

Abstract

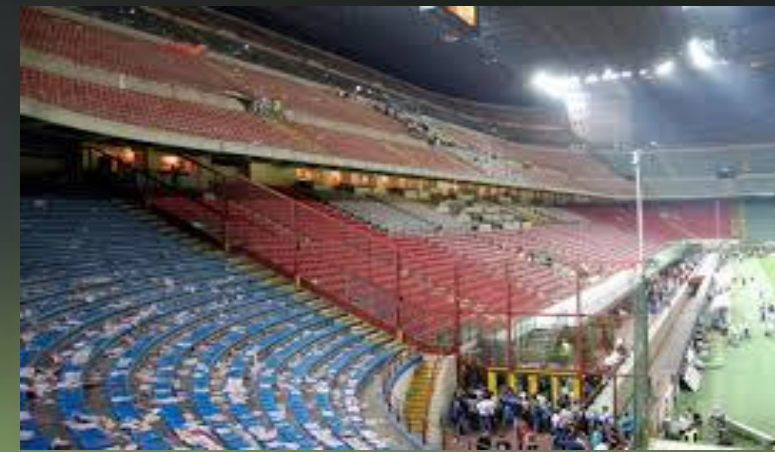
This research examines how mega sport events such as the Olympics, Soccer World Cup, and Pan Am Games have socio-economic negative impacts and hurt the environment directly or indirectly. People have always been entertained by sports. Global cities all over the world invest enormous efforts to win the opportunity to host large sport events. Political leaders, planners, and organizers often ignore the negative impacts of mega sport events and only highlight the expected benefits. These events inspire athletes, communities, and nations. They contribute to job creation, volunteering opportunities, entertainment, tourist attractions, and infrastructural development of the host city. In spite of their popularity and some positive effects, they cause traffic congestion, air pollution, a lot of greenhouse gas emissions, soil erosion, water contamination, and lead to health problems. The building of sport facilities displaces people, causes environmental degradation, and disturbs wildlife. Hosting multi-sport events have massive economic costs and great security risks. One great example of the socio-economic and ecological impacts of mega sport events is the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in Toronto, Canada in 2015. Sport events cause price inflation and increase local taxes in order to finance the facilities that are required for hosting the events. Mega sport events are great cultural, civil, economic, and political challenges for organizers, city planners, and decision-makers.



