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When Event Social Sustainability Is Tarnished by Scandal: Long-Term Community Perceptions of the 2002 Winter Olympics Bid Scandal and Legacy

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Abstract: Due to the increasing number of events around the world, event sustainability is an area of research relevant across disciplines. Research has found that event sustainability encompasses economic, environmental, and social legacies. However, events may face unforeseen challenges, sometimes even major scandals. How do these scandals impact residents and the sustainable legacy of the mega-event? As a historical case study, we explore social aspects of event sustainability in the wake of the 2002 Winter Olympics bid scandal, where it was reported that the Salt Lake Olympic Committee (SLOC) bribed members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to secure votes in favor of Salt Lake City hosting the 2002 Winter Olympic. Despite the bribery scandal, the Salt Lake City Games were considered a success by the media and members of the SLOC and IOC. Specifically, the present study investigates local residents' perceptions of the scandal before, during, and after the Olympics using data gathered from 1999 to 2018 in Heber Valley, Utah. We find that time is a significant predictor of residents' feelings toward the scandal. Further, feelings towards the Olympics, community desirability, race, and biological sex are also significant predictors. These findings lead us to conclude that the effects of the scandal on the Olympics' sustainable legacy fade away over time.

Keywords: event sustainability; mega-event; Olympics; community; scandal



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1. Introduction

In 1980, sociologist Todd Gitlin published his iconic book *The Whole World is Watching* [1]. While the book specifically addressed the rise of mass media and its role in the making of the New Left, the concept that everyone could have a front-row seat to even the most localized events forever altered our understanding of the role of the media in social change. Post-Gitlin, the meaning of Shakespeare's phrase "all the world is a stage" began to morph into a new and more modern attitude that "everyone can see you". In early 2007, with the onset of social media, the Pew Research Center released a report titled *How Young People View Their Lives, Futures, and Politics: A Portrait of "Generation Next"* [2]. The report labeled those who were between the ages of 18 and 25 as the "Look at Me" generation. A recent article addressing the narcissism of the "Look at Me" generation argues that this proclaimed narcissism is "a symptom of our generation's need to react and rebel in the most quickly moving and anxious age in history" [3] (p. 1). Thus, we moved from the Orwellian chill of "everyone can see you" to the narcissistic thrill of "I want everyone to see me!" In matters of social change at a localized level, does it matter if, indeed, the whole world is watching? Or is change just change, such that it matters little if the whole community is on the world stage or instead in social isolation? To what extent do community residents want their community to be seen? How might being seen affect the perception of their community?

1.1. Events and Sustainability

Generally, sustainability has been defined as the capability to maintain a new way of working at a certain rate or level, often transforming existing systems to support the changes [4–6]. When evaluating sustainability, many researchers use the triple bottom-line framework, which encompasses economic, environmental, and social dimensions [7–9]. While this approach has its limitations [10–12], we use it for the present study because of its utility in illustrating the broadly defined concept of sustainability.

In a recent study of social sustainability and local community events, Stevenson [13] noted that “community events encompass small-scale processes and practices that . . . enact some aspects of social sustainability”. Community events often disrupt normal routines and require planning and organization, but in return, provide benefits to the local residents [13]. For example, the social impacts of these events include increased social capital, community participation, positive attachment to place, and improved psychological wellbeing [13]. However, event impacts, also referred to as legacies, depend on many factors, such as the size of the event. Researchers agree that the larger the event, the larger the impacts, both negative and positive [14]. Mega-events (also known as major events or large-scale events) are different from other events or festivals in that they are grandiose in scale, and as a result, can have more grandiose impacts. These legacies include positive benefits, such as increased global awareness of the host city leading to more tourism, as well as negative costs, such as increased taxes and higher housing costs to pay for new infrastructure [15]. Therefore, careful attention to the impacts of mega-events is needed.

While much planning and preparation go into the act of putting on a mega-event by many different stakeholders, mega-events do not always go as planned. Throughout history, unethical or irresponsible actions have been taken by event organizers and stakeholders, jeopardizing the event’s social sustainability. For example, in light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the 2004 Athens Olympic Games became the testing ground for the latest antiterrorist surveillance technology [16]. The experiment of the new surveillance system was a disaster due to technical and bureaucratic issues [16]. Further, the 2004 games were related to a major phone-tapping scandal of over 100 government officials in Greece [16]. Despite the various setbacks, the Athens Olympic Games is considered a success today because hosting the event resulted in a sustainable positive legacy by rejuvenating the home of the classical Olympics [17]. This leads us to ask, can mega-events be sustainable even when tainted by scandal? Will residents still support hosting a mega-event, even when it has been tainted?

1.2. The Present Study

Due to the increasing number of events around the world and the call to investigate their sustainability, the present study analyzes residents’ perceptions of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Games and the effects of a related scandal on those perceptions. The goal of this paper is to investigate (1) residents’ perception of the scandal surrounding the games over time, (2) how residents’ experiences of their community influence their perception of the scandal, and (3) whether the location within the Heber Valley area has an influence on one’s perceptions of the scandal. Using longitudinal data collected in parts of Wasatch County, Utah, we find that time has a significant relationship with perceptions of the scandal: up until 2003, residents felt that the state had not recovered from the scandal. However, based on survey data from 2007, we find that residents’ perceptions had changed and that, on average, people had come to feel that the state had recovered from the scandal. Additionally, we find that community desirability, feelings toward the Olympics, race, and biological sex are significant predictors of perceptions of the Olympic bribery scandal. These findings lead us to conclude that the effects of the scandal on the Olympics’ sustainable legacy fade away over time.

