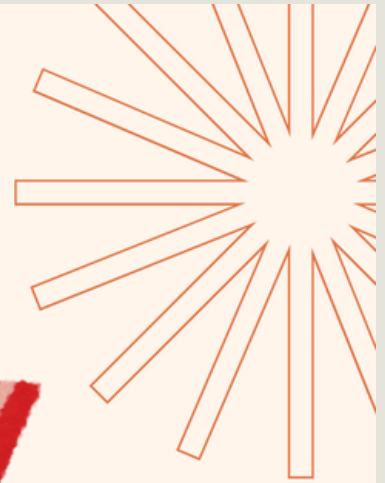


Cacher les Pauvres: Neoliberal Urbanism, Class Cleansing, and the Olympics

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December 2025



“Cacher les pauvres” – To hide the poor.

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to the people whose guidance, generosity, and encouragement made this project possible. First and foremost, I extend my sincere appreciation to my faculty supervisors, Madeline Wander, Karla Peña, and Martha Matsuoka, whose steady support carried me through the most demanding phases of this work. Their willingness to meet during evenings and weekends, to read drafts, and to challenge me toward sharper thinking and clearer writing ensured that this project could become what I hoped it would be. I am profoundly fortunate to have learned from mentors so committed to thoughtful, justice-oriented scholarship.

I am equally indebted to the faculty and staff in the Urban & Environmental Policy Department, notably Claire Cahen, Sylvia Chico, Mike Bonin, and Regina Freer, whose teaching has shaped not only my academic development but also the political and ethical commitments that drive my desire to do this type of work. Their relentless enthusiasm for critical inquiry continually pushes me to approach urban issues with rigor and imagination.

My heartfelt thanks also go to all of my interviewees. Each offered their time, insight, and experience in exchange for no recognition or reward, but only out of a genuine inclination to contribute to a pressing and consequential conversation. This project could not exist without their commitment to illuminating truths that are too often obscured.

Finally, I owe an enduring debt of gratitude to my brother, Avery. His influence on my intellectual upbringing, especially his insistence on scrutinizing power with skepticism, has shaped the foundation of how I think, write, and engage with the world. This work is, in many ways, an encapsulation of that relationship.

Introduction & Context

The Olympic Games are typically marketed as opportunities for urban renewal that will have a universally positive impact on the local population, regardless of income. Closer examination, however, reveals a pattern of precarious outcomes for low-income urban residents. Host cities launch ambitious **'redevelopment'** efforts in preparation for the Games centered around both practical infrastructure upgrades and the idea of **'beautification'** of public space (Sánchez & Broudehoux, 2013). In the context of mega-events like the Olympics, 'redevelopment' refers to the large-scale transformation of urban space undertaken to prepare for or capitalize on the event, which is a process that can reshape neighborhoods, transportation networks, and land-use patterns. These supposed upgrades demand some urban space to be deemed as 'in-need of improvement,' a notion that precludes the demolition of low-income housing, increased policing of public space, and the implementation of policies that prioritize global image over the material needs of poor and working-class residents (Rocha & Xiao, 2022; Davey, 2024; Nicolau & Shin, 2017). These patterns are part of a global trend in which cities embrace **'neoliberal'** planning models, where privatization, market deregulation, and capital attraction take precedence over social welfare (Harvey, 1989).



Woitak, J. (2024, August 2). Olympic rings on the Eiffel Tower [Photograph]. Getty Images.



Samson, T. (2023, December). Demonstrators at Sacré-Cœur protesting impacts of the Paris Games [Photograph]. AFP via Getty Images.

Regardless of the host city, research shows that **Olympic planning has disproportionately harmed low-income and marginalized residents including children, the elderly, and unhoused populations who are evicted, forcefully displaced, or priced out of their neighborhoods** – these outcomes are often shaped by speculative real estate investment and pressures to accommodate an influx of tourists (Suzuki, Ogawa, and Inaba, 2017). Existing legal frameworks in host cities fail to adequately protect residents' housing rights, or they are selectively enforced to not hinder gaudy redevelopment goals (Mahon, 2007).

This case study examines how Olympic-driven redevelopment affects the rights of poor and marginalized residents to exist in host cities; it situates the Olympics within global trends of gentrification and housing commodification and considers how communities have resisted these changes through protest, community land trusts, and legal challenges. This study offers insight into how future Olympic host cities can pursue more equitable urban planning and how resistance movements can organize to help realize those outcomes.

To investigate these dynamics across different host cities and contemporary Olympic cycles, this study employs a qualitative, multi-source research approach that brings scholarly analysis into conversation with insights from experts spanning Los Angeles and Paris, including two community organizers, a labor organizer, a municipal housing policy expert, and an elected official. These interviews provide grounded accounts of how decision makers, advocates, and practitioners understand the mechanisms and consequences of Olympic-led redevelopment. Their perspectives help illuminate how policy changes, security expansions, and development pressures are interpreted by those working closest to these issues, offering a critical bridge between structural patterns identified in the literature and the institutional and political contexts that shape them. This integrative approach allows the study to trace the political-economic logics of Olympic urbanism while attending to how these dynamics are perceived and contested by actors engaged in shaping or resisting redevelopment.

Prior Research & Background

This examination of existing literature on Olympic-driven displacement, over-policing, and housing commodification explores how these dynamics express a push to remake urban environments according to neoliberal economic and political ideals, along with the material impacts this has on host-city residents. The review considers protest, land trusts, and policy advocacy to provide examples of how communities have effectively responded to efforts to transform space, which offers a lens into emerging strategies for organizing in favor of more equitable city planning. Many studies of mega-events have documented increases in policing in low-income communities, forced evictions, or short-term rental proliferation independently from one another, but **this case study seeks to synthesize these elements as interconnected processes that reinforce systemic inequality.** In doing so, it provides critical context for understanding how Olympic redevelopment functions as a form of class restructuring, where the built environment is reorganized to privilege capital accumulation, wealthy residents, and tourists while displacing its most vulnerable residents.

I. The Olympics as a Tool of Neoliberal Urbanism

In “From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism” (1989), David Harvey describes *the entrepreneurial city* as one in which urban governance shifts from providing services for residents to aggressively pursuing economic growth through competition, place-marketing, and government partnerships with private capital. Within this logic, hosting mega-events such as the Olympics becomes a strategic tool: the spectacle attracts investment and global visibility while giving city officials a powerful justification for large-scale redevelopment. Coupling Harvey’s framework with Noam Chomsky’s concept of “manufacturing consent” helps to contextualize the Olympics as an agent to help produce public support, or at least reduce opposition, for these projects that primarily serve capital accumulation for business interests and wealthy tourists at the expense of local communities (Chomsky & Herman, 1988).

The Games have historically presented developers and city officials with an opportunity to bypass ordinary planning procedures and fast-track projects that might otherwise face grassroots political resistance (Jones & Ponzini, 2018). As a result, urban planning becomes event-led, prioritizing flagship districts, visitor-oriented infrastructure, and rapid redevelopment, often to the detriment of long-term social needs and more democratic planning processes (Wolfe, 2022). Again, these tactics are fundamentally neoliberal, centering the ultra-commodification of space to stimulate maximal flow of private capital.

Some documented examples are as follows: in preparation for the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio, **22,059 families** residing in the area of development projects for the Games were “systematically displaced” between 2009 and 2015, where individuals residing on property desired by the government and private construction companies were forced to relocate, often “more than 60 kilometers” from their original residency (Crout, 2018).



Chiba, Y. (2016). *Maria da Penha amid the rubble of Rio's Vila Autódromo near the Olympic Park* [Photograph]. AFP/Getty Images.

