

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE 2016 RIO OLYMPICS ACCORDING TO PUBLIC PARK GOERS

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ABSTRACT

Discovering the positive and negative social impacts of the 2016 Rio Olympics and other sport-related megaevents for public park goers in Brazil is the objective this research. Thus, a qualitative and quantitative study was carried out through bibliographic and field research techniques. The field research, in turn, was conducted with 300 attendees of three different public parks in Brazil. The positive and negative social impacts of the sports megaevents analysed correspond to data found in the literature: social interaction is found to be the main positive impact, whereas the high economic cost is the main negative impact. Social interaction should be an essential factor to be taken into consideration by countries hosting sports megaevents while developing public policies concerning sports, leisure and tourism in order to encourage people to practice sports in general. The inclusion of elements of sociability and interaction among people increase the meaningfulness of an activity.

Keywords: Sports. Culture. Leisure. Public policy.

IMPACTOS SOCIAIS DOS JOGOS OLÍMPICOS DE 2016 PARA FREQUENTADORES DE PARQUES PÚBLICOS

RESUMO

Descobrir os impactos sociais positivos e negativos das Olimpíadas do Rio de 2016 e outros megaeventos relacionados ao esporte para frequentadores de parques públicos no Brasil é o objetivo desta pesquisa. Assim, foi realizado um estudo qualitativo e quantitativo por meio de pesquisa bibliográfica e de campo. A pesquisa de campo, por sua vez, foi realizada com 300 participantes de três diferentes parques públicos no Brasil. Os impactos sociais positivos e negativos dos megaeventos esportivos analisados correspondem aos dados encontrados na literatura: a interação social é o principal impacto positivo, enquanto o alto custo econômico é o principal impacto negativo. A interação social deve ser um fator essencial a ser levado em consideração pelos países que realizam megaeventos esportivos, ao desenvolver políticas públicas sobre esportes, lazer e turismo, a fim de incentivar as pessoas a praticarem esportes em geral. A inclusão de elementos de sociabilidade e interação entre as pessoas aumenta a importância da atividade.

Palavras-chave: Esportes. Cultura. Lazer. Política pública.

INTRODUCTION

As a consequence of the sports megaevents that took place in Brazil recently (2014 FIFA World Cup and Rio 2016 Olympics and Paralympics), authors from different countries contributed to the study of this theme. This knowledge is fundamental in order to identify the effective contributions of sports megaevents to the host nations, and more specifically the recent events that took place in Brazil, in order to generate improvements for the society, increasing the well-being and health of the population. Identifying how the social impacts of sports megaevents held in Brazil are portrayed in the scientific literature and in the population's view, that is represented here by public park goers, is fundamental to understand how the general population sees the sports megaevents in the country. Having direct access to their opinion is crucial, since this may be a determining factor in establishing public policies related to sport and leisure in the future.

Brazil has successfully hosted several major sports events in the span of just one decade (2007-2016), including the Pan American Games Rio 2007, Parapan American Games Rio 2007, 5th CISM Military World Games 2011, FIFA Confederations Cup 2013, FIFA World Cup 2014, Olympic Games Rio 2016, and Paralympic Games Rio 2016 (UVINHA *et al.*, 2018).

According to Reppold Filho (2016), in this decade of sports megaevents in Brazil, the country had worldwide visibility and this has never happened before with other countries. The sports megaevents held in Brazilian were a success, that is, the country proved to be able to host events satisfactorily, but also have created some problems.

In the data collection, we identified the following positive social impacts of sports megaevents that can be enhanced through the implementation of public policies that concerns sport and leisure: 1) the population in the cities hosting sports megaevents feel prouder and more in tune with the events and with their city itself (SILVA, 2007); 2) the improvement of the local population's quality of life due to the permanence of the infrastructure built for the sports megaevents Silva (2007); 3) large-sized sports events provide a variety of new experiences and possibilities that result in knowledge growth within parts of the population. For example, those who are employees or volunteers in the events can acquire new knowledge and skills in different areas, such as management, security, public relations, etc. (PREUSS 2007); 4) It is also positive that "sports megaevents stimulate young people to engage more in sports-related activities" (SILVA, 2007).

