

# An Olympic Mosaic

Multidisciplinary Research and Dissemination of Olympic Studies  
CEO-UAB: 20 Years

## Editors

Emilio Fernández Peña  
Berta Cerezuela  
Miquel Gómez Benosa  
Chris Kennett  
Miquel de Moragas Spà



Centre d'Estudis Olímpics  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



Ajuntament de Barcelona

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# Study of Olympic Urban Planning: Research assessment and future outlook

**Francesc Muñoz**

**Urban Development Observatory, Department of Geography, Autonomous University of Barcelona;  
CEO-UAB Research Collaborator**

## **Olympic urban planning: innovative, cross-disciplinary research**

Within the wide variety of Olympic studies topics, one of the most significant research topics that scientific contributions have gradually consolidated is, undoubtedly, the relationship between the Olympic Games and urban planning or, to be more precise, the emergence and evolution of a specific type of urban planning connected with the celebration of the Games in a host city. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly since the 1930s, this model of constructing the spaces required to hold the Games has gradually changed and become more complex, so much so that it now characterises a whole aspect of city construction that I call ‘Olympic urban planning’ (Muñoz 1997, 2006, 2007 and 2008).

It is a pioneering research topic that CEO-UAB has decidedly fostered, and one that we at the Urban Development Observatory in the Department of Geography at the Autonomous University of Barcelona have been enthusiastically and constantly collaborating on for the last 15 years.

Describing and explaining the different urban models that have provided the inspiration for the many and varied Olympic urban planning experiences, as well as stressing the impact of the Games on a city’s urban planning once the event is over, are very important and profound issues, not only from the viewpoint of debate on the history and evolution of the modern Olympic Games, but also in relation to periods of change and urban transformation that the process of urban development has experienced for over one hundred years.

It is, therefore, a very interesting line of work from the viewpoint of urban studies and architecture, which has clearly demonstrated the enormous cross-disciplinary potential that Olympic studies now have; a line of research that we have been able to develop extensively thanks to CEO-UAB’s support and initiatives, which began at a very specific time: the celebration of the 1<sup>st</sup> Symposium on Olympic Villages held in Lausanne in 1995.

The Lausanne symposium allowed the first piece of research to be undertaken on the evolution of Olympic urban planning. Three main conclusions were drawn from that research:

- The process of urban construction connected with the celebration of the Olympic Games in a city has become more complex throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, it was about a series of well-defined elements that were strictly related to various sporting events, such as those held at the Olympic stadium and at specialist facilities, depending on the Olympic discipline. However, the role of the Olympic Village and of the whole urban organisation connected with the celebration



of the Games led to the emergence of urban strategies and protocols that allowed reference to be made to the consolidation of a specific type of urban planning related to the Games: ‘Olympic urban planning’.

- The various Olympic experiences of urban planning and architecture allow us to plot the evolution of ideas about how to plan a city better, and they clearly show the main concerns that have defined planning at each particular moment in time. Thus, the analysis of Olympic urban planning allows us to study – in a defined and delimited territory – how the principles inspiring architecture and planning in the contemporary city have changed and developed.
- An in-depth study of Olympic Villages and urban strategies defining the organisation of the Games in each city also poses some very important research questions like, for example, the gradual emergence of new topics and concerns – mobility and security – and the relationship between Olympic actions and the general process of city development. On this particular point, studying each city’s strategies – locating Olympic Villages outside built-up areas to promote future urban enlargement, or locating them inside the city to foster internal regeneration dynamics – and the analysis of the evolution of Olympic Villages after the Games, especially with regard to their social, economic and functional integration into the urban fabric, were some of the vital issues that came out of that symposium. These have provided the inspiration for research undertaken thus far.

The research originally presented at the Lausanne symposium has given rise to subsequent updates and publications incorporating an analysis of different Olympic urban planning experiences throughout the 1990s and the 2000s.

A concise assessment of the main conclusions drawn from those works is given below.