Suzuki, Ogawa, and Inaba (2017) similarly document how preparations for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics involved forced removals of poor tenants in stadium-development zones – one of the most prominent examples was the demolition of the Kasumigaoka housing complex, where residents faced, “irresistible pressure [...] as if they were required to sacrifice themselves for the ‘national policy.’ One resident of the complex reported, “They are absolutely forcing us out. **They never listen to the voices of the poor and old**, and we are robbed of our ‘home’” (Suzuki, Ogawa, and Inaba, 2017).



Gittel, T. (2013). *Kasumigaoka Apartments, Tokyo, Japan* [Photograph].



Michelena, L. (2017, May 26). *Entrance to the Indiana community, where homes were demolished ahead of the Rio Olympics* [Photograph]. Associated Press.

Parallels to this strategy were historically observed in Seoul (1988), where 'city beautification' schemes justified demolishing neighborhoods by redefining existing residential areas as 'substandard' settlements or 'slums,' designations which were followed by the forced clearance and demolition of poor people's houses and informal settlements (Mahon, 2007; Davis, 2011). Preparations for the Seoul 1988 Olympics ultimately involved the destruction of **48,000 buildings**, displacing **720,000 people** (Mahon, 2007). Comparably, Olympic-related development in Beijing for the 2008 Games displaced an estimated **1.25 million people** (Mahon, 2007).



Yonhap. (1987, April). *Displaced residents of Sanggyedong protest the demolition of their homes in Seoul* [Photograph]. Associated Press / New Jersey Herald.

One major displacement mechanism in the 21st century is the rapid increase in the prevalence of short-term rentals, particularly through platforms like Airbnb. In case studies of New York and Los Angeles, Allen (2017) and White & Thor (2024) demonstrate how unregulated short-term rental markets reduce the supply of long-term housing and inflate rental prices. Though these trends are not always directly linked to the Olympics, they are often exacerbated by the influx of tourists and speculative investment that accompany mega-events. Kontokosta (2012) provides more empirical evidence that **Olympic host cities experience significant, uneven increases in housing prices, particularly near new development zones**, that is driven by both global speculation and targeted rezoning strategies.

Spatial policing and the increased securitization of public areas have become standard operating procedures in Olympic planning. In Sydney (2000), legislation aimed at controlling public conduct and extending enforcement powers to municipal rangers and private security guards resulted in an escalation of surveillance and police powers (Mahon, 2007). Kennelly and Watt (2011), studying the Olympics in Vancouver (2010) and London (2012), reveal how **host cities implement aggressive policing strategies that systematically exclude marginalized youth from public spaces**. Further, they argue that heightened surveillance and anti-loitering enforcement effectively redefined the urban core as a sanitized zone designed for tourists and corporate interests.

Ludvigsen and Byrne (2024) found that this “securitized gentrification” is especially harmful to children’s rights, as the conversion of public spaces into commercialized, controlled zones eliminates safe, accessible environments for play, learning, and community formation. Researchers worry that the increased use of algorithms in predictive policing during mega-events, trained on racially biased police data, creates a pipeline for a prolonged increase in the surveillance of vulnerable communities (Boykoff, 2016).

In conjunction with heightened data-driven policing practices, **the criminalization of visible poverty functions as a primary strategy to achieve the neoliberal urban environment**. Olympic host cities frequently implement intensified policing measures that disproportionately target vulnerable populations (Mahon, 2007).

Bans on sleeping in public spaces, removal of informal shelters, and heightened surveillance are common weapons that cities deploy to systematically erase signs of poverty in an effort to project an image of modernity (Freiler & Holden, 2012; Kennelly & Watt, 2011). The result is the displacement of unhoused populations that render them invisible, both physically, in the sense that they are unseen by wealthy populations and tourists, and politically, such that their ability to publicly organize, disrupt, or resist, is hindered. This process often involves the implementation of punitive legal and policing measures that effectively makes homelessness illegal within designated urban areas (Rocha & Xiao, 2022).

For the Atlanta 1996 Games, ordinances were introduced to help police public space, such as making it illegal to be in a parking lot without a car – this ordinance facilitated the clearing of unhoused residents, giving the impression of a ‘clean’ city (Boykoff, 2016). **9,000 arrest citations** were issued to people experiencing homelessness in downtown areas leading up to the Olympics in Atlanta, **sometimes using mass-produced citations pre-printed with demographic information like “African-American, Male, Homeless”** (Mahon, 2007).

Ahead of the 2010 Vancouver Games, the passage of the controversial *Assistance to Shelter Act*, dubbed the “Olympic Kidnapping Act,” granted police the authority to remove individuals deemed “at risk,” a tactic further reinforced through aggressive ticketing for minor public-order infractions (Rocha & Xiao, 2022).

In Rio (2016), security preparations included the use of Pacification Police Units (UPPs) to quell violence in favelas (informal settlements of low-income people), a practice described as an internal colonization program that inherently militarizes public space and reinforces the stark divide between favela dwellers and the rest of Rio (Gaffney, 2015). Privately contracted security guards, too, were tasked with shipping homeless individuals out of touristic parts of Rio to remote shelters, a process that one resident explicitly likened to **“removing trash”** (Barbassa, 2015; Talbot, 2016). These “hygienization” policies defined groups like the black population and favela residents as “out of place” in the elite environment, associating the word “clean” with removal, segregation, and even violence (Boykoff, 2016; Kennelly & Watt, 2011).

Aggressive social restructuring of this kind is intrinsically tied to the underlying shift in urban governance toward “entrepreneurialism,” which prioritizes attracting external investment and speculative development over meeting residents’ basic economic needs (Harvey, 1989; Rocha & Xiao, 2022). This process aligns with the theoretical concept of “accumulation by dispossession,” wherein privatization and rising land speculation transfer resources from marginalized groups to the wealthy, often facilitated by opaque public-private partnerships (Harvey, 1989; Boykoff, 2016; Rocha & Xiao, 2022). The imposition of a competitive, sanitized urban image onto existing neighborhoods constitutes an act of “symbolic violence,” leading many low-income residents to perceive the resulting infrastructural and socio-spatial changes as fundamentally exclusionary. (Davey, 2024; Kennelly & Watt, 2011; Watt, 2013).



Hui, S. (2010). *Anti-Olympics organizers in Vancouver fighting for social housing and anti-poverty policy* [Photograph].



Marshall, P. (2012). *Carpenters Against Regeneration Plans (CARP) protester outside London City Council meeting* [Photograph].

II. Contesting the Olympic City through Resistance

Communities have resisted Olympic-driven displacement through legal action, policy reform, and collective ownership models, mitigating redevelopment pressures with strategies ranging from local campaign groups and broad coalitions to creative public-awareness actions (Mahon, 2007).

In London (2012), Carpenters Against Regeneration Plans (CARP) organized “The Unofficial Gentrification Tour” to draw critical attention to the “REAL Olympic Legacy” (Watt, 2013). This campaign challenged regeneration plans tied to the 2012 Olympics, resisting demolition and the associated loss of social housing by establishing a **Community Land Trust (CLT)**, where land is held by a community organization and removed from speculative markets to secure long-term affordability and democratic control (Watt, 2013). As Read et al. (2025) argue, this effort represented a form of “slow opposition” to the “slow violence” of speculative development that won permanently affordable housing rooted in collective land ownership. Its victories were limited in scale, only encompassing 23 homes at its inception, but it demonstrates a model of post-neoliberal planning grounded in community control.

