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RESEARCH NOTE

BRAZILIAN WORLD CUP 2014: TERRORISM, TOURISM, AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

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The World cup transcends the interests of culture and nations worldwide. Every 4 years, delegations from the four corners of the world compete for a month. The mass tourist demand an event of this caliber generates prompts policy makers and tourism scholars to devote considerable time in planning in detail the infrastructure and service industry for the benefit of incomers. Unfortunately, in areas of the world plagued by political instability, some groups may use the media events to communicate radical messages to the state. For similar reasons many specialists have studied terrorist attack prevention in the context of event management. This present article is based on the FIFA World Cup in Brazil 2014 to illustrate that terrorism and tourism have been historically intertwined.

Key words: Brazil 2014; Event management; Terrorism; Tourism; World Cup

Athleticism and Archaeology of Mega-Events

The organization of Olympic Games or World Cup events presents a great challenge for the hosting country. From both anthropological and sociological perspectives media games not only “stage” a state of competition among nations, they emulate a “state of war” among participants. Let us not forget that the Olympic Games were originally created as a precautionary mechanism to dissuade cities from organizing a real military conflict. In particular, the

games were used to channel or even dramatize in a more peaceful and controlled way the violence brewing among neighbors. Thus, significantly, the hosting nation should ensure the security of the sporting delegation. To date, the “law” of hospitality guides the conduct of the hosting nation so that it manages its resources to ensure the safe celebration of the games.

As a rite of passage the competition is open to a random balancing. Individual skills and athletic talent are also identified with the rest of community to which the athlete belongs. The city that would win

more medals would gain in reputation and esteem, and an attack against it would be considered a bad idea (Spivey, 2005). These types of competitions were held in an atmosphere of great distress and tension. Any mistake could easily offend the morale and decorum of the guest, leading the cities that participated in the games to a real war. Bearing in mind this background, it makes sense why specialists in event management have drawn attention to the importance of caring for the integrity of sportsmen, tourists, and other attendants of similar contemporary athletic mega-events (Barker, 2004; Barrett, 2011; Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2014; Toohey, 2008; Toohey & Taylor, 2008). Dayan and Katz (1992) explain that media events correspond to rites of passages that reinforce the trust and loyalty of the national community in its leaders.

Sociologizing the Present Conditions: Prestige and Resentment

Broadcast mega-events of this type allow common people to alleviate their daily frustrations by supplanting much deeper collective sentiments: the pride of belonging in a community of ennobled winners. Sporting failure or attacks on athletic personalities may also seriously affect the reputation of political leadership, ultimately undermining the authority of state. This is the reason why international terrorism groups often select such major athletic celebrations to perpetrate their attacks: damaging the public image of the hosting country has extensive negative effects and might lead to political destabilization. Harming an athletic delegation, as was the case with the terrorist attack during the Munich Games in 1972, may engender major diplomatic problems among nations (Paraskevas, 2008; Tarlow, 2006). It is therefore unsurprising that pressure groups use, or even generate and endorse, such incidents to thwart the authority of state. Citizens lose faith in the state, and a legitimacy gap allows the dissidents to present their claims in more forceful and visible ways in public. Needless to say, as aliens, tourists and international visitors are subject to many risks, which range from local crime to terrorism (Álvarez de la Torre, Rodríguez-Toubes, & Korstanje, 2013; Korstanje, 2011a, 2013a).

Social resentment or poor working conditions are often key factors that trigger political instability

and various frictions between the citizenry and its political representatives. Radical groups exploit these socioeconomic asymmetries to delegitimize the political center and gain in power and public support. Naturally, using attacks on domestic crowds and tourists as such a “lightning rod” is a good way to secure public support of various causes, including terrorism. The complex connection between terrorism and tourism remains open and still needs profound research in the next years (Korstanje, 2011b).

