ABSTRACT

Rio de Janeiro is going to host two of the most known mega-events of the world in the coming years: the FIFA World Cup, in 2014, and the Olympic Games, in 2016. Therefore, strategic projects to improve key parts of the city have been developed, inspired on the urban transformations that occurred in Barcelona, due to the Olympic Games in 1992. On the whole, mega-events have already demonstrated to be an efficient conductor of urban transformation. However, they are part of a process that shifts the urban planning logic, aiming at a more just and democratic city to the market orientated perspective. As far as the mega-events in Rio de Janeiro are concerned, the expectations of the population, scholars and politicians are high and the opinions are diverse. In any case, the reality demonstrates big challenges involving mobility, security and basic infrastructure, not to mention the large housing deficit, the so-called favelas [slums]. The proposals seem to be opposite from the good practices in terms of urban planning that have been happening worldwide. In this scenario, this article presents some critical views on the process for hosting mega-events and their influence on the urban context in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Keywords: Rio de Janeiro; mega-events; the Olympic Games 2016; the FIFA World Cup 2014; urban transformation.

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SPORT MEGA-EVENTS AND URBAN ENTERPRENERISM

The realization of international sports events in the cities worldwide had different perspectives in the past decades. Formerly, the cities that hosted the events used to either have the infrastructure to accomplish it or provide it while still remaining on a smaller scale, basically focused on the specific necessities to supply the event, not reaching the power to conduct the investments in the city.

Nowadays, this scenario has changed and the mega-events are considered driving forces of urban transformation. The Olympic games in Barcelona, in 1992, is considered to be a mark of this thinking. It urged the urban conversion in the city, brought the participation of the private sector into it’s decisions and even created in the imaginary of the visitors and of some residents, two histories for the city: before and after the games.

The current mega-events packet includes mobility projects, real state developments, revitalizations of entire areas, city marketing (tourism),
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construction of new sports facilities according to new standards (usually hard to simply adapt to the existing ones), and a new level of articulation on the city dynamic through polarization or new centers. They instigate the association with progress in people’s minds, arguing that the country will be the focus of the entire world during this moment.

Taking into consideration Harvey’s (2001) perspective, it is possible to notice that the realization of mega-events has become a strategy to encourage the circulation of worldwide capital, taking advantage through commodification of culture, urban land, following neoliberal policy, gathering public and private interests. It stimulates the economy of the host city, attracting entrepreneurs, tourists, and business.

In this sense, to implement such strategy, there should be a social consensus toward the “priority strategies” of investments. Compans (2004, p.20) claims that the increasing participation of the private sector on the management of public services aims to create this consensus; by introducing business rationality in public administration and creating justifications for the actions that do not present benefits for the major part of the population.

The realization of mega-events in the near future in Rio de Janeiro has been guiding the urban intervention for the coming years and fostering transformations. It is possible to notice very orientated market strategies, with which the public government overlaps the principals of a democratic society and leaves behind projects that might encounter the challenges that the city faces, attending the priorities established by the realization of both events.

According to Häußermann und Siebel (1993), this process of city managing is also known as “Festivalization of Politics”, which considers the mega-events as strategies to accelerate the urban development and to bring notoriety to a certain city and to its mayor.

In Rio de Janeiro’s case, it started twenty years ago. The former mayor Cesar Maia had been trying to host the games since his first administration in 1993. He is not the mayor anymore, but he is considered to be an important person and the current follows the same logic of administration. Some scholars argue that Rio de Janeiro has been in the Maia’s Era for about 20 years.

His inspiration came from Barcelona, with the success the Olympic games in 1992, which were considered a successful model by many Brazilian politicians and entrepreneurs, worthy of emulation.

Thus, in 1992 Rio de Janeiro hosted the global forum of United Nations: Summit Conference on Sustainable Development of the Earth - ECO 92, which brought some international repercussions for the city, motivating the entrepreneurs and decision makers to move toward this orientation.

In this context, in 1993, Cesar Maia contracted the Catalan consultant, TUBSA Group [Tecnologías Urbanas Barcelona, S.A.], the same consultants that worked in Barcelona, to design a plan for the city - Plano Estratégico do Rio de Janeiro [Strategic Plan for Rio de Janeiro], including the realization of the Olympic games as part of the goals of the city. Thenceforth, the city applied the selection process three times (in 1996, in 2002 and in 2009) succeeding in 2009.
On the one hand, Rio’s second attempt for the Olympics games had an evaluation from the International Olympic Committee, which declared that the city was the worst in terms of security, mobility, and accommodation among the others, not reaching the qualifiers.

