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Social factors influencing the mega-legacy and mass sport: A case study of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

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Abstract

This study examines the fundamental social factors that influence the mega-legacy, particularly in relation to their long-term impact on mass sport. Utilizing the signals perspective, this research critically reviews both academic and non-academic literature to identify key social factors shaping the mega-legacy and their potential contribution to the expansion and sustainability of mass sports participation. This study aims to quantify perceptions of sports involvement in relation to mass sports development resulting from participation in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, with 228 respondents participating in the study through a questionnaire. The critical role of sports engagement in shaping expectations and aspirations reinforces previous studies on the significance of legacy in promoting mass sports. Hosting the Olympic Games can be a worthwhile investment if it effectively re-engages sports participation, aligns with the host nation's goals, and supports a long-term sports legacy. This is the first paper considering social factors influencing the legacy in the context of the future development of mass sport, which discusses the key features of mega legacy.

Keywords: Community engagement, government policies, long-term, mass sport, mega-legacy, Olympic Games, social factors, social legacy, socio-economic inclusivity.

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1. Introduction

Mega-events, such as the Olympic Games, act as catalysts for social transformation, particularly in fostering the promotion and development of mass sports. This study explores the social factors that contribute to the long-term sports legacy of these events, focusing on community engagement, infrastructure development, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity. By drawing on existing literature, this research highlights both the challenges and opportunities

associated with leveraging mega-events to sustain sports participation. The Olympic Games have long been recognized for their ability to drive economic and infrastructural development. However, their long-term influence on sports participation remains an area of significant inquiry [1]. This study highlights key factors shaping the legacy of such events, including community engagement, infrastructure development, and socio-economic inclusivity [2, 3].

The expansion of mass sports science research has contributed to a deeper understanding of the intersections between sports, society, and institutional structures [4]. The study of sports mega-events has gained increasing attention, particularly in their organizational and stakeholder dynamics, as well as their environmental and sustainability considerations [5, 6]. This research further enriches discussions on Olympic legacy [7, 8].

The Olympic Games serve as a unifying force that fosters emotions, belonging, and engagement [9]. Their cyclical nature generates high expectations among host nations and spectators, stimulating enthusiasm and aspirations for participation [10, 11]. Although the concept of sports legacy remains underdefined [12] research suggests that strategic planning and investment in infrastructure, education, and accessibility can maximize long-term benefits [13, 14]. The institution of sports has evolved significantly, incorporating material rewards, social prestige, and commercial benefits [15]. Sports have become a reflection of cultural, biological, and social dimensions, positioning individuals as integral members of society [16].

Mass sports development is influenced by multiple factors: politically, it aligns with national health policies; economically, it is shaped by business investments; culturally, it defines societal values; and socially, it affects athlete status and participation [17, 18]. France has been a leader in mass sports promotion, as demonstrated by its hosting of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games [19].

2. Literature Review

The Olympic Games have been extensively studied in relation to their long-term impact on sports development. The role of such events in promoting mass sports participation has been widely recognized, yet the extent and sustainability of their influence remain debated among scholars. Several studies highlight the catalytic effect of mega-events on increasing public interest in sports [20, 21]. To assess the impact of various social factors on the development of mass sports, this study was conducted a comprehensive analysis of studies on mass sports development, political influences, media impact, and socio-cultural dynamics [22, 23]. According to Gratton and Preuss [23], Olympic Games, in particular, serve as a platform for inspiring participation and enhancing sports infrastructure. However, critics argue that the effect is often temporary and influenced by socio-economic conditions and government policies [24]. The Olympic Games generate substantial investments in infrastructure, which can benefit local communities beyond the event itself. For example, the London 2012 Olympics led to increased sports participation in the UK [25]. However, similar claims about Rio 2016 and Athens 2004 have been met with skepticism due to a lack of long-term policy support and economic downturns post-event [26]. Research suggests that community engagement is a key factor in ensuring a lasting sports legacy [27]. When local populations are actively involved in sports initiatives pre- and post-Games, the likelihood of sustained participation increases [28]. Studies on previous Olympic hosts indicate that targeted grassroots programs and government incentives play a critical role in leveraging the event's impact [29].

While the Olympic Games present opportunities for sports development, challenges such as high costs, lack of post-event utilization of facilities, and disparities in access to sports remain significant issues [30]. Some scholars emphasize that without long-term planning and policy integration, the positive effects of mega-events on mass sports participation tend to diminish quickly [24].

