

THE FALLACIES OF STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING: URBAN MARKETING, BARCELONA MODEL, AND MEGA-EVENTS¹

LAS FALACIAS DE LA PLANIFICACIÓN ESTRATÉGICA: MARKETING URBANO, MODELO BARCELONA Y MEGAEVENTOS

NAS TRAMAS E FALÁCIAS DO PLANEJAMENTO URBANO ESTRATÉGICO: *MARKETING* URBANO, MODELO BARCELONA E MEGAEVENTOS

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Abstract

Mega-events are often considered to be catalysts of urban transformation. They are perceived as a great opportunity to advertise the host cities globally. Therefore, focusing on the Barcelona Model, the strategic urban planning and urban regeneration built upon the 1992 Olympic Games have become a Barcelona model for several stakeholders. This paper intends to critically examine the strategies and implications of the Barcelona Model, urban development, and renewal schemes in the Catalan capital. More specifically, it aims to provide a critical geographic analysis of the impacts of such schemes on the residents. Furthermore, it could give us clues about the extent to which the urban renewal changes taken place in Barcelona affected the core of what constitutes public governance practices and urban entrepreneurialism.

Key words: Barcelona model, mega-events and evictions, urban marketing, strategic urban planning.

Resumen

Megaeventos son a menudo considerados como catalizadores de transformación urbana. Ellos son vistos como oportunidad para proyectar las ciudades anfitrionas. Una profunda atracción en la planificación estratégica y el éxito del proceso de regeneración urbana obtenido en el marco de los Juegos Olímpicos de 1992 consiguieron llamar la atención de muchos agentes sobre el modelo Barcelona. De esa manera en este artículo se hace una discusión crítica sobre la transformación urbana experimentada por la ciudad catalán. Además se evalúa el impacto de los preparativos de Barcelona'92 en el acceso a la vivienda y en los desalojos de los grupos afectados. Se trata también de entender cómo la planificación estratégica impuesta en Barcelona impulsó los proyectos, planes y programas derivadas de coaliciones públicas y privadas. Por lo tanto, este artículo analiza la trayectoria de las implicaciones socio-territoriales de los megaeventos deportivo español a través de una reflexión sobre todo geográfica.

Palabras clave: modelo Barcelona, megaeventos y desahucios, marketing urbano, planificación estratégica urbana.

Resumo

Frequentemente, considerados como catalisadores de transformação urbana, os megaeventos têm sido associados, outrossim, como ensejo de projetar globalmente as cidades-sede. À luz desse fenômeno, tanto o fascínio pelo planejamento estratégico, quanto o processo de regeneração urbana desvelado, sobretudo, por meio da edição dos Jogos Olímpicos de 1992, instigaram a atenção de diversos agentes no modelo Barcelona. Neste sentido, este artigo retoma a discussão crítica acerca da transformação urbana vivenciada pela cidade catalã, ponderando os impactos das preparações do megaevento esportivo Barcelona'92 no acesso à moradia, nas remoções e desalojos dos grupos afetados. Trata-se, enfim, de compreender como o planejamento

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estratégico esboçado em Barcelona impôs toda sorte de eventos, planos e programas resultantes de coalizões públicas e privadas. Além disso, o presente artigo analisa a trajetória das implicações sócio-territoriais do megaevento esportivo espanhol por meio de uma reflexão precipuamente geográfica.

Palavras-chave: modelo Barcelona, megaeventos e remoções, *marketing* urbano, planejamento urbano estratégico.

Introduction

With the basic objective of hosting the Olympic Games, Barcelona's 92 bid and preparations were largely motivated and captivated by the desires to express the achievements and nationalism of the Catalonian community (Essex; Chalkley, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000). It has passed about 70 years since there was a previous possibility to host the editions of the Games, in 1924, by the *Ciudad Condal*.