2. Background

2.1. Mega-Events and Communities

Mega-events (also known as large-scale or major-events) differ from other events in that they are larger in scale in terms of the construction of facilities, financial investment, attendance, media coverage, and potential economic benefits for host communities [18–20]. Additionally, mega-events are short in duration and often change locations [19]. Examples include world expos, conventions, FIFA World Cup, ICC Cricket World Cup, and the Olympic Games [21]. Mega-events promise to bring increased tourism and positive media attention to the host community [18,22–25]. Due to the grandeur of mega-events, they often transform host cities and leave lasting legacies [26]. Communities bid to host mega-events in anticipation of the potential benefits, including economic development and the promise of being put “on the map” [15,27].

For mega-events to be successful, consideration of the sustainable legacies of the event on local residents is needed [28,29]. In the last two decades, many studies have investigated how mega-events can have a sustainable impact on the host community, or in other words, leave a lasting positive legacy [30–33]. According to Preuss [34], legacies are “all the planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible and tangible structures created through a sports event that remain after the event” (p. 11). In the case of mega-events, “sustainability” refers to the event’s achievement of positive legacies in the community. Mega-events should “give a holistic contribution to meet the economic, environmental, and social needs of the involved stakeholders in the event, including the host community” [32] (p. 2). Often, the triple bottom line approach is used to measure a mega-event’s sustainable legacy by assessing economic, environmental, and social impacts [7–9,35]. The economic legacies of hosting the Olympics are often evaluated by the effect that new infrastructure and an increased focus on tourism have affected the event’s final balance sheet [7,8]. Environmental legacies, such as effects on environmental awareness and environmental protection policies, can be measured by analyzing external and internal externalities, including, public complaints, energy materials use, and hazards or risks to the community [7,8,36]. Social impacts include effects on community pride, social capital, and local network development, but are often more difficult to measure due to their subjective nature [7,9]. As a result, event organizers often overlook them and instead tout positive economic and environmental impacts to garner support for the event [37–39].

When considering the legacies of the Olympics specifically, the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) mission statement includes a promise “to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly; to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to host cities, regions, and countries” [40]. The commitment to sustainable Olympic Games was included in IOC’s mission statement after environmental demonstrations took place against the impacts of the Albertville Winter Games in 1992. Norwegian authorities emphasized the importance of the environment and sustainable development when organizing their Winter Games in 1994, considered the first “Green Games” [41]. With a new requirement set by the IOC to outline environmental protection and sustainability in all future host bids, the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games were the first to incorporate the environmental dimension into their bidding process [32,41]. Despite the IOC’s increased focus on economic and environmental sustainability in recent decades, the social benefits of the Games continue to be less studied. However, what happens to these legacies when a mega-event is embroiled in a scandal? Can economic, environmental, and social legacies persist when host-community residents are confronted with a scandal?

2.2. The 2002 Olympic Games Bribery Scandal

On 12 November 1998, Chris Vancouver from the Salt Lake City-based television station KTVX reported that the Salt Lake Olympic Organizing Committee for the Olympic Winter Games of 2002 (SLOC) had paid for Sonia Essomba's tuition at American University in Washington. As Sonia was the daughter of an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member, this action violated the IOC's rules that placed limits on the value of gifts and other benefits host cities could give [42–44]. Before the news story, all appeared to be well for the IOC: revenues from fund-raising and television were at all-time highs, and the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan earlier that year were considered to have been a success [42]. Initially, the report seemed to be innocent enough, but quickly the story began snowballing, and what eventually transpired “threatened the entire existence of the International Olympic Committee” [42] (p. 1).

SLOC spokesperson Frank Zang spoke out when the news of the scandal initially broke, saying that the support for a small number of international students, including Sonia Essomba, was a “humanitarian effort” [44] (p. 15). Similarly, SLOC member Frank Joklik dismissed the idea of there being anything suspicious about the tuition payments, suggesting that the accusations of bribery were “a sort of defamation which is regrettable . . . destructive and distracting” [44] (p. 15). However, this stance was not well-received by locals and Salt Lake City reporters were persistent in pressing SLOC officials for more information [45].

Learning of the news, IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch met with Joklik and several SLOC executives. Joklik reported on the progress of Salt Lake City's preparations for the Games and disclosed that the SLOC's Chief Financial Officer had found several alarming payments to IOC members in the committee's bid files [44]. Samaranch decided that an expanded investigation was needed and assigned the IOC Juridical Committee to investigate the claims. At first glance, the head of the investigation, IOC Vice President, Richard Pound commented that the evidence looked “very damning” [44] (p. 18).

On 12 December 1998, the IOC Executive Board held a previously scheduled meeting in Lausanne. Near the end of the meeting, IOC member Marc Hodler spoke openly to the press and claimed that Nagano's and Atlanta's recent bids had been tainted and that between five and seven percent of IOC members had taken bribes from bid cities [42,44]. Hodler claimed that to his knowledge “there has always been a certain part of the vote given to corruption” [44] (p. 19). Other IOC officials, including Samaranch and Pound, were shocked. Stephen Wilson of the Associated Press wrote that “once Hodler started talking, what was a relatively routine IOC executive board meeting . . . turned into one of the most tumultuous three days in the organization's history” [44] (p. 18). Action by the IOC and SLOC was desperately needed.