In Atlanta (1996), clergy, activists, and unhoused residents formed the *Olympic Conscience Coalition*, which developed the 'Olympic Conscience Agenda' to demand protections for housing and civil rights (Mahon, 2007). Legal resistance also played a central role for these Games, with advocates filing multiple lawsuits — *Williams v. City of Atlanta*, *Richardson v. City of Atlanta*, *Atchinson v. City of Atlanta*, and *Osborn v. City of Atlanta* — to challenge city ordinances that criminalized homelessness before and during the Olympics (Mahon, 2007).

Policy-centric resistance strategies challenging the hold of short-term rentals on the residential housing market has relevance to Olympic-planning, though the following examples are not linked directly to mega-events in their respective cities. Allen (2017) and White & Thor (2024) show that in Los Angeles, enforcement gaps and policy loopholes have allowed Airbnb to continue extracting long-term housing for tourist consumption. Gyódi (2019) shows that enforcement and data sharing, not just licensing restriction, drove significant reductions in Airbnb listings in Barcelona as grassroots frustration grew over the mounting increase in short-term rental units across the city.

The Honolulu Vacancy Tax Report (2020) offers another example of a policy response to speculative vacancy, often linked to short-term rentals, proposing taxation to encourage the return of empty units to the market; this is an approach that could be applied in post-Olympic cities grappling with distorted housing markets.

Street protests and organizing, too, have played a significant role in resistance efforts. During the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, thousands marched through downtown in a broad coalition led by Indigenous elders, chanting "**No Olympics on stolen Native land**" in order to visibly disrupt the opening ceremony; the protest brought together social justice activists, environmentalists, and anti-poverty groups to challenge the narrative of a celebratory Games while highlighting Indigenous dispossession and inequality (O'Bonsawin, 2009; Fenton, 2010). Activists in Vancouver also engaged in direct action by establishing the Olympic Tent Village on development land to challenge gentrification and the criminalization of homelessness, demonstrating "more creative tactics" that break traditional protest rituals (Boykoff, 2016).

In Rio, ahead of the 2016 Games, residents and advocates coalesced to condemn the violent removal of unhoused children and families, a move Monico (2016) criticized as image-management rather than social policy. Finally, in Tokyo, the activist group *Hangorin-no-Kai*, rooted in the city's unhoused community, used creative, "playful" protest tactics (i.e., parody, cardboard models) to contest stadium-area redevelopment and to express resistance to evictions and privatization of public parks ahead of the 2020 Olympics (Andrews, 2020).

III. Synthesis

Forced evictions, securitized public space, market-induced displacement, and the criminalization of visible poverty function as coordinated tools of **class-cleansing**, or the systematic removal of poor and working-class residents to remake urban space in ways that privilege wealthier populations, investors, and global spectators. **Each strategy reinforces the other: displacement frees up land for speculative development; securitization protects elite enclaves; short-term rentals extract profit while pricing out locals; the criminalization of homelessness attempts to make it such that none of this is publicly challenged.** Prior research reveals that Olympic-driven redevelopment systematically restructures urban space to prioritize capital accumulation and global image over local welfare, producing intertwined processes of displacement, securitization, and housing commodification. While existing research documents these harms and highlights instances of community resistance, there is a gap in synthesizing these strategies across diverse host cities to understand how resistance might reshape mega-event driven urban governance. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the interconnected mechanisms of Olympic-led transformation alongside the varied forms of organized opposition, providing insight into pathways for more equitable and socially accountable urban planning.



Court, C. (2021, August 6). Protesters near the main Olympic Stadium in Tokyo [Photograph]. Getty Images.

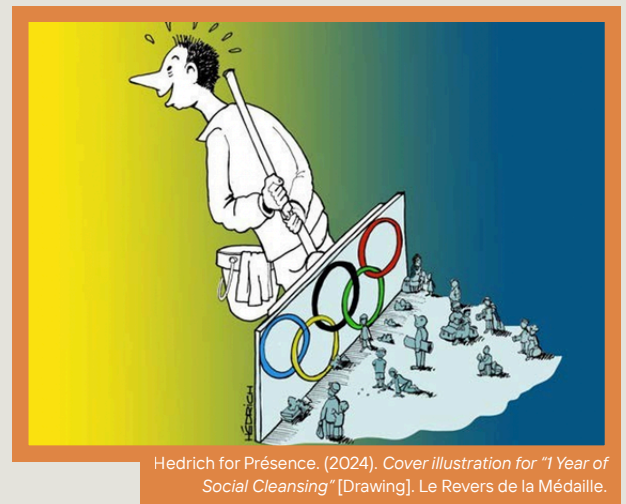


Fong, P. (2021, July 23). Protester against the Tokyo 2020 Olympics [Photograph]. AFP via Getty Images.

Research Design & Methods

This case study utilizes a qualitative research design to investigate if and how the Olympics are used as mechanisms of neoliberal urbanism that displace poor and working-class residents. The research focuses on recent Olympic cycles – specifically, Paris 2024 and the current period leading up to Los Angeles 2028, as case contexts to identify both recurring patterns and locally specific variations in displacement, securitization, speculative development, and resistance. To analyze results and identify findings, I conducted: 1) a textual discourse analysis of policy documents, academic scholarship, NGO and advocacy-organization reports, and media/investigative journalism, and 2) five semi-structured interviews with community organizers, policymakers, and scholars in housing policy and urban planning using an interview protocol designed to elicit multi-faceted perspectives on the topic (see Appendix).

Some of the textual evidence that I examined includes an inter-association report by *Le Revers de la Médaille* (a Parisian collective that organized against Olympic-driven redevelopment before the 2024 Games), quantitative data and censuses on evictions and sweeps in Paris leading up to the 2024 Olympics, journalistic reports from both French & American media organizations, and a United Nations Press Release on human rights violations leading up to the Paris Olympics. I analyzed the interviews using qualitative thematic analysis in which transcripts were coded for recurring patterns related to displacement, securitization, and community resistance to center recurring themes and develop case-specific conclusions. This qualitative data collection and analysis allowed me to investigate the underlying political-economic logic that governs Olympic-driven redevelopment and to examine strategies that have emerged to contest these logics.



Findings

I. Public Safety

a. Policing

Interview subjects re-affirmed that Olympic planning is closely tied to intensified policing, where host cities dramatically expand law enforcement presence and adopt militarized tactics justified by the narrative of hosting a global event. These shifts are found to lead to long-term transformations in urban governance and social control.

One interviewee, the mayor of a small city outside of Paris during the 2024 Games, spoke to the proportions of policing deployed in the city at the time:

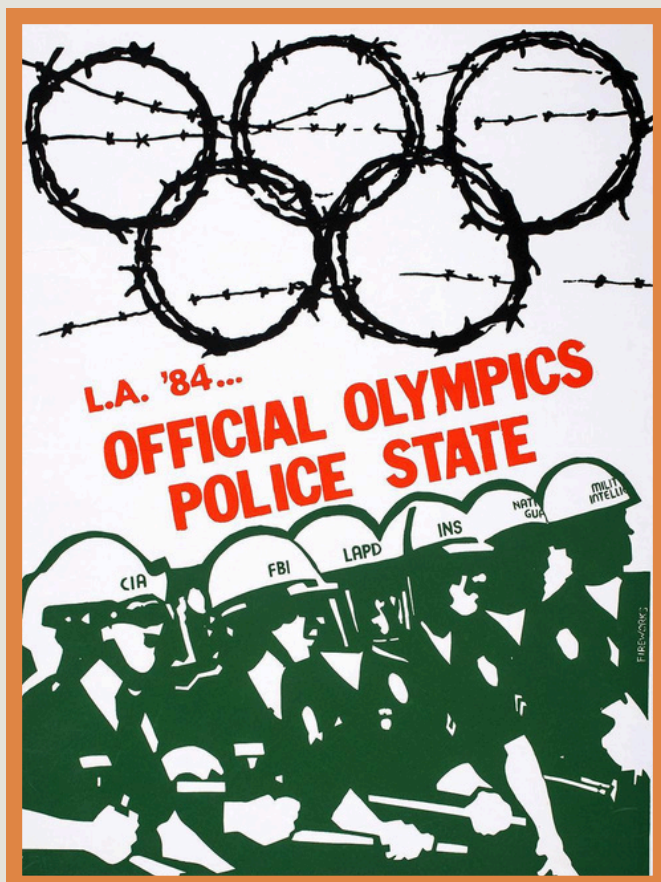
“During the Olympics, security reached its highest levels — around 45,000 officers in Paris. In comparison, a large demonstration usually brings about 7,000 to 10,000 police. So that’s four to five times more, which is unprecedented [...] Another important point: many foreign officers also participated.”



