


MEGA EFFECTS OF MEGA EVENTS:

A brief history of the right and the wrong, the guidelines, economics, politics, and outcomes, and why countries still want to host the biggest parties on the planet.

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Project Abstract:

Mega events, such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup, are catalysts for change and transformation in cities and countries across the globe that attract a large number of visitors, have a large reach, incur large costs, and have large impacts on the built environment and population. This project has analyzed data on select cities and countries that have hosted mega events in the past as case studies in order to examine both the proposed benefits of hosting these events, as well as the shortcomings that surface once the events finish. The product of this report will eventually be a key findings report that highlights and synthesizes my broader research on the topic – I will be submitting this report to the United States Soccer Federation Professional Council on August 1st and for that reason, I have opted to work on the report over summer while finalizing the broader capstone report for graduation purposes. Potential hosts see mega events as opportunities to catalyze development and improvement across the board, yet the vast majority of cities and countries fall short in establishing a positive post-event legacy for themselves. The project identifies issues within the governing guidelines of these mega events and the discrepancies between the goals of the organizing and bidding committees and the goals of the general public, which leads to the failure of establishing a sustainable event legacy once the event has ended. To complete the report, a comprehensive literature review was compiled that examined the history of mega events, as well as specific literature on the selected case studies, which were combined with onsite research and the data gathering which generated the overall findings.

Introduction, Overview, and Context:

My interest in developing this project on mega events emerged out of some of my earlier research and work on the reversing of consumption and waste output trends. In my second year of college, I analyzed various programs across Europe that had increased their recycling collection rates and decreased their solid waste collection rates with a standard result of drastically reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste being produced. The question that spurred this research was why, when we are surrounded by thousands of notifications of humanities disastrous effect on the planet, do we refuse to act on the large scale? My conclusions turned out to be more psychological than I had originally presumed – simply humans are not the best at taking the initiative and making a change when we get used to something being easy. A lot of people have heard that there is an enormous swath of plastic in the Pacific Ocean for instance, yet they still consume plastic on a day to day basis, just as a lot of people understand that climate change is the largest issue our species has ever faced, yet they refuse to cut down on agricultural products. I decided that I wanted to research why that was.

“We are always slow in admitting any great change of which we do not see the immediate steps¹”. Unsurprisingly Charles Darwin was once again ahead of the curve with his thinking on this subject, and while this was mainly in response to the lack of support he originally received on his theory of evolution, I found it fits very solidly as an indicator of the lack of action taken elsewhere in our reactions to problems we face today. In my research, I found that the waste reduction programs worked so well because they limited the ability to physically throw whatever was consumed away through regular waste pickup and encouraged the consumer to recycle more through an added availability of options and incentives including more frequent pickup and tax breaks.

In terms of my current research on mega events, I originally approached the topic in the same way – with so many complaints of wasted infrastructure alongside claims of slave labor and widespread corruption, is there anything being done to address these issues and if not, why not? On the topic of consumption, mega events acted as the perfect representation of everything wrong in the topic; mega events symbolized the top level of the problem which my earlier research addressed. If having the honor of hosting the Olympic Games or World Cup respectively cost London \$9.9 Billion US Dollars in

¹ Darwin, Professor Charles. *Origin of Species*. pp. 481.

2012², and Rio de Janeiro \$11.6 Billion US Dollars in 2014³, was that expenditure worth it for the hosting country, the local inhabitants, and the worldwide audience? That question is especially important if we are in fact dealing with issues surrounding forced labor and rushed and corrupt construction among other various ethics violations.

The World Cup occurs every four years while the Olympic Games occur every two (alternating Winter and Summer Games). Every year prior to the year when an event occurs, there is substantial increase in the reporting of the overall progress being made – no surprise here. When Rio hosted the Olympics in 2016, numerous articles surfaced detailing the conditions that Olympians would be dealing with including a green swimming pool⁴, exposed wiring and leaking pipes⁵, and a bay used for sailing and swimming that was full of sewage⁶, not to mention the Zika Virus outbreak that began in Brasil in 2015. The same occurs for all hosts of the Olympic Games and World Cup every time the event is hosted, but then during the event, the outrage subsides, and after the event finishes, everyone moves on.

Of course, I was able to quickly correlate my findings with my previous research to figure out why people were able to suddenly move on – they had no investment in what went on in Brasil for instance, and they were not impacted by the green swimming pool or the leaking pipes above where athletes slept; it was back to regular life for the majority of the world audience.

Even now, following the various corruption scandals that have rocked the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the latter of which saw the resignation of FIFA President Sepp Blatter in response to bribery charges⁷, nothing has drastically changed. When Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup, cries of fraud and money laundering seemingly shook the organizational hierarchy of the larger governing bodies such as FIFA and the IOC – widespread allegations took over the news for months following the announcement, yet even with Blatter and numerous other high-profile members stepping down, nothing was addressed further. There is outrage before the mega event takes place, there is occasionally sporadic outrage throughout the duration of the mega event, yet there is very little after the mega event transpires.

² London Bid Committee. *Candidature File*.

³ Brasil World Cup Bid

⁴ Park, Alice. "Rio Olympics Green Pools: Here's Why They Turned Green."

⁵ Schmidt, Michael. "In Athletes' Housing at Rio Olympics: Blocked Toilets, Leaking Pipes and Exposed Wiring."

⁶ Rogers, Martin. "Guanabara Bay Water Still Overrun by Sewage as Rio Olympics Loom"

⁷ Guardian Staff. "Sepp Blatter Resigns as Fifa President – Full Statement."

As I mentioned earlier, it was obvious to me that I needed to push my research in a different direction, as I felt I had a handle on responding to the problems described prior. The question of where that direction exactly was plagued me for quite some time however – within the broader subject area around mega events, there were many ways I could have gone. The entire concept of a mega event is intriguing personally which I can imagine is born from the amount of World Cups and Olympic Games I have watched over the years. Conversely, academically I was unaware I would be able to focus in on the topic until I studied abroad throughout Spain in 2017 in the summer before I started my final year of undergraduate studies. While the program in its entirety was focused on analyzing a mix of the politics and economics surrounding the world of football, alongside studying the urban history of the cities we travelled through which consistently stoked this project in my head on and off throughout the whole trip, it was not until we arrived in Barcelona at the end of the program that the idea of this project emerged fully.

After traversing the Poble-Sec district on a mission to find a football store for some new boots, I ended up walking down Av del Parallel and seeing a parking sign with an Olympic logo underneath – for whatever reason, that stuck with me. The following day we took a bicycle tour around the majority of well-known locations such as La Sagrada Familia and La Basilica de Santa Maria del Mar, ending up on the famous South-East beaches overlooking the Mediterranean. The view itself was striking, but what really mattered in this situation was that everything we were looking at was built following the 1992 Summer Olympic Games – Port Olympic, Casino Barcelona, W Hotel Barcelona, the beaches, the waterfront, everything was a product of those Olympic Games. The sheer quantity of difference was unbelievable, and it was that, following my discovery of the Olympic parking location, that solidified my ambition to pursue this project. I wanted to understand how that change happened, why it happened, and if it was still happening around the world.

