Toward an Urban Sociology of the “Real” Olympics

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The Olympics are often thought of in terms of the athletes, sport organizations and competitions, and the industries which the Games have catalyzed. For many, the Olympics are encountered as a mediated product involving transmitted (television) and interactive (social media) programming and as a marketing tool for sponsors. The urban aspects of the Olympics are usually related to place marketing, soft power; and issues of urban renewal. What has been missing is an analysis of how local residents in the host city encounter the Games as a public policy choice which they directly experience. The “real” issues which the Olympics generate take place in the host city where the Games generate a variety of challenges and which produce a diversity of responses. It will be shown how inhabitants in the city rather than Olympic guests visiting the city can be the central research theme through four phases of the Olympic cycle that produce different sociological outcomes.

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