# 17  Sport matters

Urban regime theory and urban
regeneration in the late-capitalist
era

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Sports! … With their galvanizing effect on the human spirit, sports offered an
attractive way to draw people's attention and enlist their cooperation in a partner-
ship across the lines that so easily divide them … Sports could motivate people to
rally round. They have an energizing effect that other causes – such as building a
steel mill or making us the insurance capital of the country or improving city
housing – just do not posses.

<div align="right">(William H. Hudnut III, Mayor of Indianapolis 1976–1991,<br>cited in Hudnut, 1995, p. 97)</div>

I will return to Mayor Hudnut's comments at the conclusion of this chapter. Whether
or not one embraces the romanticised view of this former Indianapolis Mayor, it is
difficult to ignore the notion that sport matters. From Manchester to Melbourne
and Calgary to Cleveland, civic leaders tell us that sport is good for the city-as-a-
whole. So while the research examples presented in this chapter are embedded
within the US context, the themes will be relevant to a number of urban contexts.
Like John Crompton, C. Michael Hall and others in this volume, I will seek in this
chapter to present a critical view of sport in the city.

At the outset, I would like to make the following assertions. First, there is no
city-as-a-whole that benefits uniformly from sport-related economic initiatives.
Urban development strategies produce winner and loser social groups. The fact
that urban policy connected to sport 'motivates people to rally round' (in Mayor
Hudnut's words) is cause for concern, not celebration. Second, our analyses of
sport events, or stadium development impact, or sport as 'wise investment', must
include an examination of the broader urban context in which sport is located. In
other words, while micro-analyses might be useful in separating economic myth
from reality; they are usually studies of projects, not the urban policies that
legitimate them. Policies are not made by 'cities', they are made by people who
have various material interests in and differing understandings of the decisions
that are made (Stone, 1987). In addition to the fact that sport matters, is the fact
that politics matters.

## Investing in sport in the US: stadium boom, or boondoggle?

In the US context, privately owned professional sport franchises receive huge public subsidies. Within the last two decades, public investment in professional sport has escalated mostly in the provision of supplying tax-supported stadiums to team owners. It is fair to say that currently the US is undergoing a stadium boom – publicly funded stadium construction has recently been completed or is underway in Baltimore, Jacksonville, Nashville, St. Louis, Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. The events that have taken place in the two Ohio cities of Cleveland and Cincinnati illustrate the extent to which the American public is literally 'buying into' professional sport and the stadiums that house them.

Located on the banks of Lake Erie, Cleveland, Ohio's second largest city has for years been the target of taunts from outsiders. Known to most of the US only as 'The Mistake on the Lake', its image problems are rooted in its rustbelt past. In the mid-1980s city officials and private entrepreneurs collaborated to construct a strategy for economic and civic image enhancement. Included on the agenda were a new $180 million baseball stadium (Jacobs Field) and $150 million basketball arena (Gund Arena) – collectively called Gateway Complex – and a planned $175 million football stadium renovation. The baseball franchise's participation in the 1995 World Series provided a national stage for both civic leaders and local sports fans to display the city's new 'successes'. Sending a retort to the national television audience, a handmade banner flew from the upper deck of Jacobs Field during game three of the Series that read: 'NOW do you believe in Cleveland?"

Whatever national envy existed during the October Series certainly came to an end in November when professional football franchise owner Art Modell announced plans to relocate his Cleveland Browns to Baltimore. The conflicts and turmoil included in the months to follow threatened not only the 'comeback' image of the city, but also the very existence of the civic leadership group that constructed the economic development policy. Despite the fact that the Gateway project was on the verge of bankruptcy, 'officials' in Cleveland 'made a deal' with the National Football League requiring the city to construct a new lakefront stadium in order to 'save the Browns'. In Cleveland, construction has begun on a new $280 million, tax-supported football stadium. This, despite the fact that Gateway Complex is $20 million in debt, has an annual operating deficit of more than $1 million, and owes $600,000 in unpaid Cuyahoga County property taxes. In essence, Cuyahoga County voters approved a plan that equated the building of tax supported, deficit-ridden stadium construction with community development.

Located on the banks of the Ohio River, Cincinnati, Ohio's third largest city relishes its image as a 'major league' town and staunch defender of conservative family values. It is a city seemingly more at ease clinging to an idealised past than fashioning a strategy to meet the future. The professional baseball franchise – the first in the major leagues – has for decades enforced an edict forbidding its players to wear facial hair. In 1990, Cincinnati caught the nation's attention by suing its own Contemporary Arts Center for 'pandering obscenity' in hosting a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition. In the words of Mike McConnell, a midday-talk-show

host of the city's radio station: 'Cincinnati would be happy if the river changed course and made the place an island and it wouldn't be Cincinnati, Ohio. It'd be Cincinnati, Nowhere'.