## **Cities and urban mega-events: the relationship between Olympism and the city**

The urban transformation of cities around the Western world throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century cannot be dissociated from the organisation of mega-events. Universal expositions and the Olympic Games are two paradigmatic examples of this type of urban growth. Within Olympic urban planning, what stands out above all is the construction of Olympic Villages as urban artefacts that allow the relationships between architecture on the one hand, and the communication of a specific urban image on the other, to be perfectly explored. It is in an Olympic Village where architecture is most clearly placed at the service of the image that the city organising the event wants to project internationally. In this respect, building typologies, formal languages and the very design of spaces all form part of an urban landscape specially conceived to highlight not only the values of contemporary modernity, but also the specific values of the place. In addition, the architecture of Olympic Villages expresses the ambition to reproduce – in a controlled way and in a small, delimited space – certain urban models and architectural proposals that, in the real space of the city, generally come up against obstacles and difficulties in the way of their implementation.

Little by little, as architecture began to play an important part in the design of urban planning programmes and plans throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Olympic Villages went from being ephemeral constructions – such as military barracks or camps supplemented with accommodation in a city’s hotels – to new constructions conceived first as part of a process of enlarging a city in the territory, and second as experiments for transforming elements that had already been built.

## **Defining the Olympic Village model: a history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

A characteristic feature of the Olympic Games held before and after World War I – London 1908, Stockholm 1912, Antwerp 1920, Paris 1924 and Amsterdam 1928 – was that they responded to accommodation problems by offering what we could describe as an ‘emergency residential menu’, which incorporated all kinds of temporary residences – including the boats used to transport athletes – to meet the accommodation needs of the Games.

Despite the fact that the first cautious attempt at an Olympic Village was made in Paris – a set of wooden huts near the Colombes stadium with a few additions such as post and telegraph services – the first Olympic Village proper was built in Los Angeles for the Games in 1932. Together with the Olympic Village of the Berlin Games in 1936, these constitute what I call the ‘inaugural Olympic Villages’, since they established a basic Olympic Village model that would later be reproduced: a multifunctional structure that, besides offering the athletes accommodation and board, includes amenities such as training, rest and fitness areas, as well as recreational areas.

In the years after World War II, it was not until the 1960s that the Olympic Villages of Rome 1960 and Mexico 1968 introduced new elements of any complexity into the morphology and functions of the basic Olympic Village model first used at the Los Angeles and Berlin Games.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the Rome Olympiad represented a clear break with all earlier Games from the viewpoint of Olympic urban planning. For first time ever, there was a regional conception of the urban mass and, behind the location of facilities and constructions, there was a project for the territorial enlargement of the city. The Olympic Village was therefore included in a residential zoning programme that went far beyond the immediate solution for the temporary accommodation of athletes, a characteristic that became a point of reference common to all subsequent Olympic Villages.

With Rome 1960, the architectural form of the Olympic Village played a key part in projecting the image of the city. In fact, the Olympic Games themselves changed considerably from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, since they experienced the internationalisation and commercialisation of their content. Thus, the globalisation of sports consumption went hand in hand with greater planning of veritable sporting districts as yet another way to enlarge and transform a city. Olympic urban planning would be integrated into very ambitious urban development programmes, and architecture would guarantee not only the project’s functionality, but also the added value of spectacle. Good examples of that evolution are the 1970s’ Olympic Villages: Munich 1972 and, in particular, Montreal 1976. Unlike the urban growth approach taken for Olympic Villages in the previous decade, those of Munich and Montreal were about land use reclassification and redevelopment of the existing city.

The Olympic Villages of the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century incorporated a fairly uniform set of actions: the experience of planned programming of Moscow 1980 and the urban redevelopment plans of Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992 contrasted sharply with approaches bordering on ephemerality that were taken to the ‘university’ Olympic Villages of Los Angeles 1984 and Atlanta 1996. Thus, in Moscow’s case, the Olympic Village was contemplated in the capital city’s 1971-1990 Development Plan, in the context of the 10<sup>th</sup> five-year Social and Economic Development Plan; these plans divided the city into eight planning zones, which saw activity speed up after the Games were awarded to the city. Although very different in many respects, the Seoul and Barcelona operations shared the fact that Olympic urban planning was integrated into redevelopment programmes to recover major urban sites like Chansil – an area prone to flooding on the banks of Han River – and Poblenou, the 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrial heart of Barcelona. For its part, the Los Angeles 1984 model was diametrically opposed; it had minimal urban impact because only four of the 21 Olympic facilities were new-builds. Thus, an Olympic Village was not built and athletes were accommodated on three university campuses. This minimalist format was once again followed for Atlanta 1996, where facilities belonging to the Georgia Institute of Technology were used as an Olympic Village. These were supplemented with the construction of the Village Festival Center, a large shopping mall, and the Olympic towers, two apartment blocks providing additional accommodation.

