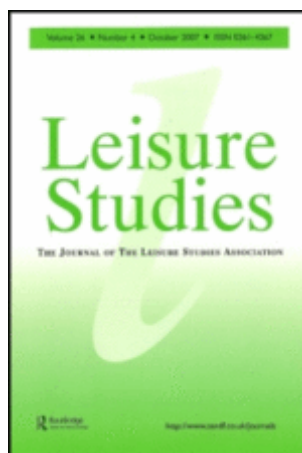


“This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis Group in Leisure Studies on 06/12/2019, available online: <http://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2019.1698648>”



### Event bidding and new media activism

Journal:	<i>Leisure Studies</i>
Manuscript ID	RLST-2019-0220
Manuscript Type:	Special Issue Paper
Keywords:	event bidding, new media activism, Boston 2024, Olympics

SCHOLARONE™  
Manuscripts

## Abstract

In this article we draw upon three case studies of American cities bidding to host the Summer Olympic Games to explore the role media, particularly new media, plays in the formation of anti-bid protest movements. Using data gathered from in-depth interviews with leaders of several activist campaigns and a content analysis of related websites and social media accounts, the paper demonstrates the increasing role new media plays in enabling resistant movements to form and articulate messages oppositional to boosterist coverage of mega sport event bids. However, it also highlights the limits of such new media activism in terms of both reach and capacity to effect change in isolation. Rather, the paper demonstrates that new media activism is at its most potent when it links and interacts with other actors, including legacy media outlets. The paper therefore concludes by highlighting the need for connectivity to both legacy media and physical acts of resistance and protest in order to generate meaningful impact and generate change.

**Keywords:** event bidding; new media activism; Boston 2024; Olympics; protest

## Introduction

In recent years, public concern over the role played by mega sport events (MSEs) in skewing urban development priorities (Müller, 2015; Broudehoux & Sanchez, 2015), violating human rights (Horne, 2018), and providing the environment for corruption and poor governance to flourish (Hover et al, 2016) has increased. This concern has been accompanied by increased evidence of protest and dissent around bidding, planning and delivery processes for the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup, in particular (Lauermann, 2015, Lauermann & Vogelpohl, 2017; McGillivray & Turner, 2017). Expressions of protest and dissent have gone together with the hosting of MSEs for decades, but these have primarily been concerned with the planning and delivery stages, as opposed to the bid phase itself. However, since the mid-late 2000s, there has been a growth in activist activity around the bid process for MSEs, which has led to a reduction in candidate cities bidding for the Olympic Games between 2022 and 2028 as well as the FIFA World Cup of 2026. The increased visibility of bid activism has coincided with the emergence of new media platforms which have been used successfully to garner support, mobilise opposition and amplify dissent to MSE bids.

In this paper, we draw upon three case studies surrounding bids from American cities for the Summer Olympic games and consider the importance of the media in MSE bid activism, reflecting on the role of 'legacy' media, historically, and the role (and limits) of new media in the professionalisation of opposition that now accompanies these mega spectacles. We also consider the extent to which bid protests interact with more conventional forms of opposition, making use of the urban landscape to express discontent. The paper is guided by a desire to question the role new media plays in protest movements surrounding peripatetic sporting mega-event bids and how such new media interacts with both legacy media and other forms of protest and activism. The paper demonstrates that new media activism plays an increasingly prominent role in the protest movements surrounding sporting mega-events. Increasingly, with each bid

1  
2  
3 cycle, such activism plays a part earlier in the protest movement and has greater reach when  
4  
5 employed. However, as the cases examined here also highlight, despite this amplified role and  
6  
7 reach, such activism is most effective when integrated with both traditional legacy media and  
8  
9 as part of a broader campaign of protest and resistance.  
10  
11

### 12 **Legacy media, boosterism and bidding**

14  
15 Historically, the mainstream media has played an important role in making the case for  
16  
17 a city or nation bidding to host one of the world's MSEs. The broadcast and print media worked  
18  
19 closely with the civic boosters responsible for conceiving of the bids to get the message out  
20  
21 early, with good news stories focused on the economic benefits of city X hosting the Olympic  
22  
23 Games or FIFA World Cup. Walmsley (2008) has suggested that bid committees understand  
24  
25 that influencing media coverage is arguably the most effective way to influence public opinion  
26  
27 on the value of a bid. Furthermore, Waitt (2001) has suggested that the media played a  
28  
29 significant role in the 'propaganda exercise' of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games bid, seeking  
30  
31 to imbue social consensus through the vehicle of spectacle. He highlighted how the  
32  
33 promotional campaign accompanying the bid resembled a product launch, backed by  
34  
35 mainstream media 'partners'. Lenskjy (2010, 2012), a long-term critic of what she calls the  
36  
37 'Olympic Industry', has also highlighted how the 'terms of the debate' are framed by Olympic  
38  
39 boosters and their media partners, leaving those most affected by the proposed bid invisible  
40  
41 and powerless. She holds the mainstream media culpable for signing up to support bids,  
42  
43 creating friction between two roles:  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49 as objective reporters of the Olympic Games and as participants in 'Olympic Spirit'  
50  
51 promotional events. Similar conflicts existed when major television networks,  
52  
53 newspapers and sport magazines paid millions of dollars for the honour of calling  
54  
55 themselves Olympic suppliers, donors, sponsors and/or rights holders (Lenskyj, 2010,  
56  
57 p.376).  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6 In signing up to 'back the bid', mainstream media partners have compromised their  
7  
8 ability to represent the views of dissenting voices, including activists, human rights defenders,  
9  
10 community representatives and critical elected representatives (Shaw, 2008). Securing the  
11  
12 rights to exclusive coverage of the MSE itself has led some mainstream media organisations to  
13  
14 prioritise potential circulation or viewership increases over scrutiny of bid promotional claims.  
15  
16 In a limited-option media environment, securing the support of a national or regional  
17  
18 broadcaster or high circulation newspaper provided bid committees with a powerful  
19  
20 mechanism to frame the narrative, emphasising opportunities over threats and creating, as  
21  
22 McGillivray & Turner (2017) highlight, a near hegemonic narrative that the bid in question is  
23  
24 a 'good thing' As Pavoni (2015) has suggested, civic boosters require event-generation to  
25  
26 arouse interest in the host locale for having an event, but they also need event-neutralization to  
27  
28 avoid reputationally-damaging expressions of opposition and protest. Managing the message  
29  
30 through partnerships with the mainstream media certainly provides an easy route to event  
31  
32 generation, represented in the now ubiquitous 'Back the Bid' campaigns. Having media  
33  
34 partners contribute to event generation also acts as a neutralising force as fewer column inches,  
35  
36 or broadcast minutes are given over to dissenting voices, in what McGillivray & Turner (2017)  
37  
38 call a 'denial of discursive space'.  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43