A brief history of the right and the wrong, the guidelines, economics, politics, and outcomes, and why countries still want to host the biggest parties on the planet. I quickly discovered that there was no way I would be able to go as in depth as I had originally hoped without focusing on one specific aspect or location, such as the transformation of Barcelona post Olympics or the economical incentive of hosting the World Cup for countries in general – the world of mega events was simply too large to take apart in one project and additionally, it turned out that there would be enough academic coverage of some aspects already that I need not pursue them further. Thus, I opted as my subtitle suggests, to cover what I perceived to be the main areas with a broader lens with specific case studies to provide analysis

on historical context, best case scenarios, worst case scenarios, the economical and political spheres, and the governing guidelines and organization, all of which ultimately address the questions of why mega events have occurred, what they do, and why they still occur.

Following the reading of this project and its product, the key findings report, I will have left the audience with a solid grasp on what hosting mega events such as the Olympic Games and World Cup have entailed for countries in the past, and what that they ought to look like for countries that host them in the future. My project has identified key factors in the success and failure of past mega events, important rules and regulations that contribute to event health and longevity, and recommendations for the removal and implementation of additional rules and regulations.

Methodology:

I found myself addressing two questions within my early research:

- What did hosting a mega event entail for countries in the past and does that historical context have any significance on countries decisions to host in the future?
- What happens after a country hosts a mega event?

These two questions eventually consolidated to form one, resulting as the basis for my research and the answer to which my project portrays:

- Why do countries host mega events, what does the hosting process look like, and can the entire process be improved?

With my research, I found that I could address this question in multiple ways:

- Evaluating past mega events and finding successful and unsuccessful events thus observing what could and should be done, verses what should not.
- Analyzing the governing organizations and their requirements for hosting thus allowing me to:
 - o Understand more about what host countries were being asked to do and whether that contributed to the successful nature of the events.
 - o Understand the incentive that compels countries to participate in the hosting process.

As my project was primarily interpretive, qualitative research situated on a topic with a fair amount of academic substance already behind it, I opted to assemble a comprehensive literature review. This literature review highlighted what I perceived to be the highest quality work within the subject area that existed already. The purpose of the literature review was to examine existing scholarly work and official documents that provided context and concrete information for my results. Outside of the existing academic work studied in the literature review, I incorporated findings from additional research performed by myself, and on location. Within the literature review, I created case studies for each

individual location I had selected based on the subtopic associated with them i.e. the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona as Historical Context and Example Good Post-Event Development. In doing so, the literature review acts as a story or narrative that explains the origins of why countries want to host mega events, highlighting the best-case scenarios and worst-case scenarios, before continuing on to analyzing the governing bodies and legislation.

In addition to focusing on existing academic studies and governing elements of mega events, I incorporated on site research and experience into three of my case studies. Whether it was visiting a museum of the city's history in Barcelona and touring the Estadi Olímpic, walking through the former Olympic Village in Whistler, or exploring the now highly successful resort in Squaw Valley that hosted the Olympic Games in 1960, my personal research and experience relating to this project was valuable in piecing together the larger story of understanding why countries have hosted mega events and continue to do so. Thus, I wove my experiences and research into the literature review to support the existing work and research on the topic and substantiate both my findings and the existing findings I discovered. This research and experience I incorporated was integrated with three case studies:

- Barcelona, Spain: Though originally chosen as a case study because of the glamour and attractiveness that was associated with the city following the success of the 1992 Summer Olympic Games, I found my research and experiences obtained while studying abroad in the city in 2017 were indispensable in the narration of the story my project was telling. Having observed firsthand the difference the 1992 Olympic Games had on the city both infrastructurally and economically, I chose to incorporate my findings with the existing work I chose in the literature review.
- Whistler, Canada: This site was chosen solely because of my site visits during the research period of my project, both of which occurred in 2017. The economic success of the Whistler Blackcomb Resort and the reuse / redevelopment of Whistler Village were the two primary sources of research and were subsequently connected to post event legacy and successful development before and after a mega event in the remainder of the literature review.
- Squaw Valley, United States: I had originally found out about Squaw through a close friend moving there for college and the resort ended up on my shortlist for case studies because I

subsequently discovered that the resort had hosted the 1960 Winter Olympic Games and constructed the first ever Olympic Village. My site visit provided me with research about the history of the location prior to the 1960 games and the subsequent measures the resort took to ensure a positive post-event legacy, of which they are still securing the benefits of today.

In terms of the full literature review, I have outlined my reasons for selecting certain case studies, governing agencies, and additional documents that make up the bulk of my research and results below:

The Historical Context:

- Barcelona, Spain: Barcelona is hailed as a holy grail of sorts in the field of urban planning and the world of mega events. The city had begun a transition from industrial port to global business and tech hub in an attempt to diversify and expand prior to hosting the 1992 Summer Olympic Games. The 1992 games accelerated and promoted this change to a global audience, causing a massive increase in tourism. Barcelona was selected as the first case study as it symbolizes the pinnacle of the city-event relationship and is referenced in practically every academic work situated on the topic of mega events and the impacts they have on cities and countries. I also found in researching additional events, that many of them reference the 1992 games in their reports as an example of what could happen to their city – meaning Barcelona is referenced as an idyllic example of what mega events can do for hosts in both the academic world and in the actual process of hosting mega events that occurs currently, particularly when talking about the usage of the games to catalyze economic and infrastructural development.
- Squaw Valley, United States: One of the later admits to the list of case studies in this project, I found out about Squaw as mentioned earlier through the decision of one of my close friends to attend college in proximity to the Squaw Valley Resort. Subsequently, through research and eventual site visit, I learned it had hosted the 1960 Winter Olympic Games, was built completely from scratch for the 1960 games, constructed the first Olympic Village (which is now an Olympic requirement), and inspired other entrepreneurs to set hosting the games as a goal for their resorts, a goal that drove Whistler's expansion and the eventual achievement of hosting in 2010. The decision to use Squaw as a case study was obvious after learning of the importance of the

historical context it would provide this project in terms of the firsts it accomplished alongside the inspiration it offered for future mega events, and the impressive success the resort has maintained subsequently to this day, almost fifty years later.

The Bad:

- Athens, Greece: Athens hosted the 2004 Summer Olympic Games to a tune of \$11 Billion US Dollars⁸ according to the official bid committee, though that number is very flexible depending on who you talk to. Like Barcelona, the academic world and general public look back to Athens often when the subject of mega events rises, albeit for very different reasons than when they reminisce about Barcelona in 1992. The 2004 games have been cited as contributing to both the fiscal hole that emerged in the Greek government's wallet in the mid 2000's and the European Union debt crisis that began in 2009. Athens 2004 personified the word failure in relation to mega events and for that reason, is included as a case study as an example of what mega events should not do, not only for important economic and political reasons, but in relation to the amount of abandoned former Olympic facilities – dubbed white elephants, that remain today as well.
- South Africa: While not as comparative as Athens on the mega events failure scale, the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa did not come as close as it needed to in the establishment of a positive post-event legacy which is why it was chosen as another case study. Official estimates put the total cost of hosting at \$3.5 Billion US Dollars⁹, and while that cost has not caused any major international debt crisis, it has left behind numerous vacant stadiums and infrastructure that does not support the majority of the country. South Africa had in short, hoped the World Cup would unify the country and propel it into the 21st Century – a notion that emerged in my research as an extremely dangerous one that has engulfed multiple countries who have tried to accomplish what Barcelona did back in 1992. Ultimately, it has led to projects being funded that are not needed for the long-term future of the host country such as the five new stadiums built by South Africa for the World Cup, or other infrastructure that is poorly planned and executed.

