

The Trickle-Down Effect of Sports Events in Urban Renewal and its Implementation Path

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ABSTRACT

As my country's new urbanization shifts toward high-quality development, urban renewal is shifting from "incremental expansion" to "improving existing resources," urgently requiring diversified driving forces. Sports events, with their agglomerative nature and radiative benefits, have become a crucial vehicle for activating urban renewal. However, existing research has insufficiently explored the "trickle-down process" by which event benefits permeate all aspects of urban renewal. This paper employs a literature review approach to define the core connotations and interconnected logic of sports events and urban renewal. It systematically analyzes the manifestation of the trickle-down effect across four dimensions: infrastructure, industrial structure, spatial function, and cultural identity. It identifies constraints such as insufficient planning foresight, imbalanced resource allocation, lack of coordinated action among stakeholders, and inadequate evaluation mechanisms. It then constructs a path to achieve this goal: "planning guidance - resource integration - collaborative governance - dynamic evaluation," complemented by supporting mechanisms including policies, funding, talent, and public participation. Research indicates that the trickle-down effect of sports events in promoting urban renewal is gradual, interconnected, and inclusive. Systematic design is needed to overcome barriers to benefit transmission and transform short-term event benefits into long-term urban renewal value, providing theoretical reference for high-quality urban development within the context of new urbanization.

KEYWORDS

Sports Events; Urban Renewal; Trickle-down Effect; Implementation Path; High-quality Urban Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

As my country's new urbanization enters a stage of high-quality development centered on people, urban renewal is no longer limited to the transformation of physical space but must also consider functional optimization, industrial upgrading, and cultural heritage. This process urgently requires breaking through the bottleneck of traditional driving forces and exploring more comprehensive driving models. As public events that integrate economic, social, and cultural functions, sports events not only attract capital, technology, and human traffic in the short term, but also, through event planning, drive improvements in urban infrastructure, upgrade public services, and even reshape urban spatial structure and cultural symbols, becoming a crucial link between the "event economy" and "urban development." In recent years, the frequency of various sports events in cities has significantly increased. However, in practice, there's often a tendency to prioritize events over renewal. Some cities overly focus on short-term benefits during events, leading to post-event idleness of venues, an imbalance in development between core host areas and surrounding areas, and a failure to translate cultural influence into civic engagement. Consequently, the benefits of events fail to effectively permeate the long-term process of urban renewal. Existing research has largely focused

on the direct contribution of sports events to the urban economy or the renewal effects of a single sector. There has been insufficient exploration of the mechanisms, constraints, and systematic pathways for how event benefits can trickle down across all areas of urban renewal, resulting in a disconnect between theoretical guidance and practical needs.

Based on this, this article, drawing on literature research, systematically analyzes the characteristics and implementation pathways of the trickle-down effect of sports events in promoting urban renewal. The aim is to clarify the underlying logic of these two mechanisms, address bottlenecks in the transmission of event benefits, provide theoretical support for promoting urban renewal through sports events, and enrich the research system at the intersection of sports and urban development.

2. CORE CONCEPTS AND LOGIC OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SPORTS EVENTS AND URBAN RENEWAL

The connection between sports events and urban renewal stems from the inherent compatibility of their core concepts, which underlies the underlying logic of the trickle-down effect. From a core perspective, sports events are organized, large-scale, and influential public events centered around athletic competition. They encompass large-scale international events, regional events, and mass events. Their core characteristics are concentrated factors, radiating benefits, and a periodic cycle.

Urban renewal addresses issues such as aging infrastructure, unbalanced functional layouts, and weak cultural heritage in existing urban spaces[1]. Through renovation, optimization, and revitalization, it aims to enhance spatial functionality, upgrade the industrial structure, and improve the living environment. Its core goal is to promote the transformation of cities from "material renewal" to "value renewal" and meet citizens' needs for a better life.

The interconnected logic between the two can be categorized into three levels: First, the demand-adaptation logic. The demand for venues, transportation, communications, and other hardware from events provides clear guidance for the renovation of existing urban infrastructure. For example, the construction of event venues forces the demolition and land reuse of old industrial areas, while event transportation guarantees promote the expansion of rail transit, providing a specific "demand anchor" for urban renewal. Second, the benefit-return logic. The economic benefits and social resources generated during events can be converted into funding and capacity support for urban renewal. For example, event tourism revenue can be used for old city renovation, and operational experience can enhance public services. Third, there's the logic of value synergy. The concepts of "health, collaboration, and inclusiveness" promoted by events align closely with the urban renewal goals of "improving living quality and promoting social harmony." The urban cultural symbols promoted by events can enhance citizen identity, build social consensus for renewal, and achieve a synergistic improvement in both "event value" and "city value."