However, in the early 1990s Cincinnati's inability (or unwillingness) to plan for the future reached a crisis-point. The downtown was in severe decline: major department stores were moving out, the 887-room Clarion Hotel was bankrupt, office vacancies were at 20 per cent, and the city's $50 million attempt to build a new skyscraper existed as nothing more than a parking lot. Further, owners of both professional sports franchises voiced growing concerns about the conditions of outdated Riverfront Stadium. In 1993, the President of the Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce broke with the city's isolationist tradition and led a contingent of business leaders to Cleveland – the butt of a generation of jokes – to see how that city had managed to 'transform itself'. In 1994, pro-growth leaders in Cincinnati launched a $20 million advertising campaign supporting an increase in the local sales tax to finance the construction of two downtown, state-of-the-art sports facilities. In 1995, Hamilton County voters approved the tax-supported, $544 million stadium construction plan – the largest in North American history.

Brookings Institute Economist, Roger Noll stated in 1974 that the history of stadium development in the United States has been written in red ink. Given the number and location of American cites that are currently developing or planning new stadiums, it is reasonable to predict at the time of writing that by the year 2000, not one major league sport franchise will have to share a facility with another tenant. Has anything changed in the 24 years since Noll's statement? Evidence, some of which will be presented in this volume, suggests not. Yet despite their weak economic justification, questionable grounds of social good, and dubious distribution of burdens and benefits among community residents, a stadium has come to symbolise civic health. Given this context, one might be compelled to ask: If stadium development is an urban solution; what must have been the problem? And who was empowered to define the 'problem' in the first place?

One of the more troubling peculiarities of the US urban context, says urban sociologist Harvey Molotch (1993), is the perception that overarching social problems should be handled at local levels and that 'more development' is the solution. The US urban scene is contoured by a doctrine of home rule that implies that cities and communities can best handle 'their own' problems, even though realistically they are only tangentially place-related. Local level politicians are expected to 'do something about' the cumulative effects of various broad-scale social ills (violent crime and structural unemployment for example) that manifest themselves in local areas. Coupled with this expectation, is the fact that locally elected officials are held accountable for problems (such as fiscal shortfalls and decaying infrastructure) that are authentically place-connected. The solution for many politicians is to 'do something' by manipulating the use and regulation of urban land, one of the few autonomous realms of local-level governance. The result is the ideological hegemony of pro-growth politics and the use of public subsidies for convention centres, urban shopping malls, retail anchors – and I would add (because Molotch does not mention) sports stadiums and arenas. In

many cities, these projects are trumpeted as 'successful' not because of any objective assessment about their benefits to local residents, asserts Molotch, but rather because of the symbolic power attached to the edifices themselves. What they point to is a 'something' that can be done, and their mere presence colours local perceptions and builds political careers. As Susan Zukin (1991) has demonstrated in her book *Landscapes of Power*, because these urban centres contain the types of glamorous landscapes – a concept she uses to embrace material practices as well as aesthetic forms – that now symbolises revival, they are read as urban triumph. Neither Molotch nor Zukin include specific analysis of sport in their work. This seems to me curious; especially given the fact that stadium development is steeped in political/symbolic power, requires more public money, more urban space, more infrastructural support, and can alter the urban landscape more than any other urban project.

In the 1970s and 1980s, nearly every professional sports franchise in the US demanded a new stadium and other benefits. Threats, either implicit or explicit, to relocate their teams to another community accompanied each demand. These types of tactics are not unique to the professional sports industry. 'Playing the field' – encouraging inter-city bidding wars – is a standard feature of US capitalist system. In a confrontation between a firm and a city, says Charles Euchner (1993), 'the city is like a boxer with his shoes nailed to the ground' (p. 167).

The quest for capital accumulation and the mobility of firms vis-à-vis cities and communities means that cities must compete with one another for capital investment. Firms are mobile, cities are not. Capital that promises investment and growth can also threaten disinvestment and decline. The tensions and conflicts caused by mobile capital has been a defining characteristic of urban politics in the late-capitalist era.

## Studying the urban context: the critical perspective

The critical urban studies paradigm emerged in the US in the 1970s as a challenge to mainstream urban social science. Readers of Marx, Weber, and more recent European sociologists Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Manuel Castells criticised the dominant perspective which was heavily influenced by the ideas of Herbert Spencer and was ultimately linked to Social Darwinism. Lefebvre's book *La révolution urbaine* (1970), Harvey's critical articles published in *Social Justice and the City* (1973), and Castells' book *The Urban Question* (1977) have been identified as landmarks in the incipient development of a paradigmatic alternative to traditional US urban sociology. Both Harvey and Castells moved to the United States from Europe in the 1970s and continued to publish in the area of urban development, thereby stimulating other scholars who joined them in producing new urban work (Feagin, 1988).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, critical urban scholarship flourished in the US as investigators influenced by the work of Lefebvre, Harvey, and Castells began to develop a new perspective of the urban condition. Emphasised in this new perspective was the importance of analysing particular features of capitalism

in any assessment of urban life. The dynamics of urban structures and space were seen to be contoured by state involvement in capital investment patterns, class conflict, and unequal resource distribution (Feagin, 1988). Michael Peter Smith's book *The City and Social Theory* (1979), for example, critiques mainstream urban sociology by providing an analysis of an activist state and corporate capital in shaping urban form. Urban planning is a 'value-laden' activity, says Smith, and urban planners serve a political function which is to 'cloak the major private bene-ficiaries of land-use and investment decisions that have shaped contemporary American society, justifying profit seeking behaviour as beneficial to the larger public interest' (p. 253). Through a case study of Houston's economic development policies, Smith provides evidence that the state 'contributed directly to the tragedy of desperate poverty amidst opulence' (p. 248). Subsequent critical scholarship focused on the capitalist state has resulted in a variety of theoretical approaches to the analysis of the state's role in urban development.

