

**The Economic Impact and Civic Pride of Sports Teams and Mega-events:
Do the Public and Professionals agree?**

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Abstract: Often sports leagues, organizing committees, and team owners justify the use of public funds used to build sports stadiums by the perceived economic impacts and civic pride generated by the team or mega event. Since the 1980s, there have been many economic studies looking at the economic impact and civic pride created by professional sports teams. Most of the economic literature finds that there is little or no economic impact from sports teams or mega-events, however there are mixed findings on the magnitude of civic pride. Overall, most of the economic literature suggests that the benefits created by sports teams or events do not outweigh the cost of public subsidies provided. We perform a survey of public opinion on U.S resident's perception of economic impacts and civic pride benefits from mega events such as the Super Bowl and the Winter Olympics. Our study asks the question: Do residents believe that mega events and sports teams create economic impact and civic pride or not? We find that, like economists, the public is skeptical that public funding of mega events is a good idea.

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I. Introduction

Public funding is commonly used to subsidize stadium construction and support sporting events. For instance, in the last 20 years over 100 sports facilities have opened in the United States with the majority receiving direct public funding. The owners of sports teams justify public funding by stating that sports teams generate a local economic impact through the creation of jobs and by increasing local incomes and by stating that sports teams provide civic pride and intangible benefits to the host community. Eckstein and Delaney (2002) suggest that local elites, in order to gain public support, construct ideas such as community self-esteem and community collective conscience to help them reap large amounts of public dollars for their private stadiums.

Economists have analyzed both reasons. When it comes to the economic impact of sports teams, one of the most studied topics in the sports world; economists have consistently found that sports stadiums do not create a local economic impact. This contradicts economic impact estimates sponsored by teams and politicians who support the use of public funds primarily because of the misapplication of economic impact in the studies (see Crompton, 1995). When it comes to intangible benefits of civic pride, the results have been mixed. Using various techniques, economists find that sport teams do provide public good benefits but generally the benefits provided do not justify the entire funding of sports teams or the public funds provided.

In our study, we provide a literature review of both the economic impact and the civic pride benefits of sports teams to provide insights on the justification for public funding. We then match a survey of the literature to a poll of people across the United

States to see if the residents polling responses match the findings in the literature or if the general public is influenced by media campaigns to justify public spending.

In general, we find that people do not know, or soon forget who host the Super Bowl or the Olympics. We also discover that almost all respondents do not plan to visit cities or countries that host the Super Bowl or Olympics. In addition, we find, however, that people believe that having a professional sports team in a city increases the perceived image of that city and hosting an Olympics increases the perceived image of the host county. Overall, we ascertain that public opinion does correlate with the findings in the economic literature.

II. Economic Impact

The economic impact of sports has been studied in two main ways: through local economic impact and through the impact of mega-events. These areas of study are both summarized below.

The Economic Impact of having a local professional sports team

The impact of having a professional sports franchise has been widely studied. Baade and Dye (1988, 1990) look at the impact a franchise has on retail sales and aggregate income within a given Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). Their 1988 paper shows some support for the link of economic activity between major league sports and manufacturing activity. In their 1990 study they find that a small fraction of cases see manufacturing activity increase with a new or renovated stadium. They conclude, however, that measurable economic benefits are not large enough to justify stadium subsidies. Baade (1996) looks at a professional sports team's ability to create jobs, again failing to observe a positive correlation. Zimbalist and Noll (1997) find that sports teams

and facilities are not a source of local economic growth and employment and the net subsidy exceeds the financial benefit of a new stadium. Baade and Sanderson (1997) research shows that nine cities with a significant impact from the presence of a professional sports team. Interestingly, of the nine significant cities, five were positive and four were negative.

Coates and Humphreys (2003) measure the impact on many different sectors of the economy finding a small positive effect in one sector: amusement and recreation. They do, however, find an offsetting decrease in earnings and employment in the other sectors suggesting a substitution effect occurs between sectors. Their results support the idea that franchises do not create employment and income but shift consumption from one sector to another. The results of finding no economic impact are confirmed at the more local level by Jasina and Rotthoff (2008) who use county level data rather than the larger MSA areas. Coates and Depken (2009) look at four-midsized cities in Texas with university that play in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of NCAA Division and do not detect any evidence of support for the public use of stadiums.

