
FROM LILLEHAMMER TO “LILYHAMMER”. PLANNED AND UNPLANNED LEGACIES OF THE 1994 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

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Abstract

1. AIM OF THE PAPER

In the Norwegian television series “Lilyhammer”, a former underboss of New York’s Italian Mafia, Frank “The Fixer” Tagliano (Steven Van Zandt, guitarist Little Steven in the E Street Band), is put in the Witness Protection Program and tries to start a new life in Lillehammer, Norway. He chose the small town after watching television images of the 1994 Winter Olympics. The first season had a record audience and was later sold to TV companies in more than 130 countries. The third season is being produced in 2014. “Lilyhammer” is considered good tourist marketing of the winter destination Lillehammer and seen as a legacy of the 1994 Games. Legacy can be positive and negative, tangible and intangible, planned and unplanned, and “Lilyhammer” was definitely not anticipated as one of the outcomes of the Games. Leaving “Lilyhammer”, the research question of this study is: How can planned and unplanned legacies of the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer be understood? Of particular interest are legacies connected to tourism, environmental issues and peace.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There is a variety of definitions of legacy. The definition presented by (Preuss, 2007) is the most frequently cited in the literature on sport events (127 times according Google Scholar) and I use it as a point of departure: “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).

Legacy is a controversial topic. One challenge has been that bidding cities include as predicted aspects of legacy many long-term effects of

the Olympics that they hardly believe in themselves and are not working purposefully to fulfill. The organizing committee disbands one year after the event, at which point the discussion of positive or negative outcomes of the Games may become just another academic issue.

In their review of legacy, Leopkey & Parent (2012) concluded that the increased importance of legacy in the modern Olympic movement has resulted in many trends, such as numerous new legacy themes (e.g. environmental, information, educational); changes in the types of legacy being emphasized (e.g. closer links to city and regional planning initiatives and legacy sustainability), the increasing complexity and interconnectedness found within the typology of legacies, and legacy's overall governance including major influencers and decision makers.

The study fills a gap in the literature in three ways. First, there is little in the legacy literature on the Olympic winter games. Second, most studies focus on economic impacts (including tourism, employment and infrastructure) while this paper also focuses on soft/intangible legacies and, not least, legacies that were not planned. Third, as opposed to many impact studies on the Lillehammer Winter Olympics (Spilling, 1998; Teigland, 1999), it is now possible to say something about long-term outcomes 20 years after the event. Based on the findings, a final discussion in the full paper will include a critique of Preuss's definition from 2007.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research entailed qualitative documentary analysis. In sum 25 documents were examined, including bidding documents, government guarantees, white papers, and minutes of meetings in the Parliament. This was supplemented by interviews with key people (N=5) in the Lillehammer process. The data were firstly coded inductively, which corresponds to a descriptive, open coding, followed by a deductive coding which is based on the theoretical model (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

4. RESULTAS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study shows a lack of coherence between the planned outcomes and the most visible legacies. For example, in the bidding documents nothing was stated about environmental issues and peace which ended up as two very visible legacies of the Games seen from an international point of view. On the other hand, an expected increase for the tourism industry was a very important issue in the bidding process. Here the legacy is mixed. The promised effect on traditional tourism in the Lillehammer area is absent. As a planned legacy it can be seen as negative. Nevertheless, sport event tourism has increased significantly and can be seen as a positive but/and unplanned legacy. (The analysis/result section is in progress and will be presented at the conference)

References

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