44  
45 One of the noticeable outcomes of the mainstream media denying discursive space to  
46  
47 oppositional interests is that their impact has been limited, in respect of their ability to prevent  
48  
49 MSE bids from going ahead. The diverse tapestry of interest groups, including those  
50  
51 representing women's rights, anti-poverty movements, disability rights and housing and civil  
52  
53 liberties protections has sought to contest MSE bid narratives but with limited success.  
54  
55 Watchdogs and anti-Olympics committees have been in existence since at least the 1968  
56  
57 Olympic Games in Mexico, though they have tended to be formed once the bid is won,  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 impacting on their ability to bring about much change. As Shaw (2008) suggests with reference  
4 to the unsuccessful No Vancouver 2010 movement, once the bid is successful the space for  
5 meaningful opposition is much more constrained. The mainstream media has, at times,  
6 provided a space where oppositional voices have been heard in event bidding campaigns – but  
7 the time and resources given over to dissenting voices has, historically, been much less.  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13

14  
15 There are at least two principal reasons why the relationship between oppositional  
16 movements and the mainstream media has been unsuccessful. The first relates to the quantity  
17 of coverage and the second to the timing of protest movements. In terms of quantity of  
18 coverage, in a pre-internet and social media age, there were simply fewer platforms available  
19 for oppositional movements to get their message out to a wider public. Control of the news  
20 agenda predominantly lay with broadcasters and the print media, who were courted by  
21 prospective bid committees from the inception phase. In terms of the temporal dimension,  
22 oppositional movements were often simply too late to (oppose) the party, often because those  
23 pro-growth coalitions initiating bids developed their thinking and garnered support from  
24 business and government away from the public glare. The significant work in establishing a  
25 bid committee prior to a mediatised launch and formal statement of the intent to bid itself  
26 creates a momentum which then becomes difficult to stop through subsequent protest. This is  
27 one of the reasons that Boykoff (2014) calls for oppositional groups to transition from a  
28 ‘moment of movements’ (often post-bid) to a ‘movement of movements’, where the politics  
29 come earlier – at the bid stage – if MSEs boosters are to be effectively held to account for their  
30 plans. In the case of the bid process for the 2024 Olympic Games, in particular, it appears that  
31 the idea of the politics coming earlier was evident, aided by the emergence of new media  
32 platforms that alter the power relations between bid promoter and potential audience. It is to  
33 this new trend that the paper now turns.  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

### **Changing the Modus Operandi: locally rooted, globally mediated**

Despite the conditions for public protest around MSEs being constrained, historically, since 2008 there has been a noticeable increase in both the number of oppositional campaigns in operation and, crucially, their modus operandi. Additionally, there is both a global and local element to these intimations of opposition that require further consideration. At the macro/global level, the legitimacy of MSEs (the Olympics and the World Cup, in particular) in achieving positive political, economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts has been subject to intense critique, since the 2008 Summer Games were awarded to Beijing (Boykoff, 2014; Coaffee, 2015; Raco, 2014). Central to this trend is a growing body of evidence, in academic, policy and activist/independent media circles, of the adverse effects generated by MSEs for a variety of, often vulnerable, publics (see, for example, O'Bonsawin, 2010, Watt, 2012).

Of principal concern to those people who oppose event bids is the false premise on which support is secured, the under-estimated costs and over-estimated benefits referred to by Whitson and Horne (2006). Prospective event hosts submit a bid book detailing the outcomes the sanctioning body can expect should they be successful in their application to host. Many commentators have likened the bid book for MSEs, in particular, to be a work of fiction (Müller, 2015), a glossy prospective for what a host might wish to do to transform its urban fabric and economic ambitions. And yet, back the bid campaigns invariably set out to secure public support without providing full information to those who will bear the brunt of the associated costs.

In recent years there has also been a change in the way opposition, dissent or protest towards event bids has been organised and mobilised, which is having some potentially significant impacts on the bidding process itself (what awarding bodies require) and on the practices of prospective host bidding teams, thereafter. No longer is it possible for a potential



1  
2  
3 host (in the advanced liberal democracies, at least) to attract powerful influencers externally  
4  
5 with promises of extravagant spectacles without having to account for this investment to an  
6  
7 increasingly skeptical, and social media savvy, public.  
8  
9

10 One important change is in the emergence of what we call a 'new media activism' in  
11  
12 relation to MSE bids, seeking to extend the reach and effects of protest or oppositional  
13  
14 movements. In terms of reach, the barriers to entry are much lower for campaigners in a new  
15  
16 social media-oriented environment than in its legacy media counterpart. While Shaw (2008)  
17  
18 bemoaned the power of the Olympic frame to prevent opponents from securing airtime on  
19  
20 mainstream media outlets during the Vancouver 2010 bid process, the availability of new  
21  
22 media platforms including Facebook and Twitter now provide near barrier-free access to  
23  
24 audiences, unimpeded by strict editorial guidelines, political and commercial interests. That  
25  
26 said, social media does not sit in a vacuum, separated from its 'mainstream' rival. Rather,  
27  
28 broadcast, print and online media outlets and are now deeply entangled with social media,  
29  
30 informing and influencing the agenda from within. Bid media partners still, in theory, dilute  
31  
32 the effects of new media activism through integrated multi-platform campaigns.  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

38 In terms of effects, the influence of new media activism on MSE bid processes stems  
39  
40 from several shifts evident in recent years. On the one hand, as legacy media (especially local  
41  
42 newspapers) lose market share, MSE boosters have lost what was historically an important  
43  
44 bullhorn. On the other hand, new media fosters new kinds of journalistic relationships which  
45  
46 activists can exploit, as detailed in the forthcoming case study of Boston. The involvement of  
47  
48 non-traditional media outlets like Around the Rings (ATR), GamesBid.com, Games Monitor,  
49  
50 and the Counter Olympics Network also contributes to a growing body of critical commentary  
51  
52 on bid campaigns that finds its way to mainstream media outlets.  
53  
54  
55

