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BEAUTIFIATION THROUGH EXCLUSION CITY IMAGE VERSUS SOCIAL MARGINALIZATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

Abstract. Organising significant sports and cultural events becomes an impulse to accelerate the development of cities and regions. The changes concern various elements of urban space, from public transport to building infrastructure. In the face of increased media interest, city authorities are trying to create a positive image of the city as a place to settle, invest and visit. This involves beautifying public areas where people from marginalised groups also lead their lives. The homeless, vagrants, prostitutes and drug and alcohol addicts, through their appearance and non-standard behaviour, differ from the designed image of the city. The article focuses on the activities of authorities and local governments related to cleaning public spaces from groups affected by social exclusion, which intensifies in the preparation period for the Summer Olympic Games. The text is based on a review of press reports, scientific literature, and reports from organisations dealing with the problem of marginalisation. Analysing the collected material allows for a discussion on the actions taken, their frequency and the socio-political situation in which they occur. The results show that regardless of the city in which the Games are held, marginalised groups experience similar repression of a similar nature using analogous tools. The article attempts to systematise the available knowledge in historical and social contexts.

Keywords: Olympic Games, social exclusion, mega-events, marginalisation, clean-up streets.

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UPIĘKSZANIE PRZEZ WYKLUCZANIE WIZERUNEK MIASTA A MARGINALIZACJA SPOŁECZNA NA PRZYKŁADZIE LETNICH IGRZYSK OLIMPIJSKICH

Abstrakt. Organizacja znaczących wydarzeń sportowych i kulturalnych staje się impulsem do przyspieszenia rozwoju miast i regionów. Zmiany dotyczą różnych elementów przestrzeni miejskiej, od transportu publicznego po infrastrukturę budowlaną. W obliczu zwiększonego zainteresowania mediów, władze miast starają się kreować pozytywny wizerunek miasta jako miejsca do osiedlania się, inwestowania i odwiedzania. Wiąże się to z upiększaniem przestrzeni publicznej, w której swoje życie prowadzą również osoby z grup marginalizowanych. Bezdomni, włóczędzy, prostytutki oraz osoby uzależnione od narkotyków i alkoholu swoim wyglądem i niestandardowym zachowaniem odbiegają od projektowanego wizerunku miasta. Artykuł koncentruje się na działaniach władz i samorządów związanych z oczyszczaniem przestrzeni publicznej z grup dotkniętych wykluczeniem społecznym, które nasila się w okresie przygotowań do Letnich Igrzysk Olimpijskich. Tekst powstał w oparciu o przegląd doniesień prasowych, literatury naukowej oraz raportów organizacji zajmujących się problemem marginalizacji. Analiza zebranego materiału pozwala na dyskusję na temat podejmowanych działań, ich częstotliwości oraz sytuacji społeczno-politycznej, w której występują. Wyniki pokazują, że niezależnie od miasta, w którym odbywają się igrzyska, grupy marginalizowane doświadczają represji o podobnym charakterze, przy użyciu analogicznych narzędzi. Artykuł stanowi próbę usystematyzowania dostępnej wiedzy w kontekście historycznym i społecznym.

Słowa kluczowe: Igrzyska Olimpijskie, wykluczenie społeczne, mega-eventy, marginalizacja, sprzątanie ulic.

Activities undertaken during preparations for the Olympic Games are closely related to mega-events characteristics, regardless of whether they are related to sports or cultural competitions. The international format and, with it, the interest of the most extensive media (Jego, Shaw 1998: 29; Mills, Rosentraub 2013: 239) give the organisers a chance to create a positive image of the city (Roche 1994: 1–2) attractive to potential tourists (Pike, Ryan 2004) or investors. Martin Müller (2015: 629) also drew attention to these features, proposing four specific elements in his definition of a mega-event: attractiveness to a large number of visitors, extensive mediated reach (mainly through media coverage), high costs, significant impact on the built environment and population. Each is important enough to catalyse changes in urban space and, consequently, in those living there. This involves treating the city as a product that must be adequately packaged and sold. However, it is not a monolith but a collection of many elements that comprise a whole. In this context, Zawada (2013: 217) treats the city as a cumulative product (M-Product) consisting of partial products, including tourism-related ones. In turn, for Szromnik (2008: 116), one of the components of an urban product is its image, which Irina Manczak (2012: 105) understands as “a set of positive and negative ideas about a given city”. Mega events significantly influence the image of the host as a tourist destination, regardless of whether it is the entire country, as in the case of the FIFA World Cup (Knott et al. 2015), or one city hosting the World Exhibition (EXPO) (Deng, Li 2013) or the Olympic Games (Ferreira et al. 2022). Apart from tourists and investors, it is worth adding

