

# **Positive and negative impacts of major events in two cities - the case of Rio Carnival and Lisbon Football Championship**

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## **Short Outline**

In this paper two events in two different countries are selected to analyse the positive and negative impacts on the city. This analysis is specially focused on the consequences on the public spaces and on the improvement on quality of urban life resulting from the construction of infrastructure for the events. The discussion is centred on the advantages for private and public actors and citizens resulting from them.

## **Abstract**

The paper departure from the analysis of case studies in two cities, Lisbon and in Rio, in two different continents Europe and South America, to discuss the impacts and major changes caused in the city by major events such as the Carnival or the Football championship. The following questions are dealt: How do the cities cope with the increase on the abnormal infrastructure demands during the events? What sort of temporary and permanent impacts can be identified in the cities? How people perceive the physical and functional changes introduced in the city by those major events just after they have happened? What sorts of measures local authorities take action to minimise impacts over every day life over the time of the events? What sort of use is given to infrastructure built to support the event after it? Frequently these major events are also used by cities as a form to implement improvements and major infrastructure on their urban space and as a form to produce and design new developments. In the two specific cases the paper will look at what sort of impacts and changes in the public spaces and on the urban fabric the events have caused, and the type of urban development associated to them? And last what sort of new demands have been generated on the public as a consequence of those changes introduced by the events?

## **Introduction**

Many cities around the world use events to promote urban life. This can be done in a permanent basis like in fixed dates – through festivities and festivals like the Revellion, the Carnival, national parades, music or cinema festivals; or in once in a life events like housing an international fair, or a sport event. These events transform the normal routine of the city and might cause real burden, but on the other hand they can be used to create new opportunities. In this paper we will look at two special occasions in two cities – the Carnival in Rio and the 2005 European Football Championship to take place in Lisbon - to look at how cities deal with the impacts on those events and pinpoint the opportunities that they might create for urban change.

## The Case of Rio's Carnival

Despite of the importance of the event for the city there is little detailed information on its impact on the city economy, culture and urban life. In a recent document – Plan of Tourism for the City of Rio de Janeiro (Plano de Turismo da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro – "Plano Maravilha") undertaken in 1997 by the Municipal Secretary of Tourism, supported by the National Agency for Tourism (EMBRATUR), little reference is made to the event as an opportunity for urban change and physical improvement of the city itself.

The Carnival is an important part of the Rio's culture. It is a traditional party known world-wide and strongly connected with popular culture, particularly to those of low-income groups.

The Schools of Samba, internationally known by the brilliantly costumed dancers performed in the parade (desfile), were founded from mid XXth century, resulting from the incorporation of many elements of the existing carnival tradition. The first parade took place in 1932 and from than onwards have become the most important carnival event in the country.

Many of the Schools of Samba were born in the favelas of the city, and still are housed there involving an important part of the community for the whole year, generating work and income. The more paradigmatic cases are the Mangueira and Salgueiro School that also name communities of the city – Morro da Mangueira and Morro do Salgueiro. At the present it also counts with the participation of a number of NGOs, for the 1999 Carnival party data show for example, that over 10.000 fantasies was manufactured by NGOs.

Streets of the city are taken during the carnival by around 200 street balls, but the official parade takes place since 1984 in a permanent purpose build area known as "Sambodrómó" at the city centre of Rio. This is an open structure composed by a street aligned by two rows of seats and dressing rooms and ended with a stage covered by a sculptural concrete skin designed by Oscar Niemayer to resemble the "curves of Brazilian woman". The building is placed in land that remained from the road works implemented during previous decades and the opening of the metro.

Fig. 1. Street Carnival



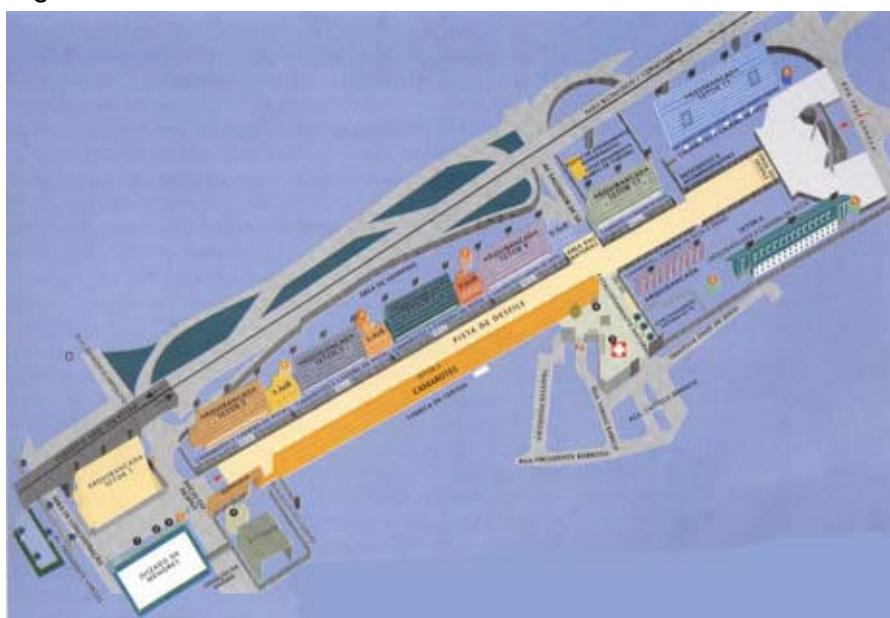
During the year, the rows are transformed into a primary school. This is an interesting experience because the carnival only lasts few days of the year and the infrastructure is able to be used often during the year with very compatible activities given that calendars are never superposed. On the other hand the investment on infrastructure are channelled to an important social use in an area that lacks educational facilities and is populated by less privileged sectors of the population. Yet, the adaptation of the building as a school create some problems, specially related to lighting and ventilation of classrooms.

