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To cite this article: Roberto Paolo Vico, Ricard Ricci Uvinha & Nuno Gustavo (2018): Sports mega-events in the perception of the local community: the case of Itaquera region in São Paulo at the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil, Soccer & Society, DOI: [10.1080/14660970.2017.1419471](https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2017.1419471)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2017.1419471>



Published online: 10 Jan 2018.



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Sports mega-events in the perception of the local community: the case of Itaquera region in São Paulo at the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil

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ABSTRACT

Hosting sporting mega-events involve considerable investment in and significant engagement with local communities. This paper contributes to the burgeoning literature about sporting mega event's socio-geographical impacts on tourism, employment, urban regeneration, and socio-economic and cultural benefits. Within the context of 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, we assess, utilizing interview data from local communities, the impact of the construction of the 2014 World Cup's opening venue, 'Arena Corinthians' soccer stadium, in Itaquera, as well as other infrastructure developments more widely in the East Zone of São Paulo. The results point to the diversity of opinions among the resident community about the real legacies resulting from this sport mega-event.

Introduction

Sporting mega-event (SME) have become an important instrument for urban regeneration and a strategic marketing instrument for host nations. Considering their level of geographical intervention and, if properly managed, it may increase tourist activity, improve the image of the city and its notoriety, as well as the quality of life of its residents through the various associated urban operations.¹

The organization of SMEs involves considerable investments and, consequently, the engagement with different economic, political and social actors, both public and private. The articulation and consensus of these agents along with the engagement of the local community are essential for the success of the event. Sporting mega events are also usually urban phenomena that require well-organized and structured services and infrastructure to meet the standards that international sports institutions, such as the Fédération Internationale de Soccer Association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) require for hosting the event. These requirements and standards often compete and collide with other real requirements and priorities at the level of education, health, safety, housing and basic sanitation systems, etc., particularly in the context of developing countries and cities.²

There are numerous studies that analyse the economic impacts of a major event,³ without considering the social and cultural impacts. Firstly, because the social and cultural impacts of SMEs are seen as external to any form of analysis and evaluation of the mega-event organization, these types of impacts

are less tangible when compared to the economic impacts that are also difficult to measure. Moreover, these impacts, as opposed to the economic impacts, tend to be associated with negative factors such as safety, alcoholism, prostitution, social tensions, loss of authenticity and increased traffic in the city.⁴ Nevertheless, a simple financial analysis is not enough to evaluate the success of a major event, because countless non-quantifiable variables are involved and linked to the success of the event⁵ and, mainly, the perception and level of satisfaction of the residents. In the last few decades, many researchers⁶ and the international scientific community have shown a growing interest and attention to studies on SMEs. The topic is complex and the doubts it arises are many. This work intends to problematize and research the socio-geographical impacts of an SME, in this case the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil, focusing on the Itaquera district in the city of São Paulo in Brazil.

Brazil has been the only country that participated in all editions of the Soccer World Cups. This is a fact that stresses how much Soccer is a central element of the sports practice, culture and daily life of Brazilian society. In this sense, the ambition for the organization of another final phase of the World Cup was something that the country looked forward to, not only due to the representation and meaning of Soccer among the Brazilian population, but also, from the political and economic point of view, due to the country's need to show the world the moment the country was living. In October 2007, during a ceremony in Zurich organized by FIFA, it was announced to the whole world that Brazil would host the 2014 FIFA World Cup.⁷ Initially there was a lot of uncertainty and mistrust about this choice, but after the beginning of the event, and despite some protests, Brazil showed the whole world why it is considered the Soccer country.⁸

Literature review

The Soccer World Cups, in the last few decades in particular, have been events that have assumed a dimension of great importance, becoming elements of entertainment and tourism, but also of geographical and social transformation, as well as international projection. This circumstance has made the nature of these events complex and multidimensional, resulting in and motivating studies with different problems ranging from management, marketing, tourism, leisure activities and free time to sociocultural, anthropological and historical variables.⁹

In fact, nowadays, the Soccer World Cups are considered instruments of geographical, urban and tourism marketing since they contribute to the growth in the number of visitors and tourists in the host cities, to the projection of the host nation's image and the notoriety. Soccer World Cups represent important opportunities for the improvement of the urban fabric and aesthetics, attracting investments and financing and generating relevant multiplier economic effects. In this context, the mega-events serve precisely to increase the notoriety of a territory by providing it with infrastructures; and also to accelerate the urban transformation process based on the requalification projects themselves.¹⁰

The interest and capture by sports mega-events is strongly growing. This phenomenon can be explained in part by how much they attract media and sponsors.¹¹ According to Horne and Manzenreiter,¹² the great development of the technologies associated with mass media, satellite television, live Internet streaming, the formation of a sports-media-business alliance and the promotion of values related to sport have been crucial to the growing economic interest associated with mega sports events. On the other hand, in recent years, mega-events have created opportunities to provide the cities with new public spaces and new instruments for urban planning and management, launching requalification and regeneration processes of the destinations. According to Matos,¹³ the most important sports mega-events, the Olympic Games and the Soccer World Cups, bring three important benefits to the host cities or countries, which the author himself describes as the 'holy trinity': economic growth, legacy of infrastructures and image promotion.