The Olympic Villages of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and the project currently under construction for London 2012 – clearly evidence the main urban planning trends of recent times: the impact of globalisation on architecture with an obvious predominance of internationally renowned architecture firms and the capacity to create a recognised brand; the tendency towards spectacle in the shape of the architectural design and form; and the presence of three major concerns for today’s planning. These concerns relate to the need to provide new urban security conditions, to make projects

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41. Thus, the characteristic feature of the Olympic Villages of London 1948, Helsinki 1952 and Melbourne 1956 was a return to ephemeral constructions like military camps and the use of social housing contained in city urban plans.

environmentally sustainable (not just the architecture, but also the urban model defining residential settlements), and the opportunity to suggest new urban forms by integrating the built city into the landscape through innovative landscaping interventions.

## **Olympic Village architecture: Olympic urban planning and urban image**

The way architecture has made itself present in Olympic Villages is clear to see in elements such as building typologies, formal languages and the city model that characterises urban proposals.<sup>42</sup>

In his book *Olympic Buildings* (1976), Martin Wimmer puts forward a classification of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Olympic Villages based on their building typologies. The first phase begins with the bungalows and houses of the first Olympic Villages, which are reminiscent of early 20th-century suburban housing, from the German *Siedlungen* (housing estates) to the variety of working-class housing typologies in garden city developments or industrial colonies. The second phase heralds the incorporation of apartment blocks, which could already be found at the Käpylä Olympic Village in Helsinki 1952, a model repeated in Rome 1960 and Tokyo 1964. The third phase corresponds to the construction of large housing developments in which tall apartment blocks – in a variety of designs in some instances – are repeated, as was the case for the Olympic Villages of Mexico 1968, Munich 1972, Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980. To these, we could add the Olympic Villages of the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, characterised on the one hand by the variety of building typologies – different height apartment blocks and houses – as was the case for Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992; and on the other by the ephemeral nature of operations for Los Angeles 1984 and Atlanta 1996, which introduced the multi-purpose container instead of apartment blocks. Finally, the Olympic Villages of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are characterised by the incorporation of constructions – both blocks and low-density typologies – into the landscape in keeping with environmental sustainability criteria that are very prominent in the definition of the urban configuration of the Olympic Village.

A very complete analysis can be performed by comparing formal languages, taking note of how they condense elements of modernity encapsulated in other elements of habitat and local culture.<sup>43</sup> In this respect, it is easy to see how the architecture of Olympic Villages is essentially a communication vehicle for an urban image.

## **Inaugural Olympic Villages: Taylorization, rationalism and localism**

The Olympic Villages of Los Angeles 1932 and Berlin 1936 perfectly demonstrate this link between modernity and vernacularity. In the first of these two cases, the Olympic Village incorporated many elements of Taylorized life that already characterised many North-American cities, such as the mass production and use of cars. Thus, Ford Model Ts – produced on assembly lines – were the vehicles that transported roofs, doors and walls – also mass produced – to the Olympic Village for speedy assembly before the Games, and speedy disassembly after the Games. At the same time, the architectural style of the Olympic Village was U.S. west-coast ‘Spanish’, with a significant presence of local stereotypes, from the entrance to the Olympic Village to the floral decoration of the gardens that were part of each housing module.

In the case of the Döberitz Olympic Village in Berlin, ideas stemming from thought on rational, ‘efficient’ housing, which were introduced into Germany’s social housing policy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, are clearly present: from the very typology

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42. For reasons of space, only built Olympic Villages will be considered here.

43. A blend already suggested by Baron de Coubertin, acknowledged as the father of the modern Olympic Games, when he spoke of the requirements that an Olympic Village should meet. According to Coubertin, it was time for architects to make their dreams come true, to envision a dazzling Olympia, original in its modernity and respectful of tradition (Pierre de Coubertin 1910. “Une Olympie moderne”, a tract published in *Revue Olympique* addressing participants in the Concours International d’Architecture, Paris 1910).

of the housing units – like those of any other *Siedlungen* (housing estate) – to furniture that placed emphasis on comfort, simplicity and cleanliness (Richter 1937, 175).<sup>44</sup> Rationalism was even introduced into landscape management in order to achieve an integral whole: shaping the undulations of the land, designing an internal forest, introducing animal species suited to the environment, and, above all, taking advantage of the scenic potential of the landscape by designing views and vistas from the accommodation. In addition, local stereotypes were incorporated to such an extent that each house bore the name of a German town or city, with bedrooms decorated with elements alluding to the ‘cultural and economic life’ of that town or city.

