7

A THEORY OF MEGA SPORT EVENT LEGACIES

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Overview

The general phenomenon of interest in this chapter is the transformation left by a mega sport event. Event-related changes to a city cannot be disregarded as it is hard to justify spending billions of dollars on a brief sport event, despite its entertainment and worldwide promotional value.

Many of the motives for staging a mega event are focused not so much on the event itself but on possible beneficial development. The city’s transformation becomes of greater interest the more public money is used. Citizens do not always welcome events such as the Olympic Games, so planning a legacy before the event and evaluating it afterwards is critical for policymakers, administrators, the population of the host country and the international sport governing bodies. In 2014, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) acknowledged this, and many of the Olympic Agenda 2020’s decisions are aimed at more flexible management of the Games and more attention to sustainable development of the host city.

Six key propositions frame my legacy theory work presented in this chapter:

1. The value of a legacy is measured by how much it improves quality of life.
2. Legacy must be distinguished from sustainability, impact and leveraging.
3. The identification of a legacy depends on the host city’s long-term development plans.
4. A legacy may be positive or negative and it must be evaluated in the context of a particular stakeholder group.
5. Legacies change in importance over time and can even be latent.
6. A legacy is the result of event-related changes to the host city’s location factors.

The boundary conditions of the legacy theory are that a legacy must be identified and evaluated on the basis of its spatial, temporal and stakeholder limits. The outcome of any legacy calculation will depend on how these are defined.

What I present in this chapter is the evolution of my original legacy theory (Preuss, 2007) to my most recent theorising about legacy (Preuss, 2015). My propositions have evolved from the consideration of five dimensions of legacy (value, intention, positive/negative and tangibility, as confined by time and space) to a more holistic consideration of the value and size of event-
related changes (according to what should be considered as legacy, who is affected by the changes, how the legacy will affect the quality of life in a host city or country, and when a legacy starts to create value). The evolution from the original legacy ‘cube’ to my most recent theorising is outlined below.

Process of theory development

The event that spurred my interest in legacy and made me aware of the importance of sustainable changes to a host city was the IOC-initiated congress on ‘The Legacy of the Olympic Games: 1984–2000’ in Lausanne in 2002. It was only around 2000 that legacy research began, and until 2002 there was no satisfactory definition of the term legacy. A congress delegate observed that ‘there are several meanings of the concept’ and that some speakers’ contributions had ‘highlighted the convenience of using other expressions and concepts that can mean different things in different languages and cultures’ (Moragas, Kennett and Puig, 2003, p. 491).

Much of the legacy literature focuses on either economic or infrastructural effects (Gratton and Preuss, 2008; Hodges and Hall, 1996; Preuss, 2007; Silvestre, 2009). Leopkey and Parent (2012) show how legacy became institutionalised within the Olympic Movement. Thomson, Schlenker and Schulenkorf (2013) comprehensively review legacy definitions from 1991 to 2008. From 2005, scholars began to take a more complex view of legacy and to place more emphasis on social, environmental and political legacies (Chappelet, 2012; Griffiths and Armour, 2013; Minnaert, 2012; Preuss, 2007; Silvestre, 2009). Mangan and Dyreson (2012) provide a broad overview of legacies.

Barget and Gouguet (2007) focus on the long-term nature of legacy and consider legacy value as the people’s satisfaction associated with the mega event being passed to future generations. This definition meets the requirement of focusing on the quality of life but is unsatisfactory because it is limited to future generations. Conceptual models of tourism legacy have been developed by Li and McCabe (2013) and Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2011). Taylor and Edmondson (2007) examine the nature of legacy planning and suggest six ways to secure legacy benefits for major sporting events. Girginov and Hills (2008), Frawley and Cush (2011) and Griffiths and Armour (2013) investigate sport legacy to see whether an event stimulates participation in sport.

The springboard for the theory presented here was my attendance at the 2005 European Association for Sport Management conference in Newcastle to present a keynote lecture entitled ‘The legacy of major sporting events: More than expensive buildings’. Despite considerable research interest in legacy, the scientific community had failed to produce a clear, commonly accepted definition of legacy (Lienhard and Preuss, 2014). Since 2000 the focus has tended to be on either specific pieces of legacy or an incomplete selection of legacies, and the concept of ‘legacy’ has often been confused with ‘sustainability’, ‘impact’ or ‘leveraging’.