For the organization of an event such as the Soccer World Cup, it is necessary to put in place an integral philosophy of planning and management, taking into account such diverse aspects and interests from the organizers, the local community, the athletes and the agents involved in the context of tourist activity. The degree of commitment of the several actors involved, although concentrated

in a relatively limited timeframe, is properly structured. The process implies a preliminary phase of design and feasibility that culminates with the approval or non-approval of the event, and the impacts in the post-event period must be considered. The planning and implementation phase includes an operational plan with the definition of the resources to be used. In the closure phase, the evaluation and monitoring must be the focus of attention with the monitoring of long-term impacts.¹⁴

It is also essential to understand who are the different stakeholders to be involved in the process of conducting a sport mega-event 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 mega-events. In the specific case of sports competitions it is necessary to consider sports associations of national or international scale (IOC, FIFA, UEFA, FIA). To organize a sport mega-event, specialized structures and facilities are required.¹⁵ Residents and local populations often assume the role of spectators, not playing an active role in the decision-making process.¹⁶ As Cashman¹⁷ also highlights, the consensus on the holding of Soccer World Cups is a result of political games, with local populations being included indirectly to express their willingness to host the event.

Post-event management should be part of the overall plans for the development of the urban fabric and the community concerned. An event should be the object of a deep engagement of all social and economic actors, and it is necessary to develop a long-term programming.¹⁸ 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. The major international events raise a growing attention to the transformations of policy, there is to say, of a different plan of action of the public policies in the territory. In fact, recent history shows that major events, together with their benefits, also produce damages, which can be of an environmental, economic, psychological and socio-geographical nature.¹⁹ These considerations lead to a careful reflection on the delicate phase of post-event management.

In order to host the sports mega-events, high investments are required to enhance or improve the city's infrastructures and sports facilities, which are not always consensual. Hosting events generates 'winners' and 'losers', which explains why events are rarely considered as 'windows of opportunity without opposition'.²⁰ Among the positive impacts of the sports mega-events most cited by the authors, we have: the forecast of an increase in tourist flows coming to visit the host city; economic, commercial and promotional benefits; economic return related to the construction costs of facilities and infrastructures, such as stadiums, new receiving structures and the improvement of the transport network,²¹ as well as intangible aspects, such as the improvement of the image of the host city/country, social cohesion, more opportunities for the practice of sports and cultural exchanges with visitors.²² However, the issue is complex, and not always a sport mega-event brings with it an increase of such flows or improvements that spread throughout the territory or in an equal manner to the whole resident population.

In terms of social benefits, hosting a major event can represent a unique opportunity to improve the organizational skills of a community. It can also contribute to the projection of the host population, in addition to being able to stimulate the population for the practice of sport.²³

Being in the 'centre of the world' for a few weeks in the context of such an event can provide a unique opportunity to promote technological developments, motivate specific talents and creative capital in local companies. Hosting a sport mega-event allows to face new challenges and opportunities to develop new knowledge, promoting the capacity of the local and business community with new specific skills. It also allows, in particular in the preparatory phase, to contribute to boosting the citizens' culture and knowledge about their own city, culture and traditions.²⁴ In some cases, there are also a number of negative impacts. A positive image worldwide may, in many cases, correspond with a negative image locally. This may happen when the construction of the new structures involve removals and/or displacement, whereby the local community can perceive the event as the cause of the loss of their own social environment, or also when there are other negative effects, such as the increase in car traffic in the area, the increase in the purchase/rental cost of real estate, geographical transformations that can harm the population, high maintenance costs associated with the new sports facilities and the low index of their use in the post-event period.²⁵

In any case, most of the studies have shown that hosting a major sports event, in particular the Soccer World Cups and the Olympic Games, generate enthusiasm and pride in the local population, giving the impression of unity and cohesion that allows to overcome ideological and social conflicts,²⁶ except of course those who suffer from displacements and other problems. The most important long-term transformations identified in a host city are the construction or restructuring/redevelopment of multifunctional sports structures and arenas, of transport systems and other related infrastructures (water, electricity, and telecommunications, among others).²⁷ These long-term transformations may be permanent and can be reused for other purposes. These elements represent a significant legacy for the daily life of host cities, but also for tourism at various levels, increasing their infrastructure standards and international projection.²⁸

Essex and Chalkley²⁹ also questioned if sports facilities and event support infrastructures can be positive or negative for the host territory at a time when such interventions were not foreseen or were a priority for the territory. The impact caused by the construction of sports facilities and new structures, in addition to the positive effect on the economy and on the labour market, may be less useful or totally negative from a social point of view. It is possible to verify the displacement of the resident population (in the intervention areas), waste of investments and diversions of funds and resources, in addition to the high cost of maintenance of these structures that, sometimes, depending on the city or the country, become unused. These are reasons why public opinion often does not express a positive judgement on the sport mega-events, and as Hall³⁰ stresses these events are associated with huge public expenditure.