Vico; Uvinha and Gustavo (2019) contend that hosting a sports megaevent allows the host to face new challenges and provides opportunities to develop new knowledge, promoting the capacity of the local and business community with new specific skills. That's because being in the center of the world for a few weeks can provide a unique opportunity to promote technological developments, motivate specific talents and create capital in local companies.

The literature indicates that sports megaevents can have different meanings, values and representations attributed by different groups, and that their realization can generate both positive and negative social impacts and legacies (PREUSS, 2007; LIMA *et al.*, 2016; PREUSS *et al.*, 2016; REPPOLD FILHO, 2016; ROLNIK, 2016; LOPES DA SILVA *et al.*, 2017; ROBINSON; LOPES DA SILVA; PATREZE, 2017).

According to Preuss (2007), sports megaevents generate positive and negative social impacts and legacies - physical / environmental, social / cultural, psychological and political / administrative, and they may change according to the historical context and time; the social impacts can be defined as happenings that take place during the preparation and realization of the event, in the short term, while social legacies are the results that will remain for the host nation after the event, in the long term.

Lima *et al.*, (2016) mention that the impacts and social legacies of a megaevent are a controversial topic, and that sports megaevents tend to generate more negative than positive social impacts and legacies, especially in developing countries; this was evident in the case of events held in Brazil. According to the authors, megaevents in the country have had more negative impacts and legacies, highlighting aspects such as corruption, unfinished or poorly done works, excessive risk (construction accidents), misuse of public money, high costs and greater government investment. Scientific studies also bring positive impacts and legacies in the economic sectors, for tourism, trade, for the government and other sectors of the society. Despite the notes on positive impacts and legacies, for Lima *et al.*, (2016), these tend to be overestimated, especially by parties involved and interested in the events. The conclusion of the study is that smaller events tend to bring more positive aspects to the host city over negative ones, due to their smaller proportion.

Preuss *et al.*, (2016) say that sports megaevents have changed over the years, thus promoting sociocultural changes. This also impacts the values associated with the Olympic Games, where there were unfulfilled expectations, due to the modern values of a globalized world. The authors argue that culture seems to be the fundamental term for understanding these changes and differences in values associated with the Olympic Games and sport.

Reppold Filho (2016) identified as positive social impacts of sports megaevents in Brazil the attendance record in the Confederations Cup in 2013 and the increase of tourism in the 2014 World Cup, attaining the second largest audience in the history of the Cups. As negative impacts, the author mentions the problems related to the Pan American Games in 2007 reported by the media, such as high costs, misappropriations, overpriced works, lack of popular participation and underutilization of facilities.

Rolnik (2016) analyzed the positive and negative social impacts of sports megaevents for the city's urbanism and the right to adequate housing, indicating events that were more successful with urban restructuring, while in other cases this didn't happen. The author concludes about the need for more responsibility of the agents involved in the event preparations regarding the social impacts and legacies related to the right to adequate housing.

Lopes da Silva *et al.*, (2017), analyzing the positive and negative social impacts of the 2016 Olympic Games for public park goers, identified the social interaction as the main positive social impact, and the economic costs as the main negative one, also emphasizing the need for more research to provide the basis for the construction of sports and leisure public policies, so that the positive impacts and legacies with the realization of sports megaevents can be increased.

Robinson; Silva and Patreze (2017) analyzed the positive and negative social impacts and legacies of the 2016 Olympic Games from the perspective of sports and leisure public policies managers in Brazil and noted that the major negative social impacts are the high costs and misuse of public money, thus requiring better public policies that maximize positive impacts and legacies.

Preuss (2007) indicates three possible negative social impacts of sports megaevents. The first among them is the privatization of public spaces, which results in the transformation of the remaining spaces into high-cost consuming areas for adults, directly affecting the possibility of lower social class citizens being able to access these areas. The second negative impact is the property exploitation in underprivileged areas to accommodate new-built sports facilities that despite any possible reallocation of the local habitants leads to a loss in the social environment. Finally, infrastructural development results in the ennoblement of the aforementioned impoverished neighborhoods. Consequently, the cost of living in these areas increases, forcing many poor citizens to eventually move to other areas due to their financial inability to maintain themselves in their original places of origin.

