

Mega sporting events in Brazil. Critical issues

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Brazil's economy is considered to be one of the most driving in the world along with those of the other Brics countries. According to all available statistics, the 'South American Giant', grew much faster than most of its neighbors in the last decade. Thanks to huge and massive governmental economic transfers to individuals and families (like the 'Bolsa-Família') and to the credit expansion, middle classes are coming back to the scene. A new and fancy concept has been developed to designate those who came out of poverty, the 'Classe C'. Those belonging to this class count in 2012 for more than 54% of the total population (around 196 million inhabitants). They are getting more and more into education, formal employment, social security protection and relatively high levels of consumption if compared to those of the previous decades. Even if the Brazilian scenario as a whole reveals that inequalities and social differences are still very high and that human development indexes are quite low in large parts of the country, a new era has been opened in economic and in social terms, at least to what concern high societal expectations of further development and growth, as shown by many surveys in these last two years. Brazil is an attractor of private investments from all over the world thanks to these trends and to its monetary policy. In this context, the attraction of mega events has been used a crucial strategy to enter in the global economy. Since the beginning of the 2000's Brazil has been attempting to host all kinds of huge events, including sporting ones. This special issue will discuss the main rationale of using this lever, its main impacts and contradictions focusing mostly on the urban dimension. Rio de Janeiro is here the protagonist as it will host the Fifa World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. The first article discusses to what extent is worthy or not to stage sporting mega events in general and specifically in the Global South cities. The following articles are written by Brazilian scholars connected to the Observatório das Metrôpoles, which are involved in research projects concerning the transformation of Brazilian cities and their commodification. They focus on some of the most important dimensions useful to analyze how cities are preparing themselves for the forthcoming mega sporting events, relating them to justice issues: housing rights, urban governance and the role of social movements, urban mobility and the conversion of sports into an élitist practice. As will be easily noticed, all the articles hold a critical point of view on mega events as possible vectors of development, which is, obviously, just one of the possible ways to address so complex phenomena that entail spatial, economic and social profound transformations.

Il Brasile è considerato attualmente uno dei paesi trainanti dell'economia mondiale. Attraversato da processi di upgrading socio-economico negli ultimi anni oggi, grazie a politiche mirate che hanno fatto uscire dalla povertà milioni di individui e famiglie nell'ultimo decennio e reso possibile la formazione di una nuova classe media, vive un momento di aspettative di ulteriore crescita. È in questo contesto che il paese è riuscito ad attrarre due dei maggiori eventi sportivi del mondo, la Coppa del Mondo di calcio nel 2014 in dodici città brasiliane e le Olimpiadi nel 2016 a Rio de Janeiro. Il servizio che segue è composto da sei articoli e discute il rationale di tale scelta nonché le sue implicazioni più critiche

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