Based on the experiences observed over the years, it is possible to identify some key themes that characterize the Soccer World Cups and, therefore, may represent a common denominator in order to try to anticipate and predict the legacies of this great event: economic development; urban regeneration; new infrastructures and services; investments and territory marketing; political legitimacy at the international level; development of skills, know-how and education; environmental impact; safety; cultural exchanges; increase of the local population's self-esteem, as well as other intangible impacts.³¹ The legacies of the Soccer World Cups, whether social, cultural, environmental, political, economic or sports, are what attract the most the political and economic elites, although these legacies are part of the sport mega-events unknown things. Positive legacies are needed both for international bodies (such as FIFA and the IOC for sport) and for the territories hosting the events, and the latter in particular to justify the significant investment of public funds required to organize them.³² However, what is always underlined in the application to host SMEs is the benefit to the places, the need and the importance of hosting a sport mega-event to raise the level of the provision of services and infrastructures, as if it were not possible to do that without hosting such events. To deepen the point of view of the residents there are many theories, but the most effective are Ethnology and the Social Exchange Theory (SET). With Ethnology one can know a certain population through the tools of direct and participant observation, where the human and social relationship is more profound. But SET represents the standard theory in this type of social research to understand the residents' perception of mega-events and tourism. The main author who uses this theory is Gursoy and Kendall,³³ who also holds the largest number of publications on this subject. One of their main works, 'Hosting megaevents: modeling locals', correctly indicates SET as a theoretical model to analyse the perception of the residents and the relative support to the mega-events (Figure 1).

In the previous model, it is important that the local community perceive the types and the size of benefits that can obtain, as well as the costs of the same. On the other hand, all stakeholders involved in the planning and organization of the event should consider as essential factors:

- (1) Attachment of the event to the local community;
- (2) Concern with the local community;
- (3) The socio-environmental and socio-geographical values of the residents.

Without a deep consideration of these three aspects it becomes very difficult to get a positive perception of the residents about the event and the same can result in a failure. Gursoy and Kendall³⁴ applied this model by conducting a study on the perceptions of residents of Salt Lake City during the 2002 Winter Olympics. The authors identified five affective aspects: the level of concern of the residents,

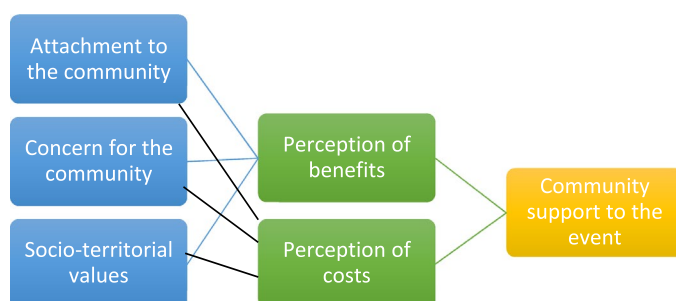


Figure 1. Social Exchange Theory (SET) – Analysis model for mega-events. Source: Adapted from Gursoy and Kendall, “Hosting Mega Events.”

attachment to the community, perceived benefits, knowledge of costs and ecological values. In another study, Gursoy, Jurowski and Uysal³⁵ clearly emphasize that local community support is critical to the development of a tourism destination, because who finances part of the infrastructure that is needed through the payment of taxes is the welcoming population, constituting an essential component for the success of tourism and the mega-event.

Methodology

Sampling and data collection

The Itaquera district is located in the southeast region of Brazil, in the east zone of the state of São Paulo. According to data from the Itaquera Subcity Hall, the region of Itaquera occupies an area of 54.30 m², with a population of 523,842 inhabitants, subdivided into four districts: Cidade Líder, Itaquera, Parque do Carmo and José Bonifácio. According to D’Andrea³⁶ up to the beginning of the 1980s, Itaquera was a neighbourhood with little urban structure and its population was composed of workers and employees in commerce and services. It was then that the first slums appeared in the region. However, from 1980 onwards, the construction of housing estates known as ‘COHABS’ enhanced the demographic explosion of Itaquera (Figure 2).

According to the 2010 census, the Itaquera district covers 14 square kilometres, the estimated population is 523,000. The sociodemographic indicators of the 2012 census indicate an average Human Development Index of 0.795 which places it in the 76th position among the city districts. The average age of Itaquera is 36.1 years. With regard to the family income levels, the population of the East Zone has a low average (1900 reais) when compared to all areas of the city of São Paulo (values between 2300 and 4200 reais).³⁷

The data were also confirmed through the answers to the questionnaire’s question regarding the family income of the interviewees during the field work. In fact, it emerges that the majority of the respondents (67%) belongs to the lower family income groups, the D group (between 1450 reais and 2899 reais) and the E group³⁸ (up to 1449 reais).³⁹

Consultoria Accenture (2011) prepared an analysis of the benefits for São Paulo with the opening of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Itaquera and identified a potential of around R\$ 30.7 billion in economic impacts for the city, especially for the East Zone over 10 years. A preliminary analysis confirms that the impact of spending on the State and Municipality are positive in the face of the investment required for the opening of the FIFA World Cup in the new Stadium.

The Strategic Plan of the São Paulo City Hall (PMSP) for the East Zone has contemplated various projects focused on the creation of infrastructure and job creation (Table 1).

