

Unknown Speaker 0:27

The Olympics, what started out as a display of brute strength has turned into one of the biggest global sporting events. On paper, the Olympics is just that a sporting event. athletes from around the world flocked to a host nation to compete at the highest level. The games began in Olympia, Greece in the eighth century BC. There were foot races combat sports, a pen, triathlon and horse races. But since the mid 20th century, hosting large spectacles like the Olympics has become a way for nations to announce themselves to the rest of the world. Any nation that sets up an Olympic Committee hopes to benefit from the economic and development opportunities that come with hosting mega events with millions and attendance and an even larger TV audience. But what actually motivates these cities to hold sporting mega events? These events often end up displacing local residents and destroying entire communities. This brings into question; what is the real cost of the Olympics? This is just housing.

Unknown Speaker 1:42

Playing host meant using large sums of money to craft a national image to designate was no different for the city of Beijing. China use the branding strategy so notorious that researchers now refer to it as the Beijing model. The Chinese government expressed their intention to bring the Olympics to Beijing all the way back in the 1980s, long before it became a reality. In general, the idea of hosting such a mega event is to announce your nation on a global scale. This was no different for China, who submitted its first bid to the Olympic Committee in 1993. Their bid was unsuccessful, and they did not bid again during the 1990s. Just after the turn of the millennium, the International Olympic Committee finally did select Beijing as a host of the 2008 Summer Olympics.

Unknown Speaker 2:35

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Chinese Embassy. Now the focus of the whole goal. The LLC members have just made history by casting the sacred the votes to Beijing.

Unknown Speaker 3:02

2008 was the year of the great global recession. But while the crisis devastated one national economy after the other in the West, China escaped largely unscathed. Beijing was able to guarantee infrastructure environmental improvements that would rival any other reformed modern city in the world. China's economy economic stability in the face of the global crisis suggested great promise, Beijing would host the best Olympic games to date, funded by an equally spectacular budget of over \$40 billion that the Chinese government pledged to spend on the games. China's propaganda based branding was optimistic. The idea behind selling the games to both local and broader communities was to overhype the positives of the Olympics. The public was expecting huge changes based on the ideological slogan new Beijing great Olympics, Li Zhang and Simon Xiaobin Zhao to social development, researchers wrote an article around the quote, Beijing effect, which describes some of the surface level changes surrounding the games that became infamous in his closing. This is where we land on some of the issues that surround mega events. Governments aim to build a national reputation. However, this is largely done at the expense of locals or ordinary people, because they're not

the target audience for the brand of cities curating the run up to the 2008 games was no different as the Olympics were met with huge controversy, and the impact on local individuals in China was huge.

Unknown Speaker 4:40

Amnesty International is focusing on four specific areas to have improvements in China before the Olympics takes place. Even though there are numerous abuses, we felt it's important that we are strategic in identifying areas where we can get some results within a year. And on that note, we are telling China and we are urging China that this one year is enough to make those changes. So for areas we have documented, or we are highlighting in our report our reeducation through labor, detention and abuse of human rights defenders, internet and media freedom and last, the death penalty.

Unknown Speaker 5:47

In preparation for the 2018 Olympics, the state evicted 1000s of residents and leveled 10s of 1000s of homes to create space for competition venues and the Olympic Village, Zheng and Zhao discuss one case where 230 officially classified shanty towns were demolished as part of the city's beautification project. The shanty towns accommodated millions of low income residents in Beijing, who are often not compensated for their relocation. confrontation between citizens and local authorities over land has been one of the most visible flashpoints of state's society conflict in rural and urban China like ailing. The statement is recent research that reported 66 million farmers lost their land between 1990 and 2000. And too many residents were given a month's notice to leave and receive little to no compensation at a fraction of their property's value.

Unknown Speaker 6:45

Another hole is turned to rubble at dust. In years to come, the Demolition Man of Beijing will look back on this as their golden age. But many local people remember it as the time that Beijing sold in Seoul. Lilla Tantra

Unknown Speaker 7:05

Development which damages the character of the old capital is being promoted within the slogan "New Olympics, new Beijing." But I still love the old Beijing I say this from the bottom of my heart. Because old Beijing is the soul of this city.

