

*Miquel de Moragas and Miquel Botella, Editors*

## The Keys to

# Success

*The social, sporting, economic  
and communications impact of  
Barcelona '92*

*Centre d'Estudis Olímpics i de l'Esport  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
Olympic Museum Lausanne  
Fundació Barcelona Olímpica*

## The authors

**Josep Miquel Abad**  
**Enric Truñó \***  
**Fidel Sust**  
**Manuel Llanos**  
**Lluís Millet**  
**Miquel Botella**  
**Ferran Pastor**  
**Jordi López**  
**Andreu Clapés**  
**Josep Bertran**  
**Miquel de Moragas**  
**Joan Botella**  
**Faustino Miguélez**  
**Ferran Brunet**  
**Fernand Landry**  
**John J. MacAloon**  
**Nancy Rivenburgh**  
**Muriel Ladrón de Guevara**  
**Pilar Carrasquer**  
**Núria García**  
**Xavier Còller**  
**Daniel Romaní**  
**Dolors Aparicio**

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Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
Edifici B. 08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona, España)

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Servei de Publicacions  
Edifici A. 08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona, España)

Editors: Miquel de Moragas and Miquel Botella  
Editorial coordination: Miquel Gómez, Esther  
Martí and Núria García  
Translations: Jeffrey Swartz, Matthew Tree  
Cover Design: Josep Maria Trias

First edition: November 1995

Legal Deposit: B. 44.139-1995  
ISBN 84-490-0450-0  
Photocomposition: Víctor Igual, S. L.  
Printing: Duplex, S. A.  
Binding: Encuadernaciones Maro, S. A.  
Printed in Spain

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## THE REPERCUSSION OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES ON LABOUR<sup>1</sup>

FAUSTINO MIGUÉLEZ / PILAR CARRASQUER<sup>2</sup>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Barcelona and its area of influence, along with the rest of Spain, initiated a process of economic recovery in 1986 which affected the service sector, arising in the context of the following three factors.

In the first place there was the international recovery, and with it, the entrance of Spain into the European Economic Community, which conditioned the Spanish recovery in a much more dependent way (Lope, Miguélez, Recio, Roca, 1993) than had occurred in the past.

In the second place there was a rise in internal demand, in particular in the construction, commerce, and hotel and restaurant sectors, as well as in services to enterprises and personal services.

In the third place there were a number of specific phenomena, which though peripheral were of great economic importance, above all because they affected construction and revitalized public initiative. This was the case of the preparation and development of the Olympic Games.

Our goal has been to study the repercussion of economic change on enterprises and labour. In this period the rate of

1. This article is a summary of a study carried out by a team of researchers of the *Grup d'Estudis Sociològics* (Sociological Studies Group) on *Treball i Vida Quotidiana* (Labour and Everyday Life) in the context of the changes in labour in the Region of Barcelona between 1986 and 1992, with special attention on the phenomenon of the Olympic Games. This study was assigned to the ADI-PROC, a labour organism, and financed by the COOB '92, the Diputació (Province) of Barcelona, and the City of Barcelona. The team was made up of Albert Recio, Antonio Martín, Andreu Lope, Carlos Lozares, Pedro López, Javier Coller, Oscar Rebollo, Inma Pastor, Pilar Carrasquer and Faustino Miguélez.

2. Faustino Miguélez Lobo. PhD. in History from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Professor of the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

Pilar Carrasquer Oto. BA. in Sociology from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Professor of Sociology of the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

unemployment clearly diminished in Barcelona and its area of influence by 6 to 7 points, even though the rate began to rise again at the end of 1992. Still, what should be pointed out above all is that both the infrastructure of labour and labour conditions have undergone a very significant transformation: less stability, lower salaries in certain sectors, worsened labour conditions.

