
LEGACY EFFECTS OF A NEW SPORTS VENUE

Submitting author: Dr Nola Agha
University of San Francisco, Sport Management Program
San Francisco, CA, 94117
United States

All authors: Nola Agha (corresp)

Type: Scientific

Category: 14: Other sport management related issues

Abstract

RESEARCH QUESTION

Much has been written on the legacy effects that stem from hallmark events yet little attention has been paid to the legacy effects of a team on its local community. Specifically, teams in North America spend considerable time, money, and effort to obtain public subsidies for new or renovated venues. These efforts can result in strong changes in the public opinion of a team when the campaign for funding is long, complicated, full of lawsuits, or other negative public behavior.

This research analyzes the legacy effects of the National Basketball Association (NBA) Sacramento Kings on its community during its decade-long effort to gain public funding for a new basketball arena. The research seeks to determine if lengthy battles for public subsidies harm, benefit, or have no effect on the public perception of the team.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

From the perspective of Whitson and Macintosh (1993), all cities are engaging in an image arms race through the acquisition of public and private investments that generate the perception of being a “big league” or “world class” city. The NBA has engaged in a strategy whereby it often places its professional teams in mid-sized American cities that have no other professional teams (e.g. Oklahoma City or Portland). Mid-size cities that acquire an NBA team and rise to “big league” status must, in a classic case of excess demand, continuously invest local resources to keep the team (Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000). These resources most often take the form of millions of dollars to build a venue and, a few decades later, millions more to build a newer “state of the art” venue.

Preuss (2007) defined legacies as combinations of planned and unplanned, tangible and intangible, and negative and positive effects. While he derived these legacies in the context of a mega event, the categorization of legacies can apply to nearly any act, phenomenon, or

circumstance designed to create a long-term transformation. Thus, this paper looks at the entire process of obtaining funding for a new stadium as the legacy-generating phenomenon. In some cities the process can be a few months, more commonly it takes a few years, and in extreme cases it can take over a decade. Regardless of the length of time, the outcomes are always assumed to be positive, planned, and tangible (the new sporting venue). This analysis instead focuses on the unplanned, intangible legacies left in the mind of fans and city residents. Specifically, the hypothesis is that a lengthy quest for public funding coupled with multiple failed attempts will result in an unplanned, intangible, negative legacy.

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

This analysis takes a case study approach by focusing exclusively on the NBA Sacramento Kings who have spent more than ten years seeking a new arena. Within this particular case, multiple methods are implemented in stages. Stage 1 involves a content analysis of newspaper articles to identify themes in opinion and public sentiment. These will be used to develop questions for Stage 2 focus groups to further explore the themes identified in Stage 1. An optional Stage 3 will involve a larger sample of the population to simply determine the frequency of opinions.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The research is currently in progress. Stages 1 and 2 will be complete for presentation at the conference. This research seeks to identify a previously undocumented legacy effect of teams and stadiums. The findings add to our understanding of legacy effects by extending them to teams. In addition, the results will inform the public debate on funding of new sporting venues. For politicians and other public sector interests, the results will provide information to help prioritize the civic strategies used to manage place. For team owners and other private interests the results will shed light on the unplanned consequences of their actions during their quest for public financing of their venue.

References

- Preuss, H. (2007). The conceptualization and measurement of mega sport event legacies. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 12(3-4), 207-227.
- Siegfried, J. & Zimbalist, A. (2000). The economics of sports facilities and their communities. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14(3), 95-114.
- Whitson, D. & Macintosh, D. (1993). Becoming a world-class city: Hallmark events and sport franchises in the growth strategies of Western Canadian cities. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 10, 221-240.