56 Moreover, the increasing presence of bodies with an interest in human rights and related  
57  
58 issues, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Centre for Sport and  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 Human Rights, and Transparency International further strengthens the case of oppositional  
4 movements and activists in effecting change around the bid process. These actors now  
5 frequently combine to draw attention to potential human rights abuses in prospective bid cities  
6 or nations and lobby governments, awarding bodies and others to hold bidders to account.  
7  
8 Crucially, they have become increasingly effective at media monitoring and applying pressure  
9 through concentrated campaigning strategies. Though the influence of these campaigns is  
10 difficult to assess, there is already some evidence that the main MSE actors are being forced to  
11 adapt their policies and practices because of the pressure exerted by advocacy organisations  
12 using a blend of legacy and new media platforms. Part of the bid process for the 2026 World  
13 Cup was a requirement to bid nations to include a human rights policy and provide  
14 governmental contractual guarantees akin to those related to financial matters. Advocacy  
15 organisations have also successfully lobbied FIFA to produce a policy that strengthens the  
16 protection of human rights defenders in host nations for the World Cup.

### 35 **Case study: US new media bid activism**

37  
38 In the remainder of this paper, we assess the growing role of new media activism by  
39 analysing the recent history of anti-Olympic activism in the United States. The US has a long  
40 Olympic bidding history. Since 1901, American cities have bid on Summer or Winter Games  
41 57 times (and have hosted nine), making the US the most frequent bidder in the history of the  
42 modern Olympics. Not surprisingly, there is also a long history of anti-Olympic protest in  
43 American cities (Burbank et al 2001, Cottrell & Nelson 2011). Lenskyj (2006), in an early  
44 piece on 'alternative media' highlights how since the turn of the millenium, such protests have  
45 engaged with the web as a tool for holding those in positions of power surrounding the Games  
46 to account. However, it is with the most recent American bids in Chicago (failed bid for the  
47 2016 Games), Boston (cancelled bid for the 2024 Games), and Los Angeles (successful bid for  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 the 2028 Games) that new media has played a significant role, making for an interesting case  
4 study. This recent activist history has included innovation in protest tactics, in which new  
5 media activism has supported new forms of coalition building and new types of relationships  
6 between media and civil society.  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11

12 We analyse this recent history using six in-depth interviews with leaders from activist  
13 campaigns in Chicago (No Games Chicago), Boston (No Boston Olympics, No Boston 2024),  
14 and Los Angeles (NOlympics LA), asking these representatives questions about their  
15 organising and media engagement strategies. We also conducted a qualitative content analysis  
16 of websites and social media accounts associated with these same organisations to assess the  
17 principal messages and mobilising tactics employed. Specifically, these included the Chicago  
18 campaign's website (<https://nogames.wordpress.com/>), the Boston campaigns' Facebook and  
19 Twitter accounts (@NoBosOlympics, @No\_Boston2024) and websites  
20 (<https://www.nobostonolympics.org/>; <https://www.noboston2024.org/>), and the Los Angeles  
21 campaign's Twitter account (@NOlympicsLA) and website (<https://nolympicsla.com>), and the  
22 Twitter accounts of 13 individual activists involved in the campaigns. We used these data to  
23 assess the role of new media in the professionalisation of opposition movements, focusing on  
24 how activists engaged with new and legacy media environments. We also analysed how these  
25 media practices facilitated coalition building with broader activist networks (both networks  
26 related to MSEs and to other urban political issues).  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

### 49 *Chicago*

50  
51 The protests against Chicago's bid for the 2016 Olympics provide an early example of  
52 new media activism, occurring in the early years of social media before its political power had  
53 been fully demonstrated. Developed between 2007 and 2009, the Chicago bid was relatively  
54 conventional by American standards. The bidders proposed a \$5.7 billion project involving a  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 variety of new and renovated venues along the city's waterfront, primarily financed by private  
4 sector investors (Chicago 2016 2008: vol. 1, pp. 117-121).<sup>1</sup> The bid promised to produce a  
5 number of general economic catalysts and to support sustainable development, in particular in  
6 low income neighbourhoods on the south side of the city.  
7  
8  
9  
10

11  
12 The bid experienced political backlash, however, over the question of whether the  
13 mayor should sign the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) standard host city contract.  
14 The host city contract is a template document, updated during each bidding cycle, which  
15 requires cities to make legal and financial commitments during the bidding and hosting stages.  
16 Until recent reforms (IOC 2018), the mayors of bidding cities were required to pre-emptively  
17 sign the contract as a pre-requisite to enter the bidding competition. One of the most  
18 contentious clauses in the contract was a commitment by the city to cover future cost overruns  
19 – a commitment which will almost certainly be invoked, given that every single Olympics since  
20 1960 has run over budget (Flyvbjerg et al. 2016). Under pressure from activists and members  
21 of the city council, Chicago's mayor initially refused to sign the contract, offering instead to  
22 purchase an insurance policy against cost overruns. The IOC bluntly rejected that approach,  
23 with the organisation's president insisting that "We have only one host city contract. There is  
24 no amendment to the host city contract whatsoever from the IOC." (Jacques Rogge quoted in  
25 Heinzmann & Blake 2009). The mayor eventually gave in to IOC demands and signed the  
26 standard contract, but Chicago's bid ultimately failed in the very first round of IOC voting.  
27 This, coupled with significant local concerns regarding the general lack of transparency and  
28 opportunity for public participation surrounding the bid (see Mowatt and Travis, 2015), led to  
29 the emergence of a sustained protest movement.  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52

53 The political backlash was inspired in part by a protest organisation called No Games  
54 Chicago. In the early years of the bid (2007 and 2008), several small-scale protest campaigns  
55  
56  
57  
58

---

59  
60 <sup>1</sup> All financial figures in the text are inflation adjusted to 2018 USD.