The present article explores the political problems in the FIFA 2014 World Cup in Brazil between worker unions and government. We refer to worldwide press reporting regarding the serious problems that Dilma Rouseff’s administration faced in mitigating worker union claims and the threat of strike on the eve of, or during, the World Cup. The social unrest generated due to the government’s orchestration of public expenditure on infrastructure for the mega-event clashed with the unanswered Brazilian deficiencies in managing issues of health, education, and public security. In a world characterized by sharp contrasts, Brazil offers an image linked to peace and prosperity that does not match its internal politics. Preparations for a prestigious mega-event that answers international demand for safe tourist and athletic spectacles comes in direct conflict with the reality of domestic strikes and riots, which were clearly orchestrated to discredit the government internally and internationally. This phenomenon is by no means isolated, as the Beijing human rights protests and the Athens 2004 labor strikes demonstrate (Tzanelli, 2010). In these contexts pressure groups and common people claim that their basic needs remain uncovered in spite of the money spent in building stadiums and highways to please the tourists. This invites uncomfortable questions: Are Brazilians second-order citizens vis-à-vis cosmopolitan visitors? Should the comfort and wellness of few be sustainable at the expense of the rest? And why are workers, who were supposed to be benefited by this event, doing their best to boycott it?

Tourism, Terrorism, and Activism in a Single “Civilizing Process”

Tzanelli suggests that the organization of any media event bears the potential to blur the material

asymmetries between exploiters and exploited through symbolic redistribution (of prestige to the whole community, the hosting nation). But she also notes that capitalist networks turn native cultures into staples to be visually consumed by global tourists (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The organization of media events not only requests thousands of dollars in investment, but also subordinates the lifestyle of peripheral nations to the various capitalist centers that may either reside in Eastern or South American peripheries or in powerful North-Western countries (e.g., the US). The social discontent sparked in UK and Brazilian cities days or months before the start of these mega-events are symptomatic of the unresolved problems of capitalist expansion, which both democratizes ideals of equality via spectacles and clashes with them in practice (Tzanelli, 2004, 2006b, 2010, 2014).

Tzanelli (2010) introduces arguments of interest in the fields of event management and tourism. Some of her work on mega-events, tourism, and nationalism (Tzanelli, 2011) and the nature of terrorism (Tzanelli, 2006a) suggest that (a) pressure groups (whether these be terrorist or labor unions) understand the ideological significance of safe consumption for the legitimization of state power, and (b) act on this knowledge in key moments such as those of mega-event management, including (c) the organization of rupture events (e.g., bombings, human rights protests) when the state seeks recognition from global community of nations and international institutions [FIFA, the International Olympic Committee (IOC)]. Finally, this is a strategy also adopted by hosts that are weak nations and seek international recognition despite their shortcomings in delivering safe mega-events. Thus, whereas on the surface such events provide a platform for universalizing consumption experience, even actors involved in hosting them (including workers and governments) know that consumer ideologies can never attain the status of a universal good and respond accordingly to powerful centers (governments internally, capitalist centers externally).

Union activism is also labeled terrorism by the state; indeed, it can mobilize terrorist mechanisms to achieve its aims. As Marx (1971) explained, the workforce is exploited whenever the exchange of capitalist merchandise undermines the value of the laborers' work. The wage represents this swindle

because the worker is dispossessed by its product. Once commodity exchange commences the system of money circulation awards the bourgeoisie or even the bourgeois-run state with the capital of labor, not the workforce. The wage, which is supported by the working contract, forms a type of robbery since the workers lose their right to claim for their production (Marx, 1971). The same phenomenon guides microeconomics: improvement in working conditions and paid wages benefits, first and foremost, those who decide on product price. State interventions in this process might destabilize the market and generate unemployment. Capital owners often coerce the governments to fire workers if the tax legislation policies threaten to reduce their profits. One wonders, therefore, if our conception of "terrorism" is an offshoot of capitalism.

