Sports Mega-Events and Global Urban Marketing: Selling the City, or Selling it Out?

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Global Sports Mega-Events Circuit

An Increasing Demand to Host

Once on the circuit, stimulates the desire to attract more and larger events.

Cornelissen & Swart, 2006; Hiller, 1999
Traditional Legacy Rationales

Economic Impact
Urban Infrastructure
Tourism Destination

Employment
Sport Development
Social Cohesion

Opportunities
Possible social and economic opportunities from hosting 2010 World Cup identified

Readiness
Work already started on readying Johannesburg to host key matches without problems

Legacy
Planning started on infrastructure investments that will support games and leave lasting legacy
Boosterism & Place Promotion
marketing the city to circulating capital
Entrepreneurial Cities
Political Economy of Mega-Events
Linkages between transnational capital and sports mega-events provides the basis for partnerships between local and transnational interests.

(Hall, 2006, p. 62-63)
Centers for Cultural Consumption
Different States/Cities Use Megas in Different Ways

Distinctions between Developed and Developing Nations as well as within Global Urban Status Hierarchy
Cities in Developing Nations
Bidding for Sports Mega-Events

Even *unsuccessful* bid campaigns can meet specific political and foreign policy goals.

See for example, Carnelissen & Swart, 2006; Haugen, 2003; Hiller, 2000; Van der Westhuizen, 2001
Developed Nations & “Wannabe” World Cities
London, New York, Tokyo

Why Even Bother?
Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission for the Games of the XXX Olympiad in 2012
Stay Ahead or Be Left Behind!

Top-tier cities compete with rivals on the sports mega-events circuit because they are afraid not to, thus raising the bar even further and separating from all the rest.

(Shoval, 2002)
But at what cost?

Public accountability
Cost overruns
Redirecting public money
Loss of civil liberties
Regulation of public space
Environmental impact
Population displacement
Mega-Events and Displacements

In 2004 over 20% of global forced evictions were caused by mega-events (of all types).

Olympic Games, Soul to Beijing: Evidence of escalating housing costs, reduction of affordable housing, absolute declines in public housing stock and low cost housing.

(COHRE, 2007)
JOIN US TO MARCH AND RALLY ON ALLOTMENT DEMOLITION DAY

‘Development’ at what cost?
Their consultation = we know best

escalating costs
government projects starved
broken promises
lack of accountability
destruction of communities
unsustainable wastefulness
ongoing requisition of public
open space
environmental shortcuts
dangerous construction work
rip-off Olympic volunteer labour
too little local skills training
affordable housing?

2pm meet Hackney Town Hall SUNDAY
23rd September 07
march to Hackney Wick Community Association,
the old baths, 80 Eastway, E9
Critics are “doubly damned” (Hall, 2007, p.67).

Inherent beliefs that sport is good for you, creates better citizens, benefits the community as a whole...
Academic and Public Scrutiny

“The idea of harnessing a mega-event to a broader urban agenda that moves beyond the interests of finance capital, developers, inner-city reclamation and the tourist city is a relatively new idea” (Hiller, 2000).
“…more accurate evaluations, social impact assessments and full public consultation before submitting bids is required if mega-events are to retain public support and become more democratically accountable achievements” (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006, p. 19).