1  
2  
3 emerged surrounding isolated issues, for instance a neighbourhood campaign to protest impacts  
4 against Lincoln Park on the city's north side. These various protests later converged into a more  
5 coordinated No Games Chicago campaign, which ultimately asserted itself through a variety  
6 of activities up until the failure of the bid in October 2009. The protests encompassed a  
7 disparate range of themes, the most prominent of which was concern over municipal spending  
8 in the midst of the Great Recession. The anti-Olympic protest was closely linked to a critique  
9 of Chicago's uniquely authoritarian brand of municipal politics. The city's mayor at the time  
10 – Richard Daley Jr. – inherited control of Chicago's Democratic Party machine from his father,  
11 the legendary Richard Daley Sr. These two long-serving mayors consolidated significant urban  
12 regime power through 'the Daley machine' (Simpson & Kelly 2008), creating a tight-knit  
13 coalition of civic boosters including much of the city's legacy media. That mayoral coalition  
14 strongly backed the bid.  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30 No Games Chicago was able to gain ground in legacy media because they filled a niche  
31 within Chicago's political media. After a few months of organising events which received  
32 minimal media attention, they abruptly became legacy media's default source for critical  
33 commentary, because so few others were willing to challenge the mayor. As one No Games  
34 Chicago organiser explained, the bid received broad support from the city's boosters, including  
35 from legacy media:  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43

44 So originally the whole city is for the bid, all the newspapers were backing it, the media  
45 outlets. And it turns out that quite a few media outlets gave money and donated services  
46 to the bid, including CBS, Chicago Magazine, ABC and NBC, you know. The Chicago  
47 Tribune is owned at the time by a billionaire named Sam Zell, who was listed in the  
48 [bid's donor list] at the \$100,000 minimum level. So the owner of the Chicago Tribune  
49 was giving who knows how much money to the bid...The media buckles down and  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 everyone becomes a booster for the bid and it was very common and therefore the  
4  
5 opposition – the voice of opposition – has very little space.  
6  
7  
8  
9

10 However, that monopoly of pro-Olympic voices in legacy media helped to amplify the  
11  
12 voices of a relatively small protest campaign, as described in one anecdote from a No Games  
13  
14 Chicago organiser:  
15

16 We managed to shoe-horn into the media and started putting cracks in the armour. And  
17  
18 the more we did it, the more people would come to us [for interviews]. The third time  
19  
20 a local television station drove to my house to do a pickup for me in front of my home,  
21  
22 I asked the reporter ‘Look, I’m flattered that you’re seeking us out and you’re listening  
23  
24 to No Games Chicago, but isn’t there anyone else you can go to?’ And she said ‘No, no  
25  
26 there isn’t.’ I said ‘Well why is that?’ She looked at me and said ‘Well, because the  
27  
28 mayor has everyone terrified’. I said, ‘Isn’t that a story you’d like to cover?’ She looked  
29  
30 at me, she says, ‘Are you kidding me? I want to keep my job.’  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37

38 The activists thus received a much broader platform than their numbers would have  
39  
40 otherwise supported. They did this with relatively little use of new media. They published a  
41  
42 blog and maintained a Facebook group, but were not particularly active on social media (which  
43  
44 is perhaps unsurprising given the early state of social media platforms at the time).  
45  
46

47 Instead, No Games Chicago activists used more traditional methods gleaned from  
48  
49 attention, by protesting at public events and organising publicity stunts (see Mowatt and  
50  
51 Travis, 2015), following an approach similar to that identified by Gerbaudo (2012 p5) which  
52  
53 understands: “the crucial element in understanding the role of social media in contemporary  
54  
55 social movements is their interaction with and mediation of emerging forms of public  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 gatherings and in particular the mass sit-ins which have become the hallmark of contemporary  
4 popular movements”  
5

6  
7  
8 Two examples of this stand out. The first was a response to a bid initiative called ‘50  
9 wards in 50 days’. This was a public relations campaign in which the bidders organised a public  
10 meeting in each of the city’s neighbourhood wards. No Games Chicago sent protestors to each  
11 event and made themselves available to any reporters who happened to be in attendance. Their  
12 strategy was a simple one – to insert anti-Olympic talking points into the conversation through  
13 the public comment session:  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20

21 We were able to be at all those meetings and actually help. We had facts, we had people  
22 there, supporters who were able to help push the anti-Olympic agenda...And they [the  
23 bid organisers] ended up hating us so much. We were a real thorn in their side.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30  
31 A second example was a publicity stunt in which a group of protesters travelled to IOC  
32 headquarters in Switzerland and held a press conference while bid officials were meeting with  
33 the organisation. In June 2009, three activists used donated airline miles to fly to Switzerland.  
34 They printed copies of a ‘book of evidence’ composed of newspaper clippings and other  
35 research, and arrived at the IOC’s front gate requesting to distribute the books to IOC members  
36 in an effort to dissuade interest in Chicago. As one of the protest participants explained, the  
37 spectacle sparked the curiosity of journalists who were already at the location covering the  
38 event:  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49 And nationally it was a sensation. Nothing like this had ever happened before and we  
50 spent the next seven hours doing immediate follow up – updating websites, Facebook,  
51 answering questions, doing interviews from all over the world *except* Chicago. [original  
52 emphasis from the interview]  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 The Chicago press corps covering the event was less amused, and the activist described being  
4  
5 avoided by annoyed Chicago reporters covering the event:  
6  
7

8 We had one radio interview with public radio here in Chicago, but we were pretty much  
9  
10 blacked out. We were asked to comment by the reporter for the [Chicago] Tribune and  
11  
12 the [Chicago] Sun Times, but honestly, when we'd get into a story, it would be like two  
13  
14 sentences. I guess it's better than nothing, but I mean, we could never believe there was  
15  
16 never any profile on us. If the story had the Olympic bid with 10 paragraphs and we  
17  
18 had a sentence in there, that would be a victory for us.  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

24 These media strategies continued until the bid failed in October 2009, with Bennett et  
25  
26 al (2013, p374) ascribing part of this failure directly to “the lack of broad support among rank-  
27  
28 and-file Chicagoans for the Olympic bid”. After that, however, the activists intentionally  
29  
30 disbanded. One of the No Games Chicago founders explained that the campaign was built on  
31  
32 an ideologically diverse coalition of activists. They were able to maintain cohesion while  
33  
34 focusing on the bid, but once the bid failed the group's raison d'être dissipated. A handful of  
35  
36 activists remained loosely engaged in anti-Olympic politics, travelling to Vancouver and Rio  
37  
38 de Janeiro to speak at protest events. They have also communicated periodically (in person and  
39  
40 online) with activists protesting bids in other cities, but they mostly avoided joining in broader  
41  
42 international networks.  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