There is one study that shows a positive economic impact: Santo (2005) finds that the sport specific urban stadiums of the 1990s do justify public subsidies. Agha (2013) looks at minor league stadiums and finds that these stadiums, which tend to be in smaller communities, do indeed create a positive economic impact. She notes, however, that she does not look at the cost of building, or funding the building, of a stadium; so no benefit-cost conclusion can be drawn from her work. Hudson (2001) in a meta-analysis finds that how researchers treat local expenditures in their analysis accounts for the large variance in economic impacts.

The Economic Impact of hosting a mega-event

Although there has been little or no evidence of an economic impact of having a sports team in a community, there is an argument that mega-events such as the Super Bowls, Olympics, and World Cups, have a positive impact on the economy of the mega-event host. It is argued that mega-events are expected to increase tourism, both current and future, as well as overall spending in the area. These events, however, may not have a positive impact if there is a crowding out effect where people who are not interested in the event avoid the area because of the large event. Crowding out might also occur if other non-sports sectors of the economy shut-down or are overcrowded because the event (Preuss 2011) .

Coates and Matheson (2011) find, from a panel of American cities from 1993-2005, that mega-events generally exhibit little impact on rental prices on a given city as a whole. In addition, when an impact is found it is just as likely to reduce rental prices as increase them. Allmers and Maennig (2009) analyze the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup in France (1998), in Germany (2006), and in South Africa (2010). They find that the World Cups held in France and Germany have no evidence of creating positive impacts on tourism, employment, and income. They do speculate, however, that the potential benefits of the South Africa World Cup may have a different impact given the developing aspects of the country. These results are consistent with Baade and Matheson (2004), who did not find any positive economic effects for the World Cup held in the United States in 1994. Hagn and Maennig (2008a, 2008b) analyze the 1974 and 2006 World Cup in Germany, also detecting no positive economic impacts.

Szymanski (2002) analyzes the world's twenty largest economies over a thirty year period and find that growth in countries involved in the World Cup is significantly lower. Ritchie and Smith (1991) find that the worldwide name recognition of Calgary, after hosting the 1988 Winter Olympic, was positive but short-lived. In addition, Tieglund (1999) research shows that 40% of the full-serviced hotels in town went bankrupt after the 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer. Soberg and Preuss (2007) advise that hosting major sports events can boost tourism but the additional revenues might not cover the cost of investment by the host destination. Lastly, Preuss (2007) suggest that measuring the legacies of mega sport events on future tourism needs to account for how spending on sports venues may have crowded out spending on other tourist amenities.

Overall, the results of the economic impact studies suggest that sport teams and mega-events either have a small or no effect on the local economy. Politicians and team owners, however, still use the economic impact argument to justify public funds for sport arenas and events. In the next section, we discuss the civic goods benefits derived from sports teams and events.

III. Civic Pride

Additional studies have attempted to estimate the intangible benefits such as civic pride provided to cities hosting a sports team. Intangible benefits include the wellbeing an individual derives from the ability to watch a local game on television, read about it in the newspaper, talk about it with friends and coworkers, or the pride generated from being in a 'major league' city. Burns (2014) applies social identity theory to the New

Orleans Saints' fan base during the 2009 Super Bowl-winning season to identify the civic pride generated as reflected in national, regional, and local publications.

These benefits are often considered important, but are difficult to value.

Economists drawing on the environmental literature have used two techniques to value the public goods benefits. The first is the stated preference technique using primarily the contingent valuation method. The second is the revealed preference technique that uses existing markets such as the housing or labor market to analyze differences in prices that may reveal the benefits created by a sports team.