Fig. 2. Views of the Sambódromo



The construction of this infrastructure did not have nevertheless any impact in attracting population to use the area in a permanent basis, since it is a flux of people that come and leave with the event. On the other hand, its spatial characteristics and dimensions have made it insular, not allowing any improvement on the quality of the local fabric or allowing an integration with the borough where it is located.

Fig.3. The Plan of Sambódromo



In fact the Sambódromo acts as a big barrier, contributing to cut the borough in segregated zones and making some streets way out. Surrounded by the viaduct at one side, and by houses in the other, the building gives its back to the surroundings, facing inside, with only two streets linking it to the existing fabric, and that during carnival are also close down to traffic. This has helped the area to become more vulnerable to crime, making difficult for residents to circulate within the borough, and contributed to its urban degradation. A situation that is more critical during Carnival when residents have access to their houses made more difficult by the numbers of streets in the neighbourhood that are closed, making the area a "samba island", with access of residents controlled by the police. Given the difficulties of mobility and accessibility, some resident end up leaving their houses empty during carnival, and more vulnerable to burglary. In addition to that the environmental conditions, due to sound pollution and generated by the event garbage (garbage is estimated to grow 20% during the period of the event, largely concentrated in the parade and street festivals), are difficult to bare by residents. All those conflicts could be minimised through adequate planning measures.

The borough itself is part of the central business district (área central de negócios). It is a traditional and popular area of Rio between the old and the new centre which is characterised by old buildings, many of them of architectural historical value, with presence of activities of service and commerce complementary to the city centre. In the last decades is suffering with many social problems like violence, unemployment or insecure forms of employment in the informal market and uncertain property rights. The construction of Sambódromo has not been used in any way to improve this reality which could, for instance, be done by developing income generating activities in the building using the unemployed local population, as suggested by the Rio's local authority in 1999, but never implemented.

The area has, throughout time, has been sliced by major arteries resulting from subsequent interventions and transformed almost into an island. Its decadence started in the 40's with the opening of Av. Presidente Vargas, one of the main arteries leading to the city centre, allowing the connection of the centre with the south, north zones, suburbs, and beyond through Av. Brasil with the metropolitan region. This has become worst during the 60's with the opening of Santa Barbara tunnel, and the construction of viaducts, connecting the south zone to the industrial area of the city and the suburbs that have finally turned the borough into a thoroughfare area, an important corridor in the new circulation structure that emerged in the city. The implementation of these roads have caused a number of demolitions and housing removal in the borough, three entire blocks were wiped away. In 1965 the Dioxiadis Plan has fixed guidelines for the renewal of the area as an expansion of the city centre. In 1980 and in 1992 new parameters of occupation were established for the area attempting to safeguard some of the local character and morphology. In 2000 a new project for the area developed by the municipality with the consultancy of the Portuguese architect Nuno Portas, known as SA'S, attempts to improve the existing infrastructure, mostly very old, and to renovate buildings and public spaces, so as to re-structure and improve the area as a whole.

The area is strategically located between the Old and the New centre, well served of transport – cars and underground, with two important infrastructures built at the two ends - the Sambódromo and the Teleporto and the São Sebastião Admistrative Centre (housing the municipality headquarter), but with very poor infrastructure and housing conditions outside those two poles. The Teleporto is a major building with modern communication infrastructure and a roof heliport, designed to create a new business centre in the area so as to make the new and the old centre more

connected to each other. Its implementation required many demolitions and the re-design of all the fabric resulting in a new block structure. The experience however has not yet succeeded and these infrastructures seem rather islands in the middle of a run down district, with very poor quality of public spaces around.