In the mid-1980s, David Harvey and Manuel Castells were again at the forefront of critical urban analysis. Both published ground breaking books that sought to place urban political phenomena within the context of the universal tendencies of contemporary capitalism. For example, the problematic explored in Harvey's books *The Urbanization of Capital* (1985) and *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (1985) is, 'Can we derive a theoretical and historical understanding of the urban process under capitalism out of a study of the supposed laws of motion of a capit-alist mode of production?' (Feagin, 1988, p. 22). For Harvey, the answer is yes. Similarly, Castell's book, *The City and the Grassroots* (1983), generalises to a capitalist system in searching across cultures and through history for the common-alty of urban social movements. In five lengthy case studies, Castells' concern is to demonstrate that urban social movements are 'collective actions aimed at the transformation of the social interests and values embedded in the forms and functions of the historically given city' (Castells, 1983, p. xvi). Throughout the 1980s many leftist scholars in the US including Stephen Elkin, Susan and Norman Fainstein, Joe R. Feagin, Mark Gottdiener, Richard Child Hill, Clarence Stone, and Alan Whitt among others, continued to contribute to a growing body of critical urban literature that included sophisticated theoretical discourse and empirical case study research.

As this body of knowledge grew, so too did the diversity of the specific perspec-tives taken by adherents to the broader critical urban paradigm. Because of the fecundity of Marxist thought and the variety of its interpretations, a number of different approaches to urban analysis developed. Paradigmatic refinement has lead to wide variation over the relative weight of the economy, the social production of space, the significance of political processes, and the role of the state in urban development.

Throughout the 1990s critical urban studies scholars have continued the challenging task of disentangling political aspects from urban processes. According to Molotch (1993) the single most useful concept in this endeavour is the 'growth machine'. Whether labelled as 'growth machines' (Logan and Molotch, 1987; Molotch, 1986), 'growth coalitions" (Mollenkopf, 1983; Swanstrom, 1985),

'governing coalitions' (Stone, 1987), or 'urban regimes' (Elkin, 1985; Fainstein and Fainstein, 1983), the basic premise is the same: local level urban policy is produced through the proximate actions of interested actors. I will refer to these groups as 'urban regimes' – they are interest groups with common stakes in urban development who use their political and cultural resources to intensify land use for profit. This perspective on urban inquiry emphasises the diverse politics of local situations and recognises that urban regimes not only develop different agendas, but they also have differing abilities to implement them (Horan, 1991). Clarence Stone (1987), whose case study of Atlanta was seminal in the construction of the regime paradigm, points to three factors the shape the specifics of local urban growth:

- the composition of the community's coalition for growth;
- the relationships among the members; and
- the resources available to the coalition.

However, the interconnections between development policy and political arrangements remain under explored territory. Urban studies researchers in the 1990s, say the regime theorists, must intensify their efforts to more fully understand the ways in which political actors shape urban areas. Given this scenario, I suggest that the time is right for sport studies researchers to begin a broad-based agenda that explores the ways in which the sport industry is being used by local growth regimes in their plans for urban development and regeneration. As we have seen, sport facility construction is implicated in numerous cities' attempts to redevelop their cores and stimulate local economies. An important aspect of this research agenda should be to focus on who constructs and supports these policies and what the material consequences of these plans are – for example the effects of local shifts in employment opportunities and the isolation of certain segments of the population from 'important' (i.e. the new city centre) parts of the city. This focus may be especially fruitful now given the current state urban distress and the current stadium boom. More and more cities are building sport facilities that require larger capital investments, more urban space, more skilled political manoeuvrings, are supported by more growth advocates, and garner more media attention than any other time in urban history. Is it possible that these policies also bear deeper distinctions between burdens and benefits among local populations? We await systematic investigations, but even brief excursions into these issues can be revealing.

With this in mind, I will highlight aspects of a larger case study I completed on the City of Indianapolis, Indiana – a city that has been called the 'Cinderella of the Rustbelt' by urban growth advocates. It is the site of one of the most intensive and successful growth coalitions in the US. Parts of this research are reported elsewhere (see Schimmel, 1995). Data for this project included formal interviews with Indianapolis civic leaders, public and private memos, media reports, local government policy statements, and census and employment data (see reference list).

