APPENDIX 9C

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF HOST CITIES

SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

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Forward

This social impact analysis was designed to match key objectives of the Calgary Bid Exploration Committee with areas of priority with respect to the impacts, experience, and outcomes of previous Olympic host cities. Two policy and working documents, the City of Calgary's Triple Bottom Line Framework and the City of Calgary's Sustainability Appraisal tool, were used to identify concept areas that form the outline of this report.

Notes

Currency, unless otherwise noted, is quoted in USD.

Hosts of the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games and Summer Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games have been shortened to the host city and the year, for ease of reading and uniformity. More accurate representations would also include the full name of the organizing committee. For example, VANOC, or the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, is represented simply as Vancouver 2010.

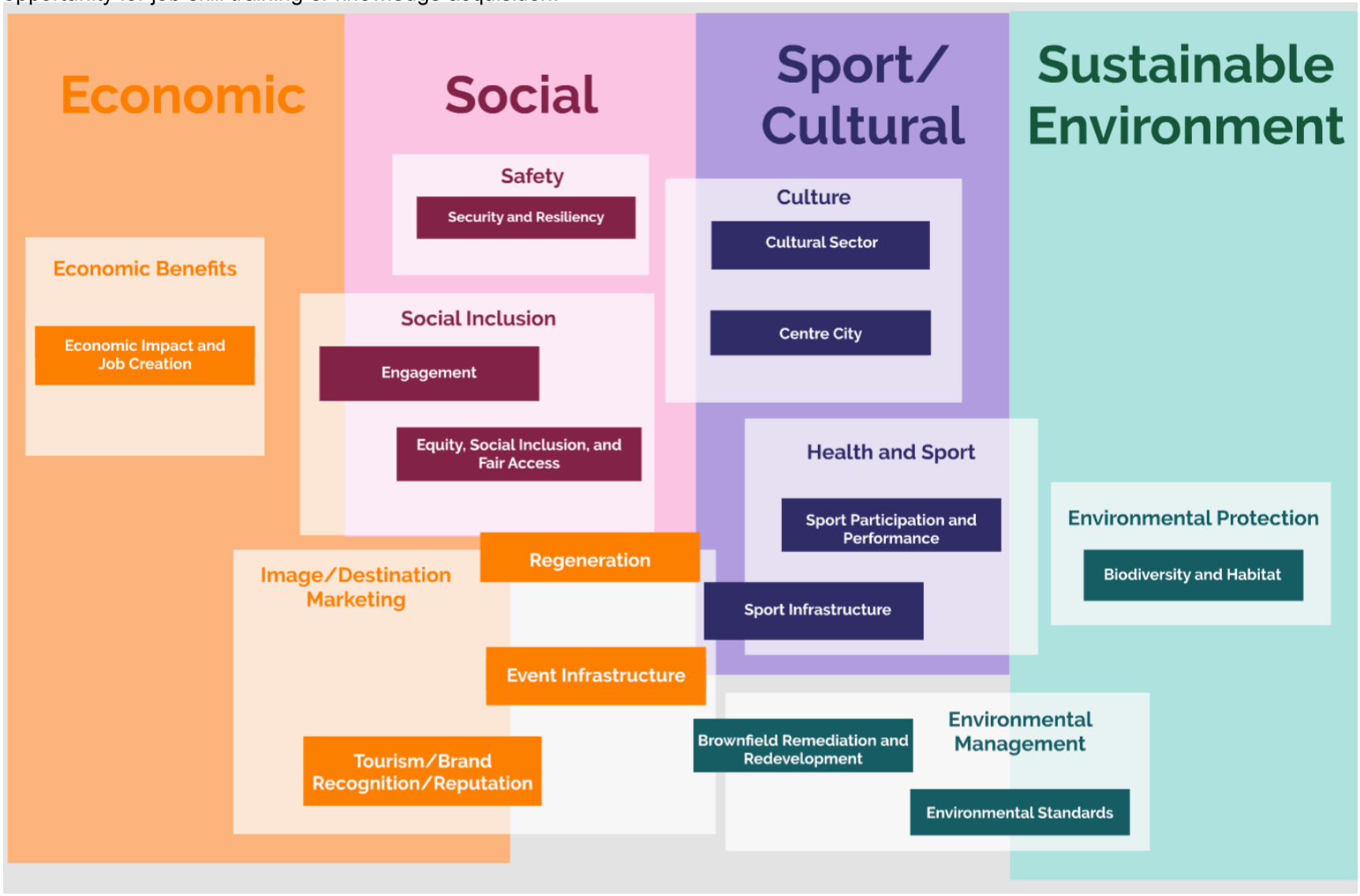
Editions of the Paralympic Games were not hosted in conjunction with the Summer and Winter Olympic Games until Seoul 1988. For reference, previous hosts are listed here:

Year	Summer Olympic Games	Summer Paralympic Games	Winter Olympic Games	Winter Paralympic Games
1896	Athens			
1900	Paris			
1904	St. Louis			
1908	London			
1912	Stockholm			
1916				
1920	Antwerp			
1924	Paris		Chamonix	
1928	Amsterdam		St. Moritz	
1932	Los Angeles		Lake Placid	
1936	Berlin		Garmisch-Partenkirchen	
1940				
1944				
1948	London		St. Moritz	
1952	Helsinki		Oslo	
1956	Melbourne		Cortina d'Ampezzo	
1960	Rome	Rome	Squaw Valley	
1964	Tokyo	Tokyo	Innsbruck	
1968	Mexico City	Tel Aviv	Grenoble	
1972	Munich	Heidelberg	Sapporo	
1976	Montreal	Toronto	Innsbruck	Ornskoldsvik
1980	Moscow	Arnhem	Lake Placid	Geilo