⁸ Athens Bid Committee. *Candidature File*

⁹ South African Public Service Commission *Home*

- Rio de Janeiro, Brasil / Brazil: Brasil encompassed a unique situation in their inability to deal with mega events as they hosted the 2014 World Cup then only two years later, hosted the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. Similar in nature to South Africa, Brasil was focused on joining the developed world by using mega events as platforms to expedite infrastructure development and other social services typical of 'western' countries. Both the Olympic Games and World Cup brought corruption in the national government to the surface with questionable contracting practices, in addition to a slew of articles that surfaced in the buildup to the events claiming mal practices were present within the country including human rights abuses, destruction of neighborhoods, and an expedited court system, all of which were products of a country running far behind schedule. Both the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 games were selected as case studies as both highlight almost everything that is wrong, and that can go wrong with mega events including white elephants, failed post-event legacy, lack of economic progress or infrastructure development, or corruption at the decision-making level.

Reuse and Regeneration:

- Whistler, Canada: Entrepreneurs began developing the resort in Whistler back in 1962 after the inspiring success of the Squaw Valley games in 1960. The resort as a long, intertwining relationship with the Olympic Games and eventually fulfilled the long-time dream of hosting in 2010. Whistler was chosen as a case study in similar circumstances to Squaw Valley, meaning that it was not until I visited the location, that I realized why it would be important to include it in my research. Whistler made several bids to host the games before 2010, all of which shaped the resort into what it is currently, and contributed to the success the resort has seen since the early 1990's. The post-event legacy is perhaps the most important element my research focused on with Whistler, as the addition of useful infrastructure, reuse of infrastructure after the event finished, and management of resources and funding before, during, and after the event made sure the resort strayed away from after effects countries like South Africa and Brasil experienced.
- London, England: As was the case with all the previous case studies my research used to showcase what mega events could and should do, the 2012 Summer Olympic Games offered an example of excellent event planning and organization, with a solid focus on utilizing existing

venues, redevelopment when needed, and following an overall sustainable blueprint. As a case study, London 2012 offered the best examples of what was currently being done to ensure a positive post-event legacy.

The Guidelines:

- General: The governing organizations and the guidelines they impose on countries who host mega events are the source of everything, good or bad, that comes out of the events. In analyzing the actual requirements that are put out by the governing organizations, I was able to work out whether the post-event outcomes were purely a product of poor planning, vision, and implementation by the host countries, intangible requirements set forth by the governing agency, or a mixture of both. In coming to a conclusion in my own research in which I have made recommendations of my own, it was obviously highly important that I understood the framework in place behind the mega event so as to make sure my recommendations were feasible, hence the governing organizations listed below were all utilized as case studies.
- FIFA: The Fédération Internationale de Football Association is the international governing body of football and primarily responsible for the FIFA World Cup. In my research, I analyzed many documents that FIFA has put forth including Stadium Requirements, Safety Requirements, general hosting requirements historic world cups and those in the future, Sustainability Guidelines, and more. All of these documents were important in understanding what countries are being asked to do when they host the World Cup.
- IOC: The International Olympic Committee holds authority over the international Olympic movement and is primarily responsible for the modern Summer and Winter Olympic Games. As was the case with FIFA, it was important to research the governing agency in charge to determine how much responsibility the organization had in the success or failure of the games compared to how much the host country should be accountable for. Documents that were submitted by host countries and reports authored by the committee proved to be particularly useful in determining overall cost numbers, especially when the amount was broken down by specific category such as infrastructure or transportation.

- UN: The final source of governing guidelines I discovered in my research was the United Nations Shanghai Report: A Guide for Sustainable Urban Development in the 21st Century. Within this report, space is dedicated to the topic of mega events and guidelines and principles are laid out detailing how to handle the hosting of one. The report describes mega events as catalysts for urban transformation and recognized that the main concern is the sustainability aspect of the event once it has concluded. Additionally, the report engages with proposed benefits and encourages the use of events as catalytic transformers, echoing the language host cities used in their bid proposals, especially those of South Africa and Brasil. The report itself was a product of Expo 2010, a World Expo mega event hosted by Shanghai under the theme of Better City, Better Life.

Concluding Remarks on Methodology:

In conclusion, my research allowed me to paint a picture that dives into multiple subject areas within the broader topic of mega events, culminating in the development of a response to my initial question that asked why countries host mega events, what the hosting process looks like, and whether it could be improved or not for the future. Each of the case studies tackled an individual aspect of hosting a mega event, while also linking to the overarching themes at the same time, with connections present between many of the case studies that ultimately allowed for a story that corroborated with my results to be told throughout the literature review.

Literature Review:

Introductory Remarks:

The purpose of the following literature review is to contextualize both my project on mega events, and the individual sources I have selected that compose the literature review. After trimming down the majority of sources I have researched to a select few that I perceive to be of the utmost importance in this area of academic study, the purpose of this literature review is to now compare, contrast, identify overlaying themes, identify gaps, and locate the position of my own research within the broader topic area. I began by identifying the need for a consistent definition of the mega event, before moving onto analyzing Barcelona as a historical case study, then looking at a few sources on the expenditure associated with mega events and what that means for both developed and developing countries, and finally, in addressing governing guidelines included in FIFA, IOC, and UN documents. All of the above constitutes the existing study area on mega events and places my project in a gap within that study area.

The Definition of a Mega Event:

The largest gap I discovered throughout all areas of existing academic work on mega events was the lack of a standardized definition that determined what exactly a mega event was. This made comparing varying academic studies confusing at times, as one source might refer to a specific mega event that was not classified as such under another source. When I originally began research on this project, I simply thought a mega event was along the lines of your typical Olympic Games or World Cup, but I found that definitions could in theory allow for a more diverse selection of events. Was a mega event an event that reached a certain level of tourism increase, or an event that was watched by a certain amount of people? Perhaps it was an event that incorporated a certain number of countries? The United Nations classifies a mega event as an event that includes:

- A fundamental commitment to significantly expand the quality and quantity of public goods (events of a non-commercial nature but with high economic benefits)

- An international multi-stakeholder involvement (public and private organizations as well as citizens)
- A complex long-term planning process¹⁰

I ultimately found these requirements to be extremely general, though important distinctions, in defining what exactly a mega event might include. Subsequently, I turned to Martin Müller, whose definition appeared in a few early sources I had researched. Müller points out that a mega event may include something outside the typical World Cup and Olympic Games, extending to international expos and political summits. He proposes that mega-events are ambulatory occasions of a fixed duration that must attract the following:

- A large number of visitors
- Have a large mediated reach
- Come with large costs
- Have large impacts on the built environment and the population¹¹

Outside of the United Nations Shanghai Report, Müller is one of few academics to have consolidated a working definition that has been used in other academic work on this topic. Additionally, he created a scoring matrix to accompany the definition, which allows for the assessment of an event to determine if it is indeed a mega event, or something else. Using a combination of the two definitions, I was able to safely comment on the role that the Olympic Games and World Cup played as mega events in my project, while still accepting that there are other possible mega events that have similar, smaller scale mega effects.