I felt there was a need for a broader perspective that captured the range of soft (e.g., knowledge, culture) and hard (e.g., infrastructure) event-related changes (event structures) being touted. Thus, I framed my original work by five dimensions captured in a comprehensive definition of legacy:

Irrespective of the time of production and space, legacy is all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself.

(Preuss, 2007, p. 211)
Thus, I characterised legacy by:

1. The intention of the change: the degree of planned and unplanned structure.
2. The value of the change: the degree of positive and/or negative structure.
3. The tangibility of the change: the degree of tangible and intangible structure.
4. Time: the timing and duration of a changed structure.
5. Space: the actual space affected by the changed structure.

The first three dimensions framed a *legacy cube*, together outlining eight smaller cubes that prompt researchers and bid committees to direct their focus to more than, typically, the planned, positive and tangible legacy(s) of an event; rather, the cube highlights the possibility of, for example, an unplanned, positive, intangible legacy, and an unplanned, negative, tangible legacy, and so on. A narrower focus means that ‘many of the pre-event feasibility and economic impact studies that consider legacies are potentially biased’ (Preuss, 2007, p. 211).

The complexity, yet limitations, of the legacy cube are further highlighted by the notion that it can only be used to evaluate change at a particular time and in a particular space (dimensions 4 and 5). However, change may occur well in advance of an event, and legacy may be of short or long duration. Thus, the intention, value and tangibility of a legacy must be measured for a given time and space, and by extension for each time and space. To address this, I argued that two additional aspects needed to be considered ‘for a valuation of “net” mega event legacy’ (Preuss, 2007, p. 212). I referred to these as ‘re-distributions’, or the consideration that resources invested in the event may have been invested to create other benefits (legacy), and ‘crowding-out’, or the notion that some anticipated benefits may not happen because of limited capacity and so must be deducted from the expected event legacy.

A further consideration is that any change in soft and hard event structures (whether planned/unplanned, positive/negative and tangible/intangible) will change the quality of the host site (location). I identified key locations that may be changed as a legacy of a mega sporting event: industry, tourism, living, events, conferences and fairs/exhibitions. The quality of location depends on the quality of its location factors and those are changed by staging an event. Therefore the location factors must be considered in the assessment of net legacy of a mega sporting event.

This legacy model can be used for both (net) legacy evaluation and event legacy planning, ensuring that intention and value of all changes of location factors due to the event are considered, each with regard to a particular time and space. My original model framed legacy as a change in soft and hard event structures that were partly overlapping concepts, at given times and in given spaces. However, I felt I was just beginning to tap into the sense of time and space, and that I needed to also capture a sense of legacy value in this process.

### Extensions and applications

Thus, my most recent work (Preuss, 2015) systematically identifies the value and timing of event-related changes, and also the size or magnitude of that change. Perhaps the most notable advancement in this extension of my original theorising about legacy is that it takes into account four aspects: *what* should be considered as legacy, *who* (i.e., which stakeholders) is affected by the changes, *how* the legacy will affect the quality of life in a host city or country, and *when* a legacy starts to create value (which happens when it is used and no longer latent). Figure 7.1 illustrates the *how* and *when* aspects and Figure 7.2 gives an overview of the whole process.
First conceptual extension

As I outlined originally (Preuss, 2007), all legacies develop from structural change. After an event, almost all event-related change (both soft and hard changes) will still exist but will often be latent (not used). Latent legacies make it more likely that upcoming opportunities will be used.

The creation of a structure intended only for the duration of the event is referred to as value in exchange. In other words, the event organisers and the city pay for structures that are only for short-term (event time) use. Structural changes will lead to positive or negative impacts only when the structures are used after the event. This is called value in use, referring to the integration and application of resources in a specific context (Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008). How the event affects the quality of life depends on the context, so when deciding whether a legacy is positive (creation) or negative (destruction) we refer to value in context. Value is solely determined by the beneficiary and in sport we often find value co-creation (Woratschek, Horbel and Popp, 2014), which means that the addition of another stakeholder can change the context of a value.