Various recent studies (see, for example, Prieto, 1991; Bilbao, 1991; Miguélez, Recio, Alós, 1988, 1989, 1990; Martín, 1992) have pointed to very important processes in the transformation of enterprises: decentralization, subcontracting, shrinkage. A different type of enterprise from those of the past is pictured: smaller, horizontally extended in a number of branches, with a nucleus of stable employees and a wide periphery of unstable workers. In this type of enterprise the administration of labour and its organization can be different from what it was in the past, and labour relations must necessarily reflect these changes in the form of weakened unions, in the possible appearance of new forms of representation, and in the development of negotiation with smaller groups of workers or individuals. This study has paid special attention to all of these questions, centering in particular on the period and the enterprises most related to the preparation of the Olympic Games.

For all of these reasons, it makes sense to wonder what changes in enterprises and labour during this period could be concretely attributed to a specific phenomena of economic and social importance such as the Olympic Games. To what degree did these changes result in or have as a consequence changes in the strategies of social agents of labour relations, with the possibility of continuity after the mentioned period?

One of the features that has defined the specificity of the context of preparation and development of the Olympic Games has been the presence of the public administration. The public administration has been the principal client, not only commissioning large projects in infrastructures, but also entering directly into the management of labour, interested that everything follow the planned program. The administration has become the great figure, through the impulse of a kind of local social agreement, of neo-guild characteristics restricted during a period when guild attitudes were actually in decline. In this agreement, workers and their representatives obtained jobs, better labour conditions, and improvement in the capacity of the unions to intervene. Entrepreneurs, especially large ones, did good business and above

all, strengthened their ties with the administration for future cooperation (we must not forget that an important part of the concessions went to enterprises which normally work with the public administration anyway). Above all, the public administration, in general and local terms, obtained political benefitis in carrying out the program as planned, which reinforced its image of efficacy and modernity as a result.

The agreement worked in general terms, principally because the public administration carefully watched over all economic activities. It is also clear that in a time when the productive economy decreased in favour of services, the administration ended up playing an important role in the restructuring of the labour market, in labour relations, and in the very structure of enterprises, whether directly through public works or through other types of interventions.

Finally, we might offer some words about the methodology of the study. Apart from existing data, which is frequently overly aggregated, the study has emphasized three types of sources: first, interviews with different participants in economic-labour activity: entrepreneurs, managers of entrepreneurial organizations, sectorial and company labour leaders, workers, administrators, labour inspectors, economic experts, jurists and sociologists. Second, there was a survey of a representative sample of workplaces with ten or more employees in the metropolitan area of Barcelona, responded to by personnel directors or their equivalent. Finally, studies were made of about 30 cases of medium and large-sized enterprises which were typologically relevant to the different forms of administration of human resources in different production and service sectors.

The second of the techniques mentioned is not frequently utilized given economic problems and the time it usually implies. With it, a data source has been constituted that could be useful for future additions to these considerations.

## 2. ENTERPRISES RELATED TO THE PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The activity generated by the Olympic event was not distributed homogeneously nor casually among enterprises. We have wanted to find out what type of enterprises were best able to benefit from a circumstance of this nature, what it could mean for the economy and employment, why there

were some types of enterprises involved and not others, and what this meant in relation to possible labour policies and strategies of the agents, as well as what might remain of it all in the future.

28% of the sample of workplaces in the metropolitan area of Barcelona with 10 or more employees have had some degree of direct and detectable involvement in the preparation and/or development of the Olympic Games (17% with a medium and high involvement and 11% with a low involvement). Within the metropolitan area the majority of the Olympic projects and activities were developed in the *comarca* (administrative district) of Barcelonés; perhaps for this reason, the enterprises with headquarters in this *comarca* are those who most benefited from this tie (31.7%).

In spite of the fact that a certain generalized presence of the Olympic phenomenon was seen in the different areas of activity, the participation was preeminent in certain sectors: public administration (55.2%), hotels and restaurants (48.1%), construction (48.1%), transport and communications (44%), and the rest of services (40.5%). That is, it was seen in those sectors that were objectively more linked to the projects or development of the Games as such. In this regard it is worth pointing out the key role played by the administration, which was also present in transportation and in certain sub-sectors of the rest of services. Yet the participation also took on notable relevance in other service sectors such as finances and services to enterprises (33.0%), education and health (27.6%), and commerce (20.9%). In industry it was lower, though in this case it was especially relevant in the steel sector and that part of industry related to construction activities.