¹⁰ Busa, Federica. *Shanghai Manual – A Guide for Sustainable Urban Development in the 21st Century*.

¹¹ Müller, Martin. “What Makes an Event a Mega-Event? Definitions and Sizes of Major, Mega- and Giga-Events.”

Barcelona as Historical Context & Case Study:

The definition I consolidated between the United Nations and Martin Müller is further built on by Maurice Roche in his work, *Megaevents and the Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*. Roche uses a similar synthesis to argue specifically for the Olympic Games and Expo as examples of a mega events, as they have acted as catalysts for change in national identity and the marking of public time and space, the production of the event has been utilized as a power play by the elite, they have had impacts on mass culture political abuses and uses, and their growth as media events has had enormous effects on everything the mega event touches, including the city or country itself, along with the worldwide audience, and natural and built environment.¹²

In utilizing various case studies including the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona, Roche goes back to the early days of mega events in his early chapters, to discover how and why they developed into what they are today. In the later chapters, still within the context of his case studies, he analyzes the impact of hosting a mega event on the city, and the varying degrees of a relationship between the event and the city that is left behind when the event moves on. The 1992 Barcelona Olympic games are prolific as an example of what a mega event can do to a city, as I had previously identified on my travels there and in other research on this topic. I found that within Roche's work and within the broader academic research on mega events, the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona are cited exclusively as being the pinnacle of the city-mega event relationship.

Global tourism and media attention were two large variables that Roche identified as contributing to the rapid change of Barcelona when they hosted the games in 1992. The city was already in the midst of a transformation from industrial port city, to one diversifying in global business, tech, and leisure, in both the physical sense and in a purely economic sense. Roche's work was one of the only sources I came across that emphasized the ability of the 1992 games to act as a platform to garner the attention of the world to this reimagining. As Robert Hughes similarly identified in his work, *Barcelona: The Great Enchantress*, "when the world came to visit Barcelona in 1992, they saw somewhere with potential and opportunity; companies wanted to move there, families wanted to go on holiday there, and the city started to solidify a reputation."¹³

¹² Roche, Maurice. *Mega-Events and Modernity Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*.

¹³ Hughes, Robert. *Barcelona the Great Enchantress*. National Geographic Society, 2011.

In comparing Hughes' statement with data from Barcelona's official tourism bureau, I found that in just over two decades, Barcelona managed to become the 5th most popular destination in Europe, with 7.2 million people visiting the city each year, 50% of whom stated leisure as the primary reason, 42% for whom business was the primary reason, and 8% of whom had family or other relatives living in the city. 51.2% of visitors to Barcelona are from Europe, while 25.2% are travelling from outside the continent, with the remaining 23.6% visiting from elsewhere in Spain.¹⁴ In other words, international business and increased global tourism saw major increases after the 1992 games, and as Hughes, Roche, and myself identified, these increases were keys to the longevity of the success that Barcelona saw following the 1992 Summer Olympic Games.

In synthesizing all my original sources for this section on the historical context and case study elements of Barcelona, I had noticed two important points. The first was that with the exception of Roche and Hughes, no other academic source had focused on the event as a showcase more so than the event as a catalyst for development. The second, was that even though Roche and Hughes did make a note of the showcasing ability of mega events, they did not identify that aspect as being a root cause of the success Barcelona enjoyed after the 1992 Summer Olympic Games concluded. It was clear from my own research in specifically looking at candidature files, that many host countries and cities often referenced this perceived Barcelona Effect, without fully realizing that it was not just the hosting of the Olympic Games that had secured the longevity of success experienced, rather than as Roche pointed out, that there were city planning processes extending a lot further back, that had contributed to the transition the city made more so than the hosting of one event.

In concluding my comments on the evaluated sources under the topic of looking at Barcelona as historical context and case study, I have determined that both Roche and Hughes are at the forefront of their fields in understanding what exactly a mega event can do to a city or country that hosts one; both offered incredibly valuable insight into the process and historical progression of the process over the years. That being said, neither of them was ultimately able to argue for the 1992 Summer Olympic Games as purely a showcase event, rather than an event which spurred a lot of the changes that are currently associated with the games and the city. I had identified in my own research, that the 1992 games had merely acted as a marketing tool for the city, rather than as an event that catalyzed a shift away from a crowded industrial port city, to one that was diversifying in global business and tech, while creating miles of beachfront and other key leisure improvements. Thus, while both sources constitute

¹⁴ *Barcelona Tourism Activity Report 2016.*

an important section of research in the broader mega event study area and are definitely at the forefront of that study area, I was able to identify a gap in the research on Barcelona's 1992 Summer Olympic Games which I have ultimately filled with my own project.

The Economics Behind Mega Events – Developing Against Developed:

For this project to exist, there had to be a problem that I would attempt to address, and that problem was that there was an enormous amount of money being spent on hosting mega events, and there were also a high amount of negative after effects associated with the mega event present after it had concluded. The topic of economics in relation to mega events has received the most widespread attention from academics over the years, and for good reason. As the 2016 Oxford Olympics study on cost and cost overrun at the Olympic Games states, the last six Olympic Games have cost an average of \$8.9 Billion USD, not including indirect capital costs. Additionally, as many governments are cracking down on expenditure across the world, there is a greater need to, “understand the implications of major investments like the Games”¹⁵, as they overrun in costs at a rate of nine times out of ten, leading to financial crises and even states of emergencies, as was seen respectively with Athens in 2004 and Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

The Oxford study solidified itself as a preliminary source on cost and cost overrun in my research due to the very thorough research present throughout the report – the usage of candidature files was particularly unique and new to mega event studies, and of course highly important in determining the factual amount of expenditure that countries and cities were budgeting for and reporting on. Ultimately, the report highlighted two points of importance directly relating to my project:

- All Olympic Games, without exception, have cost overrun – The budget is essentially a blank cheque.
- The Olympic Games have the highest cost overrun of any type of megaproject at 156% – This is mostly attributed to the fact that there is a fixed deadline.¹⁶

¹⁵ Flyvbjerg, Bent, et al. *The Oxford Olympics Study 2016: Cost and Cost Overrun at the Games*.

¹⁶ *ibid*

Mega events, as noted above, are projects that come with a blank cheque. My eventual recommendations targeted this statement after I was able to identify why they did bring a blank cheque with them, and how that issue could be minimized in the future. I also realized in looking at data presented in the Oxford study, that there were obvious differences between developing and developed countries hosting mega events. Mirele de Aragão specifically addresses this issue in a report that comparatively looks at South Africa and Brasil and their process to host the respective 2010 and 2014 World Cup. While Barcelona may have been off the map so to speak before they hosted the 1992 Summer Olympic Games – they were far from a city in the process of developing, rather, they were a city with a fair amount of resources, solid leadership, and midway through a process of reimagining.