that the image is also essential for the city's inhabitants. For them, it becomes a determinant of territorial identity based on emotions and attachment to a place, people or history (Niemczyk 2018: 117). However, the image of the city that the local population sees and, most importantly, knows does not always correspond to the expectations of the city authorities and the image they create. Deteriorating buildings, littered pavements, and damaged lighting are only one side of the problem. The second one is undoubtedly man and his activities on the margins of social life. Life on the street is usually associated with homeless, poor or addicted people. This is, of course, a simplification typical of common knowledge, which treats the problem of marginalisation superficially. Following Sztumski (2012: 55), it can be assumed that within the social margin, there are individuals belonging to various "social groups and categories" that are differentiated "due to their socio-economic situation, moral or psychophysical quality" who have been there both through their fault and due to external factors. Not only individual people are subjected to the process of marginalisation, but also entire social groups who, according to Marshall (2005: 184), are deprived of the possibility of "access to important positions and symbols of power", and which some associate with the socio-spatial conditions of the city itself and the politics of national level (Wacquant 2008). A person living on the margins of society is not only in a difficult situation but also experiences social exclusion (Sztumski 2012: 53). This process is a broad concept combining various, although often related, phenomena (Szopa, Szopa 2011: 15) regarding the financial situation, loss of rights or unequal access to education. Therefore, regardless of what exclusion precisely concerns, it is "deprivation of the possibility of full participation in social life" (Olszewski-Strzyżowski 2018: 21). Side streets, empty buildings and slums often become the only place of existence for people experiencing exclusion, deprived of constant supervision by law enforcement services, where fundamental rights no longer apply. These places meet the most critical needs of the homeless (shelter from the weather), beggars (access to potential alms), drug dealers (clientele) and criminals (escape from the police). These places become a thorn in the side of mega-events organisers who want to present a positive and friendly image of the place hosting them.

Beautification is not a new process, but it dates back to the beginning of the 20th century and the City Beautiful movement that was crystallising. At that time, however, architects and urban planners wanted to influence the morality and virtues of the then society through monumental projects and aesthetic corrections of urban space (Bluestone 1988: 255, 262). Currently, beautification is aimed primarily at improving the city's image as a product, mainly aimed at a potential tourist, a new resident or an investor (Carlino, Saiz 2008). Beautification can take place through interventions: artistic (Tartari et al. 2022; Moulaert et al. 2004), urban greenery (Ahmad, Simis 2017), historical districts (Liu et al. 2023), and even by attempting to make changes in the functioning

communities (Broudehoux 2012) (which usually has a propaganda dimension, characterising especially, but not exclusively, non-democratic countries). The process of beautifying urban space is, of course, not a novelty typical of the post-modern era. Significant cultural and sporting events accompanying people decades earlier pushed city authorities to change the appearance of city streets and squares. One of the first World Exhibitions, whose history predates the revival of the Olympic Games, had an impact on improving the city's image through beautifying measures (Espuche et al. 1991). However, this process also has its dark sides. Deep infrastructural transformations and changes in the urban fabric affect residents in the preparatory phase. Modernising entire districts is primarily associated with mass resettlements to completely alien spaces (Rasnayake 2019; Davis 2011; Hopkins 2006; Carrarino 2014). Their previous places of residence are being demolished for new investments, and parts of the cities affected by these metamorphoses are undergoing gentrification processes (Kennelly, Watt 2012; Gaffney 2016; Watt 2013), thus arousing the interest of the wealthier middle class. In this way, spaces with a new image, often serving different functions than the original ones, become beautified and attractive for tourists, and at the same time, more expensive and inaccessible to people of low social and economic status. The money-rich middle class is finally becoming interested in such renovated spaces (Lenartowicz, Mosz 2018: 179). Interference in previously neglected areas of the city, aimed at improving the image of important tourist places, also affects socially excluded people living on the streets, in parks and uninhabited buildings. Plans for organising a mega event in a given city includes improving its image through new investments, including demolitions or modernisations, which usually involve changing its functions and how the facility (place) is used. In addition to metamorphoses closely related to construction and infrastructure projects, city authorities also use unofficial actions aimed at image-undesirable groups of people whose sight could significantly reduce the value of the urban landscape. Pre-Olympic city cleansing of people considered socially marginal serves to "put pressure on the city's population to adapt to [its] marketing image" (Kennelly 2015: 19).