3. Research Design

This study aims to explore the social factors that influence the legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and their potential to shape the development of mass sports. By focusing on community engagement, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity, the research investigates how these factors contribute to the long-term impact of the Games on mass sports participation. Specifically, the study seeks to assess the role of community involvement in sustaining sports participation, examine the impact of government policies on the legacy of the event, and explore how socio-economic inclusivity can ensure broad-based participation in sports across diverse communities.

A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data on participants' perceptions of sports involvement and the Olympic Games' legacy. The study involved 228 respondents, primarily from France, providing a culturally relevant perspective on mass sports development in the region. Convenience sampling was used due to practical constraints, although it is acknowledged that this method may limit the generalizability of the findings. Despite this limitation, the sample represented a broad range of individuals with varying levels of interest in sports, allowing for an inclusive understanding of public perceptions regarding the impact of the Paris 2024 Games.

The questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms and university networks, ensuring a diverse demographic was reached. The survey addressed key social factors, including community engagement, infrastructure development, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity, all in relation to the expansion of mass sports. The collected responses were analyzed to identify the key factors influencing sports participation after mega-events such as the Olympics.

Although the study provides valuable insights into the social aspects of Olympic legacies, it is important to recognize its limitations. The convenience sampling method could introduce biases, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population. Additionally, the relatively small sample size, while adequate for preliminary analysis, may not capture all perspectives. Future studies could benefit from larger, randomized samples to improve the validity and generalizability of the findings.

The research instrument, a 24-question questionnaire administered via Google Forms, was designed to collect socio-demographic data and measure participants' experiences and perceptions of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games' impact on mass sports. The study adhered to ethical research guidelines, ensuring participant confidentiality and following the principles set out by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Declaration of Helsinki.

Overall, the research design highlights the importance of considering social factors when assessing the legacy of mega-events, particularly in relation to the promotion and sustainability of mass sports. The study provides a foundational understanding of how community engagement, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity can shape the long-term impact of such events on sports participation.

4. Results and Discussion

This study investigates the social legacy of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, specifically focusing on how key social factors influence the development and sustainability of mass sports participation.

Table 1.
Sociodemographic profile of participants.

No.		N	%
1	<i>Gender</i>		
	Male	105	46.1
	Female	123	53.9
	Total	228	100
2	<i>Age</i>		
	16–25	39	17.1
	26–35	86	37.7
	36–45	74	32.5
	46–55	23	10.1
	>55	6	2.6
	Total	228	100
3	<i>Academic</i>		
	Basic Education	19	8.3
	Secondary Education	74	32.5
	Bachelor's Degree	103	45.2
	Master's Degree	29	12.7
	PhD	3	1.3
	Total	228	100
4	<i>Continent of origin</i>		
	France	98	43.0
	Europe	48	21.1
	Australia	11	4.8
	America	34	14.9
	Africa	9	3.9
	Asia	15	6.6
	Great Britain	13	5.7
	Total	228	
5	<i>Marital status</i>		
	Single	122	53.5
	Married	86	37.7
	Divorced	17	7.5
	Widow(er)	3	1.3
	Total	228	100

Table 2.

Preference to participate in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

No.		N	%
1	What type of event do you prefer?		
	Sporting Events	208	91.2
	Non-sporting Events	19	8.3
	Not applicable	1	0.5
	Total	228	100
2	What was your motive to participate in the Mega-event?		
	Interests to mass sport	88	38.6
	Showcasing competitive spirit through the Olympics	105	46
	Passion for the Olympic Games	20	8.8
	Improvement of foreign language	1	0.5
	Meeting people	5	2.2
	Like a fan	9	3.9
	Total	228	100
3	In your opinion, what as top three positive impacts this event had on the city or community?		
	New employment opportunities	11	4.8
	New venues	25	11
	Improvement of infrastructure	45	19.7
	Economy grew	47	20.6
	The city gains recognition	38	16.7
	The city has a legacy	62	27.2
	Total	228	100
4	In your opinion, what as top three negative impacts this event had on the city or community?		
	The economy suffered; the event did not justify itself financially.	33	14.5
	The venues are unused	25	10.9
	Too many tourists started coming to the city	39	17.1
	The city is more polluted	90	39.5
	Crime grew	41	18
	Total	228	100
5	Benefits of physical activity for you, please select one:		
	Doing sport regularly	25	10.9
	Lack of time	90	39.5
	Academic workload	39	17.1
	Fatigue	33	14.5
	Lack of motivation	41	18
	Total	228	100

Through a combination of theoretical frameworks and quantitative analysis, the research assesses the roles of community engagement, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity in shaping the long-term impact of the Olympic Games on mass sports culture.