According to Rolnik (2016), this process of passive displacement and removal due to indirect procedures is called gentrification, and threatens the right to adequate housing. This is due to the higher real estate interest, which increases the purchase and rent prices and ends up affecting the lives of local residents, causing them to be expelled to peripheral locations. Still according to same author, the neighborhood undergoes a deep demographic change, in which people are removed from their areas, losing community ties, being affected by poverty due to a decrease in employment opportunities and increase in transportation expenses. As examples of editions where there was gentrification, the author cites Seoul 1988, Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000, Beijing 2008 and London 2012.

Another negative impact was pointed out by Miagusko (2012), who studied the costs of sports megaevents, such as the 2007 Rio de Janeiro Pan American and Parapan American Games. The initial project of the event was estimated to cost of 410 million Brazilian Reais, but ended at 3.7 billion Brazilian Reais, which is nine times higher than the amount initially stipulated, and according to the report issued by the Brazilian Federal Accounts Tribunal (TCU), damages of 884.7 thousand Brazilian Reais in overbilling and services not executed were found.

Moreover, it is important to understand who are the different stakeholders involved in the process of conducting sport megaevents and their different interests. Cities, regions and countries as institutional entities (State and Municipalities) are the first to be consulted for the organization of sport megaevents. In the specific case of sports competitions, it is necessary to consider sports associations of national or international scale (IOC, FIFA, UEFA, FIA). However, major events lack post-event evaluations. Their final conclusions often point to major deficiencies, in particular economic and social deficiencies, which have political consequences (VICO; UVINHA; GUSTAVO, 2019).

In order to maximize positive social impacts and legacies and minimize the negative social impacts and legacies it is necessary to create public policies that: 1) recognize the needs and possibilities of intervention to improve the population's life; 2) democratize social rights; 3) seek to minimize socioeconomic and cultural barriers; 4) guarantee access to spaces and leisure equipment and perform their maintenance; 5) ensure professional training for the public service. Robinson; Lopes da Silva and Patreze (2017) found that in order to obtain good legacy results, it is necessary to have proper management and public policies that allow access to sports and leisure spaces and equipment.

From these considerations, we understand that the effects of the Olympic Games and other large-sized international sports events in Brazil can be either positive or negative in terms of social impacts. Therefore, this research aims to bring scientific data to highlight ways to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones. This study can also be, in the future, a reference for scholars from nations hosting sports megaevents by enabling comparisons to the data obtained in Brazil.

METHOD

This research is based on a qualitative and quantitative approach. The first of its stages is centred in a bibliographical study of the large-sized international events in Brazil and of the public policies concerning sports and leisure. During the course of this investigation, libraries of public and private universities both in Brazil and in the United States were used to access books, articles, dissertations and theses; scholarly journals specialized in physical education, sports and public policies were also consulted. The keywords from which this work was developed were: Olympic Games, Sports Megaevents, Public Policies, Leisure, Sports, Society, Culture.

In the second stage of this research, we approached public park attendees and distributed questionnaires to gather information through them. Individuals who answered the questionnaire were present in the public parks selected for research and were walking or performing some kind of physical activity. In principle, the choice of public park goers was understood to be people who might have some interest in physical activities in general and in sports / sports megaevents because they were in a place specifically designed to practice sports or physical activities. Thus, it was assumed that these people may have opinions regarding the positive and negative social impacts of the 2016 Olympic Games and other sports megaevents held in Brazil. Therefore, the subjects who participated in this research go to public parks for physical activities or for leisure purposes. We randomly selected participants to conduct the questionnaire and our final sample included men and women aged 18 years or over. Thus, people who were sitting on park benches or stretching or completing some activity were approached and invited to participate in the research and respond to the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were distributed after the 2016 Rio Olympics, in order to collect data on the social impacts of these games. They were distributed in total to 300 people in three different cities - São Paulo, Campinas and Piracicaba –100 questionnaires per city. These cities were chosen based on the accessibility factor and because of their large and medium extension and high population. The distribution and gathering of the questionnaires were in public parks that are central to these three cities, such as the *Parque Ibirapuera*, in São Paulo, the *Parque Portugal*, in Campinas and the *Parque da Rua do Porto*, in Piracicaba. These cities are considered to be effective points to identify people who practice sports or some physical activity. They are also cities of different sizes, with the city of São Paulo being the largest city in Brazil with 12.11 million inhabitants, the city of Campinas is large and the third largest in the state of São Paulo with 1.081 million inhabitants and the city of Piracicaba the smallest of the three cities with 297,767 inhabitants. Some football matches of the 2016 Olympic Games and the 2014 FIFA World Cup were held in the city of São Paulo, and the cities of Campinas and Piracicaba were destinations for visitation and lodging of tourists during the sports megaevents in Brazil. Campinas is located 100 km from São Paulo and 65 km from Piracicaba. The distance between the cities of São Paulo and Piracicaba is 158 km. The questionnaires (with two questions) were given to both men and women who were at least 18 years old and were designed to allow park visitors to answer by choosing one or more of the alternatives. The questions presented in the questionnaires can be found below and they were based on Heere *et al.*, (2013) studies:

1 - Which are the positive social impacts of the 2016 Olympic Games and other sports megaevents in Brazil?

- civic pride economic benefits community engagement
 social interaction others _____.

2 - Which are the negative social impacts of the 2016 Olympic Games and other sports megaevents in Brazil?

- economic costs safety risks traffic congestion
 allocation of improper funds others _____.

FORM OF DATA ANALYSIS

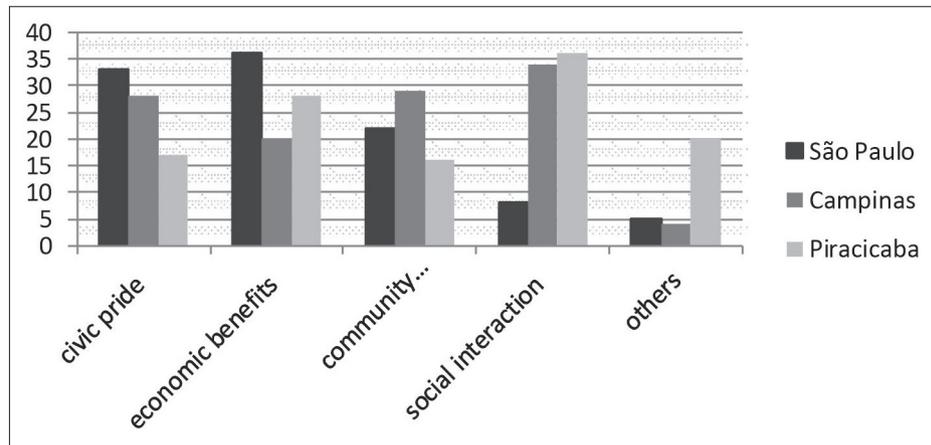
The questionnaires that were distributed and filled, the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the questions were based on the bibliographic study executed in the first stage of the research.

This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Methodist University of Piracicaba on March 29 of 2016, under the protocol number 05/2016.

RESULTS

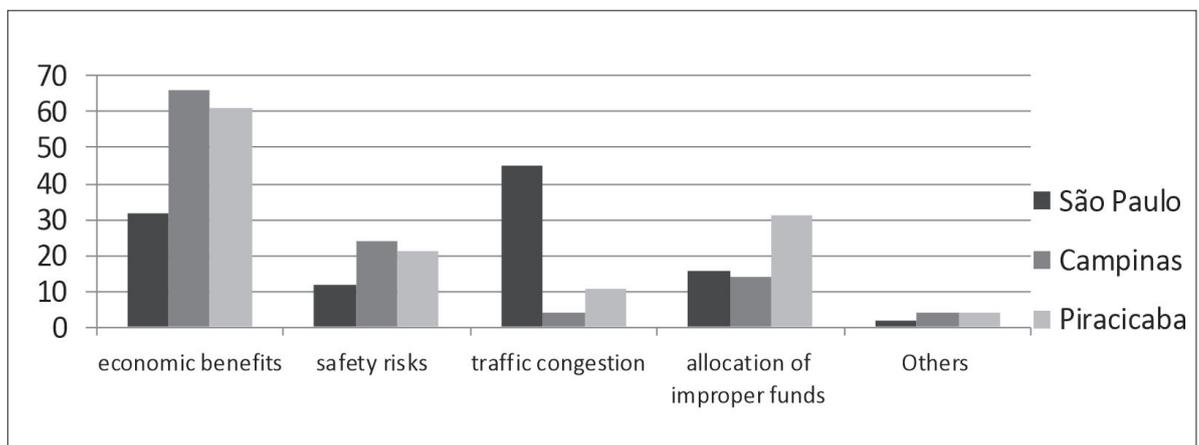
The main positive and negative social impacts indicated by the public park visitors were: positive impacts - economic benefits (São Paulo) and social interaction (Campinas and Piracicaba); negative impacts - traffic congestion (São Paulo) and economic costs (Campinas and Piracicaba).