### 49 *Boston*

50  
51 The protests against Boston's bid for the 2024 Olympics offer an example of what is  
52  
53 arguably a successful application of new media activism. Developed between 2013 and 2015,  
54  
55 the Boston bid aimed to leverage the Olympics to manage the city's historically exceptional  
56  
57 growth. The bidders proposed a \$8.6 billion project involving a variety of temporary and  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 permanent venues, primarily financed through public-private partnerships (Boston 2024  
4 Partnership 2015, vol. 6). The bid promised to alleviate some of the pressure on the city's  
5 existing residential and commercial real estate markets, by building commercial and residential  
6 projects in relatively disadvantaged neighbourhoods on the south side of the city. The bid was  
7 also intentionally linked to broader planning initiatives, and was promoted as a rough draft for  
8 the city's 2030 master plan.  
9

10  
11  
12 As in Chicago, the bid experienced political backlash over the question of whether the  
13 mayor should sign the IOC's standard host city contract, thereby committing the city to cover  
14 cost overruns. In a post-Recession climate of fiscal austerity, the question of public subsidies  
15 was a politically toxic one. In an effort to preclude criticism, the bidders repeatedly promised  
16 that no public funds would be used to support operational or capital budgets (Kassens-Noor &  
17 Lauermaun 2018). This was questionable rhetoric from the start, because the bid plan assumed  
18 free or low cost acquisition of public land in inner city Boston (worth tens of billions of dollars  
19 if privatised) and relied on \$14.6 billion of public transit investments – investments which were  
20 approved through separate legislation shortly before the bid (Boston 2024 Partnership 2015,  
21 vol. 6). The public subsidies debate became especially heated when officials from the US  
22 Olympic Committee pressured the mayor to sign the host city contract; again, this was a  
23 necessary step before the IOC would consider the city's bid. As in Chicago, the mayor sought  
24 to avoid signing the contract by instead offering to purchase an insurance policy against future  
25 cost overruns. And just as in Chicago, Olympic officials flatly rejected the offer, providing the  
26 mayor with an ultimatum to sign the standard contract or cancel the bid. The mayor chose the  
27 latter option, withdrawing municipal support – and effectively killing the bid – in August 2015.  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55

56 The political backlash was coordinated by two protest organisations called No Boston  
57 Olympics and No Boston 2024. In the early stages of the bid (2014), No Boston Olympics  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 began organising a handful of activists – many of whom were not previously politically active.  
4  
5 The group began to attract public attention when more than a hundred people turned out for its  
6  
7 first public meeting in January 2015. No Boston 2024 emerged in parallel over the early months  
8  
9 of 2015, assembling a larger coalition of activists who were already engaged in local social  
10  
11 movements pertaining to issues like gentrification and homelessness. The two groups loosely  
12  
13 coordinated, though No Boston Olympics presented itself as a coalition of centrist  
14  
15 ‘establishment’ figures while No Boston 2024 adopted a more confrontational and explicitly  
16  
17 leftist position. The protests focused on three issues: the potential for cost overruns (and the  
18  
19 city’s fiscal exposure through the IOC host city contract), a lack of transparency in bid  
20  
21 planning, and concerns about the opportunity costs of hosting.  
22  
23  
24  
25

26  
27 The anti-Olympic campaign relied heavily on new media activism. This stemmed partly  
28  
29 from necessity: the city’s legacy media – in particular the *Boston Globe* newspaper – were firm  
30  
31 supporters of the bid, at least in the beginning. But new media also provided the protesters with  
32  
33 a strategic advantage, in the sense that they were better able to respond quickly to events in the  
34  
35 news and to generate online outrage. This provided a stark contrast to the public relations team  
36  
37 in the bid corporation, which was significantly less nimble when engaging on social media. As  
38  
39 one No Boston 2024 organiser put it,  
40  
41

42  
43 One thing that helped is social media, which we always used a lot. And it was always  
44  
45 interesting to see because Boston 2024 was very bad at it! An example I often like to  
46  
47 cite is when they accidentally told people to get inspired by Nazis [by tweeting about  
48  
49 the 1936 Olympics]. That was very easy to mock and we were hounding them for the  
50  
51 whole afternoon. I think it was something like eight hours afterwards that [a Boston  
52  
53 Globe journalist] ended up noticing. And when journalists – actual journalists – noticed,  
54  
55 Boston 2024 took it down.  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 In fact, social media was so central to the anti-Olympic protests that the mayor  
4 derisively referred to the protestors as “ten people on Twitter” (Clauss 2015), a small but loud  
5 cohort of keyboard activists accused of hijacking public debate through the sheer volume of  
6 their social media posts. Not surprisingly, a satirical #TenPeopleOnTwitter social media  
7 campaign emerged in response. Years later, a number of anti-Olympic activists still reference  
8 the hashtag in their social media profiles, and occasionally tweet with it to mock the mayor’s  
9 office on the anniversary of the bid’s cancellation (and in reference to other non-Olympic  
10 failures and scandals at City Hall).  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20

21 Beyond satire, the protesters employed two more serious – and arguably more impactful  
22 – forms of new media activism. The first was muckraking: sending out a flurry of FoIA requests  
23 for correspondence by public officials related to the bid, forwarding leads to a small group of  
24 legacy media journalists, and promoting those journalists’ stories on social media when a  
25 scandal broke. By providing informal background research for journalists already known to be  
26 writing critically about the bid, activists were able to expand the range of critical topics covered  
27 in legacy media. One activist explained that his FoIA requests were much broader than that of  
28 a typical journalist, for this very reason:  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39

40 It’s just such a useful strategy, because there’s only so much that journalists are going  
41 to do. Part of that is because you don’t want to use public records across your journalism  
42 [when] you can just ask a question. And then part of that is – if you’re a journalist and  
43 submitting a request – there’s normally knowledge of a specific document that you  
44 know about. Only one of my requests is targeted at something that I believe exists.  
45 Everything else is “I don’t know what’s there.” I don’t know what I don’t know and  
46 that’s what I want to find out.  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 The second form of new media activism was live-tweeting public hearings on the bid.  
4  
5 City and bid corporation officials held a number of public hearings in neighbourhoods that  
6  
7 would be impacted by the Olympics. The meetings generally followed a standard formula: the  
8  
9 meeting would be introduced by a sympathetic local official or celebrity, bid staffers would  
10  
11 present the same PowerPoint presentation at each hearing, and then they would answer  
12  
13 questions from the general public. Activists discovered a way to commandeer these otherwise  
14  
15 staid events, transforming them into virtual and in-person spectacles. Virtually, the activists  
16  
17 live-tweeted the events, posting hundreds of tweets per hour while hashtagging topics of local  
18  
19 concern and tweeting at journalists in local and national media. In person, activists would place  
20  
21 themselves in the queue for the public microphone, asking questions that diverted the hearings  
22  
23 toward topics related to anti-Olympic talking points. As one frequent participant in these  
24  
25 meeting protests explained, the strategy allowed activists to recruit likeminded citizens from  
26  
27 the general public:  
28  
29  
30  
31