Other two structural variables of enterprises which influenced competitiveness were the size of the workforces and their economic potential (this last measure in terms of the business volume of the most recent year). The great beneficiaries of Olympic activity have been strong enterprises (with over 100,000 million pesetas in annual sales), with more than 500 employees (70% of which participated in the Olympic event). Meanwhile, of those enterprises that do not have more than 25 employees and 300 million pesetas in business volume a year —the immense majority of enterprises in the area— only 14% declared involvement. For the rest of the sizes, or about 30%, participation has been about average.

Thus when there is strong and attractive business, however controlled it might be by the administration, small enter-

prises on their own and in terms of the logic of the market are not able to compete. They must be content, in all probability, with the indirect consequences of the event. This, on the other hand, is indicative of the strong relation that normally exists between large enterprises (especially in the service sector) and the public administration.

Enterprises have had more possibility of being involved in the Olympic phenomenon when they have formed part of subcontracting networks, whether in terms of subcontractors or those subcontracted (frequently the same enterprise carries out both roles). For, in fact, somewhat more than 40% of the enterprises that subcontract part of their production and about 34% of those which dedicate themselves to cover part of the productive necessities of other enterprises, indicate that they have had some degree of participation in the Olympic event.

The type of relation studied allows us at the same time to sustain a complementary hypothesis: those enterprises that have been strongly involved in this phenomenon have as a consequence made their workforces more flexible. This flexibility, however, has not always brought about labour uncertainty, at least in terms of the quantity of salary received, such as when it has affected qualified positions requiring trained personnel.

These types of enterprises have turned to external flexibilization (short term labour contracts) to a degree above or well above average, especially those in sectors most linked to the Olympic Games, such as construction or services. It is evident that this form of flexibility of the workforce has at the same time been important in allowing these enterprises to opt competitively for the preparatory activities or the development itself of the Olympic Games. Yet there are other key elements that have also contributed to strengthening enterprises with this competitiveness, such as those related to «professional enrichment» (carrying out of non-repetitive tasks), and the quality of labour skills. Furthermore, many «Olympic enterprises» have maintained a clearly dualized workforce: an established nucleus with a high degree of mobility —probably in exchange for economic and labour benefits— and a periphery fed by various forms of flexible hiring.

This dualization, or «internal labour market», has been referred to by various authors as the confirming indicator of the differentiated strategies of labour management carried out by enterprises (Ker, Shumann, 1988; Dore, 1992). We can now see that this dualization is functional even in times

of growth, especially if the expansion is circumstantial, as it was in this case.

Thus enterprises also were better able to link themselves to the Olympic event if their workforces had a medium or high degree of geographical or functional mobility, if in recent years they have tended to increase their workforces, particularly as regards technicians (in part, we might assume, thanks to the Olympic phenomenon itself), and if they have workforces with an above-average percentage (between 10% and 30% of those employed) or a well above average level (above 30%) of employees with university degrees.

Finally, «Olympic enterprises» tend to stand out in processes of both technological and organizational modernization. Nevertheless, in both cases it should be noted that the study verifies that the proportion of enterprises in the metropolitan area with high levels of technological innovation or sharp changes in labour organization is not particularly high. All in all, «Olympic enterprises» are found among those with a higher level of modernization than in other categories. We are speaking here of innovation in administrative or productive processes, the automation of production, the use of prefabricated and new materials in the case of technological innovation, and of quality circles, work groups; enriched tasks, and just-in-time production in terms of organizational change. We might rightly hold that these technological and organizational qualities have better positioned them to capture new markets.

### 3. INTENSITY OF ECONOMIC AND LABOUR INVOLVEMENT

To what degree, we might ask, does involvement in Olympic works and activities constitute a relevant economic impulse —apart from the indirect impulse that we have not measured here, which is related to direct impulses— for these enterprises, and as a consequence for the economic area of Barcelona? To respond to this question we solicited from the enterprises an estimate of the proportion both of business volume and workforce tied to Olympic involvement in its strongest year. We are dealing, then, with an indirect estimate and not a precise quantification.

