

events & strategic planning

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This lecture is based on my ph.d project 'events & strategic planning' – a research project that is well underway - today I will present some of the central issues and findings. Please interrupt at any time if you have questions!

The focus of my studies is NOT the event itself, but the planning process and the post-event period, where the long-term effect or lasting legacy of the event becomes evident.

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I draw on examples of host cities from the past 50 years. Since the 1960's several host cities have used the Olympic Games and other mega events as catalysts of massive urban transformation. Furthermore since the 1990's host cities have emphasized on the potentials of urban marketing through hosting major events. The change from an industrial to a post-industrial economy has caused an increasing interest in using events as strategic tools for urban transformation.

I will start by introducing the dynamics behind the emergence of mega-events as a tool of urban and regional public policy within the post-industrial city...

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The overall transformations from an industrial to a post-industrial society:

Deindustrialisation => a changing economy from manufacturing and production > service industries and tourism

Globalisation => a changing role of the private sector from local > global capital investment

Deregulation => a changing role of the public sector from centralised public sector investments to encourage inward investment > reduced public sector intervention and more emphasis on role of privatisation, enterprise, culture and growth networks. New forms of local governance

These transformations have had several Implications for urban and regional policy:

New industries depend upon high quality and attractive environments, which makes urban renewal essential – commodification of landscape >

Increasing importance of image and place marketing to attract inward investment and tourists >

Increased inter-urban competition for highly mobile investment at global scale rather than at regional scale >>>

Mega-events have become options within urban and regional policy because they have the potential to:

Enable urban renewal and regeneration

Facilitate modernisation of economy

Attract tourists

Advertise new image and personality

Attract new inward investment

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The increased globalisation, inter-urban competition and deregulation have made strategic planning the prevailing planning type since the 1990's.

This is a definition – or lack of definition – of strategic planning:

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SO: There is no recipe for strategic planning. The process depends on the local preconditions and the metropolitan vision for the future.

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And just as there is no recipe for strategic planning there is no recipe for the planning and implementation of mega events as all host cities have different preconditions and different visions for their future.

To some extent, the content and scale of Olympic urbanization can be examined by looking at the capital investment in Olympic construction at each Games (L&P, 2006:1246). In that case this figure illustrates how the approach to and investments in the Olympic Games vary greatly from one event to the next.

I will now try to unfold the potential risks of applying a mega event strategy in urban planning and development processes

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Initially there is a risk of cities ending up in a so-called prisoner's dilemma:

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This means that not only does the event owners 'force' their requirements for Olympic development onto the host cities, the host cities themselves go out of their way to win the right to host the event and thus make unviable plans for the urban development.

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One of the greatest challenges when using the mega-event strategy is the fact that suddenly you have not only one but two political power players.... *Slide content*

So: If and when the global player (the event owner) gains the upper hand the development is being planned from a short-term perspective – the needs of the event – rather than the long-term perspective (the interest of the local players).

Moreover the changing conditions from an industrial to a post-industrial society means that today urban planning is involving a lot of different actors. Urban planning is not only a task of the city government. When using a mega event to accelerate the urban development, there is a potential risk of shortcutting the planning process leaving out a lot of the actors and thereby making the urban development process less democratic.

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The conclusion of Kassens is that.... *Slide content*

So: It is essential that the event will serve as a catalyst for desirable change and do not initiate a lot of development that wasn't planned for by the city. In this way the quote emphasize the event as an integrated part of the urban-change process and not as something extraneous.

One obvious benefit of the event is the fixed deadline, when the development have to be ready, which requires consensus and accelerate the desired development. But just as well as the potential of the deadline, there is a risk of hasty planning where the strong focus on getting ready for the event causes the planners to loose their long term vision and focus on the event rather than the post-event period. This can lead to missed opportunities and/or a lack of planning for the post-event period – in Sydney (2000) there was a lack of planning for the post-event period and thus it took quite a while to get the Olympic Park up and running. It is crucial to start post-event planning while planning the event!

I will now turn to some examples and elaborate a bit on the risks and potentials of mega-events.

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Tokyo was one of the first cities to use the Olympic Games as catalyst for urban renewal and development.