## From functionalism to radicalisms: ‘modern’ Olympic Villages

The three Olympic Villages of the 1960s represent more or less mimetic readings of the modern movement’s proposals, a trait that was, by the way, common to residential urban planning throughout the golden years of Fordism, characterised by the colonisation of new territories for the city. In the case of Rome 1960, the Olympic Village reproduced specific ingredients of the functionalist recipe, from pylons on which apartment blocks rested to inter-block spaces that articulated building-free zones. The two Olympic Villages of Mexico 1968 – Miguel Hidalgo and Villa Coapa – represented a more radical version of the modern proposal. Heavily influenced by European experiences of large 1960s’ housing estates, they reflected an aspiration to create new city neighbourhoods, understood as self-sufficient units, with zoning on a greater scale and a much more standardised reading of heights and inter-block spaces.

Finally, even though it was built over a decade later, the Olympic Village of Moscow 1980 still corresponded to the introduction, on a massive and superficial scale, of the principles of the country’s modern residential architecture movement; a national-scope policy launched at the time of post-war urban reconstruction. Thus, both the formal approach and the tendency towards projects on a massive scale put the Moscow Olympic Village very much on a par with the Mexican experience.

In contrast, the approaches to the Olympic Villages of the 1970s were very different and can be associated with other traditions within contemporary architecture; on the one hand, with reflection on the cultural condition of Western urban societies and on mass culture linked to Fordism, consumption and leisure, and on the other, with radicalised visions of urban design and of the very organisation of a city and its functions. From the expansive organicism of the Japanese Metabolists to the techno-pop of Archigram, 1970s’ radicalisms proposed the creation of ‘megastructures’ – integrating services and amenities by swallowing up the functions of urban space – as a new basis not only for the creation of residential units, but also for the organisation of urban life (Solà-Morales 1994).

Both orientations are clearly present in the Olympic Villages of Munich 1972 and Montreal 1976. The first of these was integrated into an Olympic park that was, in fact, oriented towards urban leisure: the buildings were constructed with shopping and leisure in mind, and even the green spaces were designed for leisure and free time. Regarding the Montreal Olympic Village, the project created four pyramidal structures – megastructures with a micro-city vocation – that brought together all necessary functions, from housing and restaurants to leisure: the basements and first floors were given over to services, while the sixth and higher floors were devoted to athletes’ accommodation.

## Postmodern readings: late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Olympic Villages

The role of architecture as a device for image communication, which began with the Rome Olympic Village, reached a structural nuance in the conception of urban operations in Olympic Villages that came after the Moscow 1980 experience. Thus, the Olympic Villages of Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992 had numerous elements in common; this was a *leitmotiv* of

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44. Three attributes that had been perfectly encapsulated in the 1926 Frankfurt Kitchen, possibly the best example of rationalist ideas applied to housing.

urban redevelopment experiences in the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Battery Park in New York, Docklands in London, La Défense in Paris and the never-ending array of waterfront sites transformed into leisure and entertainment areas: the use of architecture as a symbolic and mediatic support for the urban planning programme (Crilley 1993). An architecture that sways between territorial indifferentism and, paradoxically, the manipulation of local stereotypes.

In the Olympic Villages that I have called ‘modern’, those built in the 1960s and 1970s, localism had become limited to the realm of what we might call ‘an Olympic *attrezzo*’ in the light of the overwhelming physical presence of some architectural proposals inspired by functionalist narrative lines. It is in this sense that the initiatives to recover some historic buildings for Rome 1960 and the cultural programmes that were heavily influenced by local traditions for Mexico 1968 and Munich 1972 should be understood.

In contrast, the Olympic Villages that I call ‘postmodern’ clearly demonstrate how local elements were reintroduced, even massively, into the image that architecture shapes in the process of Olympic Village planning, as had already been the case for the first Olympic Villages of the 1930s. A good example of that is the ‘Koreanness’ of the architecture of the Seoul Olympic Village, inspired by values of tranquillity and unassuming elegance, expressing a spirituality that is so deep rooted in the country’s culture, perceptible in the shapes of the spaces created, in the sculptures and in the colours (Brandizzi 1988, 173). These are formal premises that, for example, led the tallest buildings of the Olympic Village to be located on the outside to ‘protect’ or hide lower buildings on the inside.

