# The Social Impacts of Mega-Events: Towards a Framework

Gabriel Silvestre
(University of Westminster)

**Abstract:**
The hosting of mega-events has been actively pursued by some of the world major centres as a way to 'fast-track' their urban regeneration agenda and stand out among the global competition for international capital. The Olympic Games has long been seen as a golden opportunity to achieve this but the fierce competition to host it has made some bidding cities to turn their attentions to other sports competitions such as the Commonwealth Games or the Pan American Games, thus enhancing their status and hosting requirements. The preparation phase during the years running up to a mega-event deals with great levels of planning complexity that are met with equally intense impacts on the host community. This paper examines the nature of the social impacts caused by the hosting of a mega-event drawing examples from the academic literature available in order to produce a typology of impacts. It is expected that the proposed framework can be employed in conjunction with a holistic model of assessment capable to examine the event in a broader process of transformation in local urban governance.

**Keywords**: social impacts, mega-events, Olympic Games

## 1. Introduction

It has never been more important for cities to express the group of values and signs that form their personality as in the present days of global economic competition. The combined effect of declining industrial activity, government reduction, and mobile capital investment produced a scenario where cities looked inward as a form to retain its economic vitality. Image creation is one of the processes fostered by an entrepreneurial alliance formed by progressive politicians and local elites to address the effects of globalisation. It relies on

the enhancement of local features that makes the city stand out among competitors by revitalising strategic areas with perceived economic significance. One of the tools used to increase the city visibility and at the same time provide the financial resources necessary for urban regeneration is the hosting of mega-events.

Mega-events have the ability to conciliate agendas and cooperation among different actors towards a common cause. The fixed deadlines are a stimulus for the completion of planned projects that would otherwise take a longer time to be concluded. The significance of mega-events such as the Olympic Games increased to an extent that second-tier cities that usually bid for the event have been replaced by the main economic centres like London, New York, Tokyo or Paris. Nevertheless, this process has also seen the increasing submission of candidatures from cities from the developing world and little research to date has been carried out on its motives. Rio de Janeiro is one of these cities continuingly bidding for the Olympic Games over the last years. Despite the failed bids to the 2004 and 2012 Olympics, the city was awarded to host the continental version for the Americas, the Pan American Games. It was expected that the experience would provide the city with the apparatus and organisational expertise to be successful in a future Olympic bid.

However, the planning complexity and great urban intervention associated with the preparations for a mega-event is corresponded with equally substantial costs for the host community. The increase of academic research aimed to investigate social impacts associated with mega-events can be interpreted as a need to counter balance the optimist discourse that justifies them. It is alleged that the net costs of mega-events far outweigh its net benefits (Hall 1992). The intrusive event affect various aspects of the local daily life such as housing, employment, leisure, transport, taxes, human rights and democratic participation.

This study offers an analysis on the nature of social impacts with the aim to propose a typology that can be employed as a tool to assess official bids and the preparations for a

mega-event. This typology is based on social impacts investigated during the preparations of past mega-events.

This introductory section is followed by an analysis on the rationale of mega-events. The effects of globalisation and the changing role of urban governance are discussed and the ability of mega-events to enhance the city position in the international hierarchy assessed. The following discussion will provide an extensive analysis on the academic literature of mega-events and related material produced by civil groups in order to present seven lines of investigation. The study finalises with an assessment of the typology proposed and the need to be used in conjunction with a more holistic model of analysis.

## 2. Concepts

### 2.1 Globalisation and Urban Entrepreneurialism

The bidding and hosting for mega-events must be seen as a component of the strategic planning devised by the main economy centres in response to the changes in course since the late 20th century. Changes in the production and consumption patterns and the declining manufacturing activity caused a wide restructuring process in the economic base of traditional industrial centres. As they moved towards a service based economy a new approach was necessary in order to secure their role and influence in a globalised world. Thus, urban governance gradually shifts from the managerial to a more entrepreneurial approach that aims to create the necessary conditions for the city to compete globally for jobs and the investment brought by the mobile capital (Harvey 1989). Attraction is addressed through the appliance of techniques of place marketing amid an environment of intense intercity competition. As Andranovich et al notes, 'image-creation provides the rationale for the allocation of scarce resources' with cities relying on their 'image, environment, culture and quality of life' (2001:114) as 'key weapons in the battle to retain economic vitality' (Beioley 2002:B-11).

Urban entrepreneurialism is manifested by alliances between the government and the private sector to foster local growth through the promotion of local economic development (Hall and Hubbard 1998). It involves, among other factors, risk-taking decisions and changes to normal planning processes (Harvey 1989). Tourism, culture, entertainment and sports-led projects are the most common mechanisms employed to 'aestheticise' and reshape an attractive urban landscape. They have the potential role to boost the city's positioning as a consumption-oriented economy. These strategies are also intended to generate symbolic capital that will enhance the city's visibility and can be explored to lure prospective investors. According to Law (2002), the main reasons to invest in these areas are their perceived prestige and the opportunity to raise the city profile, their association with the perceived local quality of life and the potential to enhance tourism. It is claimed that they can serve to ameliorate the cultural and recreational offer for residents and attend the demands of lifestyle of the high skilled workforce alike.