Euler, M. (2023, October 17). Police officers patrol the Trocadéro plaza near the Eiffel Tower in Paris [Photograph]. AP News.

The extreme variance in law enforcement presence in Paris underscores how the Olympics enable an extraordinary escalation in policing, both in scale and composition, that far exceeded the city's usual security practices. Another interviewee, a community organizer in Los Angeles specializing in Olympic-related resistance, noted the following:

*"The LAPD wants to hire 3,000 more cops for the Olympics, and of course, they won't fire them afterward, so that's **3,000 more [officers] on the streets permanently.** [...] The Olympics always lead to hyper-police militarization and an increase in police funding. We saw this in LA '84, when a huge influx of police into South Central, initially just for the Games, continued on afterward, creating the conditions that eventually led to the Rodney King beating and uprising a few years later."*



Oscharoff, S., & Statsinger, J. (1984). L.A. '84 [Silkscreen, 19" x 25.25"]. Los Angeles Collective.

This work critiques the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics' policing, depicting barbed-wire Olympic symbols above a line of police, labeled with federal and local agencies. It references the militarized "gang sweeps" in South Central and East L.A. that targeted Black youth, many of whom were never charged, and the subsequent institutionalization of aggressive policing.

A labor organizer in Los Angeles also found the 1984 Olympics in L.A. to be historically notable, describing how, “events like the 1984 L.A. Olympics led to the transfer of military-grade weapons to LAPD, which were later used in the War on Drugs.”

Together, interviewees illustrate how hosting the Olympics coincides with dramatic surges in policing that far exceed ordinary security practices, often involving unprecedented numbers of officers and, in the case of Paris, international reinforcements. Participants emphasized that these expansions are not temporary: **police hiring sprees and militarized tactics introduced “for the Games” typically persist long after the event, reshaping everyday governance and surveillance.** Historical accounts of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics further show how mega-events accelerate the transfer of military-grade equipment and punitive policing strategies that subsequently become embedded in local law enforcement.

b. Surveillance

Hosting the Olympics results in an escalation of the reach of surveillance in public spaces driven by the introduction of tools for the Games that intend to catch “predetermined events” or “unusual crowd movement” (Mahon, 2007; Rueckert, 2024). Multiple interviewees noted the **National Security Special Event (NSSE)** designation that the Olympics trigger, which, according to the National Lawyers Guild, “allows federal and local authorities to impose excessive security measures that limit the ability of people to assemble and express grievances” (Yoder & Tempey, 2013).

One interviewee stated the following with respect to the NSSE designation in Los Angeles ahead of the 2028 Games:

“That’s something [Mayor Karen Bass] signed onto, and it brings in coordination between the Secret Service, DHS, LAPD, ICE, and others. So while [President] Trump could technically send ICE into any city, the NSSE designation formalizes that collaboration.”



van der Hasselt, G. (Photographer). (2023, December). *Protesters demonstrate against surveillance measures related to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games* [Photograph]. AFP/Getty Images.

They further stated that, “We’ll see facial recognition technology from companies like **Palantir** and **Archer Aviation**, firms with deep military ties. The Olympics are often used to *showcase* and *sell* these technologies, which are tested abroad and then brought back to the U.S.” Another participant described that there will be, “TSA-style body scans, not just required to enter the venue, but potentially several blocks out into the adjacent neighborhoods. That would mean that anyone who lives and works there is going to have to go through a TSA-style screening just to get into or exit their home.” He warned that these security practices will be, “**quite draconian.**”

The interviewee governing a French city near Paris in 2024 reported that, “Leading up to the Games in Paris, there was a heated debate in the National Assembly and the Senate about introducing temporary AI-based video analysis to detect potential threats: weapons, suspicious behavior, and possible terror risks. The proposal made sense on paper. It was temporary, starting one day before and ending one day after the Games, limited to specific neighborhoods, and meant purely for safety.” He followed, “From what I know, the system was deactivated after the Olympics.”

However, Ruecker (2024) has reported that the political will to keep expanded surveillance tools in place exists in the highest levels of the French government and its security apparatus; Michel Barnier, Prime Minister of France in the months immediately following the Olympics, promised in his initial agenda proposal to the National Assembly that, “We will generalize the [security] methods experimented with during the Olympic and Paralympic Games.” Additionally, two weeks following the end of the Paralympic Games in Paris, the chief of Police in Paris at the time, Laurent Nuñez, declared himself “in favor” of extending the surveillance technology leveraged during the Olympics (Le Coeur, 2024). The head of advocacy at Amnesty International France, Katia Roux, delineated that, “there is a clear political desire to legalize this technology, and the Olympics were just a way to get a foot in the door” (Rueckert, 2024). These statements suggest that any post-Olympic continuation of intensified surveillance technology may be advancing through institutional channels that do not require public disclosure, making it plausible that expansions are already underway beyond official acknowledgment.



Guay, B. (Photographer). (2022, July 21). Laurent Nunez attends a handover ceremony with his predecessor as Paris police chief [Photograph]. AFP.

The Olympics are, “A feedback loop of policing and surveillance expansion, with each Games becoming a testing ground for the next generation of security innovation,” according to one participant. What this amounts to in practice is host-city residents being subjected to, without their consent, experiments for newly developed, increasingly intrusive surveillance technology, where the results are leveraged by governments across the world to more efficiently surveil their own populations.

The Olympics, therefore, serve as a powerful vehicle for expanding surveillance infrastructures and security partnerships that would be far more difficult to justify under ordinary political conditions, leaving host cities with lasting, and often troubling, legacies of intensified state monitoring and control.

c. Sweeps/Beautification

Olympic-driven preparation frequently includes “city cleansing” or “hygienization” efforts aimed at erasing the presence of marginalized populations deemed “out of place” (Kennelly & Watt, 2011). The unhoused population in Paris and the surrounding Île-de-France region has been significantly impacted by a process termed **“social cleansing”** leading up to the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games – this is a campaign that involves the harassment, expulsion, and invisibilization of people considered undesirable by public authorities, including refugees, unaccompanied minors, sex workers, and drug users (Le Revers de la Médaille, 2024; Willsher, 2024). A primary method for dispersal has been the creation of Regional Temporary Reception SAS (Situation Assessment Structures), which relocate highly vulnerable people, including exiles, far from Paris to other regions (Willsher, 2024). These relocations are often presented as the sole alternative to being on the street in the Île-de-France region (Le Revers de la Médaille, 2024). The increased use of hostile architecture, such as large concrete blocks installed beneath bridges, is another method deployed to prevent the unhoused from resettling in visible areas surrounding Olympic venues (Meaker, 2024).

For LA28, one interviewee argues that beautification efforts are a part of a larger effort, “to make LA into a sports capital for the wealthy,” and that the city plans to, “evict tenants, sweep unhoused people, and funnel public money into private profits,” in order to make it happen.