Despite many project and plans developed for the area, it is still waiting for a coherent urban renewal project that could bring vitality and requalification to the borough as a whole. Investments and changes have been introduced following a very restricted view, focused in bringing mega-infrastructure, but not have been able to change the image of the area to bring new uses and population, to make it attractive to private investment and to provide nice public urban spaces that could help to change its image. On the contrary, most public investment has helped the area to become more segregated, increasing disparities between the new and the existing, stimulating physical and social exclusion.

The carnival is an event that brings a huge number of tourist to the city – numbers show more than 300 thousand outsiders that corresponds to almost 1/6 of the total number of tourist per year. The occupancy rates of hotels increase enormously with rates reaching over 90%, and there are very positive effects for the economy of the city. It is estimated by the Rio Tourist Agency (RIOTUR) that around 1600 new temporary jobs are created connected with the Carnival party, movement around 200 million dollars in the whole State of Rio, with 50% spent in the city. Spin off in the borough of all this economic activity is nonexistent. Most hotels are located at the coastal area of the city at the South Zone, away from the area, where the large majority of tourist stay - 75% foreigners, commuting at night to the centre to see the parade.

In order to avoid traffic problems the area where the parade takes place is isolated from cars, stopping people to go on motorised transport and making people to access the Sambódromo mainly by metro. Metro operates day and night during the carnival and in 1999 Carnival it was responsible for the transport of over 500 passengers. Traffic is eliminated between the metro and the parade, around one kilometre distant one from the other, and the street is changed into a pleasurable walkway. Unfortunately no attempt has been made on the design of public spaces and the attraction of restaurants and bars that could retain the population before and after the parade, and outside the carnival in these areas, contributing to turn it into a more attractive place to be used by locals and visitors.

The whole event, and the parade in special, changes completely the inhabitant's perception of the city. There is a kind of "inversion" – a lot of local inhabitants, known as cariocas, travel and leave the city while "outsiders" come from everywhere – from the peripheral cities, other places of Brazil and abroad, some of them not having place to sleep stay in the streets. The city has much less movement as a whole, but there is an intense use of streets and public spaces where the carnival party is concentrated. In these areas the street becomes the space for people, a stage for the party and the parade, and cars are removed away. Socially there is also an inversion; the carnival is the people's party where the poor dress rich fantasies.

The city seems to find a balance between the comers and the leavers. In this way the existing infrastructure is able to cope with the burden. Most of people travelling away from the city go to the Lake region, crossing the Guanabara Bay through the bridge towards North and to the Hilly districts around the city. Data from 1999 and 2000 show that over 400 thousand cars have crossed the bridge towards the beaches amounting a number of leavers much higher than the approximately 300 thousand tourists arriving in the city. This in part explains a general feeling of quietness in the

city outside the areas where the party takes place, with many restaurants and commerce shut down during the holiday.

### **Lisbon's Football Championship and the two new stadiums**

The lack of private and public investments in infrastructure and public services for decades in the city has contributed to the existence of a powerful dynamic of municipal development around two main important areas at North/Northeast periphery of Lisbon, where major stadiums are located (Benfica and Alvalade).

This dynamic will transform the city and its urban system with the emergence of new patterns connected more to private interests than to public values. Radical transformations can be envisaged in the urban framework of Lisbon, creating discontinuities in the image and urban fabric, changing their system functioning and generating new social patterns and forms of urban space use.

The construction of the two new stadiums assigns a new urban identity for the two boroughs of Alvalade and Benfica. From an urban point of view, the construction of those mega sport facilities is broad. In general terms those buildings give support to a modern city vision, that attempts to preserve its ancient culture at the same time it projects an image of progress.

Those infrastructures, given their magnitude in the urban context, might help to promote Lisbon as an international capital. They will certainly allow the city to re-structure its present functional structure. They will allow creating local poles of activities, with adequate levels of infrastructure to the concentration of service and commerce, and to the support of the emergence of new uses (such as tourism) as an alternative to the consolidated residential use.

The scale of those urban interventions also shows the prestige the urban society in Lisbon, wishful of new images that produce impact in the city. They correspond to collective and individual dreams that are seldom used but often admired. Their meaning is temporal to the city and to society.

The new stadiums will also help to modernise the urban structure of Lisbon through the renewal of urban decaying areas that will benefit with better accessibility and integration to other areas of the city. In turn it is expected an improvement of the whole accessibility and mobility conditions of Lisbon through the revision of the present road circulation system, the connecting and ordering of transport infrastructure, with an improve of automobile flows in the city as a whole.

Less obvious, but very important, the construction of the new football stadiums express the wish of the city to re-design its public urban space, creating quality spaces around those infrastructures, preserving its local characteristics and favouring its modernisation to allow better conditions of use and fruition of citizens. In these sense an attempt has been made to provide quality urban environments around the new infrastructure, by improving existing areas or creating new streets, squares and gardens.