Flagship projects are aimed to revitalise certain parts of the city transforming 'problem places' into 'opportunity places' (Raco 2004:34). They are usually derelict downtown areas, deteriorated docklands, railway land and industrial complexes. The physical manifestation of these initiatives can be observed in the form of renovated symbolic buildings, redeveloped waterfront areas, cultural quarters, shopping and entertainment complexes, sports facilities, iconic landmarks, and mixed-use areas of office towers, residential blocks and retailing facilities (Beioley 2002, Judd and Fainstein 1999, Smith 2003). The staging of urban spectacles is another mechanism employed to spearhead the goals of regeneration. Their popularity and importance achieved such an extent that Harvey (1989) noted that they have become one of the main products of post-modern society. Urban entrepreneurs often promote hallmark sports and cultural events as a tool for the renewal of cities.

## 2.2 Hallmark Events

A hallmark event as a concept is involved in fuzziness with debates about its definition on scale, periodicity and effects in the host city. The most commonly accepted definition is the one provided by Ritchie, stating that hallmark events are:

> Major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term. Such events rely in their uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention (1984:2).

Other terms are also employed in literature for events such as special event (Getz 1991) or major event (Chalkley and Essex 1999), but the differences among them are not very clear (Spilling 2003). Using the term of hallmark as an umbrella concept we can distinguish mega-events by their 'high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige and economic impact on the host community' (Law 2002:141). They become key instruments of urban policy due to its ability to build consent and create a stimulus to tackle challenges (Essex and Chakley 1998, Shoval 2002, Cochrane *et al* 1996). The increasing number of cities from a different economic spectrum bidding for mega-events attests their prominence in the urban agenda. Moreover, it demonstrates the bidding city adherence 'to a set of (globally defined) competitive rules' (Cochrane 1996:1327). These events are usually of cultural and sports thematic like the international Expo, the European City of Culture, sports World Cups, racing Grand Prix, and fore mostly, the Olympic Games.

**2.3 The rationale of Mega-Events**

Few events can match the Olympic Games in terms of audience and importance in contemporary society. Global media coverage and the fierce competition among bidding cities to host the Summer or the Winter version helps explaining it. The rationale of the urban transformation has given the Olympics a new economic and heightened significance (Waitt 1999). The increased size of the event and the economic motivation surrounding the host city and sponsors produced implications that extend well beyond the provision of facilities and management of the event (Chalkley and Essex 1999). The awarded city is automatically entitled to receive a substantial amount for television rights from the International Olympic Committee – around US$ 600 million in the Sydney 2000 Games (Hiller 2000). The sheer size of television rights and sponsorship deals are usually emphasized in the entrepreneur discourse as a dominant financial ingredient to justify the enterprise.

The benefits of hosting, as Cox notes, are 'too alluring to dismiss' (1996:7). They can be headlined in three intrinsically related groups (Vigor 2004):

- Global exposition;

- Economic dividends; and,

- Urban transformation.

A successful bid represents a decade of international exposition, from the bidding period, through the preparations phase to the final staging. It is a unique opportunity for the city to raise its profile, acquire prestige and enhance its status. The 'showcase effect', as Hiller arguments, provides the legitimacy for the dispersal of large amounts of public money (Hiller 1989). Seoul used the 1988 Games to improve its image and show its economic

progress to an international audience while Atlanta aspired to become the Capital of New South (Gold and Gold 2005) and Rio de Janeiro aimed to 'rebirth as the cultural and tourist crown jewel of South America' as expressed in its Olympic bid book (RJOBC 1996:4). World status increases the influx of global investment and can boost civic morale and community pride

The sums injected in the local, regional and national economies from public and private sectors have considerable economic impact and multiplier effect. The seven-year preparation phase is marked by intense economic activity especially for the construction, tourism, real estate, and related servicing industries. The aforementioned visibility constitutes the competitive strategy to attract further investments, future events and more tourists. Barcelona and Sydney designated derelict areas for massive regeneration turning them into new destinations for residential, retailing, office and tourism usage. Economic dividends are exemplified by job creation, new trading networks, new industries, and increasing influx of tourism (Vigor 2004, Burton 2003).