At the beginning of 1999, various committees were formed to investigate the bribery allegations. In addition to the ad hoc IOC commission led by Pound, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) formed a panel known as the Mitchell Commission to investigate the IOC, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began its own examination into the SLOC to determine federal legality, and the SLOC formed a Board of Ethics under the leadership of Mitt Romney to investigate its own practices [42,44].

During January 1999, new reports appeared in the press almost daily accusing IOC and SLOC members of bribery [42]. As a result, major sponsors of the 2002 Winter Olympics, including US West Airline and David F. D'Alessandro, President of John Hancock Financial Services, announced the withholding of their payments until the IOC addressed the allegations and cleaned up its act [42,44]. The same month, various IOC members began to resign, admitting that they had received bribes or had conflicting interests regarding the Salt Lake City bid [42]. The head of the Sydney Olympic bid committee admitted that he made last-minute offers to two IOC officials to secure their votes [42]. Things looked bleak for the IOC, and the media repeatedly called for Samaranch to resign. On 24 January, the IOC executive board met in Lausanne to discuss Pound's preliminary findings, resulting in the suspension and eventual expulsion of six IOC members. At this meeting, the executive

board discussed the development of an ethics commission and a proposal to change the method of selecting the host city of the 2006 Winter Olympics [42,44]. Despite their efforts, criticism of the IOC and Samaranch persisted along with accusations of bribery continued. A timely report in USA Today found that 51 percent of those polled said their respect for the Olympics has declined as a result of the scandal and 46 percent thought that Samaranch should resign [46].

This criticism was further fueled by the release of the Mitchell Commission's report. The Mitchell Commission's report was more comprehensive than others had been and dealt with several arms of the Olympic movement [42]. Findings suggested that bid cities should be prohibited from giving members of the USOC or the IOC "anything more than nominal value", the USOC should strengthen its oversight of the selection process, and the IOC should make fundamental changes to increase its accountability and be considered "a public international organization" [42] (pp. 15–16). While the Mitchell Commission had no real power, the IOC took its recommendations seriously.

The scandal came to a head at the 108th IOC Session in Lausanne on 17 and 18 March 1999. Going into the meeting, Samaranch confessed that the IOC had performed poorly in its monitoring of the bidding process [44]. The stakes were high, and inaction in response to the scandal would have been catastrophic for the IOC. The scandal could have resulted in major financial losses, legal punishments for members involved in the unethical practices, and even social consequences for both the individuals and the organizations.

On the first day, six IOC members appeared before the session to plead their cases, including (1) Agustin Arroyo (former president of Ecuador's National Olympic committee and IOC member since 1968), who was accused of asking SLOC leadership to assist his stepdaughter in securing employment in Salt Lake City, (2) General Zein El Abdin Ahmed Abdel Gadir (founder of the Sudanese Parachute Regiment), whose son had studied in the United States despite a lack of personal family finances that could have provided for the education, (3) Jean-Claude Ganga of the Republic of Congo, who was accused of accepting benefits exceeding \$250,000 from Salt Lake City, (4) Lamine Keita (president of the National Olympic Committee in Mali and IOC member since 1977), who was accused of receiving around \$97,000 worth of benefits to pay for his son's attendance at Howard University, (5) Sergio Santander Fantini (president of Chile's National Olympic Committee and IOC member since 1992), who was accused of receiving a financial donation from SLOC officials through an intermediary in Chile, and (6) Seiuli Paul Wallwork (permanent secretary for Samoa's ministry of Youth, Sports, and Cultural Affairs and IOC member since 1987), whose wife had received a loan from SLOC members [44]. Of the six members, the majority claimed to have no knowledge of receiving funds from SLOC to secure their vote. One accuser, Ganga, argued that the IOC knew exactly what was happening in the host-city bidding process and that the only reason IOC members were being charged was because of the media frenzy [44]. After listening to the pleas of their colleagues IOC members were tasked with determining the offenders' fates. Arroyo (seventy-two to sixteen votes), Gadir (eighty-six to four), Ganga (eighty-two to two), Keita (seventy-two to sixteen), Fantini (seventy-six to twelve), and Wallwork (sixty-seven to nineteen) were all expelled from the IOC [44]. After the expulsion, these members maintained that they were scapegoats, and many made disparaging comments about Samaranch and Pound [44].

In addition to the expulsion of the six implicated IOC members, three individuals resigned before the extraordinary session and eleven other IOC members were sanctioned [43]. Under the guidance of Samaranch and Pound, the IOC voted to form two new commissions including the Ethics Commission and the IOC 2000 Commission, with the goals of creating an "advisory body which served the IOC" and in "generating ideas that would assist the IOC in strengthening its structure and function in the twenty-first century" [42,44]. While some praised Samaranch, others felt that allowing him to leave the scandal unscathed was unfair [44].

On 14 October 1999, the United States House of Representatives Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Commerce held its own hearing on the need for reform of the Olympic bid process [43,44]. After six hours of testimony, members of the subcommittee decided “they could do little more than pledge to monitor closely the IOC’s vow to change” and promise the passage of legislation banning American companies from participating in the Olympics if reforms of the bidding process were not implemented [44] (p. 129). Samaranch, again, was praised for his performance at the hearing as it seemed that promising measures would be implemented. By July 1999, polls from the USOC revealed that public opinion had shifted with 80 percent of Americans having at least somewhat positive feelings about the Olympics, 85 percent having a strong interest in watching the Olympics, and 75 percent agreeing that Olympic sponsors deserve the business of the American public [47]. Despite the initial negative publicity, it seemed that the public was beginning to forgive and move on from the unethical choices of the IOC and SLOC.

