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THE TOURISM IMPACT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES AND THE SUPPORT OF THE BUDAPEST 2024 OLYMPIC BID CONSIDERING THE RESULTS OF A QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED SURVEY

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1. Introduction

The theme of our investigation can be justified by the fact that the issues concerning the organization of Olympic Games have lately moved into the centre of people's attention and have widely been discussed by the public for weeks, occasionally for months. The Olympic movement in Hungary has always been surrounded by positive thoughts and narratives, because Hungary, since it was part of the preparatory phase of the history of the Games and, later it continued to be its stableid member, has been one of the most successful countries in the history of the modern Olympic Games (Bánhidi, 2011). Although our survey and the analysis of its results had been done before Budapest's Olympic bid to organize the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games was withdrawn, still, our survey's results are able to reflect that milieu of conflicts, which resulted in the weakening of the support of the Olympic bid and, which, eventually, led to its withdrawal.

The Olympic Games represent one of the world's most appreciated and most widely watched sport events, including the largest number of different types of sport. Since the organization of the first modern-age Olympic Games held in 1896 in Athens, the number of the participating countries has continuously been on the rise and the attention surrounding these events has also been on the growth. And sport also has changed dramatically over time, it has become the pat

of our everyday lives, as it is connected to society, politics, economy and business with many ties (Balogh, 2015). In addition, the organization of the Olympic events has been beneficial for the economy of the host country since, from 1984 onward, when the summer Olympic Games were organized in Los Angeles, the events have become an integral part of business life, it has been part of the so-called 'show business' phenomenon (Frenkl, 2008). In addition to the organizational benefits, the Olympic Games may potentially be beneficial for the sport life of the host country. Due to enhanced sport facilities the sportsmen of the host countries achieve better results, and they may perform better at future Olympic Games as well. After the Olympics, the high cost of running a sports facility can be a problem for the state. To solve that problem a long-term operating contract could be a solution with the specialized companies of the private sector. This, however, involves the spread of business sport to the detriment of community sport, which provokes criticism of taxpayers. There are very few taxpayers who benefit from the advantages of stadium and arena services (Gyömörei, 2015).

The Olympic bids, announced by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have been attracting the attention of many cities, which intend to compete for the rights to organize summer or winter Olympic Games. These five-loop games, in addition to continuing sport heritage, are significant from economic, social and cultural points of view as well. The organization of the games may become a strategic aim in the life of the host countries, which would determine their further development. In addition, winning the right to organize Olympic Games may mean the enhancement of the country's international prestige as well.

As Pricewaterhousecoopers (PWC) Hungary wrote in a 2015 study (olimpia.hu) on the practicability of the Budapest Olympic and Paralympic Games that, when evaluating the Olympic bids it a very significant point in the assessment procedure to see to what extent the population of the given candidate country or city supports the application. In addition, the same study underlined the significance of

other issues as well, including the economic-financial feasibility of the organization, the problems of financial return and sustainability, the social usefulness of developmental gigaprojects, the utilization and financing of buildings and facilities in the period following the Games, the prospects of the opening of new jobs, as well as the possibilities to improve the tourism sector in the host country and city. Agenda 2020, a strategic package of reforms compiled by the International Olympic Committee, focuses on austerity and sustainability, and this document may serve as a point of reference. The recommendations of this package target economic, financial, social and environmental problems, thus Olympic bids became available for 'medium-size' towns with lower population figures as well; thus the era of mega-size Olympic Games have come to an end (olympic.org). The reform package thus encourages the organization of cheaper, sustainable Olympic Games and these recommendations serve to influence the organizational structure of future Olympic Games.

Our research results represent a synthesis of the study of relevant literature (secondary research) supplemented by our own empirical (primary) research. First, from the point of view of sport tourism an analysis of the literature on the Olympic Games was carried out, then the support of the Budapest Olympic Games was considered. This phase of the research was based on a non-representative questionnaire survey. Eventually the lessons drawn from the above analyses were outlined and the overall usefulness of the event was considered.