32  
33 It's also a way of engaging with other people who were at the meetings, as well as  
34  
35 dispelling things in real time. It was useful because you can keep records of those  
36  
37 comments and then share with people who want to know but weren't there. You also  
38  
39 get things trending at times.  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44

45 Just as importantly, online commentary on real-world hearings was a way to shape  
46  
47 media coverage on those events:  
48

49 Influencing media coverage is one thing that social media helps to do. We have some  
50  
51 connections [to journalists], but social media is one thing that really helps to do that. It  
52  
53 helps you actually shape what the press is seeing by being at the community meetings.  
54  
55 We never expected the mayor or Boston 2024 to change, but you can make them look  
56  
57 bad to the press.  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

These media strategies continued until the bid was cancelled in August 2015. After that, the activists continued to engage with anti-Olympic protests in other cities. One founder of No Boston Olympics collaborated with a local scholar to write a book on anti-Olympic politics (Dempsey & Zimbalist 2017). Others met informally with activists in other bidding and hosting cities, for example Hamburg and Rio de Janeiro. Some of the digital resources they created were passed on to other campaigns (e.g. a No Boston Olympics database of Olympic research). But as in Chicago, the national and international reach of the campaign is somewhat unclear.

### *Los Angeles*

The protests against Los Angeles' plans for the 2028 Olympics provide an example of a campaign that did not fully form until after the city won its bid, but which has subsequently amplified to protest the planning process. After Boston cancelled its bid for the 2024 games in 2015, Los Angeles stepped in to become the American bidder. As other bidding cities dropped from the competition due to negative referendums or local protests, Paris and Los Angeles eventually emerged as the sole bidders for the 2024 games. Given the paucity of interest, in September 2017 the IOC made the unprecedented decision to award two Olympics in one bidding cycle: 2024 to Paris, and 2028 to Los Angeles.

Partly due to the complexity of the bidding cycle for the 2024 version, Boston's withdrawal, and successful promotion by city boosters of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games as a commercial success, there was minimal organised protest before the hosting contract was awarded to LA in 2017. The anti-Olympic coalition, NOlympics LA, emerged out of discontent with the US Presidential cycle in 2016. The left and centre left, supporters of Bernie Sanders, felt disenfranchised by the Democratic party. Alongside discontent with the existing party political system, a new political and activist movement, the Democratic

1  
2  
3 Socialists of America (DSA), grew in importance across the US. Tied to the DSA LA chapter,  
4  
5 current members of the NOlympics LA coalition had been campaigning since 2014/15 about  
6  
7 social issues including gentrification, wealth inequality, militarisation and endemic levels of  
8  
9 homelessness in LA. The proposed Olympic bid, supported by the ambitious but controversial  
10  
11 Democratic Mayor, Eric Garcetti, became a focal point for DSA activists, radicalising a broad  
12  
13 coalition of housing and homelessness organisations, Black Lives Matters activists and other  
14  
15 group concerned with racial justice. In early 2017 it became clear that a dual award for the next  
16  
17 Olympics was likely and Paris was the favourite to get the 2024 version. As one NOlympics  
18  
19 LA activist explained:  
20  
21  
22

23  
24 it wasn't really a question that LA would get 2028 so we found ourselves in a very  
25  
26 unique situation where we have 11 years to organise against this – which is different to  
27  
28 most other places  
29  
30  
31

32  
33 However, the unique nature of the IOCs decision also meant that the coalition of DSA  
34  
35 activists that became NOlympics LA was unable to stop the bid committee from being awarded  
36  
37 the 2028 games. There was a recognition that a new organisation was required if the 11 year  
38  
39 opportunity to halt the Olympics going ahead was to be a realistic proposition, though  
40  
41 maintaining close links to the DSA. As the NOlympics LA coordinator explained:  
42  
43

44  
45 It branched out from the (DSA's) homeless and housing committee to be launched on  
46  
47 May 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 – it became kind of its own thing, but still under the umbrella of DSA.  
48  
49 We then started going round all these groups and officially getting them to sign on to  
50  
51 our coalition and starting our press and social media awareness and presence and  
52  
53 agitation, and all that stuff. Then we started doing actions in the summer of 2017,  
54  
55 elevating our game.  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3                   Significantly, politically, NOlympics LA exploited its association with the national  
4 DSA movement, which differentiates it from other anti-Olympic organisations. It also  
5 recognises that it is part of a long-term political process that relies as much on power shifts  
6 within national and local politics as it does on the Olympic bid per se. In contrast to the other  
7 cases examined here, the Los Angeles protest therefore demonstrates greater coherence  
8 between protest in the spheres of new media, traditional local activism and a broader national  
9 movement. So, as the coordinator explains:

19                   Our approach was that we always thought it would be a several year process – a three  
20 to five year process to actually unseat and run out the bid, waiting for some other power  
21 shifts to happen. We don't have a lot of official political support though behind closed  
22 doors I think there's a lot of doubt and a power shift. Two of the 12 city council  
23 members who signed off on this are now out of the picture. And the math says that so  
24 many of these people are going to get termed-out and there's going to be an actual  
25 power shift dynamic happening in the next couple of years. And what separates us from  
26 other anti-Olympic movements is that we're part of a larger movement – we're part of  
27 a larger national organisation that consistently funnels new people to our organisation.  
28 There's no other anti-Olympic group that's trying to run politicians in three to five years  
29 – which is something our group is actively talking about.