## Indianapolis: a showcase for growth

Indianapolis is a mid-western US city that, like many others, was facing in the mid-1970s a complex set of social and economic challenges. Prior to its new growth strategy, the backbone of the local economy was heavy manufacturing. Especially prominent were factories connected to the automobile industry. This made the city vulnerable to capital disinvestment and firm mobility spurred by national economic downturns and foreign competition. In order to regenerate 'Naptown' civic leaders argued, it would be necessary to build and promote a new image of the city. The problem, according to local leaders, was not that the city had a bad image, but rather that the city had no image at all. Local growth advocates decided to attempt to transform Indianapolis from a sleepy mid-western town into a white-collar tourist and corporate headquarters centre and to target the nation's expanding service sector economy in an attempt to redevelop the city's downtown. Perhaps realising the city's aesthetic limitations, public officials and local entrepreneurs collaborated to use sport as a foundation on which to build an amenity infrastructure. Leveraging the sport industry as a tool with which to build a national image and buttress large-scale brick-and-mortar projects, from 1974 to 1984 a total of $1.8 billion in public and private resources was invested in inner-city construction. The 'sports strategy' would, argued growth advocates, bring national reputation, capital investments, and jobs. In many ways, Indianapolis may be viewed as a counterpart to Sheffield in the UK. In fact it has been widely reported that Sheffield city leaders used Indianapolis as a model for designing and implementing a strategy for growth anchored by sport.

Although lacking in 'natural' attractions, Indianapolis is not without geographical assets. First, it is located near the geographical centre of the nation and quickly accessible from both coasts. Second, five US highways and four interstate highways converge on the city, making it within one day's drive for 60 per cent of the US population. Millions of potential tourist either drove through (or flew over) the city annually. Third, because it has no natural boundaries such as mountains, coastlines or large neighbouring cities Indianapolis has plenty of room for development. For example, the downtown area covers seven square miles and the central county (Marion) in the statistical metropolitan area covers about four hundred square miles. With these factors in mind, regeneration efforts were aimed at enticing private capital and luring large conventions and affluent tourists and residents to the downtown area. City leaders entered the 1980s with a determination to put their city 'on the map'.

Completion of this goal would be no small feat. In the 1980s the core of the city was dirty and filled with vacant dilapidated buildings. Businesses and residents were fleeing from the central business district. When city officials reviewed development patterns they discovered an almost total mismatch between areas targeted for development and areas where development was occurring. According to the city's 1980 growth policy review, residents were moving away from places where capital investments in schools, thoroughfare and shopping existed. In areas where services, facilities, jobs, and tax bases were limited, the resident population was

increasing. This lead the city's Department of Metropolitan Development to state: 'The result is the underutilization of developed areas of the county leading to abandonment, isolation of low-income groups, and a reduced tax base'. Reflecting on this time, the Director of the Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development in the early 1980s recounted to the *Indianapolis News* (November 13, 1989):

> We had nothing downtown, If our goal was to create a city nobody wanted to live in, we'd done it. I just make the comment that the mayor would mortgage his mother-in-law to get jobs in downtown Indianapolis. We couldn't get anything down there (p. A7).

The Director's comments are reflective of city leaders concerns about the 'empty' downtown. However, overlooked is the fact that people did live there. In fact, in 1980, 208,624 residents lived in the city's centre most township (aptly named Center Township). The community know as Midtown was a vibrant centre for African-American residents. The Midtown Jazz festival, held each summer, was one of the city's largest cultural attractions. However, not only were these residents overlooked in discourse about the emptiness of the downtown, this sub-community's needs were seemingly not counted among the problems that the 'city-as-a-whole' faced and that growth strategy aimed to solve. I suggest this is a result of the composition of the urban regime that constructed the agenda for Indianapolis' regeneration.

### The composition of the growth regime

With respect to planning and implementation of Indianapolis' growth agenda, the influence of the Eli Lilly Company cannot be over emphasised. In August 1972, Indianapolis Mayor Jim Lugar met with Eli Lilly (at Lilly's invitation) to discuss the city's future. Lilly, who was 87 at the time, was the son of J.K. Lilly, Sr, co-founder of Eli Lilly & Company, one of the largest pharmaceutical concerns in the world. The company was founded in 1876 in Indianapolis (where it remains). Eli Lilly, his father, and his brother (J.K. Lilly, Jr) established a private family endowment in 1937. According to James H. Madison, an Indiana University historian who wrote Eli Lilly's biography:

> The Lilly brothers knew their father was not going to live forever, and they knew that upon his death, they would pay large inheritance taxes. Putting stock in the foundation was a way for many families to keep outsiders from controlling the business.
>
> (Quoted in *Indianapolis News*, November 13, 1989, p. A7)

The Lilly Endowment, Inc. was founded with $280,000 worth of stock, and by the early 1970s would contain assets of $1.2 billion, making it the second largest (behind the Ford Foundation) charitable foundation in the United States (Nielsen,

1985). Eli Lilly was still president of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. in 1972 when he met with Mayor Lugar.

The Lilly family had always been active in philanthropy, making frequent and generous contributions to Indianapolis charities. However, the Tax Reform Act of 1969 requiring that foundations pay out at least 5 per cent of their assets meant that the Lilly Endowment, Inc. would have to begin making much larger contributions (up to $50 million per year). Lilly family donors believed strongly that the endowment should focus on Indianapolis and Indiana. Recalling his meeting with Lilly, Lugar told the *Indianapolis News*: 'He told me that he was prepared to recommend a sizeable benefaction to the city of Indianapolis and looked forward to my counsel on what it might be' (November 13, 1989, A1). Lugar suggested the restoration of the city market to which the endowment eventually donated $5 million. According to the *Indianapolis News*, Lugar and Lilly did not meet again after this first meeting. However, in 1973, Jim Morris, who had been Mayor Lugar's top aide since 1967, left Lugar's administration to become an officer in the endowment's community development division.