2. The impact of the Olympic Games on tourism

Our secondary research was based on a survey of the international and Hungarian specialist literature, describing the organizational aspects of the Olympic Games of the past few decades. In order to carry out the impact assessment of the Olympic Games of the past few decades, it is of utmost importance to clarify the definition and the most important characteristics of sport tourism and urban tourism, which is closely related to it. When offering a historical overview of sport tourism, it can be stated that, in its earlier forms it appeared in the

ancient times. As early as the period of antiquity, people travelled in order to attend or view various sport events. Monumental sport facilities were built in the antiquity, too, and supposedly, the organization of the Games represented outstanding quality. The event, organized every 4 years, was becoming a real festival of sport, attracting many visitors (Marton, 2015). After the first modern Olympic Games were organized, the event acquired global significance, a feature, contributing greatly to the marketization of sport and its development as a separate branch of economy.

Sport involves travel and also consumption that goes with it. Consequently, the capability of sport to generate tourism has been known from ancient times. From the 1950s onward the social significance of sport has been acknowledged in general, and, due to the popularization of the media it has become a business, a dynamically developing branch of the economy, and, as such, an important factor of national economies. Today sport tourism is well-organized and well-structured (Györi, 2014a). „Sport tourism represents a specific type of travel with the aim of viewing or doing some competitive or leisure time sport, or sport-related attraction’ (Hudson, 2003).

Sport tourism may be classified in a number of ways, but the majority of authors agree that the two major types are active and passive sport tourism. Active sport tourism is for example, when a person travels with the aim of doing some sport, like golf, or, skiing. In case of ‘passive’ sport tourism the traveller intends to watch a sport event in order to support for an individual or a team (Hudson, 2003). In addition to ‘active’ sport tourism Ritchie and Adair (2004) distinguish between ‘event’ and ‘nostalgia’ sport tourism. These two latter categories mean a breakdown of the notion of ‘passive’ sport tourism. The travelers belonging to the category of event tourism are motivated by watching a certain sport event at its venue, while ‘nostalgia’ sport tourism includes visits to sport museums, venues of wellknown sport events, stadiums and the viewing of sport-related relics. Consequently, it is primarily the urban areas where the impact of the

Olympic Games on tourism can be felt. In the group of space-specific tourism products, urban tourism, sometimes also called, city tourism, represent a specific subgroup. „Urban tourism includes all those activities which are done in urban environment and are related to tourism. It includes all the activities tourists are involved in, as well as all the services and institutions and the activities of the service sector which serve to satisfy tourists' needs' (Juray, 2008).

The city as a 'product' is a complicated notion: it includes services in a very concentrated form which represent a wide range of possibilities for tourists. The host cities of the Olympic Games usually are able to meet all kinds of tourism needs, and, at the same time, they also have their own typical characteristic features. They are usually economically strong and thus they are able to trigger a variety of sport-related motivation. The individual countries, in their tourism development policies, lay an emphasis on the cultural attractions of big cities, since, if a destination cannot provide an attractive beach and sunshine, then it is the cultural events that are able to attract tourists (Michalkó, 1999). Also, being the venue for a megaevent can be a potential of significance. A gigantic sport event, like the Olympic Games, are capable of affecting beneficially both the economy and the tourism of a country. The organization of such an event may invigorate the tourism of the given city and its surroundings. In summary it can be said that, sport tourism, both of its types, the event- and the nostalgia tourism, are realized in an urban space. They are an organic part of urban- or city tourism and they are related to one another and supplement each other's product offers.

Sport events of significance, which were organized during the past few decades, had an effect of significance on both the economy and the society of the host country and city. From the point of view of tourism many changes can be detected in these areas including the building of new hotels, expanding the capacity of the existing ones, or, diversifying accommodation possibilities. Infrastructure in these countries can also be characterized by significant changes. Rome, the capital of Italy used the Olympic bid as its own strategy for urban

development, as early as 1960. Then, from the organization of the 1972 Olympic Games of Munich it has become a tendency that the host city reused and rehabilitated a formerly abandoned, underdeveloped industrial area in order to improve it. Both in Sydney (2000) and in Athens (2004) it was the formerly neglected, polluted areas where the facilities of the Olympic Games were erected (Preuss, 2004). Thus the aim of urban rehabilitation went hand in hand with the preparatory works for the Olympic Games. In addition, these areas meant further business possibilities for the economy, the society, and the tourism of the given country. This trend could be detected in the organization of the Olympic Games in London (Kyte, 2012).