In addition, since the 1888 and 1929 Universal Expositions to the 2004 Forum Universal de las Culturas and the project22@Barcelona - *El Districte de la Innovació*, the city of Barcelona has been explicitly using strategic actions that culminated into profound transformations of essentially physical, political-ideological, and symbolic character. The success of a strategic planning process oriented to strengthen the image of the city and the emergence of the phenomenon of urban regeneration, mostly by the 1992 Olympic Games, has triggered the interest from a variety of stakeholders in the Catalonian model. Understanding it was essential to reproduce both the strategic elements and its base-ideas, which have also raised dilemmas, polemics, and questionings about its efficiency or inefficiency in other areas of intervention. Along the modern history of the Olympic Games, some host cities have restlessly sought to reproduce the Catalonian urban transformation process more than other hosts for many reasons. In view of this, some economic factors within local and international contexts have played a key role in determining the level of investments in infrastructure and urban marketing also. In this respect, qualifying them as an opportunity to achieve strategic elements in the urban agenda, Hiller (2006) underlines the existence of other rationales involved in the "schemes" of hosting a mega-event, in addition to the mere offering of sport competition facilities. In other words, much attention has been given to the "fallacies" of "economic impact and to tourism in hosting the Olympics" than, simply, manifesting the sportive spirit and/or uttering the legacy of sports competition (p. 317-318).

Indeed, by making a historical synthesis of such sports mega-events, it is possible to realize that, before 1960, the editions of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games were considered as relatively small-scale events. They were sporting events with “modest investments in urban infrastructure” (Essex; Chalkley, 2003), in addition to the construction of some sports facilities, when they did not exist yet in the host city. Since 1960,¹ the Olympic Games, precisely the Summer Games, began encompassing great urban transformations which have become strategic and tactic tools to regional development, urban planning, and economic growth. According to Horne (2007, p. 93), among the many factors mentioned therein, the intense dispute among cities to host sporting mega-events² has become known for the following theses:

- i. First, the proliferation of new mass and communication technologies, especially the development of satellite television, has enabled preceding global audiences for events such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup;
- ii. Second, mega-events are seen both as useful for the sale of all kinds of commercial products and as valuable opportunities for the promotion of host cities, reinforcing the city image, and contributing to local tourism and external investments;
- iii. In the case of sports competitions, mega-events have been economically seen as a “profitable industry” around which the host cities can develop local and regional economic revitalization, fostering the upper accumulation circuit;
- iv. Urbanistically, such events have been disseminated as fostering mechanisms to interventions of urban renewal, gentrification, flagship development, waterfront development, etc.

In any case, sporting mega-events, precisely the editions of the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup, have become catalysts for urban transformation (mega)projects. However, according to the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), these events have equally caused negative impacts on the issue of housing access in host cities (COHRE, 2007). Unfortunately, since the Seoul Olympic Games, in 1988, it can be observed the growth of forced removals associated with transformations produced under the combined effect of (sports) mega-events preparations, urban and sporting infrastructure projects, impacts of human rights

violations, etc. In the case of Barcelona '92, the construction of Olympic facilities and other associated projects affected over 600 families.

Therefore, it is thought-provoking and essential to analyze how a sporting mega-event has equally threatened the right to housing in local communities affected by the transformations that took place during the run-up to Barcelona '92. In this respect, this paper initially addresses the urban transformation experienced by the city of Barcelona, directly regarding the strategic planning oriented to the urban revitalization process, the so-called Barcelona model and its city marketing in its multiple dimensions. The following section evokes the impacts of the preparations for this mega-event on access to housing, both in accessibility and availability of housing in Barcelona and in its metropolitan region. Next, I highlight the evictions and removals of groups affected by the 1992 Olympic Games, leading to the reflection about the aspects related to the issues of housing access of involved stakeholders. At last, it is about the understanding of how the strategic planning conceived in Barcelona has imposed all sorts of plans and programs resulting from political and private agreements. Generally speaking, it is necessary to analyze the trajectory of the social and territorial implications of this sporting mega-event in question, delineated by means of an essentially geographic reflection.

From a Strategic Project to an Urban Marketing Project: The Barcelona Model

Roughly, in response to the population explosion, the medieval walls' demolition began in 1854. After six years, Idelfonso Cerdà's *Plan de los Alrededores de la Ciudad de Barcelona y proyecto de su Reforma y Ensanche*³ (see Image 1) were adopted. The so-called Ensanche was effectively concluded around the 1920's. In those times, there already existed certain elucidative concern in regard to the imbrications of the design and direction of urban public policies as a response to population density. For this reason, "in the 1920's and 30's, there was a creative effort to plan Barcelona's future growth in the Catalanian region as a whole. In 1920, clearly inspired by Ebenezer Howard, the idea was proposed by the Societat Cívica La Ciutat Jard " (Naylon, 1981, p. 231).