The Tokyo Games were conceived in a period of explosive growth/urban expansion and *Tokyo used the event to give impetus to its already proposed ten-year development plan.*

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In contrast to previous Olympic Games, new development for Tokyo was weighted much more heavily towards projects other than those designed for the sporting events and the athletes. The construction of a new road and highway network was the largest of the Olympic projects and was designed to meet both the short-term demands of the event itself and, in the long-term, to accommodate the city's continued population and traffic increase.

In addition, the city made a number of more general infrastructural improvements.

The organizers and government were to spend US \$2.7 billion on developments related to the staging of the 1964 Olympic Games, with significant consequences for Tokyo's urban structure. The investments in indirect Olympic investments made up more than 97% of the total investments in Tokyo!

The Tokyo Olympics gave the Japanese Government an opportunity to show the world that they are now ready to play on the world's economic stage. In other words they saw the Olympics as an opportunity to open up to the West and create a positive image worldwide.

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By contrast Montreal only spent around 12% of the total Olympic investments on indirect investments. The main part went into the construction of elaborate sports facilities. This is the Olympic Stadium in Montreal built for the 1976 Olympics.

Montreal saw the 1976 games as a chance to build on its world prestige that was first developed during the 1967 World's Fair. However the city of Montreal ran into several problems while preparing the Games (a.o. labour strikes) and the stadium wasn't finished on time. The city was striving too much for prestige and ended up with a bad image...

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This is a photo of the Olympic stadium in 1976 – without the tower. The stadium got the nickname 'the big owe' due to the massive debt from hosting the Olympic Games. The award of the Games to Montreal coincided with a worsening economic situation and period of global inflation, which accentuated the financial burden of staging the Olympics. The financial support from the federal government was very unstable and the city incurred a debt of CAN\$1.5 billion and it took the city/citizens 30 years to pay it back.

The Olympics provided the stimulus for the construction of a main stadium, swimming pool, velodrome and Olympic Village. There were also wider improvements made to the general infrastructure of the city including a brand new airport – Mirabel - that was intended to replace the existing international airport of Montreal, but later it was abandoned by passenger flights (2004) and today it only serves as a cargo airport. Initially a source of pride, the airport eventually became an embarrassment widely regarded in Canada as being a white elephant. And with a history of financial and structural problems, the Olympic stadium is largely seen as a white elephant too.

Unfortunately big arenas like this too often end up as white elephants, partly because they are built according to temporary global demands rather than actual local needs – and very often they are difficult to make financially sustainable in the long run.

There are several examples that this is one of the most difficult aspects of planning and hosting the Olympic Games....

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...we only have to look back at the latest Summer Olympic Games in Beijing 2008. The Olympic stadium – known as the Bird's Nest – was recognised for its architectural quality and served as the icon of the Olympics....

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...it even won prestigious prizes....

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But despite prestige and prizes the future of the icon is very uncertain. The city doesn't have a soccer team or the like that can make use of the stadium and attract the 80.000 spectators that the stadium was built for. To avoid the financial burden of maintaining the stadium alternative ways of using the structure have been tried – as here by converting it into a snow-theme park inside....

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...and outside! Something that is still out of reach for the majority of the Chinese people (the entrance fee is too high)

If the city will not succeed in finding a permanent – sustainable – use of the building, the stadium will end up as a decaying white elephant unless the citizens will take on the financial burden of maintaining something that only a very small percentage of the population can make use of.

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The Barcelona Games in 1992 is widely recognized as the *Best Games Ever* in terms of urban development. In 1999 the RIBA in London awarded the annual Gold Medal - not to a person but to a place - the City of Barcelona.

Here we see the Olympic Stadium in Mont Juic which was originally built in 1929 and refurbished for the Games in 1992. But even though the focus of Barcelona was the long-term urban development rather than the 2 weeks of the Olympic event, the city didn't avoid a couple of white elephants – but only minor incidents compared to the Montreal Games 16 years earlier....

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...Barcelonas approach to the Olympics was in line with Tokyos - both quite opposite of Montreal – but the Olympics in Barcelona were conceived after a long period of industrial decline and coming out of the Franco era, the city had been neglected for many years.