The Civic Pride of having a local team

One of the first applications of the contingent valuation method to valuing public good amenities was Johnson and Whitehead (2000) who focused on both a minor league baseball team and a new arena for the University of Kentucky basketball in Lexington, Kentucky. Their analysis finds that the measured benefits of both projects do not provide justification for public funding. Johnson, Groothuis, and Whitehead (2001) find that while the Pittsburgh Penguins generate substantial civic pride, the value of these public goods falls far short of the cost of the new arena. Groothuis, Johnson, and Whitehead (2004), using the same data set, suggest that even if a vast majority of residents receive civic pride benefits from sports teams in Pittsburgh only a minority support public funding for building new sports arenas.

Owen (2006), using a contingent valuation study of both Michigan and Minnesota residents, suggests that although the aggregate willingness to pay is less than the typical stadium funding, they are still large enough to be considered for public support. Johnson, Mondello, and Whitehead (2007) provide a contingent valuation study of the Jacksonville

Jaguars in the NFL and find that the overall benefits to the community are \$36.5 million, still less than the funds the city provided to keep the Jaguars. Fenn and Croker (2009), analyzing the public goods generated by the Minnesota Vikings of the NFL, find that the benefits derived to the community warranted the stadium subsidy given to keep the Vikings in Minnesota.

Whitehead et al. (2013), using a combination of both revealed preference, contingent valuation, and stated preference, travel cost, find that the residents of Alberta Canada derive both significant use and nonuse benefits from the Calgary Flames of the NHL; up to 82 million Canadian dollars a year. Whitehead et al. (2013) do suggest, however, that some of the benefits can be captured in ticket pricing. Carlino and Coulson (2004) also use the revealed preference technique to measure the benefits of sports teams using hedonics. They find that the increase in quality-to-life benefits captured in increased housing cost justifies public spending on NFL sports teams. Coates, Humphreys, and Zimbalist (2006) reanalyze Carlino and Coulson (2004) data with various specifications and find that their results are not robust and do not justify public subsidies of sports teams.

The Civic Pride of hosting a mega-event

Kavetsos and Szymanski (2008) find that hosting the Olympics, World Cup, or European Championships increases the happiness of resident of the European countries. Studying over a thirty year period they find significant and positive effects from the World Cup. Dohmen et al. (2006) also finds that individual perceptions of economic prospects both at the personal level and economy-wide level are affected by soccer outcomes.

Walton, Longo, and Dawson (2008) use the contingent valuation technique to measure the benefits of hosting the Olympics in London. Their results suggest that there are positive intangible effects associated with the event and residents outside of London are willing to pay toward the Olympic funding. In addition, Atkinson et al. (2008) discover that respondents from the cities of London, Manchester, and Glasgow are willing to pay £22, £12, and £11 per year (for 10 years) respectively for the 2012 Olympics. They also show that the willingness-to-pay for intangible impacts is in the region of £2 billion.

Overall, the results of the intangible benefits literature on sports teams and events suggest that public goods do exist and there is a benefit to the community. Most studies, however, find that the benefits of the team, facility, or mega-event are significantly smaller than the public funds provided. Politicians and team owners, however, use the concept of civic pride to justify public funds for sport arenas and events at higher levels than indicated.

IV. Polling

One area that has been under studied is how this research informs public opinion. The research suggests that the public funds provided for sports teams, facilities, and events are greater than the benefits to the community. To analyze what people think, we developed questions for a national poll on sports: one survey on opinions about the Super Bowl and one about the Winter Olympics.

The Stillman School of Business, at Seton Hall University, runs the Seton Hall Sports Poll. We used this Sports Poll to run a nationwide survey, conducted by telephone,

of adults dialed from samples of both standard land-line and cell phones.¹ Our data on people's opinion of the Super Bowl was collected from September 30 – October 3, 2013 (before the Super Bowl), has 947 phone call respondents where 44% were male and 56% were female. Our data on people's opinion of the Olympics was collected from February 24 - 26, 2014 (after the Winter Olympics) and has 780 phone call respondents where 44% were males and 56% were female. The responses for each sample came from 10,000 random numbers dialed from across the United States. The Super Bowl survey has a 9.47% response rate and Winter Olympic survey has a 7.8% response rate.² Although each survey has a low response rate it is not uncommon for telephone survey techniques.