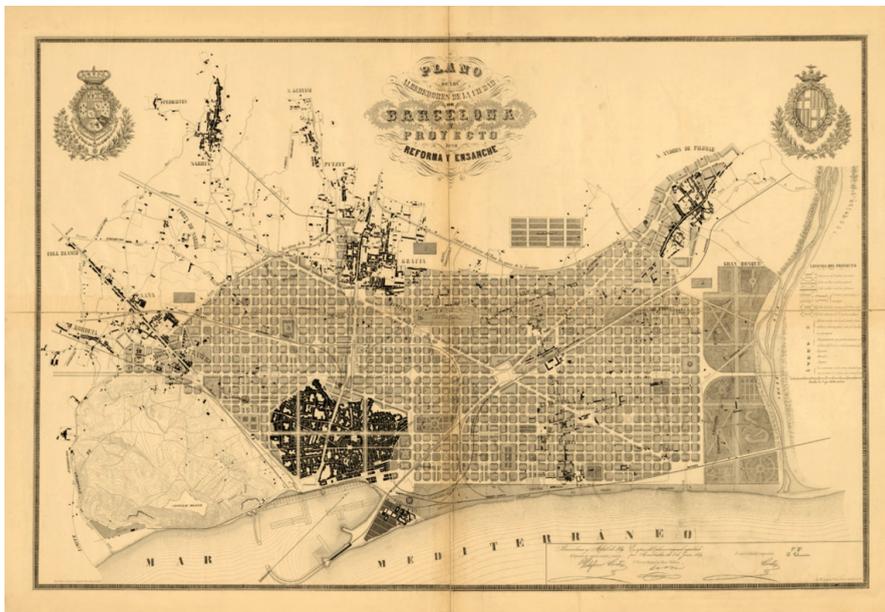


Image 1 - *Plan de los Alrededores de la Ciudad de Barcelona y Proyecto de su Reforma y Ensanche*, in 1861. Reproduction, according to the original plan by Ildefonso Cerdà, from 1859.

Source: *Instituto Cartogàfic de Catalunya*.

Indeed, the urban sprawl of Barcelona and its spatial planning, likewise, reflect the political climate of Franco's Spain⁴ between 1939 and 1975. It is important to note that such planning was based on context generated by the conflicts between political groups and social classes: "Barcelona is an example of what can happen when urban growth is left to the uncontrolled play of market forces, with private entrepreneurs amassing profits without regard to social effects" (Naylon, 1981, p. 224). The city has become a large enclosure of urban and regional concentration in northeastern Spain, bringing together industrial activities and, consequently, intensifying migration fluxes and the expansion of its urban area.

Monclús (2010b) argues that the profound and undeniable urban transformation undergone in the late twentieth century by Barcelona was forged by the 1992 Olympic Games. Based on the strategic planning, in favor of a more competitive and attractive city, such a process has become

known as the “Barcelona model”. As a consequence, this model has been referred to and replicated by many other cities as one of the most representative city planning, reinforcing both the tendency of competition among cities and the character of public policies as a tool of support. Since then, the equally acknowledged “compact city model” (Busquets, 2004; Capel, 2009) has turned the Catalanian city into a “target of international attention and has been specifically analyzed from different perspectives by economists, geographers, and urban planners” (Monclús, 2010b, p. 268).

In short, for Coaffee (2010, p. 186):

The “Barcelona Model” has encompassed several important urban resources that other countries later tried to replicate. Those encompass long-term vision and strategy, excellence in urban design, as well as the importance of well-funded social programs.

Within a strictly productive area, the goal was to (re)build a *spirit* of the city’s meaningful identity and a sense of ownership of the urban restructuring process, especially since the 1980s, the period of the Spain’s transition to democracy. Notably, it was a series of spatial interventions via a strategic and operational planning, paving the way for a desired economic and social development within a local and regional reach.

Furthermore, “a belief that seems to be widespread is that the true success of the Barcelona Olympic Games was a result of the transformation experienced by the city through a series of actions that would normally take decades and lasted only six years” (Monclús, 2010b, p. 269). In this sense, the Barcelona success mentioned above in regard to the planning strategically oriented to the urban regeneration through the organization of the Olympic Games has had profound implications for urban managers and planners around the world. Probably, the greatest impact in the UK, where the rhetoric surrounding the contemporary urban renaissance was largely influenced by Barcelona’s experience: “such a drive of urban policy owes a great deal to the architect Lord Richard Rogers, who oriented the seafront development in Barcelona” (Coaffee, 2010, p. 187).