Traffic congestion during mega sport events



Aggressive plane traffic during large sport events



Vast amount of waste produced during sport events



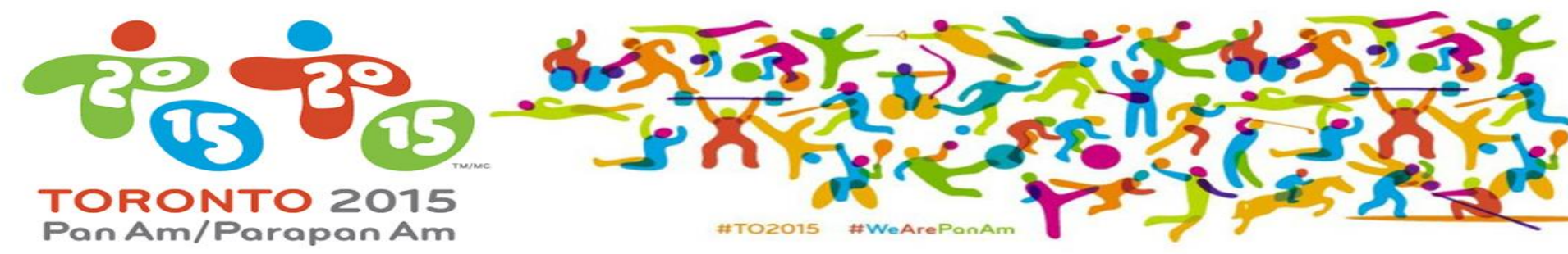
Protest during FIFA World Cup 2010

Results

- Environmental degradation caused by the construction of facilities, roads, and parking spaces when preparing for the events and the refurbishing of transportation lead to degradation of physical and biological environments
- Sports events related developments have raised concerns about traffic congestion, overcrowding, pollution, and health problems associated with them
- Snow making during winter sport events diverts water altering the normal rivers and stream flows which leads to dry stream beds, effects irrigation, and hurt species
- Security risks associated with major sporting events have received increased attention in recent years as they can act as targets for terrorist attacks
- Olympic Games organizers seek to hide social disorders, economic and housing issues through celebrating and promoting athletic and physical activity
- Multi-sport events raise questions about social justice, human rights violations, and greenwashing the remediation process; Large sports events displace people, disrupt rhythms of households and their lives
- Mega sporting events are very expensive for the host city and country; cause price inflation and increase local taxes in order to finance the events

Mega Sport Events: Popular with Planers & Politicians but Controversial Because of Their Socio-economic & Environmental Impacts

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Pan Am Games Toronto 2015

- The Ontario government paid over one billion dollars extra which included part of the security budget and it was higher than it was initially estimated
- The regression models of health outcomes associations during the Games in July 2015 show a 10% higher Air Quality Health Index of air pollution levels than forecasted, causing 20% higher rates of asthma and 20% higher rates of hypertension than predicted
- The Union Pearson Express trains produced net excess of 78,476 lbs per week of carbon dioxide and emitted 5.4 million lbs from the beginning of the Pan Am Games to October 2015
- The high-occupancy vehicle lanes for three or more people in one vehicle implemented during the Games to help commuters, brought great traffic congestion in the rest of the lanes and frustrated many drivers in bumper-to-bumper traffic
- The Western edge of the Michael Boyer Woodlot at the York University Keele Campus, Toronto was destroyed to make room for the 2015 Toronto Pan Am/Parapan Am Games stadium. In 2012, over 250 trees were cut which threatened wildlife and affected many trees of the woodlot that were left by soil erosion
- The 2015 Pan Am Games building of the Exhibition five-court volleyball stadium used 185 dump trucks to bring 50,000 cubic feet of finely filtered sand and created a lot of GHG emissions
- The transportation and building of the seats, scoreboards, portable toilets, tents, television monitors, generators for electricity, and podiums for ceremonies created more pollution and environmental damage



Michael Boyer Woodlot, York University



Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Athletic Stadium, York University



York University Subway Station, planned for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games Toronto

Mega Sport Events Contribute to Global Climate Change

These events cause great traffic congestion, air pollution, and a lot of GHG emissions. The aggressive plane and car traffic during major sport events result in an increase of carbon monoxide, black carbon, and GHG emissions. The Beijing air quality amount of air pollution increased dramatically during the 2008 Olympics. The vigorous traffic of 300,000 heavy emitting vehicles before and during the Olympics and Paralympics in the metropolitan area of Beijing contributed to the high black carbon concentrations which led to flooding and drought in China and India. The 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens produced 500,000 tons of GHGs from transportation and utility usage, the same amount of emission that a single city of 1 million people would emit for the same period. Mega sport events use energy and produce vast amounts of waste. During the 2006 FIFA Soccer World Cup each match used around three million kilowatt-hours of energy which is the same amount of energy used by 700 households, and produced approximately 5 to 10 tons of waste.