Until the spring of 2000, the judicial arm of the US government had remained quiet on the Olympic bribery scandal. Just before the opening of the Sydney Summer Olympic games, however, the Department of Justice filed a fifteen-count felony indictment against the former SLOC President and Vice President, Thomas Welch and David Johnson, with charges of conspiracy, mail fraud, wire fraud, and travel across state lines in aid of racketeering [44]. Five days before the scheduled opening of the trial on 16 July 2001, the defense counsel presented an appeal to Judge David Sam on four of the fifteen federal charges. As a surprise to everyone, Judge Sam stated that Utah’s commercial bribery law could not be stretched to serve as the basis of federal charges under the travel-in-aid dimension of racketeering laws and dismissed all charges in November 2001, just a few months before the Olympic games were set to begin [44]. At that time, the world’s attention turned to the Salt Lake Games, which unfolded “almost immaculately, certainly gloriously” in February 2002 [44] (p. 129).

After an extremely successful Olympic Winter Games, the Tenth US Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, Colorado heard arguments by the Department of Justice for reopening the case. Once again, Judge Sam was assigned to try the case and once again he sided with Welch and Johnson, acquitting them of all charges [44].

Although the Olympic Bribery Scandal caused ripples, both great and small, throughout the world, the media seemed to forgive the transgressions of the IOC and SLOC as the Salt Lake City Olympics were considered an overall success. In consideration of environmental sustainability, part of the emissions from the Games were offset, eighty-five percent of waste produced from the Games was recycled or composted, and 100,000 million trees were planted in the State of Utah [48]. Further, the Games helped Utah establish itself as one of the world’s best high-performance and recreational winter sports destinations, with Legacy venues reported to be four times busier in 2020 than they were in 2002 [48].

However, how do the residents of the host community feel? Have they also forgiven those at fault for the scandal? That is, did the unethical choices of the IOC and SLOC and the scandal that followed affect the sustainability of the event? Previous studies have utilized social exchange theory (SET) as a framework for examining residents’ support for mega-events [29,49–52] and have found that several factors may influence the level of residents’ support, such as perceptions of the event’s positive and negative impacts, concerns for the community, community attachment, and environmental values. As the bidding and planning processes for mega-events tend to be politically charged with little inclusion of locals, levels of trust in government and the organizing committee also influence residents’ support. When there is little or no trust between groups, the host community typically has less enthusiasm and does not provide as much support [53–55]. Therefore, a calamity, such as a bribery scandal, may have significant effects on local residents’ trust in mega-event officials, resulting in diminished event support.

2.3. Study Setting

Non-native settlement of Heber Valley began in the mid-1800s by immigrants looking for a place to farm [56]. For years, Heber Valley was considered to be a small, agricultural community, but starting in 1993 it experienced rapid population growth due to its proximity to Park City, a major recreational and cultural destination [56].

Despite the developing news of the scandal, preparations for the Olympics moved forward in Utah. A site in Heber Valley, Soldier Hollow, was chosen to host various events, due to its proximity to other major venues in Park City [56]. Major construction in Heber Valley began in 1999, including the building of forty-two four-bedroom homes to house athletes and officials [57]. To “put their best face forward”, leaders in Heber Valley developed plans to create a “Western Experience” including music, pioneer reenactments, Native American displays, and other entertainment [58]. An analysis of newspapers during this preparation period revealed that residents’ opinions of these Olympic-related activities were mixed [59].

2.4. The Current Study

Using data from eight different data waves collected in Heber, Utah—before, during, and after the Olympics—the present study seeks to determine: (1) how time influenced residents’ perceptions of the scandal surrounding Salt Lake City’s acquisition of the 2002 Winter Olympics, (2) how residents’ experiences of their community influenced their perception of the scandal, and (3) whether or not community residence within Heber Valley had an influence on one’s perceptions of the scandal.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Sample

The data used in the present study were collected during eight different years from 1999 to 2018 in Heber Valley, Utah. The data were collected via telephone surveys administered by the Brigham Young University Survey Research Center (BYU SRC) once a year over a five-year period from February 1999 through February 2003, with additional waves of data gathered in February 2007, 2012, and 2018. Individuals were randomly selected each year from a phone number database, which included unlisted phone numbers, through random digit dialing. In 2018, data was gathered via mailed surveys. Yearly sample sizes varied from 258 to 619, with the total sample size across all waves being 3124. The longitudinal data allow us to understand changes in residents’ perceptions of their community and the Olympic bribery scandal over time.

3.2. Dependent Variable

Residents’ perceptions of the 2002 Winter Olympics bribery scandal was the main dependent variable. Perceptions were measured by one question which asked respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement: “The state has recovered from the scandal about the acquisition of the Winter Olympics”. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale where one indicated “strongly disagree”, three indicated neutral, and five indicated “strongly agree”. When necessary, responses were recoded to consistently reflect the negative to positive direction of the scale.

3.3. Independent Variables

3.3.1. Community Attachment

Our first key independent variable, community attachment, was based on two different well-established measures in community literature [57,60,61]. These measures asked respondents: “How well do you feel you fit in your community?” and “how much do you have in common with most people in your community?” Responses were measured on five-point Likert scales where one indicated poor fit in the community and having nothing in common with other people, three indicated neutral fit and commonality, and five indicated good fit within the community and having a lot in common with other

people. Due to slight variations between various data waves, some responses were recoded to follow the negative to positive scale direction. The responses were added together, and the mean was used to measure overall community attachment.