1. Methodology

The article aims to collect and systematise information on the activities of the city authorities aimed at socially excluded groups whose principal place of operation is public space (streets, parks, squares, markets) and which activities are related to the organisation of a mega event in the city, such as the Summer Olympic Games.

The article is based on content analysis, primarily on a review of newspaper articles and – additionally – scientific publications, reports of organisations dealing with the problem of social exclusion and website articles. Since the aim of

the text was to reach the behind-the-scenes activities of the city authorities and organisers, the choice of this method allowed us to find journalistic reports (as well as information from non-governmental organisations), usually containing interviews with the victims themselves and reports from the places undergoing “clean-up”. The keywords used in the research directed us to specific articles and reports. However, merely indicating the presence or absence of a given phenomenon would be insufficient (Richardson 2007: 15). The frequency of a particular word, which indicates the level of importance of the problem in a particular newspaper (as pointed out by Berelson [1952: 265]), was not considered. I was more interested in whether a given action took place and, if so, how and who it affected. A quantitative indication of the occurrence or absence of a given phenomenon is presented in the Table 1. In contrast, a qualitative description of a specific situation in the social context is presented in the description of individual cases.

All 30 cases of the Summer Olympic Games¹ were considered, including one relating to the 2024 Games, which were in the preparation phase when collecting materials for this text. To obtain data, primary Internet search engines were used, as well as virtual newspaper archives, if available. The research was conducted from December 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024. To find thematically interesting content, keywords in English were used, including their synonyms regarding the nomenclature of excluded groups: homeless/homelessness, beggar/poverty, etc., in connection with the subsequent editions of the Summer Olympic Games. The keywords resulted from a preliminary analysis of groups affected by exclusion but functioning on the streets, parks and other urban public spaces. Not all people at risk of exclusion or experiencing it (Silver 1995: 20) exist in the places mentioned above. The most frequently mentioned among them are the homeless, the poor, minors, prostitutes, and criminals (Król 2018: 79). For each of these groups, a street or park serves a different function: accommodation, protection, provision of services, etc. Table 1 presents all groups that appeared at least once in the analysed material. The results did not include texts from sources that were difficult to verify (including those without authorship) and those that were reprinted. Data was obtained from 26 journalistic articles², eight website articles³, seven scientific texts⁴ and two reports from non-governmental organisations. Among the press, the most frequently appearing titles were “The Guardian” (9 times), “The Moscow Times” and “Daily Mirror” (2 times each), “The Washington Post”, and “Daily Mail”, and others appearing at least once. In the case of eleven games, no data directly related to the topic was obtained.

¹ The review was limited only to the Summer Olympic Games due to their different nature from their winter version (related primarily to the scale of the event and media interest).

² Including traditional press with an online version, magazines published exclusively online, press agencies, news portals, and independent media platforms.

³ Only websites of public organisations (municipal, university, non-governmental organisations, etc.) were considered.

⁴ Including articles in scientific journals and scientific or popular science books.

Table 1. Actions taken by city authorities before the Summer Olympics aimed at specific groups affected by social exclusion.