In 1977 Thomas H. Lake, former president of Eli Lilly & Co., was named president and chairman of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Although the two organisations are legally separate, there have always been close connections between them. For example, the company's chairman has always been on the endowment's board of directors. Over the years former company employees, like Lake, have joined the endowment. According to Waldmar Nielsen (1985), a member of the endowment's board once questioned former Eli Lilly & Co. CEO Eugene Beesley about the propriety of exchanging members back and forth between the company and the foundation. Beesley is reported to have replied, 'I know its questionable and can't last but we will keep on doing it as long as it is legal' (p. 289). During his years with the company Lake's known enthusiasm for sports balanced his reputation as a staunch buttoned-down executive.

At the same time as Lake assumed his new position with the endowment, Mayor Lugar's former aide, Jim Morris, was promoted to vice president with increased responsibility for community development projects. Morris had witnessed the political machinations of urban development from the inside and had forged important corporate community connections through his experiences with the eminently skilled Lugar. Morris, too, had earned a reputation as quite a sports enthusiast. Through his travels with Lugar, he had the occasion to see the role that sports played in other cities. Morris would continue to rise in the ranks at the foundation, eventually becoming president in 1984, replacing Lake who became chair. Jim Morris would become the single most influential member of the city's growth coalition.

In the late 1970s board members of the Eli Lilly & Co. had become increasingly concerned over the condition of Indianapolis. As one of the city's largest employers (7,442 in 1989) and a Fortune 500 company, Eli Lilly & Company's interests in the community were quite keen. As expressed by Harris Ulman, runner-up in the 1984 Indiana gubernatorial election, and publisher and editor of the *Indiana Letter*:

There was a concern by the Lilly company about the quality of life and the ability to attract people to Indianapolis. Executives, scientists, technicians, are highly mobile and can go anywhere.

(Personal communication, September 24, 1992)

Ulman's comments appear accurate. The Fantus Study, commissioned by the Chamber of Commerce in 1972 with a Lilly Endowment, Inc. grant, read in part:

Living conditions are a factor of increasing importance in corporate location decisions … A company located in a community offering superior living conditions enjoys a significant advantage in recruiting and retaining executive talent … Executives may refuse to transfer to a location where it is likely that their standard of living or style of life will undergo a change for the worse.

Apparently, Lilly's interest in the Fantus study's conclusions was well known among civic insiders. Sidney Weedman offered the following details:

Eli Lilly Company was recruiting some of the best minds to work for them and there was a high number of them that said 'no' … in the exiting they would ask them why [the recruits] turned them down … the city did not have the quality of life these people were looking for. So Lilly had a vested interest in the city having a quality of life, altruism aside … The company and the endowment are two separate entities but there are conversations I'm sure. The endowment was on a mission to revitalise downtown.

(Personal communication, October 20, 1992)

Weedman served as director of a small group of corporate élites whose organisation became a tool through which the endowment channelled capital resources.

Being well-versed in the style of Indianapolis politics, Morris met informally with public officials and corporate élites who would be likely to have an interest in and who could be of assistance in planning and implementing a strategy designed to enhance the city's 'quality of life' for middle- and upper-class populations. According to the *Indianapolis News*, one important meeting occurred in the late 1970s. Morris and Robert Kennedy, director of the Department of Metropolitan Development, met privately to discuss the city's direction. During the meeting, Morris handed Kennedy a one-page list of 'big ticket' projects that Morris said the endowment would consider funding. He offered Kennedy the advice to 'think bigger' on projects than the city had in the past. Morris told the *Indianapolis News* that he did not recall handing anybody a list of projects, but he recalled talking to a number of people about ideas. According to Kennedy, the list provided,

the scope and breadth of things they [the endowment] would like to see happen in the town. It shed a whole new light on how you think about the possibility of getting some things done. Things that you never thought possible before. All of a sudden … you think 'My God, we can really get some things done'.

(Quoted in *Indianapolis News*, November 13, 1989, p. A8)

With the realisation that the Endowment's considerable financial resources were available to 'get things done', discussions concerning a growth strategy became more enlivened and more frequent. Representatives from the Greater Indianapolis Progress Commission, the Corporate Community Council, the Mayor's office the Department of Metropolitan Development and the Lilly Endowment, Inc. met formally and informally throughout the 1980s to devise and implement the city's agenda for development. In addition to these institutional groups, an informal but exclusive group of young executives began meeting regularly with Jim Morris to discuss the way in which downtown revitalisation and economic development should proceed. The group, active throughout the 1980s, called themselves the 'city committee'.