Year	Summer Olympic Games	Summer Paralympic Games	Winter Olympic Games	Winter Paralympic Games
1984	Los Angeles	New York/ Stoke Mandeville	Sarajevo	Innsbruck
1988	Seoul	Seoul	Calgary	Innsbruck
1992	Barcelona	Barcelona	Albertville	Tignes/ Albertville
1994			Lillehammer	Lillehammer
1996	Atlanta	Atlanta		
1998			Nagano	Nagano
2000	Sydney	Sydney		
2002			Salt Lake City	Salt Lake City
2004	Athens	Athens		
2006			Turin	Turin
2008	Beijing	Beijing		
2010			Vancouver	Vancouver
2012	London	London		
2014			Sochi	Sochi
2016	Rio	Rio		
2018			Pyeongchang	Pyeongchang
2020	Tokyo	Tokyo		
2022			Beijing	Beijing
2024	Los Angeles/ Paris	Los Angeles/ Paris		
2026			Calgary/ Erzurum/ Sion/ Stockholm/ Lillehammer	Calgary/ Erzurum/ Sion/ Stockholm/ Lillehammer

Concept Map

The nature, scale, and planning processes associated with mega-projects such as hosting the Olympic Games typically leads to impacts that cannot be neatly defined or circumscribed. However, by following the framework of Calgary's policy on the Triple Bottom Line, it is possible to start to align anticipated impact areas against core planning elements. For the purposes of demonstration, the categories that are closely linked to others are nested to show the interconnected nature of event impacts. For example, while volunteering is described in the context of social inclusion under the engagement category, there are also economic impacts from volunteering as volunteer training programs can be used as an opportunity for job skill training or knowledge acquisition.



Executive Summary Table

		Positive	Negative	Recommendation/Mitigation Strategy
Social	Social Inclusion	Hosting the Olympic Games has been linked to the creation of social legacies including skill development, knowledge acquisition, the development of social capital, and enhancements to civic community. Volunteers can contribute to enhancing knowledge acquisition and can lead to the development of translatable skills that can carryover to future employment. Regeneration, while frequently discussed in terms of urban and infrastructural impacts, is increasingly defined in broader terms, incorporating social and economic rehabilitation.	Evictions, displacement, and abandonment of social commitments such as affordable or social housing are also common as there are few protections ensuring that social commitments are met, and little recourse or accountability. The primary beneficiaries of the hosting the Olympic Games are not always those in greatest need, and hosting can contribute to greater patterns of marginalization.	• Olympic bid and planning processes must engage with Calgarians/Albertans as early as possible in order to better understand expectations, concerns, and areas of importance in communities before building out intended social legacy areas or commitments related to inclusion. • Accountability, in the form of evaluation mechanisms and public facing commitments, should also be considered from the outset of the bid process.
	Safety	Olympic planning can involve elements of resilience planning by combining strategic interventions and governance with security practice.	Securing the Olympic Games is among the largest and costly peacetime military operations in Canadian history. The Olympic Games represent a target for catastrophic terrorism, both domestically and internationally, that make the event difficult to secure.	• Balancing risk management, fear minimization, and appropriate security practice is a challenging but crucial balance for Games organizers that requires heavy amounts of coordination between law enforcements and all levels of government. • Security measures put in place for Olympic Games can have long-term or permanent impacts on host cities and countries.

		Positive	Negative	Recommendation/Mitigation Strategy
Sport/ Cultural	Culture	There are opportunities, although empirical evidence is limited, to engage with or develop cultural activities as part of the larger effort involved in staging the Games. Cultural and educational components can be combined with hosting, and with appropriate planning measures, can be applied in order to better engage with communities in meaningful ways.	Marginalized communities are rarely considered in Games' planning processes, nor are they considered as potential beneficiaries of event impacts. Cultural imagery used by hosts has been considered by critics to be exploitative for the purposes of financial gain. Cultural or educational elements of Olympic planning do not receive nearly the same attention or resources as sport, and are often the first elements to be eliminated in the face of budgetary pressures.	• Meaningful engagement with diverse communities should take place as early and as frequently as possible in the Games' planning or bidding process. • Solidifying and separating commitments related to the cultural components of the event, irrespective of sport-related planning, would ensure that cultural programming is appropriately included and funded, protected from the financial pressures and constraints of the organizing committee.
	Health and Sport	Hosting major events offers host cities and provinces the opportunity to leverage the event to secure funding from higher levels of government to meet infrastructural needs. Facility improvement, sport investment, and consolidated systems planning can also yield benefits at the provincial and federal levels.	Previous examples from Games' hosts have shown that converting Olympic facilities after the event can be a costly undertaking if not planned for appropriately. Public resistance related to investing in venues with taxpayer funding for private benefit has proven challenging and controversial. There is no reliable evidence to indicate that hosting any Olympic Games has yielded a meaningful increase in sport participation for a host population, and hosting is no longer viewed as an effective means to achieve a sustained increase in physical activity rates.	• Considering after-use planning is critical in the selection, design, and construction of major Olympic-related venues. • Planning for future facility usage before the event is key in ensuring that infrastructural investments have significant impacts. • The conversion or creation of temporary facilities should be pursued wherever possible as it creates an opportunity to lower cost and to ensure resources are spent efficiently. • Hosting provides an opportunity to enhance capacity of sport systems in the form of renewed and consolidated investments around specific objectives and outcomes.