In 1992 the Olympic Games was used as an opportunity – a strategic device – to catalyse a long planned urban development and at the same time communicate this transformation to a global audience.

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The Games have been the catalyst for improvements in the general infrastructure of the metropolitan area and for large scale planning projects which have altered the shape of the growth of the city.

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Abandoned industrial area along the Mediterranean coastline were transformed into the Olympic Village and Marina which (re)opened the city to the sea and gave the citizens new recreative opportunities. Until then the industry had been cutting off the city from the sea.

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I have mentioned some of the risks connected with hosting the Olympic Games. These have been acknowledged by the IOC, since they have great interest in keeping the Olympics a success story.

Therefore some significant reforms have been introduced by the IOC since 2001, when Jacques Rogge was appointed as IOC president. He had been Chair of the Coordination Commission for Sydney and had become aware of the growing scale and cost of staging the Olympic Games. In February, 2002, the IOC introduced a Transfer of Knowledge Programme between IOC and host cities: Olympic Games Knowledge Services (OGKS). In 2001, Rogge also established an Olympic Games Study Commission: "to propose solutions to help manage the inherent size, complexity and cost of staging the Olympic Games in the future; and to assess how the Games can be made more streamlined and efficient" (IOC OGSC, 2003, p.4).

The final report was presented at 115th IOC Session in Prague in July, 2003. Its main recommendation was to develop a Games 'template' which would specify the requirements for staging the event. In doing so, these expectations would also enable extravagant provision to be more easily identified. Key principles enshrined within the Commission's report were:

- *to encourage the development of shared venues and facilities;*
- *to maximise temporary installations and only permit permanent facilities if a positive post-Games legacy could be demonstrated;*
- *to promote the transfer of knowledge between host cities; and to optimise government and host city involvement throughout the planning process.*

The Commission highlights that the IOC, through its efforts to make the Games leaner and more manageable, should ensure that the Olympic Games leaves a positive legacy for the host city and its citizens.

The full implementation of these measures will not occur until 2012 Olympic Games in London.

The planned facilities for the London Summer Olympics in 2012 are most definitely part of a large-scale urban regeneration project in a deprived area of East London (306ha). Some facilities will be permanent, with an ability to reduce capacity, while others will be temporary.

This is the Olympic Stadium which will have a capacity for 80.000 spectators during the Olympics and after the event it will be possible to remove 55.000 temporary seats and downsize the stadium to 25.000 permanent seats. West Ham United & Newham Council will be the future tenants of the Olympic Stadium and they plan to reduce the capacity to 60.000.

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IOC stiller nu krav til OL-værtsbyer om at lave en såkaldt Legacy Plan – dvs. en plan for tiden efter OL. I London har man bevidst valgt at samle OL i et tidligere industriområde mellem 5 af de dårligst stillede boroughs (bykvarterer/lokalområder) i den østlige del af London, som man herved får en mulighed for at udvikle til et attraktivt byområde.

Til venstre ser vi planen for OL-parken som den vil tage sig ud i sommeren 2012 og til højre er det planen for områdets udvikling på lang sigt (jeg mener at det er i ca. 2030 man forventer området fuldt udbygget). Området går endvidere fra at være et af de absolut dårligst opkoblede områder rent infrastrukturelt, til at være et af de bedst forbundne knudepunkter i byen.

Kritikere frygter at den Olympiske Park vil blive omdannet til et nyt attraktivt bykvarter for den velstillede del af byens borgere, mens de omkringliggende bykvarterer vil forblive fattige og meget lidt integrerede. Andre kritiserer planen/strategien for at opgradere hele områdets status og dermed presse den fattige del af befolkningen længere ud af byen. Hvad enten den ene eller anden får ret lige i dette tilfælde, er der bred enighed om, at disse prestigefulde projekter i høj grad favoriserer toppen af samfundet på bekostning af bunden!

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By using a mega event strategically cities get the opportunity to accelerate their physical development and to a certain extent the event will cause a mental change – a new self understanding – but there is a risk that the physical development of a mega event such as the Olympic Games to a certain degree will end up as alien elements in the local context of their host city. **Thus it is important that there is a certain coherence between the event and the local preconditions and visions for the future....**