

# **'MAJOR SPORT EVENTS \_ LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE'**

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Title of Presentation:

**'Mega-Events, Olympic Games and the World Student Games 1991**

**- Understanding the Impacts and Information Needs of Major Sports Events'**

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Abstract:

The Presentation is divided into three main sections.

The first will be concerned with general issues in understanding the nature and impact of sport 'mega-events' like the Olympic Games. This will be based on my recent book 'Mega-Events and Modernity' (Routledge, London). Information about the contents of the book and also a the text of the Preface will available at the conference.

The second section will focus on a case study and an assessment of Sheffield's World Student Games 1991 event.

The third section discusses some of the main lessons to be learned, particularly from problematic experiences such as the Sheffield event, about the need for greater democracy and rationality in major event planning, and in particular the need to generate an 'information culture' in the event policy-making process.

Some notes on this are contained in this file document.

Also the file document contains a Bibliography

## MEGA-EVENT ANALYSIS

(Roche 2000, Mega Events + Modernity, Routledge)

	PART ONE MEGA-EVENTS + THE GROWTH OF INTERNATIONAL CULTURE		PART TWO MEGA-EVENTS + THE GROWTH OF GLOBAL CULTURE
Ch.2	EXPOS 1 - Nation, Empire + Capital  Perspectives (Hobsbawm + Bennett) Origins (e.g. Crystal Palace 1851) Imperial Expos (e.g. Wembley 1924)	CH.5	MEGA-EVENTS, CITIES + TOURISM  'Expo City': - Tourism, Theme Parks 'Olympic City': - Tourism + Image 'Media City' + 'City Bidding Game'
CH.3	EXPOS 2 - Cultural Citizenship  Expos, Tourist Culture + Inclusion Expos, Social Divisions + Exclusion Expos + Olympics	CH.6	MEGA-EVENTS, MEDIA + SPORT  Media sport 1 - Drama + Ritual Media sport 2 - Political Economy Olympics as Media Events
CH.4	OLYMPICS - Super-nationalism  Inter-war International sport 'Alternative' International sport Super-national sport: Nazis+The Olympics	CH.7	MEGA-EVENTS + GLOBALISATION  Olympic Movement + Global Governance. Global citizenship Olympic Movement + Global Citizen.

## WHAT ARE MEGA-EVENTS?

**Table 1: Public Events: - Types and Dimensions**

TYPE OF EVENT	EXAMPLE OF EVENT	TARGET ATTENDANCE/ MARKET	TYPE OF MEDIA INTEREST
Mega-Event	Expos Olympics World Cup (soccer)	Global	Global TV
Special Event	Grand Prix (F1) World Regional sport (e.g. Pan-Am Games)	World Regional/National	International/ National TV
Hallmark Event	National sport event (e.g. Australian Games) Big city sport/festivals	National	National TV
		Regional	Local TV
Community Event	Rural town event	Regional/local	Local TV/Press
	Local community event	Local	Local Press

**Table 2**

<b>'MEGA-EVENTS': - Key Dimensions + Their 'Extra-Ordinary' Character</b>	
INTER-NATIONAL EVENT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-Ordinary = Beyond National Event Calendar</li> <li>• OK Lead nation: - National Elites + Publics</li> <li>• BUT International NGOs involved (e.g. IOC)</li> <li>• AND 'Host' Role: 'Welcoming the World'</li> </ul>
URBAN EVENT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Event is 'localised' in a 'Host' City</li> <li>• Extra-Ordinary = Beyond Urban Event Calendar</li> <li>• Urban Elites + Publics involved</li> </ul>
MEDIA EVENT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press, then Radio + then TV traditionally involved</li> <li>• TV Corporations central to Mega-Sport Events</li> <li>• Extra-Ordinary = Beyond normal programming</li> </ul>
SCALE:	'Size Matters'
TEMPORALITY:	'Time Matters'

## **WHY MEGA-EVENTS? - CAUSES, USES + IMPACTS**

### **ELITES USE MEGA-EVENTS:**

#### **1. AS 'THEATRES OF POWER' - TO PROMOTE DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES**

- Liberal Capitalist; Nationalist; Communist; Fascist etc.
- Class-ism; Sexism; Racism etc.