The costs associated with staging the Olympics are so high that, as Essex and Chalkley argue, are only justifiable if directed to a major regeneration and improvement of the urban 'hard' structure (1998). Funding is mainly channelled through two fronts: the renovation and construction of facilities, and the improvement in the supporting infrastructure and environment necessary to ensure the effective operation of the event – e.g. airport capacity, the accommodation stock, public transport, telecommunication, water and sewage systems (Chalkley and Essex 1999). The clear deadline for the completion of the programmes provides a focus for the synergy of work among the different levels of the government and the private sector. Moreover, it helps to 'fast-track' urban regeneration developments that otherwise might have taken a longer period (Chalkley and Essex 1999, Vigor 2004). Barcelona is the ultimate example of urban intervention. The regeneration of the Poble Nou area for the Olympic Village meant a massive programme of infrastructure developments

especially on housing, transport, water and sewage systems, recovering 4 km of polluted beach and integrating the area into the general urban fabric. A revitalised city is attractive to investors, tourists and the host community.

The legacies are the thermometer for residents to judge the validity of the hosting. Physical legacies are in the form of improved transport and communication systems, improved infrastructure, housing developments, sporting facilities, and new recreational areas. The new facilities and recreational areas can, in turn, act as anchors for extended regeneration (Law 2002). For entrepreneurs the main legacy is somewhat less tangible. They expect that the city emerged after the event will be one upgraded in the hierarchies of the global urban system and a node of economic and cultural activity (Beriatos 2004, Law 2002). However, as Cox (1996) argues, hallmark events have a 'repeated tendency to show the bad sides of cities, as well as having a range of negative effects' (1996:7) that, as Chalkley and Essex expose, 'might overshadow or marginalize the needs of local people' (1999:391). If legacies are to become relevant for the lives of most of the people and at the same time revitalise local economy, it demands a careful planning and relation to a long-term strategy (Law 2002).

## 3. The social impacts of mega-events

The mega-event strategy is a risky and highly charged political enterprise that requires negotiation and consensus from those in the leadership (Kidd 1992). Decisions are traditionally top-down in their structure and the process from the conceptualisation of the bid to the planning stage often override democratic processes regarding transparency and public participation (Law 2002, Hall 1989). The conception usually grows out of the political sphere and is made by what Law calls a 'small cabal of local politicians and business people' (Law 2002). Smith (2003) points that historically; governments are not very good at hosting mega-

events. Decisions are often not the result of a rational process and important feasibility studies, as the Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) and Social Impact Analysis (SIA) tend to be ad hoc (Cox 1996, Hall 1989).

In order to sustain their ambitions, entrepreneurs often rely on the patriotic rhetoric and on examples of success from former hosts. Lenskyj argues that this 'boosterist' discourse gives prominence to an image over substance. The author observes that it is not hard to find some evidence to support the opportunity to address unemployment, traffic congestion, polluted environment or the provision of housing and facilities (Lenskyj 2000). The alleged legacies and benefits are also open for discussion and there is a tendency for pre-events studies to exaggerate them (Law 2002). As Hiller evidences, economic and other benefits might turn out to be incalculable or estimates only. However, whatever the opportunity to address an important urban concern, it should not exclude the discussion of potential negative impacts. As Law stresses, the much desired spotlight 'not only magnify (the city) strengths but also its weaknesses and problems' (p.147).

Cashman (2002) recognizes that every major city contending for an Olympic event is susceptible to encounter an organized form of criticism. Preuss identified the five most common lines of criticism used by opponents of mega-events:

- The host city may run up too many debts

- Money spent on the Olympics could have been used for more sensible projects, such as health care or education

- The Olympics benefit prosperous citizens and create disadvantages for the poor

- The Olympic Games only bring short-term job opportunities

- The Games may create a rise in the cost of living that does not decline after the Games are concluded

    (Preuss in Burton 2003)

Ritchie argues that 'the net costs of the event often tend to far outweigh any net benefits, except in terms of potential political and economic benefits for urban elites' (Ritchie 1999). The following sections review the main forms of social impacts associated with the hosting of mega-events based in the extensive academic analysis available on Olympic experiences. The headings will form the baseline to assist the analysis of the following case study.

## 3.1 Openness, accountancy and community participation

It is noted that the entrepreneurial approach is detrimental for community participation (Waitt 1999). The Los Angeles 1984 experience was distinct for being almost entirely private-run. This model was of great influence on the approach of subsequent bidding cities (Andranovich et al 2001, Chakley and Essex 1999). The rationale that explains the mega-event strategy became the result of a convergence of elite interests 'sold' to the local government. Its coherence with public objectives and the influence of other hidden agendas dictate the participatory level in planning the bid.

During the bid phase the city showcases its strengths while minimising or even denying its weaknesses (Cochrane et al 1996). In this light it is easy to understand reservations about public scrutiny. Commenting on the findings of a study on events and publicly funded projects, Roche concludes that decision-making is essentially autocratic and comes from the will and power of political leaderships and/or powerful urban elites (Roche 1994). There is little democratic community input and popular approval is usually limited by superficial opinion polls. At this stage support tend to be high as there is little information available about possible implications, and bidding committees stress it in their submissions as genuine community approval (Chalip 2002).