It is necessary to point out that almost 40% of the centres involved in Olympic activity did not respond to these questions, alleging that they did not know the answer, or by simply ignoring the question. Of the enterprises that did respond, the majority pointed to an economic and labour im-

pact of less than 20% of their business volume and the size of their workforce. An impact over 20% was recognized by 14% of enterprises in economic terms and 19% in terms of workforce.

In regards to those enterprises strongly affected we could point out that they are found in those sectors most directly linked to the preparation and development of the Olympic Games: construction, the hotel and restaurant sector, and the rest of services. Yet they tend to be medium rather than large enterprises, repeating in turn the rest of the characteristics already mentioned on their most noteworthy level: the most dynamic, flexible and modern enterprises.

With the notable exception of the construction sector, the «Olympic enterprises» tended to expect better perspectives for 1993 than the rest, although this was not precisely for their Olympic character, but for what allowed them to be so in the first place. That is, these enterprises had a competitive and relational capacity that allowed them, on the one hand, to enter into Olympic-related business, and, on the other, to continue to maintain positive expectations once 1992 had ended. This is not the case for the construction sector, which once the Olympic event had ended, tended to decrease in activity. This data seems to be coherent with the interpretation of the current crisis as essentially industrial, with the construction sector being presumably affected by the end of a cycle of public investment.

With all this in mind, can we come to a viable conclusion in regards to the creation of employment directly tied to the preparation and development of the Olympic Games? There is no completely clear answer on the basis of this micro-analysis of enterprises, as the increase in «Olympic» work could have been absorbed by optimizing an up to then under-used workforce, or increasing extra hours without having to hire new staff. There is a basis to conclude that the enterprises with 10 or more employees in the metropolitan area increased their workforces by between 10% and 20%, on average, due to the Olympic Games. We do not know the duration of this shift, though we can presume that we are speaking of generally short periods of time because of the nature of activities and the hiring methods typically used. Therefore, to have a more solid basis of argument we have proceeded to a more detailed analysis of two of the sectors with the greatest «Olympic» activity: construction, and hotels and restaurants (and, partially, other services such as commerce, sanitation and security).

#### 4. THE EMBLEMATIC «OLYMPIC SECTORS»

##### 4.1. *Construction*

The construction sector in the province of Barcelona — there are no data for the metropolitan area — grew from 76,025 employees in 1985 to 110,837 in 1987 and 145,000 in 1991, returning in 1992 to levels before those of the previous year, according to data from the EPA (*Encuesta de Población Activa*, the national employment survey). The strongest growth, which can be attributed to the real estate boom and to some degree to the development of infrastructures, occurred from 1985 to 1987. From this latter date until the end of the pre-Olympic year, the increase of employed workers was 34,163 people, equivalent to 30.8%. This figure would grow to 40% if we were to consider a few thousand illegal workers and foreigners not accounted for in the official statistics. To what degree can this employment be attributed to Olympic activity, keeping in mind that a year after the Olympics the figures fell considerably? To what degree, in contrast, can these jobs be attributed to the housing market? We consider that the jobs generated by Olympic-related work in the broad sense of the idea oscillated between 20,000 and 25,000 people. In order to make this conclusion we based our study on interviews with constructors, union leaders, labour inspectors, administrators of Olympic projects, and in the figures for active construction workers from some of the more emblematic projects.

This volume of employment is lower than that which some studies had previously claimed (see, for example, the forecasts in issue 9 of the magazine *Barcelona Olímpica*, from May 1989). From among the reasons that would explain this phenomena, two should be pointed out. On the one hand, was the use of new technologies in the construction process. This is an important factor to keep in mind for the future, as we cannot forget that up until 10 years ago the construction sector had maintained rather traditional methods, where changes were basically related to transportation. Yet in recent years (Miguélez, Recio, Alós, 1990) innovation has made itself manifest as a factor in the elimination of both skilled and unskilled workers.