Aragão's report concludes that while mega events like the World Cup can come in and expedite development and bring additional high opportunity costs, the reality is that the costs exceed the benefits in the long run. The report utilizes studies by the World Bank Governance Indicators that assert high levels of corruption and government ineffectiveness contribute to this problem. Specific to developing countries, infrastructure development is not usually new, rather, it is upgradable – the country or city does not actually benefit from additional projects that serve inhabitants outside of the tourism sector. The numbers used by countries and cities to measure the direct impact of the mega event are also almost always in gross terms, and not in net terms. As Aragão notes, this means a report that states there was positive economic impact generated by the World Cup may in all actuality, only mean that instead of buying groceries or going to the movies, inhabitants may have opted to buy a ticket to a match instead, or in addition to, their usual expenses.¹⁷

In the selection of sources relating directly to the economic category associated with mega events, important research components included analyzing the immense expenditure with costs and cost overruns, and applying an equity lens to that study, by looking at how developed and developing countries have almost a different task in hosting the mega event altogether. There were enough economic studies available for me to research that I did not need to turn my own project into one, but these studies were useful as I attempted to discover the reasons why countries and cities were laying so much money down to do so. In addressing the developing and developed nations discrepancies, I created recommendations that would aim to create as fair of an experience as possible for the handling of the hosting process.

¹⁷ De Aragao, Mirele. "Economic Impacts of the FIFA World Cup in Developing Countries ."

One major gap that I identified within the economic and historical context lens, was the measuring of success relating to leisure and tourism, both in terms what made countries and cities successful or unsuccessful in attracting the masses before, during, and after the mega event, and in terms of the specific allocation of funds to boost both sectors. The United Nations Report and Robert Hughes both agree that that in the lead up to the Olympics, cities will spend avidly on all sorts of infrastructure and improvements in a city-wide effort to present themselves as a destination for business and leisure – but what then differentiates the success and failure of a city or country to pull off that marketing? Ultimately, this was too large of a question to address in my own research, and I did not find any existing reports that engaged with the gap I had identified.

Additional Case Studies:

Through my own research and analyzing existing academic research on case studies detailing the hosting of mega events across the globe, it seems as though the issue is simply the lack of smart investment and improvement. For instance, Volume 75 of the Association of College & Research Libraries Journal states that Brasil was not short on money to spend for the event, with \$9.7 billion spent on top of the \$15 billion the country spent two years earlier for the World Cup in 2014. These ridiculous numbers are made even more ridiculous when comparing them to the amount of money the country spent on combatting the Zika virus, which was and continues to be a major health issue for the country; \$590 million. This sums up the issue that the UN report and Hughes are trying to get at; a city cannot have an Olympic legacy or present themselves as an attractive option if they cannot look after their own people and city first and foremost.

London hosted the Summer Olympic Games in 2012. Similar to Barcelona, London is often praised for its hosting of the games and the usage of Olympic space after the event had passed. The majority of the games took part in Eastern London, which is known for not being quite up to par with the rest of the city. Effort was placed on the reuse of Olympic facilities, as well as the repurposing of space for the likes of affordable housing with additional focus put on community engagement and grassroots activity throughout the six boroughs involved in the planning process. A few notable transformations to have taken place since the games occurred include the 80,000 seat Olympic Stadium being repurposed as a football stadium that continues to house Premier League games, has housed multiple 2015 Rugby World Cup matches, various cricket matches, concerts, and much more. Additionally, public transport systems

throughout East London have been upgraded, as has the Olympic Park, which mirrors Hyde Park in the West.

Whistler hosted the majority of alpine events for Vancouver in the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Historically, the area had been an established resort village since the 1990's, but it was the games that cemented its reputation as a top winter resort in North America, and the most internationally visited resort in North America too. Since hosting, many Olympic facilities have been repurposed as happened in London – The Richmond Olympic Oval is now a recreational community center, and the Vancouver Olympic Center now houses a community pool, library, and gym. At a time when the 2008 global depression was in very recent memory, the city has done remarkably well to continue to benefit from hosting, as is seen with Whistler's specific success as a resort village.

Every city that has hosted the Olympics publishes a candidature file that will evaluate everything from economic to environmental impact. For my Whistler case study, I have utilized a report by the Economic & Statistics Services division of the Government of British Columbia titled Report 6: Preliminary Economic Impact of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games on British Columbia and Canada. This report, and similar ones that hail from my other case studies such as London, evaluate the performance of the city in the lead up, during, and immediately after the hosting of the Olympics. The information present in these reports was invaluable for my research and combined with the theoretical material described earlier in the literature review to formulate a comprehensive definition of what it means to have successfully hosted a mega event.

Governing Guidelines:

This is an important section of my research because it is the governing guidelines that are the cause of what determines success or failure in regard to hosting a mega event. FIFA's Stadium Requirements Handbook, requires every World Cup host country to have 12 suitable stadiums, meaning at least two should hold at least 80,000 spectators, four should hold at least 60,000, and the rest at least 40,000. While the Olympic Governing Committee does a better job in offering realistic expectations which is helped in part by the multi-use professions at the games, the 2020 Candidature Acceptance Procedure report offers similar valuable insight from which to draw from.

Other notable reports included in my research include the Russia 2018 Sustainability Report, Qatar Development Plan 2022, Morocco Bid 2022, and the United States 2026 Bid Plan.

Results:

Addressing Initial Questions – Why Host a Mega Event?

In analyzing both the existing academic research in my literature review and in drawing conclusions from my own research on selected case studies, I have found there to be three reasons as to why there is still a demand for hosting mega events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup. The identified three reasons are listed below and together, summarize the rationale behind the decision to host a mega event, and the perceived associated incentives that accompany that decision.

The Barcelona Effect:

Forming the bulk of the literature review, the Barcelona Effect refers to the phenomenon that occurred when the city of Barcelona hosted the 1992 Summer Olympic Games. Prior to the occurrence of the games, the city had been in the midst of a city-wide urban renewal and reimagining process that had its origins in the mid 1850's within the work of Ildefons Cerdà, an engineer turned early urban planner. During this time period, the city had an economy highly specialized in industry, marked by a busy Mediterranean port that had developed as a result of the textile boom during the industrial revolution. In response to the literal suffocation of the highly dense population confined within the medieval walls, Cerdà composed and implemented a plan that would eventually diversify and expand the economy, the layout of the city, and how people would use and reside in the city. The implementation of the plan was highly successful, and the city was able to essentially completely redefine itself in terms of economic specialization, reputation, and social fabric leading up to the 1992 Summer Olympic Games.

When the 1992 Summer Olympic Games took place, the city was showcased to the world. Without these games, the city of Barcelona would have developed at a more normal rate, equivalent to other cities of similar size during this time period. However, the hosting of the games acted as a development catalyzer and ultimate marketing tool, that would expedite the final touches on the city reimagining process and promote that new face to a worldwide audience. The games marketed the city under three categories:

- Hub for global business and tech
- Destination for global leisure and tourism

- Idyllic location

All three of these categories coexisted and amplified each other – business leaders looking for locations to expand in Europe would be impressed in locality by connections within the continent and to the rest of the world through the Mediterranean, and in terms of climate and picturesqueness. At the same time, those same location factors would draw in tourists from around the world, coupled with the beautiful beaches, surrounding mountains, and of course the city culture with its significant leisurely focused atmosphere. Simply put, when people tuned in to the games in 1992, a shining new city had emerged from the industrial remnants that people remembered, and many companies and individuals decided they saw opportunity and potential for establishing themselves in a location that would be progressing prosperously.