	Athens 1896	Paris 1900	St. Louis 1904	London 1908	Stockholm 1912	Antwerp 1920	Paris 1924	Amsterdam 1928	Los Angeles 1932	Berlin 1936	London 1948	Helsinki 1952	Melbourne 1956							
Homeless		no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data	no data			no data	X	X							
Poor, beggars																	X			
Prostitutes																	X			
Addicts																				
Romanies, Sinti																	X			
Mentally ill																				
Illegal business activity																				
Afro-Americans, Latinos																X				
Vagabonds																				
Minors																				
Jews																	X			
Thieves, gangs	X																			
LGBT+ people																				
Drug dealers																				
Asylum seekers																				

Source: author's work based on collected data.

It is worth noting that it was impossible to find press references to activities aimed at excluded people in all cases. When undertaking research in which press articles are analysed, one must be aware of certain limitations and difficulties. In mine, these included using almost exclusively English content; most press reports came from European and Anglo-Saxon sources; and journalists had different working conditions depending on the Games (national politics, local conditions, community of excluded people). Actions targeting marginalised groups are usually unofficial and denied by city authorities. Reaching classified information and behind-the-scenes activities is extremely difficult, especially when the researcher enters the field to obtain the desired data personally (Męcfal 2019). Relying solely on existing materials, it must be assumed that journalists obtained the information in compliance with journalistic ethics. At the same time, trust must be limited. Therefore, this article does not exhaust the topic or close the discussion. On the contrary, it is a starting point for subsequent analyses considering new information, sources, and data.

In the chapter containing the research results, the author divided the Summer Olympic Games into two periods: 1896–1972 and 1976–2024. The periodisation proposed is related to data availability on the analysed topic. In the first period, the source materials were scarce, often fragmentary, and only concerned with some Summer Games. The second period is characterised by access to information and data related to each summer edition of this sports mega event. Additionally, such periodisation is supported by the fact that it was in the 1970s that the phrase *social exclusion* was coined (Daly 2006: 3; Boardman et al. 2022), which is one of the keywords enabling the search for appropriate content.

2. Results

First period: 1896–1972

The activities of the organisers of mega-events aimed at creating an appropriate image did not characterise only the post-war times and took place already in the 19th century (Espuche et al. 1991). During the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, the Athens authorities concluded a gentlemen's agreement with local thieves, which reduced theft to a minimum (Traiou 2016). Moreover, the national pride of the Greeks was appealed to, as was the case 84 years later during the Games in Moscow, when attempts were made to obtain at least a tacit agreement with petty criminals (Tetrault-Farber 2013). Unfortunately, little is known about the situation of poor or homeless people in the face of the Games before and immediately after World War I. During the London Games in 1908, suffragists fighting for women's voting rights disrupted some competitions (Miller

2012: 72). On July 20, 1924, The Daily Telegraph reported that the French authorities planned to rid the streets of Paris of beggars and small souvenir dealers called “pests”. The games ended in this city a week later. However, the text does not directly refer to this mega-event, so it is unclear whether it was the reason for these actions.

In 1936, the Games were organised by the Third Reich. Less than a year earlier, the Reichstag had introduced the Nuremberg Laws. Under them, just before the Games, a camp was created in the Marzahn district of Berlin, to which 600 Roma and Sinti were deported just over two weeks before the opening ceremony (Walters 2008: 192). The laws above officially outlawed Jews, so even though attempts were made to cover up anti-Semitic signs from public spaces during the Games, they were still an openly persecuted group. The Berlin authorities also tried to clear the streets of beggars. Over 1.4 thousand of them were arrested in June 1936 and placed in the House of Forced Public Works, while prostitutes were banned from entering the central part of the city (Walters 2008: 192).

In Helsinki in 1952, homeless people were concentrated in underground shelters, access to which was restricted before the Games due to fear of losing their reputation (Pääkkönen, Marjomaa 2022). Interestingly, they were forced to live on the streets and beaches. The city authorities preferred that people experiencing homelessness be visible in public spaces rather than in overcrowded and cramped underground shelters.

Before the 1964 Olympics, the Tokyo police carried out intensified actions against pickpockets. Also, they persuaded local gangs to send their members (yakuza), who appeared to be repulsive, out of the city during the Games (Tomizawa 2020). They also liquidated unhygienic and discreet-looking houses and relocated vagrants (Iwata 2021: 100).