The ‘Koreanness’ of the Seoul architecture became the ‘Mediterraneanness’ of the Barcelona architecture, where references to the historic city are a constant in the urban planning of the Olympic Village. In fact, the architectural project proposed an *in vitro* architecture, clearly alluding to the fact that, on the one hand, the intention was to create a new neighbourhood organically linked to the existing city, while, on the other, there was a problem of generating the perception of the passage of time and the superimposition of various architectural forms that history ends up producing in a space created *ex novo*. An architecture that should simulate history or, in other words, the passage of time, and where the *in vitro* diversity should be provided by the variation of formal elements like, for example, façades, porches, arcades and balconies, as well as colours and textures.

Finally, the U.S. Olympic Villages of Los Angeles 1984 and Atlanta 1996 show, besides ephemerality as the essence of operations, several simulation attempts that try to recreate the urban landscape by using decorative elements that, in the case of Los Angeles, went from the use of a Mediterranean palette of colours to the use of signposting elements conceived not only to be seen by visitors, but also – and in particular – by television viewers. Thus, attempts were made to create identification with all the Olympic sports facilities through the iconography and the chromatic attributes of the décor, capable of giving that impression via television screens (Los Angeles Olympic Games Organising Committee 1985, 161).

## **21<sup>st</sup>-century Olympic Villages: between revival and branding**

Olympic Villages built in the 2000s and the Olympic Villages proposed by candidate cities for both the 2012 and the 2016 Games show how the role that architecture plays in urban image communication has expanded beyond specific projects and even characterises territorial planning proposals associated with Olympic urban planning.

Thus, 21<sup>st</sup>-century Olympic Villages fall into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century tradition of creating urban sites inspired by notions of what an ideal urban city and region should be like. Thus, a series of key words characterises the discourse, not only on architecture, but also on Games-related urban planning.

In this respect, the Olympic Villages discussed below only reflect what is happening now in the field of urban planning, which sways between brand images such as ‘sustainability’, ‘security’, ‘compactness’ and ‘landscape’, suggesting the ambition to

create urban areas that are environmentally sustainable and socially safe, inspired by the compact city ideal and integrated into areas for people's enjoyment of the landscape, understood merely in terms of visual consumption.

In other words, the images that shape today's Olympic Villages are, in reality, those of the most successful urban branding in financial terms, in a context defined by a global market for land and urban images. In this respect, the Olympic Village is, now more than ever, a place where architecture and communication go hand in hand.

The idealised image of what constitutes a compact city model, materialised in terms of revival, thus exists alongside the new labels attached to today's urban planning: technology and sustainability. In the same way as images, labels, logos and brands have become substantial elements in urban transformation, today's Olympic Villages replicate this model of compact urban planning in physical terms, operational technology terms and landscape sustainability terms.

Indeed, the Olympic Village that launched this new model was Sydney 2000, which is located in the heart of a wetland near the harbour, in Homebush Bay. For the Olympic event, the area underwent a process of redevelopment and was transformed into a metropolitan natural park. The landscaping actions, the introduction of animal species and the generally low density of building typologies were, to a large extent, reminiscent of the advertising for many tourist resorts subject to specialist urban planning. This sustainable urban planning, which contemplated meticulous management of the landscape, clearly drew much of its inspiration from the Acharnai Olympic Village built for the Athens 2004 Games and the one built for the Beijing 2008 Games.

In the case of Athens, the idea of an 'ecological park' (into which the Olympic Village was incorporated) and the presence of 'eco-trails' and other soft elements, which are characteristic of the simplest sustainable city readings, shared protagonism with the revival of the modern movement, as proposed by the architecture. In fact, as the project announced, the Olympic Village had been designed in accordance with the principles of the modern movement, which places emphasis on factors such as proper orientation, natural and appropriate ventilation or the good circulation of air. It is, without doubt, a highly interesting example of a postmodern interpretation of modernity that even replicated the image of Le Corbusier's proposals on the plans. The result was in some ways reminiscent of the initiatives that had led to the construction of the peripheral areas of European cities in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the case of Beijing 2008, the Olympic Village resumed the sustainability and ecology discourse and, thus, it was considered a 'green district' that added, as a differentiating factor, the intensive presence of communication technologies. Indeed, the proposal for the entire Olympic Village was that of a digital community, with the presence of an online square devoted to all kinds of activities connected with digital interaction. A telematic urban world designed on a scale that would also ensure the security of the environment through sophisticated video-surveillance systems.