On the other hand, Rio de Janeiro succeeded with the last application, in 2009, earning the right to host the Olympic games of 2016. Actually, it does not mean that the index of security, mobility, and accommodation had improved. It means, in fact, that the interest brought Rio de Janeiro as the flavor of the month.

The Dossiê Rio 2016 (2008), a brochure produced for the contest, presents an optimist scenario with simplified maps and graphics presenting a city with all the possibilities to host such mega-event, however the reality brings challenges that are not included in these proposals.

Most of the proposals concerning urban interventions affect direct swamp areas; low-income neighborhoods, slums, historical sites that are treated as invisible elements, what could be interpreted as manipulation of data or omission of information. For instance, the schematic maps demonstrate that the sports venues easily connected; however the mobility in this city is one of the largest issues. Another example is the security plan, which treats the city as something under control and emphasizing defenses against terrorism attacks as the main problem; but in a ordinary level, violence are daily experienced in many area in the city, usually involving drug dealers and police.

Nevertheless, a relevant fact is that in the last candidacy the three levels of the entities of the federation have committed themselves to heavily invest public budget on the project, to reach the standards required to host the event.

It demonstrates that cities that host the mega-events nowadays are the ones that are more willing to meet the requirements of the Organizational Institutions, FIFA and ICO, with a market oriented planning, for business, formenting real estate markets and media production, rather than simple deserving or being able to do it.

RIO DE JANEIRO AS A GLOBAL CITY

The interventions concerning the mega-events in Rio de Janeiro follow the same ideal of Barcelona’s: they are willing to make a mark in the history; thus, they aim to contribute to reach the global city status. The document states that it is the first time that the Olympic games are going to take place in Latin America, attracting a high level of special attention.

Global Cities is a concept elaborated by Saskia Sassen (1994) to characterize London, New York and Tokyo, regarding the metropolises that provide modern communication services necessary for the realization of the global economic operations. They tend to concentrate the headquarters of the companies, especially the ones that have business in different countries, and provide high technology to ensure the globalization of the economy.

Sharing this point of view, Castells (1996; 1998) illustrates the global city describing the facilities, such as banks, stock exchanges, credit institutions and
insurance companies, hotels (luxury) for senior officials of multinational companies and government agents that are equipped with appropriate services (skilled labor) to ensure the movement of financial capital, the hard core of the modern economy and information society.

In Rio de Janeiro, the economy is based 74.7% on services; 15.1% with public services and 10.3% with industries. In the national context, the city has the second highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP), participating with about 5.1%. The services are based on communication services from television companies, telecommunication companies, spreading ideas and influencing a large percentage of the population through image production. Tourism is also an important sector that heats the economy.

The activity that has been fomenting the economy of the state of Rio de Janeiro is related to the extraction of minerals and petrol and their commercialization through the stock market and exportation (China), stressing international trade.

Curi, Knijni and Mascarenhas, (2008) affirms that cities from developing countries aims to be considered as global city status as an auto-affirmation of its economic potential and capacity and for this, they use the realization of the mega-events for international repercussion, as their moment in the world’s eye.

There are potential consumers for the mega-event’s sponsor’s products, encouraging consumerism and the circulation of the capital worldwide.

It is possible to identify diverse reasons to justify the realization of both mega-events in Rio de Janeiro and in Brazil, and this also provide us a reflection concerning the public administration.

The urban planning for Rio de Janeiro is currently mega-events orientated, neither covering the entire city nor the real challenges, and in the worst case, presenting proposals that increase segregation, anger and breaking with any kind of popular participation.

This way of governing may be considered as “urban propaganda” (Carvalho da Silva, 2010), concentrating efforts to improve the packages in order to realize superficial and short-term works, rather than contents, invisible and long-term works to solve the real problems of the city.

As a matter of fact, the mega-events in Brazil have been used as an excuse to circumvent the legislation with exceptional rules, and considering that everything is possible and it is a priority, even if the projects just present immediate and temporary results - but still require high budgets.