They continued, “Think QR codes residents must scan just to access their own homes, like in Paris. That’s especially alarming for unhoused or undocumented people who can’t ‘prove’ where they live. Within security perimeters, being unhoused will effectively be illegal, so there will be sweeps displacing people.”

Beautification agendas tied to the Olympics routinely operate as mechanisms of social exclusion, using the language of cleanliness and urban improvement to legitimize the removal, displacement, or concealment of those who do not fit the sanitized image that host cities seek to project.

II. Housing

a. Evictions/Displacement

Mega-events consistently accelerate displacement, resulting in forced evictions and urban gentrification (Watt, 2013; Ludvigsen & Byrne, 2024; Mahon, 2007). Displacement can be induced directly through demolitions or rent increases, or indirectly through a process referred to as “displacement pressure,” where neighborhood changes make an area progressively less livable for existing lower-income groups (Watt, 2013).

Leading up to 2024, the Parisian city government and French federal government made grand promises around urban mobility and environmental innovation that have both come up short and coincided with a sharp increase in evictions – in 2023-2024, ‘forcible eviction’ amounted to the displacement of **12,545 people**, including **3,434 children** and young people from the Île-de-France region from areas close to the Olympic athlete village; this represented a, “three-fold increase in the number of comparable evictions from the year 2021/22” (Ludvigsen & Byrne, 2024). Between April 2023 and September 2024, nearly **20,000 people** were forcibly displaced from informal housing in Paris, reflecting a 41% surge in similar eviction operations compared to the 2021-2022 period (Nouvian, 2024).

Squat evictions around Olympic sites in Seine-Saint-Denis

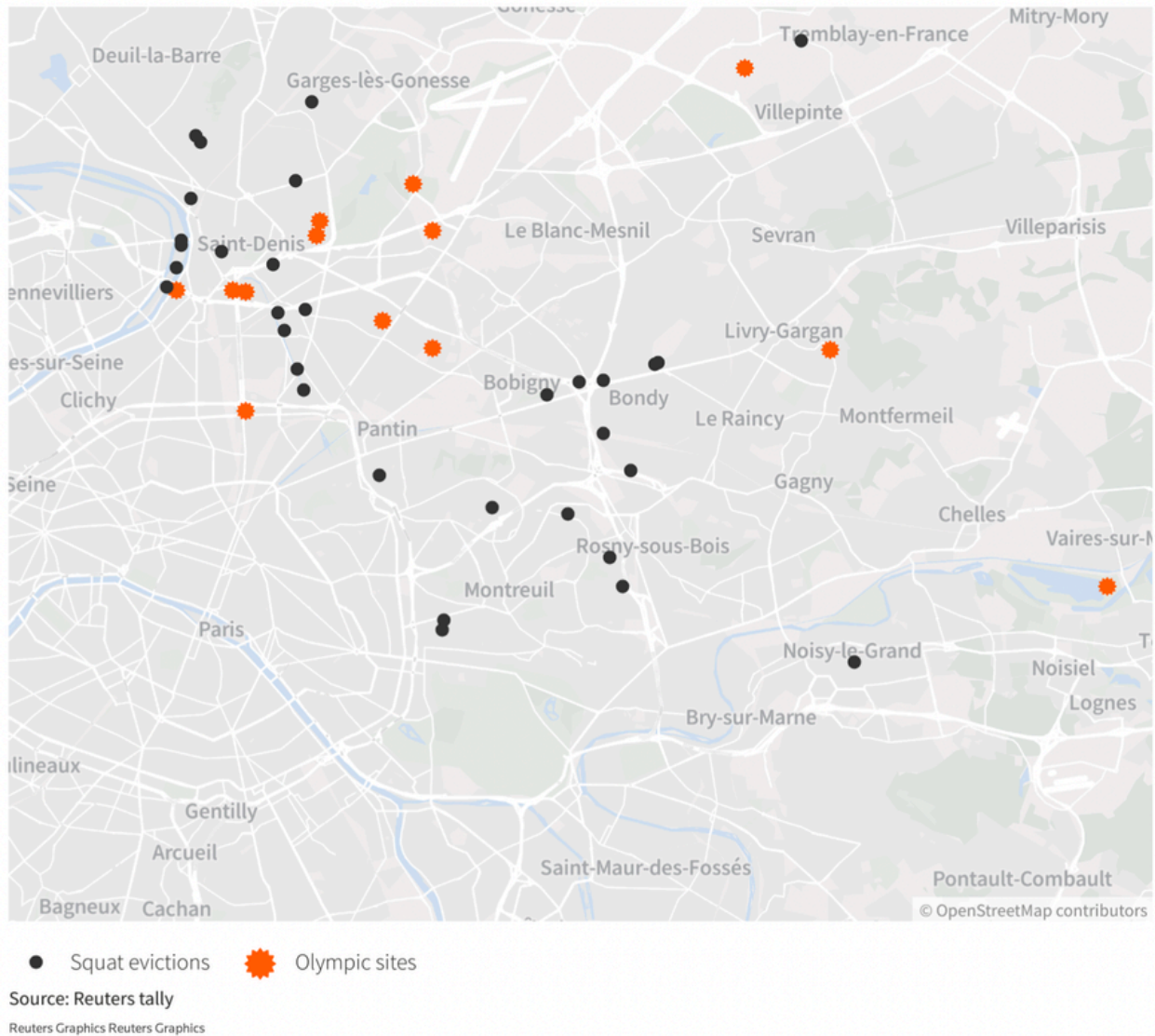


Figure 1

This trend in evictions is visually represented above in Figure 1, which maps the concentration and frequency of squat evictions around Olympic-related construction sites in the Île-de-France region, highlighting how **displacement intensified in areas directly affected by Games-driven development.**

Despite being sold as a “no-build” Olympics, negative impacts associated with development are already underway in Los Angeles, with one subject offering the following:

*“Traditionally, the biggest criticism of the Olympics is that cities directly displace residents to build stadiums. In LA, the bigger issue is the development around existing venues. **Developers and landlords are evicting long-term tenants near stadium areas so they can put in much more expensive housing and attract wealthier tenants.** We’re seeing this on Flower Drive, right across from the [Los Angeles Memorial] Coliseum and Exposition Park. An entire block of tenants has already been evicted and had their housing demolished.”*

Multiple interviewees emphasized that the Olympics incentivize landlords to evict long-term tenants in order to convert rent-controlled units into lucrative short-term rentals, eroding the limited affordable housing stock, especially near Olympic venues. Even the mayor of L.A.’s interim housing programs, which utilize motels, are expected to face challenges as the Games approach because motel owners will likely terminate agreements or demand higher tourist rates, potentially pushing thousands back onto the streets (Fleming, et al., 2024).

b. Airbnb & the Short-Term Rental Market

The growth of short-term rental platforms like Airbnb has been criticized for exacerbating housing affordability problems by removing units from the long-term market, thereby driving displacement and gentrification (Allen, 2017). The platform incentivizes **"rampant speculation"** and necessitates **"supercharged policing"** to ensure neighborhoods remain appealing to tourists (Allen, 2017). At the same time, Airbnb often obscures its commercial operations by promoting the image of “mom and pop” hosts (Allen, 2017). Cities attempting to regulate these services face a “Goldilocks Regulatory Challenge,” struggling to craft rules that commercial short-term rental operators cannot easily circumvent (White & Thor, 2024).

