6	Cost and budget of the games - neg.	29.5	National pride	39.1
London underground	39.1	London underground	42.9	2012 Olympics	41.7	Olympic emblems and iconography	35.3	Tourism / travel	28.8	Success	36.5
2012 Olympics	36.5	2012 Olympics	40.4	Olympic emblems and iconography	34.6	2012 Olympics	34.6	National pride	27.6	Olympic athletes - Team GB	35.3
Monarchy	34.0	Monarchy	37.8	Competition	33.3	Competition	34.6	Medals / prizes	26.3	General sport references	30.8
Tourism / travel	31.4	Shopping	30.1	Human greatness / achievement	24.4	Athletes / competitors	26.3	Busy / crowded	25.6	Ceremonies	30.1
Business, banking & finance - neu.	30.8	Business, banking & finance - neu.	26.3	Olympic venues & infrastructure - neu.	24.4	Countries & their emblems	26.3	Tickets - neu.	25.0	Excitement	30.1
Football	28.8	Cost - neg. (expensive)	26.3	Athletes / competitors	20.5	Human greatness / achievement	26.3	Regeneration	23.7	Human greatness / achievement	26.9
Cost - neg. (expensive)	26.9	Government & politics - neu.	25.6	Excitement	19.9	Ceremonies	19.9	General sport references	23.1	Olympic venues & infrastructure - neu.	23.7
Shopping	26.9	London icons and iconography	23.1	Cost and budget of the games - neg.	18.6	Excitement	19.2	Athletics	19.9	Legacy - neu.	21.8
London icons and iconography	26.3	Tourism / travel	21.8	Countries & their emblems	18.6	International	19.2	Commercial aspects - neu.	18.6	Cost and budget of the games - neg.	16.7
Government & politics - neu.	25.6	Football	21.2	Ceremonies	17.3	Enjoyable	18.6	Cost and budget of the games - neu.	16.7	Inspirational	16.7

Traffic / congestion	22.4	Vibrancy (London lifestyle)	19.9	National pride	16.0	Olympic venues & infrastructure - neu.	15.4	Athletics	16.0
Huge	19.9	Stage / theatre	18.6					Inclusivity	16.0
Stage / theatre	17.9	Traffic / congestion	17.3					Paralympic Games	15.4
History	15.4	Transport - modes and infrastructure	17.3						
Vibrancy (London lifestyle)	15.4								

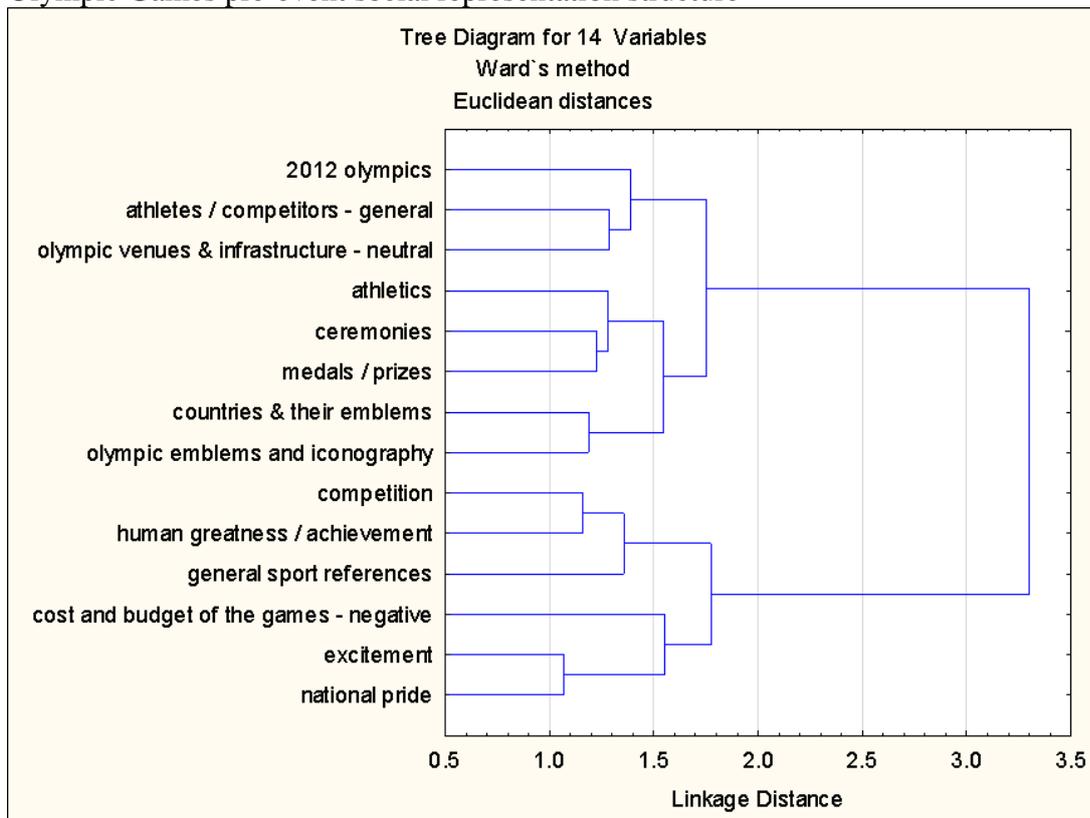
**Figure 1**  
London pre-event social representation structure