#### **2. TO MARK COLLECTIVE CHANGE: - 'PROGRESS' into the FUTURE**

- Political/Ideological +/- Economic Change
- Mark +/- 'Perform' Change (Collective 'Rite de Passage')

#### **3. TO CONSTRUCT CONTINUITIES: - 'COMMUNION' with the PAST**

- Invent 'Origin' Myths
- Draw Legitimacy from a previous Event - Via Commemoration
- Draw Legitimacy from Mega-Event Traditions + Calendars

### **PUBLICS USE MEGA-EVENTS:**

#### **1. TO CELEBRATE NEW COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES**

#### **2. TO RE-NEW + CELEBRATE OLD COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES**

#### **3. TO EXPLORE OTHERS' IDENTITIES**

#### **4. FOR MANY 'AD HOC' PURPOSES: - INTER-PERSONAL +/- FAMILIAL**

# ***THE WORLD STUDENT GAMES 1991***

## **Q.WHAT WAS IT?**

**'The biggest multi-sport event in the UK  
since the 1948 Olympics'**

### **PROJECTIONS 1: - PEOPLE**

6,000 competitors + 2,000 officials

5,000 volunteers

2,000 media (!?)

1,000,000 visits (!?)

### **PROJECTIONS 2: - MONEY**

#### **1986/7-1st Finance projection:**

Event cost = £25million + deficit = £0

Capital costs + deficit = £20-30million

#### **1987 - 2nd Finance projection:**

Event cost = £25m + deficit = £0

Capital costs + deficit = £80million

### **PROJECTIONS 3: - BENEFITS**

**\* City Image + \* Tourism**

**\* Event jobs (5,500 job years) + \* Economic catalyst**

**\* Community leisure + \* City sport**

## **WORLD STUDENT GAMES: - CAPITAL COSTS**

### **STADIA & FACILITIES FOR THE EVENT**

* DON VALLEY (Athletics Stadium, 25000 seats)	£28+ million
* SHEFFIELD ARENA (Indoor Stadium, 12000 seats)	£33+ million
* PONDS FORGE (Swimming Centre, 2000 seats)	£50+ million
* LYCEUM THEATRE (Refurbishment, 1000 seats)	£12 million
* HILLSBOROUGH LEISURE CENTRE	£12 million
* Etc.	

**TOTAL COST c.£140++ million**

**(excluding 10 yr. Debt Interest etc.)**

# ***THE WORLD STUDENT GAMES 1991***

## **Q.WHAT HAPPENED?**

### **Event Planning + Management process 1986-1992**

#### **PRE-BID + BID PHASE: 1986-87**

- Project Conceptualisation: (Studies = cursory or ignored)
- Political Commitment to Bid
- Bid group organized + Bid success

#### **POST-BID + EVENT PREPARATION PHASE: - 1988-91**

- Event organization problems: (Event company collapse)
- Building + Finance problems: (Costs grow)
- Publicity + Image problems: (Low TV interest + Hi Press Criticism)
- Economic Impact study 1990: (3 years after Bid!)

#### **THE EVENT:- 1991**

- Technically successful
- Fairly popular at time

#### **POST-EVENT PHASE:**

- No event research: (No visitor study + no media study)
- Big event deficit: (£10 million)
- Big Capital debts: (20 years, £400 million - later cut)
- Financial Audit Report: (delayed 1 yr + then highly critical)
- No political accountability
- No clear post-event after-use plans for key facilities

# ***THE WORLD STUDENT GAMES 1991***

## **Q. WHAT WENT WRONG?**

Q1 - Did the short-term Event Project  
'hi-jack' the long-term Strategy?

A. YES

Q2 - Did the local public  
feel that it 'owned' the Project/Strategy?

A. NO

Q3 - Were all the organisers  
'singing from the same hymn sheet'?

A. NO

## SOME LESSONS: - 'LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE'

### A 'Commonsense' Approach to Big Project Planning

#### LESSON 1:

'Try to act strategically and realistically'

\* Develop **'an information culture'** in the policy-making process

\* An **'information culture'** = **'Looking'** ..... **NOT 'Visions'**

1. 'look **before** you leap'  
'act in haste, regret at leisure + be realistic as well as a 'visionary'

2. 'look **long** as well as short'

3. 'look **around** at other city Projects'

Q. what are the connections? + Any synergies?

4. 'look at **alternatives** + at **opportunity costs**'

5. 'look at **costs** as well as benefits'

Q. who benefits? + how? Q. who pays? + how?

6. 'look in **detail**'

Note: 'instinct' - 'judgement' - 'vision' won't do

## **LESSON 2:**

### **'Involve the Public'**

**Big Events need to be 'owned' by the local 'host' public**

'Ownership' = both symbolic + real

Planners usually finance the event, in part from **the Public's money**

Planners need to get **the Public to buy tickets**

Planners need to get **the Public to give volunteer support**

#### **SO:**

Q. what are Planner's responsibilities to the public?

Q. What are the public's rights in the Event as citizens?

#### **ACTIONS:**

\* consult with the public (at the right time & attempt to persuade the public etc.)