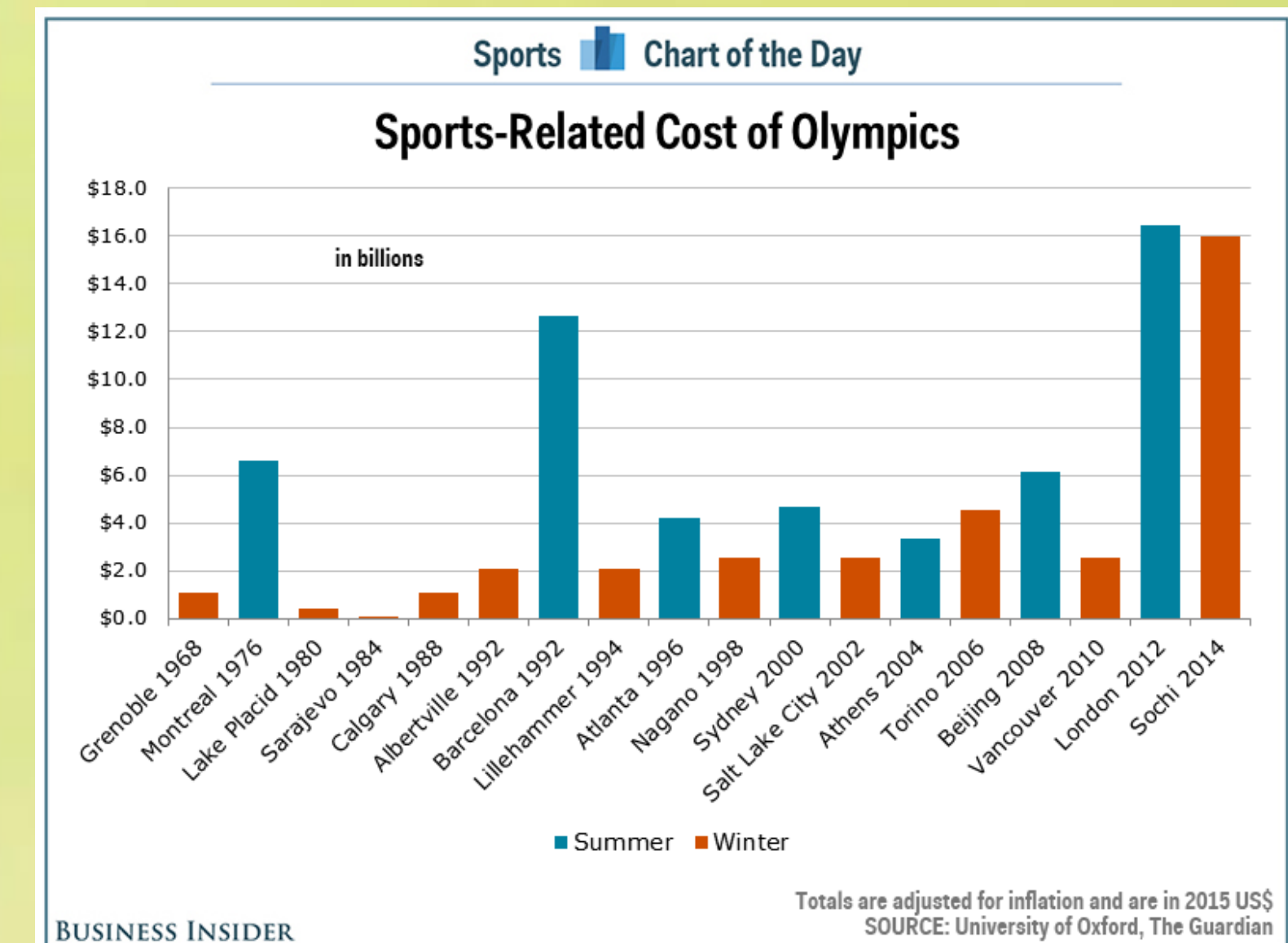
Building venues & villages requires huge amounts of cleared land



Politicians in the beginning of venue building



Abandoned Olympic venues



Conclusion

Due to the intense competition to host these events, political leaders, planners, and organizers often ignore the negative impacts of mega sport events and only glorify the expected benefits. Planners, politicians, managers, and architects spend huge amounts of money to build venues on a temporary basis with no post-game future. It is critical for all stakeholders like local governments, policy makers, and organizers to appreciate the level of community support toward the proposed event, taking into account both support and opposition. All stakeholders and communities must work towards preserving the physical environment and local heritage to reflect on the impacts of major sport events and look at how to plan these "hallmark events" in order to provide long-term benefits for cities, countries, and citizens.