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**Monitoring Torino 2006 Winter Olympic Games**  
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**1. After the deindustrialization: culture and tourism ?**

This contribution deeps some aspects of a broader research that a group from Polytechnics and University of Torino are carrying on about perspectives and implications of next Winter Olympic Games (2006), that will be held in Piemonte, in two different areas, Torino and three Alpine Valleys (Susa, Pellice and Chisone). The investigation, sponsored by “Torino Incontra” (a society belonging to the Chamber of Commerce of Torino) and “Istituto di Scienze Umane” (Politechnics of Torino), is conducted by a large number of researchers (economists, sociologists, geographers, urban planners...), that have been analyzing an imponent documentation about the past experiences of Olympic Games, and are in touch with many Study Centers and University Departments in Europe (Barcelona, Plymouth, Mainz, Oslo, Grenoble, Lausanne...). An international congress held in Torino on May 21, 2001, opened a discussion about general results of the preliminary investigation (CD consultation and abstracts, specialized literature summaries, bibliography, case studies, past Olympics experiences and economic budgets...), and prepared a comparative analysis of the effects and implications of past Games. Main results of that congress have been published (Bobbio, Guala, 2002).

Torino 2006 Olympic Games present a peculiar characteristic, that distinguishes this event between many other past Winter Olympics: due to the considerable distance between the Piedmont chieftown and the Alp venues (80 kms far), a certain number of sport facilities and competitions (e.g. ice skating, or hockey) - and some Media and Olympic Villages – will be located in urban context. This implicates that Torino should face a planning and decision making process similar to those held in occasion of the more involving past Summer Olympic Games: Torino Winter 2006 is following the same and broader development problems experienced by cities that have been hosting mayor summer Olympics in the past (Preuss, 2000).

The impact of a Mega Event as Olympics on Torino compels the city to a reflection about its future: from this point of view the implications of the Games remind the general theme of the big urban transformations (independently by the specific condition related to a main sport event) (Pichierra, 1989; Essex, Chalkley, 1998).

Urban transformations are linked to the tertiarization of economy, and depend on delocalization and dismantling of industry; this process affects specially the old industrialized cities (as Torino, or Glasgow, or Detroit); the same destiny involves old port cities (as Genova, Barcelona, Bremen or Baltimore) that are making attempts of recovering their historic ports, after having moved their commercial harbours. Old industrialized cities are creating the conditions for a new local development, based also on tourism, culture, leisure, sport and recreational facilities, in the logic of improving the quality of life for inhabitants, city users and visitors.

The history of Mega Events is full with similar kinds of re-development of urban structure and landscape, depending on the end of the “fordist town” and/or “fordist economy”. In many cases cities are working to re-utilize out of use areas, or to recovery old districts: in the late Eighties, for example, architect Renzo Piano recovered the old port area of Genova, taking advantage of the Celebration of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Discovery of America (1992): the International Exhibition then held (“The Man and the Sea”) was a real failure from the point of view of tourism arrivals, but the recovery of the old port was the first condition for a complete process of renewal of the waterfront (aquarium, convention center, maritime museum, ice skating area, recreational facilities, science museum linked to Paris La Villette, bars and restaurants...). From 1992 to 2002, the total amount of visitors in Genova old port area has overtaken the number of 3 million people per year. The same issues were pursued at the end of Seventies in the waterfront and downtown

in Baltimore, a case-study of a city increasing its desirability as an international destination for conventions, tourism and leisure services (Getz, 1997; Guala, 1995).

The same process occurred in Barcelona, probably the best example of Olympic-related urban development, considering the ability of taking advantage of a (indeed) Big Event (1992 summer Olympic Games); at the same time Barcelona utilized perfectly its local autonomous resources: in this case we must underline the rich network formed by the "social capital" belonging to the chieftown of Catalonia, i.e. intellectuals, artists, and specially the tradition of social planning implemented by architects and urban planners: one name over all, Oriol Bohigas and his "100 projects plan" during Seventies and Eighties (AAVV, 1999; De Moragas et alii, 1966).