THE PROPOSALS FOR THE MEGA-EVENTS

The Olympic games have been taken as a turning point in the history of the city, to modify its image associated with poverty and violence. In terms of urban infrastructure, they boosted many projects, not only their acceleration but also their implementation.

The areas for the Games are located in different parts of the city, and all the effort is concentrated to improve those specific spots, simply beautifying the
The proposals for the mega-events in Rio de Janeiro do not present anything new or different regarding urbanity from the other editions of the sport mega-events around the world. Sharing this thought with Curi, Knijni and Mascarenhas (2008), the areas related to the Games are going to become ‘perfect urban bubbles’, demonstrating that it is possible to have the little developed country in the city, like a Disney World moment.

Thus, the interventions create gated public spaces, closed and controlled, isolating the area from the rest of the city (arguing that it is due to security reasons), but it also selects the area that can be seen and shown by the participant and media. This has already happened during the Pan American Games realized in Rio de Janeiro in 2007, when some walls were constructed as a barrier around the sport facilities.

Although the city has a diverse society in cultural, economic, and social terms, the cosmopolitanism does not seem to be taken into consideration in the proposals. The event is focused on a certain target group and is going to happen at specific places, everything selected and planned to foment the specific image in people’s minds.

The problem is that all these actions have been conducting the projects as well as the large amount of the public investments and for the next years, remaining in a top-bottom planning, decided by politicians and entrepreneurs, which insist to affirm that “they know what is good for the city”.

The advances of the national urban legislation (Estatuto da Cidade, 2001), regulated by the master plan for the city (Revisão do Plano Diretor do Rio de Janeiro, 2006) have currently been put aside as a formal attitude, and so do the effort from the technician of the municipality and the community to have a participatory process. Unfortunately, the manifestations, forums and public discussion do not achieve greater effects.

THE URBAN INTERVENTIONS

Rio de Janeiro knowingly divided in two parts: rich and poor; respectively South Region (South Zone and Barra da Tijuca) and North Region (City Center, North Zone and West Zone).

For the FIFA World Cup 2014, the city is going to host some matches together with other 12 Brazilian cities, including the prominent final match at the Maracanã Stadium, located on the North Zone close to the city center.

The public investments cover the projects in terms of sport facilities, mobility (infrastructure), accommodation and security. But, there is lack of information regarding the planning of the city and the real legacy after the games. It is important to mention that the implementation of the mobility projects has been evicting population from entire areas to create the bus corridor and more expressways, without proper indemnification, violating human rights.
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The Olympic Games proposals affect more intensively the urban fabric spread on the territory and with heavy investments, even shifting its dynamic, from the city center and South Zone to the Port Area and Barra da Tijuca.

The projects are going to be in four zones, two in the South: Barra Zone, Copacabana Zone; and two in the Central-North region: Maracanã Zone and Deodoro Zone.

Barra da Tijuca is the main site to host the Olympic games, with the Olympic Park (site with most of the sport facilities), the village for the athletes and the village for the media. The neighborhood is from the 1970s, presenting characteristics of the American suburbs, being a car oriented area, with shopping malls, luxury condos and high income residents.

The realization of the event in this area realizes the desire of the image production, allowing Rio de Janeiro to affirm itself as a rich city with a “high standard” of life.

The urban interventions and the plans have already been impacting the property market lately, and the corridor between Recreio and Barra da Tijuca, for instance, raised property prices more than 50% in 2010.

The Copacabana Zone is also a high-income area. It is considered the best area in terms of urban infrastructure (metro, buses, drainage, sewage, gas), restaurants and hotels. The main touristic spots of Rio de Janeiro, such as the Copacabana beach, the Christ Redeemer and the Sugarloaf cable car, surround it.

This zone presents a very consolidated region, with high density, difficult to realize the kind of large-scale intervention needed, such as the construction of sports facilities. On the other hand, it could not be left out. Therefore, temporary intervention will be arranged, such as a beach volleyball arena, or running events in the street.

The Maracanã Zone, located not far from the city center, and this Zone has two stadiums: Maracanã Stadium and the João Havelange Stadium.
The Maracanã Stadium is part of a sport complex from 1950, constructed to host the World Cup of that year. It has the gymnasium (Maracanãzinho), swimming complex (Parque Aquático Júlio Delamare) and athletic arena (Estádio de Atletismo Célio de Barros). Only the stadium is being renovated to reach the requirements of FIFA.

