



**POLITECNICO
DI TORINO**

Honors thesis

Course of Master Program in Architecture
Construction and City

Abstract

Torino 2006 - Beijing 2022
Can the Olympic event be an opportunity?

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The Olympic Games are international sporting “great events”. Although they have origins in ancient times, only in the 1990s scholars started to investigate about their evolution. Their influence has been recognized not just as territorial but also as social, cultural and political.

The scale of the urban investments that is required to stage the Olympic Games has increased along with the growth of number of sports and athletes, global media interest, level of commercial sponsorship (Chalkley, Essex 2003). Since 1960, the Games have started to include also large-scale urban and then regional transformations.

In order to investigate how the Winter Olympic Games potentially influence, affect, foster the development of a hosting city and territory, the thesis provides the analysis and comparison of two case studies. The first taken into consideration is Torino 2006, the second is Beijing 2022. The aim of the thesis is to analyse both positive and negative aspects of Torino as well as promises and expectations of Beijing. Suggestions are provided from Torino's experience in favour of China's future host, despite political, economic, urban, cultural and social differences between the two countries.

The historical and urban context, within which the two cities were selected, helps to understand the reasons of the Olympic candidacy. In both cases the event was conceived as an accelerator of territorial processes that extends on an wide "Olympic Region" comprehending an urban and a mountain area. Torino needed to: renovate the "one company town" image, boost territorial cooperation and international promotion. Beijing, selected as Host City in 2015, aims to overcome pollution, traffic congestion, overcrowded population and low urban quality problems. The event has been included in the National Strategy of "Integrated and Coordinated Development of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province" approved by Xi Jinping. The approach is expected to foster a more even distribution of resources, environmental quality improvements and winter sport activities promotion.

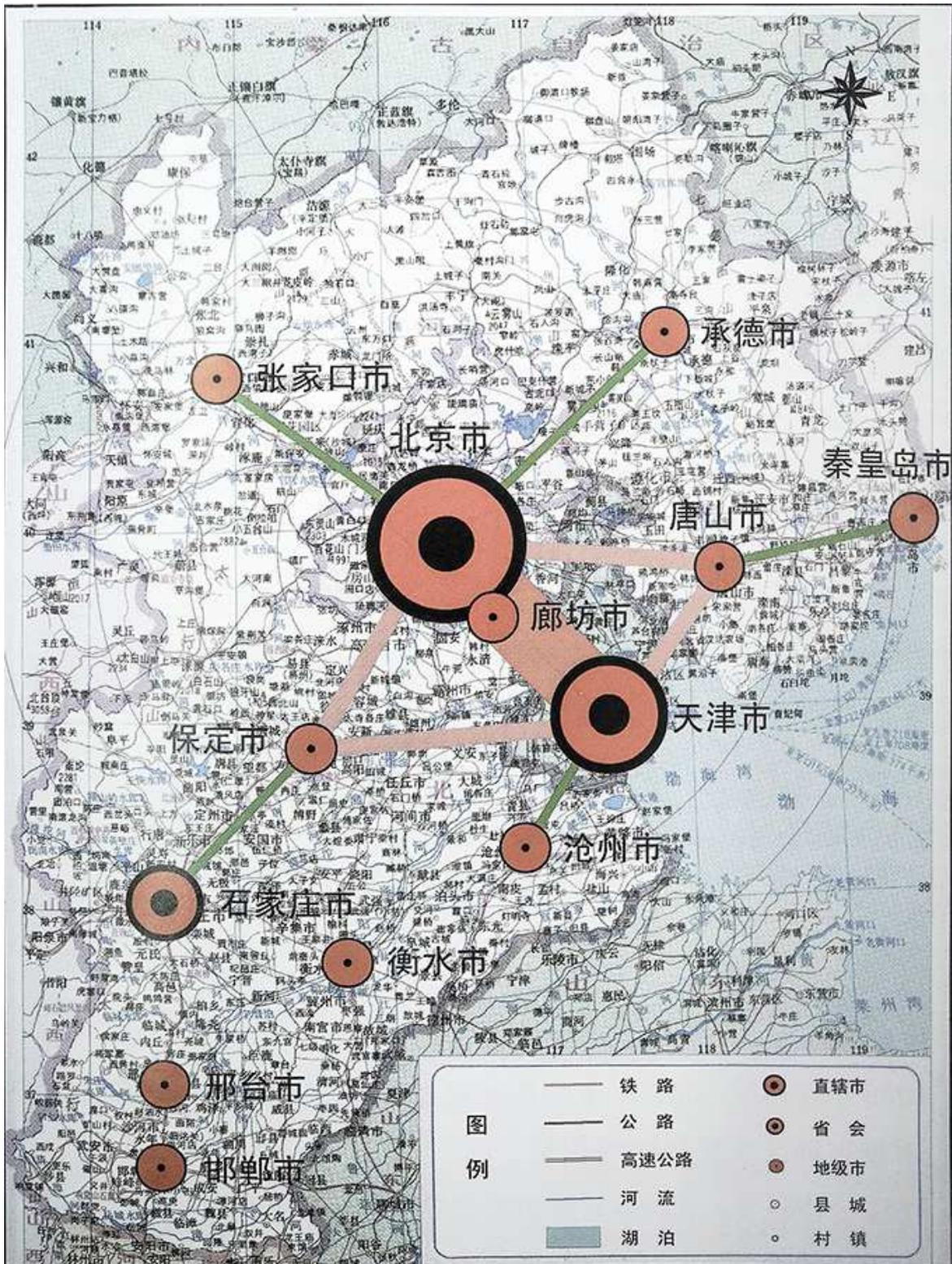
A comparison of the candidacy dossiers is presented in order to identify expectations and promises of the two cities. An analytical evaluation is followed by a critical examination that outlines weaknesses and strengths, realistic and idealistic features.