During both polls, the respondents were asked if they were sports fans using the question: "How closely do you follow sports?" The answers provided were: Very Closely, Closely, Not Closely, and Not at all. All survey participants in both surveys responded to this question. We report the results in Table 1A for the Super Bowl and 1B for the Winter Olympics.

¹ Website for the Sports Poll: <http://www.shu.edu/academics/business/sports-polling/index.cfm>; which states "The error due to sampling for results based on the entire sample could be plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. The error for subgroups may be higher. This poll release conforms to the Standards of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls."

² Calls are automatically made from a list of known phone numbers for residents in the United States. Calls with no answer, or a caller not willing to answer questions about the survey, are listed as non-responses. The low response rate reflects the large number of unanswered phones but not the randomness of the dialing process.

Table 1A: Results to the question "How closely do you follow sports?"							
Super Bowl		Gender		Age			
	All	Male	Female	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Very Closely	16.7	26.7	7.6	13.3	16.5	22.9	13.5
Closely	29.1	31.3	27.1	27	29	25.3	34.6
Not Closely	22.9	18.3	27.1	22.8	20.2	23	24.9
Not at all	31.2	23.7	38.2	36.9	34.3	28.9	27.1

Table 1B: Results to the question "How closely do you follow sports?"							
Olympics		Gender		Age			
	All	Male	Female	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Very Closely	22.9	30.0	14.9	28.5	20.9	20.2	18.3
Closely	33.9	35.5	32.4	33.3	38.1	36.0	30.6
Not Closely	29.5	23.7	34.9	28.0	22.5	29.7	37.7
Not at all	14.5	10.8	17.8	10.3	18.5	14.1	13.5

One unexpected result is that more respondents self identified themselves as sports fan after the Olympics than before the Super Bowl. It is possible that the Olympics has a greater amount of attention due to the large number of different events that appeal to a wide variety of fans and the fact that it happens once every four years. For instance when asked: "What sport would you say you enjoyed the most?" 27% of males said hockey and 52% of females said figure skating while 29% of youth 18-29 enjoyed snowboarding and 44% of older adults over 60 enjoyed figure skating.

In the Super Bowl sample, we asked the subset of respondents who follow sports a follow-up question "Which sport would you say you are more interested in?" The answers were between Baseball and the NFL; the results broken down in Table 2.

Table 2: Results to the question "Which would you say you are more interested in?"							
		Gender		Age			
		Male	Female	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
	All						
Baseball	30.2	31.4	28.8	23.5	30.1	32.3	34.1
NFL	59.6	59.4	59.9	71.8	65.3	54.7	51.8
Don't Know/refuse to answer	10.2	9.2	11.3	4.7	4.5	13	14.2

To gain an understanding on how people view both the arguments of economic impact and civic pride, the following five questions were asked in the Super Bowl questionnaire:

- Do you know where this season's Super Bowl is going to be held?*
- Do you know where the last Super Bowl was held?*
- When a city hosts the Super Bowl does your interest in that city increase, decrease or remain the same?*
- Would the fact that a city has hosted a Super Bowl make you want to visit after the event?*
- Do you think professional sports teams improve the image of their host city?*

The following six questions were asked in the Winter Olympic questionnaire:

- Do you know where this year's Winter Olympics is going to be held?*
- Do you know where the 2010 Winter Olympics were held?*
- When a country hosts the Olympics does your interest in that country increase, decrease or remain the same?*
- Do you think hosting an Olympics improves the image of the host country?*
- Would the fact that a country hosted the Olympics make you want to visit that country after the event?*
- All things considered, was the decision to hold the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia a good or bad decision?*

Within each of these questions, we report the overall responses, as well as the responses broken down if they are follow sports very closely, somewhat closely, not closely, or not at all:

Table 3A: Results to the question "Do you know where this season's Super Bowl is going to be held?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	21.5	41.3	27.9	16.9	8.3
Table 3B: Results to the question "Do you know where this year's Winter Olympics is going to be held?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	86.8	96.0	86.2	89.5	69.0

We find that most people do not know where the Super Bowl was going to be held but they do know the location of the Winter Olympics (The Super Bowl was held in Metlife Stadium at the Meadowlands; New York Giants/Jets Stadium which is located in northern New Jersey and the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia). We find that people who very closely follow sports, only 41% could name this year's Super Bowl host while 96% could name the host of the Winter Olympics. Our results suggest that using a sporting event to put one city in the spotlight does not always occur unless it is a mega event such as the Olympics. When it comes to the Super Bowl, we find that people tend to be unaware or pay little attention to the city hosting the event. The Winter Olympics is such a major event that we find that nearly 70% of people who do not follow still know where the Winter Olympics were held.

Table 4A: Results to the question "Do you know where the last Super Bowl was held?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	22.7	36.1	27.9	22	11.3
Table 4B: Results to the question "Do you know where the 2010 Winter Olympics were held?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	33.8	49.5	35.9	25.8	11.3

We followed up by asking if they knew where last year's Super Bowl was held and where the last Winter Olympics in 2010 were held. The last Super Bowl was in The Superdome in New Orleans and the 2010 Winter Olympics was held in Vancouver, Canada. We discover that the majority of people were unable to name who hosted the last Super Bowl or the last Winter Olympics, suggesting that the host city does not receive benefits from exposure that last over time. In fact, we discover that less than half of individuals who self identify as following sports very closely remember where either the last Super Bowl or the last Winter Olympics were held.

Table 5A: Results to the question "When a city hosts the Super Bowl does your interest in that city increase, decrease or remain the same?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Increase	22.8	30.1	26.8	26.7	12.3
Decrease	2.1	0	3	2.8	1.9
Remain the same	75.1	69.9	70.2	70.4	85.8

Table 5B: Results to the question "When a country hosts the Olympics does your interest in that country increase, decrease or remain the same?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Increase	34.1	47.2	35.7	30.6	17.3
Decrease	1.6	2.2	2.4	0.4	1.2
Remain the same	64.3	50.6	61.9	69.0	81.5

In Table 5A, we asked if the hosting of a Super Bowl causes your interest in that city to increase, decrease, or remain the same. We show that most people say that hosting a Super Bowl does not change their opinion of that city. In addition, we find similar results for the Winter Olympics reported in Table 5B. When we focus only on the respondents who self-identify as following sports very closely we find that less than half report that the event increases their interest in the city. Most of the respondents report that the event does not change their interest in the city one way or the other.

Table 6A: Results to the question "Would the fact that a city has hosted a Super Bowl make you want to visit after the event?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	17.5	30.1	23.8	16.7	5.3
No	67.6	62.9	67.2	70.3	68.5
Don't know/refuse to answer	14.9	7	9	13	26.2

Table 6B: Results to the question "Would the fact that a country hosted the Olympics make you want to visit that country after the event"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	23.6	38.2	23.9	15.5	16.7
No	67.4	55.1	67.5	79.7	61.0
Don't know/refuse to answer	9.0	6.7	8.6	4.7	22.2

In Table 6A and 6B, we show that there may be some residual economic impact. At least some people say they are more likely to visit a city after it has hosted a Super Bowl (18%, Table 6A) and more likely to want to visit a country after an Olympics is held (24%, Table 6B). Of course we do not know if these people will actually travel, but our results are suggestive that the event might increase some tourism.