Governments portray mega-events as a matter of honour to show off the city to an extern audience and require the participation and goodwill of all. In some instances it may be

strategically used to divert the attention from more relevant local concerns. Those criticizing the enterprise are labelled as unpatriotic or against progress (Cox 1996, Hiller 2000, Law 2002, Lenskyj 2000). Public buy-in can be observed when key figures from the media, civic leaderships or minority groups are attracted to perform as public relations. Both and Tatz prefer to call it 'manufactured consent' (*in* Cashman 2002). At the stage that opposition groups are able to raise public awareness through the media or organising protests it may be already too late for relevant modifications in the event's proposals.

The longer period leading up to the event – seven years in the case of the Olympic Games – is a radical exercise of political manoeuvres. The clear timeline is a powerful rhetoric to fast-track approval for projects that might otherwise have required detailed appreciation. Normal procedures are set aside – labour laws might be changed and administrative and regulatory barriers relaxed or removed (Getz 1997, Lenskyj 2002, Owen 2001). The community, especially those directly affected by the construction of facilities and the infrastructure, are more commonly informed than consulted and the impacts upon them overlooked (Hiller 1998). The costs, that hardly meet the initial projections, are often hidden or misallocated to other areas (Getz 1997).

The Toronto bid for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games was an exception in the usual by-pass of community consultation. Organised opposition groups since the pre-bid phase and the support of some key political and bureaucrat actors (Olds 1998) incorporated local concerns in the bid book. The local government was also influenced to approve an intervenor fund for non-profit organisations to investigate potential social impacts. However, in most cases Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is usually ignored, postponed or has its scope limited by bid groups. Hall (1992) sees it as a vital part of the planning process by its potential to set the platform for community involvement and minimise the risks of 'any negative impact that may occur' (p.83) As Toronto failed to be awarded it was a lost opportunity to observe the level of influence of the findings on the planning processes for the event.

Similar occurrence was found during the running up to the 2007 Pan American Games. A special committee (CO-Rio) was set up to oversee the preparation process, however no civil group or NGO was represented. Controversial commercial projects on the sites of some of the venues were pushed along the renovation agenda. Legal disputes were an indicative of the lack of transparency and involvement of different stakeholders around a project.

## 3.2 Land, housing and accommodation

One of the most investigated aspects of social implications related to the hosting of a mega-event is the one regarding housing and real estate speculation. Interventions in the urban landscape in the form of venues and related infrastructure usually involve direct – the clearance of designated areas and subsequent removal of buildings – and indirect consequences – gentrification and community disruption. The last experiences of Olympic related to housing – the athletes' village and the lodging of the Olympic family and the media – showed the construction of exclusive areas in partnership with the public sector.

These projects are intended to act as a catalyst for regeneration in a former deprived area. The most striking example was the Barcelona Olympic Village in the Poblenou district. A former obsolete industrial site was revitalised and transformed in a middle and upper class environment. Former working class residents and 'thriving' small business (Shapcott in Raco 2004) were evicted and had to migrate to other parts of the city. The occupation of the new residences signified an increase of almost 50% in the total population of the district. This 'invasion' was not just social but also economic (Gil 1991:105) Businesses serving the new residents – shops, restaurants, entertainment complexes, and offices for the 'new economy' – were attracted to the area and contributed to a gentrification process. Adjoining poor areas were indirectly affected by the increasing speculation in rent and real-estate prices and the rise

in the local cost of living, forcing them to relocate because of their economic circumstances. During the seven-year planning period up to the 1992 Games housing prices in the city rose in more than 250% while 59,000 residents left the city (Ferran 1993). Gentrified areas often led to the 'displacement and marginalisation of local communities' (Smith 2003) and a disruption in the former social fabric. Similar processes were witnessed in Atlanta (French 1997) and Sydney (Lenskyj 2002).

Tenants are usually the most affected by the mega-events projects because of their limited housing rights. Depending on the local legislation they can be subjected to abusive increases in rents or being evicted without cause, common tactics of landlords expecting to profit with the tourist trade. By investigating the evictions of tenants related to mega-events in Canada, Olds noted that residences ranging from residential hotels housing, poor segments of the population, student halls and even some luxury apartments were evacuated for the more lucrative tourist and Olympic personnel (Olds 1998). The author concluded that if residents expect to have their housing concerns attended, community groups must be extremely well organised and prepare their strategies as soon as the bid planning is initiated.