These two images, the sustainable city and the technological city, the green city of landscape and the transparent city of technology, actually had a significant presence in the Olympic Village projects proposed in the candidatures of London, Madrid, Moscow, New York and Paris for the 2012 Olympic Games, and in those of Chicago, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro and Madrid – again – for the 2016 Games. Albeit with a number of nuances and differentiating elements, all of them swayed between these two scenarios.

Regarding the 2012 Games, London's proposal is particularly interesting because the Olympic Village is presented as a model for the development of future urban regeneration operations inspired by sufficiently superficial images of the compact city model – such as the much idealised mixed-use scheme – and on criteria of sustainability, going from the materials employed to the use of renewable energies. These are some of the guidelines that should be followed by future 'sustainable communities', always to the east of the city.

In the case of Paris, the proposal was for an Olympic Village in the 17<sup>th</sup> district, based on four key principles: clarity, serenity, security and mobility. These four priorities were intended to shape both landscape management – including the development of parks and canals – and the space, with physical barriers that isolated the Olympic Village from the outside.

In contrast, the approaches taken by New York and Moscow were mainly from the perspective of redeveloping areas that were more central. In the first case, it was about a future residential intervention in an industrial sector of Queens, near the United Nations neighbourhood on East River. In the case of Moscow, the Olympic Village shaped a new residential area on the waterfront of Moskva River, a 'picturesque green space' framed by the rest of the Olympic facilities spread out along the axis of the river as it flows through the city.

Regarding the 2016 Games, the candidatures of Chicago, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro and Madrid continued to draw on very similar ideas and concepts for their architectural projects.

The Olympic Villages proposed by Chicago, Tokyo and the winner Rio de Janeiro once again placed emphasis on the urban recovery of an urban area with great potential for redevelopment and centrality, always with the common denominator of a natural element, such as the presence of water, as the backdrop of the urban planning operation.

In the case of Chicago, Lake Michigan itself was the scenario of an urban redevelopment process, which was not exempt from debate between resolute preservationists – who, in the land of the old site of Michael Reese Hospital, saw an opportunity for the conservation of the modern legacy of Walter Gropius – and those who favoured a new-build waterfront development on the lake. A new waterfront thus became the main reason for the urban approach to a Games that, in the arguments put forward for it, combined issues such as environmental sustainability and urban diversity in terms of the design of the settings.

In the case of Tokyo, the city's bay was the landscape framing an urban operation based on icons of ecological architecture and inclusive urban planning. Thus, the emphasis was placed on the sustainability of solar panels, green roofs and vegetation, all of which were present in every Olympic facility, as well as the universality of an urban design inspired by accessibility and the removal of architectural barriers. The Olympic Village, clearly inspired by the harbour redevelopments of cities in the Western world, proposed an urban landscape of modules that protruded over the bay among parks and water features between apartment blocks.

For its part, the Barra da Tijuca Olympic Village of the winning candidature, Rio de Janeiro, also incorporated projects of environmental sustainability and of decontamination of the highly run-down Guanabara Bay and the recovery of the harbour. The elements that anchor the Olympic Village in the vernacular culture of the place – such as an 'Olympic beach' or a 'Carioca street' – were incorporated into a discourse common to all the Olympic Village proposals mentioned earlier, which summarised similar values relating to technology and sustainability, with the added aspect of placing emphasis on the implementation of specific security protocols. Despite the recurrent references to the Barcelona'92 experience, the project now presents not inconsiderable doubts about the outcome of the urban planning operation, especially in terms of centrality distribution and returns on the urban image of the Games beyond the specific areas in which action will be taken.

Finally, in the case of the Madrid candidature, the area defining the Olympic Village formed part of an ambitious project to enlarge the city towards the east, where images relating to the urban development's coexistence with nature were accompanied by constant references to the Mediterranean city model as a guarantee of community life. In the way it had been put together and in its detail, this objective presented similar content to the proposals mentioned earlier; initiatives, concepts and ideas that contemplated criteria like the sustainability, ecological architecture, inclusiveness and diversity of urban planning operations, not to mention the presence of urban morphologies associated with the global forms that architectural production now takes on the territory.