The host city of the 2012 Olympic Games, London, the British capital, is one of the world's financial centres and leading global cities. Its touristic significance both in Europe and the world is of high account. Consequently, when organizing the Olympic games it was not the development of local tourism that represented the primary aim of the organizers, but it was the rather the rehabilitation of the city centre, the modernization of its infrastructure and the development of public transport (Kyte, 2012). On the other hand, it is the tourism sector that was the primary beneficiary of the developments. The old-new infrastructure was and is still used by both the inhabitants of London and the tourists visiting the British capital (Neville et al., 2009).

Considering the social usefulness of the Olympic Games it can be stated that the attitude of local population in tourism may undergo a significant change under the influence of the Olympic games; in addition, the level of training as well as the foreign language skills of those who work in tourism may improve. In Beijing (2008), for example, the employees of the tourism sector participated in language courses and in politeness training programs (Pap, 2009).

The new services and facilities may change the image of the host cities for a lengthy period of time. The new, or rebuilt sport facilities can be useful in the future not only in competitive or recreational sport, but they may also be significant in event and in nostalgia tourism. Consequently, becoming the venue for and organizing one

of the world's most significant sport events means a potential of significance for the development of tourism. The organization of the Olympic Games is certainly dependent on the economic bearing capacity of the given country, the agreement between and the level of commitment of the relevant official organs, non-governmental organizations and businesses, the guarantees involved in the Olympic bid and, at last, but not least, on a national consensus (Győri, 2014b). Organizing the Olympics can also greatly contribute to improving the competitiveness of Hungarian sport. In the field of sport, we can consider some country to be competitive if its strategically embedded economic base makes the optimal use of its resources while gaining long-term benefits in the international market (Ács, 2007).

3. Empirical research questions and hypotheses

Our questionnaire-based research questions about the support of the Budapest 2024 Olympic bid and the general interest in sport events were as follows:

1. To what extent do Hungarian people support the idea of the Olympic Games to be held in Budapest?
2. Do people know the reform program called Agenda 2020, which is to have an impact on the organization and the structure of future Olympic Games?
3. Also, we intended to compare the opinion of students who study in the area of different research topic-related disciplines, including sport science and geography students. Our research questions were as follows:
4. Are there any differences between geography and sport students' (specialized either in sport coaching or the teaching of physical education) interest in sport events and their motivation?
5. Supposing that sport students are more interested in and more devoted to sport, do they support the Budapest Olympic bid in higher proportions than the students of geography?

Based on feasibility studies and our own practical experience the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The majority of those who filled in the questionnaire would not support the 2024 Budapest Olympic bid.
2. Most respondents would not know about the agenda 2020 program, determining the organization of future Olympic Games.
3. It is assumed that sport students (specialized in sport coaching or teaching PE) would be more interested and more motivated concerning sport events than geography students.
4. It is also assumed that sport students, specialized in PE teacher training, would demonstrate their support of the Budapest 2024 Olympic bid in higher proportions.

4. Research material and methods

The empirical research was based on a questionnaire edited by the authors of this paper. The survey, which involved 335 respondents (n=335) was carried out from November 6-20, 2016. The questionnaire was made available on the internet and it was filled in by 140 respondents on a voluntary basis (n1=140). Then paper-based questionnaires were filled in by different target groups, i.e. university students of geography (n2f=96) and sport (n2t=99), representing various Hungarian training institutions and different disciplinary areas.

62% of the respondents represented the 19-24 age group, 30% of them was between 25-35 years of age. Concerning their educational background 54% of the respondents had a degree from higher education and 43% finished secondary school. By place of residence 85% of the respondents were urban dwellers, out of which 43% lived in county seats, 30% in other towns and 12% in the capital.

