6th International Congress on
"Science and Technology for the Safeguard of Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean Basin"

PROCEEDINGS

VOL. III - Sessions D, E, F
Museums; Cultural identity; Sustainable development

Athens, Greece
22 – 25 October 2013
RIO DE JANEIRO, ROME AND THE MEGA EVENTS: COMPARING MODELS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION
This paper aims at analyzing the relevance of mega events in the urban planning of metropolitan contexts. There could be several examples for this concern, but we have focused our idea comparing two very different cases: Rome and Rio de Janeiro. They present deep differences, in cultural, social and economic terms, but they both faced the topic of the mega events in the last year in their territorial contexts, with urban changes, proposing several ways of developing the city and projects of urban redefinition.
Rome has faced the topic of the mega events connected to the urban special planning many other times in the last century, for the Universal Exposition of Rome, in 1942, with the construction of the EUR neighborhood, in a rationalist way. In 1960, for the Olympic Games the Olympic Village was constructed, not far from the Stadium. The Village before 1960 was a sort of favela of the city. It was born just during and after the Second World War, now it is used for the inhabitants’ houses. Other Italian examples are the one of Genoa, partly renewed in 1992 for the Fifth Century Anniversary of the Discovery of America, made by Columbus, who was born in Genoa. For Turin, the occasion of the Winter Olympic Games of 2006 gave the chance for big urban projects, that have transformed it as a modern and smart city (Dansero e Segre, 2002; Segre e Scamuzzi, 2004). Other programs are planned for Milan, for the Expo 2015 and for Naples, for the America’s Cup of this year.

Rome and the New Millennium
Rome, in the mega events experiences, has changed in its history many of its parts. For the World Swimming Championships of 2009, as well as for the programmed, and vanished, candidature at the Olympic Games of 2020, many interventions were planned for the City, both for the centre and for the periphery. A very stimulating example of those projects, is the one of Tor Vergata in the South outskirts of Rome: this part of the city hosted the Jubilee of 2000. For that occasion, the World Youth Day took place right in Tor Vergata, giving to this degraded and peripheral area a great relevance, with many significant and deep interventions, both for residential aims and services for the citizens. The same area of Tor Vergata should have been one of the most important centers for the Swimming Cup of 4 years ago, but the project of a Sport City born in 2005, was not completed (Bozzato, 2011). We also have to mention that in the project for the World Swimming Championships were included the university and the research structures, for completing the Campus of the second University of Rome, constructed in the perspective of a system of relations and functions for sport, research and culture. The Swimming World Championships could have been the perfect occasion for these necessities, through that particular Plan, for specific interventions in that direction, with good answers for the citizens of that area and for the implementation of the services connecting to the city centre. But, once the crisis occurred, many difficulties of making real those projects of renovating the

The article is the result of a common reflection, but the chapters Introduction and Rome and the New Millennium are attributed to Simone Bozzato, and the chapters Rio de Janeiro and Conclusions are attributed to Alessandro Ricci.
south periphery of the city arose and the City Sport was stopped in the middle of the operations. After that lost occasion, with an incomplete Sport City in the Tor Vergata zone, Rome decided to become a candidate for the Olympic Games of 2020, with Tor Vergata at the centre of the developing projects. But, mostly for the spending review and for the crisis moment (Maggioli, 2011), the Government decided to skip the chance of making Rome a candidate for that year.

After 4 years from that mega event, we can affirm that many of the planned projects weren’t realized, and we cannot know, neither understand, when they are going to be realized. On the other hand, we can say that the Swimming World Championships in Rome have been very well organized, and that was a very good occasion for the city and for its good image – of course, forgetting all the other things. The uncompleted project of Santiago Calatrava, named the Sport City, for the zone of Tor Vergata, was the most expensive and important one for the World Swimming Championships. This project was initially born as a complementary part of the University Campus and it is a real innovative project. Then, it became an architecture element with the aim of the decentralization of the sport structures from the centre of Rome.

For the candidature to the Olympic Games of 2020, the city administration organized several meetings, called the General States of Rome, trying to start a process of organic organization, even with the participation of the citizens and the companies. The project, named Millennium, was the starting point of a new phase of the city transformation and urban planning, for completing, even with all the economic difficulties, the projects in the south area of Rome and in the other areas of the city.

The chance for Tor Vergata, and for that part of the city, to become a modern and renewed portion of the territory of the Capital city, vanished maybe definitely with this last news. We have to consider that each of these possible interventions, could have had a direct impact on a better way of living for the citizens, giving them new and better structures, and that in many cases it is particularly important to consider the people’s feelings and impressions. But we have to say that the Millennium project, that was made for the candidature for the Olympic Games of 2020, made possible the realization of many cultural structures, like the Auditorium, the MAXXI and the Macro (Maggioli e Bozzato, 2012). Partially inserted in the same Millennium project is the area of EUR that is now living a new era of regeneration, with the next opening of a Congress Centre of 55 thousands square meters, with new structures like an Auditorium for about 2 thousands people, with new buildings, like a new hotel with about 5 hundred rooms, and new and renewed roads for all these new structures. Another project for the EUR zone, realized just for a half, is the new aquarium of Rome, that will be called Mediterraneum, for the interactive living of the water and the world of the Mediterranean Sea.