From the desired goal of hosting an edition of the Olympic Games, it was clearly advocated that:

Los juegos fueron una excusa para atraer y concentrar infraestructuras en la ciudad y en su área metropolitana, con los objetivos de contrarrestar la crisis económica 1975-1980, que produjo un alto nivel de paro, así como para reducir el déficit de infraestructuras metropolitanas.⁵ (Clusa, 1999, p. 87)

Based on this statement, the territorial changes – followed by the dynamization of the new spatiality originated from the Barcelona experience – express the socio-temporal materialization of the logic as well as of the strategic, operational and management actions on the Catalan regional and urban organization.

Busquets (2004) strongly highlights the importance of these sporting mega-events for the onset of territorial and urban arrangements in which the urban governance have played an essential role both in spatial and institutional dynamics. It is assumed that the implementation of urban projects strategically based on areas “susceptible” to urban regeneration, which were indicated in the Barcelona ‘92 Olympic Program, have forged such arrangements.

Following this dynamics, some renewal projects and spatial interventions from the urban program designed for the 1992 Games effectively started in mid-1982, even before the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, in 1984, and the election of the XXV Olympic Games’ host city at the 91st Session of the International Olympic Committee, in 1986. Formulated even before the European summer of 1986, the then mayor Pasqual Maragall assumed the execution of urban projects, which were secured by investments guaranteed in the premises of the aforementioned program (Busquets, 2004).

Therefore, by raising the true role of the state regarding contemporary changes in territorial pattern and economic policy modification in the urban scenario, Monclús (2010a) asserts that the 1992 Olympics were used as a booster agent for the city strategic projects and in the dynamics of the Catalan territory. Hence, the main sources of urban policy in Barcelona aimed at turning the city more competitive and dynamic, emphasizing the phenomena of “place promotion” and urban regeneration (Monclús, 2010b, p. 282). Thus, it has contributed to new spatial economic patterns of production and consumption, whether explicit or implicit patterns.

In a perspective related to the issue of the symbolic capital, marks of distinction, and monopoly rent,⁶ Harvey (2005) maintains that,

whenever associated with the name of cities⁷ they have “an important power of attraction in relation to the most general capital flows” (p. 233). In this sense, from a Marxist spatial analysis and Anglo-Saxon bias, the author evokes the city of Barcelona as the great beneficiary of monopoly rent associated with the symbolic capital, in a relentless pursuit for the accumulation of marks of distinction:

It has been emphasized the investigation of the history and typical Catalan tradition, the marketing about its important artistic accomplishments and architectural heritage (Gaudí, of course), as well as its distinctive marks of lifestyle and literary traditions, with the support of a number of publications, exhibitions, and cultural events which celebrate distinction. Moreover, there has been new architectural embellishments (the Norman Foster radio antenna, the blazing white Meier Museum of Modern Art, in the midst of degrading buildings of the old town), heavy investments to allow easy access to the port and the beach, recovering vacant land for the Olympic Village [...], and the transformation of what used to be once an eerie and dangerous nightlife into an open panorama of urban spectacle. (p. 233-234)

Together with the implementation of strategic plannings conceived as part of an urban impulse, Barcelona has lost some of its marks of distinction and has incorporated not-at-all subtle signs “of Disneyfication” (Harvey, 2005, p. 234). Reflecting upon the extent to which certain urban and speculative elements have become powerful tools constituent of urban entrepreneurship, Harvey explains that “[...] the collective symbolic capital accumulated by Barcelona [depended on] the values of authenticity, singularity, and special non-replicable qualities”.

With regard to posterior phases of the Barcelona’92 model, Harvey (2005, p. 235) underlines that the “collective symbolic capital of Barcelona as a city” has been related to monopoly rent within a fierce global competition, headed by a “brand architecture”. In this respect, it must be mentioned the power commanded by urban governance through which the various marks of distinction yield monopoly rent. Being an object of capitalist fetish, monopoly rent is highlighted by capitalist appropriation via multiculturalism, monumentalism, fashion, aesthetics, and spectacle (Harvey, 2005). Therefore, whether intentional and functional, “monopoly rent is always an object of capitalist desire, the means of obtaining it through interventions in the fields of culture, history, heritage, aesthetics,

and meanings must necessarily be of great importance to capitalists of all kinds” (p. 237).