At the same time, another factor was the intensification of labour, principally in the form of overtime, the consequence of a certain coincidence of interests between enterprises and employees. In order to fulfill pre-established schedules, it was necessary to work as many hours as possible at

the fastest rhythm reasonably possible. All of those interviewed agreed in affirming that the working days in the Olympic projects had been extraordinarily long—around 12 hours for many workers, rising to 16 hours in some cases according to the labour inspection itself—which in fact meant working more than the legal limit for overtime. For enterprises this practice was less costly than hiring additional workers, while for many workers who had come from elsewhere it was an opportunity to increase their salaries notably. Only with difficulty could the unions intervene in practices that the workers agreed to, as an important part of their salaries depended upon them. A good part of the success of the preparatory projects of the Olympic Games, as well as a good part of the profits of the enterprises in question, should be attributed to working overtime.

The interviews carried out show that the immense majority of those hired for Olympic projects were temporary (in 1990, 50.6% of the construction employment contracts were temporary while the average was 33.4% for other sectors). To a great degree these were shorter contracts than those in other economic sectors, with greater rotation from one enterprise to another. It could be argued that it had to be this way due to the occasional nature of Olympic construction. Taken together, this instability had other negative consequences for the training of workers, the possibilities of integration, and the quality of work, not to mention the negative effects there could have been for the future of employees.

New workers came largely from other regions of Spain (Aragon, Galicia) and from other countries. The number of foreign workers is difficult to quantify—some information from organized industry spoke of 12,000, although it is quite possible that the figure was not even half this due to different labour circumstances: those brought directly by the construction company; those comprising qualified technical staff; seasonal immigrants; and immigrants considered to be illegal.

The general opinion is that legality and current norms had to be respected more than ever, possibly because all of those involved were interested in assuring that everything went well, though perhaps for different reasons. However, the extraordinary, complex chain of subcontracting that can mean that in a single project there are up to 6 or even 8 enterprises, makes it difficult to verify the rectitude of all situations, in spite of labour and union inspections.

The shrinkage of the construction sector—which as we have noted coincided with the end of Olympic projects and the boom in housing construction—lead to a significant

decrease in employees in the sector. Yet this decrease did not translate into an equivalent proportion of unemployed in Barcelona, since many workers in this period had returned to their original homes and other economic sectors. In these areas and sectors the unemployment rate went up as well.

The most frequent type of contracts were for projects or services, or those designed to promote employment. Especially prominent was the first of these, given that it allowed for short term hiring without later commitments. These contracts are highly flexible, and were used most in those sectors least affected by the presence of labour unions.

The fixed single-project contract had a certain importance in more unionized enterprises undergoing a certain revitalization of labour representation. Whatever the case, the stability of the fixed single-project contract was not particularly high, given the weakening of the very concept of a single-project in relation to the enterprise carrying it out. For an enterprise intervening in a number of projects, a single project could last for a very short time.

In the areas of security and hygiene, and in the qualification of employees, there were changes as well. In the first case, important steps were taken to create a control structure more closely linked to projects that firmly involved enterprises, unions and labour inspection; the experience of the Olympic projects allows us to maintain a certain hope that the high accident rate in the sector might drop, providing this experience continues.

As for the qualification and training of employees, important steps were taken during these years—with agreements on training and the creation of the Institut-Escola Gaudí—where Olympic experiences have played a role. Yet it would be necessary to bring training inside the enterprises further, and stabilize employment, as no one will want to spend time in training if in a few months he or she is to end up in another sector. The dramatic experience of the Olympic projects, obliging enterprises to rehire older workers who might have been retired or working in other jobs, demonstrates the destructive effect of instability on this sector.

All of these aspects bring to light the new representative role of unions, which had become more difficult in previous years due to the extreme decentralization of the sector. In this sense, pioneer experiences such as the «labour relations agreement» signed by the UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores), CCOO (Comisiones Obreras), VOSA and AOMSA, with the goal of giving unions an on-site presence in those

Olympic constructions the two latter entities were responsible for, could be a basis for future action.