Sometimes what appears to be a legacy of an event may in fact just be normal change in the city, but citizens may subjectively attribute the change to the event (a placebo legacy) (Preuss, in press). Even though we can see they are mistaken, the effect is real because their behaviour and happiness are influenced by their belief (Meyer, 2003). This is known as the Thomas Theorem: ‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’ (Thomas and Thomas, 1928, p. 572).

Figure 7.1 Value creation through legacy
Source: Adapted from Preuss, 2015.
**Figure 7.2** Illustrative summary of mega sport event legacies

Source: Reprinted from Preuss (2015) with permission from Taylor & Francis Ltd. (www.tandfonline.com)
Second conceptual extension

What can be counted as legacy is represented by how the required event structures fit in with the host city’s long-term development plans. I distinguish four fields of event-related development (Figure 7.2, top part), each having different legacy effects:

Field A Represents the non-event-related development of the host city. Here the legacy is the negative effect where event development hampers normal development; for example, if money spent on the event was needed for hospitals or schools.

Field B Represents the changes the city would have experienced without a mega event. An event may speed up changes (acceleration effect) and help politicians to budget public money or develop policies for structures (political effect), and some changes will be externally financed (financial effect). In this field, the legacy consists not of the change itself (which would have happened anyway) but of the accelerated development, the way an event can remove barriers, or the financial support for change. This kind of indirect legacy can be either positive or negative.

Field C Represents the changes that are needed only for the mega event and not for the city’s long-term development. To avoid a negative legacy, the host should try to limit investments in this field, either by avoiding them (for example by constructing fewer stadiums) or reducing long-term impact (for example by using temporary structures or renting existing ones).

Field D This field represents developments the city does not plan at the time of the event but would plan in the future. For example, the event may alert the city to the need for more transport facilities, and the development of these will thus be brought forward. The earlier the event is awarded to a city, the larger this field will be, since the development is further in the future and planning will be more long term. The event may force the city to analyse its structures, revealing inappropriate or late and therefore expensive development. Intelligent legacy planning will use the overlap of Field D with Field B to create event structures that can be used later for development that is needed anyway.

Third conceptual extension

Many studies consider legacy only indirectly. They study specific developments, such as enhancement of the host city or the country’s image, or more efficient local governance or improved communal well-being, rather than the concept of legacy as a whole. The legacy literature reveals many opinions on what legacy is. Table 7.1 lists some typologies, mostly related to particular industries such as sport or tourism.

Unlike the views of legacy presented in Table 7.1, my theory views legacy as constituting five event factors (infrastructure, knowledge, policy, emotions or networks) within an industry or branch (economy, society, sport or ecology) that undergo change. This is visualised as a matrix (Figure 7.2, middle, left side). With this extension, the theory avoids the missing and overlapping categories prevalent in the literature (Table 7.1) and makes it possible to identify the legacies of a past event and plan for the legacies of a future one.

The typologies used in earlier research often either fail to identify a legacy or combine two or more legacies into one. A tourism legacy consists of tourism infrastructure (hotels, iconic buildings, museums) and knowledge about the city’s history. This brings lasting revenue streams from post-event consumers. A sport legacy consists of sport infrastructure and knowledge about
coaching and may bring lasting consumption of sport goods and therefore also an economic legacy. Clearly, infrastructural legacy is not limited to sport venues, knowledge legacy not only to coaching, and economic legacy not only to the immediate profit from the event.

The legacy theory described here largely avoids these overlaps. A city planner or event manager wanting to plan an event legacy could use Figure 7.2 by reading the middle section from left to right. For example, to use an event to develop a sport legacy, one could take sport and plan to develop sport infrastructure, sport knowledge, sport policy, sport networks and sport emotions (Sallent, Palau and Guia, 2011). Each of these five event factors can, in turn, leave several legacies. Infrastructure in sport includes venues, training sites, tracks and clubhouses. One must check each factor to see whether it constitutes a legacy or not. One must also ask whether the particular infrastructure was planned anyway (Field A), or developed quicker (Field B), or was not planned but is now available (Field C), or was simply an opportunist use of the event to fit in with the city’s long-term sport development planning (Field D).