In São Paulo, the 2014 FIFA World Cup matches were held at the ‘Arena Corinthians’ stadium, inaugurated in April 2014 and located in the East Zone of the Itaquera district. The stadium has a capacity of 48,000 seats, and during the FIFA World Cup 20,000 removable seats were added increasing

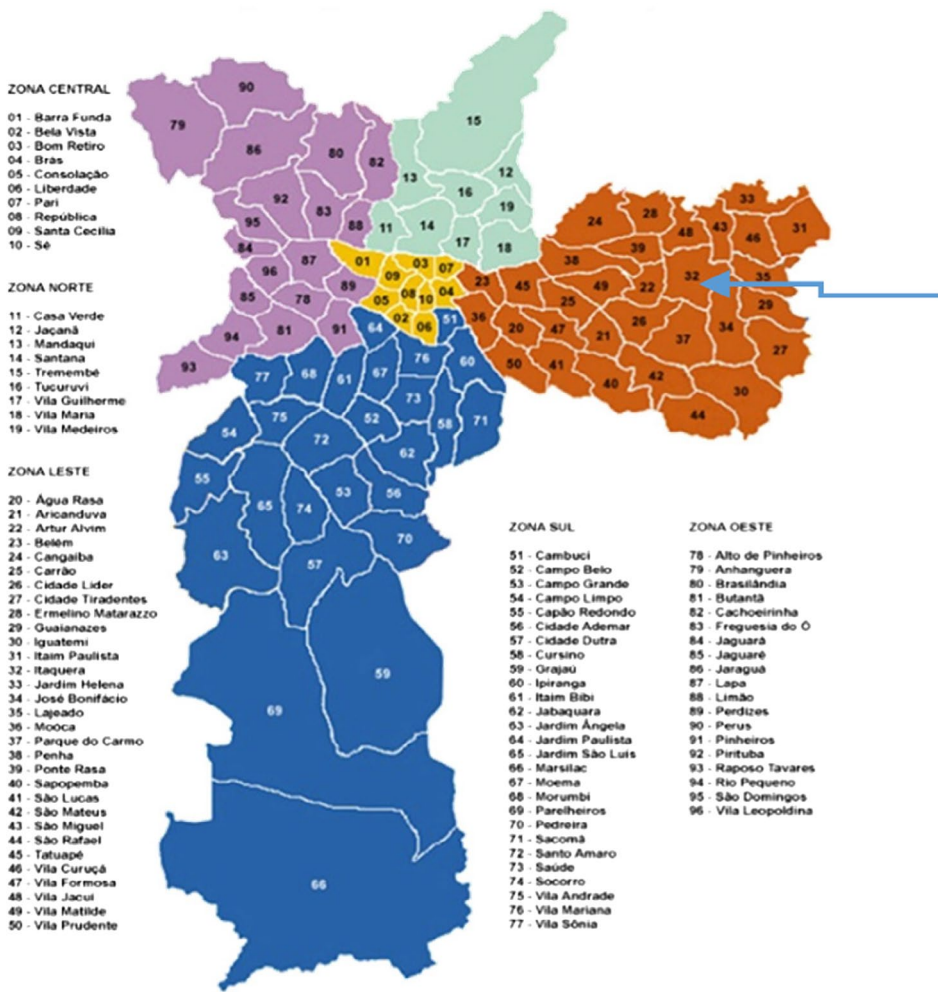


Figure 2. Map of the city of São Paulo showing Itaquera district (no. 32) in the East zone. Electronic source: <http://redmotoboy.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/mapasaopaulonome.jpg>.

the capacity to 68,000 seats. The stadium was built by means of a private contract between Corinthians (São Paulo's main Soccer team) and Odebrecht (a construction company) costing 820 million reais and was delivered on April 15, 2014.⁴⁰ With the construction of 'Itaquerão', several projects were announced and carried out in order to adapt the entire road network and access roads to the stadium area in the Itaquera, Arthur Alvim and Cidade Líder districts. The projects included the construction of new avenues, ramps and improvements in the underground and train stations. According to the magazine São Paulo Outlook,⁴¹ the state and the city of São Paulo governments signed an agreement to carry out the interventions, valued at 478 million reais, of which 346 million by the state government and the remaining 132 million by the city government.

The methodology consisted essentially of a collection and analysis of statistical data and information regarding the perception of the Itaquera community's local population about the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil. The research was of the qualitative-quantitative type and sought to provide, in addition to a set of statistical data related to mega-events (typical of purely quantitative research), an overview of opportunities and risks, limits and disadvantages related to the possibilities of hosting a mega-event. In fact, according to Veal,⁴² the methodologies used to collect qualitative information

Table 1. Projects and works in the Itaquera district during the last 20 years.

Type of project/work	Start year	Current situation
Construction of the USP – East (University of São Paulo Campus)	2005	Concluded
Itaquera Shopping Metro	2007	Concluded
Future convention centre	No forecast	–
Technological Park	No forecast	–
Poupatempo Itaquera	2000	Concluded
Itaquera STATION (UNDERGROUND/TRAIN – CPTM)		
Rio Verde Linear Park	2012	In project
Future FATEC (Faculty of Technology)	2010	Concluded
New Itaquera forum	No forecast	–
New bus station	No forecast	–
Future building commercial rooms	No forecast	–
Underground Rail Exchange Yard	1989	Concluded
Future SENAI (National Industrial Learning Service)	No forecast	–
Expansion and improvement works of the Marginal Tietê	2009	2012
Ayrton Senna interconnection and ring road through Avenida Jacu-Pêssego	No forecast	No forecast
Technological Pole of the East Side	No forecast	–
Rio Verde Jacu Urban Operation	2004	Concluded in 2014
Construction of the ‘Arena Corinthians’ Stadium	2010	Delivered in April 2014

Source: Author during research and fieldwork.

include observation, informal interviews, direct and participant observation. All these techniques were implemented during the fieldwork.