		Positive	Negative	Recommendation/Mitigation Strategy
Economic	Image/ Destination Marketing	Hosting the Olympic Games has been recognized for its regenerative capacities, ability to stimulate change, and role as a catalyst for urban redevelopment. Hosting can have a significant impact on the awareness of host cities internationally as media attention can boost the host's profile and offers a significant marketing opportunity.	Rather than enhancing tourism, studies have shown that visitors are shifted in the short term, often choosing not visit because of the event. Focusing attention and resources on amenities targeting the visitor class can also have negative ramifications socially and politically.	• Successfully leveraging the media and marketing opportunity of the Games to an international audience requires careful planning and messaging. • While the Olympics are frequently associated with catalyzing effects on urban development, the greatest gains arguably stem from hosts that are able to align long-term planning objectives irrespective of Olympic planning. • Leveraging the opportunity to host by consolidating urban planning efforts and policy agendas is one of the most successful means through which host cities and countries can use the opportunity provided by hosting.
	Economic Benefits	Hosts can experience short-term boosts in tourism, leisure, and construction industries in the lead-up to the event. The most positive economic benefit to come from bidding relates to international trade increases, which arise from the 'signal' sent from the bid itself to the international economy.	Economic benefits from hosting the Olympic Games are negligible, while projections of economic benefit (especially in terms of GDP and job creation) are almost always overstated or a fraction of initial projections. Cost overruns are the most significant constant amongst previous hosts. There are no long-term positive impacts to tourism, trade, or employment.	• Bid organizers should be forthright about the Games' economic outlook, which is typically not as positive as initially claimed. • The projected economic benefits of hosting the Games should not be put forward as primary justification or motivation for hosting. As is typical with many mega projects, budgets only tend to increase over time, which can contribute to erosion of public trust. • Accounting for public expenditures verses privately raised funds and distinguishing event costs from non-event costs should receive careful consideration.

		Positive	Negative	Recommendation/Mitigation Strategy
Sustainable Environment	Environmental Management	Olympic hosts have engaged with remediation of brownfield sites and redevelopment opportunities, often 'fast-tracking' initiatives and using Olympic-affiliated projects for greater social, economic, and environmental gains. Host cities have also pursued ambitious environmental management agendas, incorporating international environmental standards and seeking certification for environmental projects.	There is little accountability or oversight when environmental projects fail to meet their objectives, and the greatest enforcement mechanisms will arguably come from host cities and countries themselves, not from the IOC. Many critics have pointed out the hollow nature of many environmental promises, which serve to 'green wash' the event and are used to secure legitimacy for Games organizers.	• Local and provincial environmental practices and standards must be upheld, even under deadlines or financial pressures. • Establishing an entity responsible for all environmental accountability and reporting outside of the bid or organizing committee can help maintain an independent oversight and transparency.
	Environmental Protection	Environmental protections are incorporated into the bid process, and cities are compelled to respond on the ways in which the Games may have environmental impact.	Critics have identified that environmental protections only serve a rhetorical purpose, and that in reality, there is minimal oversight provided when environmental promises are broken. Meaningful incorporation of sustainable practices is not well articulated or enforced by the IOC.	• Pre-determined reporting periods and clearly articulated and tangible commitments to on the environment can help environmental communication strategies. • Identifying areas of environmental concern as early as possible in the bid process and openly communicating potential risks can help establish trust and confidence.

SOCIAL

Social Inclusion

Equity, Social Inclusion, and Fair Access

Positive

Many social benefits of the Olympic Games are either intangible, difficult to quantify, or both. Among those most cited include knowledge and skill development,[1] the development of social capital,[2] and civic community.[3] While social legacies have been included in Olympic bids since Atlanta 1996, there is no standardized model for implementation or development of social impact areas across hosts.[4]

Social inclusion was most prominently included in Vancouver 2010, when social inclusion and responsibility was featured as one of Vancouver 2010's six-point plan[5] on sustainability.[6] Vancouver 2010 sought to engage and protect residents living in Vancouver's inner cities during its bid and planning process. The Inner-City Inclusive Commitment Statement[7] sought participation and equity for all British Columbians, most significantly those with low and moderate incomes, while also emphasizing accessibility, affordability, and public safety.[8] This document was developed through discussion with community organizers, nonprofit organizations, and activist groups, leading to 37 commitments across 14 categories to better ensure the wide distribution of games benefits while also protecting vulnerable populations.[9]

Regeneration, while frequently discussed in terms of urban and infrastructural impacts, is increasingly defined in broader terms, incorporating social and economic rehabilitation.[10] London 2012 and Vancouver 2010 anchored their Olympic Village developments amongst broader regeneration schemes, selecting areas in need of environmental remediation that city planners and Games organizers also believed could meet a need for affordable rental and social housing.

Negative

Critics of the social impacts of sport mega-events question the degree to which such promises are ever realized, noting that such legacy claims are often developed as a response to criticism and dissent.[11] Mega-events have come to rely on social legacy areas such as housing affordability and infrastructural enhancements to rationalize public expenditure, even though past host experiences indicate the opposite is often true. In Rio, more than 6,000 families were evicted or threatened with eviction, all in areas overlooking iconic Olympic or World Cup projects, while real estate prices surged in those same areas, making living in Rio increasingly less affordable.[12] Forced evictions have also been noted in Seoul 1998, Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996, and most startlingly in Beijing 2008, which saw 1.5 million residents involuntarily displaced or evicted.[13] Weak tenancy laws in Alberta at the time of Calgary 1988 created an environment in which excessive rent increases led to evictions.[14] 2,000 people were displaced, many of whom were in the Victoria Park neighborhood, one of Calgary's poorest communities located near the Saddledome development.[15]

Despite Vancouver 2010's ambitious planning agenda to specifically protect the city's most marginalized residents and mitigate negative impacts, economic crisis, planning delays, and other binding commitments kept them from being fully realized. Under these conditions, it is quite common for the planning processes of sport mega-events to experience tension between the short-term requirements they are working against relative to the large scale, transformative change that has been promised. This often results in the delay or abandonment of social commitments or longer-term legacy initiatives as the social components are not contractually required in order to deliver the event itself. For Vancouver 2010's Athlete Village, this meant that

original commitments to deliver an equal balance of affordable housing, middle-income housing, and market housing skewed greatly towards market housing. Of the approximate 1,000 units in the development, only 28 were rented at the shelter assistance rate of $375 per month.[16] As nearly $1 billion of public funding from the city ($690 million) and provincial governments ($458 million) was added in an effort to save the project from failure, a publicly financed project that was supposed to ease housing affordability within the city was missed.[17] The most significant lesson in Vancouver 2010's Athlete Village remains that there are very few, if any, comparable examples of a municipal government becoming involved with, and eventually financially responsible for, for the delivery of a major development project. However, it was the contractual agreements between the IOC and government partners that forced the city to step in with taxpayer dollars to ensure the village would be built on time.