The questions could be divided into two groups. The questions of the first group concerned the motivation of the respondents and their interest in sport in general and sport events in particular. In the second part of the survey data were collected in relation to the support of the Olympic Games to be organized in Hungary, the

interrelatedness of that support and the assumed impact of the Olympic Games. The responses in relation to the organization of the Budapest Olympic Games were formulated and then evaluated using the 5-level Likert scale.

5. Results of the empirical research

The questionnaire first focused on 'event' type sport activities and their motivational background. 92% of the respondents had already personally seen a sport event in Hungary and 30% of them had even travelled abroad to see one (Figure 1). An exceptionally high proportion of respondents had already seen some sport-related relic or had visited a relevant museum; on average 4 out of 5 respondents had already been part of some kind of 'nostalgia' sport tourism. One of our initial hypotheses has been proven by the research results, that is, those students who study some sport-related discipline, are more interested in sport events and travels for sport.

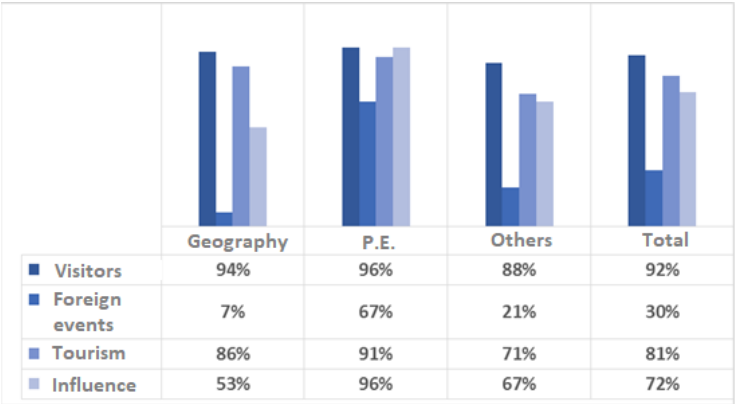


Figure 1. Interest in sport events by target groups
 (Source: edited by the authors)

In relation to the reform program Agenda 2020, another of our initial assumptions has been proven. Two thirds of respondents answered

that they had never heard about the program. Students, who pursue studies in one or another related discipline (sport science and geography), gave very diverse answers concerning their familiarity with the reform program. A higher proportion of geography students knew the reform program than sport students (Figure 2).

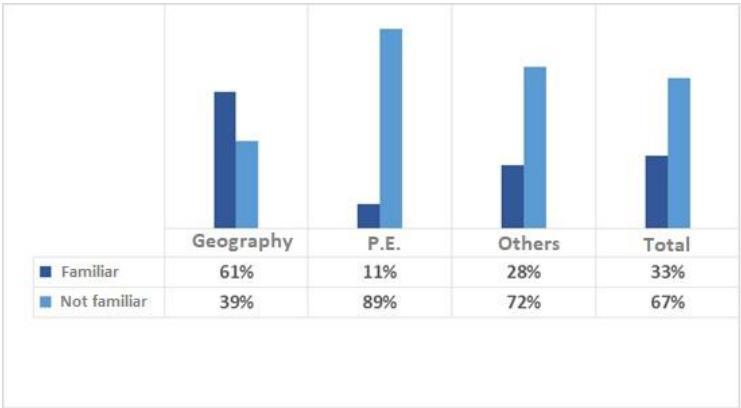


Figure 2. Familiarity with the Agenda 2020 reform program by target groups
 (Source: edited by the authors)

Our initial hypothesis concerning the support of the Olympic Games to be held in Hungary has also been proven. The majority of respondents did not support the idea that Hungary should organize the Olympic Games in 2024; although, the rejection of the idea was not typical either (Figure 3). At the same time a pronounced difference was detectable between the responses of geography and sport students and those of the control-group of voluntary respondents who had filled in the questionnaire on the internet (Figure 4). Our hypothesis has been proven, namely, that PE teacher training students support sport events in general and the budapest Olympic Games in particular in higher proportions, than geography students. The average value of support by the 5-level scale was 2.79 in the group of geography

students, while it was 3.13 in the group of PE teacher training students. The same figure in the quasi control group of voluntary respondents via the internet was only 2.47.