We might apply this hypothesis to South American contexts, where officials and a highly politicized press do not focus on the protests at the main street of Brazilian cities, but on worker union involvement. Indeed, under strenuous conditions, unions may obstruct visitor access to mega-event facilities (e.g., stadiums). The possibility of obstructing the World Cup visitor in-flow with a sudden strike is in fact high: workforce and worker unions associated with mass transport industries and other such mobility systems can easily declare a general strike that affects accessibility to the main mega-event and tourist destinations. Korstanje and Clayton (2012) have enumerated the commonalities between tourism and terrorism. The surprise factor combined with the indifference by the other's suffering is two of many shared values between the tourist and the terrorist. Korstanje (2013a) has explained that modern tourism is terrorism by other means and Tzanelli (2011) has also stressed that terrorism is a form of mobility that both resembles and obstructs tourism traffic by use of adjacent mobility systems (e.g., new technologies). Nation-states have consolidated their authority over their dominion and subjects with the help of two disciplinary mechanisms: violence and the doctrine of free transit. Therefore, blocking the free circulation of visitors corresponds to attacking the state and its monopoly of productive systems (for further details see theory of conquest and hospitality) (Korstanje, 2013a). The "end" is to discredit unfair governance, to destroy the public image of power, and replace it with a fair(er) system.

Worker Union “Terror” as Legalized Spectacle

To clarify connections between union activist and terrorism, we refer to the history of worker unions in the US. First, we might note that capitalism created internal migration from rural zones to cities. External migrants from peripheral (commodity producer) countries such as Argentina and Australia into the US from countries defied the working conditions in US and promoted new ideological discourses of fairness. From anarchists to socialists, migrants faced serious problems in the “promised land” and struggled to improve labor conditions. Many such activists planned terrorist attacks against the bureaucratic apparatus and the political elites. This violence invited the forceful intervention of the state, which not only deported the new undesired guests, but also exerted a considerable violence in repressing the social movement. Anarchists postulated a direct change of the roots of inequality in US that capitalists would not accept. Persecuted and deported to Europe, anarchism was labeled an “act of terrorism.”

Another less radicalized activist wave opted to help worker conditions by organizing their legal representation. Worker union claims were gradually accepted by the state and even when elements of the anarchist ideology survived in labor legislation. Improvement in working conditions also accommodated a leisure regime for the workers, which had already been in place in Europe [in 1948 paid holidays were recognized as a fundamental human right (Dann & Parrinello, 2009, as cited in Tzanelli, 2011)]. Thus, not only could working class people now partake in consumption rituals by being tourists, they were also the primary clientele and subject matter of cultural industries (Lanfant, 2009). Evidently, then, tourism is an aspect of modernity that surfaced as a pacifying method for the “dangerous working mob.” Workers were granted new legal mechanism of protest, such as the strike, while the capital owners were given space to advance of one of the most important doctrines in the theory of economics: capitalism (Korstanje, 2013b). This way, the state accepted worker union claims but placed labor demands into a manageable legal framework. The reverse process took place with terrorism, which was declared as the enemy of the state and society and its perpetrators never acquired “rights.”

Modern tourism facilitated both the expansion of modern economy and technologies of governance, which we may loosely perceive as the state’s project of civilizing human nature by teaching subjects how to obey the law and survey their own behavior. Tourism and technology are, in this respect, part of the same system of rechanneling harmful urges into ennobling, productive pursuits: learning about other cultures while resting and traveling, contributing to knowledge advancement by technological means, and the like. Nonetheless, anarchist ideology was never fully eradicated.

Conclusion

In spite of their substantial differences, like the degree of violence exerted over innocent people, strikes and terrorist attacks retain a structural resemblance and can also claim birth in the same system that human societies constructed so that they eliminate threats from their own members. Both occur and recur when weaker agents seek ways to negotiate with stronger ones. To return to our exploration of mega-events that operate as tourism zones, both union activism and terrorism are based on instrumental reason, as they attack tourists and common people to promote their own political agendas. Finally, both rely on the element of surprise to dissuade government planning against the strike. A tourist stranded at an international airport by a strike is a victim of violence that resembles terrorist incidents, like those we witnessed in Egypt, Bali, or Argentina. The 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil presents us with another similar instance: domestic social movements and union protests have swamped the urban centers that host the mega-event and that are visited by international media crews, football fans, and tourists. A twin conception of “accessibility” seems to be of paramount importance for the insurgents: not only do they block stranger traffic in these visitor hubs (travel access), they also gain in global publicity by disseminating their cause through foreign reporting (technological access). Even though what we cannot comment on the ability of security forces to control the situation, in this article we endeavor to illuminate synchronically and diachronically the importance of comprehending forms of activism that threaten political stability

and peaceful event management in sociological and anthropological terms.

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