3.3.2. Community Satisfaction

Our next key independent variable, community satisfaction, was also based on two well-established measures in community literature [57,60,61]. The questions asked respondents: “Where would you rank your present community compared with your ideal community?” and “how satisfied are you with living in your community?” Responses were measured on five-point Likert scales where one indicated complete dissatisfaction or feeling that the community was nothing like their ideal community, three indicated neutral feelings, and five indicated feeling very satisfied, or that their current community was very much like their ideal community. Again, responses across different waves were recoded to follow the negative to positive scale direction of the scale. Responses were added together, and the mean was taken to measure overall community satisfaction.

3.3.3. Community Desirability

Our final key independent variable was community desirability. Community desirability was measured using one question: “Over the past 5 years, would you say that, in general, your community has become more desirable, stayed about the same, or become less desirable as a place to live?” Responses were measured on a three-point Likert scale, with one indicating that it had become less desirable, two indicating that it stayed about the same, and three indicating that it had become more desirable. As with the previous variables, responses across different waves were recoded to follow the negative to positive scale direction.

3.3.4. Olympic Legacy

To measure perceptions towards the 2002 Winter Olympics, respondents were asked to respond to five different statements. Those statements included: “The costs of the 2002 Winter Olympics outweigh the benefits”, “my quality of life has improved as a result of the 2002 Winter Olympics”, “the Winter Olympics resulted in improved winter recreation in my community”, “the Winter Olympics resulted in improved economic opportunities for my family”, and “the quality of the natural environment in this area has diminished as a result of the Winter Olympics”. Responses were measured on five-point Likert scales where one indicated negative feelings, three indicated neutral feelings, and five indicated positive feelings towards the Olympics. Some responses were reverse coded to follow the negative to positive directionality. The five responses were then combined and put into a scale, ranging from five to twenty-five. Cronbach’s alpha for the scale was 0.7464.

3.3.5. Length of Residence

Because time in a community has been shown to affect feelings towards the community [57,62], we created a “length of residence” variable by dividing respondents’ reported age by the reported number of years living in their current community. Reported as a percentage, responses ranged from zero to one.

3.3.6. Lifecycle Stage

Several variables were included to control for lifecycle stage, including age, number of children, and educational attainment. To measure age, respondents were asked which year they were born. After subtracting these responses from the survey year, ages ranged from 18 to 96.

Respondents were asked how many children ages 17 or younger currently lived in their household. Responses were recoded into categories ranging from 0 to 7+.

Marital status was measured by asking respondents about their current marital status. Response options included married, separated due to marital problems, divorced, widowed, never married, and unmarried but living with a partner. A dichotomous variable was created with those who reported their status as married or widowed being coded as one, and all other responses being coded as zero.

Lastly, educational attainment was measured by asking respondents about the highest level in school or college they had completed. Response options included 11th grade or less, high school graduate (or GED), 1 year of college or trade school, 2 years of college or trade school or an associate's degree, 3 years of college or trade school, 4 years of college or BS/BA degree, and graduate degree (MA, PhD, MD, JD, etc.). Responses were coded on a scale of one to seven where one indicated the respondent had completed 11th grade or less and seven indicated they had completed a graduate degree.

3.3.7. Demographic Variables

We controlled for biological sex and race. Respondents were asked to indicate their biological sex, with response options being male or female. Male respondents were coded as one and female respondents were coded as zero. Furthermore, respondents were asked to select a category that best described the ethnic or racial group with which they identified. Response options included Hispanic/Latino, White, American Indian/Native American, African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other (then asked to specify). Due to racial homogeneity in the area, a dichotomous variable was created with one indicating identifying as white and zero indicating identifying with one of the other five categories.

3.3.8. Current Town

Our final control variable measured the town in which the respondent currently lived. Response options were Heber, Charleston, Daniel, Midway, Wallsburg, Unincorporated Wallsburg, Center, and other unincorporated areas of Wasatch County (respondents were then asked to specify). Three dichotomous variables were created to indicate if respondents lived in Heber, Midway, or another town. The "other towns" variable was left out of the model to be used as the reference group. See Table 1 for additional information on the measurements used.

Table 1. Variable Descriptions.

Variable	Description
Dependent Variables	
Scandal	On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree, how do you feel towards the statement: "The state has recovered from the scandal about the acquisition of the Winter Olympics".
Independent Variables	
Attachment	Scale based on two separate items: "On a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means poorly and a 5 means well, how well do you feel that you fit into your community?" and "On a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means nothing and a 5 means everything, how much do you have in common with most of the people in your community?"
Satisfaction	Scale based on two separate items: "Imagine the ideal community in which you would like to live. On a scale from 1 to 5, where a 1 means the worst and a 5 means the best, where would you rank your present community compared with your ideal community?" and "On a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means dissatisfied and a 5 means satisfied, how satisfied are you with living in your community?"

Table 1. Cont.