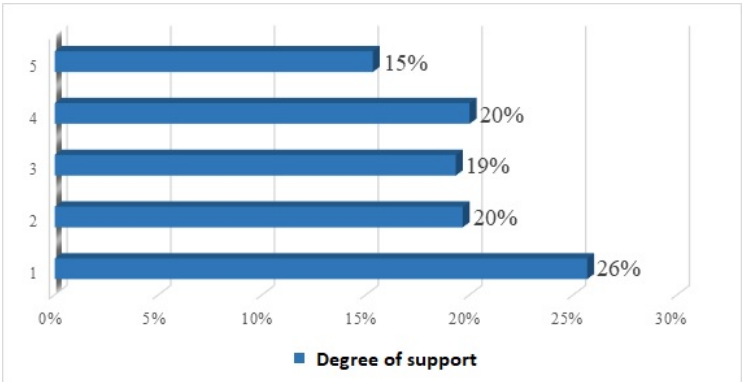


Figure 3. The support of the 'Budapest 2024' Olympic bid
(1: rejects – 5: fully supports)
 (Source: edited by the authors)

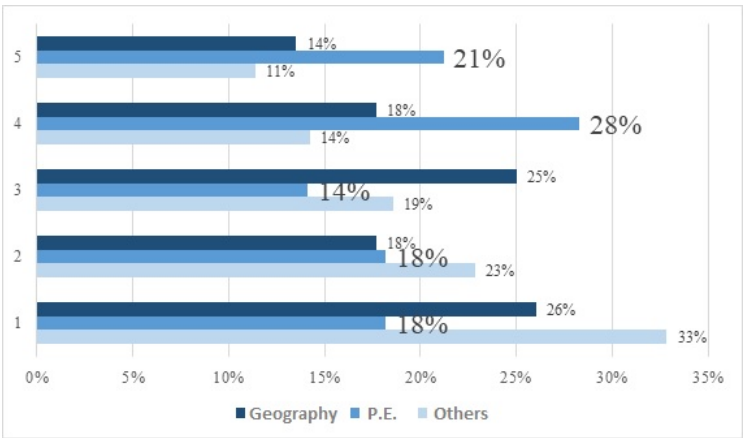


Figure 4. The support of the 'Budapest 2024' Olympic bid by target groups
(1: rejects – 5: supports)
 (Source: edited by the authors)

Although the responses can be characterized with great diversity (geography students 1,38; sport students: 1,41; respondents via internet: 1,36), and the opinions were polarized within the individual groups, too, there was a difference concerning the judgement of the impact of the Olympic Games. Geography students - . arguing that a grandiose event like the Olympic Games would move Hungary to the centre of global attention – considered the image-enhancing impact as the most important one (Figure 5). Sport students, on the other hand, emphasized the building of sport facilities, since, in their opinion, those would potentially contribute to the future development of sport in Hungary (Figure 6).

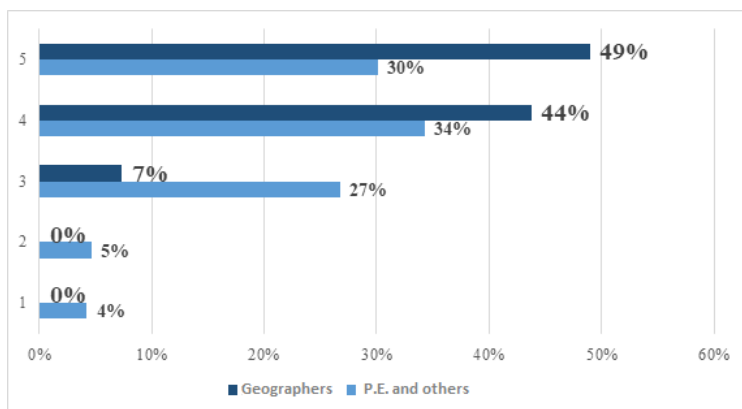


Figure 5. The opinion on image enhancement of Olympic Games by target groups (1: disagrees – 5: fully agrees)
(Source: edited by the authors)