The work was developed in stages according to the research methodology carried out by Quivy and Campenhoudt.⁴³ In fact, according to these authors, the fundamental principles that research should respect can be summarized in seven stages: in each stage the operations carried out to reach the next stage and thus progress are described.

Since this is a type of research with a social nature, it was decided to choose a qualitative-quantitative methodology using ethnography through direct and participant observation where the human and social relationship is deeper and the SET that was developed by Gursoy and Kendall.⁴⁴ In order to deepen the point of view of the residents there are many methodologies, but the most common are Ethnology and the SET, the first being of a qualitative nature and the second mainly quantitative.

From the point of view of the quantitative analysis, a questionnaire was utilized where the participant wrote his/her answers and where no interviewer was involved. According to Veal,⁴⁵ the surveys with questionnaire are perhaps the most used tool in leisure and tourism research. These are used when information about a particular population is wanted and when the report of the respondent himself/herself about his/her behaviour and/or attitude can be accepted as a source of information. The types of surveys were ‘field’ and ‘electronic’. The ‘street’ survey, as the name suggests, was applied on public roads in the Itaquera district, in shops, bars/snack bars and at the Shopping Itaquera, in which a cross-section of the community was expected to be found. In the electronic survey, each person received a link by e-mail or through the social networks that, once opened, showed the questionnaire to fill out online. Therefore, there was the advantage that the data was compiled in electronic format using the Google Drive program. Once the method was defined, a pre-test was carried out to assess the applicability of the questionnaire to a reduced number of respondents. Subsequently, during the study conducted between December 2014 and January and February 2015, the same was applied to the Itaquera district in the East zone of São Paulo where, according to data from the Itaquera Subcity Hall, there are 523,000 people. In order to obtain a confidence level of 95%, 402 residents of this area were interviewed (to a minimum of 384).

According to Sousa,⁴⁶ we can say that the sample obtained is classified in the category of ‘Sampling by Convenience’. This type of sampling is not representative of the entire population and, as in this case, the elements of the sample are chosen for convenience depending on the context and place. In fact, some places of Itaquera were chosen where there was more movement and flow of people, that is, in the shopping mall, restaurants/bars, underground stations, etc. Even so, this method proves to be very effective since it has the advantage of being relatively fast and economical.

Results

Throughout this section we present some statistical data that result from the responses to the research/fieldwork questionnaire carried out with 402 people from the Itaquera district.

After the event, the majority of the population believes that the mega-event 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil only lasted for a month. The Itaquera district was at the centre of the world before the eyes of millions of viewers, gaining greater visibility and improving its image according to 71% of the Itaquera population interviewed.⁴⁷ However, after the World Cup, 86% of the Itaquera population interviewed⁴⁸ found that the legacies were few and of little importance for the improvement of the living conditions of the district residents. According to the majority of the Itaquera population interviewed, the main beneficiaries of the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil were the Federal Government, the State Government and the City of São Paulo, FIFA and its business partners (such as Coca Cola Company, McDonald's, Budweiser, Visa, etc.) and some Brazilian companies, mainly those in the construction industry (Odebrecht). Even so, a consistent minority of the residents considered that the mega-event left benefits and some positive legacies for the Itaquera population such as the improvement of the image and the increase of the notoriety of the district of Itaquera.

Besides the large investments that were, in the majority of the cases, borne by the public sector, a large number of people was removed from their homes without compensation, in addition to those evicted by the effects of real estate speculation.

FIFA, through the General Law of World Cup, created ad hoc laws only for the period of the organization and development of the World Cup, where only FIFA sponsors could sell their products during the event and paid no taxes for their activities in Brazil. However, small merchants, street performers and thousands of street vendors and street workers (150,000 in São Paulo alone) were unable to sell in the areas around the stadiums and the Fan Fest areas that were protected by the army and were total exclusivity of FIFA.

FIFA is currently living the worst moment of its history. FIFA top officials have been arrested and many are being investigated for corruption involving various aspects and different Soccer World Cups, among which is the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil.

Investments in urban mobility have brought improvements to bus, train, underground and airports services, but many works have not been completed and others have not even started. Thousands of people participated in protest demonstrations against the mega-event in the main streets and squares of São Paulo during the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup and shortly before the 2014 FIFA World Cup. At the beginning, during and at the end of construction of the various infrastructures for the World Cup, some problems that were maybe considered common in mega-events have accentuated, such as real estate speculation and delayed works.

The announcement of Itaquera as the São Paulo headquarters for the 2014 FIFA World Cup gave the district residents encouragement. The expectation was of improvement, satisfied citizens and people with much willingness, for the long-awaited World Cup. However, the effects of real estate speculation were severe, according to the real estate agents of the Itaquera district interviewed,⁴⁹ an apartment at the COHAB that cost R\$ 60 thousand before the start of construction is currently sold for R\$ 190 thousand, more than triple the value.

