

Why do less countries bid for hosting worldwide sports competitions than before?

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Abstract:

The Olympic Games have always been one of the worlds top sports competitions, combining nearly every sport in the world in one huge sporting event. Ever since the Olympics was introduced to the whole world, countries have been competing vigorously for the honor to host this game in their cities. But this situation have changed since the 2000s. In 1993, there was only a number of 11 applicant countries to bid for hosting the 2004 olympic games. The amount fell to 10 countries for the 2008 olympic games and only 5 countries applying for the 2024 games. In September 13th, the IOC single handedly selected Los Angeles to be the host city of the 2028 Olympic Games without even making a call for other bidders. These phenomenons all point to the increasingly decline of countries' interest in hosting this competition. This trend reflects a complex interplay of economic, social, and political factors that have reshaped the global view point of hosting world-wide events. In the past, nations viewed hosting these competitions as a prestigious opportunity to showcase their cultural heritage, in order to boost national pride and stimulate economic growth through tourism and ticket sales. However, the huge costs of hosting these competitions often running into tens of billions of dollars. This have discouraged many potential bidders. These financial burdens have led countries to question the economic viability of such events. Additionally, social welfare demands have grown, with citizens prioritizing local needs like healthcare and education over other fancy mega-events. Environmental sustainability has also become a pressing issue, with the harm and pollution of large-scale events drawing criticism. As a result, only a few nations, often those with significant financial resources or stabilized governments, continue to bid for these competitions. This change raises questions about the future of global sports competitions and whether their traditional model remains sustainable or not.

Keywords: : Financial Unsustainability; Public opposition; Geopolitical risk; Sustainable model transformation

1. Introduction :

Olympic games are global sports event that not only reflects athletics talent, but also shown cultural differences, technological innovation, and the development ideas of the host city. So through the comparison with different host city's preparing strategy, concept, and even slogan, the changing idea of holding Olympics games can be reflected from construction of more fantastic and deliberate structure to integration of existing resources and buildings, which can reflect the falling of global economy subsequent COVID-19 has a huge affect on cities' decision toward Olympics.[1]

2. Literature Review

2.1 Key theories or previous research

2.1.1 Economic factors

High Costs and Financial Risks: Hosting the Olympics has become increasingly expensive, with costs often out of control. Olympic Games preparation and hosting require huge capital investment including venue construction, infrastructure upgrade, security and other costs. [7]The construction cost of the venues for the 2008 Beijing Olympics reached tens of billions of yuan. The actual expenditure of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics exceeded the budget by nearly 6 billion US dollars. Many cities and countries find it difficult to bear these expenses, especially when the income from tickets, sponsorships, cannot cover the costs. For instance, the 2014 Sochi Winter Games went over its \$10 billion budget by an additional \$41 billion. Similarly, the Tokyo 2021 Games ended up costing an estimated \$15.4 billion, exceeding the proposed budget by 244%. These high costs and financial risks have deterred many potential bidding countries. In addition, the epidemic has also had a huge impact on economic development. [4]COVID-19 pandemic force the entire global economy has been greatly affected and growth has stagnated. Global market turmoil and the disruption of the global industrial chain brings huge pressure to the economy.

Economic Impact: Research indicates that the economic impact of hosting the Olympics is often overstated. Cities used to make a profit from the games, partly due to revenue from TV rights. [5]However, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has been taking larger percentages of this revenue, making it harder for host cities to profit.

Despite extensive research on the economic and political aspects of hosting the Olympics, there are several gaps in the literature:

Long-term Social Impact: There is limited research on the long-term social impact of hosting the Olympics, particularly in terms of community development and social cohe-

sion.

Changing Global Priorities: The literature often overlooks how changing global priorities, such as environmental sustainability and social justice, influence the decision to bid for the Games.

Comparative Analysis: Few studies provide a comprehensive comparative analysis of different Olympic bids and their outcomes, which could offer valuable insights for future bids.

This paper aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to the decline in Olympic bids. It will explore the economic dimensions in greater depth, using a comparative approach to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with hosting the Olympics. By doing so, this study will offer practical recommendations for making future Olympic bids more sustainable and attractive.

2.1.2 Sports facilities:

'Beijing 2008 is remembered for its impressive and futuristic infrastructure' compares to 'Paris 2024 focuses on sustainability and the reuse of existing infrastructure.' [2] In Beijing, the national stadium, also known as 'The bird net', can hold at most 91000 spectators; The Water Cube, on the other hand, is another innovative building that design for swimming and diving competition. While for Paris 2024, it focuses on sustainability, which leads to it use 24 existing stadiums out of 36 in total. Also, Paris plans to use historical landmarks such as Eiffel Tower as stages for abundant competition that can integrate whole city with these events.

2.1.3 Number of Olympic Sports and participants:

Beijing 2008, 302 events were held in 28 different sports compare to 329 events in 32 sports in Paris 2024. The major and obvious goal of increasing new sports and events is to attract new audiences and give more chance to the athletics who participate in these minor sports events. However, one potential result of these new adding sports is a more challenge on cities capability of infrastructure and security. That's why it may also be a reason that less country bid the Olympics games, since they can't ensure to solve these pressure and challenges.