Variable	Description
Desirability	Over the past 5 years would you say that, in general, your community has become less desirable, stayed about the same, or become more desirable as a place to live?
Olympic	Scale based on five separate items: “The costs of the 2002 Winter Olympics outweigh the benefits, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree”, “my quality of life has improved as a result of the 2002 Winter Olympics, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree”, “the Winter Olympics resulted in improved economic opportunities for my family, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree”, “the quality of the environment has diminished as a result of the Winter Olympics, where 1 means strongly agree and 5 means strongly disagree”, and “the Winter Olympics resulted in improved recreation in my community, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree”.
Length of Residence	Proportion of life: (resident – years resident)/age
Age	Measured in years
Children	0 to 7+
Education	1 through 7, where 1 means 11th grade or less and 7 means graduate degree
Sex (% male)	1, Male; 0, Female
Race (% white)	1, White; 0, Other
Marital Status	1, Married or Widowed; 0, other

3.4. Sample Characteristics

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for both the pooled sample and each survey year. The average age of the pooled sample was 52 years old, 44 percent was male, 86 percent was married or widowed, and 96 percent identified as white. On average, respondents reported having one child and obtaining an associate degree or attending two years of a trade school. Sixty-three percent reported living in Heber, 21 percent lived in Midway, and 16 percent lived in other towns.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

	Pooled (N = 3124)		1999 (N = 328)		2000 (N = 364)		2001 (N = 368)		2002 (N = 332)		2003 (N = 288)		2007 (N = 567)		2012 (N = 258)		2018 (N = 619)	
Dependent Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Scandal	3.09	1.21	2.91	1.18	2.76	1.11	2.57	1.11	1.98	0.83	2.03	0.86	3.77	0.76	4.12	0.71	3.73	1.01
Independent Variables																		
Olympic	15.66	2.32	15.42	2.41	15.85	2.23	15.77	2.36	16.09	2.17	15.98	2.27	15.41	2.09	14.94	2.30	15.74	2.50
Attachment	2.78	0.89	2.70	0.94	2.77	0.92	2.73	0.92	2.81	0.92	2.87	0.91	2.85	0.88	3.09	0.79	2.63	0.82
Satisfaction	3.00	0.87	2.90	0.91	2.96	0.84	2.88	0.93	3.07	0.84	3.07	0.84	3.00	0.88	3.38	0.74	2.93	0.84
Desirability	1.94	0.84	1.84	0.84	1.78	0.83	1.82	0.83	2.18	0.84	2.03	0.81	1.90	0.87	2.21	0.77	1.91	0.82
Length of Residence	0.41	0.34	0.44	0.33	0.46	0.34	0.43	0.36	0.37	0.32	0.37	0.33	0.42	0.35	0.47	0.31	0.37	0.33
Age	51.46	16.72	44.66	14.14	47.76	16.57	48.14	17.20	47.39	15.82	51.99	18.58	53.92	17.30	58.50	14.06	55.97	15.00
Children	1.68	1.59	1.83	1.78	1.71	1.73	1.63	1.61	1.67	1.74	1.64	1.77	1.45	1.68	0.92	1.44	2.15	0.83
Education	4.45	1.80	3.90	1.68	4.04	1.80	3.97	1.72	4.38	1.73	4.42	1.78	4.54	1.77	4.65	1.81	5.15	1.71
Male	44.22%		43.50%		44.69%		41.44%		42.73%		40.83%		37.06%		32.56%		59.84%	
White	96.16%		96.98%		96.19%		93.32%		95.85%		95.16%		96.68%		97.67%		96.94%	
Married/Widowed	86.34%		81.27%		81.20%		85.29%		85.16%		84.78%		90.73%		92.25%		87.58%	
Heber	62.58%		60.61%		60.66%		67.29%		53.71%		64.36%		63.40%		60.94%		65.86%	
Midway	21.15%		21.82%		21.31%		17.16%		27.00%		17.99%		21.37%		19.53%		21.84%	
Other Towns	16.27%		17.58%		18.03%		15.55%		19.29%		17.65%		15.24%		19.53%		12.30%	

4. Results

To answer our research questions, we used multiple ordinary least squares regression (OLS) models. Model 1 reported in Table 3 indicates that without including control variables, perceptions of the Olympic bribery scandal were significant in all the survey years. Compared to the reference year (1999) the survey years 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 had negative relationships with the variable “perceptions of the bribery scandal”, while 2007, 2012, and 2018 had positive relationships. In this model, there is a clear pattern of negative perceptions of the bribery scandal decreasing over time.

Table 3. OLS Regression predicting Scandal Perceptions.

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	b		SE	b		SE	b		SE	b		SE
1999 Reference												
2000	−0.159	*	0.073				−0.143	*	0.073	−0.143	*	0.073
2001	−0.349	***	0.073				−0.337	***	0.073	−0.337	***	0.073
2002	−0.939	***	0.075				−0.881	***	0.075	−0.881	***	0.075
2003	−0.887	***	0.078				−0.838	***	0.078	−0.838	***	0.078
2007	0.853	***	−0.067				0.867	***	0.067	0.867	***	0.067
2012	1.206	***	0.080				1.215	***	0.082	1.215	***	0.082
2018	0.811	***	0.066				0.843	***	0.068	0.843	***	0.068
Olympic Legacy				−0.085	***	0.009	−0.051	***	0.008	−0.051	***	0.008
Attachment				0.002		0.029	0.015		0.024	0.015		0.024
Satisfaction				0.004		0.030	−0.026		0.025	−0.026		0.025
Desirability				−0.076	**	0.026	−0.050	*	0.022	−0.050	*	0.022
Length of Residence							0.050		0.054	0.050		0.054
Age							−0.001		0.001	−0.001		0.001
Children							−0.017		0.012	−0.017		0.012
Married or Widowed							−0.026		0.052	−0.026		0.052
Education							0.001		0.010	0.001		0.010
White							−0.141		0.090	−0.141		0.090
Male							0.071	*	0.035	0.071	*	0.035
Interaction between 2001 and Desirability										−0.264	***	0.064
Interaction between 2012 and Desirability										0.205	*	0.080
Interaction between 2018 and Desirability										0.231	***	0.052
Constant	2.915	***	0.053	4.553	***	0.175	4.026	***	0.185	4.026	***	0.185
R ²	0.367			0.028			0.380			0.380		
Adj. R ²	0.365			0.026			0.377			0.377		
F	258.14			22.15			105.77			105.77		
p	<0.001			<0.001			<0.001			<0.001		