Rio de Janeiro
The case of Rio de Janeiro, with very deep and different perspectives and prerogatives from Rome, from an urban, social (Santos, Marafon, Sant'Anna, 2010), cultural and economic point of view, is living a new phase of great urban and economic transformations, due to the mega events that they will have to face in the next few years. The planning projects of the city started several years ago, with other big events like the Pan American Games of 2007, and we have to mention even the last World Youth Day, that took place from the last 23rd to the 28th of July, mainly in Copacabana beach: there weren’t big projects of redefinition of the city for this event, but it has been a very important and good experiment for the future. About 3 millions people went to Rio for that occasion, from all over the world (about 175 countries). The event was held in Copacabana
beach, and it also has been a great occasion for the local tourism (Marafon e Ribeiro, 2010), but nothing special was programmed for the urban planning. More related to the sporting mega-events, were the Pan American Games of 2007, that have been a sort of first step of the other – most important – programmed events in Brazil. For that occasion some of the structures that are going to be used for the other mega events, were built. The next big event will be in 2014, with the Soccer World Cup and then, in 2016, there will be the Olympic Games.

Brazil, in general, is doing its best for hosting these major events (and for the first time the Olympic Games will be held in Latin America), and the main centre will be, of course, Rio de Janeiro (Cfr. Marafon, Ribeiro, Corrêa, Vasconcelos, 2011). What the city did, at the moment, and what is going to do, is providing services and structures that will pose the city as a global and sustainable, in every sense, agreeing with the complete analysis made by Karin Fernanda Schwambach (2012). Following what she said, and again agreeing with her interpretation, the city is trying to «modify its image associated with poverty and violence», also because «the areas for the game are located in different parts of the city» (Idem, p. 4). In this aim, the city will be modified, for the Fifa World Cup and for the Olympic games in four main zones, with very important urban interventions: the Barra da Tijuca Zone, the Copacabana, the Maracanã and the Deodoro Zone. The Barra area – that was born in the 70’s, will become the village for the athletes and journalists for the Olympic games, with areas for the high level shopping, in order to give the image of a rich city, «with a “high standard of life”» (Ibidem, p. 6). Quoting Schwambach, the houses in this area raised of the 50% in 2010 (Idem). The Copacabana area, that is the richest part of the city, with high density, will be arranged just with «temporary interventions» (Idem), such as areas for volleyball or running, because it is pretty difficult to make a real planning in this part of the city. But, at the same time, Copacabana cannot be excluded from the image of the city and from the games. The Maracanã zone hosts now two stadiums: the first one is, of course, the historical Maracanã, constructed for the World Cup of 1950. At that time, it was the biggest one in the world, and for the Fifa requirements it was renovated for the next World Cup. The other stadium is the João Havelange Stadium, built for the Pan American Games of 6 years ago. This zone is going to be very well considered for the real estate market (Ibidem, p. 7). Finally, there is the Deodoro zone, that now is a military zone. It is surrounded by some very violent neighborhoods. With the works for the Games and for the mega events in general, the aim is to give this zone, that is far from the city centre and isolated from it, a good transportation system and a good quality for the mobility and connections with the other parts of the city (Idem). This is, clearly, also a social target of the Olympic Games, for the implementation of the services mostly connected with the military inhabitants: a shooting centre, equestrianism, fencing arena, pentathlon and so on. The other two main ideas of implementation of city services, are the one of the Porto Maravilha Urban Operation – for a reconstruction of the port area – and a new centrality of the city (Idem).

CONCLUSIONS
The Brazilian author, quoted before many times and who has made a very good work, on which we have based our analyses about Rio de Janeiro, is very critical about some points: first of all, for the fact that some of the aims for the mega events go over the human rights (like for the mobility services, and for the necessity of constructing big roads against houses), and for the idea of giving value to the port area, and not the close area, that is the historical centre of Rio, with heritage architecture that now presents degraded buildings. In general, it is clear the basic point for the mega events in Rio: of giving an image of Rio as a
global city (Sassen, 2001) renovated, and with high standards of life, covering the poorness and the violence of the favelas. In this analysis, we cannot forget the recent revolts of population about the Games and the Fifa World Cup, that remind us the same critical analyses quoted before and the different perceptions of people: on one hand, the extreme richness of those projects, which are often realized as if they were bubbles in the city; and, on the other hand, the extreme poorness of a big part of the city population, living in the favelas (and in the city, just beyond Copacabana, there is Rocinha, the biggest one of South America). So, we can talk of a top down process, with scarce participation of citizenship, but the willing of creating a global city with a renewed image. We are talking of very big projects, that will change the aspect of the city, with very high costs. On the other hand, these mega events are going to be a very great occasion of development and richness for part of the city, in a good moment for the Brazilian economy.

The other analyzed case of Rome is completely different. We have seen that for the World Swimming Championship of 2009 the city could organize the games very well, but it was not possible to complete the project of the City Sport by Calatrava, that was central for those games and for the life of the Tor Vergata neighborhood and the south periphery more in general (Cerreti, 1984). So, it was a negative point for the city, for the expectation of the citizens of the south periphery of Rome, for the University and even for the image of the administration. The other vanished occasion was the candidature for the Olympic Games of 2020. Once again, for the economic crisis, the government decided to not present the candidature, and to wait maybe until 2024.

We can conclude saying that in both cases the mega events can represent a great occasion of developing the cities and for the renewal of their cultural heritage (Richards, 2007). But, at the same time, even for very different reasons, it is always necessary to take into consideration the people’s participation and way of living. In the case of Rio, maybe the critical points are about the top-down process, that contributed to the revolts of the last months. Otherwise, in the case of Rome, the population of the periphery was hit because of the lack of coherence with the starting projects, that – only if realized – could represent a very positive moment in social and economic terms.

So, at the end, the mega events (with the cultural and territorial impacts) are great occasions, but, at the same time, they always present critical social points, when there is not participation from the people.

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