Second period: 1976–2024

In 1975, the actions of the Montreal authorities in connection with the upcoming Games were primarily aimed at the LGBT+ community. Although homosexuality had been decriminalised by the Criminal Law Amendment Act seven years earlier, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) raided gay and lesbian bathhouses, clubs and bars not only in Montreal but also in Ottawa and Toronto (Kinsman, Gentile 2009). According to journalistic accounts from that period, these actions had the character of a coordinated plan to cleanse the country before the Games. Opposition to these actions was an impetus for the faster development of organisations dealing with the rights of LGBT+ people. Additionally, the Montreal police also extended detention stays for alcohol addicts. Those arrested stayed there 6 to 8 times longer, thanks to which they were less visible on the streets of the Olympic city during the games (ibid).

Four years later, the Games were organised by Soviet Moscow. Alcoholics, beggars, prostitutes, petty thieves and the homeless, known by the acronym *бомж* ([IPA: bomʂ] – *a person without a permanent residence*), were deported 101 kilometres from Moscow (MacWilliams 1997). Taking care of the city's image contributed to eliminating people who were considered untrustworthy on the streets (Will 2018). The cleansing of the city also affected the Jews (Booth, Tatz 1994: 18).

In Los Angeles in 1984, the local Police Department (LAPD) searched the area around the Memorial Coliseum Stadium to get rid of drug dealers, gangs and homeless people (Felker-Kanotr 2017). The latter, along with the addicted and mentally ill, were woken from sleep by a particular mounted police formation and chased away from the city centre (Leon 1984). Press reports show that the games in Los Angeles were also used to intensify actions against poor Afro-Americans and Latinos, and homeless people – arrested under the established ban on using the streets for overnight stays – were placed in detoxification centres, having previously thrown away their belongings (Chandler 2018).

The time before the Games in Seoul was used to cleanse the city of homeless people, addicts, beggars, vagrants and mentally ill people who, after being arrested, were sent to prison camps, where some of them were held temporarily (COHRE 2007: 92–93). Small street traders were also banned from operating (Monbiot 2007).

Before 1992, the Barcelona authorities developed a plan to remove prostitutes, beggars, fraudsters and street vendors from the city. Attempts were made to move them to less touristy parts of the Catalan capital. Roma families also experienced evictions as they were dispersed and tried to assimilate with the local population in new places (Monbiot 2007).

Atlanta, where the centenary of the Olympic Games was celebrated, was a city burdened with racial segregation. Creating the image of a modern and, above all, racism-free centre was one of the local government's priorities. In 1995, 9,000 people were arrested (often without specific reason) – homeless people, mainly Afro-Americans (Monbiot 2007). Socially excluded people left their previous places of existence on their own due to the harassment they experienced from the security services (Beaty 2007: 32). The homeless and the disadvantaged were given free one-way tickets as long as they did not try to return. The court finally banned this practice two days before the Games' opening. However, no assistance programs or housing were offered to those who benefited from free removal from Atlanta. They were carried to cities such as Birmingham, Alabama and Chattanooga, Tennessee (Butler 1996).

Before the second Olympic Games in the Antipodes in 2000, negative actions from the authorities were mainly experienced by homeless people (including many Aborigines), mentally ill people and minors (COHRE 2007: 135). However, these were not activities on such a large scale as during the previous Games.

The first Summer Games of the 21st century returned to Greek soil. The actions of the Athenian authorities, on a smaller scale, focused on drug addicts, applying for asylum, homeless people and beggars (Smith 2004). However, it is estimated that 2,700 Roma families were evicted as a result of preparations for the Games, which ultimately worsened their already difficult situation (COHRE 2007: 146; Watts 2008).

Four years later, the Games found themselves in the communist reality of the People's Republic of China. To present Beijing in an appropriate and positive light, the head of the Organizing Committee ordered the city to be cleansed of beggars, prostitutes, homeless people and door-to-door vendors. Despite assurances that such activities should be carried out in a "civilised manner", arrests also affected people engaged in unregistered activities (e.g. taxi drivers) (Watts 2008). The repression also affected hairdressing salons and karaoke clubs, which were also places where prostitutes worked (Watts 2008). The Beijing authorities also planned to hospitalise mentally ill people, and captured vagrants or beggars were sentenced to the so-called "re-education through work", for which the Chinese penal system is famous (Monbiot 2007).