Engagement

Positive

Volunteers are a critical element of staging sport mega-events that, with appropriately planned learning and development opportunities, can also help enhance knowledge acquisition and can lead to the development of translatable skills that can carryover to future employment.[18] Vancouver 2010 utilized more than 17,000 volunteers to help carry out the event, representing 84% of its workforce.[19] Beyond impacts felt in the tourism and hospitality industries, there is also potential for event related volunteering to contribute to or positively influence social capital, or the degree to which host city residents feel connected to their communities and to each other.[20]

Host nations have also used the Olympics Games as a nation-building exercise, and in the Canadian context, hosting on home soil has represented an opportunity to put forward a unified national image and attempt to define what it means to be Canadian. While extremely difficult to quantify, the perceptions that hosting can have on feelings of national sentiment have been directly tied to the hosting as well as the bid process.[21] Studies have shown that while economic gains are negligible, host nations are motivated to bid because of politicians' ability to harness the 'feel good factor' of hosting from political gain.[22]

Negative

There are many examples from Olympic host cities that indicate the main beneficiaries of the event are not always those in greatest need.[23] Urban policies intending to exclude, marginalize, or remove 'undesirable' populations are common in Olympic host cities, often times carried out under the guise of beautification, securitization, and social control.[24] In Glasgow's preparations for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, gentrification efforts also served as social policy, seeking to transform 'problem people' and 'problem places.'[25] Several host cities have introduced legislation restricting access to public spaces, allowing the removal of certain populations that might be seen to be negatively impacting the city's projected image.[26] Vancouver passed several pieces of legislation intending to 'civilize' the city, especially in the Downtown Eastside, in the years leading up to the 2010 Games.[27] By criminalizing nuisance behaviors such as panhandling, jaywalking, squeegeeing, and street disorder, law enforcement officers were able to ticket and ultimately remove 'offenders' from public spaces. Enforcement of these infractions was overwhelmingly carried out in areas home to Vancouver's most marginalized populations.[28]

Safety

Security and Resiliency

Positive

Violence, protest, and resistance have been a part of the modern Olympic Games since at least Mexico City 1968, where student activists were killed in the Tlatelolco Massacre days before the

opening ceremony.[29] The murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the hands of a Palestinian terrorist group during Munich 1972 brought the prospect of defending against terror to the fore in Olympic planning, followed later by the Centennial Park bombing at Atlanta 1996. However, the starkest difference in security approaches seen in Olympic hosts comes can be seen between pre- and post-9/11 Games organizing. Security operations for Vancouver 2010 made the event the largest security operation in Canada since 9/11.[30] Embedding safety and security into Olympic projects is increasingly referred to as 'resilience' planning, encompassing strategic planning intervention, governance restructuring, and security practice.[31]

Negative

There is a danger of 'risk amplification' in that the message of risk is accelerated, which means creating a balanced approach to risk management, fear minimization, and precautions is needed.[32] As the profile of the Olympic Games is considered a platform for catastrophic terrorism, there is a precautionary mind-set of 'high consequence aversion' that contributes to the highly militarized operation of Olympic security practices.[33] In the case of London 2012, there was a fundamental change in the country's approach to securitization following the vent, further blurring the boundary between military defense and peacetime security.[34] Mega-events are temporarily made into 'security landscapes,' which carries implications for urban design, electronic surveillance, and mechanisms of social and population control.[35]

SPORT/CULTURAL

Culture

Cultural Sector

Positive

Creating and promoting a cultural program has been central to the IOC's requirements for decades, although there is very little definition provided and minimal performance indicators to ensure the delivery of cultural programs. While empirical support related to cultural programming is limited compared to the availability of information on other areas of impact, there is opportunity to engage with or develop cultural activities as part of the larger effort involved in staging the Games. Cultural initiatives can vary widely across events, from investments in museums to operational programs in host countries. London 2012's cultural program intended to deliver smaller projects and national level signature events in the four years leading up to the event.[36] Vancouver 2010 worked to include the Four Host nations across it's planning by focusing on partnership development, economic development, sport and youth, and cultural involvement.[37]

Negative

Cultural elements of Olympic programming are often some of the first to be eliminated under budgetary constraints, making their visibility in Olympic cycles comparatively small. While the IOC intends sport, culture, and education to be equally considered, sport is overwhelmingly the focus and recipient of resources. Socially excluded groups are very rarely considered in the planning stages of the event, nor are they considered to be beneficiaries.[38] While Indigenous people and imagery have been included in many Olympic Games editions, including Montreal 1976, Calgary 1988, Sydney 2000, and Vancouver 2010, critics have pointed out the continued exploitation of such imagery for corporate and financial gain.[39] The IOC came under heavy criticism for allowing Sochi 2014 to continue in a country openly hostile to LGBTQ rights that also banned any form of 'homosexual propaganda.' The Canadian Olympic Committee also faced criticism at the time for failing to denounce Russian laws that could have negatively impacted out LGBTQ athletes competing at the Games.[40]

Centre City

Positive

Urban imaging strategies are primarily designed to attract tourists, generate economic activity, and cultivate positive images of the host city for potential investors.[41] As the features of the mega-event are analogous to urban entrepreneurialism, the centralization of planning power, increasing incorporation of the private sector in traditionally public sector activity, and the relaxation of consultative practices are increasingly common in host cities.[42] The less tangible, but deeply attractive[43] notion of gaining greater recognition within international community is seen as a key motivating factor. For Calgary, the 1988 Games came to symbolize population growth and downtown expansion, with the event serving as the 'vehicle to make a statement about this transformation to the world.'[44]

Hosting can have a significant influence on the awareness of host cities to broader media audience. In one study, levels of awareness of Calgary grew from 48.3% of European respondents when surveyed in 1986, to 85.6% of respondents when surveyed in 1989.[45] While 1988 Olympic Games had a dramatic impact on Europeans' awareness of Calgary relative to other Canadian cities, awareness decreases after a short period of time. While hosts do not have the opportunity to expressly direct the message, the opportunity for exposure is significant.