Whereas the city committee represented the young establishment, the Corporate Community Council (CCC) was the group with the real power. When a recommendation for a project was developed, 'if the Mayor liked it and Lilly liked it, the business community would get involved' (T. Binford, personal communication, October 8, 1992). As explained in the *Wall Street Journal*, CCC was composed at 'the chief decision-makers' of the largest firms in Indianapolis and was founded to place corporate resources behind 'selected projects' (July 14, 1982, p. A1).

Though in large part it was comprised of second-tier executives, the most powerful local corporations were represented on the city committee. Not surprisingly, that included local banks, insurance companies, law and architectural firms, and Eli Lilly & Co. Also represented were the mayor's office, the Department of Metropolitan Development, and the state legislature. No members of the locally elected 29-seat city-county council were ever extended invitations to the exclusive club. Democratic state representative, William A. Crawford was the committee's only African-American member. Crawford told the *Indianapolis News* that his inclusion on the committee put him in the position of making sure issues important to African-Americans 'hit the table'. Nevertheless, the urban development strategies that were devised for Indianapolis, in part by the city committee, evidence clear class and race bias. The ways in which the 'city's problems' were defined and the solutions aimed at solving them were shaped by the interests represented in the coalition. Improving the 'quality of life' in the downtown was clearly seen by the coalition to be of great concern. The question begged is, improvement for whom? In reference to the city committee, Louis J. Mahern, Jr, Democratic state representative and early city committee member said:

> These were by and large white middle-class males who view the world a bit differently. If you say, 'What are the problems in downtown Indianapolis?' inadequate housing might not be the first thing that occurs to them. The need to ensure that we have good public schools might not be the first thing that occurs to them, because their kids may be at Park Tudor or they're at North Central or they're at Carmel [suburban schools]….
> (*Indianapolis News*, November 14, 1989, p. A5)

The city committee existed, said many of its members, to 'dream' about what Indianapolis might become. The city resident identified as being the most visionary

was Jim Morris, of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Not insignificant is the fact that Jim Morris sat on the city committee. He was joined by the vice president of finance and chief financial officer (James M. Cornelius) and the Director of financial development (Ronald D. Henriksen) of Eli Lilly & Company. Referring to his activities with the city committee, Morris stated:

> One of the central themes of my work there was the importance of downtown. Indianapolis is a city of about 300 neighborhoods, but the downtown is one neighborhood that belongs to everybody.
>
> The idea of the endowment's involvement was to be supportive and helpful to *good* [emphasis added] ideas that would cause Indianapolis to become that special community.
>
> (*Indianapolis News*, November 13, 1989, p. A8)

Between 1978 and 1988, when the city committee was most active, the endowment spent $140 million on 'good' downtown construction project ideas. I would like to suggest that not only did these gifts hasten the implementation of development projects (e.g. constructing sport facilities), they also served as a 'foot-in-a-door' technique for legitimising these projects. In other words, large philanthropic gifts to (what is presented as) state-proposed development may help to construct consensus by implicitly suggesting that the projects are 'worthy' or will be good for the 'community-as-a-whole'. The public may therefore be more compelled to support such projects, especially when they feel they have the opportunity to obtain them at a discount price (i.e. minus the sum of the gift).

This does not mean, however, that the other members of the city committee or their corporate bosses determined the way the endowment spent its money. Thomas Lake (of Lilly Endowment, Inc.) expressed this point quite clearly:

> It may be that this was a group of people that communicated easily together and talked about things and it may be that, yes, we funded some of the things that came out of the ideas of the city committee. But as far as the city committee setting our agenda, no way.
>
> (*Indianapolis News*, November 14, 1989, p. A3)

In fact, more evidence suggests that the city committee was one vehicle by which the endowment implemented its agenda. Although local public relations campaigns were successful in attributing the city's growth strategy to Mayor Hudnut, growth coalition insiders say that it was Jim Morris who determined that sports should be used as an urban growth vehicle. His vision got fleshed out through the city committee and public (i.e. visible) organisations – some of which were born out of city committee meetings.

In his 1995, semi-autobiographical account of the 'Indianapolis story, ' former Mayor Hudnut underscored the importance of the Lilly Endowment:

> Supplying the glue that held it all together was the Lilly Endowment. Across the country, as I tell the Indianapolis story, people ask whether we could have

accomplished what we did without Lilly Endowment. I always say no. Indianapolis would not be what it is today without the tremendous support for these initiatives – and many others – from the endowment. Its generosity during the past 20 years has been a blessing (p. 98).

Critics of the Indianapolis story do not agree with Mayor Hudnut. One of those critics is Waldmar A. Neilsen, who in 1985 published *The Golden Donors,* an historical analysis of American philanthropy. In his analysis of the Lilly Endowment, Inc., he makes the following statement about the Lilly/sport strategy connection (specifically in reference to the funding of the Hoosier Dome):

> In the history of American philanthropy, there has never been a foundation expenditure of equivalent size given on weaker economic justification, more questionable grounds of social benefit, and more dubious distribution of benefits among local politicians, profit-seeking entrepreneurs, and the needier elements of the population (p. 295).

### Implementing a growth agenda

In 1980 a document (Regional Center Plan), prepared for the Department of Metropolitan Development by Hammer, Siler, George Associates outlined to the year 2000 the city's revitalisation objectives. The 300-page report focuses exclusively on the downtown.