Obviously, the strategic planning model and applied urban regeneration in Barcelona became irresistible subsidies for the real estate market, developers, and other select stakeholders. Though, according to Muñoz (2006), the alleged socio-spatial lessons from the 1992 Olympic Program have not been entirely positive for two main reasons:

- i. First of all, the urban regeneration process considerably increased housing prices in the decades subsequent to the 1992 Olympic Games. It was a process that has been extended to the entire city, making it very difficult for the local population to have access to (social) housing. As a result of this unfortunate reality, in which select stakeholders have been privileged, a great number of families have left the city to live in other metropolitan areas.
- ii. Second, in parallel to this process, the renewal of several areas for the city’s tourism promotion has shown a very intense process of specialization of activities directly or indirectly connected with the world tourism economy.

Furthermore, Muñoz (2006) considers that the success of the Catalan capital as a tourist destination have had a definite positive attribute, not only in economical as in financial terms. Apparently, however, the initial goal to develop a diverse and integrated city, both in socio-spatial terms as in socio-economic angle, has not been reached entirely. There is no dispute over the achievement of the aforementioned model fashioned by Barcelona, but the perverse effects have also been present through a distribution of gentrification, segregation, exclusion, and dispossession.

In regard to the post-Barcelona’92 period, precisely around 1996, “the city’s concern to be [constantly] an international reference led the municipal management to organize the 2004 World Forum *Proyecto de las Culturas* in the region of Besos. [...] This time it is intended to create a new type of event – under the auspices of UNESCO – that deals with cultural diversity, the realm of peace and sustainable city” (Busquets, 2004, p. 430). The event management consortium has been formed by Spanish state members, the *Generalitat* (Government) of Catalonia and the Barcelona City Council (Clusa, 1999).

In fact, the area renovated to host the 2004 *Forum Universal de las Cultures* has equally shown a relative lack of quality of architectural projects (Busquets, 2004). Such a regenerated spatiality has forged a “new neighborhood and maritime center in Barcelona” (Bohigas, 2004). It is located in the neighborhoods of *Diagonal Mar i el Front Marítim del Poblenou*, *El Besòs i el Maresme* and *Poblenou*: the new landscape revealed along the coast of the Spanish town “resembles a kind of urban development secondhand to Florida, highly disconnected from the urban landscape and local culture, reproduced in a short time, that has generated profound disagreement among locals” (Muñoz, 2006, p. 183).

Re-organized during a short time lapse, the event *Forum Universal de las Cultures* has generated strong disagreements among local inhabitants and it has represented once again the ambitions from that 1992 “Olympic urbanism”: “to find a balance between the success in the global arena and solutions to the local social problems is nowadays as it used to be in 1992, the main challenge for the city” (Muñoz, 2006, p. 183).

During this post-Olympic period, a series of other infrastructural and urban renewals projects have been carried out. In this sense, Clusa (1999) criticizes the use of “(mega) events” as a strategic framework through which recent urban transformations have redefined the use and the access to the territory. The expanding urban and speculative dynamism has forged the use of extremely selective areas in this territory, which environment has favored the institution of productive tourist, cultural and creative spaces in the districts of *San Martí* (see Image 2) and *Ciutat Vella*. These areas have received a number of urban projects and programs, reshaping areas which used to be industrial and peripheral. Among them, it is vital to consider the *Plan de Barrios*, Barcelona Key design, and other URBAN projects, financed with European funds.

It is also worth mentioning that the existing articulation between production and consumption has been confirmed in another model and (mega) project of socio-spatial and economic transformation *paripassu* the formation of a new cluster of technological innovation: the 22@, also known as 22@Barcelona and *Districte de la innovació*. As a municipal initiative, it emerges in the year 2000 in order to incorporate 200 hectares of a pre-industrial area of *Poblenou* in an innovative and productive neighborhood. Thus, it was intended to strategically enable the creation of modern spaces for the setting up and concentration of scientific and technological enterprises.