\* listen to the public (& respond, adapt the project)

- \* inform the public throughout
- \* use the local media to do this (rather than just to do PR for the planners)

### **LESSON 3:**

#### **'Get your act together & keep it together'**

- Big Events are **intrinsically complex**,
- So coordination + communication are **priorities**.

#### **Main actors:**

- \* The **Project group** (i.e. Event &/or Stadium design & construct people)
- \* Other City **facilities/stadia organisers** (marketing & PR aspects)
- \* City Council's **Departments:**
  - Leisure/Recreation dept.,
  - Publicity and Public Relations office,
  - Tourism office,
  - Planning,
  - Transport,
  - Employment depts. etc.
- \* City Council's **Corporate & Strategic** organisation
- \* City's Private + Public Sector **Partnership** organisation

#### **Corporate working + corporate communications:**

- They need to be sustained over **years of pre-event work**,
- They are **essential** for all-round success in this sort of project.

**TOWARDS A NEW 'INFORMATION CULTURE'**  
**IN BIG SPORT EVENT PLANNING**

**ANALOGY:**

Post-Hillsborough/Taylor Report event + venue planning 'safety culture'

**THE 'INFORMATION CULTURE'**

Policy actors in the 'information culture' =

- Proactive in the relevant 'information field'
- Cultivate the info field + Quality control it
- Communicate it (in-house + to the public)

**THE 'INFORMATION FIELD':** e.g.

- feasibility studies + cost-benefit analyses
- economic impact studies + other impact (social, environmental) studies
- market research + attitude surveys,
- media surveys,
- long-term trend projections + forecasts
- etc

## EVENT PROJECT 'INFORMATION CULTURE'

### QUESTIONS

#### Q. WHAT INFORMATION?

\* All Gross Benefits + All Costs + .... Net Benefits

\* Alternatives? + Opportunity Costs?

#### Q. HOW TO USE INFORMATION?

##### **Methodology of Multiple & Competing Studies**

##### **Suggestions:**

- Commission 2 (+) independent studies of project elements
- Compare, criticise + then decide
- Create central UK archive of all big event studies + documents
- Create independent social scientific standard-setting and review procedures
- Use UK Universities + ESRC to assist this

#### Q. WHEN?

**Quality Information BEFORE decision-making - NOT after it**

#### Q. HOW TO PAY FOR IT?

Suggestion:

Standard 1% (+) of Total Event Cost (Event +Capital Costs)

MEQA-EVENTS STUDIES +  
THE WORLD STUDENT GAMES 1991 CASE STUDY

A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: This is a selective list of sources

- For fuller bibliographic information on Sheffield's World Student Games 1991 case study see Roche 1992b) and 1994.
- For fuller and more up-to-date bibliographic information on Mega-Events research in general see the bibliography in Roche 2000 and also Roche 1992 a)

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## **'MEGA-EVENTS AND MODERNITY' - Maurice Roche**

(Note: This is the preface to this book and was written in early 2000)

### **PREFACE**

I first got interested in 'mega-events' in the late 1980s. My home city of Sheffield made a successful bid for the (ultimately not-so-very-'mega' and enduringly controversial) 'World Student Games 1991' event in 1986. I made a study of this event, looking at its social context and policy implications and identifying themes and issues for further research. Ultimately I started work on this book in the mid 1990s. Back in the late 1980s, and for a long time afterwards, my interest in mega-events, - although it resonated with the interests of various specialist historians and other researchers, as I discuss in the book, - was a perennial source of puzzlement to many of my sociological and academic colleagues. Thankfully this by no means applied to all of them (as is indicated in the Acknowledgements section). The colleagues who were puzzled seemed to regard mega-events as demonstrably trivial, populist cultural ephemera, irrelevant to 'the problems of the real world' and 'the big issues' of the day, such as struggles in the contemporary period against war, class inequality, sexism, racism and xenophobia, and, conversely, struggles to promote peace, social justice and citizenship and social inclusion. However their puzzlement was, in turn, a puzzle to me. How could they not see that these events were undeniably, even if only periodically, 'problems of the real world' for many citizens in modern societies, and that, as they always have done throughout the modern period, they continue to provide periodic focal points and symbolic expressions, and arenas of debate and struggle in relation to many 'big issues'?

In recent years the clouds of mutual incomprehension have begun to lift. This is particularly so as the notion of 'the Millennium', and of the apparent imperative need to mark and celebrate it, has crystallised in the plans of governments and the consciousness of publics around the world. The fact that this book is published in the year 2000 was not something that had figured in my original plans for this project. Nonetheless it is a fortunate coincidence. In the year of such 'official' events as Britain's 'Millennium' Expo, the World Expo in Hanover, the Olympic Games in Sydney and also numerous 'alternative' large scale events few people, even sociologists, can credibly continue to claim ignorance of, or indifference to, mega-events.