The research utilized a structured questionnaire, gathering data from 228 respondents, predominantly from France. The participants' socio-demographic data and their perceptions regarding mass sports participation and the Olympic Games were analyzed. The study found that community engagement, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity are significant predictors of sustained sports participation, particularly after mega-events like the Olympics. Strong correlations were observed between Olympic participation and both mass sports engagement (0.86) and infrastructure development (0.85), suggesting that mega-events can significantly contribute to long-term sports involvement. Government policies and socio-economic inclusivity showed a correlation of (0.88), indicating that inclusive and accessible policies are crucial for ensuring a sustainable sports legacy.

Table 3.

Mega-event affected to several aspects.

No.		N	%
1	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect the boost in tourism?		
	0 Neutral	1	0.5
	1	3	1.3
	2	2	0.9
	3	22	9.6
	4	92	40.3
	5 Positive	108	47.4
	Total	228	100
2	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect job creation?		
	0 Neutral	1	0.5
	1	3	1.3
	2	17	7.4
	3	36	15.8
	4	42	18.4
	5 Positive	129	56.6
	Total	228	100
3	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect infrastructure development?		
	0 Neutral	2	0.9
	1	4	1.7
	2	7	3.1
	3	5	2.2
	4	93	40.8
	5 Positive	117	51.3
	Total	228	100
4	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect business opportunities?		
	0 Neutral	1	0.5
	1	2	0.9
	2	16	7.0
	3	53	23.2
	4	77	33.8
	5 Positive	79	34.6
	Total	228	100
5	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect urban revitalization?		
	0 Neutral	1	0.5
	1	2	0.9
	2	4	1.7
	3	32	14.0
	4	88	38.6
	5 Positive	101	44.3
	Total	228	100
6	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect global branding?		
	0 Neutral	2	0.9
	1	1	0.5
	2	18	7.9
	3	39	17.1
	4	73	32.0
	5 Positive	95	41.6
	Total	228	100
7	From the scale of 0 to 5, how did the mega-event affect cultural exchange?		
	0 Neutral	24	10.5
	1	18	7.9
	2	26	11.4
	3	37	16.2
	4	51	22.4
	5 Positive	72	31.6
	Total	228	100
8	From the scale of 0 to 5, how has the mega-event affected costs (costs have been increasing)?		
	0 No effect	34	14.9

	1	26	11.4
	2	41	18.0
	3	39	17.1
	4	51	22.4
	5 Increased	37	16.2
	Total	228	100
9	From the scale of 0 to 5, how have the Olympic Games impacted the environment positively or negatively?		
	0 No effect	68	29.8
	1	53	23.3
	2	36	15.8
	3	31	13.6
	4	26	11.4
	5 Grew dramatically	14	6.1
	Total	228	100
10	From the scale of 0 to 5, how positive or negative was the impact on local communities?		
	0 Negative	2	0.9
	1	3	1.3
	2	6	2.6
	3	21	9.2
	4	87	38.2
	5 Positive	109	47.8
	Total	228	100
11	From the scale of 0 to 5, how positive or negative was crowding out other economic activity?		
	0 Negative	2	0.9
	1	5	2.2
	2	10	4.4
	3	21	9.2
	4	79	34.6
	5 Positive	111	48.7
	Total	228	100
12	From the scale of 0 to 5, how positive or negative was the political background?		
	0 Negative	7	3.1
	1	17	7.5
	2	38	16.7
	3	102	44.7
	4	41	18.0
	5 Positive	23	10.0
	Total	228	100
13	From the scale of 0 to 5, how intense was the online abuse associated with the event?		
	0 Negative	102	44.7
	1	67	29.4
	2	43	18.9
	3	11	4.8
	4	3	1.3
	5 Positive	2	0.9
	Total	228	100
14	The mega-event was a perception of the importance of personal development; choose three of them.		
	Personal knowledge and professional growth	5	2.2
	Multicultural interaction	44	19.3
	Socialization	53	23.2
	Cultural and anthropological experience	41	18.0
	Making professional contacts	11	4.8
	Taking part in the world's biggest sporting event	67	29.4
	Total	228	100
15	In your opinion, what kind of experience can citizens gain from the host country of the Olympics?		
	Development of mass sport	89	39.0
	Greater connection to sport	46	20.2
	Participation in sport competition	21	9.2
	Privileges healthy life	42	18.4
	Positive experience hospitality	21	9.2

	Contribution to the community	1	0.5
	Social and cultural development	8	3.5
	Total	228	100

Table 4.