1.5 billion people watched Calgary 1988 on television, while 180,000 visited during the 16-day event.[46]

Negative
The downside of creating spectacular images associated with host cities is that it can lead to the creation of 'tourist bubbles,' or demarcated urban boundaries that separate tourist sites from the rest of the city.[47] These environments are secured, clean, normalized, and often times free from any kind of detracting images in order to present an anesthetized view of the city. Consumption-based economic drivers are intended to evoke a certain image of place and also indicate status for those experiencing, rather than living in, the city.[48] This sort of marketing can contribute to the sentiment that the Olympic Games are a highly exclusionary undertaking that can have adverse social and political ramifications.

Health and Sport

Sport Infrastructure

Positive
Planning for future facility usage before the event is key in ensuring that infrastructural investments have significant impacts in the longer term. Converting the Richmond Olympic Oval (400m long-track speed skating track with 8,000 spectator seats) and Hillcrest Centre (4 Olympic-sized curling sheets with 6,000) are two prominent facilities whose after-use was planned before Vancouver 2010. The ice in both facilities was removed immediately following the Games and both locations were outfitted for community benefit. While the Richmond Olympic Oval continues to host international sport events, it also holds a track, gym, climbing wall, multiple hockey rinks, and convertible playing surfaces that can serve a range of needs.[49] Similarly, Hillcrest Centre was built to consolidate and reorganize three aging public facilities within a broader park area, incorporating an aquatic facility with a community centre.[50]

Temporary and existing facilities provide opportunity for reduce event related infrastructure spending while also ensuring that long-terms needs can be upheld. For example, Los Angeles 2024 will bid using existing facilities exclusively, with some facilities currently employed as convention centres. London 2012's Aquatic Centre was converted to a public pool by removing the grandstand seating and replacing walls with glass. Entry fees are also pegged to local levels to ensure the facility remains accessible for local residents.[51]

Negative
Within the Canadian context there are some examples of the ways in which public funding, leveraged from federal and provincial levels of government, has functioned to fund the development of sports-related infrastructure for private benefit. The Olympic Stadium in Montreal (intended for the MLB's Montreal Expos), Commonwealth Stadium (home to the CFL's Edmonton Eskimos), and Saddledome (used by the NHL's Calgary Flames), all utilized public subsidy for professional sport franchises.[52] While leveraging public funding in the form of public private partnership is a common model for funding stadium development in North America, these infrastructure projects are also linked in that they were featured venues as part of the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, 1978 Commonwealth Games, and 1988 Winter Olympic Games, respectively. In the U.S. and Canada, taxpayers fund 78% of the average professional sports facility,[53] and public benefits often cited – including economic growth, tax dollars, and job projections – are largely unfounded.[54]

There are other examples of Canadian host cities struggling to convert sport-related infrastructure after a mega-event. The Olympic Stadium in Montreal, which hosted track and field events as well as opening and closing ceremonies at a cost of $1 billion, was used for baseball initially, later the CFL Alouettes, and now occasionally hosts concerts, trade shows, and soccer events. Issues with the stadium design and architecture has made high-level competition problematic for baseball, soccer, and football, and issues with the roof and deteriorating facility have kept operating costs between $0.5 and $1.4 million annually.[55] The costs associated with running niche winter Games sports like bobsleigh, skeleton, luge, and ski jumping are also exceedingly high. The costs of operating the facilities run by Whistler Sport Legacies (Whistler Athletes Centre, Sliding Centre, and Olympic Park) total $7.5 million annually and are heavily subsidized by the provincial government and partially supported through a Games Operating Trust.[56]

Considering after-use planning is critical in the selection, design, and construction of major Olympic-related venues. In London 2012's example, the stadium built for the opening and closing ceremonies as well as the track and field events struggled to find a suitable long-term tenant. The stadium, which was not built with retractable seats or football fans in mind, kept seating too far from the field of play due to the location of the track. The cost of converting the stadium reached £272 million ($470 million CAD), bringing the total cost to £702 million ($1.2 billion CAD).[57]

Beyond converting facilities, there are other stark examples of mega-event hosts engaging in excessive spending without any after-use planning in mind. Brazil spent $3 billion on 12 stadiums for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, with little regard for how investments would fare in the longer term, resulting in those stadia immediately falling into disrepair and disuse after the event.[58] These investments are often dubbed 'white elephants,' a term used in the mega-event context to describe venues that are largely symbolic, hugely expensive, and challenging to maintain.[59]

Sport Participation and Performance

Positive

The sport infrastructure and planning efforts stemming from Calgary 1988 contribute to one of the most significant and durable sport-related legacies stemming from an Olympic event. With nearly all venues still in use, Calgary 1988 is one of few examples of hosts successfully planning for, and later utilizing, virtually all Olympic-related facility investments. One motivation for renewed investment in sport development and infrastructure would arguably come from Canada's Olympic results – Canada was the only host nation to not win a gold medal at an Olympics on home soil in Montreal 1976, and experienced the same for Calgary 1988. The Own the Podium program, launched in January 2005, provided 5 years of investment totaling $110 million, with the overall objective of winning the most medals at Vancouver 2010.[60] While Canada had the highest total of gold medals, not overall medals, Vancouver 2010 was officially Canada's most successful winter Games performance ever, by a wide margin.