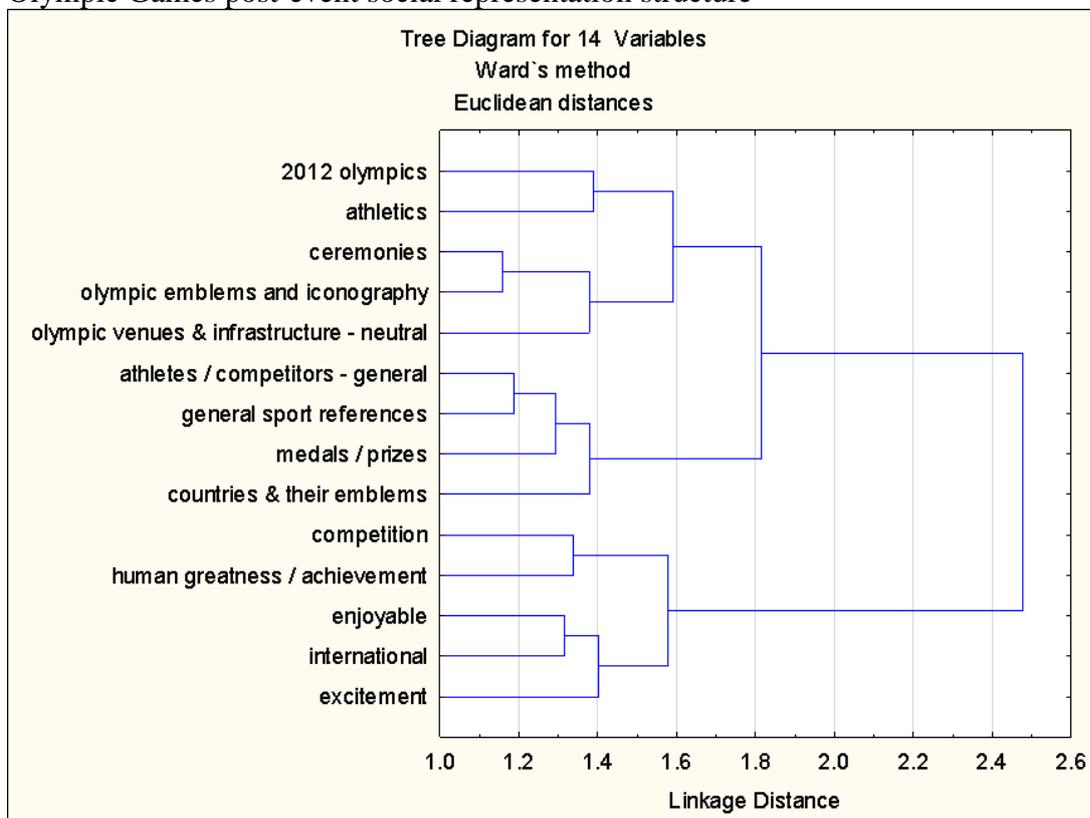
**Figure 2**  
London post-event social representation structure



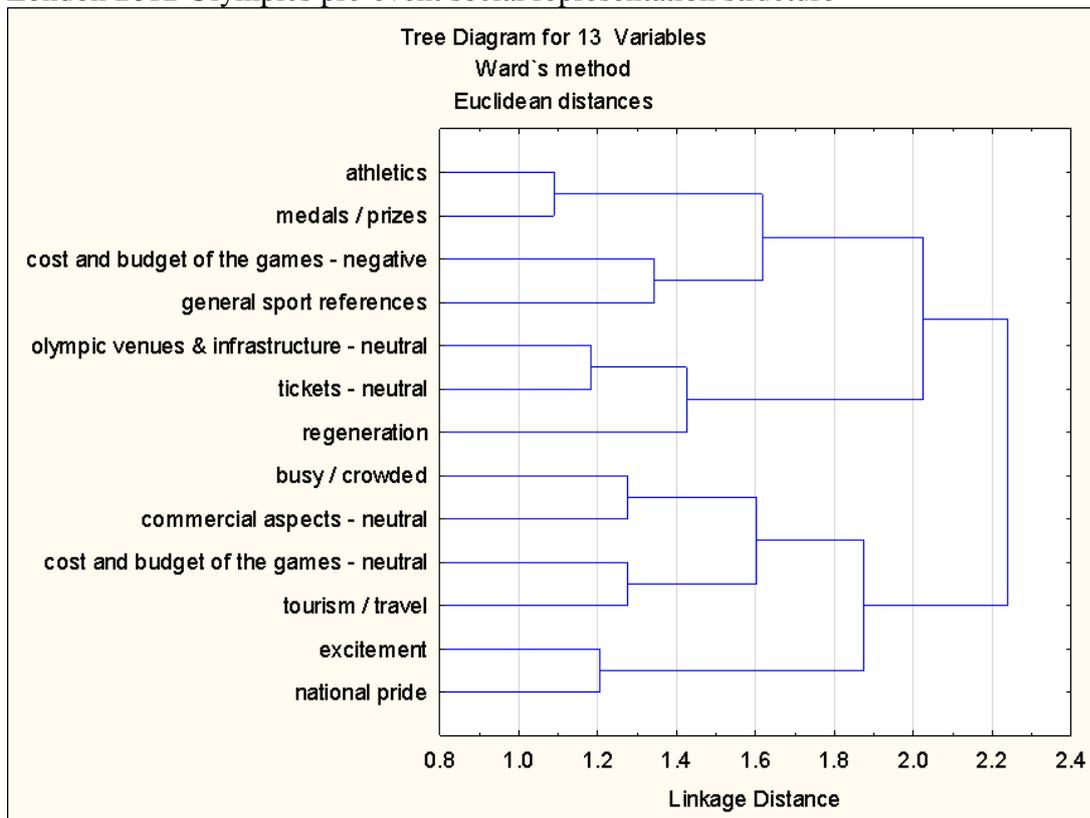
**Figure 3**  
Olympic Games pre-event social representation structure



**Figure 4**  
Olympic Games post-event social representation structure



**Figure 5**  
London 2012 Olympics pre-event social representation structure



**Figure 6**  
London 2012 Olympics post-event social representation structure