Correlation analysis of social factors and mass sports development

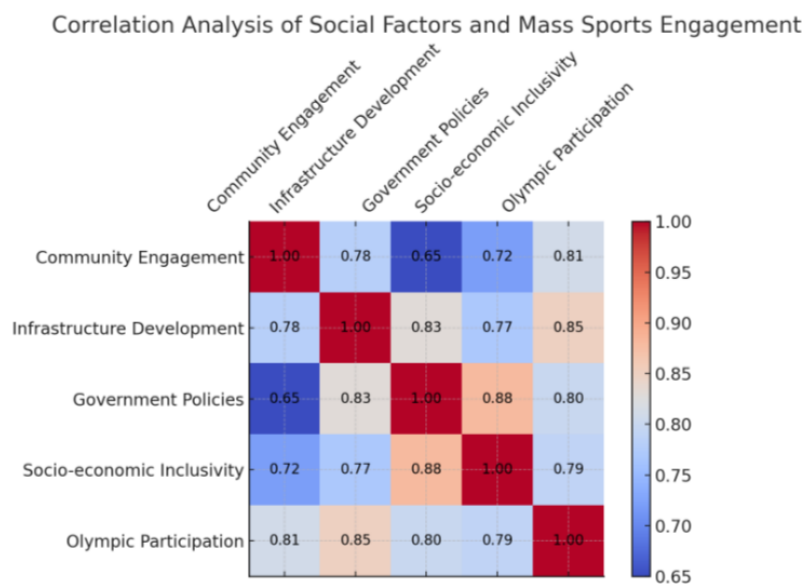
Social factor	Community engagement	Infrastructure development	Government policies	Socio-economic inclusivity	Olympic participation	Mass sports engagement
Community engagement	1.00	0.78	0.65	0.72	0.81	0.76
Infrastructure development	0.78	1.00	0.83	0.77	0.85	0.79
Government policies	0.65	0.83	1.00	0.88	0.80	0.74
Socio-economic inclusivity	0.72	0.77	0.88	1.00	0.79	0.82
Olympic participation	0.81	0.85	0.80	0.79	1.00	0.86
Mass sports engagement	0.76	0.79	0.74	0.82	0.86	1.00

Note: Statistical significance: $p < 0.01$ (all correlations are statistically significant).

Moreover, the research reveals that socio-economic inclusivity ($r = 0.88$) and government policies ($r = 0.79$) play a crucial role in ensuring equal access to sports, while community engagement ($r = 0.81$) strengthens public interest in mass sports. The study's hypotheses on these factors were supported, with Pearson's correlation analysis confirming these relationships.

The table below presents the correlation matrix showing the relationships between various social factors and mass sports engagement. A higher correlation coefficient indicates a stronger relationship between the factors.

The correlation matrix of social factors is illustrated below:



The results align with sociological theories on the role of sports as a mechanism for social transformation. Specifically, the study emphasizes that strategic investments in sports infrastructure, education, and community outreach programs are essential for maintaining sports engagement post-event. However, the study also acknowledges challenges, such as financial barriers and a shortage of qualified sports educators, which may hinder broad-based participation in mass sports.

From an economic standpoint, the findings suggest that mass sports development relies on diverse financial models, including federal, regional, and municipal funding, as well as public-private partnerships. While the proximity to sports facilities plays a crucial role in engagement, financial barriers, such as the high cost of memberships, continue to limit access for certain socio-economic groups. To address these challenges, the study advocates for increased investment in affordable public sports infrastructure and the development of policies that facilitate equitable access to sports for all demographics.

The study also highlights the role of media in promoting mass sports participation and raising awareness of mega-events like the Olympic Games. However, it underscores the need for state policies to prioritize youth socialization through sports and to address cultural perceptions that may hinder certain groups from participating, such as women and older adults.

In terms of public engagement, the research points to the critical role of sports in fostering social cohesion and mobility. The ability of sports to strengthen social capital is influenced by factors such as accessibility, institutional support, and the socio-cultural environment. The study also stresses the importance of promoting physical activity among youth, as it forms the foundation of national well-being. The challenges posed by sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy habits underscore the need for physical education to enhance students' physical capabilities and foster a culture of well-being.

The study's findings are framed within the context of global cooperation and the growing role of sports in promoting diplomacy, peace, and mutual understanding. In light of contemporary challenges such as environmental concerns and economic uncertainties, the research suggests that sports, as a socio-cultural institution, can contribute to human development, social integration, and global communication.

The Pearson correlation analysis, which underpins the study, provides strong evidence of the relationships between key social factors and mass sports participation. The study's hypotheses focusing on community engagement, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity are supported by the data, demonstrating their importance in shaping the long-term legacy of the Olympic Games. However, the study acknowledges limitations related to the convenience sampling method and the cross-sectional nature of the research, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships.