> The image of the downtown area serves as constraint to some market groups. Crime is perceived to be a major problem, as is security of private personal property. Also, the predominance of lower income households in the central area creates an overall *image* [emphasis added] of poverty households living in substandard and overcrowded housing. Most downtown neighborhoods are not safe, pleasant, and attractive neighborhoods that most *new* [emphasis added] homeseekers would consider (p. 165).

This segment of the Regional Center Plan suggests that problems related to Indianapolis' downtown had to do with the perceptions that outsiders have of it, rather than the reality of life for its residents. According to Jim Morris, 'the sports strategy was a part of community development, of helping to build an infrastructure for a community' (*Indianapolis News*, 15 November, 1989, p. A12). This type of legitimating argument was not well received by large segments of the city's racial and ethnic minority populations. According to Sam Jones, president of Indianapolis' Urban League:

> Infrastructure for us means sewers, transportation … I'm not sure that we in the black and minority communities had very much input into the sports strategy …
>
> (Personal communication, 30 October, 1992)

Nevertheless, between 1974 and 1991 over $168.05 million (in 1991 dollars) was invested in downtown state-of-the-art sports facilities. Among the most expensive were: (a) a $21.5 million, 5,000-seat swimming and diving complex; (b) a $6 million, 20,000-seat track and field stadium; and (c) a $2.5 million, 5,000-seat velodrome. Funding for these projects was provided by public and private sources. The local state provided grants, tax abatements, and industrial revenue bonds. As illustrated in Table 17.1, the Lilly Endowment contributed $60.6 million to sport facilities.

Interestingly, the Hoosier Dome, the city's and Lilly's largest the largest investment (in terms of physical size and financial cost) was something of a Trojan Horse sports facility. David Carley, former Director of the Indianapolis Department of Metropolitan Development explained:

> You see we wanted to [build] a stadium and it met with resounding negativism everywhere. So, about that time we were looking to expand the Convention Center. So we said OK, we're going to expand the Convention Center, we're going to add 200,000 square feet of meeting space on, and oh, by the way, it's going to have this multi-purpose room attached, which has this inflatable ceiling, seats 60,000 – but the floor can be used for exhibits. And honest to God, we sat around the table at the Mayor's office and took a vow that we would never call it anything but the Convention Center Expansion.
>
> (Personal communication, 20 October, 1992)

The 'Convention Center Expansion' is a 60,300-seat structure and one of only six air-supported domed stadiums in the United States. It contains 99 luxury suites that each accommodate up to 16 guests and a projection screen with instant replay capabilities. Six weeks after Mayor Hudnut announced the philanthropic community's investment in the stadium, the Indiana legislature passed a bill authorising the city-county council to enact a 1 per cent food and liquor tax on all restaurants and taverns in Marion County to back revenue bonds. Announcement of the new tax prompted law suits from local citizens who opposed the stadium project. Their sentiments were likely expressed by Julia Carson, Center Township trustee:

> I had difficulty supporting a stadium [the Hoosier Dome] when our schools are woefully underfinanced and other city services are inadequate. The mayor and the Lilly Foundation wanted the stadium, so it was built. That's the way things get done here.
>
> (Personal communication, 14 September, 1992)

Not surprisingly, the Hoosier Dome was promoted by Mayor Hudnut as a wise investment for 'the community'. The growth ideology that justified such a conclusion was clearly articulated by him:

> In Indianapolis, we are trying to leverage amenity infrastructure for economic advantage. Our commitment to sports facilities, for example, is not an end in itself. The Hoosier Dome is a job generator. It creates new business

*Table 17.1* Cost breakdown of Indianapolis' sport facilities 1974–91

| Facility | Year of completion | Cost in millions/ Lilly contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Market Square Arena | 1974 | $23.5/6.0 |
| Tennis Complex | 1979 | $7.0/3.6 |
| Natatorium | 1982 | $21.5/10.7 |
| Track & Field Stadium | 1982 | $5.9/4.1 |
| Velodrome | 1982 | $2.5/0.72 |
| BMX Track | 1985 | $0.05/0 |
| Hoosier Dome | 1984 | $77.5/25 |
| National Institute for Fitness and Sport | 1988 | $12/6.0 |
| Soccer Complex | 1987 | $1.3/1.0 |
| Regatta Course at Eagle Creek | 1987 | $0.07/ |
| Archery Range at Eagle Creek | 1987 | $0.05/ |
| Renovation of Golf Courses at Eagle Creek | 1988 | $2.6/2.3 (combined for Eagle Creek Facilities) |
| World Skating Academy | 1987 | $7.0/na |
| Renovation of Sports Centre | 1988 | $1.0/0 |
| | 1990 | $2.0/0 |
| Little League Regional Headquarters | 1990–91 | $3.0/1.2 |
| **Total** | | **$168.5/60.6** |

opportunities. As a result of its construction, new convention business is coming to town, new restaurants and hotels are opening up, new national organiz-ations are moving to Indianapolis, and new people are interested in investing in our city.