3. DIMENSIONS OF THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT OF SPORTS EVENTS ON URBAN RENEWAL

The trickle-down effect of sports events on urban renewal is a process in which the benefits of events gradually spread from core areas such as venues and core hosting areas to surrounding areas, related industries and social and cultural fields, rather than immediate and comprehensive coverage. It is specifically reflected in four dimensions.

3.1. Infrastructure: From "Event-Specific" to "Shared Benefits for the People"

Core infrastructure built during the event planning phase, such as venues, transportation hubs, and communication base stations, will not remain idle once the event concludes. After the event, these

facilities, originally intended for the event, will be repurposed and reused, gradually extending their service beyond the event scene to the daily lives of citizens. For example, some event venues will be converted into national fitness centers to facilitate daily exercise, while others will become convention centers and cultural venues to host various civic events. Regarding transportation and communication infrastructure, temporary bus routes and shared bike parking areas added during the event will be optimized and repurposed to meet the commuting needs of community residents after the event, becoming regular routes connecting suburban areas with older urban areas. 5G communication equipment used for the event will also be extended to older residential communities, helping them keep pace with the city's digital transformation. This model of "serving the event first, then benefiting people" ensures that the benefits of infrastructure reach a wider range of citizens, achieving universal benefits.

3.2. Industrial Structure Dimension: From "Single Sport" to "Diversified Integration"

The impact of sports events on industries isn't limited to sports alone; it will gradually extend to related sectors, ultimately forming a "sports +" industrial cluster. First, the sports industry itself directly drives the development of sectors like tourism, catering, accommodation, and cultural and creative industries. For example, a marathon attracts many participants and spectators from other regions, boosting a city's tourism revenue. Second, this driving effect pushes traditional retail towards a "sports + commerce" model. For example, many shopping malls are creating dedicated sections for sporting goods and adding sports experience zones to attract consumers. Furthermore, the city's brand recognition boosted by sports events can attract external investment, fostering the development of emerging industries like sports technology and health, helping cities shift from a single industry structure to a more diversified one while also increasing added value[2].

3.3. Spatial Function Dimension: From "Partial Renewal" to "Overall Quality Improvement"

The transformation of the core areas of the event, such as the areas around the venues and along the event routes, will not stop at the core areas, but will also gradually radiate to areas with prominent stock space problems such as old urban areas and urban villages. On the one hand, after the core areas have undergone environmental improvements, such as increasing greening, renovating building facades, and adding public rest spaces, a "model effect" will be formed, and the surrounding areas will follow suit and learn from this transformation idea to promote their own environmental upgrades; on the other hand, the "business + sports + culture" integration model explored in the core areas, such as the joint operation of venues, shopping malls, and museums, will also penetrate into the old urban areas - adding business formats such as community sports parks and cultural and creative blocks to the old urban areas will revitalize the original old stock spaces and ultimately realize the transformation of urban space from partial renewal to overall quality improvement.

3.4. Cultural Identity Dimension: From "Event Symbols" to "City Consensus"

The city elements embedded in the event, such as the city logo, local historical stories, and folk customs, will gradually permeate all levels of society through media coverage and citizen participation in the event. For example, medal designs will incorporate images of local historical buildings, and the race route will deliberately connect cultural landmarks throughout the city. Participants and spectators can rediscover the cultural highlights of their city while participating. Furthermore, volunteer services and the lively atmosphere of watching the games together during the event can enhance citizens' sense of collective honor, allowing the "culture of the event" to gradually become a recognized "city spirit." This cultural penetration not only strengthens citizens' sense of belonging and identification with the city, but also attracts more attention to the city, generating sustained social momentum for urban renewal.

4. CONSTRAINTS ON THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT OF SPORTS EVENTS IN DRIVING URBAN RENEWAL

Although sports events have the potential to drive urban renewal, the realization of this trickle-down effect faces multiple constraints, resulting in "breakpoints" in the transmission of event benefits and hindering their deep penetration into all areas of urban renewal.

4.1. Lack of Foresight in Planning: Short-term Needs Disconnected from Long-term Goals

Some cities overly focus on short-term needs during the event planning phase, failing to integrate them with long-term urban renewal plans. For example, venue site selection prioritizes event convenience over post-event public welfare, leading to venues being built in remote suburbs and left idle after the events due to inconvenient transportation. Transportation planning focuses solely on peak event traffic, failing to consider the long-term commuting needs of surrounding areas, resulting in low utilization of newly added transportation facilities after the events. This "short-term over long-term" planning model disconnects event facilities from the transformation of existing urban space, preventing a sustained trickle-down effect.