47                   In terms of key messages, and narratives, NOlympics LA has focused on reaching local  
48 elected officials who originally voted for the bid, despite there being no budget agreed. They  
49 believe that the failure to undertake meaningful polling or agree on a budget is the weak spot  
50 of the bid committee which can be targeted. As the coordinator explains:

56                   I'm surprised they signed off on it without a budget which I think ultimately might be  
57 the flaw that undoes this whole thing. Because as you know the issue of taxpayer  
58

1  
2  
3 guarantee moves the most people across the political spectrum no matter what city or  
4 decade we're talking about...we've been doing a lot of research – power mapping  
5  
6 research across DSA on our locally elected and people hoping to be locally elected and  
7  
8 I think we can exert a lot of pressure and way more force on a council member than the  
9  
10 Mayor who is a lot more buffered, with more handlers and with more money, so he's  
11  
12 insulated.  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18

19 NOlympics LA generated grassroots funding to undertake polling on LA citizen's  
20 attitudes towards the bid in late 2018 and utilised legacy and social media to communicate the  
21 results. Their objective was to generate credibility, change the conversation, cast doubt and  
22 capture the attention of mainstream media outlets. With only one newspaper, the LA Times,  
23 existing in LA, information about the Olympic bid and post-bid planning has been scarce. The  
24 bid committee has money, influence and establishment power which enables it to purchase  
25 broadcast TV and radio ads but NOlympics LA has been effective at using the strength of its  
26 coalition, access to a national organisation and an integrated media strategy to cast doubt on  
27 the claims of the bid committee. Their organising has taken physical and online forms,  
28 depending heavily on direct action and classical activist tactics, accompanied by creative  
29 digital and social media activity. One of the best examples of their direct action was in  
30 December 2018, when they ambushed Mayor Garcetti's address at UCLA on the 70<sup>th</sup>  
31 anniversary of the publication of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. As the coordinator  
32 explains:  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50

51 So we effectively shut his whole speech down in a way that had never happened before.  
52  
53 I think that direct action gets the goods. Doing stuff in real life is still the most important  
54 thing. And it's the hardest thing to do in a culture and an economy where we're crushed  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 by capital. The LA Times covered our action and bunch of other sites too. I think the  
4  
5 press coverage was fair and people online were really excited about it.  
6  
7  
8  
9

10 Striking a balance between direct action, on the ground, and exploiting the affordances  
11  
12 of new media online has been crucial to the activities of NOlympics LA, with the intention of  
13  
14 being more nimble, versatile and responsive than the bid committee machine. This strategy  
15  
16 was carefully crafted to generate as much attention as possible and be viewed as credible:  
17  
18

19 we like to make sure we have a lot of balance to what we're doing. So we never have  
20  
21 too much online just being snarky or attacking people, or just agitating. Or just making  
22  
23 videos or podcasts. We also have a big teaching and screening series where we're  
24  
25 physically in communities – because LA is so sprawled out and dispersed that it's red  
26  
27 lined and segregated and it's sprawling and we're organising against that too.  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32

33 In a similar vein to Boston, social media activity has been deployed to agitate, share  
34  
35 information and, perhaps most crucially, garner the attention of other media outlets that can  
36  
37 take their messages to new audiences, in and outside of LA. For example, after publishing their  
38  
39 citizen poll in late 2018, they successfully generated coverage in New York Times, Deadspin  
40  
41 and Sports Illustrated and some other big national media brands. This credibility is also  
42  
43 associated with their expertise on the Olympics, transnationally, something the mainstream  
44  
45 media struggles to replicate. As the coordinator explains:  
46  
47  
48

49 We also found out through that process (the poll) just how uninformed most journalists  
50  
51 were – whether on the sport side or sport justice or even on the housing side – how  
52  
53 unequipped were to talk about these things or compare these things or deal with these  
54  
55 things with nuance and that's because newsrooms have been so drastically  
56  
57 underfunded.  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

Finally, though unsuccessful at stopping the bid from going ahead, NOlympics LA has actively benefitted from collaboration with a broader international anti-Olympic movement and continues to inform other prospective bidders about effective strategies and tactics to contest bid committees. Early on in the process they talked to and visited campaigners in Boston, Tokyo and Paris. They have also participated in discussions about strengthening anti-Olympic solidarity, in person and online. As the coordinator explains:

They [the Olympics] didn't plan for having a more threaded together, international, transnational movement and I think that's where this is headed and I hope we can put those pieces together. I think in the next year you'll see some more direct actions where we'll be in different parts of the world, shooting some films and doing different actions in addition to strategic meetings. You'll also find other groups covering these issues like Around the Rings, Gamesbids.com. We've even talked about the idea of a shared collective space where oppositional movements to the Olympics, internationally, might host their content, including past bid/host cities. The stories never really end.

In sum, NOlympics LA has a very clear, long term strategy to unsettle the bid committee, cast doubt on their claims and exploit a shift in local and national US politics to suspend LA's Olympic candidacy. Classic direct-action tactics, complemented with online agitation and information circulation, has produced some short-term success but it remains unclear as to whether this activity can be sustained and with what effect on the planning and delivery process itself.

## Conclusion

1  
2  
3 In conclusion, the recent history of anti-Olympic protest in American cities  
4 demonstrates the growth – but also the limits – of new media activism for contesting MSEs. In  
5 Chicago, activists experimented with new media but largely focused their efforts on gaining a  
6 foothold in legacy media otherwise monopolised by Olympic boosters. In Boston, activists  
7 aggressively deployed new media to facilitate coalition building and develop mutually-  
8 beneficial relationships with the press. In Los Angeles, activists lost the bid but have since  
9 sought to use direct action, mediated via new media channels to undermine preparations for  
10 the 2028 Olympic Games, on the basis that fact checking, polling and information circulation  
11 will pressure city leaders to suspend their hosting plans. Across these recent cases, new media  
12 has allowed activists to circumvent the legacy media monopoly over public debate and  
13 Olympic boosters' monopoly over local legacy media. It has facilitated the growth of networks  
14 of protest and enabled otherwise marginal voices to combine and amplify, countering the  
15 boosterist legacy media coverage of bids. However, the case studies above also demonstrate  
16 that there are significant limits to the political influence of new media activism. On its own,  
17 keyboard activism may generate significant noise but does not necessarily change policy.  
18 Instead, it is clear from this analysis, that new media activism is more likely to be successful  
19 when combined with a broader urban politics, embedded within existing political parties or  
20 social movements, and speaking to broader urban debates (over housing, gentrification, fiscal  
21 responsibility, etc.). Similarly, it is most likely to succeed when aligned to more traditional,  
22 albeit critical, media outlets which can provide a wider mainstream audience and legitimacy  
23 for its critical discourse.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## References