Ten years after the event, it is possible to compare Torino's material and immaterial legacy, with the initial prospects. The former is linked to the Olympic facilities, the latter to a wide range of factors examined on different spatial scales of influence. This was possible thanks to direct interviews with Piedmont Region's stakeholders and Olympics' managers. The event has left a clear disparity: Torino and the Olympic mountain venues have reached great international touristic and cultural promotion, on the other hand, the urban and the mountain territory have remained disconnected and managed through uncoordinated policies. R. Bontempi's dream of a new synergic development of "Torino and the Alps" is still nowadays unfulfilled.

In China, the Olympic event is expected to accelerate the evolution of "Jing-Jin-Ji", the great region that is outlined to comprehend Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei province. It is planned to become the third main economic Chinese area and support more even development of the territory through urban functions redistribution and new advance infrastructures construction.

Since the selection in July 2015, the Olympic dream of Beijing 2022 is coming to reality and procedures have started. The thesis provides the description of the initial collaboration between professors of Tsinghua University of Beijing and local political institutions of Chongli (a town 200 km away from Beijing) towards the development of the Olympic mountain areas. This was possible thanks to the visit of the future Olympic areas and meeting with local stakeholders and experts who are in charge of the Olympic urban planning process.

In conclusion the thesis aims to deduce indications and recommendations from the experience of Torino in favour of Beijing. It stresses the past mistakes and outlines a potential "exchange of know-how" for a more sustainable organization and management of the future Olympic Games.

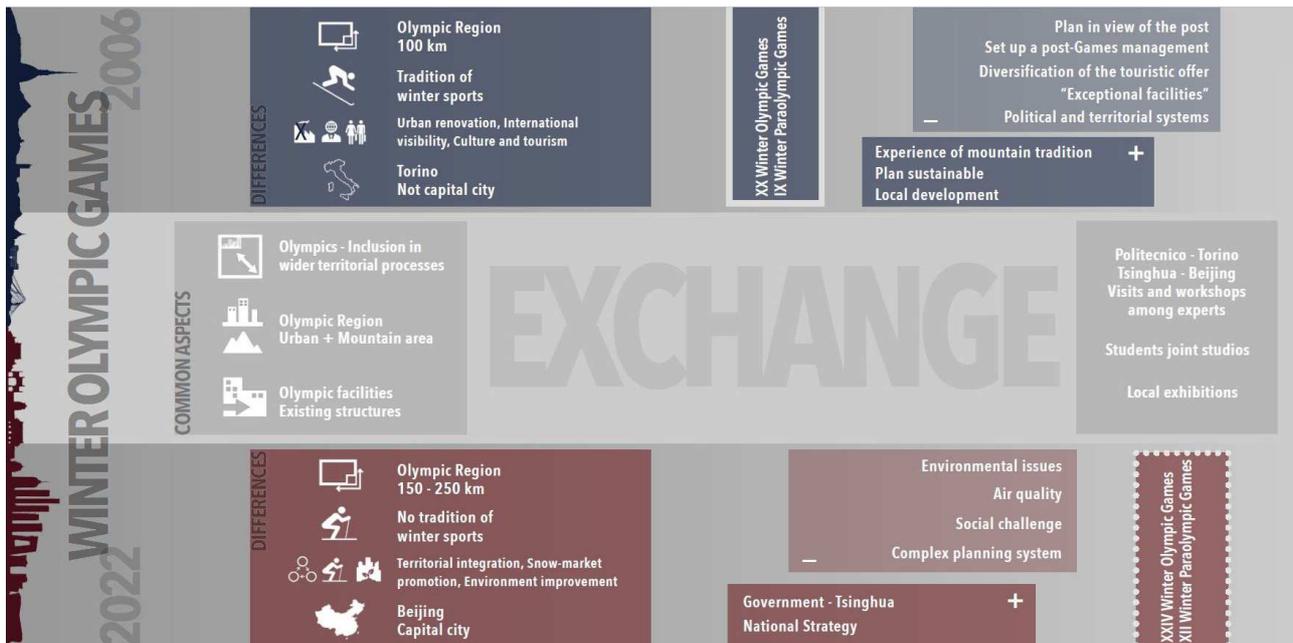


Study Map of "Greater Beijing". Source: L. Wu, *Research on the rural and urban spatial development planning for the greater Beijing Region*, Tsinghua University Press, Beijing 2002.

It represents the plan of territorial coordination among Beijing, on the axis with Tianjin, and the other main urban centres of Hebei province. The Olympic event is planned to foster the provincial reorganization and development.



Picture of Taizicheng farmers' village (Chongli, China) taken by the undersigned. The existing one-floor buildings will be dismantled in favour of the construction of one of the future Olympic Villages of Beijing 2022.



The scheme sums up the common aspects of the two cities and the differences in terms of territorial extension, sport tradition, objectives of the Olympic candidacy. It compares Torino's legacy and the promises and the expectations of Beijing 2022. In conclusion it suggests potential practical activities for a know-how exchange.

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