4.2. Imbalanced Resource Allocation: Uneven Distribution of Benefits Across Regions and Sectors

There is a clear tendency toward centralization of event resource allocation, with most resources flowing to core hosting areas and hardware facilities, while insufficiently supporting regions and soft sectors with urgent renewal needs. From a regional perspective, event funding and technology are often concentrated in urban cores or new districts, while areas with significant stock issues, such as old urban areas and suburban areas, face limited access to resources, exacerbating the development gap between core and surrounding areas. From a sectoral perspective, resources are primarily invested in hardware areas like venue construction and transportation improvements, with limited support for soft areas like industry development, cultural development, and talent cultivation. This results in a trickle-down effect that remains limited to the "material level" and struggles to penetrate the "value level."

4.3. Lack of Coordination among Stakeholders: Difficulty in Coordinating the Interests of Multiple Stakeholders

Sports events drive urban renewal, involving multiple stakeholders including government, businesses, social organizations, and citizens. Due to a lack of coordination mechanisms, each entity tends to operate independently. Governments often overly dominate event planning and renewal projects, neglecting the market capabilities of businesses and the actual needs of citizens. Businesses, driven by the pursuit of short-term profits, are less motivated to participate in long-term projects such as post-event venue operations and industry development. Social organizations and citizens lack channels for participation, making it difficult to express their needs and monitor progress[3]. Information asymmetry and conflicts of interest among these stakeholders prevent event benefits from synergizing and effectively influencing urban renewal.

5. PATHWAYS TO REALIZE THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT OF SPORTS EVENTS IN URBAN RENEWAL

To overcome the constraints of the trickle-down effect and break down barriers to the transmission of event benefits, four implementation paths must be developed from a systematic perspective to ensure that the benefits of events gradually permeate all areas of urban renewal.

5.1. Planning Guidance: Building an "Event-Renewal" Collaborative System

In the early stages of event preparation, it's important to bring together departments like planning, sports, development and reform, and culture and tourism to form a dedicated team to develop a collaborative "event-renewal" plan. First, the post-event transformation direction of the venues must be clearly defined, with plans in advance for potential conversions into common scenarios like national fitness centers and exhibition venues. They must not be "disposable venues" that are used only once and then left idle. Secondly, plans must be made to connect the core event area with the old city via rail transit to facilitate the flow of resources between the two areas. Furthermore, cultural symbols of the event, such as the city's spirit and local historical elements that reflect the city's characteristics, must be incorporated into urban renewal plans to ensure the continued delivery of cultural benefits. This will provide a clear path for the trickle-down effect[4].

5.2. Resource Integration: Promoting Balanced Allocation and Diversified Transformation

The key is to break the "clustering" problem of resources being concentrated in the core area, and to allow resources to flow evenly between different regions and different fields. At the regional level, a "special fund for event-driven renewal" can be set up to direct funds and technology to old urban areas and suburbs where renewal is urgently needed, and support them in infrastructure renovation; at the field level, the use of resources should be expanded - by leveraging the brand reputation created by the event, sports technology companies can be attracted to settle down, and the flow of people brought by the event can be converted into a source of customers for urban cultural consumption, such as guiding tourists to experience local cultural projects. At the same time, a resource-sharing platform should be established to allow the government, enterprises, and social organizations to participate, promote the mutual allocation of resources between the core area and surrounding areas, and maximize the effectiveness of resources.

5.3. Collaborative Governance: Improving Multi-Agent Participation Mechanisms

First, the roles of the government, businesses, social organizations, and citizens must be clarified, and then a collaborative mechanism must be established. The government should shift from its previous role as a "leader" to a "coordinator," primarily responsible for policymaking, oversight, and public services, while minimizing interference in market dynamics. Businesses can leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs) and franchises to participate in event operations, post-event venue management, and related industry investment, earning reasonable returns. Social organizations should be responsible for gathering citizen needs, organizing volunteer services, and overseeing project progress. Citizens can participate in planning and project evaluation through hearings and community councils to ensure that renewal projects meet their needs. Finally, mechanisms such as joint meetings and benefit-sharing should be used to resolve conflicts and foster a synergistic force that promotes a trickle-down effect.

5.4. Dynamic Evaluation: Build a full-cycle, multi-dimensional system

We must not simply focus on short-term economic gains during the event; we must establish a long-term evaluation mechanism. The evaluation cycle should extend from the event itself to 3-5 years afterward, examining the long-term impact of the event's benefits on urban renewal. The evaluation should encompass indicators across four dimensions: infrastructure, industry, space, and culture[5]. Third-party organizations and citizen representatives should also participate in the evaluation to ensure objective and impartial results. Strategies should then be regularly adjusted based on evaluation feedback to prevent the trickle-down effect from deviating from the intended direction.