However, as Hall observed 'the people who are often most impacted by hallmark events are those who are the least able to form community groups and protect their interests'. It is certainly the case of boardinghouse residents at the time of the preparations for the Sydney Olympics. Several boardinghouses were converted into backpacker accommodations and their former occupants – among them elderly and disabled - were forced to relocate (Lenskyj 2000). The costruction of the Olympic Stadium in a working class neighbourhood in Rio de Janeiro was marked by community disturbance and public by-pass. Detailed information regarding planned works and possible implications were not provided to local residents. Thirteen properties were designated to be demolished in order to give space for the construction works without previous communication sent to their residents who were

informed via press news. Despite financial compensation were given in some cases, the residents did not receive assistance for reallocation.

When analysing the findings of Hall and Olds studies, Ritchie (1999) summarised the main options available for protecting and monitoring the effect on low-income residents:

- establishment of a housing impact monitoring committee;

- development of an Olympic accommodation strategy;

- tougher legislation to protect tenants and prevent arbitrary evictions;

- provision of public housing and emergency accommodation for disabled people; and

- a form of rent control.

(Hall and Olds in Ritchie 1999)


## 3.3 Employment, training and business development


The economic dividends, albeit difficult to ascertain, legitimate the mega-event strategy. Boosters, mixing the concept of economic impact with social impact, portray the trickle down effect of a more active construction and tourism leading to the creation of new jobs as social legacies.

As some authors have pointed mega-events related jobs are usually temporary and the ones generated by the expansion of the service industry are characterised for being part-time and low paying (Swart and Bob 2004). Reflecting on the construction cycle prior to the Sydney Games, Chalip (2002) states that it constituted a mixed economic blessing. Investments and jobs that otherwise would have taken place over a longer period of time were compressed in the years prior to the Games. The nature of the jobs created may also implicate in the social polarisation between the employed and the unemployed, relevantly skilled and unskilled, and in terms of the new flexibilisation of employment connected with the service

sector employment (Roche 2000). More jobs do not necessarily have an immediate effect on unemployment rates especially if projects in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are viewed as benefiting for the local unemployed work force. Employment opportunities may be taken by those living outside the area or even outside the city. The Cape Town bid for the 2004 Games was the first to formally commit social objectives including the destination of 30% of the jobs for the residents of the designated area.

A way of increasing the opportunities of employment for some segments of the society is through volunteer programmes. However, it may become short reaching in its objectives if it does not take into account the profile of the volunteers. As Smith (2006) noted; 'people who volunteer are often enthusiasts who have volunteered before, and tend not to be marginalized members of local communities'. The volunteer programme for the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester targeted disadvantaged segments of society in order to develop professional skills and thus enhance their professional opportunities (Smith 2006). The volunteer profile required by some organizers often demand higher education and knowledge of more than one language. It is essential to discuss the nature of the volunteer programme in order to define which one of the sides – the organizing committee or the volunteers – are to reap most of the benefits of not having a paid workforce.

Local small business can see their daily operations affected when at proximity to areas designated as Olympic sites. Restricted access and the constant flow of lorries can substantially affect their business, as experienced by small businesses located in the area surrounding the construction site of the Olympic Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. No business development programme for small businesses was introduced as well as compensation schemes for those adversely affected planned works. Commercial opportunities for local small businesses may also be restricted with the present nature of Olympic sponsorship. The IOC is highly concerned with the use of the Olympic brand and has a separate topic on ambushing marketing in its assessment of bid books. They also require a non-commercial

zone around the venues. Transnational companies and private interests have a great deal of influence on the marketing plan of mega-events and are able to secure most of the commercial opportunities. If there is a concern for positive social impact in local businesses, small business should be included in a social programme. The failed Cape Town 2004 bid included the provision of 50% of the business transactions handled by the Bid Company to businesses from previously marginalized communities (Hiller 2000).

### 3.4 Recreation, leisure and accessibility

New and renovated facilities and public spaces are the most visible legacies left by a mega-event. Often claimed as a social benefit for community use, these venues can turn into highly specialised sports facilities (Chalkley and Essex 1999) and unlikely to be used by the wider community. Some permanent facilities might even have to be torn down after the event when their low demand and costly maintenance become apparent. Public areas can be revitalised and returned to the community. In Barcelona the recovering of the seafront in Poble Nou and the regeneration of the Montjuic area were translated into important leisure and sport facilities. Similar experiences were observed in Atlanta's Olympic Park that revitalised a run down downtown area.

However some leisure spaces may have its accesses restricted for a long period in preparation for the event or also be turned into private premises. In Sydney a public swimming pool was closed for two years and part of a public park was converted into a private leisure facility after the 2000 Games (Owen 2001). Public access restriction was also observed in a listed park in Rio de Janeiro's coastline. The company in charge of renovating the marina destined for the sailing competitions used a legal breach to quickly fence a section of the park next to the premises, and expand its planned works over a public area, pulling out trees and destroying a playground area to give space for the construction of a parking area. It

catalysed a popular manifestation organised by residents associations and pressed the public governance for more detailed information and respect for the park listed status.