In short, as can be deduced from the analysis of the projects of the candidatures and winners of the last two calls to organise the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, the variety of current proposals for Olympic urban planning is immense: the regeneration of non-central areas with a continuity vocation; the redevelopment of central areas with urban landscape characteristics on which a value can easily be placed, such as the presence of a river, a lake or a bay; and the enlargement and continuation of a city's growth.

However, despite the variety of situations, it is equally clear that the current Olympic Village model is evolving towards the consolidation of fairly common programmes that, as mentioned earlier, situate the Olympic Village space between an urban planning revival and images of logo architecture characteristic of the global urban form.

## **From army barracks to the ‘eco-neighbourhood’ model**

Despite the existence of obvious discontinuities, this analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century Olympic Villages evidences the clear evolution of the meaning of urban planning in relation to them. Thus, the ‘barracks village’, which characterised the first attempt at an Olympic Village for the Paris Games in 1924, subsequently became a ‘resort village’, which was understood as a place not only for accommodation and board, but also for rest and fitness. Thus, new amenities and services were offered, such as saunas and gyms at the Döberitz Olympic Village for the Berlin Games in 1936. The third phase corresponds to the ‘hotel village’, characterised by offering not only board, accommodation and amenity services, but also free-time programmes and facilities that would gradually gain in protagonism. The definitive model is the ‘neighbourhood village’: an Olympic Village therefore offers all of the above-mentioned functions, while also forming – materially and symbolically – a neighbourhood of the city. In consequence, a whole series of urban functions have emerged, such as the prioritised circulation of different types of traffic flow, the location of diverse services and amenities in containers, and the specialisation of each area. Likewise, there are also new requirements, such as those for new information and communication technologies, and the need for landscape integration, environmental sustainability and urban security conditions, none of which make the planning of an Olympic Village very different from the planning of any new city neighbourhood.

## **Research and future outlook**

As mentioned earlier, Olympic urban planning clearly demonstrates the enormous cross-disciplinary potential that Olympic studies research has. A series of results obtained after 15 years of joint research with CEO-UAB is indicative of continuity in a line of work that has offered a new outlook on the city and Olympism, yet it is one that can carry on growing and contributing innovative readings of the future of the Games and the city.

Thus, the research undertaken has consolidated a field of new, specific work that can evolve by dealing with five major topics that, over the coming years, will provide critical assessments and evidence of the evolution of Olympic urban planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Conceptualisation of the sporting mega-event, which has become more complex as it has evolved, with the addition of elements of a cultural nature, the power and presence of which were initially residual. Thus, the urban cultural dimension will be one of the most interesting elements for the definition of mega-events like the Olympic Games in the future.
- Evolution of the concerns and major topics in the definition of urban planning. The new issues that 21<sup>st</sup>-century Olympic urban planning has already incorporated, such as security, sustainability and landscape, are certainly giving rise to new ways of thinking and planning the Olympic event from the perspective of transforming an existing city.
- Importance of image in a global world characterised by the success of a digital visual culture. The incorporation of this type of issues into urban planning is unquestionably very novel and may foster future research focusing clearly on the links between the Olympic Games, urban image and global communication.
- Innovation in proposing new ways of integrating Olympic urban planning actions into the urban fabric. In this respect, the approaches taken to Olympic Villages in the future will certainly go much further and will re-elaborate traditional



formulas, characterised by opting for the enlargement of a city or the transformation and regeneration of an internal and occasionally run-down area of the existing fabric.

- The way in which new and highly important urban topics can be incorporated into the design and configuration of Olympic urban planning. This is the case for issues such as urban creativity, knowledge technologies, the culture economy and the essential role that existing processes are playing in current urban evolution, yet which are acquiring a new and radically different dimension nowadays, such as global tourism and cross-border migration.

These five lines of research may be productive paths to follow in terms of consolidating the current relationship of knowledge exchange and joint research, and may also reveal not only the permeability and cross-disciplinarity of the work already carried out, but also the potential impact on future societies, for which the study of relationships between the Olympic Games, urban planning and city transformation will continue to be relevant.

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