

Hallmark events are large scaled, planned events of limited duration. These events have arisen to the forefront of urban planning and potential tools to stimulate and direct urban growth. Rio De Janeiro, Brazil provides a unique case study in the use of these events in the context of urban revitalization. The city hosted the Pan American games in 2007 and later won bids to jointly host the World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympic Games in 2016. Through the International Experience award, I was given the privilege to study how these events have impacted the city. I was able to travel to the city one month prior to the opening ceremonies of the 2014 World Cup.

With the use of these events, the city hopes to recreate the so-called “Barcelona Effect”, whereby large-scale events are used to accelerate projects, stimulate economic growth and create a feeling of civic identity. To what extent is the so-called “Barcelona effect” truly a factor in the city’s growth? The city has constructed many mega projects for these events such as the revitalization of the famous Maracaña Stadium, construction of a new BRT and LRT system, upgrades to the airport and construction of new mixed use neighbourhoods. These projects will be legacies of these events and the incorporation of these legacies into everyday city life is critical. Furthermore, legacies become important within the conceptual framework of “place marketing” and “urban entrepreneurialism.”



Figure 1 The Rio De Janeiro Media Village will be a mixed use community following the 2016 Olympic Games

Through interviews and site visits, I have explored a variety of topics and projects that are the result of these events. An economist for the Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada claimed that growth occurred prior to these events due as Rio De Janeiro was the economic core of Brazil’s sugar, oil, and tourism industries. He explained that public money would be better used to improve labour productivity through education and healthcare, two underfunded services, rather than stadia.

My site visit to João Havelange Stadium marks one of the most valuable opportunities on the trip. The stadium was built in 2007 as a track and field and football facility, which was to be reused on a regular basis by Botafogo Football Club and for local events. I was given a tour by the communications manager for the club and an architecture professor for

the Federal University of Rio De Janeiro. The stadium as it was built for the Pan Am games, failed to meet the standards of the International Olympic Committee. Furthermore, a troubled public-private partnership resulted in the discovery that the stadium was structurally unsound. Only 7 years following initial construction, public money is being used to redevelop the stadium to meet future uses. Many locals have been particularly upset by this financial waste, when the surrounding neighbourhood is in dire need of investment.



Figure 2 João Havelange Stadium has faced many structural and logistical issues since its completion in 2007

However, there was evidence that mega projects in Rio De Janeiro have

resulted in accelerated construction timelines. For instance, Federal and State capital are being channeled into a badly needed BRT and LRT projects throughout the city. As an architect for the Empresa Olympica Municipal for the 2016 Olympics put forth, these projects were all part of the city's Masterplan and are now being completed from this Federal and State support.



Figure 3 Federal and State capital are funding the removal and replacement of an elevated expressway with an LRT in Port Maravilha

The verdict is still out on the end result of these events on Rio De Janeiro. As the host city for the Pan American games in 2015, Toronto could learn a lot from a city like Rio De Janeiro. Especially if the city intends to use these Pan Am games to pursue a future Olympic of World Exposition Bid.