Unknown Speaker 7:28

Guan Yoon is watching his neighborhood disappear. He says developers are gobbling up 43 hectares in one bite.

Unknown Speaker 7:41

China has a fairly unique land ownership rules where the state itself owns urban land. Well, rural land belongs to the people, at least, theoretically, the law works in that way. In reality, what happens is that laws in China about who owns urban real estate are fairly ambiguous and often lead to people being cheated or forcibly removed from their land. But let's take a second let's

back up a little. China is a country under an authoritarian government. So it's not hugely surprising that such easily exploitable laws have come to fruition. But how did China's land laws get to this point where a communist nation is now in a position where they're taking their own citizens land. The beginning of Chinese land ownership laws began in 1957. With the creation of the household responsibility. The high idea behind the early stage, early stages of the household responsibility system can be traced back to China's Communist roots and the 1950s. The idea was that farmland was to be collectively owned, and the decision on how to use the land was to be decided amongst the community to come to a formal consensus. This system was then reformed in 1978, and became a national policy known as Land Management Act. But what actually changed was a dead designation of collective ownership. This reform still made land collectively owned, but now the use of land was left up to individual households instead of a larger community. The Amendment law also gave rural land owners a more formalized 15 year agreement on the rights to their land. This later became a 30 year agreement in 1998 reform of the same law. China reform the laws governing land use, and at the same time placed new restrictions on land acquisition, and even those stronger restrictions might have made the law harder to exploit. It turns out that these new restrictions did nothing to protect regular people in China from being removed from their land.

Unknown Speaker 9:55

Shannon says people are evicted without proper compensation.

Unknown Speaker 9:59

There's a saying that goes a profit of 10 times is a good reason to kill.

Unknown Speaker 10:10

I wonder how much they're making to do something like this. We're like baby chickens, they can grab us whenever they want. The law is just something that used to oppress people. In the lead up to the games, the Chinese government began gathering land in the name of, quote, public interest. This very vague terms comes out of the 2003 rural land contract law, which warranted relocation, the law leverage ambiguous language to describe what it meant to act in the public interest. The idea behind public interest was to create conditions for things like a time of war, so the government can easily have access to what they need. In theory, the law looked after the public interest, but in practice, landowners were left unprotected. Once the construction of the Olympic Stadium began, the authorities used this law to force residents of Beijing to turn their land over to the Chinese government. By law, this was the land designated to be left to the actual farmers and rural residents. But the Chinese government interpreted the law. So it essentially became a squatters, right problem. Anyone currently on land had the right to it. The government obtained this mostly rural land for a low price and leased it long term to private businesses. These businesses subsequently acquired the use rights to land so they could do as they wished with it. And while this practice did cut costs, the Chinese government gave private businesses access and the rights to land they were not at liberty to give

Unknown Speaker 11:59

Mrs. Gou recalls the dark days of the Cultural Revolution when private property was seized.

Unknown Speaker 12:06

This is worse than the Cultural Revolution, then property was confiscated, but it was not turned afterwards. Our home belongs to us. Now, they will demolish it for good. I don't want that.

Unknown Speaker 12:20

But the latest issue of Chinese housing law had a negotiation clause, we're rural landowners were supposed to be invited to talk to possible investors, so they could agree on how their land would be used and how much they would be compensated. But these rural farmers were often not involved with these former negotiations over land at all. So they were not even in any position to ask for compensation, let alone agree to a fair price to have their land in formal negotiations are also typically not even a guarantee. And even if they did happen, businesses could start doing their work before any formal meetings were held. Thus, formal negotiations became a point a moot point because the land was already taken away. But China wasn't just cheating people out of their land through back end deals and loopholes and ambiguous laws. They also deployed scare tactics to force residents to vacate their properties. People living in zones slated for demolition to make way for the Olympics suffered violence and nitrates. Some people were physically dried from their homes, leaving all their possessions behind forever to be crushed in the rubble along with their houses that themselves and the damage to regular urban residents of Beijing that the construction of the Olympic infrastructure extends to be extends beyond this physical violence. Those who weren't removed from their houses by physical force were driven out by economic forces. The Geneva based center for housing rights and eviction estimated that by 2004 300,000, Chinese citizens had been uprooted and saw their homes demolished to make way for Olympic facilities. The removal of people for the construction of the games only served to aggravate the gentrification problems in Beijing. Not to mention the government had come to rely on land leasing to raise revenues, which dramatically drove up housing and property values across urban China. Physical river redevelopment for the games facilities require that existing affordable housing and community facilities had to be removed or replaced, resulting in even higher housing product prices. The Olympics created a real social crisis.