## 2. Mega Events and Olympics

Depending on previous considerations, the scientific literature on Mega Events has been growing in the last two decades, specially during the Nineties; a common output of socioeconomic and urban research confirms that Mega Events are formidable catalysts of urban change (Essex, Chalkley, 1998). If the original definition of Mega Event recalls "short time events, but of high profile" (Hall, 1992; Hiller, 2000), or "Hallmark Events" (Richtie, 1984), really we face a sort of differentiation of these events. For example, we can consider:

- top sport events (such as summer and winter Olympics, or the World Soccer Championship)
- special sport events, but more specialistic (America's Sailing Cup, or Formula 1 Championship)
- G7 and G8 international meetings (at a different economic impact scale)
- "European Cities for Culture" (a network opened with Athens in 1985 under suggestion of Melina Mercouri, then Minister for Culture in Greece)
- Top music or art event (such as the "three tenors" concerts: Carreras, Domingo and Pavarotti, or high profile international Exhibits)
- International Fairs or Expositions
- specialized exhibitions and meetings of sailing old vessels ("Tall Ships"), organized by International Sail Training Association (London) and hosted in maritime tradition cities in Europe and America
- special religious meetings and ceremonies, devoted to a particular anniversary or recurrence (e.g. Rome 2000 Jubilee, very important for massive pilgrimage and tourism arrival)

To give an idea of the budgets involved, we can consider that a Summer Olympics costs approximately 5000 million dollars/euros, a winter Olympics 800 million dollars/euros, a G8 100 million dollars/euros; the nomination of "European city for culture" implies a initial budget of 100 million dollars/euros, mainly allocated by the central government.

To give an idea of people involved, we can add that the number of athletes participating are 10.000 in the summer Olympics, 2500 in the winter ones. The so called Olympic Family in the summer Games involves more than 50.000 persons (athletes included); people involved in winter Games are obviously lower, and the same consideration concerns the number of nations participating. Very high the number of volunteers: about 15\20.000 people.

But the real problem in staging Olympics is urban planning (Essex, Chalkley, 1988).

If the "Three tenors" concert attracts one million people for one night, the main problems are focused on venue, security and logistics (for one or two days only); but organizing Olympic Games involves 7\8 years of decisions and planning before the event (that lasts two\three weeks).

And which kind of buildings, works and facilities are involved? We can summarize some items:

- Olympic Villages for Olympic Family and Media
- Media and Communication Center
- Public transportation system (highways, railways, tubes, airports)
- Private transportation system and dedicated facilities (e.g. parking system, )
- Pedestrian and bike dedicated routes
- Waterfront to be recovered, or adapted, or improved (if it does exist)
- Sport facilities and structures (new, or recovered, or adapted to new security standards)
- Restaurants, bar, hotel accommodation, tourist and visitors information system
- Old districts and out of use areas recovered
- New malls and shopping centers
- Strategies of possible "uses" of the "notoriety" associated to the mega event (citymarketing...)

- Environmental issues (water system, garbage recycling, new energy sources...)
- Security (attention has improved after Monaco 1972, specially in the Ninetieth and beyond)

The history of cities hosting Olympic Games presents a broad variety of experiences, with high differences in success and failure: logistics and public transportation difficulties (Atlanta summer 1996), environmental problems (Calgary winter 1988, partially winter Lillehammer 1994 and summer Sydney 2000), dismantled facilities (Sapporo winter 1972), difficulties for facilities too expensive to be maintained (Rome summer 1960, Calgary winter 1988, Grenoble winter 1968), economic failure (Montreal summer 1976, Grenoble winter 1968).

A peculiar problem, directly linked to the "pulsar effect" is the "happy intermezzo syndrome", that indicates a situation of sudden economic success, that lasts only a few weeks: some months after the Event the decline begins, and it's difficult for the community to come back to the previous conditions, and forget the high expectances before the Event. This syndrome has been deeped considering the case of Lillehammer winter Olympics 1994 (Spilling, 1996; Lesio, 1992).

The lesson we can learn from economic literature on Mega Events, specially from Lillehammer (26.000 people), is that a Mega Event has a negative effect on a small community: if carefully planned, the big event can have a positive economic and social effect only if the local community is strong; the best cases probably are Barcelona summer 1992 and Albertville winter 1992.

A strong system becomes stronger, a weak system cannot survive to the "intermezzo" syndrome; a similar expression is "the feast - or holiday - is over" (Kariel, 1991; Cochrane et al., 1996).