In this theory, a wide variety of industries or branches can be considered, depending on the purpose of a study or a practical application. The structural changes remaining after the event can be attributed to the five event factors, and whether they affect a stakeholder positively or negatively depends on the context.

Table 7.1 Typologies of event legacies (adapted from Preuss, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Communities</th>
<th>Image, branding</th>
<th>Information, knowledge</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Psychological, emotional</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Networks</th>
<th>Trust fund</th>
<th>Education, skills</th>
<th>Symbols, memory, history</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Health</th>
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Fourth conceptual extension

The third major change extension to my legacy theory was to narrow the aim of legacy to improved quality of life for the host city population (see Figure 7.1), as suggested by Kaplanidou (2012) and Karadakis and Kaplanidou (2012). However, it was important to distinguish precisely how legacy affects particular stakeholders. Conflicting legacies cause disagreements between mega-event opponents and protagonists. It is thus virtually impossible to study event legacy as a general phenomenon; any study must define its stakeholder perspective, as the following example from the London 2012 Olympic Games makes clear:

More than 11,000 new properties will be built on the site of the Olympic Park in the next 20 years but despite assurances that more than a third would be allocated to ‘affordable housing’ there are fears that recent changes to social housing policy will mean that the majority of local people will be frozen out by the high cost.

(Cooper, 2012, np)

This gentrification of East London made affordable homes more widely available to middle-class citizens, who could rent the subsidised properties at up to 80 per cent of market rates (Cooper, 2012). For them this was a positive legacy. But it was negative for the poorer population of East London, some of whom had to relocate because of the increased rents, thus losing their neighbourhood and having to travel further to work (Bernstock, 2014). For the rich Londoners, or those not looking for a new house, there was no legacy, as they were not affected by the change in housing prices.

Fifth conceptual extension

The final extension of the theory was a more exact definition of the time and duration of a legacy (see Figure 7.2, bottom, right side). ‘Time’ refers to the moment when a legacy occurs and starts creating value. When structures are built long before the event, and the location factors are thus changed before the event, we have what we may call a *pregnancy effect*; in other words, a legacy not of the event itself but of the preparation for the event.

A legacy may affect the quality of life only long after the event. The event creates the event factors (value in exchange), but the legacy may only be used (value in use) when other circumstances occur. For example, knowledge about how to bid for and prepare a mega event is acquired long before the event is staged but does not become a legacy unless it is needed – it will only become valuable if the city bids for another event. This latent legacy is illustrated in Figure 7.1, which shows a structural change built up for an event but not used, thus only value in exchange. Events create opportunities, but until an opportunity is used, the legacy that will develop from it remains latent (Barget and Gouguet, 2007, p. 169, call this ‘potential use value’). Latent legacies may exist for all five event factors. For example, a network is only activated when a contact is used for co-operation of some kind.

The other temporal aspect is the duration of a legacy. This is different for each stakeholder. Some legacies, such as emotions or political reputation, are short-lived while others, such as infrastructure, last much longer.

Regarding duration, I should also note that a positive legacy can turn negative and vice versa. A new stadium may at first be economically positive (non-sport events are staged, tourists visit, a tenant team uses it as their home stadium), but later become a financial burden (the venue deteriorates, tourists stop coming because memories of the event have faded, the tenant team finds another venue).
Another kind of temporal legacy is the retro legacy (Preuss, 2015), where rundown areas or buildings are renovated, extending the life span of the structure. The Maracanã stadium in Rio de Janeiro, a prestigious symbol of the 1950s, was restored to its former glory at least partly as a result of the FIFA World Cup 2014. A similar concept is the reincorporation of brownfields or a polluted environment into city development. However, unlike the ‘retro legacy’, here the refurbishment changes rather than restores the character of the area. These examples demonstrate that both new and redeveloped infrastructure create legacies.

In the long run most legacy loses its power and therefore its utility. People get older and networks and memories disappear. Knowledge and skills become outdated. The older infrastructure may no longer satisfy modern demands. But regardless of the time and duration of the legacy, it is critical that legacy benefits be considered well in advance of the event (Taylor and Edmondson, 2007).