However, the return of the Games to democratic soil in 2012 did not result in a break with the authorities' previous actions towards excluded people. Just like four years earlier, the streets were "cleared" of prostitutes (mainly in London's Soho) and homeless people (Boyes 2012). Actions against the latter were carried out, among others, as part of "Operation Poncho", which involves making it difficult to spend the night on the streets. For this purpose, people sleeping there were woken up in the middle of the night and forced to seek help from the services (Benjamin 2008). They, in turn, sprayed water on places favoured by the homeless, preventing them from returning and sleeping there (Benjamin 2008). The next move of the London authorities was the introduction of "Non-Sleep Zones" and confiscating alcohol (Boyes 2012). The operations, clearly assessed by organisations supporting the homeless as controversial, were consistent with the announcements made by the then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, in 2009 (Boyes 2012). The British government also pressured the capital's streets to be free of people sleeping there until the games (Benjamin 2008).

The 2016 Olympic Games were held for the first time on the continent of South America. Famous for its colossal poverty districts – *Favelas* – while preparing for this major sporting event, Rio de Janeiro became a place of arrests focused primarily on minors (especially people experiencing poverty and those with different skin colours) (Da Agência Brasil 2016). They were subjected to interrogations even if they had not committed any offence. This practice was part of the "sanitisation" of the city, which was condemned by 26 institutions working for excluded people (Da Agência Brasil 2016). Entire favelas or their fragments were also demolished, depriving the houses of their previous inhabitants.

The Games in Tokyo, marked by the pandemic and postponed for a year, were preceded by the eviction of homeless people from the places they occupied near the Olympic facilities, mainly the Olympic Stadium (the Asahi Shimbun 2021).

The 2024 Olympic Games will be held in Paris for the third time. When writing the article, the French capital was in the process of preparations, and the media reported government plans to close homeless camps and relocate them (David 2023). Officially, these activities have nothing to do with the Games but only as a response to relieving the city and supporting homeless people (David 2023).

3. Discussion

Of the 30 summer editions of the Olympics, information was collected about 19 of them. The collected data shows that behind-the-scenes activities, essentially the responsibility of city authorities, focus on cleaning the city space from the so-called street people intensify during the preparations for the Games, reaching a climax just before the opening ceremony. From groups affected by social exclusion directly related to public spaces, such as streets, parks, squares, etc., homeless people were most likely to experience arrests, roundups or evictions (13⁵). This may be related to the visibility of these people on the streets. They do not operate there only at specific times of the day (like drug dealers or prostitutes), but their life revolves around a selected part of the street throughout the day. Subsequently, such actions were aimed at beggars (8) and prostitutes (6). People with an addiction (both alcohol and drugs) were taken off the streets during preparations for the five Olympic Games. Table 1 shows the frequency of repressive actions against other excluded groups during selected Olympic Games.

Due to different sources, social or political contexts, and more or less intense journalistic (but also authors of other sources) activity, most data may give the impression of randomness regarding the frequency of occurrence. It is worth emphasising, however, that they are not exhaustive, and the state of knowledge on this subject may expand with access to new sources previously unavailable virtually. Due to these activities' unofficial or hidden nature and the situation in a given country, journalists could not always describe their problems to all excluded groups. Analysing the collected material, it is also clear that the country's political system does not determine the frequency of actions taken by city authorities. Their distribution was similar in cities in communist countries (Moscow 1980; Beijing 2008) and democratic countries (Los Angeles 1984; Seoul 1988).

Over the years, the word "actions" has been mentioned many times and has covered various ways to remove people representing marginalised social groups from public space (which theoretically belongs to everyone). Due to their

⁵ The number of cases is given in brackets, where one case means one Olympic Games.