One interviewee, a labor organizer in Los Angeles, had the following to say on how the city and developers will make it harder for low-income people to stay in their neighborhoods:

*"[There is] a lack of enforcement of the Home-Sharing Ordinance, which regulates Airbnbs and short-term rentals. Since 2016, the ordinance has prohibited turning rent-stabilized units into short-term rentals, but **enforcement has been extremely weak**. With mega-events like the Olympics, landlords have an incentive to evict tenants or convert units into illegally operated short-term rentals because they can make more money. Many don't pay required taxes either. [Developers are also] using "the Olympics" as a rhetorical justification for projects, even when unrelated, which accelerates development timelines and can displace tenants."*

Another interviewee, a municipal housing policy expert in California, also spoke to the use of rent-stabilized units for Airbnb:

"There has been a long push for that, and for non-owner-occupied units, which would create an incentive to short-term-rent our housing stock when we're in a housing crisis. It would take housing units away from people who need them for tenancy and put them into short-term rentals because it's a lot more lucrative. We would also see greater incentive to evict long-time tenants, and even short-time tenants, so landlords can do short-term rental practices."



Pinto, T. (Photographer). (2024). Anti-Airbnb protests in France after the 2024 Olympics [Photograph]. SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images.



Tucat, N. (Photographer). (2023, November 10). A woman walks past graffiti reading "Airbnb out" in France [Photograph]. AFP.

Airbnb's most public campaign in Los Angeles heading into the 2028 Games is the *Save Our Services* campaign – an interviewee described this campaign as having, “been everywhere – flyers, billboards, etc. It argues that deregulating short-term rentals boosts tax revenue, even though **Airbnb is one of the biggest offenders in not paying required taxes.**” In other words, Airbnb is attempting to market their presence in Los Angeles not only as good for tourists and short-term rental suppliers, but necessary for the continuity of the provision of public goods. Short-term rental platforms like Airbnb therefore operate simultaneously as mechanisms of speculation and as instruments for reshaping public narratives about urban space. In doing so, Airbnb and its allies characterize profit-driven displacement as civic stewardship, transforming an extractive tourism-centric economy into something that appears essential to the city's public life.

III. Organizing & Resistance

a. Organizing Issues

The materialization of resistance movements in both Paris and Los Angeles was driven by a mix of concerns, most prominently the displacement of vulnerable communities and the expansion of state surveillance justified by Olympic preparations. In Paris, organizing efforts were directly stimulated by the previously detailed implementation of “social cleansing” tactics (Le Revers de la Médaille, 2024; Willsher, 2024). The interviewee that held a position in public office in a Parisian suburb during the 2024 Olympics identified the French government’s increased use of AI-based facial recognition technology as a surveillance tool ahead of the Olympics as the issue that stimulated most extensive, specifically anti-Olympics organizing campaigns in Paris leading up to the Games – **“It caused widespread fear. Many people saw it as a slippery slope towards ‘Big Brother surveillance.’”**

In Los Angeles, organizing efforts leading up to the 2028 Games have already been invigorated by fears of mass displacement and the increased militarization of security, mirroring the tactics used during the 1984 Olympics (Levin, 2025; Robbins, 2024). One interviewee identified labor and immigration-centric demands as having been successful individual organizing items preceding LA28, citing wage victories for tourism workers who will be working the Games in Los Angeles. The same interviewee also highlighted the *Better Neighbors LA* campaign as one that holds some momentum advocating for stronger enforcement of the Home-Sharing Ordinance, revealing that actions are beginning to take place to combat the predictable erosion of affordable housing stock driven by the economic incentive to replace long-term tenants with short-term occupants across the city.

Resistance to Olympic development has been diverse, reflecting intersecting struggles over housing, public safety, labor rights, and dignity in public space. In both Paris and Los Angeles, organizing efforts foreground community-defined needs, insisting that urban policy prioritize residents’ rights and livelihoods over the demands of short-term spectacle.



Loubat, O. (2023, December 15). *Protestors from Le Revers de la Médaille demonstrate against the Olympics* [Photograph]. Citoyen.

b. Organizing Tactics

One sizable resistance effort to the Olympic-driven "social cleansing" in Paris has involved documentation, public advocacy, litigation, and direct non-violent public actions coordinated by the collective, *Le Revers de la Médaille (RM)* – the following information describing the identity and actions of the collective is derived from their report, "1-Year of Social Cleansing Before the Olympics." This collective, formed in September 2023, gathers data and observations from numerous associations working with vulnerable groups. Their tactics include local political education and drawing international attention through extensive media coverage, having generated over 700 articles and reports worldwide since October of 2023. *RM* has engaged in formal advocacy, having participated in more than 30 consultation meetings with various public authorities, including the City of Paris and the Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (COJOP), to push for alternative and permanent solutions to displacement. A key component of their organizing is the creation and dissemination of detailed dossiers containing concrete proposals for solutions, such as establishing a concerted plan for dignified care and the creation of 20,000 accommodation places nationwide.

Resistance tactics also include direct actions like projecting a laser message onto the COJOP headquarters reading **"Paris 2024: The Other Side of the Medal,"** and legal recourse against public policies like the temporary suspension of a prefectural decree banning food distributions. Additionally, organizing involved legal and community resistance to evictions, such as the occupation of the Maison des Métallos by the Belleville Youth Collective to demand housing for unaccompanied minors.

Two interviewees, community organizers in Los Angeles, describe that resistance against the 2028 Olympics has focused thus far on grassroots coalition building, political education, direct community defense, and challenging policies that accelerate gentrification and surveillance. **Coalitions like NOlympics LA adopt a principled "no" campaign philosophy, rejecting the premise of finding reforms within the mega-event framework and instead aiming for cancellation.** In response to the question of how the Olympics could be more fair, one interviewee involved with the coalition said this:

*"I would say, at this point especially, **we need to reject this premise entirely.** At this point, with the amount of information that I have, I truly do not see any kind of reasonable path towards [hosting the Games] in a way that is ethical or humane."*





Estrada, D. (2023). *LA Tenants Union Protest in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles* [Photograph]. People's World.

The “No” organizing strategy could serve as a scalable model of resistance, laying the groundwork for escalating opposition **during the negotiation processes** for future mega-events in Los Angeles. One of the organizers explained that a crucial tactic of the *NOlympics LA* campaign is political education to inform other community organizers and the broader public about the projected harms of the Games, such as displacement, a “housing disaster,” and increased militarization, so that local communities can prepare and respond more effectively (White, 2022).

Another participant has found that the most effective organizing tactic against Olympic-driven gentrification processes is, “Definitely the tenants’ union model. It’s direct, collective, and it works.” She cited the ***Lennox-Inglewood Tenants’ Union*** as an example of an effort that has been effective in bolstering tenant protections that could be generalized to anti-Olympics organizing, employing tactics such as mutual aid networks to document squalor and make urgent repairs when landlords fail to do so.

Imperial evidence supports her claim that organizing of this variety is effective in strengthening tenants' security with respect to eviction and displacement across national boundaries (Ancelovici & Badimon, 2024). She further described how activists are focusing on building community defense networks to resist the increased criminalization and policing, particularly by collaborating against potential ICE raids and the expanded security apparatus institutionalized under the National Special Security Event (NSSE) designation.