The stadium is part of the heritage buildings of the city, totally constructed with concrete and it was the world's largest stadium by capacity, when it was inaugurated. The project has been heavily criticized due to the modification that de-characterizes the original architecture, including destruction of the concrete stands and the concrete coverage. Besides, it involves high public budget and delay on the schedule.

The João Havelange Stadium was constructed for the Pan-American Games in 2007. Actually, part of the project that included the surroundings, a plaza and the parking was not implemented, causing chaos in the neighborhood for every game. Most of the streets are very straight, presenting a small-scale urban fabric with older buildings retaining colonial architecture.

However, with the implementation of the sport facilities, this area has become the target of the real estate market, increasing the value of the land, and attracting new residents, and transforming the area, replacement of the old colonial houses, emerging the gentrification process.

The Deodoro Zone is a military Area, with low density. It is far from the city center and surrounded by some very violent neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro, such as Realengo and Bangu. Therefore, it seems to be an island, isolated and apart from the city. The realization of the Olympic games is going to bring a park built outside the military zone. The mobility project is going to improve access to this side of the city, renovating the station of the existent train line, and replacing the cars. These actions can be considered positive and are going to work as a legacy for this location that lacks infrastructure.

However, the predominant reason to choose the area is not the necessity of investments in the neighborhood that lives far out with low mobility, but to build specific sport facilities that are usually more related to Military Sport, and necessary for the Olympics Games, such as Sport Shooting Center, equestrianism, fencing arena, Park of Modern Pentathlon etc.

Some facilities were built for the Pan American Game 2007, increasing the number of existent sport facilities, with the intention to emphasize the justification of the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Apart from the Olympic spots, the anchor project is the Porto Maravilha Urban Operation converting the former port area. The main idea is to create new centrality in Rio de Janeiro, bringing a new economic role to the area.

The intention is to attract Real Estate investments with towers from 10 to 50 stories high for residential, commerce and service uses. At the present time, low-income families occupy the area and the project does not present concrete plans including these people.

The project aims to renovate the area, bringing “new people”, which tends to be exclusionary and might also generate a gentrification process. Once more,
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the argument of “internationalization”, to be contemporary and modern, prevails over the local needs.

It consists of Public Private Partnership, which the concessionary company responsible for the renovation and maintenance of the urban infrastructure, currently lead by the Urban Development of the Port Area Company - CDURP.

The project based on a statutory framework that shifts the uses of the land and allowing higher index of land occupation. The additional indexes are obtained through CEPACS (Certificado de Potencial Adicional de Construção - CEPACS) in public auctions held at the Stock market.

The surpluses should be invested on the urban renovation of the area. At the present time, investment in the area receives tax reduction by the municipality, which means that the investors receive twice, once constructing as high as they wish (paying for that), improving the area that they are implementing and paying less taxes.

In general, the project includes piers for cruise ships, extension of the plaza Mauá and requalification of the urban space through the destruction of the elevated way and the construction of an underground tunnel (which hides the problem, but does not solve the traffic. This is with high costs.

Plus cultural projects as museums, including one by the famous Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava that can be considered an element to instigate in the imaginary of the people the “global city” image.

It is favorable to give special attention to the port area location that is part of the origins of the city and is currently sub-used. However, it is very questionable the way that this transformation has been happening as well as the ones to be benefited by it.

Close to the port area is the historical center of Rio de Janeiro, home to large amounts of heritage architecture, with lack of maintenance, a high level of vacant houses, degraded buildings, and places with low quality of urban environment. This area asks for strategies to rescue and reinforce the historical identity of the city, but, unfortunately, it is not included in the mega-events packet.

THE MEGA-EVENTS CONDUCTING PUBLIC POLICIES

It is possible to notice that the mega-events have also been conducting public polices regarding actions at the informal settlements. Two of the most relevant programs concerning informal settlements, are first going to happen in the surrounding areas of the sport facilities until the realization of the Olympic Games 2016. Then, as the last priority are the other slums in the town, regardless of how poor the situation is.