6. MECHANISMS TO ENSURE THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT OF SPORTS EVENTS IN URBAN RENEWAL

To ensure the implementation of the trickle-down effect of sports events in promoting urban renewal, four key mechanisms must be established to prevent it from becoming a formality.

6.1. Policy Guarantee: Strengthening the Institutional Foundation

The "Guiding Opinions on the Coordinated Development of Sports Events and Urban Renewal" will be issued to clarify the goals, principles, and departmental responsibilities of the collaboration. Special support policies will be formulated, including tax incentives for post-event venue operators, subsidies for old urban area event renovation projects, and streamlined approval processes for multi-stakeholder collaborative projects. Furthermore, a cross-departmental policy coordination mechanism will be established to coordinate policies across sports, planning, development and reform, and culture and tourism departments to avoid conflicts that hinder progress[6].

6.2. Funding Guarantee: Broaden Supply Channels

Transcend the single-source government investment model and expand three funding sources: attract private capital to participate in event facility construction and post-event operations through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and industrial investment funds; apply for support from the National Sports Industry Development Fund and the Urban Renewal Special Fund; and leverage existing assets through market-based operations such as venue naming rights and advertising rights to supplement renewal funds. Simultaneously, establish a fund oversight system to ensure that funds are prioritized in key areas of renewal, such as urban renewal and industrial development, to prevent waste.

6.3. Talent Guarantee: Cultivate Professional Capacity

Focus on cultivating interdisciplinary talent in the "sports events + urban renewal" sector, supporting universities in establishing relevant interdisciplinary programs for targeted training; attract high-end talent in event planning, urban renewal design, and other fields through talent introduction programs; establish a talent evaluation and reward mechanism, awarding professional title promotions and financial rewards to those with outstanding contributions, and encourage the flow of talent to the front lines of renewal. Furthermore, conduct specialized training to enhance the collaborative awareness and practical skills of government officials and business managers.

6.4. Ensuring Public Participation: Building Social Consensus

Civilian participation channels will be streamlined. During the planning phase, plans will be publicized and opinions will be collected through an online public disclosure and offline hearing system. During the implementation phase, citizens will be encouraged to participate in volunteer services and project oversight to strengthen their sense of ownership. During the evaluation phase, citizen representatives will be invited to participate to ensure that the results meet people's livelihood needs. Furthermore, through community outreach and media coverage, the value of events and renewal will be promoted, increasing citizen participation and fostering social synergy for a trickle-down effect[7].

7. CONCLUSION

This paper uses a literature review method to systematically explore the trickle-down effect of sports events in promoting urban renewal and the paths to its realization. The core conclusions are as follows: First, sports events and urban renewal share a triple interconnected logic of "demand adaptation,

benefit feedback, and value synergy," which underpins the trickle-down effect. This effect manifests itself through gradual penetration across four dimensions: infrastructure, industrial structure, spatial function, and cultural identity. It is characterized by gradual, interconnected, and inclusive nature, rather than a short-term, "comprehensive" approach. Second, the current trickle-down effect faces four major constraints: insufficient planning foresight, unbalanced resource allocation, a lack of coordinated action among stakeholders, and a missing evaluation mechanism. These constraints hinder the benefits of events from reaching core sectors, creating a dilemma of "significant short-term benefits but insufficient long-term penetration," hindering the transformation of event value into urban renewal. Third, by constructing an implementation path of "planning guidance - resource integration - collaborative governance - dynamic evaluation," coupled with a supportive mechanism of policies, funding, talent, and public participation, these constraints can be effectively overcome, promoting the systematic penetration of event benefits into all areas of urban renewal, and achieving a transformation from "event-driven" to "renewal-enabled."

Theoretically, this article clarifies the interaction between events and urban renewal, transcending the limitations of existing research that focuses on the short term over the long term and single-source over systemic approaches, enriching research at the intersection of sports and urban development. Practically, the proposed path and mechanism are operational, guiding cities to avoid "one-time investments" during event planning and achieving sustained benefits post-event. This study has limitations: It relies solely on literature for theoretical discussion and lacks empirical analysis of urban practices, leaving the conclusions untested for practical applicability. It also fails to consider the differences among cities of different sizes and types, making it insufficiently targeted. Future work could examine the trickle-down effect and path effectiveness through case studies of multiple city types, conducting comparative studies of regional differences to inform precise strategies. Furthermore, the role of digital technologies, such as smart venues and big data assessments, in enhancing the efficiency of the trickle-down effect could be explored, supplementing the theoretical framework with practical support.

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