### 3. One Olympics, many experiences: differentiation of the possible goals

A significant differentiation in the issues and in the possible goals of the past Olympics is the output of many researches and case-studies on the effects of the Games. It's interesting to deal with this "differentiation"; the issues are not always the same, and the evaluation of the single experience may present contradictions very strong. An example: summer Atlanta Games 1996 are successfull from an economic point of view (budget, sponsorships, merchandizing...) but unsuccessfull considering logistics and public transportation system (Unione Industriali Torino, 2000). So it's possible to differentiate Olympics' uses and main issues. We can consider Olympics:

- as an occasion of political legitimation

The case is Seoul summer 1988, a tool for South Korea to be accepted and legitimated by Western Nations (almost independently by the organizational success of the Games) (Koo, 1989)

- as an attempt of a Nation to be competitive and successfull in the world arena

The case is Chamonix winter 1924, a nationalist project to legitimate a French area as an élite destination fort sports and leisure (Arnaud, 1991).

- as catalyst of urban transformation

The best case is Barcelona, as above mentioned, with a lot of big recoveries and new facilities (Montjuic area, Vall'Hebron, Diagonal, Olympic and Media Villages, new Olympic harbour, Waterfront and marinas, development of a special cultural offer, recovery of museums, public transportation system...); some failure cases are Atlanta (as mentioned), Calgary winter 1988 (Purchase, 2000; Kariel, 1991) and Sapporo winter 1972 (Kagaya, 1991; IOC, 1998).

- as promotion or improvement of an area as a tourisme quality destination

Besides Barcelona, a positive example is Albertville winter 1992, a very strong attempt of a network of alpine villages to promote and reinforce the Savoy French ski district; it's interesting to make a comparison between different "pulsar effects" in a weak area (Lillehammer) and a strong area (Albertville-Savoy) (Dailly et al., 1992; Andreff, 1989; Kukawka, 1998; Ronningen, 1995).

- as promotion of an area from an economic point of view

The positive case is Atlanta summer 1996, considered "The Second Best Games", as underlined: Atlanta shows that a Big Event can be successfull considering an issue (economic balance), unsuccessfull considering a different one (logistics); Atlanta is the best sample of "privatization" of the Games, not regarding general social interests and plans of recovering some districts in downtown: after the Games, due to a good strategy of citymarketing, Atlanta and Georgia improved their position in the USA ranks of areas attractive for companies coming from other States and abroad (Zangola, 2000; IOC, 1998).

- as promotion of a whole nation utilizing the notoriety of a small area

The case is Norway, a nation out of the larger tourism traffics and flows, that had the possibility to make its self well known through the notoriety of a small village (Lillehammer); in this attempt, Norway took advantage of many symbols and special conditions: respecting environment, "green Games", simple and friendly people (Klausen, 1999; Ronningen, 1995)

- as occasion of reconciliation between cultures

The best case is Sydney summer 2000, with the full recognition of peoples that in the past centuries have been building Australia, and the full legitimation of the aboriginal culture (Cashman, Hughes, 1999; Purchase, 2000).

#### **4. Which variables are associated to success or failure ?**

Obvious that summer and winter Olympics are rather different considering facilities, structures and other implications, e. g.:

- number of athletes, sports and nations involved
- typology of sport facilities and structures
- dimension of accommodation for media and "Olympic Family" Villages
- budget, investments and consumption
- visitors arrivals, tickets, spectators
- radio, newspapers and TV audience
- territorial distribution of Olympic venues
- logistics, communication and public/private transportation system
- geomorphology, climate, meteorological conditions

But many other variables explain the success (or the failure) of a big event as Olympics:

- dimension of the hosting city

We can remind the above considerations about Lillehammer and Albertville

- localization of sport facilities, and distance from the central city

Torino 2006 presents two main centers of activities and facilities, Torino itself and the alpine valleys, with a distance of 80 km and a clear division between them; Sapporo winter 1972 presented 14 areas, all very close to the City and Olympic Village; Nagano winter 1998 had a good communication and transportation system.

- structure and economic dimension of the area

We can remind the above considerations about a weak system, that remains weak, and a strong system, that becomes stronger (or doesn't present any crisis after the Games)

- finalization of Olympic event

We can distinguish many different goals: political interests, economic issues, environmental objectives, urban transformation plans, tourism expectations; there are localistic confidences, or general and universalistic; all these issues create a different attitude toward the Games, and the way the games are managed create a differentiation of the effects: "pulsar effects" (explosion and implosion) are strongly conditioned by all these decisions and conditions.