behaviour and/or appearance, these people do not correspond to the idea of a positive image of the city. The homeless, vagrants and prostitutes remind the city of its problems, unresolved conflicts, imperfect social programs and human tragedies. By showing the incompetence of the city machine, they destroy the propaganda image of a place that is supposed to host tourists worldwide. Depending on the country, such actions were mainly in the form of (a) criminalisation of the homeless, involving unjustified arrests, subsequent interrogations and detention (including extension of the duration of stay); (b) making it difficult to function in a selected space (e.g. spraying water on places of accommodation, closing places that are so-called covers for prostitutes, raids on LGBT+ clubs); (c) forced relocation, including permanent resettlement to the outskirts or outside the city; (d) intensifying the work of law enforcement services against people violating applicable law. In extreme cases, repressed groups were forcibly placed in labour and extermination camps (Berlin 1936) or penal centres (Beijing 2008), where they were subjected to “re-education through work”. It is also worth adding that in some situations described, activities were carried out as part of special programs or projects not officially related to the organisation of the Games but intensified during this period.

The Olympic Games not only pushed city authorities to fight against socially excluded people unjustifiably but also – and it is worth emphasising – engaged their defenders. Unlike legal law enforcement services, such activities were conducted under challenging conditions. In the case of Los Angeles in 1984, people experiencing homelessness were informed and equipped with the necessary knowledge in the face of organised resettlements. In turn, before the 2000 games, Aborigines were encouraged to use the event to draw attention to the problems of social inequality not only in the country but also in sports (Booth, Tatz 1994: 18). Organisations dealing with the protection and rights of people on the margins of society also mobilised in protests to organisations such as the UN against violations in the run-up to the Games.

The problem of clearing the city of street people is not only concerned with the Summer Olympics. Such or similar actions targeting marginalised groups living on the streets also took place before the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 (Booth, Tatz 1994: 18) and the Toronto Economic Summit in 1988 (Lenskyj 2000: 64) or the FIFA World Cup, including in 2010 in South Africa (Kiddle 2010) and in 2018 in Russia (Stewart 2018). This proves that the beautification of urban space by clearing it of marginalised groups has its source in the activities of city and/or state authorities and is not related to the institution of the mega event itself, regardless of whether it is of a sports, cultural or economic nature. Institutions such as the IOC, FIFA and UEFA advocate inclusion, cooperation and mutual respect in their strategies, reflected in their publications (e.g. Olympic Charter), programs (e.g. UEFA Respect Campaign, FIFA No Discrimination Campaign) and competitions. (e.g. on banners and slogans). These events,

constituting a kind of catalyst for the region's development, both in terms of infrastructure, economy and image, motivate the hosts to make not constantly ethical moves, the results of which are not available in official reports but only through press reports and independent scientific publications.

City authorities should focus even more intensively and carefully on the problem of excluded people, not treating them as unnecessary elements who have fallen outside the social system. As Sztumski (2012: 53) writes, they are still part of the social structure, although it has a different character – so they do not orbit in the void around a functioning society but still belong to it. Entering into dialogue with non-governmental organisations is as crucial as turning to the “street people” themselves. Learning about their needs and problems and understanding their perspective can positively affect the entire community. City authorities can, in turn, activate people affected by exclusion through sport. Research shows that practising team disciplines and participating in competitions help to overcome difficult life situations (Olszewski-Strzyżowski 2018: 111–115). Sports help provide emotional support and overcome social barriers, but – as the author mentioned above points out – the interest of city authorities or sponsors in this topic is still negligible (Olszewski-Strzyżowski 2018: 111–115).

The lofty idea of equal opportunities, cooperation and mutual respect accompanies the Summer Olympic Games. However, each party organising the Games has its own goals and interests. This is an excellent opportunity for the city to promote its brand and attract the attention of potential tourists, entrepreneurs and new residents. However, the projected vision usually does not correspond to reality, and the decorated streets hide unwanted problems. Behind them are people who experience social exclusion due to various factors: poverty, maladjustment, breaking the law, disease, addictions, non-standard behaviour, sexual orientation, etc. Before the Olympic Games, they suffered from double exclusion, as they were deprived of the opportunity to participate in this sports festival and, therefore, in all its dimensions. The beautified streets, full of people from the farthest corners of the world, are not accessible to the poor or homeless who live there every day. The analysed data indicate that before the Games – regardless of the region, culture or state system – activities aimed at marginalised groups were intensifying and removing them from urban space (incredibly valuable for tourism). This means that every city struggles with similar problems, the solutions of which are still far beyond the reach of urban communities.

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