The situation also got complicated for those who live on rent since the prices were increased. There was also great distress on the part of slum dwellers and in particular the Favela da Paz, a community located a few meters from the arena, where according to the World Cup Popular Committees File⁵⁰ approximately 300 families lived in risk.

The following are some opinions of the respondents on the most significant effects for the Itaquera district since the 2014 FIFA World Cup: 'The visibility of the neighbourhood before the world'; 'The Itaquera neighbourhood had visibility, even if it was only for a short period of time'; 'Knowledge and appreciation of the region'; 'The disclosure of the neighbourhood', 'Itaquera became known by the world'; 'The East zone was seen in a positive way and more valued by the other neighbourhoods'; 'There was only visibility due to the Itaquera matches'; 'The neighbourhood had better visibility and

greater flow of people. The World Cup brought the minimum of structures that the neighbourhood lacked for many years.⁵¹

Homeowners were pleased with the event because they could profit from the rental of their houses, but this was the opinion of only a minority, pointing to the 'commercial valuation of real estate'.⁵²

One of the positive legacies for Itaquera was the fact that the construction company Odebrecht promoted the 'Acreditar' (Believe) programme. This is a labour qualification programme in partnership with the Office for the Economic Development of the Strategic Plan of the City of São Paulo (PMPS). This policy surely increases the level of know – how/knowledge and experience of some workers in the region.

With regard to the increase in employment due to the World Cup, the Itaquera population that was interviewed is much divided, but negative opinions prevail, in fact 89% say that the jobs assigned were mainly temporary and informal. According to data from the City Hall of São Paulo,⁵³ the Itaquera region in the city of São Paulo received approximately 68 thousand fans during each match, which, together with the normal movement of the region, generated a significant increase in vehicles and pedestrians traffic volume, requiring for this reason adjustments in public transport and in the access to roads connected to the stadium. Some residents managed to have contact with tourists, but most of them had hardly any contact with visitors complaining that tourists came to Itaquera only to watch the matches and then returned to the city centre or Vila Madalena, a West zone neighbourhood that became their meeting and party place.

The following are some open answers given during the fieldwork interviews in the Itaquera district: To you, during the World Cup, was there any valuable experience in contacting tourists? In the case of residents who managed to have contacts with tourists: 'It was a very good experience, the contact with another world'; 'I changed the way I think about the gringos a lot'; 'I made a lot of friends and learned about other cultures'; 'The Japanese gave a class of cleaning and education, taking their own garbage'.⁵⁴

In the case of residents who did not have any contacts with tourists: 'The tourist didn't stay in Itaquera, he only came to the stadium area and left'; 'The 'gringos' (foreigners) were afraid of walking around Itaquera'; 'Tourist didn't stay, just came to the games'.⁵⁵

Another significant fact about the World Cup in the Itaquera blog 360,⁵⁶ presented by the São Paulo Housing Union (SECOVI-SP 2014), states that real estate in the surroundings of the new stadium, in Itaquera, obtained an appreciation of 83% between 2009 and 2013, and also reveals that the economic impacts started even before the completion of the stadium. These data are also confirmed by the research carried out. In fact, 89% of the respondents say that there was an increase in the real estate acquisition value also in the rental value.⁵⁷ Real estate speculation tends to intensify in the region, which raises doubts as to what type of legacy and socio-geographical impacts the competition has left and will leave for the residents who live around the Arena Corinthians.

For many residents of the Itaquera district, the 2014 FIFA World Cup has been a waste of public money. According to the population that was interviewed, the money could have been invested mainly in the areas of health, safety and education, as shown by data from the research carried out in Itaquera.

The following are the open replies of two respondents on the improvement of the safety level in the Itaquera district after the 2014 FIFA World Cup: 'The police kill without inquiring'; 'There is no safety, safety only improved during the month of the World Cup'.⁵⁸

In the face of the investments for the World Cup, which ran from 12 June to 13 July 2014, many Brazilians questioned why these resources were not invested in education, health, safety, housing and basic sanitation. The question results from the fact that, in order to reduce violence, these investments would be much more useful than police operations.

With regards to the Works carried out for the World Cup, the residents' opinion was: 'They stopped doing the works necessary for the well-being of the residents'; 'some people may have liked the stadium, but I think it's unnecessary, I think they should have thought more about the improvement of the Itaquera society'.⁵⁹

Some of the FIFA requirements were contrary to Brazilian law. It was necessary, for example, to repeal the ban on the sale of alcohol in stadiums. On the other hand, due to the limitations of

circulation, it was necessary to declare a holiday on match days in order to improve circulation. Many of the Itaquera residents interviewed during the fieldwork, in fact, stated the following about the commercial activities during the match days in Itaquera: 'There were losses because we could not open'; 'There was a loss in commerce, because we could not work on match days'.⁶⁰

In Brazil about 7 million people live in precarious and unhealthy conditions. According to the research carried out in Itaquera, works for the construction of the new Itaquera stadium 'Arena Corinthians' and the surrounding infrastructures cause, every time it rains floods in the region. This was a great loss and a negative legacy that the World Cup brought to Itaquera and that there is still a long way to go before a solution is found. The respondents on the most significant effects for the Itaquera district since the 2014 FIFA World Cup: 'They stopped making necessary works for the benefit of the residents'; 'They diverted the river for the construction of the stadium and now we have constant floods'.⁶¹

Conclusion and implications

Throughout the work, it was observed how events can influence the image and the perception of a tourist destination in a decisive manner, constituting real geographical marketing instruments, which increases the attractiveness of a destination through the valorisation of its distinctive feature, and being able to produce relevant socio-economic benefits for host populations. Geographical marketing, if properly managed, there is to say, involving residents, local companies and institutions, can lead to investments in the territory, economic growth, greater social cohesion and strengthening of local identity. It has also been shown that not all territories can compete to host and organize mega-events and vice versa.