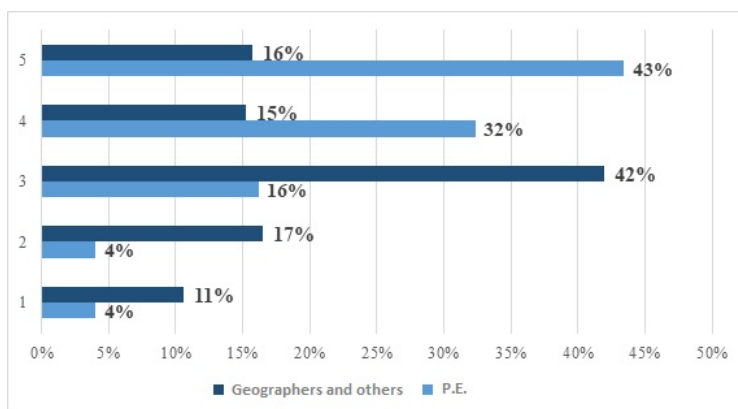


Figure 6. The opinion on the development of sport in the future (1: disagrees – 5: fully agrees). Edited by the authors
(Source: edited by the authors)

5. Conclusions

It has already been proven that the organization of Olympic Games may become a tool of key significance for the host city from both the points of view of urban and tourism development. The improvement of infra- and suprastructures, including the expansion of airports, construction of networks of roads, the establishment of diverse types of accommodation, are all consequences, which are able to influence the future of the destination in question, by enhancing its popularity and creating a positive image.

When deciding on the Olympic venue the Committee considers whether or not the population of the given country, as well as the members of the local community support the event convincingly. The approval of the organization of the Olympic Games and the public support of the event are elements of key importance considering the future success of the event. The feasibility study, prepared by PWC Hungary as attachment to the „Budapest 2024” Olympic bid (2015) highlights the lack of public support as one of the potential risks. It has been concluded by our non-representative survey, too, that the

Olympic bid has not been strongly supported by the public, although clear rejection has not been identified either.

Assumingly that there was no nationwide consensus concerning the organization of the Olympic and the Paralympic Games in Budapest in 2024, in February 2017, not long after conducting our questionnaire-based survey, the government of Hungary proposed the local government of Budapest and the Hungarian Olympic Committee to withdraw their application. The weakening of the support of the Olympic bid was likely due to the fact that the recommendations formulated by the document Agenda 2020, which were aimed at organizing cheap and sustainable future Olympic Games, have not reached all segments of Hungarian society. This statement is supported by the results of our questionnaire-based survey, too, since the majority of respondents did not hear about the program of Agenda 2020 at all.

In addition, it is a regrettable fact that the issue of the Olympic Games to be organized in Hungary has completely been over-politicized. Considering the communication of certain political parties and the media appearances, only the negative consequences of the Olympic Games of the past two decades were emphasized, most importantly, the danger of corruption. On the other hand, the background causes and the lessons to be learnt from the organization of the Olympic Games of the past were never mentioned. Also, when preparing Hungary's bid the recommendations by the reform program Agenda 2020, the developments, which should be introduced anyway, independently of the Olympic bid, together with the long-term effects of the event, were not properly dealt with. The results of our questionnaire-based survey also demonstrate that the young representatives of sport-related disciplines, including sport science, physical education and geography agreed that the organization of the Olympic Games would be beneficial, although their opinions differed concerning the concrete long-term benefits.

The past of Hungary's sport history may predestine the country to organize the Olympic Games some time in the future. In order to

achieve this aim it is necessary to properly deal with the country's social and economic problems, and, in addition, to achieve a nationwide consensus to support the event itself. It is of utmost importance that instead of dividing the nation, the Olympic Games serve as a link connecting the different groups of our society.

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