The programs are the UPPs [Pacifatory Police Units] and the Morar Carioca [Living Carioca]. The table below demonstrates the priority criteria that the municipality has used to choose the locations to receive the interventions:
Table 5: Criteria to choose slums to be urbanized by the Morar Carioca Program. Source: Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro - SMH 2011

The map below illustrates the location of the priority area in which the Morar Carioca [Living Carioca] program is going to intervene in the coming years.

Figure 57: Slums to be urbanized by the Morar Carioca Program for the Olympic Games 2016. Source: Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro - SMH

It seems that the municipality assumes that everything is so “chaotic” that it does not really matter where to intervene, as long as they guarantee the security for the Olympic games.
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The informal settlements of the city (the *favelas* in Portuguese) are all the way around the urban territory, usually concentrated up to the hills. They are characterized by the absence of urban code and laws, no order regarding the construction of the houses (spacing between the buildings), and unregulated housing market.

Usually the local leaderships stipulate the rules and control them, as a parallel order. Although the informal settlements co-exist in the whole city, there is a large concentration of them in the North and West Zones.

The complexities that concern the security issues in Rio de Janeiro are known; therefore, the government has developed another strategy to fight against the violence. The new proposals for the security police in the *favelas* are the UPPs [Pacifying Police Units].

After the exhaustive violent actions with an immediate character, the combination Elite Square plus the implementation of a permanent civil police has presented positive results in the action, usually without confrontation and less aggression.

Firstly, the elite squat (BOPE or CORE) invades the area, using the *Caveirão* [big skull], an armored vehicle that is driven through the *favelas* intimidating the residents and criminals.

Then, the military police enter and install a unit, which remains in place. This is going to be maintained at least until the realization of the Olympic Games 2016. In two years, thirteen Peacemakers Police Units have been constructed and installed. There is a high concentration of policemen in these areas.

Ferreira (2008), on the other hand, describes that it is not possible to live within a dual regulatory model, so the next steps of the UPPs are regulations concerning the occupation of the land, commercial and services activities, ending up with urban regulations. This movement of legalization of the *favelas* involves municipal and state responsibilities.

There are initiatives from the municipality to formalize the services in the slums and provide the urbanization of the areas, through land regularization, formalizing activities/services and with the program *Morar Carioca* [Living Carioca], which is a new version of the program *Favela-Bairro* [Neighborhood-Slum].

The *Morar Carioca* program has been implemented now, but the studies regarding the *Favela-Bairro* projects demonstrated works regarding urban infrastructure; and the social integration projects are superficially covered.

The projects present strategies that encounter the palliative needs of the *favelas*, not reaching the origins of such problem. But even so, the acceptance by the population has been high since these projects address some of the problems that affect their daily life.

Concerning these projects, there are relevant topics that are difficult to be approach, such as the corruption in the system, demonstrating the involvement of the police, politicians, big entrepreneurs and residents in illegal services and products in the *favelas*, revealed in 2007 through the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry.
The success of both programs, the UPPs [Pacification Police Units] and the Morar Carioca [Living Carioca], is very important not only to bring the feeling of security for the people, but also to motivate the investors and tourists to go to Rio de Janeiro. Therefore, the speeches of the politicians regarding the mega-events emphasize these programs as part of the main legacy.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is possible to notice an imbalance of the benefits for the population with the realization of the mega-events in Rio de Janeiro. By hosting such mega-events, the priorities in the city agenda might not correspond to the real necessities of the population and challenges of the city.

The location of the Olympic Areas reveals contrasts of effort, where the richer areas receive more investments, and the poorer ones receive less or none. Thus, the projects might emphasize the social segregation, isolating, selecting and controlling the access of the people, in this very segregate city.

The real issues that are present in Rio de Janeiro are in fact national issues in Brazil, such as housing deficit, lack of urban infrastructure, low education, unemployment, early pregnancy, diseases, etc, and the plan indicates they will not substantially approached in the future.

The proposals encounter some necessities of the city, mainly concerning the public transportation and renovation of open areas. But, most of the urban interventions present immediate results, and inevitably, the amount of effort and public budget for this.

The logic behind the realization of the mega-events runs against the good practices that area happening worldwide, which creates more dialogs between locals and municipality.

The end result is that the plan realization represents the refusal to any kind of democratic system, which demonstrates the breaking of the politicians' commitment to provide a better city for its citizens.

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