Mega-events have come to have a high political profile in the contemporary period. In 2000, at the turn of the 20thC, they are beginning to assume, once again, the kind of high political and cultural profile they had in 1900, at the turn of the 19thC. The year of 1900 saw the staging in Paris of the biggest and arguably most impressive Expo the world had ever seen, the high tide of the 'belle epoque', an event which also contained the second in the series of modern Olympic Games. This was followed in the early years of the new century by the staging of two great Expos in the USA, at Buffalo (1901) and St. Louis (1904), the latter event also containing the third Olympic Games. As this book tries to show, this was more than just a passing flurry of national cultural assertiveness and international cultural diplomacy. The current high political and cultural profile of mega-events is similarly misunderstood if it is seen in this way. In the main body of this book I explore the historical developments in the main genres of international mega-events, the various reasons and forces behind their creation, and their various impacts. For the moment however it is useful to briefly illustrate the high contemporary political profile of mega-events both in this Millennium year and beyond, by noting the interest of nations in winning and staging them. Take the cases of Britain and South Africa for example. In each of these countries a governing party's attempt to re-new its nation's political identity and re-orient its path of development has come to be closely associated with its ambitions to host and organize global mega-events.

In Britain the New Labour government came into power in 1997 aiming to re-orient British society and politics after nearly a generation of 'New Right' Conservative government. Early on it affirmed its commitment to the staging of the Millennium Expo in London. The Expo was a controversial project, initiated by the previous Conservative government, criticised as an unnecessary and costly extravagance

by many New Labour supporters and poorly conceptualised in terms of aims and contents. Nevertheless its distinctive and monumental architectural centrepiece, the Millennium Dome, echoes the dome at the centre of the 1951 'Festival of Britain' event. It thus allows New Labour to symbolically reconnect itself with a well-regarded and memorable image of the 'old' Labour Party's foundational role in the post-war reconstruction of Britain's society and state. Also, as the flagship of an armada of minor events nationwide, the Expo event provides a high profile, readily identifiable and potentially memorable platform for the celebration of New Labour's versions of contemporary Britain and its visions of a new nationalism.

The linking of the visions and fortunes of the New Labour government to mega-events does not stop with its support for the staging of the Millennium Expo. It has also committed itself actively to the current bidding processes for at least two international mega-events, namely the 2006 soccer World Cup and the 2008 or 2012 Olympic Games. Wembley Stadium, - which was an inheritance from the 1924 Imperial Expo, and became a true and legendary 'theatre of dreams' and a site of national sport-event pilgrimage for the British public (albeit mainly the male part of it) throughout the 20thC, - is to be completely reconstructed to support the bids for both of these events. In addition it is possible that the Millennium Dome could have a part to play in the staging of some aspects of any future Olympic Games to be held in London. Although not quite going as far as creating a Minister and a 'Ministry for Mega-Events', in 1999 the ex-Sport Minister Tony Banks was given the role of government representative in the British bid team for the 2006 World Cup. This is an indication of the seriousness with which major international event projects are now seen. One of the nations competing with Britain to win the right to host the 2006 World Cup event is South Africa.

One of the first international cultural actions of the newly democratised post-apartheid nation of South Africa was to host the Rugby Union World Cup in 1995. Its success in doing this, and also in becoming World Champions, and the positive impact of this on the image of the new South Africa both at home and abroad seemed to convince President Nelson Mandela of the importance of events such as this. Mandela has a credible claim to being one of the 20thC's most historically important politicians and statesmen. Since his retirement in 1999 he has, among other things, been prepared to provide support and, where necessary leadership, in the courts of the international mega-event organisers, for South Africa's bids for the 2006 World Cup and the 2008 Olympics. The fact that a politician of this stature would choose to continue to serve his vision of his nation by being involved in such bids speaks eloquently for the importance of mega-events for nations in terms of their self-image and place in world society in the early 21stC.

These prefatory observations hopefully indicate some of the reasons why I regard the field of megaevents as being more worthy of study by sociology and generally by the social sciences and contemporary humanities than it has (with some notable exceptions) typically been regarded as being hitherto. For me the study of mega-events has opened up windows and perspectives into areas as diverse as social history, architecture and urban planning, media studies, and the political history of the 20thC. Mega-events contain and condense within themselves, and within the processes of their production and consumption, much of interest and importance, from these and other disciplinary areas. They contain much about the construction of, and connections between, the cultural, the political and the economic in modern societies and in the contemporary world order. To understand something about their origins, nature and development in modernity is to throw light on phenomena and processes within modernity which continue to influence us even when the lights of any particular event have been switched off and when 'the show' appears to be over.