Unknown Speaker 14:48

Hosting the Olympic Games requires a lot of infrastructure. In the case of Beijing, a total of 37 stadiums serve the games, the construction of these spectacular attractions and opened up a whole other set of problems. The construction crew for the games included millions of migrant workers who are paid less than \$5 US dollars, and some weren't even paid at all. The lack of pay was such a staggering issue that the Chinese government has evaluated unpaid migrant wages for 2003 to be around 12 billion US dollars. Moreover, the Human Rights Watch discusses the government's crackdown and removal of quote, undesirables from Beijing as being a critical issue during the time of the games and the lead up to the games. These groups included migrant workers, beggars, sex workers, and petitioners. Petitioners are a particular group of residents from the countryside, seeking redress for abuses at the grassroots level. Unsurprisingly, the same groups were also the main constructors of Olympic facilities. After building these facilities, however, 1000s of migrant workers were removed from the city due to

sanitation and security concerns. This removal came after harrowing experiences with the construction process. During construction workers became so desperate in their lack of pay that they became desperate enough to commit suicide by jumping off high rise buildings. These tragedies happen so regularly that a phrase depicting them was added to common vernacular. Researchers who have studied the urban impacts of mega events have shown it's generally those at the bottom of the economic ladder, such as migrant workers who bear the social and financial costs of the Olympics. Migrants live much like their much of their lives as political and legal outsiders. And this causes many of these communities, communities to be resigned to poor treatment because they feel trapped within the confines of their situations. And if that in and of itself is not bad enough, the government also deployed against local residents. The Chinese government tried to silence people who attempted to organize against injustice as they were witnessing during the construction of the Olympic stadiums, Human Rights Watch comments on one particular case surrounding Yi Jones Zoo. This 53 year old housing rights activist was convicted in December of 2004. on charges of, quote, suspicion of disturbing social order. His crime, he tried to organize protests against forced evictions related to the Beijing Olympics. He remained in prison throughout the games despite having completed his four year prison sentence, and his family believed that the government held him until after the games to prevent him from speaking freely. There was also a long sheet. She was a form was a founder of a website dedicated to publicizing a legend human rights abuses occurring across time China at the time, it is said that she was detained in June of 2008 in Chengdu when investigating allegations that shoddy construction had contributed to the collapse of schools in the Sichuan earthquake. He was then formally charged a month later with, quote, possessing state secrets.

Unknown Speaker 18:24

We are extremely disturbed that China is rounding up more people now in the process of cleaning up Beijing and locking these individuals without any charge or trial in China at this moment, so our disturbance comes because China is actually increasing crackdown, because of Olympics.

Unknown Speaker 18:55

But despite the fact that the games were over budget displaced communities that took their land, and arrested citizens for speaking out, the 2008 games are largely seen as a success. With many of the strategies used in Beijing mimicked in the development of future games. The success could be hiding undesirable population from public views, allowing China to craft their image without the poor. But in the end, there is something deeply ironic about this story. The International Olympic Committee was well aware of the ongoing human rights issues in China. Jacques de Lille, CEO of the Foreign Policy Research Institute's insinuates that these exact issues were the reason that China had been previously unsuccessful of getting a winning bid to host the Games. Human Rights Watch comments that the Chinese government even sent a letter to the Olympic Committee, promising to develop human rights in the country ahead of the games. The Human Rights NGO also reports that several lawyers who were sentenced to jail lost their license As both for trying to expose the government failings to make do on its promise. Yet the Olympic Committee seemed to purposely award the Beijing the Olympics to Beijing in 2008. To help China merge into the new world, and action that directly contradicts the IOC is

insistent that the Olympics were not about politics. But while China emerge into the new world, it's important for us to look back at who they left behind in this emergence, and what the costs were for the local citizens as China emerge into this new era, both for those who were forced out of their homes, the hundreds of 1000s of citizens, as well as the new Beijing and the new urban centers that were created as a result of the creation of these Olympic venues. Thank you