One study carried out as part of the Olympic Games Impact study and organized through the University of British Columbia examined how perceptions of people with disabilities changed as a result of hosting the Paralympic Games. Results showed an increased willingness on behalf of employers to hire people with disabilities, combined with 66% of Canadians finding that the Paralympic Games contributed to more positive portrayals of people with disabilities in the media. While the majority of respondents did not find that the event directly contributed to improved services and support for people with disabilities, media exposure during the event likely contributed to an improvement in societal perceptions.[61]

Negative

Overwhelmingly, a large number of studies have shown that there is no reliable evidence to indicate that hosting any Olympic Games has yielded a meaningful increase in sport participation rates for a host population.[62] Hosting is no longer viewed as an effective means to achieve a sustained increase in sport participation or physical activity rates. The assumed 'trickle-down'[63] effects of sport participation have been systematically disproven in studies from USA, Australia, and New Zealand.[64] Some studies involving single sport mega-events such as the FIFA World Cup and IRB Rugby World Cup have demonstrated increases in membership rates for those sports within host countries,[65] which may suggest that more targeted and intentional strategies to increase sport participation have more potential than broad-based plans seeking to address systemic physical activity rates. Attempts to create a sport or physical activity related legacy as a result of hosting a mega-event must be part of an integrated strategy that links community programming, coaching, and accessible facilities, matching those plans with identified and existing needs.[66]

ECONOMIC

Image/Destination Marketing

Regeneration

Positive

Regenerative processes associated with hosting the Olympic Games recognize the ability of the event to catalyze urban redevelopment,[67] stimulate change,[68] and drive consumption-led economic revival.[69] The Games did not become attached to urban regeneration until Rome 1960, when purpose built stadia and other facilities combined with infrastructural improvements left a definitive mark on Rome's urban landscape.[70] Similarly, Tokyo 1964 pursued an ambitious agenda that also included a monorail, hotel developments, and public health infrastructure.[7172] Barcelona 1992 is an example of a host city using transformative urban projects to enhance their image internationally. 83% of total expenditure for the 1992 Games was directly invested in urban improvements rather than sport.[73] Barcelona 1992 encompassed a major revitalization project of the seafront, including the Olympic Village, transforming what had been an industrial and warehouse area into an economically profitable tourist destination. Key transportation projects received significant upgrades, including the metro, the airport, and the railway system, while hotel rooms and coastline beaches were also built as part of the wider regeneration strategy coinciding with the Olympics. London 2012 engaged in one of the largest regeneration schemes ever attached to staging a mega-event. Selecting the Lea Valley region in a disadvantaged and underdeveloped section of East London, London's organizers sought to regenerate a physically blighted area once home to dumping ground for toxic waste sites, making it Europe's largest regeneration project.[74]

Negative

While Barcelona 1992 is the most frequently cited example of a host city using the Games for a vehicle of urban regeneration, there was also a lasting and unintended negative impact on Barcelona. Between the time the bid was announced and the staging of the Games, housing prices increased dramatically (250%), while number of available rental units decreased (75%) and the construction of public housing units slowed dramatically.[75] Critics would also say that assigning Barcelona's success strictly to the Olympic Games would be a mistake; the event was just one part of a larger strategy intending to shift Barcelona's image.[76] Thanks in part to the success of Barcelona, the IOC has pushed the use of 'legacy' discourse specifically surrounding urban regeneration. This has encouraged many host cities to embark on massive projects that must ultimately be funded by the host, while the host must also guarantee any cost overruns related to event-related infrastructure as well. Stockholm 2026 most recently cited the IOC's failure to commit financially amongst its reasons for abandoning its bid.[77]

Event Infrastructure

Positive

The Olympic Games are frequently accompanied by other major infrastructural projects that are not directly connected to sport, representing an opportunity to 'fast-track' or accelerate pre-existing urban development agendas. In Vancouver 2010's case, there were three major infrastructural projects that were perused – all affiliated with, but not directly connected to, hosting. The Olympic-induced infrastructure projects, which included the Canada Line, Sea to Sky Highway improvements, and Vancouver Convention Center totaled $3.7 billion.[78] Most significantly, these projects were able to secure funding from the Federal government ($672.5 million CAD), provincial government ($1.8 billion CAD), local government ($119 million CAD), and private sources ($664 million CAD).[79] Utilizing existing resources to facilitate long-term benefits in the host community has been explored through the concept of social leveraging, in which government and event actors seek to secure benefits beyond the event itself.[80] In total, it

is estimated that an additional $1.26 billion CAD was invested in local development through venue construction and construction by third-party investors.[81]

Negative
While Vancouver 2010's affiliated infrastructure projects brought widespread and largely positive impacts well after the event ended, other hosts have not fared as well. Athens 2004, meant to signal the country's growth and development, instead is 'indicative of misplaced extravagance, desolation and despair' and spending on the event is believed to have contributed to Greece's economic downfall.[82] While the Athens 2004 Olympic Village was meant to be the biggest regeneration project in Athens' history, the village is now abandoned. Arguably, the most successful Olympic villages were the most modest ones – utilizing student dormitories at local universities (Los Angeles 1984 and 2024, Salt Lake City 2002, Atlanta 1996) – pointing towards the danger and risk in ambitious urban infrastructure schemes.