The paper focused the analysis of the socio-geographical impacts and it was verified that the consequences of a mismanagement of the residents' interests may produce aversion to the event with the wrong perception of its objective. If the residents are involved in the early stages of planning it is possible to have: greater valorisation of traditions and elements of local culture, less conflictive decision environment, positive legacies in the territory, greater success of the event in general.

We highlighted the weaknesses that sports mega-events may have when organized by emerging countries due to the fragility of the social and economic fabric, which still have several basic needs to meet. It has been found that, as a rule, the weaker groups suffer from the negative effects, such as expropriation and displacement (sometimes forced) of the resident population, in the areas of interest. These dynamics clearly widen the inequality between the population of a given territory, which increases the geographical and social imbalances.⁶² Even so, cities continue to compete to acquire the right to organize mega-events. In a period of economic restructuring and globalization, the promotion of mega-events has become a key strategy to justify large projects for urban renewal, publicize their status, attract new domestic investment and modernize their economies.⁶³

As seen, the cities and territories must continually draw the attention of the international media, must be able to attract investment, tourist flows and also skilled workers. To do this, the territories must remain attractive, efficient, and capable of renewing themselves, offering a whole range of infrastructures and services sought by both companies and tourists. Even so, it is not advantageous to compete at a global level to organize sports mega-events if the high levels of investments in infrastructures are not included in a plan for the overall reorganization of the reference urban system.

Looking at our research, first of all, it is necessary to remember that in Sao Paulo one of the greatest legacies was the construction of the Corinthians Arena in the East Zone, where the stadium received the opening of the World Cup and five other matches, which valued the Itaquera district. Throughout the country, the construction of the stadiums was the priority, followed by the concern about airports (such as the new international terminal at São Paulo/Guarulhos Airport).

When we analyse the perception of the Itaquera district residents, in the East zone of São Paulo, about the current situation of the region after a few months the 2014 FIFA World Cup mega-event, it is considered that the major concerns refer to fundamental and crucial aspects of their everyday life,

such as education, health, safety, basic sanitation and housing. The majority of those interviewed in Itaquera considered that the mega-event lasted only in the month in which it happened, leaving no positive and lasting legacies for the people, and that there was a lot of corruption and misappropriation of money in the face of important investments.

Infrastructures in general, such as sports facilities (Arena Corinthians stadium), as well as all urban infrastructures such as roads and access roads are where it is evident that the benefits were more significant. Transport has also been improved through works to improve urban mobility in the East Zone (underground and train-CPTM system and new buses). The improvement of the image of Itaquera is also another of the most highlighted benefits by the residents together with the increase of the visibility of the district that, before the mega-event, few or almost anybody knew and it was considered a peripheral and marginal area.

Returning to the research question, it is concluded that the opinions of the Brazilians diverge. Most of them have a negative and pessimistic point of view, however, the positive results of some investments are evident and, in a broader perspective, also looking to the future, they are bringing and shall bring benefits to the population and to the development of the whole region.

It is considered appropriate to continue studies and research on the engagement and participation of residents in mega-events such as the Soccer World Cup in the coming years (considering also that in 2016 Brazil hosted the Olympic Games in the city of Rio de Janeiro) allowing to compare and to know the evolution of the perceptions of the same socio-geographical factors that were analysed in this study, in order to be able to plan and organize future sport mega-events, trying to avoid the errors already made in the past.