These venues are often expected to act as catalysts for further regeneration in the area. Their implications can be similar to those found in the cultural flagship projects observed by Smith (2003). He states that far from benefiting the community, urban regeneration projects can exacerbate social polarisation within the city, gentrified areas erode the social fabric and simply shift social problems from one part of the city to another. If these projects are to be judged as successful then the quality of life in such neighbourhoods needs to be significantly improved (Raco 2004).

**3.5 Transport and urban fabric**

The transportation and mobility of the expected high volume of visitors is a key topic for planning mega-events. Investment in roads and public transport are often the largest part of the event budget. Improved and expanded underground lines, new buses, roads and the new traffic engineering linked to the renovation and construction of roads have a great distributional effect. In Barcelona railway tracks that acted as a physical barrier to the seafront were placed underground and there was an improvement in the connection between the railway that served distant parts of the province and the underground system. Although the overall analysis of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games was one of mixed results, new roads, underground and suburban trains were deemed the main positive legacy for the city (A.T. Kearney 2005). The decision not to invest in urban freeways and major public transport in Atlanta seriously jeopardised its image during the 1996 Olympics (Chalkley and Essex 1999). Transportation problems and traffic congestion were widely reported. Despite much public expectation in Rio de Janeiro regarding the expansion of the underground system and

improvements in existing roads included in the city bid book, the only executed project was the designation of dedicated lanes during the 2007 Pan American Games.

The topic of concern here is how these benefits are distributed across the residents, if improvements make life easier for most of those relying on public transport or merely serve tourists commuting between tourist areas and the competition sites. How the unique opportunity to accelerate the urban agenda is also directed towards the integration of the poorest parts of the city into the urban fabric? The developmental agenda of the Cape Town bid made provision in this matter including its existing transport plan into Olympic proposals. An Olympic award would accelerate the implementation of new routes and improvements in existing ones in the poor peripheries of the city.

## 3.6 Human Rights and Civil Liberties

The Olympic Games have also witnessed some violent episodes involving the suppression of local manifestation and the violation of human rights. In its most violent episode more than three hundred students protesting against the lavish spending in 1968 Mexico City Games were massacred and a same number jailed. In 2003 during the Pan American Games in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, another popular protest was violently repressed. A local priest carrying a 'hunger torch' led hundreds of citizens to denounce the national situation when circled by the police. Protests were actively repressed during the event in order to keep a  positive national image (Mascarenhas 2005).

As some authors have observed, in the light to guarantee a positive and sanitised image to the external audience and visitors, new enforcement laws might be introduced to contain local demonstrations of dissent and arbitrary arrests may occur of those portrayed as 'dangerous people' (Lenskyj 2002). Arbitrary police harassment prior to the Sydney 2000 Games were mainly directed towards homeless people, sex trade workers, minority groups

and the youth, showing that suspicion was 'influenced by age, ethnicity, social class, gender and sexual orientation' (Lenskyj 2000:53). Additional laws extended authority powers to remove individuals causing 'annoyance or inconvenience' in the Homebush Olympic Park. Lenskyj argues that as such statement was open to a wide range of interpretation, force could be used to suppress peaceful protests. Distribution of unauthorized articles, including leaflets with dissent content within 3km of an Olympic site, constituted an offence and was subjected to fines. Homeless were also driven away from Olympic areas that previously served them as a shelter making it difficult for the work of vans that feed the needy.

**3.7 Taxes and social budget**

As pointed before, mega-events are a costly enterprise requiring funding from various levels of governments and often through partnerships with the private sector. The population may also be required to finance part of the projects directly in the form of new taxes. The accomplishment of works in time legitimates constant revisions of the budget and it is not unusual for initial projections to double or triplicate, often impacting on other budgets. It is not uncommon for governments to redistribute budgets and affect those destined to the social welfare. The Mexico City manifestation was protesting against the allocation of US$ 200 million from social services to the Olympic budget. Social services leaders in Sydney pointed out the impact of the preparations on the budget destined to health, education, welfare and transport (Lenskyj 2002).

Grandiose projects like the ones associated with the building of stadiums and state-of-the-art facilities may become a drain of public resources if its use after the event is not properly planned. 'White Elephants' are notorious in the Olympic experience, constituting a burden for taxpayers in the period after the event. Sydney's 80,000-seat Stadium Australia and the indoor SuperDome arena, both built in the Olympic Park, operated with substantial

losses after its opening and failed to attract events large enough to justify its capacity (Searle 2002). In terms of losses few examples match the Montreal, its Olympic Games left the city with US$ 1 billion debt in the form of special taxes to be paid along almost three decades after the event. Obviously, during the seven-year preparation period the enterprise is subject to be affected by changes in the economy and political environment but careless planning and corruption can often be minimised in order to not compromise the event.