Tourism/Brand Recognition/Reputation
Positive
Hosting, or even bidding for, the Olympic and Paralympic Games has been considered a 'significant prize' in terms of prestige, city branding, and investment.[83] From an urban branding and marketing perspective, the common perception amongst hosts is that hosting the Games provides one of the foremost opportunities for place promotion. Mega-events are increasingly seen as having a key role in regional tourism, marketing, and promotion, using the event to project a favorable image both at a national and international level.[84] Hosts have the opportunity to communicate and promote 'selective images' to a target audience, which allows host authorities to undertake long-term activities to shape city image.[85] This has been especially true for Canada, which has repeatedly turned to hosting mega-events as a form of 'soft power' wherein Canada can project an image of Canada (and Canadians) as safe, reliable, and competent.[86]

While using the Olympic Games to engage in image enhancement, stimulating inward investment, and generating economic opportunity is not a new phenomena, the increased importance of symbolism in a competitive and increasingly neoliberal global order has made hosting an important endeavor. Media attention, predominantly before and during the event, can serve to boost the profile of host cities. Using spectacularized images of the urban or natural landscape, traditional broadcasters are often able to produce a media-friendly version of the host that is conducive to attracting tourism. Previous research on Calgary 1988 showed that international awareness of Calgary was significantly raised as a result of hosting the Winter Olympics, but without a longer-term ability to attract tourists, the image of the city faded in the longer-term.[87]

Negative
While the Games are considered a hallmark mega-event offering sustained international media attention, there are risks associated with the 'Olympic' brand related to recent doping and corruption scandals. Due to the popular symbolism attached to the Olympic Games and the perceptions around the social benefits of sport in general, criticism of the mega-event and its affiliated costs are difficult to level against Olympic hosts.

Rather than enhancing tourism, many studies have shown that instead visitors are shifted in the short-term as many would-be visitors decide against visiting during the time of the event for security concerns, increased costs, and availability of accommodation.[88] The number of visitors to the UK in the summer of 2012 actually fell by 400,000 when compared to the year before.[89] Further, in cities that cannot sustain the IOC minimums related to tourism following the event,

such as the number and level of hotel rooms, there can be significant losses on major investments.[90] No longer needing the 40,000 hotel rooms required by host cities after the peak two-week period of the Games, 40% of full service hotels went bankrupt after Lillehammer 1994.[91] Developing a city for the 'visitor class' – by focusing resources on entertainment districts, stadiums, and convention centres, for example – carries broad social and political implications. There is a risk that this type of investment can strain public trust between citizens and local government while also skewing the civic agenda.[92]

Economic Benefits

Economic Impact and Job Creation

Positive

The impacts of sport mega-events from a macroeconomic perspective focus primarily on economic output in the form of increased labor productivity, tourism impacts, and infrastructural investment. Hosts can experience a short-run boost, typically in the construction sector, and a short-term gains in tourism.[93] The Olympic Games are believed to 'promote economic activity as a result of the jobs created by tourists inclined to visit before, during, and after the event.'[94] Revenues, in the form of ticketing, sponsorship, licensing, and broadcast rights, can also be applied to offset the costs of staging the Games.[95] However, these revenues, while significant on their own, often pale in comparison against the costs of hosting. For example, the total cost of Vancouver 2010 is approximately $7.5 billion, whereas $1.5 billion in revenue was generated.[96]

One of the most positive studies on the economic impact of mega-events points to a statistically significant boost to international trade increase of 20%. This impact is attributable to the 'signal' a country sends when bidding to host the Games, which indicates that bidding (and losing) provides a similarly positive impact.[97]

Negative

Proponents of Olympic bids frequently identify economic gains, specifically in terms of GDP and job creation, as motivating factors behind Olympic bids. Research has shown that Olympic Games' budgets overrun with 100% consistency, exceeding projected budgets in real terms by 179%, making hosting the Olympic Games one of the riskiest mega-projects that exists.[98] Numerous studies have repeatedly debunked such claims of economic benefit, instead finding projected economic impacts tend to be completely negated or a fraction of what was initially predicted.[99]

Economic windfall is the most commonly recognized motivation to host the Olympic Games, despite the fact that for most hosts, positive net benefits only arise under very specific series of circumstances.[100] While researchers have noted strong evidence of positive impacts in leisure related industries following Salt Lake 2002, there were no long-term impacts on trade or total employment.[101] Further, while Salt Lake City 2002 saw positive gains of $70.6 million in the hotel and restaurant industry, this does not replace the losses reported in the general merchandise industry ($167.4 million).[102] Initial estimates surrounding economic activity for Vancouver 2010 predicted up to $10 billion in total economic activity. However, the total impact of the event on GDP from 2003 to 2010 was actually found to be $2.1 to $2.6 billion by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, over half of which could be attributed to Games operations directly. This makes the actual impact, averaged per year, to be $300 million annually, or, the equivalent of one-seventh of 1% of British Columbia's GDP.[103]

Following Salt Lake City 2002, there were actually no identifiable gains made in the employment sector, either before or after the Olympics. During the Games themselves, there was a statistically significant increase of 4,000 to 7,000 jobs, but this number is significantly less than

the projected 35,000 job-years originally predicted by the state government.[104] Based on the amount of federal spending by the federal government ($342 million in direct costs and $1.1 billion on indirect infrastructure spending), this equates to $300,000 in federal spending per job created.[105] Forecasts created for Vancouver 2010 predicted that between 40,000 and 56,000 person years of tourism related employment, however, reporting after the event showed less than 10,000 person years of employment were actually created.[106]

As economic impact studies are often commissioned by interests seeking to advance a bid to host, there is a bias to promote more favorable assumptions and estimates.[107] Further, there is an ongoing challenge in matching the optimism of ex ante (before the event) tourism and economic impacts with the ex post realities (actual returns) of Games hosts. Methodological issues and concepts such as the displacement effect, time lags in impact measurement, and shadow effects also prevent more accurate ex post studies from taking place. Studies must also accommodate for the substitution effect, which makes it easy to overstate projected benefits, and also be aware of flawed assumptions in economic impact studies.[108] One of the most common errors in projecting sport-related economic impact is to treat all visitors with a uniform impact, based on the presumption that all visitors share the same travel distance and spend in the same ways, which is a gross over simplification when considering the context of an international mega-event. The crowding out effect is also important to note in that 'regular' visitors might be dissuaded from visiting, and choose another destination instead, because of the mega-event.