#### 4.2. *Services*

In services, and particularly in the hotel and restaurant sector, the effect of the Olympic Games varies from that reflected in the construction sector, given that it was observable only a few weeks before the event began. The levels of employment in the hotel and restaurant sector and commerce—the data is combined—rises from 305,229 people in 1987 to 320,451 in 1990. This represents an increase of 5% in the province of Barcelona, falling notably in 1991 and recovering lightly in 1992, according to data from the EPA. To what degree and with what characteristics was this recovery the effect of Olympic activities, and to what degree did it reflect the ups and downs of a period of economic expansion?

In order to respond to this question we have in the first place compared hiring through the INEM (the national employment institute) in July of 1991 and in the same year in 1992, in the city and province of Barcelona. Although the source used does not allow us to itemize the analysis, we can affirm that for total services part-time hiring increases, as well as contracts for projects, services, or market necessities. Keeping this in mind, it is probable that the increase of 10,000 contracts in 1992 in relation to 1991 in the city of Barcelona (there are only 2,000 more in the rest of the province) had to do almost exclusively with Olympic activity.

On the basis of the interviews made, the employment created in all services could be estimated to be between 20,000 and 25,000 jobs. This is less than expected (for example, there was no job creation in commerce) due to a number of factors. On the one hand, there was less demand for services than expected (due in part to overly optimistic visitor forecasts) and thus less need to generate new employment. On the other hand, enterprises underwent an enormous effort in assuring the cooperation of their employees by advancing or delaying vacations, or having them do overtime beyond that allowed, which significantly limited the need for new hiring.

This search for cooperation, which could be of great importance in understanding forms of competitiveness in the future, has occurred in this case due to the characteristics of the event itself, favouring the expectation that everything would «turn out right». Yet it was also due to the nature of the hired labour: young people and students, as well as family members of those already employed. A different case, which also

had a significant repercussion on employment, was that of the «Olympic volunteers». We do not mean to suggest that the COOB interfered in bad faith in the labour market —in fact the Olympic organization took special care to ensure that this was not the case—but that these types of events always develop certain necessities that many citizens are willing to respond to outside of the logic of the market, for more idealistic motives.

The jobs in this sector were of short duration, sometimes lasting only a few days. The forms of hiring—for projects, services, or market necessities—made them enormously flexible, at the same time that they brought about a high degree of precariousness for workers, given that they did not even know if they would work the time stipulated in their contracts. In the same way, there seems to have been a certain degree of illegal labour in types of activity where it is common: sanitation and hotel-restaurant services, especially in enterprises that cannot be so easily controlled, whether on the part of the COOB, the unions, or labour inspectors. This difficulty arose to a great degree because of the complex chains of subcontracting that these enterprises tend to be immersed in.

Finally, as a new factor from the point of view of labour relations, we must point out that the Olympic Games meant an impulse in the search for new areas of activity in the sector. As in the case of construction, the interest of the administration in assuring good results for the Olympic event favoured the agreement between the COOB and the unions to guarantee their *«in situ»* presence during the Olympic Games, as well as their activity as institutionally legitimized agents in the resolution of whatever conflicts could arise. As in the case of the construction sector, we do not know to what degree these types of initiatives will have continuity in the future. Yet there is no doubt that the celebration of the Olympic Games brought to the fore new and interesting union experiences.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

1. From the point of view of employment, the Olympic Games have not been the basic economic impulse for Catalonia or for the metropolitan area of Barcelona that many had expected and that the public institutions had often suggested they would be. There are two reasons for this: first, it was a limited phenomenon that for this reason only affected some economic sectors. Second, it occurred in the context of

an international recession that also affected Spain. It is quite possible that a better overall situation in 1991 and 1992 would have «enlivened» the economic activity related to the Games even more. The case of commerce and the hotel and restaurant sector is illustrative of this. Throughout the summer of 1992 commerce did not do a volume of business above that of previous years, while in regards to the hotel and restaurant sector, there were better results in 1993 and 1994 than in 1992. All in all, the economic impulse of the Olympic Games, though limited, probably contributed to delay the effect of the recession which otherwise would have made itself evident beforehand with particular vehemence.