2.1.4 Open ceremonies:

The purpose of the open ceremonies in Beijing was to illustrate its national image throughout the world. Chinese government carefully and elaborately design a tremendous opening ceremony showing the face of China to the world. 'Also, the opening ceremony transmitted the image of a nation capable of joining the international order harmoniously and peacefully without renouncing its ancient roots.' Tokyo 2020, affected by a global economy recession due to COVID-19, the opening time of Olympics not only delayed for a year, 'but also forced a change in the

content of the message during the opening ceremony and the way that the ceremony was introduced to the world. ' It put aside many elements of the past of Japanese civilization that have made up the current Japanese nation.

3. Method

3.1 research method

3.1.1 Systematically review domestic and international relevant literature: Conduct a comprehensive collection of academic literature, industry reports, policy documents, etc., from domestic and international sources concerning world-class competitions, audience interest, sports event communication, and related areas. This will encompass multiple disciplines such as Sports Science, Communication Studies, Sociology, and Psychology to provide a solid theoretical foundation for the research.

3.1.2 Conduct an in-depth analysis of existing research findings and their limitations: Summarize the approaches, methodologies, and conclusions of previous research, identify research gaps and under-explored areas, clarify the entry points and innovative directions for this study, avoid redundant work, and ensure the research is scientific and forward-looking.

3.1.3 Carefully select representative cases: Choose typical, recent world-class competitions, such as the 2024 Paris Olympics, that have exhibited varying degrees of declining audience interest, possess clear visibility and influence, and are suitable for in-depth analysis of the specific manifestations and causes of this decline.

3.1.4 Conduct multi-dimensional in-depth case analysis: Perform detailed analysis of the selected cases from multiple dimensions including event organization, communication strategies, audience feedback, and socio-cultural background. This aims to uncover the key factors contributing to declining interest, summarize commonalities and differences across different events, and provide rich empirical reference for proposing targeted solutions.

3.2 Technical Approach

3.2.1 Web Data Scraping: Utilize web scraping techniques to collect data related to world-class competitions from various sources such as major search engines, social media platforms, and official sports event websites. This includes data like search indices, topic 热度 (hotness/buzz), and audience comments during the event period to ensure the comprehensiveness and timeliness of the data.

3.2.2 Data Cleaning and Preprocessing: Clean the collected raw data by removing invalid, duplicate, and erroneous entries, and reasonably impute missing values to ensure data quality. Perform preprocessing operations such as word segmentation and part-of-speech tagging on text

data to lay the groundwork for subsequent text mining and sentiment analysis.

3.2.3 Data Analysis and Mining: Employ data analysis tools and methods to conduct in-depth analysis of the cleaned data, uncovering patterns and trends behind the data. For example, use correlation analysis to identify key factors influencing audience interest, or cluster analysis to recognize the interest characteristics of different audience groups, thereby providing data-driven support for the research conclusions.

4. Conclusion

The decline in the number of countries bidding to host global mega-sports events, particularly the Olympic Games, is not a temporary phenomenon but a rational response by nations to an outdated and economically unsustainable model. The traditional paradigm, in which a single city or country shoulders enormous financial burdens in exchange for transient prestige, is no longer viable in the 21st century.

Firstly, the economic equation has become fundamentally unfavorable. From Athens 2004 to Tokyo 2020, massive cost overruns have become the norm, with financial risks escalating from manageable investments to sovereign-level threats. The contrast between Beijing 2008's «futuristic» new-build approach and Paris 2024's emphasis on utilizing existing venues reflects a global awakening to this issue. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend, exposing the extreme fragility of this model in the face of external shocks and forcing governments worldwide to prioritize spending on social welfare and economic stability. Meanwhile, institutions like the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are claiming an increasing share of media revenues, making financial returns for host cities even more uncertain.

Secondly, the political and social landscape has undergone a fundamental transformation. Rising public opposition, evidenced by the withdrawal of bids from Hamburg, Rome, and Budapest due to referendums and protests, demonstrates that in democratic societies, hosting such events requires obtaining a "social license" from citizens increasingly concerned with fiscal responsibility, social equity, and environmental impact. Furthermore, the geopolitical environment has become more complex, with events often turning into arenas for diplomatic boycotts, adding an additional layer of political and reputational risk for host nations.

Therefore, the future of mega-sports events depends on systemic reform. Governing bodies like the IOC must proactively establish a new model, built on three core pillars: 1) A steadfast commitment to frugality and sustainability, mandating the use of existing or temporary infrastructure to significantly reduce costs; 2) Establishing

fair revenue-sharing mechanisms with host cities, ensuring they receive a reasonable share of commercial returns; and 3) Formally promoting collaborative hosting models, such as multi-city or multi-country bids, to distribute financial burdens and political risks.

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