Resistance to Olympic-driven displacement is taking multiple forms: grassroots community defense, legal challenges, and direct service for vulnerable residents. Collectively, the Paris and Los Angeles cases demonstrate how anti-Olympic organizing is expanding beyond symbolic protest toward durable, locally grounded infrastructure capable of contesting both the event itself and the urban ideology that sustains it.

c. Community Land Trusts/Non-Conventional Organizing Models

Resistance to Olympic-driven harms in Los Angeles includes non-conventional tactics aimed at securing tenure and control over land, often embodying the spirit of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) even if formal CLTs have not yet been explicitly linked to the resistance efforts. Organizers interviewed are advocating for fundamentally changing ownership structures, such as demanding housing be socially owned and managed by residents, rather than landlords. One organizer mentioned the efforts by the tenants of Hillside Villa, who petitioned the city to use eminent domain so the building could be purchased and eventually transferred to community control as one example of a non-conventional organizing campaign that showed promise. She added, "There's also the "Reclaiming Our Homes" [campaign], where people have occupied vacant Caltrans houses that were just sitting empty. These aren't "traditional" developments, but that's the point. **Liberation doesn't come from traditional development. It comes from people taking back what's already ours.**"

In Paris, resistance utilized highly visible public actions and the unconventional leverage of municipal autonomy and land control. One action involved Parisian organizers threatening to stage a **“poop protest”** involving the deliberate dumping of human waste into the Seine to call attention to the city’s escalating evictions and inadequate housing policies that coincided with expensive, taxpayer-funded sanitation projects like cleaning the Seine (Wharton, 2024).

The Mayor of L’Île-Saint-Denis, Mohamed Gnabaly, used the voted-upon demands of residents as his non-negotiable mandate, enabling him to “build the commons” and fearlessly negotiate with developers and the French government (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, 2025). L’Île-Saint-Denis was a key location for the Olympic Village, and their resistance to real estate speculation through public land management ultimately resulted in two-thirds social housing that acts as a strong defense against displacement (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, 2025).

Across both cities, these unconventional strategies reveal an understanding that resisting displacement can take the form of asserting collective control over land and housing as the foundation for enduring community power.



Delmotte, L. (2024, July 3). Protesters gather in République Plaza, Paris [Photograph]. Associated Press.

III. Summary of Findings

Across both Paris and Los Angeles, findings demonstrate that **Olympic-driven preparations consistently intensify policing, expand surveillance, and accelerate displacement, disproportionately impacting low-income and marginalized communities.** In Paris, the 2024 Games saw unprecedented police deployments, AI-based facial recognition trials, and “social cleansing” tactics that forcibly evicted thousands and displaced informal housing residents. Los Angeles anticipates similar pressures, including short-term rental conversions and gentrification near Olympic venues. These changes are rarely temporary, embedding long-term expansions in law enforcement capacity, surveillance infrastructure, and urban redevelopment patterns. In response, resistance is emerging through diverse and strategic organizing, ranging from grassroots coalitions, tenant unions, and legal advocacy to non-conventional approaches like asserting community land control. Together, these efforts demonstrate that local actors can contest displacement, strengthen housing security, and challenge the social and political costs of mega-events.



Lafargue, R. (2023, March 30). Protesters in Paris with flare on Olympic rings condemning police violence [Photograph]. Abaca/Sipa via AP Images

Discussion

The findings of this study illustrate that Olympic-driven redevelopment does not operate through isolated or accidental harms, but rather through a set of mutually reinforcing mechanisms: policing, surveillance, sweeps, evictions, speculative development, and the expansion of short-term rentals. Collectively, these mechanisms serve to restructure urban space along neoliberal lines. Placing these findings in dialogue with the broader literature reveals a consistent governance model in which mega-events function as a means to manufacture public consent for intensifying trends already underway: securitization, commodification of land, and the political marginalization of low-income communities (Chomsky & Herman, 1988; Harvey, 1989; Rocha & Xiao, 2022). The interviews conducted for this project help illuminate how these processes materialize in the contemporary context of Paris 2024 and the lead-up to Los Angeles 2028, demonstrating that **such harms are neither aberrations nor confined to the Global South, as earlier critiques of Rio, Seoul, and Beijing might have suggested**, but are instead structurally embedded in the logic of Olympic hosting itself (Kennelly & Watt, 2011; Mahon, 2007).

Across cases, the convergence of policing and redevelopment emerges as a central mechanism of transformation. The extraordinary escalation of law enforcement capacity described by interviewees – 45,000 officers deployed in Paris or the LAPD’s proposal to hire 3,000 additional officers – reflects the “event-led” planning model in which mega-events justify emergency governance and the normalization of coercive state power. This aligns with prior scholarship documenting how host cities use mega-events to circumvent democratic accountability and accelerate securitization (Boykoff, 2016; Ludvigsen & Byrne, 2024). The NSSE designation for LA28, in particular, demonstrates how domestic mega-events now mobilize federal agencies, such as ICE, DHS, and the Secret Service, in ways that expand the architecture of surveillance and border policing far beyond the duration of the events themselves.

Housing pressures function as an equally important pillar of Olympic urbanism, but the findings suggest that displacement today is increasingly financialized rather than solely reliant on mass demolitions. Interviewees described weak enforcement of home-sharing ordinances, the conversion of rent-stabilized units into illegal short-term rentals, and speculation justified rhetorically “because of the Olympics.” These dynamics mirror global observations that Airbnb-driven scarcity and speculative vacancy compound the precarity created by mega-events (Allen, 2017; White & Thor, 2024). **In this way, the Olympic city becomes a site where the über-marketization of housing is both accelerated and legitimized.**

Organizers and policymakers interviewed for this study agree that while the Olympics amplify state and market power, they also generate political openings: new coalitions, heightened public awareness, and demands for structural alternatives such as CLTs, tenant unions, or veto-based organizing models. This corresponds with international patterns of “slow opposition” and community-based resistance that contest the underlying developmental regime as opposed to isolated projects (Read et al., 2025). Ultimately, the findings affirm that Olympic redevelopment is best understood as class restructuring operating through both material and symbolic mechanisms. The removal of unhoused residents, the securitization of public space, and the rebranding of neighborhoods as tourist zones collectively produce a city “not for us” (Watt, 2013). Yet, the interviews also highlight that despite the scale of these forces, communities continue to develop a diverse array of tools — legal, political, and organizational — that challenge the inevitability of Olympic-driven harm. The broader literature suggests that these forms of resistance, though often limited in scope, represent some of the few counterweights capable of disrupting the entrenched neoliberal logic of mega-event urbanism.

Recommendations

I. Policy Recommendations

a. Establish Binding Housing Protections During Mega-Event Planning

Host cities should adopt legally enforceable anti-displacement frameworks that apply specifically during mega-event preparation periods. Rather than relying on voluntary commitments or symbolic community benefits agreements, cities should implement statutory prohibitions on no-fault evictions, Ellis Act withdrawals, and rent hikes within designated **“impact zones.”** These “impact zones” could be determined by mapping areas most likely to experience development pressures and displacement due to the event, such as neighborhoods surrounding Olympic venues, athlete villages, transportation hubs, or sites slated for infrastructure upgrades. Cities could combine historical eviction and rent data with projected construction and tourism flows to identify high-risk areas where binding housing protections should automatically apply. These protections must be automatically activated when a city enters an official host agreement, ensuring that event-driven market pressure cannot be exploited by landlords or developers. Governments should require independent audits of housing loss and speculative activity, including the conversion of rent-stabilized units into illegal short-term rentals.



Hillside Villa Tenants Association. (2019). *Hillside Villa Tenants Association, Los Angeles, California* [Photograph].

b. Regulate Short-Term Rentals Through Platform Accountability, Not Individual Tenants

Given that enforcement failures have driven much of the abuse of home-sharing systems, **cities must shift the burden of compliance onto platforms** rather than relying on tenant reporting or understaffed municipal agencies. Mandatory data-sharing agreements, automated cross-checks between listings and government registries, and escalating financial penalties for hosting illegal rentals would significantly reduce the extraction of housing units from the long-term market. These measures should be paired with vacancy taxes to disincentivize speculative withholding of units during mega-event periods.

c. Restrict the Use of Exceptional Policing Powers and Sunset Them Automatically

To prevent the normalization of mega-event security structures, cities should adopt clear limits on NSSE-style coordination agreements, algorithmic surveillance, and mass police hiring tied to mega-events. Any security expansions, including interagency coordination, facial recognition technology, or predictive analytics, must be subject to democratic oversight, transparent public debate, and automatic sunset clauses that require renewed legislative approval to remain in place after the Games. Independent civil liberties monitors should be empowered to evaluate compliance.