Within my research, I found that in both existing academic work on the subject and in the official reports from countries on the organization of the events themselves, that the Barcelona Effect was often referred to incorrectly. As was detailed previously extensively in my literature review and briefly above, there was significant planning going on to reimagine the city before the Olympic Games arrived in 1992, and that for the city leaders in Barcelona, the 1992 Summer Games were more of a marketing event for the changes the city had undergone rather than a catalyst for that change to physically begin to take place. In the existing academic work, official reports, and governing guidelines the authors tended to refer back to Barcelona consistently as a case study on how the Olympic Games could act as a mechanism for reimagining their city – meaning they were looking at the 1992 games as an event that caused the redevelopment of Barcelona and the subsequent success that the city enjoyed rather than the marketing event that it actually served as.

Understandably, this notion was cause for concern, as I quickly discovered that specifically in the official reports for South Africa and Brasil's hosting of the respective 2010 World Cup and 2014 World Cup / 2016 Summer Olympic Games, that they had crafted a focal point of the fact that these events would catapult them into the 21st Century – that they would showcase the country emerging as a developed country. Countries were looking back specifically to the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona and wrongly concluding that the success Barcelona enjoyed subsequently, was a direct result of hosting the Olympic Games.

To counter this widespread popular conclusion of the effects of hosting a mega event, I have composed an alternate definition of the Barcelona Effect:

- The Barcelona Effect refers to the process in which the city of Barcelona utilized the 1992 Summer Olympic Games to market the process of city-wide urban renewal, redesign, and redevelopment that had been ongoing since the mid-19th century to a global audience. Ultimately, the result of this effort was a short term economic boom that occurred in the leadup to the event, throughout the event, and that was sustained for a few months following the event conclusion. Concurrently, a more long-term based expansion in the city's gross domestic product output formed as a result of the marketing of the city by the event, and this expansion was sustained by increases in business and technology investment, and by increases in global tourism. More so, the effect should not be reflective of the 1992 Summer Olympic Games' ability to transform the city of Barcelona by way of infrastructure development or general city redevelopment, as this process was occurring far before the city began entertaining notions of hosting the Olympic Games. Thus, the subsequent success the city has enjoyed is not reflective of the fact that the 1992 Summer Olympic Games changed the city, rather that the games showcased improvements and changes that the city had already made to a global audience.

It is my ambition that this provided definition will suffice in dispelling the notion that a mega event will seemingly automate or catalyze a country or city in its endeavor to attain a developed or improved benchmark. As previously mentioned, it is extremely dangerous to have a mega event marketed alongside this notion, as cities and countries will look at pumping high amounts of resources into hosting a mega event with the assumption that they will be propelled into the 21st century while in actuality, it is the long-term planning processes in place before the mega event arrives that determine the future success of the location once the event leaves. Future hosts must begin analyzing Barcelona as a case study under my definition, in order to plan for a more sustainable and positive post-event legacy.

The Squaw Effect:

While there were nods to the Squaw Valley 1960 Winter Olympic Games in a few official reports that I analyzed such as the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games Report, there were no existing academic studies of this effect thus, I have essentially pioneered the study of this effect and made efforts to

define it in terms of the role it had already played in the hosting of mega events, and the future role it could and/or should play.

Situated around halfway between the cities of Reno, Nevada and Sacramento, California, Squaw Valley is nestled on the shore of the scenic Lake Tahoe in the Sierra Nevada region of the United States. Before 1955, there was relatively nothing there yet in 1960, there was full-fledged Olympic Village and budding resort town connected to both major cities by a new interstate and a new international airport. Today, Squaw Valley retains some of the original structures built for the 1960 games, and remains a high end, quality alpine destination for the entire North American region. Within my research, the expedited development and emergence of the resort for the sole purpose of hosting the Olympic Games fit a box that was left unchecked by other effects I had identified as reasons for hosting mega events. Alexander Cushing was the one man behind the development of the resort and that was all there was to it – he wanted to build his own alpine resort and he wanted to host the Olympic Games, and he did.

Arguably, this phenomenon could be classified under the Barcelona Effect, as the mega event was incorporated to essentially showcase the resort and immediately boost the number of visitors, ensuring the best possible beginning and best possible chances at longevity for the resort. However, the mega event in this instance does more than just symbolize the Barcelona Effect, as it completely transforms the environmental landscape into a resort town – essentially from nothing to something. As previously mentioned, Squaw Valley is additionally mentioned in later official documents as influencing development of similar alpine resorts thus, it is important to define separately.

Vancouver and Whistler hosted the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, and the development and success of Squaw Valley was repeatedly referenced both in the official report as a way to argue for the successful post-event legacy to be created, and in the actual development of Whistler as an alpine resort village itself. Inspired by what Squaw Valley had accomplished in 1960, businessmen began planning to host the Olympics at what was then London Mountain. Over the years, they unsuccessfully bid to host the games four separate times, all the while developing a resort with the eventual goal of doing so. When Whistler and Vancouver eventually won the bid to host the games in 2010, the resort was essentially a product of trying to emulate what Squaw Valley had done in 1960.

Definition presented for the Squaw Effect:

- The Squaw Effect refers to the way in which a location is born in its entirety, out of the process of hosting a mega event. Efforts should be made within this process to ensure a sustainable post-event legacy once the mega event concludes.

This definition addresses the second reason why countries and cities continue to host mega events – they offer a chance to create a location and sustain it. Squaw Valley was a success story in of itself, but it managed to inspire other cities and countries much like Barcelona has done over the years, in their attempts to replicate their endeavors. The majority of these attempts have been less than fruitful and particularly extravagant, as is displayed with cases such as the Sochi 2014 Winter Games and the 2022 World Cup in Qatar – both of which have used hosting a mega event as an excuse for an incredible amount of investment and development in locations where there was little sporting culture, let alone need for that type of infrastructure prior to the mega event, and what remains to be seen as existing demand for anything once the mega event has concluded, ultimately leading to an unsustainable model of mega event hosting and legacy.

The Mandela Effect:

Returning to existing academic literature, while not directly named as an effect, the role of population happiness, community building, and nationalism and/or patriotism play a part in the reason countries opt to host mega events and have been documented as such in said literature. Author Simon Kuper spearheaded this research which summarized, basically argues that the sole reason cities and countries want to host mega events, is because they are fun and make people happy. While I agreed with elements of this approach in that it most definitely is a reason why mega events occur now, I did not agree that it was the sole reason, as outlined by my definitions of the Barcelona effect and Squaw Effect.

The idea that mega events can generate increases in population happiness and displays of community and nationalism is nothing new – early Olympic Games such as the 1936 Summer Games in Berlin and the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow are good examples of the usage of mega events to act as vessels for ideologies, nationalistic generation, and community building; even if it was not the best ideology on display. The whole bringing people together, communal aspect is a large selling point for everyone involved with the mega event – be that the host nation, the governing body, the participants, or the

audience. Essentially, as the subtitle of my project states, hosting a mega event is like throwing a massive party – parties make people happy, and people rarely ever profit economically from hosting them.