2. The «Olympic enterprise» was a medium or large enterprise, with modernized technology and organization. The enterprises that directly benefited from the preparatory activities of the Games have not been small ones, although some business did come to them through chains of subcontracting.

In order to obtain contracts for projects, enterprises have had to have flexibility, economic capacity and access to the complex world of public administration. The study carried out in the construction sector, which was the most emblematic, has shown that there were only a few enterprises commissioned to do the projects, but that a long and complex chain of subcontracting was developed from them, which in many cases affected small enterprises and independent workers. This capacity for distribution and coordination is available to only a few enterprises, those with economic potential, good technical teams to respond to the demands of the public administration, and strong ties to other enterprises, whether Spanish or foreign.

Furthermore, the presence of the public administration in Olympic projects strengthened the possibility of social control of the administration and unions, and of employment. Even so, this control was limited, as could not have been otherwise. The presence in a given project of many enterprises at the same time, in a very limited space and for a very short period of time made any type of control difficult.

3. The volume of employment created was less than expected. We have verified that there are three reasons for this gap (here we must note that perhaps the forecasts were due to a self-interested or unrealistic optimism). In the first place, technological innovation allowed enterprises to carry out the same activity with less employees, or lead them to import labour and new materials that could not be supplied sufficiently from within Spain; this was especially true in the

construction sector. Second, the demand for services, especially in hotels-restaurants and commerce—in this case during the actual celebration of the Olympic Games—was much less than expected and had an effect on employment, in general tending to be short term. Third, and most importantly, was the intensification of working hours so as to lower costs and not have to deal with the complications of reducing staff after the event.

The employment created was basically temporary, and as a consequence, was not maintained after the Games, with few exceptions. Yet an important part of the temporary employment created was of a type in construction, communications, and tourism that meant that labour periods, whether long or short, also became periods of apprenticeship that would have put these workers in better conditions to find a job position later or once the particular task had been completed.

It should be pointed out that the fact that in a sector with such a high accident rate as construction, the levels of security and hygiene increased in the Olympic projects, thanks to greater union control, in turn leading to the enterprises' fulfillment of current security norms. This is an indication that social control of working conditions is not inefficient, especially if carried out by the representatives of those directly affected, and done on the work site itself.

4. If we keep in mind the enormous volume of projects in the preparation of the Games and the complex labour activity throughout, it is noteworthy that there was relatively little labour conflict. A kind of «Olympic social peace» was one of the dominating factors. In this there was the influence of all of the social and political agents, who did not wish to be responsible for serious delays or the poor operation of an event of such importance, which would have meant a significant cost in political terms. The characterization of labour relations also affected this situation: the sectors affected were not highly formalized in terms of labour relations, especially because the presence of unions and labour committees was low and the organization between enterprises (the *patronales*) was strong. As a consequence, labour relations worked on the basis of *ad hoc* agreements on training, security and hygiene, with the explicitly agreed upon presence of unions on site, the important role of labour inspectors, and the interest of the public administration in assuring respect for norms and agreements. This role of the public administration was decisive and can be explained above all because the public administration was the principal client.

The good mutual understanding in terms of labour ques-

tions must be understood within the context of a social agreement to contribute to the economic and social progress of Barcelona, known as the *Barcelona 2000 Strategic Plan*. The political and social forces of the city, together with universities, various institutions, neighbourhood associations, and many enterprises, have consciously undergone a process of debate and consensus in a series of measures that could define the future of the city in the medium term in certain strategic areas of economic policy. Perhaps more important than the content of the agreements and their effective fulfillment, is the fact that for various years these entities have met together to move forward within this very framework. Upon this ground a consensus has been established that allowed for the peaceful preparation of the Games and many other initiatives.

Perhaps we are faced with a formalization of new guild-like agreements, this time on a local level, that should be carefully studied. These agreements could be extraordinarily interesting both for local powers and large enterprises that operate in the city, but which are further distanced from the interests of social and politically weaker groups, as is seen by the fact that social measures are the most difficult to have respected as there are not sufficient resources nor a sufficient level of concretion that could further oblige all participants to cooperate. Yet the Olympic Games were a ground upon which some of these common interests were able to come together more easily.

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