### An overview of the current theory

The legacy theory as it stands today makes it possible to identify the value and size of event-related changes systematically. Again, four aspects are considered:

- **What** constitutes an event-related change?
- **Who** is affected by the change?
- **How** does a legacy affect a particular stakeholder?
- **When** does a legacy occur, how long does the legacy last and how constant is it over time?

Figure 7.2 illustrates the difficulty of taking into account all legacies for all stakeholders over a prolonged period.

The grey bar in the figure illustrates the flow of legacy, starting with ‘What is a legacy?’ To measure an event legacy we must first isolate it from non-event-related city development. In my original theorising (Preuss, 2007), I suggest that the most workable way to measure legacy is to start with the event changes (a bottom-up approach).

The event itself is of short duration but it can be a catalyst for change, with important consequences for the host city. An event energizes the political, economic and social systems of a city and helps to break stale patterns that are difficult to change by ordinary political means. The 1992 Olympics changed Barcelona from a mundane industrial city with extremely high unemployment into the cultural and tourist centre it is today. In Athens, the 2004 Olympics finally moved the airport out of the city and infrastructure investments improved the traffic flow. However, breaking through formal systems can also destroy systems that were functioning well. The time pressure and the argument that ‘we need this for the event’ may result in structures that benefit only a small stakeholder group (Lenskyj, 2014). Last-minute construction may bypass public procurements or expropriate property, as happened in Athens 2004 (defeating anti-corruption legislation) and also during preparation for the FIFA World Cup in Brazil in 2014.

Centrally, the theory states that legacy should be seen as structural changes that affect the city’s location factors – positively or negatively. A location factor is a given strength or weakness to consider when searching for an ideal location for industry or other purposes. The event-related structural change in the city strengthens or weakens its location factors to make it a different kind of destination. Positive changes then trigger new impacts, such as event tourists’ expenditure, which we categorise as an economic impact, not as a legacy for the tourism industry. We can identify a legacy only if the event leads to continually increased economic activity, which will happen only if the event changes the tourism-relevant location factors (such as
new iconic buildings, new museums, better access to a beach) and makes the destination more attractive, thus bringing more tourists to the city (Stevenson, 2012). In other words, a legacy depends on changes on the supply side.

**Future directions**

**For practice**

The theory can be used in practice to guide event organisers in planning a legacy. It was introduced to the organising committees for Qatar 2022 (FIFA Football World Cup), and to the government in Brazil regarding the IFA World Cup 2014 and Olympics in Rio 2016, as well as to the Japan Sports Council concerning the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Importantly, any evaluation of an event legacy must take the following into account:

- The net legacy must be distinguished from the gross legacy. We must establish whether a development in a city was driven by the event or not.
- Had the event not been staged, some investments would have been made differently. These investments would also leave legacies. Such opportunity costs must not be missed.
- Developments that get crowded out by an event legacy must not be overlooked (for example, if a school cannot be built because the money was spent on a stadium).
- It is difficult to decide whether a legacy is positive or negative, because sometimes it is both, depending on which stakeholders are being studied. An evaluation of legacy must therefore be based on a social welfare function defined by the decision-makers. A welfare function ranks social status and thus helps politicians to aim for a legacy that may benefit a needy group, although a less-needy group may perceive it as negative.
- It is essential to define the region under consideration, since different legacies occur for different spaces.
- The measurement of legacy over time is challenging. Because a mega event changes the location factors, it stimulates social change, environmental improvements and economic activities only indirectly. Legacy, therefore, cannot be identified in isolation from the general development of the city. For example, it is impossible to determine to what degree a business that runs conferences in Barcelona is a legacy of the 1992 Olympic Games. The choice of Barcelona as a conference destination is partly based on the now-available Olympic facilities, but also on the city’s overall attractiveness.
- Improved quality of life is the main target that politicians hope to achieve through legacies. As explained above, this can be achieved by transforming the location factors of a city. Measurement of quality of life must be assessed by citizen surveys. But citizens often cannot distinguish between change stemming from an event and normal city development. They may attribute any changes to the event. If they are wrong, we can call this the ‘placebo legacy’ (Figure 7.1).