Image 2 - Forum Area (on the back), between *Diagonal mar i el Fron Marítim del Poblenou* and *El Besòs I el Maresme*, district of *San Martí*, in the Northeastern area of Barcelona, in 2011.

The Negative Impacts of a Mega-Sporting Event on Housing Access

On the one hand, the city is committed to the capitalization of the space. On the other, it aims at the reconversion of its socio-economic and touristic profile, making it more competitive. Viewed from these perspectives, through massive investment in infrastructure, Barcelona has played a catalyzing role of spatial revitalization schemes: gentrification, urbanism business and fashion, ‘spectacularization’, urban marketing, etc. The city has engendered such schemes in an increasingly controlled process by the arrangements of the hegemonic capital and through the adoption of the urban planning formula, called strategic. Next, therefore, the “plots” were undone and the “fallacies” revealed: the valorization of real estate assets greatly accompanied such dynamism, enabling exclusive spaces, jeopardizing and damming the access to housing.

In this sense, the realization of the 1992 Olympic games have an equally negative on housing accessibility and availability in Barcelona and in its metropolitan region. According to surveys from the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) and from DESC Observatory

(2007), between the years of 1986 and 1992 – run-up period to the Olympics –, the price of housing escalated considerably in the Spanish city. There was an increase of about 240% in the prices of new homes between 1986 announcement of Barcelona's election as the host city and 1992, concluding the year of the Olympics. The number of housing units destined, preferably, to social rent went down. Even worse, the construction of new houses of social interest shrank considerably.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that there has been a lack of social housing policies targeted at the protection of less-favored groups and, as a result, largely affected by the mega-sporting event. Besides, many people have been displaced. About 624 families have been expelled from the areas designated as Olympic zones or from those associated with the realization of construction work of urban and sporting facilities. However, it is important to take into consideration that, during the preparation for Barcelona '92, some housing units have been offered to the families affected by the interventions and planned enterprises. In any event, compensation mechanisms have been set up by means of negotiations between the affected people and institutional bodies.

Increase of Housing Price

It is worth highlighting that, "from the 80's up to the present time, Barcelona has been characterized by a desire of internationalization via the organization of several events of global impact, trade fairs and congresses" (Pareja, 2010, p. 138). The city has outlined spatial (re)adjustments seeking international recognition by means of a heavy advertising promotion - and propagandist - with the strengthening of scenarios to the "ritual" of production, consumption, and public as well as private partnerships; however, "making it difficult to know who are the true stakeholders and what are the strategies" (Carreras, 1994, p. 113).

To paraphrase Queirós (2010), it is urgent to reflect on the importance of this territorial and business strategy by means of urban transformations in the "scheme" of a bourgeoisie championing positions and ideological-symbolic, capitalist, and selective discourses. In a word, "Barcelona is now the hub of a network of cities. It is in a process of expanding its service economy, although still with strong industry representation, the traditional economic base of the city and its metropolitan environment"

(Queirós, 2010, p. 13). Hence, the “urban driving force” in the city of Barcelona has been a strategic epicenter, largely impregnated with spatial arrangements (re)produced under the institution of gentrification spaces, regeneration, and urban segregation.

According to Muñoz (2006), the process of urban regeneration undertaken by Barcelona has caused the increase of housing price in the period just after Barcelona ‘92. This phenomenon has jeopardized the access to housing and encouraged the migratory fluxes within the *Barcelona Metropolitan Area*.

In this sense, given its unequal character of production space, the resulting enhancement of soil caused a significant impact on the access of local populations to affordable housing. During the run-up to the Olympic Games in 1992, there was an increase around 139% and 149% in house prices and rent, respectively (DESC Observatory, 2007).

Beginning in the second half of the 1980’s, that increase of housing price has been considered one of the major impacts of the persuasive urban growth of the Catalan capital (Tello; Martinez, 1994, p. 61). Up to 1992, the prices of real estate went up excessively, duplicating values. The same phenomenon did not occur in mid-1976 when the General Plan for Urban Planning of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area was approved. This plan, according to Valls (1998, p. 34),

disminuía substancialmente la edificabilidad global, aproximadamente en un 25%, y afectaba de equipamientos y zonas verdes a muchos solares que quedaban por edificar. Esto produjo una fuerte demanda de licencias de edificación con los estándares antiguos, licencias para las que existía interés en agotar el plazo de dos años para la obra, plazo que se prolongó luego con otro dos más. Es decir que viviendas según los antiguos estándares continuaban entrando en un mercado ya saturado incluso a principios de los 80.⁸

Market prices for new homes rose considerably, fueling speculation in the districts and neighborhoods of the city. Consequently, there was a reduction in the availability of properties for rent and no public housing policies targeted at disadvantaged groups, such as immigrants, migrants, homeless, gypsy families, etc.