A mega-event might constitute a startling idea at first glance but if its costs are not properly discussed and problems with financing provisioned, the hosting might turn inappropriate when the population is faced with more pressing difficulties. The legacy of Olympic events, as Smith argues is often 'one of high levels of debt, redundant buildings and a community that has been displaced or bypassed' (Smith 2003:159)


## 4. Conclusion


Current research on the nature of social impacts of mega-events tends to be fragmented and focused on cause-effect manifestation with little attention given to the broader process that resulted in the hosting of the mega-event. An extensive analysis on the academic literature of mega-events and related material produced by civil groups was provided in order to present seven lines of investigation. The points identified were: openness, accountancy and community participation; land, housing and accommodation; employment, training and business development; recreation, leisure and accessibility; transport and the urban fabric; human rights and civil liberties; and taxes and social budget. Each impact was illustrated with examples observed in past mega-events as a form to constitute a typology to assist in the research of the social impacts caused.

However, a focus on only this aspect of a mega-event may incur in what Hiller (1998) calls a 'piecemeal and fragmentary' analysis (p.48). The present rationale of mega-events

encompasses a wide range of motives and actors that attests its complexity for analysis. Hiller observed that the scale and complexity of mega-events reached such a level that the event could not be understood only in terms of the event itself (2000:47). He thus adapted the concept of linkages from the political economy due its possibility to view

> mega-events not as isolated unique occurrences but as part of a chain of relationships which is expressed through backward and forward linkages. A third relationship is proposed as parallel linkages. By taking this approach, simple cause-effect analyses are broadened to include a wide range of impacts which are given a more contextual and longitudinal perspective.

Applying a common recourse of urban leaders, it can be said that a mega-event is not capable to solve 'all of society's problems' by itself (Lenskyj p.79). However the opportunity to engage several segments of the society, public and private sector should be better addressed to discuss the city's most pressing problems. Host cities can only produce and benefit from lasting social legacies if they are an integral part of a long-term urban strategy that is not dependent on the mega-event for its implementation (Essex and Chakley 1998, Raco 2004). The employment of the typology proposed in conjunction with the linkage model to analyse the existing social agenda of bidding cities could provide a useful resource to estimate the nature and dimension of the social impacts.

## Bibliography

ANDRANOVICH, G., Burbank, M. J. and Heying, C. H. 2001. Olympic Cities: Lessons Learned from Mega-Event Politics. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 23 (2), pp. 113-131.

A.T. Kearney, Inc. 2005. Building a Legacy - Sports Mega-Events Should Last a Lifetime, online article, A.T. Kearney, Inc: http://atkearney.com/shared_res/pdf/BuildingaLegacy.pdf

BEIOLEY, S. 2002. Metroland – The Urban Tourism Market. *Insights*, July, B1-B18.

BERIATOS, E. and GOSPODINI, A. 2004. Glocalising' Urban Landscapes: Athens and the 2004 Olympics. *Cities*, 21 (3), pp. 187-202

BURTON, R. 2003. Olympic Games Host City Marketing: An Exploration of Expectations and Outcomes. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12 (1), pp.35-45

CASHMAN, R. 2002. Impact of the Games on Olympic Host Cities*, online article, Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olimpics: http://olympicstudies.uab.es/lectures/web/pdf/cashman.pdf

CHALIP, L. 2002. Using the Olympics to Optmise Tourism Benefits*, online article, Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olimpics: http://olympicstudies.uab.es/lectures/web/pdf/chalip.pdf

CHALKLEY, B. and Essex, S. 1999. Urban Development Trough Hosting International Events: a History of the Olympic Games. *Planning Perspectives*, 14(4), pp. 369-394.

COCHRANE, A., Peck, J. and Tickell,A. 1996. Manchester Plays Games: Exploring the Local Politics of Globalisation, *Urban Studies,* 33 (8), pp. 1319-1336.

COX, G. 1996. Showing Off or Showing Up the City? *Social Impact Assessment Newsletter*, August, pp. 5-11.

ESSEX, S. and Chalkley, B. 1998. Olympic Games: Catalyst of Urban Change. *Leisure Studies*, 17(3), pp. 187-206.

FERRAN, Brunet. 1993. *The economy of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games.* International Olympic Committee. Lausanne.

FRENCH, S.P. and Mike, E. 1997. Atlanta and the Olympics – a One-Year Retrospective. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 63 (3), pp. 379-492

GETZ, D. 1991. Festivals, Special Events and Tourism. Van Nostrand Reinhold. New York

GIL, E. T. 1991. *El Poblenou: el canvi urbanístic I la transformació social* in Papers Revista de Sociologia n.38 (91-107) Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona: Barcelona

GOLD, J.R. and Gold, M.M. 2005. Cities of Culture: Staging International Festivals and the Urban Agenda, 1851-2000. Ashgate. Aldershot

HALL, C.M. 1989. Hallmark Tourist Events: Analysis, definition, methodology and review. In Syme, G.J., Shaw, B.J., Fenton, D.M. and Mueller, W.S. (Eds). 1989. The Planning and Evaluation of Hallmark Events. Aldershot. Avebury

HALL, C. M. 1992. Hallmark Tourist Events: Impacts, Management, and Planning, Belhaven Press. London.