- role of the local actors

This argument is very complex and difficult to deep: the local decision makers can be united or divided (for political or economic interests...), a differentiation between administrative levels (local administration, region or state) reduces the possibility of success; the bidding process can be weakened by these contrasts (a conflict between Swiss central administration and some Cantons explain the failure of past nominations for winter games in Switzerland); the role of intellectual and professional groups is very important to legitimate and support local decisions, the same for associations and social networks; a strategic variable is the recognition of population toward local identity, that can play a positive function on communication and citymarketing actions; all these considerations can be assimilated to "social capital" concept and role.

#### **5. Monitoring Torino 2006**

As above mentioned, planning services, buildings, sport facilities, districts and area recoveries implies a long time planning and decision making: the bidding iter lasts several years, and the final decision (the conclusive nomination) occurs 7 years before the event (for Olympic Games).

Then the city that will host the Games has to face many problems, briefly:

- fears of population, or segments of it, about projects and public and private works
- problems about the local identity, to be recognized or rebuilt in a strategy of citymarketing
- problems of managing the "Olympic heritage", or "legacy": what to do after the Games ?
- problems of checking the economic long term effects, after the Games ("intermezzo" syndrome) (Spilling, 1996; Preuss, 2000)
- problems of utilizing the awareness in a strategy of citymarketing (Mega Events are often Media Events) (De Moragas, 1996).

Among these problems, one of the most important is how to manage the legacy, or heritage, of Olympic Games. We must underline at least two kinds of legacy:

- the "material" legacy (buildings, media and athletes villages, facilities...)
- the "immaterial" legacy (symbols, values, local identity)

For this problem some "new" recent researches pay much more attention to the post-Games period than to the precedent stage (every step at all events must be planned very carefully): planning for Olympic legacy (and legacies) is the real issue to be checked and programmed in advance. From this point of view, local authorities, Chamber of Commerce, University and Politechnics of Torino are realizing a sort of joint venture to plan some research activities together: the goals – and the initiatives - are the following:

- longitudinal survey on population, from september 2002 till spring 2006 (six telephone CATI surveys, both on the areas of Torino and the Valleys), with the possibility to check attitudes and problems also after the Games
- creation of a Social Indicator Observatory, to check modifications of some variables during the years (demography, social mobility, economy, cultural consumptions, tourism and visitors, new entrepreneurships, labour market...)
- creation of a "risk map", locating on the territory the effective or potential situations of crisis to be managed by local authorities, that have the responsibility of monitoring fears and mediating local opposition movements
- definition of a communication strategy, in the perspective of giving population, groups and associations a correct information about questions of public interest
- improvement of monitoring environmental effects (specially in the Alpine Valleys), opening a second step of VAS (Strategic Environmental Evaluation), carried on by some Departments of Politechnics; it is the very first time that this "preventive research" is made in Italy; the VAS will be followed by VIA evaluation (Evaluation of Environmental Impact) after the most important interventions in the Alp Valleys.

## 6. A brief conclusion

Looking forward to 2006, Torino and the Valleys have two different main goals.

Torino is working to ameliorate its quality of urban life, facing a new development model, overcoming the Fiat crisis and searching for new facilities and services devoted to culture and tourism, after the "fordist and one company town" (Bagnasco, 1986, 1990; Pichierri, 1989; Mellano, 2000); in this attempt, other strategies are involving transportation system (railway stations, tube, urban recovery and promotion), new technologies, education and university improvement, citymarketing opportunities.

The Valleys (Susa, Chisone and Pellice) are trying to consolidate their position as definitive tourism destination, extending the "industrial ski" period and differentiating the alternative offers; this aim has to deal with heavy problems in communication system, in a territory with high negative environmental difficulties, with strong competition with several areas in Italy (Aosta Valley, Trentino Alto Adige) and abroad (French, Switzerland, Austria, and the new entry Slovenia).

Torino and the Valleys have to bet on 2006, as a rationale choice and a necessity at the same time. If the process will not work, the risk is not only to have a negative Pulsar Effect, but to finish into a Black Hole.

## Note

The research group from University and Politechnics of Torino is composed by Davide Barella, Fulvia Bernard, Luigi Bobbio, Pier Vincenzo Bondonio, Egidio Dansero, Fiorenzo Ferlaino (Ires Piemonte), Chito Guala, Livia Lusana (Torino Incontra), Alfredo Mela, Carlo Olmo, Ester Rubbi, Sergio Scamuzzi, Anna Segre.

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