Notes: N = 3124. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Model 2 tested if perceptions of the Olympics as a whole and feelings towards one's community predicted perceptions of the bribery scandal. Perceptions of the Olympics ($p < 0.001$) and community desirability ($p < 0.01$) have a negative association with perceptions of the bribery scandal. Thus, without including control variables, both having stronger positive perceptions of the Winter Olympics and feeling that one's community is more desirable are associated with more negative perceptions of the state having recovered from the scandal. Community attachment and community satisfaction were not significantly related to scandal perceptions in this model.

Further, model 3 includes all key independent variables and control variables. We find that the only control variable that significantly predicted feelings towards the scandal was biological sex, with males being more likely to agree that the state had recovered from the scandal ($p < 0.05$). No other control variables were statistically significant. When including control variables, perceptions of the Olympics ($p < 0.001$), community desirability ($p < 0.05$), and all the survey years (2000 ($p < 0.05$), all other years ($p < 0.001$)) continued to be statistically significant predictors of perceptions of the scandal. The patterns that were seen in earlier models persist: as time passes, perceptions of the scandal improve, and residents feel that the state has recovered from the Olympics bribery scandal. Positive perceptions of the Olympics and feeling that one's community is more desirable are associated with perceptions that the state has not fully recovered.

Various interaction effects were tested (see model 4). First, we tested if there was an interaction between significant survey years and community desirability, finding that there was a significant interaction effect for 2001, 2012, and 2018 (2001 and 2018 ($p < 0.001$), 2012 ($p < 0.05$)). Survey years and Olympic variables were also tested for interaction effects due to their statistical significance in model 3. However, we found no statistically significant interactions.

Lastly, we controlled for resident community by running separate regressions for Heber, Midway, and other towns (see Table 4). While most patterns found in the pooled model persisted, we did find a handful of differences between communities when predicting perceptions of the scandal. For example, survey year 2000 was only a significant predictor in Midway ($p < 0.05$), and survey year 2001 was not a significant predictor in Other Towns but was significant in Midway ($p < 0.001$) and Heber ($p < 0.01$). Negative perceptions of the “Olympic Legacy” continued to be a significant predictor across community categories, at varying levels of significance (Heber ($p < 0.001$), Midway ($p < 0.05$), Other Towns ($p < 0.01$)). Increased feelings of community desirability was a significant predictor only in Midway ($p < 0.05$), not identifying as white was only a significant predictor in Other Towns ($p < 0.05$), and identifying as male was a significant predictor only in Heber ($p < 0.05$). Overall, this leads us to conclude that resident community may have some association with certain predictors of perceptions of the bribery scandal.

Table 4. OLS Regressions predicting Scandal Perceptions by Community.

	Model 1 Heber			Model 2 Midway			Model 3 Other Towns		
	b		SE	b		SE	b		SE
1999 Reference									
2000	−0.018		0.094	−0.390	*	0.156	−0.181		0.172
2001	−0.297	**	0.092	−0.622	***	0.166	−0.147		0.177
2002	−0.840	***	0.100	−0.973	***	0.152	−0.800	***	0.174
2003	−0.792	***	0.099	−0.977	***	0.175	−0.773	***	0.186
2007	0.900	***	0.086	0.830	***	0.146	0.883	***	0.168
2012	1.271	***	0.106	1.209	***	0.186	1.213	***	0.195
2018	0.913	***	0.087	0.803	***	0.145	0.596	**	0.172
Olympic Legacy	−0.051	***	0.010	−0.043	*	0.017	−0.064	**	0.019
Attachment	0.040		0.030	−0.021		0.051	−0.055		0.061
Satisfaction	−0.030		0.031	−0.023		0.059	−0.009		0.064
Desirability	−0.032		0.028	−1.03	*	0.047	−0.070		0.061
Length of Residence	0.036		0.068	−0.023		0.130	0.183		0.134
Age	−0.002		0.001	0.002		0.003	−0.002		0.003
Children	−0.027		0.015	0.019		0.026	−0.030		0.030
Married or Widowed	0.019		0.064	−0.075		0.116	−0.223		0.143
Education	−0.009		0.013	0.028		0.023	−0.009		0.025
White	−0.064		0.108	−0.003		0.254	−0.513	*	0.234
Male	0.114	*	0.045	−0.070		0.078	0.106		0.087
Constant	3.857	***	0.230	3.804	***	0.429	4.932	***	0.490
N	1946			663			507		
R ²	0.376			0.4329			0.3721		
Adjusted R ²	0.370			0.4170			0.3489		
F	64.56			27.31			16.07		
p	<0.001			<0.001			<0.001		