Between 1986 and 1992, the number of new homes for sale increased by almost 101%. This increase, far from allowing access to housing, has had a negative impact on accessibility, also resulting in a

significant increase of the selling prices of new residential units. This increase, far from enabling access to housing, has had a negative impact on accessibility, also reflecting a significant enhancement of the selling prices of new residential units. As a result of new regulations on rents, the values of housing units for rent, similarly, increased in the period mentioned above.

Between 1986 and 1993 (years after the Olympic Games), the cumulative increase was almost 145% in prices of new homes. At the same time, the supply of rental homes gradually decreased: from 1981 to 1991, there was a decrease of 23.69%. The availability of public and social housing has been drastically reduced: between 1986 and 1992, there was a cumulative reduction of about 75.92% in available public housing. Indeed, while the Olympic Games have helped promote the “Barcelona” brand as an international tourist destination, they significantly favored, via real estate valuation, the housing price in the namesake city.

Removals

Now, even if a great part of the Olympic installations were built in “supposedly” non-residential areas, the urban projects have affected the total of 282 families, see Table 1. Such projects have eliminated four communities in the districts of *San Martí* and *Montjuïc: La Perona, Camp de La Bota, Transcementiri, and Can Valero Petit*. The mobility project has displaced around 195 families. In addition, 147 families have been removed from the *Poblenou* district for the construction of the Olympic Village. The report *Barcelona 1992: International Events and Housing Rights: A Focus on the Olympic Games* is emphatic in concluding that great part of the removals were not forced, as well as the relocation process of the affected groups enabled the construction of appropriate housing units and/or there was financial compensation or indemnification.

Three main areas were targeted for evictions: the first one comprehends a set of neighborhoods near the Olympic Village; a second region comprises the area where the *Montjuïc* hill is located (where the Olympic stadium and other sports facilities were located); and a third one included the neighborhoods where new ring roads (called rounds, in Spanish) were built.

Table 1 - Localization of communities and number of families affected by the 1992 mega-event.

Projects	Communities	Number of Affected Families	
Construction of the Olympic Village	Removals in <i>Poblenou</i>	147	
Construction of ring roads (<i>Ronda de Dalt</i>)	Removal from the community <i>Bloque Fantasma</i>	65	
	Removal from the community <i>Las Casas del Comandante</i>	18	
Connections with the ring roads outside Barcelona	Removal from the community <i>La Pata Norte (Santa Coloma de Gramanet)</i>	52	
	Removal from the community <i>La Pata Sul (L'Hospitalet de Llobregat)</i>	60	
Urban renewal projects	District of <i>Sant Martí</i>	Removal from the community <i>La Perona</i>	102
		Removal from the community <i>Camp de La Bota</i>	60
		Removal from the community <i>Transcamentiri</i>	100
	District of <i>Montjuïc</i>	Removal from the community <i>Can Valero Petit</i>	20
Total		624	

Source: DESC Observatory (2007). Elaborated by the author.

The construction and/or extension of ring roads, aimed to improve urban mobility in Barcelona and the access to the neighboring metropolitan areas, were included in the Olympic program for 1992. The constructions of *Rondas* equally facilitated traffic fluxes to and from competition facilities – distributed in four Olympic areas – which were used in the 1992 Summer Olympic Games. To this end, four communities were totally displaced with the construction of the *Ronda de Dalt: Bloque Ghost, Las Casas del Comandante, La Pata Norte* (located on the edge of the municipality of *Santa Coloma de Gramanet*) and *La Pata Sul* (in the metropolitan limits of *L'Hospitalet de Llobregat*).