Figure 1 - Positive Social Impacts.



Source: data of the research. (Authors).

Figure 2 - Negative Social Impacts



Source: data of the research. (Authors).

DISCUSSION

The economic benefits were the most cited as a positive social impact in São Paulo and this may have been because of the direct role the city played in hosting sports megaevents in recent years. In the 2014 FIFA World Cup, the city hosted different games and the opening ceremony.

Additionally, São Paulo is the largest city in Brazil and its financial centre. The 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was an event held for the first time in South America and which offered many challenges in terms of management. Soccer as an Olympic modality was not just limited to Rio, but was also hosted in five other Brazilian cities, including São Paulo (UVINHA *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, during the Olympic Games of 2016, the city held several soccer matches. These facts may have directly influenced the local economy, generating greater mobility and consumption among people in the city.

Social interaction was the fourth positive social aspect most mentioned by the people who participated in the questionnaires in the city of São Paulo; in Campinas and Piracicaba, however, it was the most cited positive aspect among all options. Social interaction promotes behavioral change because it enhances contact between individuals and, therefore, their relatedness and experiences of cultural exchange. This phenomenon may have occurred more easily in the sports megaevents in Brazil because Brazilians tend to be very receptive to social interactions in general. However, this interaction can occur in both ways: from the host country's population's interactions towards tourists, as well as from visitors towards their hosts. This result echoes Silva (2007) conclusion that large-sized international sports events can generate a higher level of engagement with city issues among its population. This factor is relevant if we think about strategies to tap into the potential of the psychological well-being of the population. As people get motivated to start practicing physical activities, mainly driven by social interaction, it will have a positive effect for the psychological well-being and will help to generate healthy habits.

According to Roa; Muñoz and Clavijo (2018), there is a current trend related to positive psychological well-being, which leads to the development of abilities and personal growth, specifically on mechanisms associated with healthy functioning and adjustment. In the research developed by the authors, they tested Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-being, according Ryff (1989), with Colombian young adults and came to the conclusion that this scale is adequate for the evaluation of the psychological well-being in the population of Colombian young adults, especially considering educational background, gender and socioeconomical status. The scale is defined in six dimensions: (a) self-acceptance, the capacity of feeling good about oneself, despite their own limitations, with positive attitudes towards oneself; ; (b) positive relationships, perception of the establishment of social stable relationships and to have friends who they can rely on; (c) autonomy, ability to resist to a higher social pressure and self-regulate their behaviour; (d) dominion of surroundings, personal ability to elect or create favourable surroundings in order to meet their desires and own needs; (e) personal growth, commitment to develop their own potential, to continue growing as individuals and broaden their capacity to the fullest; and (f) to have a purpose in life, which refers to the targets and goals they have in order to attribute meaning to their lives.

When we compare this study about the psychological well-being of Roa; Muñoz and Clavijo (2018) with the element of social interaction as a positive social impact of Rio 2016, and according to the public park goers who participated in this investigation, we can identify this result as highly positive for the psychological well-being. Individuals can set objectives about developing healthy habits in their daily lives, such as regular physical activities, once favourable conditions to motivation individuals and build social relationships have been established as shown in Ryff (1989).

The alternative "civic pride" and "community engagement" were not the most cited in the three cities, but were the choice of several public park goers from the three cities, with some variations from one city to another. These data show that sports megaevents contribute in some way to reminding people of aspects that are related to patriotism and the sense of bringing people together for a common cause. In addition, it is also a way for local communities to engage in sports-related activities such as their own practice and entertainment (wherever they occur: in parks, bars, or at home watching on television).

