
THE PUBLIC OPPOSITION AGAINST THE MUNICH 2022 OLYMPIC BID IN THE MEDIA

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Abstract

1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In November 2013, local citizens of Munich and the surrounding districts voted in a referendum against a city's bid for the 2022 Olympic Games. In all four areas where events would have been held if Munich hosted the Games the majority of voters rejected the plan. The result of the poll was broadly covered by the media across the country. Many sports officials, politicians, members of the Olympic family as well as opponents of the Olympic Winter Games publicly took position on the failed bid. A broad variety of statements on the decision was conveyed. The general purport of the people's resistance seemed to be cost and environmental concerns as well as the perceived conversion of the Olympic Games to commercial spectacle. Besides, the recent protests in Brazil surrounding the preparations for the FIFA World Cup 2014 point to a similar direction. This socio-economic paper sets out to gather the transmitted opinions on the Munich result by different stakeholders and tries to answer the following questions: What explanations and opinions are transported via the media regarding the result of the referendum? Who were the collective actors and which coalitions were formed? What were the main arguments brought forward and which strategies were employed?

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

To date, this is the first academic study to investigate potential reasons for the result of the Munich vote. To the best of our knowledge, there is also paucity of research focusing on similar incidents, providing our endeavour with an exploratory character.

As the aim of the paper is to capture the attitude of different stakeholders concerning the Munich bid, we first identify the relevant stakeholders. In his seminal work, Freeman (1984) was the first to systematically develop a model to identify and manage stakeholder groups – i.e. people that have a legitimate claim on the firm – and thus paved the way for what is today

known as stakeholder theory. His work has been extended by different authors since (e.g. Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In the context of the Olympic Games, Preuss (2008, 2013) identified the relevant stakeholders and named, amongst others, the host city's general population as potential "winners" of the Games, due to e.g. upswings in economic activity and the image of the city. Given the rejection of the bid by local citizens, this is in an interesting basis against which our results may be evaluated.

We build on the so-called Doping-Matrix, which has been used to identify structural similarities of various socio-economic practices to classical doping (Könecke & Schubert, 2013; Schubert & Könecke, 2014). Their framework represents a systematisation of performance-enhancing behaviour subject to the dimensions legality and legitimacy. The crucial idea behind it is the dynamics that underlie processes of problematisation: Principally, all practices formerly deemed legitimate at a certain moment in time could be classified as illegitimate and, if applicable, also as illegal in sporting contexts (Schubert & Könecke, 2014). The prerequisite is that they pass through a corresponding "career as a social problem" (Schetsche 1996). Whether or not this happens is subject to the dynamics of social discourse. We posit here that certain aspects related to the potential Munich bid (e.g. the notion that some actors apparently profit much more from these events than the broad public) were perceived as illegitimate by the general public in Munich and the surrounding districts and that this was the main reason for the outcome of the vote.

3 METHODOLOGY

Argumentative Discourse Analysis as developed by Hajer (1995) is employed. The approach offers conceptual instruments to investigate controversies in a wider political context. By analysing how interests are displayed in the framework of specific discourses, the aim is to illustrate how different actors try to convince others of their definition of a problem and thus win the argumentative "fight". Data was gathered from three nationwide German newspapers for the two weeks immediately following the referendum (11-24 November 2013). Data analysis draws from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as well as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4 RESULTS

Please note that this paper represents work in progress. Results are not yet available but it is guaranteed that they will be presented at the conference.

5 MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Answers to our research questions will provide useful socio-economic insights leading to implications for strategic planning in many facets for both cities/countries planning to bid for mega sport events in the future and sport governing bodies (e.g. IOC, FIFA) alike.

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