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

5. Discussion

Due to the increasing number of events around the world, event sustainability has become a relevant topic across disciplines. Much research has been done to investigate the sustainable legacies of mega-events, such as the Olympics. While economic and environmental impacts have often received more attention than social impacts, previous research has found that some of the social benefits of hosting the Games include improving residents' quality of life [63,64], positive effects on residents' mental and physical health [65,66], increasing social cohesion, and improved social networks [65,66]. On the other hand, mega-events also have been found to negatively impact traditional family values [67], promote cultural commercialization [68], create conflicts between the host community and visitors due to differences in the groups' living styles [69], and generate lower overall benefits than expected by the host-community [70]. Irresponsible or unethical actions by event organizers and stakeholders, such as jeopardizing the safety and privacy of attendees, evidently seen in the case of the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics, or engaging in unethical behavior, as in the case of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, can result in scandals that threaten the sustainability of the event. Unsuccessful and unsustainable events can cost stakeholders financially, legally, and even socially. To date, little investigation has been done examining how residents perceive a mega-event scandal or how event legacies may affect the perception of such a scandal. The purpose of the present study was to investigate: (1) how does time influence residents' perceptions of the scandal surrounding Salt Lake City's acquisition of the 2002 Winter Olympics, (2) how do residents' community experiences influence their perception of the scandal, and (3) does location in Heber Valley influence one's perceptions of the scandal. To answer our research questions, we used data collected from the Heber Valley area during seven different waves between 1999 to 2018.

Our results indicate that in comparison to our reference year of 1999, survey years are significant predictors of an individual's perception of the scandal. The survey years 2000 ($p < 0.05$), 2001 ($p < 0.001$), 2002 ($p < 0.001$), and 2003 ($p < 0.001$) have a negative relationship with residents' perceptions of the bribery scandal. On the other hand, the survey years 2007, 2012, and 2018 (all $p < 0.001$) have a significant positive relationship with perceptions of the bribery scandal. This leads us to conclude that time does "heal all wounds:" the more time that had passed between the scandal of the acquisition of the 2002 Winter Olympics, the more positive residents' perceptions were, even when including Olympic legacy variables, community variables, and control variables in the pooled model.

Additionally, we find that some community variables do influence perceptions of the scandal, while others do not. Positive perceptions of the Olympics significantly predicted residents' perception of the state not recovering from the scandal surrounding the acquisition of the 2002 Winter Olympics when including control variables ($p < 0.001$). Feeling that one's community has become more desirable in the past five years also was a significant predictor of feeling that the state has not recovered from the bribery scandal ($p < 0.05$). However, community attachment and satisfaction are not significant predictors, leading us to conclude that feelings towards one's community do not have a large effect on perceptions of the bribery scandal. This is relevant to mega-event planners as improving feelings towards one's community may not act as a protective factor in the case of an event scandal.

When separating respondents by community categories, we find that most patterns replicate those found in the pooled model. However, some patterns only persisted in specific communities. For instance, our data shows that the results for the survey year 2000 were only significant in Midway and that the year 2001 is not significant in other towns. Furthermore, perception of the Olympic legacy has different significance levels across the communities (Heber $p < 0.001$, Midway $p < 0.05$, and Other Towns $p < 0.01$), leading us to conclude that Heber residents' perceptions of the scandal are strongly influenced by their perceptions of the Olympics. Community desirability is a significant predictor of perceptions of the scandal in Midway but not in Heber or Other Towns ($p < 0.05$). Race is a significant predictor only in Other Towns (i.e., not Heber or Midway) ($p < 0.05$), and biological sex is a significant predictor only in Heber ($p < 0.05$). Overall, we find that a

person's residential community does have some influence on how one feels about the bribery scandal.

While the present study contributes to social legacies in the sustainable mega-event literature, there are still limitations to be noted. Since the surveys were conducted across time by different researchers, survey question construction varied, potentially introducing measurement error into our study. Additionally, important variables that may have influenced residents' perceptions of the scandal, such as religion, were not included in the model due to data entry errors in the 2012 survey. We encourage future researchers to investigate religion and other variables that may be related to perceptions of scandal surrounding mega-events. While our findings are representative of residents' experiences in the Heber Valley area, they may not be generalizable to other communities that have also experienced a scandal surrounding a mega-event. While the bribery scandal of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics had lasting effects on the host community, the event was considered an overall success financially, many individuals, such as Juan Samaranch, recovered their social reputations, and there were no legal repercussions for SLOC committee members. However, not all scandals end as positively and we encourage researchers to investigate the lasting impacts of other mega-event scandals, especially those that are not considered successes [71,72]. Lastly, we suggest that qualitative methods be employed to understand in greater detail the findings of this study and explore the nuance in how residents may experience their community being affected by a scandal surrounding a mega-event.

To conclude, stakeholder expectations are an important consideration when studying the sustainability of mega-events. Event organizers desire sustainability and specifically focus on reducing costs and maximizing benefits. However, sustainability does not happen by chance; consideration of environmental effects, economic costs, and social impacts on the local population are necessary during the planning stages of mega-events. Local residents' opinions and support are crucial aspects of the planning and preparation process as they play a vital role in determining the success of events and the sustainable legacies they leave behind. To minimize the likelihood of a scandal and ensure that an event or mega-event leaves a sustainable legacy in the host community, organizers can prioritize social sustainability while planning and executing the event by implementing accountability frameworks, considering and tracking social, environmental, and economic outcomes, and integrating the host community early in the process of hosting a mega-event [32,41].

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