The complex relationship between the rights holder, the IOC, and host cities also makes securing economic benefits a difficult undertaking. The IOC does not explicitly subsidize event hosts, even though it takes a broad share of revenue through its media rights distribution. Less than 30% of total revenue brought in for television and broadcast rights is shared with local organizing committees.[109] Heavily enforced regulations to prevent 'ambush' marketing and enforcement of 'clean venues' free of any advertising except for those that are official IOC sponsors reinforce criticisms levied against the IOC.

The last, and only, Summer Games hosted in Canada are remembered for the 30 years of debt incurred by the city of Montreal. Leaving behind a shortfall of $1.5 billion, the organizing of Montreal 1976 was marked by poor management, competing political goals, and extreme deficits related to ambitious projects.[110] Montreal 1976, combined with the boycotts of the Moscow 1980 Games, left the 1984 Summer Games with only one bidder, Los Angeles. Such a crisis allowed LA to have direct influence on the way the Olympic Games would be hosted; the funding model, influence of sponsorship, and attention to the way facilities would be utilized following the Games are some of the lasting changes that LA left on the process of hosting.[111] LA1984 is commonly remembered as the Olympic event with the greatest economic upside; however, LA 1984 should also be remembered as the event that utilized existing structures and facilities while changing the use and application of taxpayer funds. Due to their rare bargaining position, LA 1984 successfully passed an ordinance declaring that no public funds would be used on the Games, and that the IOC would guarantee the city against any operating losses – an arrangement that has never been realized since.[112]

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Management

Brownfields Remediation and Redevelopment

Positive

Regeneration of derelict sites dates can be connected to Munich 1972, where an abandoned WWII airstrip, later used as a dump and fairground site, was chosen as the site of Olympic venues.[113] The site had been marked for redevelopment as part of an earlier urban planning strategy, and the redevelopment of the site was 'fast-tracked' and completed in only five years.[114] Sydney 2000 incorporated sustainable development into its Games concept, building its Olympic Village as part of a larger remediation strategy of the Homebush Bay area.[115] Vancouver 2010 heavily incorporated sustainable principles in selecting a former industrial site, classified by the City of Vancouver as a property that had been 'let go' as it was a former sawmill location, operational port, and terminus of the Canadian rail system.[116] London 2012 planned its Olympic Village and 560-acre Olympic Park around a large redevelopment scheme in the Lower Lea Valley in East London, which also helped to justify the bid as well as accompanying expenditures.[117]

Negative

While environmental promises are widely celebrated by rights holders and organizers, the reality is often very different. For Rio 2016, the bid promised to clean up Guanabara Bay, but the Olympic sailing venue continued to be plagued by raw sewage and trash during the event, calling into question the health and safety of many participants. $400 million was secured for clean up efforts for the bay, but only 20-50% of sewage was being treated, far less than the 80% figure organizers claimed.[118] The failure of the Guanabara Bay remediation project is actually doubled considering that organizers for the 2007 Pan American Games promised to clean up the site as well, but were never held accountable for their environmental failings either. Rio 2016's environmental problems were widely covered in international media leading up to, and during the event. As the IOC continues to stand behind the claimed positive environmental 'legacies' of Rio 2016, there is even more responsibility on local organizing committees to uphold their own standards for environmental management and to communicate them publicly.

Environmental Standards

Positive

Vancouver 2010 took an ambitious approach to sustainability, calling for oversight in terms of environmental stewardship, energy use, emissions, air quality, and waste management. Securing LEED certification for many of its venues and embracing sustainable development principles, Vancouver 2010 worked closely to embody the City of Vancouver's own approach to sustainability. Vancovuer 2010 organizers developed their own internal sustainability management and reporting system and integrated international standards including ISO 14001-14006, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G3, and BSI 8900-8901.[119]

Negative

While the Olympic Movement claims to work towards sustainability, many have been critical of the propaganda-heavy nature and public relations focus of such environmental campaigns. London 2012 was heavily criticized for signing BP, a multinational oil and gas company, as a sustainability sponsor without considering the ethical and environmental implications of such an agreement.[120] Many hosts have relied on carbon offsets, which critics have argued does not contribute to actually making an event more sustainable. The aspirational goals that are

frequently attached to hosting – such as carbon neutrality and zero waste – cannot be realistically considered to be achievable targets, but continue to be used as a means of legitimacy for host organizing committees. The logic of attempting to make short-term event sustainable is also challenging. To impose sustainability messaging on what appears to be an unsustainable enterprise (attracting large volumes of tourists and spectators) has made the prospect of a 'sustainable games' a target of considerable criticism.

Environmental Protection

Biodiversity and Habitat

Positive

Environmental protection first became involved in the planning and staging of Sapporo 1972, although it wasn't under Albertville 1992 that the IOC moved to formally incorporate environmental protections in the bid process. Albertville 1992 was widely criticized for its degradation of the environment and irreparable harm to the natural environment. International outcry from the 1992 Games coupled with Lillehammer 1994's successful incorporation of environmental protections established the IOC's position on the environment.[121] Since the bid for the 2000 Summer Games, bid cities have been obligated to respond to a section on environmental impacts as part of their candidature acceptance procedure.

Negative

While technically all prospective host cities are required to respond to the environmental section as part of the bid process, many studies have noted that such responses typically do not function beyond the level of rhetoric, there is minimal oversight, and no enforcement or accountability when environmental commitments are broken.[122] Sydney 2000 offered 'Green Games,' Beijing 2008 'Green Olympics,' Vancouver 2010 'First Sustainable Olympic Games' and Rio 201 held a 'Green Games for a Blue Planet', however, these present more of a rhetorical and marketing related opportunity than they do a meaningful incorporation of sustainability. Ironically, promises made in the name of sustainability show significantly diminished, if not negligible, returns.[123]

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