Table 7A: Results to the question "Do you think professional sports teams improve the image of their host city?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	60.9	74.4	73.4	56.2	45.5
No	24.3	19.4	16.7	30.4	29.7
Don't know/refuse to answer	14.7	6.2	9.9	13.4	24.8

Table 7B: Results to the question "Do you think hosting an Olympics improves the image of the host country?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Yes	62.9	75.5	65.7	59.7	43.3
No	23.5	18.5	21.2	28.8	25.9
Don't know/refuse to answer	13.6	5.9	13.2	11.4	30.7

In Table 7A and 7B, we find that 61% of respondents believe that having a professional sports team improves the image of a city while 63% of respondents believe hosting an Olympics improves the image of a host country. When we focus only on people that do not follow sports at all, we find that 46% and 43% of them still believe that having a professional sports team increases the image of a city or hosting an Olympics increases the image of a country, respectively.

Table 8: Results to the question "All things considered, was the decision to hold the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia a good or bad decision?"					
		Follow Sports...			
	All	Very Closely	Somewhat Closely	Not Closely	Not at all
Good	48.2	59.5	57.6	38.6	28.5
Bad	25.7	29.3	21.7	30.3	19.9
Don't know/refuse to answer	26.1	11.1	20.7	31.1	51.6

In Table 8 we report the results to the question: "All things considered, was the decision to hold the 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia a good or bad decision?" We discover that 48% of respondents believe hosting the Winter Olympics in Russia was a good idea. When focusing on how close a respondent follows sports, we find that the majority of respondents who follow sports (very closely or somewhat closely) believe it was a good idea. A clear minority, however, of individuals who do not follow sports (not closely or not at all) believe it is a good idea. Although we do not know the criteria individuals use to decide on why it is or is not a good idea, we find that half the respondents are skeptical about the value of hosting the Olympics.

V. Discussion

The economic literature suggests that there are both short and long term effects of hosting major events. The short term impact occurs as the event happens while the long

term effects occur after the event due to the host city being in the worldwide spotlight. Some of the economic impact from a mega-event is not just those who travel there for the event, but those that will travel to the city after the event is held due to the exposure. In our survey, we find that only 22% of the people knew where the next Super Bowl was being held (Met Life Stadium, northern New Jersey/New York) and 23% knew where the last one was held (The Superdome, New Orleans). We find that respondents that follow sports closely only 41% could name the upcoming Super Bowl and only 36% could name the previous Super Bowl suggesting no long term impacts.

Our results, however, differ for the Winter Olympics. We find that 87% of respondents know where the current Winter Olympics were held, but only 34% knew where the last Winter Olympics were held. Of the respondents that follow sports closely, 96% knew where the Winter Olympics were just held but only 50% could name the previous Winter Olympics. Given the poll for the Winter Olympics was done days after the closing ceremony, whereas the Super Bowl poll was done months before the event date provides evidence that the notoriety of hosting a mega-event is very short-lived and does not lead to a long term impact for either event.

When asked if hosting the event increases your interest in the host city, only 23% and 34%, for the Super Bowl and Winter Olympics respectively, say yes. When asked if hosting a mega-event makes you want to visit that city after the game, 68% and 67% said no for the Super Bowl and Winter Olympics, respectively.

We do find, however, 61% of people surveyed believe that a professional sports team improves the image of a city, which is consistent with the results from the civic pride literature. The results are similar for the Winter Olympics, where 63% of

respondents believe that hosting an Olympics improves the image of the host country. These results suggest that individuals do feel civic pride from having a sports team or hosting a mega-event.

VI. Conclusion

Our survey results of the general population in the United States shows that the majority of respondents conclude that local economic impact is not created by sports teams or mega events. The vast majority of the economics literature also concludes that local economic impact is not created by having a professional sports team or by hosting a major event. Our survey's results are consistent with the economic literature findings on the effects of mega-events such as the Super Bowl or the Winter Olympics creating an economic impact.

We find that both the general public and the researchers do not expected an economic impact from hosting the Super Bowl or Olympics are not beneficial to a local area. In addition, the majority of economic literature on civic pride concludes that sports teams and events do create intangible public good benefits, although less than a fully public subsidized event or area. Our survey also finds that people are of the same opinion that sports teams and events do create civic pride benefits. Our research suggests that the general public has become skeptical to the use of public funds to build sports stadiums or host mega events.

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