Those projects are sign of a new economic attitude of the city society, both at individual and collective level, that wish to express their importance at the national and European level, showing similarity with economically developed societies.

### **Undergoing transformations at the Lisbon's 2sd ringroad**

The two stadiums are neighbours of the 2sd ringroad of Lisbon. Their construction will have impacts on the urban design, image, functional structure, road system and urban life of the entire city.

Some of the existing urban design proposals for the areas do not respect the memory and logic of local places. They consider the complete renewal of the existing fabric, neglecting important historic and cultural aspects of the city life. They also introduce changes on the social, spatial and environmental reality of those places. Developers tend to believe that esthetical aspects, together with other of practical and functional nature, are the dominant component to allow for the desired "inhabitants appropriation" of the areas.

Many of those new interventions end up proposing also the construction of "*cities within the city*", with multi-purpose buildings that include shops, cinemas, sport facilities and other leisure activities, housing and offices. This new way to think and design the city tend to create poles – spaces of confluence and animation – that contribute to change the places and do not facilitate urban interface or the creation of leisure activity spaces.

The visual changes in Benfica and Alvalade introduced by the construction of the two football stadium highlights the new city image, dominated by large buildings. The impact of those large developments is visible inside and outside the city, from several angles and distances, defining new visual landmarks.

The legibility of this new city image imposed by those large developments, including the sport facilities, is of key importance for the individual knowledge of many parts of the city, performing as organising elements of a new urban order.

In this sense, the new stadiums and adjoining urban complexes have definitively contributed to change the esthetical perception of those boroughs of the city, introducing in its image new values and esthetical patterns that tend to isolate part from the whole (individual buildings/areas from the fabric). Those new aesthetic values tend to differentiate the new buildings from the rest of the urban context.

From a social point of view the new modern image of Alvalade and Benfica is also important since it assumes emotional meanings through the definition of a prestigious zone inside the city. The image of prestige that the new stadiums give to the city also helps to the consolidation of its physical and functional structure.

Alvalade and Benfica emerge as two potential secondary centres that are able to counterbalance the strong polarisation of the economical activity at the Central area. They also bring economic improvement to the periphery and the upgrading of spaces strategically located to the development of services and commerce. The huge amount of building already underway in those two areas will, nevertheless, worsen the critical traffic situation of the city, demanding for urgent solutions. A number of new road links under construction are meant to alleviate the huge traffic of the 2sd ringroad.

Another mobility problem existing in the two areas is the lack of parking space. This problem has gradually become "chaotic", being a real obstacle to vehicular and pedestrian circulation and contributing to deteriorate local environmental conditions.

## **Final considerations**

The construction of large infrastructures like the two football stadiums in Lisbon, or the Sambódromo in Rio, are important for the city specially because they might raise the interest of private and public sectors for the modernisation and transformation of an urban area, offering new opportunities for urban renewal and requalification.

The existence of those infrastructures in a given area of the city can also be used as a motor to promote urban life and to generate new attraction areas in the city. Inhabitants and visitors will link this to a large extent to the quality of public spaces, which should stimulate social interaction and the appropriation of space.

Public spaces are the support of collective life. They reflect the inhabitant's culture and create the image of a place. Public life results from the set of everyday activities developed by people, individually or in group, in a given space. Space thus need to be able to attract activities and to hold urban life in order to maintain vitality. This in turn has to do with the image it is able to build and the life it able to hold. Large events can be important, if associated to broader policies of urban renewal, to help in constructing such conditions.

Many reasons for the urban success of those large enterprises can be identified. First the support to such initiatives might be interpret as a sign of vitality and change, giving confidence and optimism to investors. Large developments also are important to introduce dynamism in the construction industry, allowing the definition of a new image and urban structure for the city.

In the particular case of Lisbon, the construction of the two new urban-sport complex have several and broad consequences on the social, environmental and spatial structure of the city. They will contribute to change the image of the city and its functional structure, guiding the capital re-urbanisation process. Lisbon will be different, consolidating its condition of European capital, with a more modern and cosmopolitan image, but may be less humanised.

In the case of Rio, the construction of the Sambódromo by not being followed by an overall policy aiming the requalification of the entire area and the reconstruction of its image, and given the segregation and fragmentation imposed by the Sambódromo in the neighbourhood, the impact of the event is rather negative than positive. The lack of a clear and consistent policy of improving the quality of urban spaces and promoting new uses has prevented private investment in the area, consolidating a very negative image for the entire borough.

The analysis of these two cases reveals the importance of developing urban design and planning policies, in parallel with the construction of infrastructure for the events, to create positive impacts in the city improving the quality of urban life and to generate new social, cultural and economical opportunities.

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