The economic costs alternative was the first possible answer for the question that addressed the negative social impacts of the 2016 Rio Olympics and other sports megaevents in Brazil. In the questionnaires distributed in the city of São Paulo (Parque Ibirapuera), the economic costs were the second most cited negative social impact, while in Campinas (Parque Portugal) and in Piracicaba (Parque da Rua do Porto) it was the most cited alternative, which can be explained by the high costs of managing these events that have to be dealt with by the organizing country, as stated by Miagusko (2012).

It is important to note that in Brazil, after the 2016 Olympic Games, there was a series of corruption incidents involving Brazilian representatives in the organization of such Games, as well as the FIFA Soccer World Cup held in Brazil in 2014. This subject was widely reported in Brazil in the main networks for the dissemination of news in newspapers with wide circulation and also in television programs. Additionally, a period of crisis in Brazil's financial and political life, with the removal of the then President of the Republic, Dilma Roussef, and several occurrences of corruption involving national companies and politicians. All of these factors may have contributed to public park goers choosing as an alternative to negative social impact "economic costs". Thus, this alternative is mentioned as both a negative and a positive social impact.

The third alternative was the issue of traffic congestion. For those who answered the questionnaire in the city of São Paulo, this was the most cited option; in Campinas and Piracicaba, traffic congestion was only the fourth most cited. It may have certainly occurred because the traffic in the city of São Paulo is an everyday social problem faced by its population. According to the National Traffic Department (Denatran in the Portuguese acronym), the city of São Paulo had more than 4.8 million cars in the streets, which corresponded to 11.5% of the Brazilian fleet, in September 2012. Thus, it is plausible to conclude that the 2016 Olympic Games and the 2014 FIFA World Cup, when the city hosted the opening of the event and several soccer matches at the *Arena Corinthians* Stadium in June 2014, may have increased this problem even more – despite the infrastructure for traffic improvements that were made.

The fourth option of "allocation of improper funds" was not pointed out by public park goers in an expressive way, this may have been due to the fact that they named the alternative "economic costs" as a negative social impact, which is a more corresponding option to the problem.

The option "others" both as a positive and negative social impact was mentioned by a smaller number of people and is related to local issues as a positive social impact - local benefits, such as the construction of sports and leisure equipment in the city or in nearby areas; negative social impact - lack of greater investment in the city both in the construction of new sports equipment, human resources, and projects aimed at the local population in the city.

The investigation and results of the present study show the necessity and importance of thinking about questions related to the social aspects of sports megaevents, which can contribute to improvements to the living conditions of the population, including, leisure and the knowledge produced in this field (about practicing physical activities, the public venues used for those practices and to sports, and of social interaction and sociability of public policies etc).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The data obtained in the bibliographical study and in the field research are somewhat correspondent. In the case of the positive social impacts of the sports megaevents held in Brazil, it is possible to identify a correlation between the phenomenon of social engagement described by Silva (2007) and what public park attendees answered in the questionnaires in regards to social interaction. Considering the negative social aspects of sports megaevents, literature and the most cited aspects in the questionnaires are also correspondent: the high economic costs were also identified in Miagusko's studies (2012). To maximize the positive social impacts of sports megaevents and minimize the negative ones, social interaction should be an essential factor to be taken into consideration by countries hosting large-sized sports events while developing public policies concerning sports and leisure, in order to encourage people to practice sports in general. The inclusion of elements of sociability and interaction among people increase the meaningfulness of an activity and, consequently, turn it into an everyday habit, which contributes to the psychological well-being of the population.

This study focused on the search for references in Portuguese and Spanish language, predominantly because our choice of Scielo database. Thus, the contribution of this study is to produce more knowledge about the sport mega-events held in Brazil, but our goal is not to let knowledge be restricted to the host country. But rather that it can circulate and contribute to studies and research from other locations. Therefore, it is recommended that other research be carried out in other databases, so that a more complete set of both empirical and bibliographic data can be used and that they serve as a basis for the planning and implementation of public sports and leisure policies for the populations of various countries, so that people have guarantees of their social and human rights.

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