It is in this effect that I need to finally address the elephant in the room as well – the fact that people who like throwing grandeur parties, are usually the people who like making a name for themselves. The leaders in positions of power within the host cities, countries, and governing organizations who are actually running this process are usually gone by the time after effects of a mega event start tasting sour, but they are also usually still around if the going is good – the debacle with FIFA and Brasil during the leadup to the 2014 World Cup is an excellent example of this; highlights of which included the resignation of the current FIFA President, as well as various charges being thrown towards members of the Brazilian government.

The best representation of this effect is found at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa which is where I have derived the name from. Nelson Mandela was used as the figurehead for the unification of South Africa – a country with a troubled past that had ambitious goals of overcoming the legacy of apartheid and investing back into the country in order to become a developed nation in the 21st century. The 2010 World Cup was all about coming together to enjoy the beautiful game and becoming a united community – while that worked for a couple months, reality set back in once the mega event concluded, and the country has been at a standstill ever since.

Definition for the Mandela Effect incorporating existing aspects of academic study with new inferences I have made:

- The Mandela Effect refers to the way in which population happiness, unity, cohesiveness, community, nationalism, patriotism, and additional themes are used as marketing factors for the mega event. Furthermore, the effect incurs the ability of positions of power to amass private gains from dealings partaking to the awarding, hosting, and development of mega events.

This definition addresses the third and final reason why countries and cities want to host mega events. The initial section speaks to the party aspect of hosting a mega event as that is exactly what a mega event is, a massive party – and there is nothing wrong with wanting to boost the morale of a city or

country. The problem occurs when that is the sole reason for hosting, as this acts as a distraction from the real problems at hand. When this occurs, the second section of the definition comes into play, where we find that those in charge of the proceedings have usually benefited privately from some aspect of the process. As sad as this fact may be, it cannot be ignored as a reason why the mega event occurs, and where it occurs.

Concluding Remarks – Why Host a Mega Event?

In this results section, I have answered my initial question that asked why countries and cities are still lining up to host the mega event. Over the course of my research I identified three specific reasons which I then defined or re-defined as effects. The Barcelona Effect acts as historical context for countries and cities who look back and try to replicate what Barcelona managed to do in 1992, though as I identified, to their detriment under the current definition of the effect. Thus, I provided an updated definition in the hopes that future hosting ambitions might realize there was a lot more behind the scenes operations going on before the 1992 Olympic Games came in and marketed the city to the world. In similar historical context, the Squaw Effect speaks to the ability of the mega event to transform nothing into something – a goal that many subsequent hosts have had when attempting to pull off their respective events. The third and final effect, the Mandela Effect, spoke to a more human side of why mega events happen – because they make people happy, and because at the end of the day, there are a lot of individual benefits at the top level of these exchanges.

All three of these effects hold an equally important place in the occurrence of mega events in the past, and the occurrence of mega events in the future. When combined with the recommendations I have listed in the upcoming section, the mega event can be looked at in a completely different light and may in fact be able to be hosted with minimal damaging effects in the future – creating a positive post event legacy that was often advertised and sought after in the past, but that was actually enjoyed by very few.

Recommendations:

Addressing Initial Questions – Can the Overall Hosting Process Be Improved?

In similar fashion to the results section of this project, I was able to identify three areas for improvement in the hosting process that I developed from my research. As I noted in the concluding remarks section from the results section, it is my opinion that if incorporated, these suggestions could pave the way for a sustainable and positive future for the mega event – one that is desperately needed. The three areas of improvement I identified are broken down and listed below, and are mostly attributed to, or directed towards the governing agencies that determine the awarding of the right to host their respective mega events, as they manage the rights of the event and ultimately have the final say in deciding what should or should not be implemented in association with the mega event.

Joint Bids:

The largest, most impactful, and simplistic change that could occur within the entire process of awarding and hosting mega events is the process of host countries submitting joint bids. When a country or city bids to host a mega event, they are taking on the responsibility of whatever that event requires and needs for it to occur without a problem. This means you need to build venues for every single recognized sport in the Olympic Games for instance, or nine to twelve football stadiums for the World Cup. However, those requirements are just the tip of the iceberg as I discovered in analyzing the bid evaluation documents provided by FIFA and the IOC, the respective governing agencies in charge of the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

FIFA were the most transparent in their processes – they allocate varying percentages and weights to categories in their bid decision shortlist which targets the stadiums, broadcast centers, accommodations, transport, and of course revenue and projected costs among other items. The bottom line here is that there is a lot to plan for and of course develop for when it comes to hosting mega events – mega events will occur, and they will need those requirements to be met. There can be no circumventing the rules and regulations these organizational bodies have laid out – as I mentioned in response to a follow up question in my capstone project presentation, as much as I wanted to come into this project and be able to rip apart these requirements and start from scratch, I could not viably do

that; FIFA and the IOC know what they need, and there are reasons behind the requirements. For instance, I cannot suggest that the number of stadiums be reduced, as that requirement currently exists so that the pitches do not receive excessive wear and tear over the short period of time that they handle multiple matches. What can happen however, is a distribution of the process over multiple parties.

The Joint Bid Proposal:

- Governing agencies in charge of managing mega events should require that a bid to host said mega event be received from at least two participating parties, host cities, or host countries. Doing so would alleviate the pressure to meet all listed requirements for hosting for one host, ultimately leading to a reduction in excessive expenditure, unsustainable investment and development, and unused facilities, culminating in the emergence of a more beneficial, positive post-event legacy once the mega event has concluded.

Splitting up the requirements for hosting a mega event between multiple parties means that instead of one nation being solely responsible for meeting all of the requirements by themselves, they realistically only need to meet half of them, which drastically reduces the financial burden in the leadup to the event, and once the event had concluded – less facilities to build means less facilities to maintain afterwards. Unless your nation already has a high demand for football, you do not need nine football stadiums with an average capacity of fifty-thousand per stadia. Realistically, you probably do not even need half of that either – yet half is sizably more manageable, even if you tear down one or two and leave the others as multi-use venues. When looking at the Olympic Games, a lot of cities will realistically not need a full-fledged aquatic center complete with a kayaking track. However, if the games are co-hosted between two cities in two different countries, and you built that facility somewhere that was accessible for both city's inhabitants to reach, chances are it will get more use than if it were placed in one location for two weeks.

The Olympic Games has historically only been hosted in one location every two years (four years per season). However, the World Cup has actually allowed joint bids in the past, although the list does only include one host that managed to utilize that function – South Korea / Japan in 2002. Excitingly, a North American bid is a frontrunner in 2026, which sees the United States, Canada, and Mexico joining forces. In 2030, Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay have come together to form another joint bid, and a not yet

official joint bid for the 2034 World Cup has been put forth by Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore. This is of course fantastic news, and it shows that nations have noted the same concerns and issues that I have in my research and made moves to minimize the negative effects associated with hosting mega events. Conversely, nations have begun to withdraw from hosting the Olympic Games and are doing so at a noticeable rate – perhaps because they do not have the possibility to break up the enormous task with a joint bid. Four cities have already withdrawn their candidacy for the 2022 Winter Games, a list that includes the likes of Stockholm and Oslo – cities not strapped for cash by any means.