(Hudnut, 1987, p. 22)

According to Hudnut and other civic boosters, the 'Indiana Convention Center and Hoosier Dome' (its official name at the time) symbolised the rebirth of downtown. Whether or not it and the other downtown amenities would serve as a magnet to 'new people' did not seem much solace to some of the city's established residents. Shadeland Avenue, on the city's east side, where working-class commun-ities once thrived on manufacturing jobs, began to be referred to as 'Memory Lane'. When Chrysler and RCA announced they would be closing Indianapolis branches, 800 people lost their jobs. When Western Electric closed in 1985, 8,000 people were left jobless. On the west side of the city, 2,000 employees at General Motor's Detroit Diesel plant were victims of a 1982 cutback. A former Chrysler employee, who lost his $28,000 per year forklift job, told Levathes and Felsenthal (1987) that after 24 years with the company, 'it's alarming to think about having to scratch at this point in my life. But I'll think of something' (p. 24). This worker's optimism was not shared by all. Quoting from Levathes and Felsenthal (1987):

'I don't know what I'll do', said Tim Fout, 33 'The only thing I know is that I don't want my son working here'.

> To many workers the downtown development is like a mirage in the desert. 'Who are they bringing the city back for? Not for us', said Ted French, 42, a job setter, 'I pay tax on restaurant food and beverages in the city to help finance the Hoosier Dome, but I've never been in it' (p. 241).

Presumably, the Hoosier Dome/job generator, would in some way ease these residents' burdens. Perhaps this was the intention of the Lilly Endowment's $25 million cheque to 'the community'. Perhaps belief that the convention centre's 'expansion' would benefit people in need somehow justified the actions of a philanthropic institution whose traditional concerns had been related to education, science, health, religion and social services.

If this was the case, the belief was not shared by many leaders in the African-American community. In fact, one of the main criticisms of the city's growth strategy voiced by community leaders was that growth advocates were so consumed with efforts to construct facilities that the needs of downtown residents (particularly African-Americans) had been neglected. To quote Sam Jones, the executive director of the Indianapolis Urban League:

> I'm not knocking the growth, I can show you relative progress here for blacks. But we have not really been financial recipients from the massive development that has occurred, and the feeling in the black community is that while we're building a city with bricks and mortar, the inclination is to forget the human side.
>
> (Personal communication, 30 October, 1992)

## Conclusion

Growth politics in Indianapolis emerged and evolved from a long tradition of alliance-building between corporate élites and eminently skilled mayors who were able to combine their financial, bureaucratic, and political resources behind 'big ticket' development projects. Designed to enhance the city's quality of life for middle and upper-class residents, sport projects were presented to the community as a way to solve local urban problems. These public and private élites, fuelled by a desire to shed their small-town image, mobilised behind a banner of pro-growth that not only sought to promote the interests of the dominant class, but also sought to legitimise political solutions by symbolically constructing consensus (i.e. by blurring conflict in the redevelopment process). What I am suggesting is a critical interpretation of Mayor Hudnut's sentiment (cited at the beginning of this chapter) regarding the 'galvanising effect' of sport and the power of sport to 'draw people's attention *and enlist their cooperation* [emphasis added] in a partnership that so easily divides them'.

Concerned that Indianapolis' 'Naptown' image put them at a competitive disadvantage for specially skilled labour and capital investment local élites fashioned a growth agenda that propagandised their visions of a good business climate and 'quality of life' throughout the population. Thus, the power of the local state and

the influence of private capital merged to define and solve 'the city's' problems. The building of new sport facilities, the attempt to lure professional and amateur sports organisations, and the hosting of sports events articulated with these broader strategies of pro-growth and urban development. Given these circumstances, perhaps we can understand the cynicism of Indianapolis' Judson F. Haggerty, former Marion County Democratic Party Chairman:

> If the point is to make a city appear to be beautiful, prosperous, functioning, no matter what the real underlying problems are, then of course the Hoosier Dome and all the other things have been a success.
>
> (*Indianapolis News*, 15 November, 1989, p. A1)

In addressing issues related to sport in the city, we should the temptation to embrace the city-as-a-whole assumptions that dominate much of the discourse related to hosting professional and élite-level sport events. Though well intended, the following questions reveal much about our underlying assumptions regarding cities: Are professional sports good for 'a city"? Is a new stadium complex a wise use of 'the city's' resources? And does a sport-related development policy serve 'the public interest"? These questions are at best conceptually flawed and politically naive: at worst they lead to regressive social policy. A city is simply not a unitary entity that benefits uniformly from development policy. Further, as Gregory Stone has argued the 'public interest' that is supposedly addressed in development policy cannot be determined objectively. Public need gets defined through political arrangements of urban élites who have similar interests and concerns. People whose needs differ from those within these élite coalitions are often excluded from the planning process (see also Euchner, 1994). Sport matters. As Mayor Hudnut instructs, a sport strategy for urban development may serve as a vehicle to symbolically construct consensus. However, we should also be cognisant of the fact that such a powerful symbol of common interest may also obscure other less dramatic concerns such as improving city housing, or health care, or schools, or job training.

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