HALL, T. and Hubbard, P. (eds). 1998. The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation. John Wiley & Sons. England. Chichester.

HARVEY, D. 1989. From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler,* 71B, pp.3-17.

HILLER, H. 1989. Impact and Image: the convergence of urban factors in preparation for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics. In: Syme, G.J., Shaw, B.J., Fenton, D.M. and Mueller, W.S. (Eds) (1989) The Planning and Evaluation of Hallmark Events. Aldershot. Avebury.

HILLER, H. H. 1998. Assessing the Impact of Mega-Events: A Linkage Model. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1(1), pp. 47-57.

HILLER, H. 2000. Mega-Events, Urban Boosterism and Growth Strategies: an Analysis of the Objectives and Legitimations of the Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Affairs*, 24 (2), pp. 439-458.

JUDD, D. and Fainstein, S. 1999. The Tourist City. Yale University Press. New Haven.

KIDD, B. 1992. The Toronto Olympic Commitment: Towards a Social Contract for the Olympic Games. *Olympika*, 1, pp.154-167.

LAW, C.M. 2002. Urban Tourism: The Visitor Economy and the Growth of Large Cities. Continuum. London

LENSKYJ, H.J. 2000. Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics and Activism. SUNY Press. New York.

LENSKYJ, H.J. 2002. The Best Olympics Ever? Social Impacts of Sydney 2000, SUNY Press. New York.

MASCARENHAS, G. 2005. Para Muito Além do Esporte: O Urbanismo Olímpico e seu Legado Social. *Pan-Americano de 2007: Grande Negócio para Quem?*.PACS. Rio de Janeiro

OLDS, K. 1998. Urban Mega-Events, Evictions and Housing Rights: The Canadian Case. *Current Issues in Tourism,* 1 (1), pp. 1-46.

OWEN, K.A. 2001. Sidney 2000 Olympic Games: Processes and Politics of Venue Preparation, *Monograph Series (3)*, Centre of Olympic Studies - The University of New South Wales.

RACO, M. 2004. Whose Gold Rush? The Social Legacy of a London Olympics. In: Vigor, A. et al (eds) After the Gold Rush: A Sustainable Olympics for London. IPPR/DEMOS.London

Rio de Janeiro Olympics Bid Committee (RJOBC) (1996) Rio de Janeiro Candidate to Host the XXVIII Olympic Games in 2004, Vol.1. COB. Rio de Janeiro.

RITCHIE, J.R.B. 1984. Assessing the Impact of Hallmark Events: Conceptual and Research Issues. *Journal of Travel Research*, 23 (1), pp. 2-11.

RITCHIE, B. 1999. Mega Events and Human Rights. In: Taylor, T. (ed) How do you Play the Game? Papers from the First International Conference on Sports and Human Rights. University of Technology. Sidney

ROCHE, M. 1994. Mega-Events and Urban Policy. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21, pp. 1-19.

ROCHE, M. 2000. Mega-Events and Modernity – Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture. Routledge. London

SEARLE, G. 2002. Uncertain Legacy: Sydney's Olympic Stadiums, *European Planning Studies,* 10 (7), pp.845-860.

SHOVAL, N. 2002. A New Phase in the Competition for the Olympic gold: The London and New York Bids for the 2012 Games', *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24 (5), pp. 583-599.

SMITH, A. 2006. After the Circus Leaves Town: The Relationship between Sports Events, Tourism and Urban Regeneration'. In Smith, M.K. (ed.) *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*. CABI

SMITH, M. 2003. Issues in Cultural Tourism. Routledge. London.

SPILLING, O.R. 2003. Beyond Intermezzo? On the Long-Term Industrial Impacts of Mega-Events – The Case of Lillehammer 1994. *Festival Management and Event Tourism*, 5, pp. 101-122.

SWART, K. and Bob, U. 2004. The Seductive Discourse of Development: the Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid', *Third World Quarterly*, 25 (7), pp.1311-1324.

VIGOR, A., Mean,M. and Tims,C. 2004. Introduction. In: Vigor, A. et al (eds) After the Gold Rush: A Sustainable Olympics for London. IPPR/DEMOS.London

WAITT, G. 1999. Playing Games with Sydney: Marketing Sydney for the 2000 Olympics. *Urban Studies*, 36 (7), pp.1055-1077.

Gabriel Silvestre
University of Westminster
School of Architecture and the Built Environment
Centre for Tourism
35 Marylebone Rd
London NW1 5LS
campossalles@hotmail.com