Macías, M., Jr. (2023). Alejandro Gutierrez speaks at an April 20 renter assembly [Photograph]. LA Public Press.



Brown, F. J. (2022, January 26). *Unhoused people speak with activist at encampment near SoFi Stadium* [Photograph]. AFP/Getty Images.

d. Require Social Return on Investment (SROI) Metrics for All Olympics-Adjacent Infrastructure Projects

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a principles-based method for evaluating the social, economic, and environmental value created by a project beyond what traditional financial or profit-based metrics would capture - in practice, SROI analysis involves identifying all affected stakeholders, mapping expected changes (positive and negative), and then assigning conservative monetary “proxy” values to social or environmental outcomes (like housing affordability, displacement risk, accessibility improvements, community cohesion) so that those non-market values are expressed in the same terms as costs and investments (Lombardo et al., 2019). By requiring SROI metrics for all Olympics-adjacent infrastructure, the ‘burden of proof’ shifts: **developers and public agencies must demonstrate, in quantifiable social-value terms, that a proposed project will actually benefit existing residents, not just increase tourism revenue or city branding.** This embeds accountability and community welfare into the decision-making calculus from the outset.

II. Organizing Recommendations

a. Strengthen Tenant Union Networks as Front-Line Defense Against Displacement

Tenant unions provide the most direct, durable, and scalable form of resistance to Olympic-driven gentrification. Organizers should prioritize block-level union formation in neighborhoods adjacent to major venues and transit corridors, along with citywide coordination to track eviction patterns and landlord practices. These structures allow tenants to respond collectively to harassment, illegal short-term rentals, and speculative redevelopment while generating political pressure for policy reform.

b. Build Mega-Event Coalitions Before Development Timelines Accelerate

The timeline for mega-event planning creates predictable windows of opportunity for coalition-building. Labor organizations, immigrant rights groups, disability advocates, transit justice organizations, and housing coalitions should coordinate early, before the event narrative becomes fully institutionalized. Cross-sector alliances increase bargaining power and prevent the isolation of housing struggles from broader concerns about racialized policing, workplace protections, or environmental justice.

c. Expand Community Ownership Models to Combat Predatory Financial Speculation

Organizers should prioritize acquiring land through CLTs and cooperative ownership before speculative pressures escalate. These models should be concentrated in neighborhoods already experiencing pre-Olympic marketing or rezoning activity. Community ownership shields land from market extraction and provides a tangible, alternative vision of development that counters the profit-driven pursuit of mega-event-driven displacement.

d. Employ Narrative and Visibility Tactics That Redefine the “Olympic City”

Because mega-events rely heavily on public perception, narrative interventions like counter-mapping, public art, and storytelling campaigns are critical. These tactics disrupt the curated image of the host city and reframe displacement, policing, and speculation as political choices rather than unavoidable byproducts of global celebration. They also build the moral foundation for future legal or policy challenges.



Van Der Hasselt, G. (2024, March 24). Le Revers de la Médaille activists display inflatable buoys at Jardin du Luxembourg, Paris [Photograph]. AFP via Getty Images.

Conclusion

The evidence presented throughout this study demonstrates that Olympic planning functions not as a neutral celebration of sport, but as a political technology that reorganizes urban space in accordance with deeply entrenched neoliberal logics. Prior research and qualitative data analysis in this study reveal a consistent pattern: the Olympics intensify existing trajectories of securitization, commodification, and displacement, accelerating what David Harvey (1989) describes as the transformation of urban governance from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. Within this paradigm, the city becomes a competitive enterprise tasked with attracting investment, managing global perception, and generating market value, often at the direct expense of marginalized communities.

This dynamic is not accidental, nor is it unique to any single host city. Rather, it reflects a political-economic framework in which mega-events serve as a method of restructuring class relations. The Games provide an opportunity to consolidate private influence over land-use decisions, fast-track redevelopment projects that would otherwise face public resistance, and deploy extraordinary policing and surveillance capacities that often remain permanent under the guise of temporary necessity. Consistent with Noam Chomsky's analysis of how institutions "manufacture consent," the Olympics construct a narrative of civic pride, global prestige, and economic opportunity that obscures their extractive impacts and diffuses potential opposition (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Through symbolic appeals to unity and progress, the Games enable governments and private actors to legitimize policies that would be politically untenable outside the exceptional context of a global spectacle.

The findings from Paris 2024 and the lead-up to Los Angeles 2028 affirm that this model has become increasingly sophisticated, relying less on overt demolition and more on market-based displacement, speculative development, and technological forms of social control.

Interviewees described how algorithmic surveillance, over-policing, and the hyper-commodification of housing and land form an interconnected ecosystem of exclusion to cumulatively reshape who is allowed to inhabit or move through the city. These interventions create a highly securitized construction of an urban environment optimized for investors, elite consumers, and international visitors, while rendering poor and working-class residents disposable or out of place.

The research also highlights that **this process is neither uncontested nor inevitable**. Tenant unions, labor coalitions, community land trusts, and grassroots campaigns across host cities demonstrate that communities continue to imagine and enact alternative models of urban governance. These interventions, while often limited in scale, challenge the dominance of market-driven planning and reaffirm the possibility of development grounded in democratic participation and collective ownership. They illustrate what Harvey (1989) refers to as **'counter-movements'** against the commodification of space, or efforts that seek not only to mitigate harm, but to redefine the purpose and function of the city as a collective space where people produce and reproduce their social life – a vision in which cities exist not simply to house markets or infrastructure, but to enable residents to shape and democratize the conditions of their own everyday living.

Ultimately, this study finds that understanding Olympic-driven redevelopment requires recognizing the Games as part of a broader political project that shapes urban futures through both material interventions and ideological legitimization. **The Olympics do not merely reflect neoliberal urbanism; they actively produce it.** However, by examining the mechanisms through which this production occurs, and the forms of resistance that disrupt it, we gain critical insight into how cities might chart more equitable pathways forward. If future host cities are to avoid repeating the harms documented across decades of Olympic cycles, they must prioritize democratic control, community stability, and the fundamental right to remain over the pursuit of global spectacle (Masuda et al., 2019).

Appendix

Interview Instrument

Introduction

- Please tell me a bit about yourself and what brought you to your current role.

Development, Displacement, and the Olympics

- What are ways that the city or developers have made it harder for low-income people to stay in their homes or neighborhoods?
- Have any new laws, rules, or city plans been introduced around the Olympics that changed how people live or move in the city?
- Have you noticed more police or security measures in certain areas since the Olympic plans started? Or, are there plans to increase police or security measures in certain areas as the Olympics get underway?
- Do you think the city is trying to change how it looks or who it's for because of the Olympics? If so, what gives you that impression? And who's being included or left out of that vision?
- What would a more fair or just version of Olympic development look like to you?

Community Resistance and Solutions

- Have you or your community taken any action to push back against these Olympic-related changes? What did that look like?
- What kinds of organizing or community action have you seen be effective in confronting displacement or unfair redevelopment?
- Are there examples of housing or land projects that were led by the community instead of big developers? How did those come together? Did they help people stay in their neighborhoods?

Closing

- Anything else you would like to add that I didn't ask you about, related to this topic?

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