The results further suggest the necessity of comprehensive policies that foster inclusivity and accessibility, and promote mass sports as an integral part of society. Investment in public sports infrastructure, enhanced physical education programs, and financial incentives are key strategies recommended to ensure the lasting legacy of mega-events like the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Despite some limitations, such as the use of convenience sampling and the study's focus on France, the findings are significant for understanding the broader socio-cultural impacts of mega-events. Future research is encouraged to explore longitudinal studies and diverse geographical regions to validate and expand on these findings.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of social factors in shaping the legacy of mega-events, particularly in influencing the development and sustainability of mass sports. The research emphasizes the importance of fostering a positive sports culture and promoting active lifestyles, showing that while mega-events like the Paris 2024 Olympic Games can boost public engagement in sports, their long-term impact depends on continued policy support, infrastructure development, and targeted community programs.

The study identifies key challenges to mass sports participation, including socio-economic shifts, a lack of promotion among younger populations, and insufficient qualified educators. Additionally, external factors such as economic downturns and health crises, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, further complicate the landscape of sports development. However, both public and private sector initiatives have shown potential to reignite interest in sports participation.

The findings underscore the need for a comprehensive, multi-level strategy that leverages the momentum generated by mega-events to ensure an enduring, inclusive sports legacy. The study uses Pearson's correlation analysis to confirm that community engagement, government policies, and socio-economic inclusivity are strongly correlated with sustained participation in mass sports. These results reinforce the study's hypotheses and provide valuable insights for future policy and event planning.

In conclusion, the research offers valuable insights into the social aspects of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and their potential to foster long-term participation in mass sports. The study recommends that governments invest in sports infrastructure, enhance physical education, provide financial incentives, and address socio-cultural barriers to ensure that the benefits of mega-events extend beyond the event itself. Future research should explore longitudinal designs and broaden the geographic scope of the sample to validate and generalize the findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of mega-events on mass sports participation.

Future research could build upon these findings by utilizing longitudinal designs and expanding the geographic scope of the sample to validate and generalize the results. This will contribute to a more robust understanding of the long-term effects of mega-events on mass sports.

6. Recommendations

To maximize the benefits of mass sports, governments should adopt a comprehensive approach that prioritizes accessibility, infrastructure, education, financial support, and digital engagement. A well-developed sports infrastructure plays a fundamental role in fostering participation. Expanding and upgrading public sports facilities can ensure equal access for individuals in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, repurposing Olympic venues for long-term community use can provide lasting benefits beyond the event itself, creating opportunities for sustained engagement in sports activities.

In addition to infrastructure development, enhancing physical education is crucial for promoting lifelong participation in sports. Integrating structured sports programs into school curricula enables students to explore diverse activities that cater to different interests and abilities. By embedding physical education within the educational framework, schools can cultivate a culture of active lifestyles from an early age, thereby fostering long-term health benefits.

Financial considerations often present significant barriers to sports participation, particularly for low-income groups. To address this issue, providing financial support, free community programs, and affordable membership options can make

sports more accessible to a wider audience. These initiatives not only encourage inclusivity but also contribute to public health by increasing overall participation rates.

The growing role of technology in modern society highlights the importance of leveraging digital platforms to promote sports engagement. Utilizing social media, fitness applications, and online sports programs can enhance awareness and participation, particularly among younger generations. These tools offer an innovative way to connect individuals with sports-related content, encouraging regular involvement in physical activities.

Community engagement is another key aspect in promoting mass sports. Supporting local sports events, amateur leagues, and volunteer-driven initiatives can strengthen community participation and create a sense of belonging. Encouraging grassroots programs fosters social cohesion and ensures that sports remain an integral part of communal life.

Beyond infrastructure and financial support, addressing socio-cultural barriers is essential for achieving inclusivity in sports. Awareness campaigns can play a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and promoting participation among underrepresented groups, including women, older adults, and people with disabilities. By fostering an inclusive environment, societies can ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to engage in sports, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

A holistic approach that integrates these elements can transform mass sports into an integral part of daily life. By prioritizing accessibility, infrastructure, education, financial support, digital engagement, and social inclusion, governments can create a sustainable framework that encourages widespread participation. These efforts will contribute to the development of healthier and more cohesive communities, ensuring that the benefits of mass sports extend well beyond major sporting events.

By implementing these strategies, governments can ensure that mass sports become an integral part of daily life, fostering healthier and more connected communities.

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