Final Considerations

The construction and implementation of Olympic installations and other infrastructure associated to Barcelona '92 have affected the total of 624 families. This factor has enhanced removals statistics triggered by sporting mega-events and mega-projects of urban transformation and regeneration. Now, expanded by the Olympics, strategic and operational planning designed in the Catalan capital has affected all sorts of spatial and economic arrangements of production and consumption. Furthermore, we cannot forget that there was an increase of about 240% in house prices between 1986 and 1992. In addition to this situation, we must take into consideration the number of “displaced” and/or “evicted” residents who have been forced to settle in peripheral areas where the land and housing prices were more accessible.

Consequently, the city has benefited from monopolist rent attached to the symbolic and hegemonic capital. Even losing its original marks of distinction, urban and speculative objects have become powerful tools that constitute the urban entrepreneurialism of Barcelona, which have been greatly enhanced by the mega-event phenomenon. Thus, the archetype of strategic planning and of urban requalification applied to the city and its surroundings – known as the Barcelona model – has been transformed in irresistible subsidies to the real estate market, developers, and other select stakeholders in the capitalist production mode.

Obviously, one has to consider the prowess of the model developed by Barcelona. However, the initial target to develop a diverse, as well as economic, social, and spatially integrated city has not been fully achieved. Nevertheless, the negative effects on the socio-spatial structure have been present also via a distribution of gentrification spaces, segregation, exclusion, and dispossession. The newly “regenerated” spatiality has only privileged a few stakeholders who, by incorporating projects that triggered an expanding urban and speculative dynamism, have led the repossession of extremely selective areas, whose ambience favored the establishment of production tourism, innovative, cultural, and creative spaces.

We must bear in mind that, even with many enthusiasts, the Barcelona's model conception of patterns and strategies has led to their crease of land and housing prices. Indeed, the rapid process of real estate valuation greatly accompanied such dynamism, enabling excluding

spaces, making it difficult and jeopardizing access to housing and the right to the city. Finally, it is worth noting that, generally speaking, such spaces meet the hegemonic capital interests and not those of the social majority. Once vacated, they have become areas of both retention and real estate ownership, in the 1992 Olympic Games host city.

Notas

1. In 1960, the city of Rome hosted the Summer Olympic Games. There were investments in sporting and urban infrastructure: as an example, the Internazionale Leonardo da Vinci di Fiumicino Airport, known as *Aeroporto di Fiumicino*, was conceived because of the mega-event.
2. Here, it can be mentioned both the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup; in addition to those of smaller scale, such as the Pan American Games, the Commonwealth Games etc.
3. The *Plan de los Alrededores de la Ciudad de Barcelona y su proyecto de Reforma y Ensanche* proposed by Ildefons Cerdà Sunye had initially as main objective to create a new modern city – during the new industrial era –, expanded (Ensanche in Spanish and Catalan, l'Eixample) and of unlimited growth forecast by the means of an orthogonal layout with four-sided blocks in octagonal format.
4. The Franco's military dictatorship was a period that lasted in Spain for about 37 years, which roots were essentially associated with nationalism, conservatism, Catholicism, and anti-communism. Above all, it was characterized by the violation of human rights, radical force, and strong crackdown on opponents of the military regime. After World War II, the economic policy of that system received significant financial aid from the United States during the Cold War.
5. English translation from the original text in Spanish: “The games were an excuse to attract and concentrate infrastructure in the city and its metropolitan area, aiming to counteract the 1975-1980 economic crisis, which produced a high level of unemployment, as well as to reduce the deficit of metropolitan infrastructure.”
6. Monopoly rent “[...] is an abstraction from the language of political economy. For those who are more interested in the issues of culture, aesthetic, emotional values, social life and heart, this term might be too technical and arid to support the weight of human affairs, beyond the possible calculations of financiers, developers, real estate speculators and renters” (Harvey, 2005, p. 221).
7. “The collective symbolic capital which attaches to names and places like Paris, Athens, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Berlin, and Rome is of great importance and give such places great economic advantages relative to, say, Baltimore, Liverpool, Essen, Lille and Glasgow” (Harvey, 2005, p. 233).
8. English translation from the original text in Spanish: “[...] has significantly decreased the total area of construction, approximately 25%, and affected equipment as well as many green and solar areas which have not been built. This

produced a strong demand for building licenses for the old standards, licenses for which the interest was sold out within two years for the construction. This deadline was then extended for two more years. That is, the housing units in accordance with the old standards remained a market already saturated, even in the early 80's".

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