Joint bids also address the inequality of the governing guidelines in terms of allowing the mega event to be equitably shared between developed and developing nations. It is one thing for FIFA to ask somewhere like the United States to have nine stadiums ready to go for the World Cup, and quite another for them to require the same of a country like South Africa, who would have little use for them after the event concludes. The Olympic Games and World Cup pride themselves on sharing the world with the host country, and likewise, sharing the sport or sports with them on the global stage – football is often touted as the world’s game, and the beauty of the World Cup is that it does indeed share the game with the world. However, the lasting negative effects that often plague host countries detract from this initial well-meaning mantra. For developing countries especially, a joint bid would be the ultimate way to participate in the world’s game, without succumbing to the negative after effects associated with conforming to the requirements that they have to meet while getting to the hosting stage.

Location Selection and Evaluation Based on Existing and Future Demand:

This recommendation toes the line between being reasonable and fracturing the ability of the mega event to bridge the barriers across the globe that allow sport to act as a cultural phenomenon between politics, beliefs, and viewpoints, that being said, I do feel ultimately that it is reasonable enough to warrant a recommendation however, hence the inclusion here. Governing agencies should include another weighted category in their bid evaluation document that measures, or that simply evaluates the existing demand for sport related infrastructure that exists prior to the hosting of the mega event, and then determines the potential demand that could sustain sport related infrastructure after the event concludes. In the same vein, this evaluation might additionally expand to cover general infrastructure development as well.

When I was originally toying with this recommendation, I was thinking more along the lines of looking at my South African case study – should FIFA be held accountable for awarding the World Cup to a country with a smaller footballing culture, that is not in need of nine immense stadiums in the foreseeable future? Over the course of my research, I expanded this initial thought to encompass the placing of the venues themselves, and the accompanying infrastructure. This train of thinking was prompted by researching the leadup to the 2014 World Cup in Brasil, which saw the construction of seven new stadiums for the event. Brasil is a country with no shortage of footballing culture, yet adding seven new stadiums was incredibly excessive, especially the Arena de Amazônia, which is located in northern Brasil in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, right by the equator. That stadium in particular has received plenty of criticism for simply being completely unnecessary, save for the four games it hosted during the 2014 World Cup.

The Demand Evaluation Proposal:

- Governing agencies must be required to evaluate existing demand for sporting venues and additional associated infrastructure and development, furthermore, they must then evaluate the expected demand from those same improvements should they be implemented. Incorporating this evaluation and measurement will decrease expenditure in unnecessary locations and subsequently, reduce the amount of unused facilities and infrastructure once the mega event concludes.

The issue of facility and infrastructure usage post-event completion is one of the larger issues that this recommendation seeks to tackle, along with cutting the initial investment numbers down. It is not just the stadia left there as I pointed out earlier, but transportation lines that no longer get used, and investment in new roads, restaurants, and more, than sit underutilized and overfunded. Developing a way to measure existing demand for both the sporting venues and associated development, along with measuring what that demand might look like after the mega event occurs, is vital to minimizing the negative long-term impacts of the mega event and ensuring that resources and expenditure are not wasted on development that it utilized for a month before it gets forgotten about.

Accountability for Long-Term Planning:

The progression of these recommendations has increased in specificity from the first to last – this particular recommendation, is aimed at holding governing agencies directly accountable for ensuring a sustainable approach is adopted toward the post-event usage of specific sport related infrastructure; the direct capital costs associated with hosting the mega event. While the previous recommendation was aimed more at addressing the problem before it occurs, this recommendation takes aim at ensuring there is a plan to keep host nations on track in keeping tabs on their facilities and venues once the mega event concludes. At the moment, when the World Cup or Olympic Games end, FIFA and the IOC move on, no strings attached.

FIFA and the IOC do not care how you build your transportation network or hotels, only that you have them. They do however, care if you do not build the required facilities to their specifications, thus, I believe they should also care about what happens to the facilities once their event has concluded. FIFA especially, likes to pride themselves in their approach to sustainability, and to give them credit where it is due, they do have some well thought out measures. Praise aside, the lack of responsibility awarded to them in regard to managing the number of stadiums they leave behind all over the world is a glaring discrepancy.

If both the previous recommendation were to be incorporated along with the current one being discussed here, a governing agency would be able to identify existing demand and future demand and make a decision about where to place a required facility. Ideally, you would want a location where there is enough demand, although being realistic, there will be locations where there is not enough demand, thus, the current recommendation is utilized. If there is an identified lack of demand present currently, and an identified lack of future demand, the governing agency should be held responsible for implementing a plan of action that addresses the caring for, or dismantling of the facility. Implementing this recommendation would immediately reduce the number of unused venues across the world that are left behind because of mega events and would additionally possibly allow for the reusing of resources.

The Accountability for Long-Term Planning Proposal:

- Governing agencies must be held accountable for implementing a plan of action that ensures there is a use for direct capital costs associated with the mega event once the event has

concluded. If the event concludes and there is no demand or usage of the direct capital cost, the care, cleanup, or removal of the direct capital cost should be overseen by the governing agency who should have the authority to hold the host nation accountable if the direct capital costs remain underutilized after the event concludes. The following of this recommendation would ensure there are no sport related facilities left abandoned or overfunded once the mega event has concluded, serving as detriments to the post-event legacy and to the host country.

As noted in the previous recommendation, the post-event legacy is swathed by the underutilization of facilities and infrastructure that often, is built specifically for the mega event and then left behind afterward. Ensuring there is some sort of long-term action plan for the management, cleanup, or removal of these direct capital costs that would include stadiums, aquatic centers, broadcast centers, and similar requirements, would ultimately curtail the amount of unused venues across the world that remain after the mega event concludes. As it is, the governing guidelines require these direct capital costs, and it should be the governing agencies that are responsible for the requirements that ensure the requirements are managed after the mega event takes place – no matter if that is in terms of utilization, or removal.

Concluding Remarks – Can the Overall Hosting Process Be Improved?

The mega event has the possibility to become a sustainable venture that improves the status of a host nation through smart infrastructure development, and ultimately, by exposing them to the world and catapulting them into an era of globalization. That being said, cities and countries must prepare adequately for hosting a mega event before they bid to host one. Identify existing and future demand for venues and infrastructure before building it, do not just evaluate whether the infrastructure is there or not. If there is no need for a massive stadium but you have to build it as a last resort, build it with the purpose of it being taken down afterwards, so that it does not sit there becoming abandoned slowly, burning an increasingly large hole in your pocket – as is the case with Athens, South Africa, and Brasil.

The joint bid is an extremely useful tool for countries looking to host the World Cup, and hopefully it will soon be a tool available to be utilized by cities aiming to bid for the Olympic Games. Being able to split up hosting requirements eases the burden so much that even the United States, a country with a multitude of stadia, decided it was smart tool to engage with. There is a belief that one can replicate

what Barcelona did in 1992, or what Squaw Valley did in 1960 – as we have discovered, there are very specific parameters that define what those locations accomplished, however, steps can be taken to ensure cities and countries get closer to achieving a sustainable, positive post-event legacy in a similar fashion, which can be done by adhering to the recommendations I have set forth in this section.

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