Notes

1. Getz, *Event Management and Event Tourism*; Roche, *Mega-events and Modernity*; Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*; Matias, *Organização de Eventos*; Hall, "Urban Entrepreneurship, Corporate Interests," 58–71; Preuss and Solberg, "Attracting Major Sporting Events," 391–411.
2. Essex and Chalckley, "Mega-sporting Events in Urban and Regional Policy," 201–33; Preuss and Solberg, "Attracting Major Sporting Events," 391–411; Preuss, "Winners and Losers of the Olympic Games," 416–39; Rubio, *Megaeventos esportivos, legado e responsabilidade social*.
3. Crompton et al., "A Guide for Undertaking Economic Impact Studies," 79–87; Crompton and McKay, "Measurement the Economic Impact of Festivals and Events," 33–43; Delpy and Li, "The Art and Science," 230–54; Jeong, "Residents' Perceptions Toward the Tourism Impacts," 153–73; Deccio and Baloglu, "Nonhost Community Resident Reactions," 46–56; Delamere et al., "Development of a Scale," 11–24; Getz, *Event Management and Event Tourism*.
4. Kim and Petrick, "Residents' Perceptions on Impacts," 25–38.
5. Lohmann et al., "Analysis of Tourists' Perception."
6. Getz, *Event Management and Event Tourism*; Roche, *Mega-events and Modernity*; Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*; Essex and Chalckley, "Mega-sporting Events in Urban and Regional Policy," 201–33; Matias, *Organização de Eventos*; Hall, "Urban Entrepreneurship, Corporate Interests"; Preuss and Solberg, "Attracting Major Sporting Events," 391–411; Preuss, "Winners and Losers of the Olympic Games," 416–439; Rubio, *Megaeventos esportivos, legado e responsabilidade social*; Coakley and Souza, "Sport Mega-events," 580–9.
7. Santos, "Brazil: An Emerging Power," 1312–27.
8. Lohmann et al., "Analysis of Tourists' Perception."
9. Kassens-Noor et al., "Towards a Mega-event Legacy Framework," 665–71.
10. Coakley and Souza, "Sport Mega-events," 580–9.
11. Ibid.
12. Horne and Manzenreiter, "An Introduction to the Sociology," 1–24.
13. Matos, "Hosting Mega Sports Events."
14. Getz, *Event Management and Event Tourism*; Matias, *Organização de Eventos*.
15. Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*.
16. Gursoy and Kendall, "Hosting Mega Events," 603–23.
17. Cashman, "Impact of the Games."
18. Pedro et al., *Gestão de Eventos*.
19. Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*; Preuss, "Lasting Effects of Major Sporting Events," 1–6; Preuss, "Winners and Losers of the Olympic Games," 416–39; Rubio, *Megaeventos esportivos, legado e responsabilidade social*.

20. Preuss and Solberg, "Attracting Major Sporting Events," 391–411; Rubio, *Megaeventos esportivos, legado e responsabilidade social*.
21. Hall, *Hallmark Tourist Events*; Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*; Essex and Chalckley, "Mega-sporting Events in Urban and Regional Policy," 201–33; Matias, *Organização de Eventos*.
22. Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*; Getz, *Event Management and Event Tourism*; Hall, "Geography, Marketing and the Selling of Places," 61–84.
23. Girginov and Hills, "A Sustainable Sports Legacy," 2091–116.
24. Preuss, "Le implicazioni economiche delle Olimpiadi"; Preuss, *The Economics of Staging the Olympics*; Preuss, "Lasting Effects of Major Sporting Events."
25. Kasimati, "Economic Aspects and the Summer Olympics," 433–44; Preuss and Solberg, "Attracting Major Sporting Events," 391–411; Cottle, *South Africa's World Cup*.
26. Preuss, "Lasting Effects of Major Sporting Events."
27. Rolnik, "Para um alojamento sustentável."
28. Ibid.
29. Essex and Chalckley, "Mega-sporting Events in Urban and Regional Policy," 201–33.
30. Hall, "Urban Entrepreneurship, Corporate Interests," 58–71.
31. Allen et al., *Festival and Special Event Management*; Matias, *Organização de Eventos* and Tenan, *Eventos*.
32. Preuss, "Winners and Losers of the Olympic Games," 416–39.
33. Gursoy and Kendall, "Hosting Mega Events," 603–23.
34. Ibid.
35. Gursoy et al., "Resident Attitudes," 79–105.
36. D'Andrea, "Itaquera, muito além da Copa do Mundo"
37. Consultoria Accenture, "Estádio da abertura do Mundial."
38. The various categories and ranges of family income are shown on the City Hall of São Paulo website.
39. According to interviewee – Questionnaire: Perception of Itaquera's population on the megaevent Soccer World Cup of Brazil 2014 in São Paulo. Personal Communication, 2014, 2015.
40. Consultoria Accenture, "Estádio da abertura do Mundial."
41. São Paulo Outlook, "An Overview of the Business Sector."
42. Veal, *Metodologia de pesquisa em lazer e turismo*.
43. Quivy and Campenhoudt, *Manual de Investigação em Ciências Sociais*.
44. Gursoy and Kendall, "Hosting Mega Events," 603–23.
45. Veal, *Metodologia de pesquisa em lazer e turismo*.
46. Sousa, *Como fazer investigação*.
47. According to interviewee – Questionnaire: Perception of Itaquera's population on the megaevent Soccer World Cup of Brazil 2014 in São Paulo. Personal Communication, 2014, 2015.
48. Ibid.
49. Itaquera district interviewed. According to interviewee – Questionnaire: Perception of Itaquera's population on the megaevent Soccer World Cup of Brazil 2014 in São Paulo. Personal Communication, 2014, 2015.
50. World Cup Popular Committees File (2011).
51. According to interviewee – Questionnaire: Perception of Itaquera's population on the megaevent Soccer World Cup of Brazil 2014 in São Paulo. Personal Communication, 2014, 2015.
52. Ibid.
53. City Hall of São Paulo (2014).
54. According to interviewee – Questionnaire: Perception of Itaquera's population on the megaevent Soccer World Cup of Brazil 2014 in São Paulo. Personal Communication, 2014, 2015.
55. Ibid.
56. Itaquera blog 360, "Por justiça e proteção."
57. According to interviewee – Questionnaire: Perception of Itaquera's population on the megaevent Soccer World Cup of Brazil 2014 in São Paulo. Personal Communication, 2014, 2015.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Preuss, "Winners and Losers of the Olympic Games," 416–39.
63. Essex and Chalckley, "Mega-sporting Events in Urban and Regional Policy," 201–33.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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