Overall, legacy results from changes in a host city’s structures and therefore its location factors. However, these changes are latent if they are only value in exchange (Figure 7.1). The changes only leave a legacy if the opportunity arises and the location factors attract social or economic activity (value in use). The better the location factors, the more likely they are to trigger social or economic impacts. A legacy increases the city’s ability to use future opportunities but can be costly if no one takes advantage of the opportunities. A newly constructed stadium triggers a positive economic impact if it is used for another event or by a tenant home team but a negative impact if it is not used or cannot be filled regularly but still has to be maintained.
The municipal government is the most appropriate entity to be in charge of stimulating legacies (Leopkey and Parent, 2012). The government must start with good city planning, to fit the event into the long-term city development. Then it must optimise the way structures are created or changed by the event and sometimes it must make additional investments to produce optimal structures. Finally, its task must be ongoing – it must stimulate a succession of new impacts by exploiting the location factors that have been enhanced by the event.

For research

An important next step to be taken is the development of methods to measure the changes of soft location factors. A measurement tool to evaluate networks or to measure a change of emotions is extremely difficult, yet it will be important to capture this aspect effectively. As well, to fully use this model some additional research is needed on how to better distinguish the event related changes from other changes in the city. The bottom-up approach is the only way to do this, however, often during the event preparation there is no time and there are no resources to observe all changes based on the event. While there are many important applications for the model in practice now, it nevertheless requires further operationalisation in an empirical setting, and continued refinement as appropriate.

Note

1 This chapter is a reflection on Preuss (2007) and the work related to it.

References

Applying the theory of mega sport event legacies

Nola Agha

In the early 2000s, there was an explosion of research on mega event legacy that produced multiple competing, yet incomplete, typologies (e.g., Cashman, 2003). It was in this environment in 2010 that I began researching the concept in order to write a case study about Olympic legacy (Agha,...
Fairley and Gibson, 2012). Immediately, the brilliance of Preuss’s (2007) model was apparent in its ability to distill a complex phenomenon into multiple measurable dimensions. Those dimensions (time, space, tangibility, planning, and positivity) illustrate the complex nature of the concept in a way that is simple, yet thorough; making it accessible to both students and scholars. The model allows the total legacy impact of an event to be estimated over time by netting out positive and negative legacies. By implicitly including perspective as a necessary variable to measure the positive/negative dimension, Preuss created the first framework that gives equal weight to the non-dominant legacy views of marginalized populations. Whereas event organizers promote the dominant narrative of planned, positive, tangible legacies, Preuss’s conceptualization requires that total legacy is a function of all perspectives of all types of legacies.

Researchers often do not include all of the dimensions when applying Preuss’s legacy framework; focusing, for example, on only one positive legacy from a single stakeholder, with or without the dimension of time (e.g., Knott, Fyall and Jones, 2013; Sallent, Palau and Guia, 2011). While the analysis is simplified by allowing variation in fewer dimensions, in reality one should account for all five dimensions, and the implicit variable of perspective, that allow the net effect to be calculated.

For example, I used multiple perspectives to assess variation in legacy dimensions while analysing the decade-long process of obtaining public funding for a new NBA arena (Agha, 2014). North American team owners view this process as the de facto standard of business that results in a positive, planned, tangible new facility. This view fails to take into account known cases where battles for public funds reduce fan support and catalyse teams to move away. My analysis found legacy is not always positive or tangible from the perspective of fans. In fact, the fans’ views of the owners, team, and arena are both positive and negative, and fluctuate over time. To determine the net legacy of a new facility, the additional perspectives of developers, housing advocates, non-fans, and so on should also be considered.

I believe Preuss’s model can apply to nearly anything designed to create a long-term transformation. Beyond mega events, this includes smaller events, structures, team moves, and the process of obtaining public funds to build new facilities. There is incredible opportunity to extend Preuss’s framework even further by applying all five dimensions simultaneously to determine the true net legacy of a variety of phenomena.

Note

1 Dr. Nola Agha is an Assistant Professor in the Sport Management Program, University of San Francisco.

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