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Olympic Games Promotion Strategy of Country Image for Greece and China

It is well known that since their dawn, the modern Olympic Games have attracted the interest of the media and the worldwide public. Gradually, the Olympic Games emerged as an emblematic cultural event of modernity, which everyone wants to attend. This applies for the organizing city / country that expects to promote its international image, to increase its visibility and exploit the event in the most profitable manner. It also holds true for the sponsors, the various media enterprises, the athletes and sports agents and finally the spectators. The consumption culture, the exaggerating quantifications, the superficial multicultural pluralism, as well as the aura of the international visibility constitute the decisive ideological characteristics for the development of the Olympic Games concept and the framework in which citizens-spectators habituate in their enjoyment, consumption and evaluation of the Games.

This ideological framework defines the way the Organizing Committees decide on the national characteristics, the technological and cultural achievements based on which they will promote themselves and their nation. Each new organization stands under increasing antagonistic pressure to adopt the most advanced ICT devices and athletic equipment and to offer the best infrastructure, because these are basic elements that contribute to the creation of the new city / country image. After the Games the interest for the exploitation of the subsisting infrastructure and the new nation / city image deriving from the organization of the OG –the so called Olympic legacy- does not only concern the organizers but it becomes an issue for global debate and a factor for evaluating the overall success of the endeavor. Needless to say, that the possibility of international promotion and national image improvement at a global level are very important incentives for taking part to the bidding procedure.

In the two last organizations of the Olympic Games in Athens / Greece in 2004 and in Beijing / China in 2008 both countries, for different reasons, wanted to improve their existing international image and to increase the visibility of various national features. In both cases the long-lasting cultural heritage and various cultural achievements, a contribution to the world's civilization, were employed as the main frame of reference. However, the priorities under which the promotion campaigning was organized for each city during pre-Games and Games-time period differed not only regarding the size of the attempt but also concerning the communicational priorities and promotion strategy that was opted for.

This paper aims to present the communication strategies of the two countries and to compare and comment the outcome regarding the efforts to improve the national image of each country.

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