- Bennett, L., Bennett, M., Alexander, S. and Persky, J., 2013. The political and civic implications of Chicago's unsuccessful bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 37(4), pp.364-383.
- Boykoff, J. (2014). *Activism and the Olympics: Dissent at the Games in Vancouver and London*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Broudehoux, A-M & Sanchez, F. (2015). The politics of mega event planning in Rio de Janeiro: contesting the Olympic city of exception. In: Viehoff V and Poynter G (eds) *Mega Event Cities: Urban Legacies of Global Sport Events*. London: Routledge, 109-123.
- Burbank, M. J., Heying, C. H., & Andranovich, G. (2000). Antigrowth politics or piecemeal resistance? Citizen opposition to Olympic-related economic growth. *Urban Affairs Review*, 35(3), 334-357.
- Chicago 2016 (2008) *Chicago 2016 Candidature City*. Chicago: Chicago 2016 Inc.
- Clauss, K. (2015, July 27) Mayor Walsh: Boston 2024 opposition is 'ten people on Twitter'. *Boston Magazine*. Retrieved from [www.bostonmagazine.com/](http://www.bostonmagazine.com/)
- Coaffee, J. (2015). The uneven geographies of the Olympic carceral: From exceptionalism to normalisation. *The Geographical Journal*, 181(3), 199-211.
- Cottrell, M. P., & Nelson, T. (2011). Not just the Games? Power, protest and politics at the Olympics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 17(4), 729-753.
- Dempsey, C., & Zimbalist, A. (2017). *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch*. University Press of New England.
- Flyvbjerg, B., Stewart, A., & Budzier, A. (2016). *The Oxford Olympics Study 2016: Cost and cost overrun at the games*. Said Business School Working Papers (University of Oxford)
- Gerbaudo, P., 2012. *Tweets and the Streets*. London: Pluto Press.
- Heinzmann, D. & Blake, D. (2009, June 28) Daley's verbal gymnastics. *Chicago Tribune*.

1  
2  
3 Retrieved from [www.chicagotribune.com/](http://www.chicagotribune.com/)  
4

5 Horne, J. (2018). Understanding the denial of abuses of human rights connected to sports  
6 mega-events. *Leisure Studies*, 37(1), 11-21.  
7

8  
9 Hover, P., Dijk, B., Breedveld, K., & van Eekeren, F. (2016). *Integrity and Sport Events*,  
10 January. The Netherlands: Muller Institute.  
11

12  
13 International Olympic Committee (2018, February) *Olympic Games: the New Norm – Report*  
14 *by the Executive Steering Committee for Olympic Games Delivery*. Retrieved from  
15 [www.olympic.org/](http://www.olympic.org/)  
16

17  
18 Kassens-Noor, E., & Lauermann, J. (2018). Mechanisms of policy failure: Boston's 2024  
19 Olympic bid. *Urban Studies*, 55(15), 3369-3384.  
20

21  
22 Lauermann, J. (2015). Boston's Olympic bid and the evolving urban politics of event-led  
23 development. *Urban Geographies*, 37(2), 313-321.  
24

25  
26 Lauermann, J., & Vogelpohl, A. (2017). Fragile growth coalitions or powerful contestations?  
27 Cancelled Olympic bids in Boston and Hamburg. *Environment and Planning A*, 49(8), 1887  
28 1904.  
29

30  
31 LA 2024 (2016) *Stage 3 Candidature Questionnaire*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles Candidate  
32 City Olympic Games 2024.  
33

34  
35 Lenskyj, H.J., 2006. Alternative media versus the Olympic Industry. *Handbook of sports and*  
36 *media*, pp.205-216.  
37

38  
39 Lenskyj, H. (2010). Olympic impacts on bid and host cities. In V. Girginov (Ed.), *The*  
40 *Olympics: A Critical Reader*, London: Routledge.  
41

42  
43 Lenskyj, H. (2012). *Best Olympics Ever?, The Social Impacts of Sydney 2000*. New York:  
44 Suny Press.  
45

46  
47 McGillivray, D., & Turner, D. (2017). *Event Bidding: Politics, Persuasion and Resistance*,  
48 London: Routledge.  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

- 1  
2  
3 Müller, M. (2015). The mega-event syndrome: why so much goes wrong in mega-event  
4 planning and what to do about it. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 81(1), 6–17.  
5  
6  
7 O'Bonsawin, C.M., 2010. 'No Olympics on stolen native land': contesting Olympic  
8 narratives and asserting indigenous rights within the discourse of the 2010 Vancouver  
9 Games. *Sport in society*, 13(1), pp.143-156.  
10 Pavoni, A. (2015). Resistant legacies. *Annals of  
11 Leisure Research*, 18(4), 470-490.  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17 Raco, M. (2014). Delivering Flagship Projects in an Era of Regulatory Capitalism: State-led  
18 Privatization and the London Olympics 2012. *International Journal of Urban and Regional  
19 Research*, 38(1), 176–197.  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24 Rasul A. Mowatt & Jhatayn Travis (2015) Public participation, action, and failure: A case  
25 study of the 2016 Olympic bid, *Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure*, 38:2, 249-267,  
26  
27  
28 Shaw, C.A. (2008). *Five Rings Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games*, British  
29 Columbia, Canada, New Society Publishers.  
30  
31  
32  
33 Simpson, D., & Kelly, T. M. (2008). The new Chicago School of urbanism and the new  
34 Daley machine. *Urban Affairs Review*, 44(2), 218-238.  
35  
36  
37  
38 Waitt, G. (2001). The Olympic Spirit and civic boosterism: The Sydney 2000 Olympics,  
39 *Tourism Geographies*, 3 (3), 249-278  
40  
41  
42  
43 Walmsley, D., (2008) Sport Event Bidding: A strategic guide for bidders and sports property  
44 owners. London, Sport Business Group Limited  
45  
46  
47  
48 Whitson, D. & Horne, J (2006). The Glocal Politics of Sports Mega events: Underestimated  
49 costs and overestimated benefits? Comparing the outcomes of mega sport events in Canada  
50 and Japan, *The Sociological Review*, 54, Supplement s2, 71–89.  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60