Mega Events as an opportunity for Urban Regeneration.

Impact on a Host Greek City

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INTRODUCTION

During this presentation I will briefly consider and evaluate:

1. the effects of hosting major sporting or other events on urban space: *success factors against failure factors, based on the international experience*

2. an assessment of Athens 2004 Olympic Games, focusing on a case study concerning the regeneration of an informal, deteriorated waterfront area in a host Greek city and

3. the lessons learned from this event-led land policy, employed in such an extent on informal settlements for the first time in Greece
1. MEGA EVENTS

- a key element of urban and economic policy
- a major opportunity for urban and economic regeneration, infrastructural and environmental improvement
- a one-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the host city or country to launch a series of major development or renewal projects
- a fast tracked urban development or redevelopment, by reprioritizing the urban agenda
- a redevelopment tool … !!!
- but the legacy from this considerable investment in sporting facilities and supporting infrastructure can be negative for the hosts?
URBAN REGENERATION

- a process of land redevelopment in areas of previous moderate to high density urban land use

- in developed economies, urban regeneration projects revitalize the city center, implement initiatives to improve the quality of the environment and promote “a return to the city”

- in emerging economies qualitative initiatives must be aligned with quantitative requirements

- event-led urban regeneration is “opportunistic”, since public and private investors are looking for available land and opportunities for the big project
Olympic Games

- a major sporting event
- a catalyst to urban renewal programs (clearing of congested areas, reorganization of open spaces, ...)
- a highly desirable event to host
- a focus of global inter-urban competition and policy
- a means of achieving international reputation and prestige
Effect of the Games on the urban environment

- early Games: small scale, poorly organised, no urban impacts
- Berlin 1936 and after the world war II: better organised, some impact on urban infrastructure
- Rome 1960: larger scale with significant impacts on urban infrastructure
- Barcelona 1992: change of scale of urban regeneration
- today: mobilise resources, large scale planning interventions
OG: a stimulus to urban renewal programs

*some examples* ... Rome 1960

- Growing participation, increased economic benefits.
- A lifetime opportunity for the host city

**large-scale urban transformations!**

*Source: pro.corbis.com*
1964 Tokyo Olympics

major urban redevelopment and infrastructure improvement projects economically revived due to the Olympics

the swoopy Olympic swim stadium

Source: cheatseekingmissiles.blogspot.com
1972 Munich Olympics

a catalyst for a fast substantial urban regeneration

the site where the 1972 Olympics took place

Source: mjbryan.com
Montreal 1976

• similarities with the Munich preparations
• a high risk strategy with long term indebtedness

Montreal Olympic Stadium, Canada

Source: pro.corbis.com
Moscow 1980 Games

• limited intervention projects
• sports facilities, communication and other services’ centres, Olympic Village

Opening ceremonies, Moscow Olympics

Source: www.darkroastedblend.com
Atlanta 1996

• did not lead to urban regeneration or revitalization
• consumption-oriented development

Source: weburbanist.com
Seoul Games of 1988

• a vehicle for urban change with positive achievements

• ‘slum clearance’, improved facilities, modernized roadway systems and popular, upper-middle class housing developments

Source: www.wayfaring.info
Barcelona Games of 1992

- large scale planning interventions
- an instrument of political decision-making and a means for collaboration with the citizens
- change of priorities

Source: www.kalipolis.es/arquitecture
Sydney 2000

- environmental remediation
- based on sustainable principles
- renovation of inner city housing stock
- use of abandoned industrial areas

The main Olympic Games stadium (former landfill site)

Source: lifeline2211.user.groupee.com
Athens 2004

The Athens Olympic Stadium

Source: www.skolos.org
Beijing 2008

a vehicle for improving Beijing’s environment and rapidly enhancing its housing and transport infrastructure

Source: movingcities.org/
2. The Athens 2004 games, as an opportunity for regeneration.
The Athens regeneration projects

- the unification of the archaeological sites
- the restoration of the ancient forum around the Acropolis
- the renovation of monuments and buildings’ facades

The aesthetic upgrade of the host cities included:
- waterfront redevelopment projects
- the seaside area of Heraklion in Crete
The Athens regeneration projects

*infrastructures*

- re-engineering of the transportation system
- Expansion of railway and bus lanes system
- Construction of a new city’s road
- Renewal of the highway network, accompanied by bridges and tunnels and
- Completion of the new airport
- regeneration project not ensuring radical urban changes
Olympic Installations - Lack of Cadastre

- existing registration system is inadequately reflecting the legal situation of land ownership
- lack of cartographic representation for land partition
- Special laws and procedural reforms for the Olympic project accelerated the process
CASE STUDY

Linkages between Olympic venues and existing infrastructure network

The Master-Plan of the project
The regeneration project

Main issues examined:
- the land use situation,
- the availability of open/ free space,
- the existing and necessary traffic network and pedestrians’ circulation, as well as
- the considered as essential, city access to the coastline, in relation to the urban core.

The regeneration project included the demolition of the informally built waterfront zone, as part of an integrated urban and environmental policy.
The project comprised:

- the integrated intervention in relation to the urban core and its open up to the sea
- the radical change of the land use of the coastal zone within the walls, by creating a network of cultural activities in an environment of high aesthetic value
- the upgrading of the environmental quality and the improvement of the urban facilities
- the protection and promotion of the cultural and historic environment and
- the effective cooperation between the different administration levels, to safeguard the parallel activities.
The case study presented an example of urban event-led regeneration project as a way to deal with informal settlements. Although concrete data were lacking, it appears that through the compensation process the authorities tried to prevent legal proceedings that would result in further delays in the completion of the construction projects.

By working closely with, or at least seeking input from the affected local citizens it is very possible to build constructive communication for the larger objective of a more sustainable Olympics within a more sustainable host city.
3. Lessons Learned from Event-led Urban Regeneration

Legacy areas (IOC):

- infrastructure,
- environment,
- post-Olympic usage of permanent structure and in the long term
- availability of leisure, cultural and entertainment facilities.
lessons learned (cont.)

Degree of success for each city (LaSalle, 2002):

- Competitiveness of the business environment
- Quality of the tourism attractions, determining the degree of long-term tourism benefits
- Ability to promote Olympic experience to attract other major world events extending the re-use of facilities and the organizational experience gained
- Level of infrastructure built for the Olympics
- Presence of an ongoing promotional campaign in translating the short-term interest into long-term benefits
- Existing legal framework and dominating mentality
- Ability to capitalize on the experience and learn from lessons of the past not just the Olympics
Thank you for your attention.