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**Searching for sites of liminality in ‘giga’ events**

**Abstract**

Giga-events disrupt urban communities and business environments rendering vulnerable social groups, particularly host communities of micro and small businesses, marginalised, invisible and unable to leverage certain economic benefits. We focus on one specific economic benefit occurring within a specific time period: opportunities and challenges associated with event visitor economies during the ‘live staging’ period between the Olympic Games Opening and Closing Ceremony. Giga-events are planned, organised and managed in such a way that they intentionally redirect visitor economic consumption away from small business communities and toward official sites of corporate consumption. These neoliberal outcomes *must* be combated and interrupted if more marginal social groups, like those residing in host communities, are to optimise the full economic potential of giga-events. Using this latent, but increasingly politicised critique of large-scale events to approach this challenge, we draw on perspectives, practices and concepts related to the burgeoning accounts of liminality. Liminality, namely liminal thinking, liminal spaces and the creation of liminoidal event spaces, inherently refers to the development of new creative spaces of disruption. As such, we frame such thinking as a way to disrupt and seek to provide a potential antidote to the neoliberal practices of giga-events that inevitably lead to the over-riding of local interests, in favour of external, contingent global demands of more visible, powerful stakeholders in the melee of Olympic planning. By mapping out the different sites where liminality may be fostered across host cities, we propose the different conceptual and practical ways host communities, policy makers, event organisers and managers can open up new emancipatory spaces ‘betwixt and in-between’. Divergent forms of liminal space have been overlaid across ‘Live Sites’ to illustrate the ways in which vulnerable social groups may be able to leverage opportunities related to event visitor economies.

**Key words:** Giga-events; Liminality; Liminoidal; Visitor economy; Micro and small businesses; Festival-Event-Leverage Complex.

**Introduction**

Giga-events, the archetype being the Summer Olympic Games, serve to shock respective cities and local territories – either blessed or cursed to play ‘host’. Indeed, during the planning and delivery phases, giga events grip and take hold of urban spaces, whether that be infrastructural assets or geographies of community living. Here, we predominantly refer to the physical, telluric type of ‘shock’ – *and –* the economic as they require significant and exponentially increasing public-private financing schemes in comparison to let’s say a mega or major event (Müller, 2015). The description ‘giga’ is a fairly new introduction in to the large-scale sporting event literature, presented to illustrate the rising financial, time and energy costs, and the colossal impact(s) of mega-events. Albeit somewhat axiomatic, a host regions’ size, geographical location, social and cultural influences and overall urban make-up plays a critical role in influencing how the event takes form and impacts the city and its citizens.

Policy and contractual bidding agreements are enacted in such a way to deploy wholesale, concentrated development projects adjoined to the hosting process. Indeed, the changes and the quotidian practices that occur and determine everyday living at the local-host community level are significant and by and large irreversible. Disruption, perhaps even creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1942) causes both temporary and permanent – often urban – change (Raco & Tunney, 2010). Within the melee of Olympic planning some vested interests are mobilised (Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius & Rothengatter, 2003), whilst others are rendered immobilised (Giulianotti, Armstrong, Hales & Hobbs, 2016) - leading to inclusionary outcomes for some, and not for others.

In this chapter we draw on a latent but burgeoning field of research that has conceptually and empirically positioned host communities, specifically micro and small businesses, as a marginalised stakeholder group – with neither the power nor influence during event planning and in amplifying positive leverageable business benefits (Armstrong, Giulianotti & Hobbs, 2017; Clark, Kearns & Cleland, 2016; Giulianotti, et al., 2016; Kirby, Duignan & McGillivray, 2018; Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016; Raco & Tunney, 2010; Vlachos, 2016). Yet, such large-scale projects are often argued on the grounds of local inclusion (House of Lords, 2013).

We have come to a critical juncture in the lifecycle and legitimisation of the Olympic movement – as noted by Zimbalist (2015). Never before have there been such accounts of international, national and regional resistance, including reports by Around the Rings right through to GamesMonitor and Play the Game. On the ground efforts from locally-based pressure and campaigning groups like ‘RioOnWatch’ and NOlympics LA have risen up magnifying the urban struggles that precede and follow the occurrence of investments in flagship urban development agendas and programmes (Lauermann, 2014). Beyond pressure groups, even large-scale funding bids have been commissioned to examine uneven development effects. For example, in 2018, Coventry University secured a Marie Curie grant entitled ‘EventRights’ to examine human rights issues within major sporting events. Similarly to this chapter, it emphasises the differential between Olympic planning rhetoric of inclusion (that feature across host city candidature bid documents, like Rio 2016) – and – the realities of event exclusion for neighbouring host communities (Duignan, Pappalepore & Everett, 2019).

Although, O’Brien (2006) indicates that mega-sport events provide the ‘seed capital’ to be appropriately optimised by stakeholders themselves (whether that be at the macro-level by policy makers, to smaller businesses and residents at the micro-level), our critical introduction, reveals that not everyone has the ability and ‘right’ to access so-called event (business) benefits. Whereas some stakeholders have the permission to be included as beneficiaries, highly circumscribed environments created by the Olympic Games often preclude individual and collective rights to leverage (Chalip, 2017 – also see Zizek, 2008 for a wider sociological debate between ‘permissions’ and ‘rights’). In order to sustain some of the positive social and economic outcomes of mega-sporting event culture and production (i.e. inspiring young social entrepreneurship – see IOC, 2018), we argue that ‘giga’ – and indeed mega and major – sporting event organisers *must* re-think the (neoliberal) economic logic that presides over the strategic and operational models and governance of the Olympics. As a result, we explore and map out both the conceptual and practical ways giga-events, alongside other large-scale events, like major events) can be disrupted.

With these issues in mind, we introduce and discuss the concept of ‘liminality’: a concept inherently disruptive, highly creative and abstract in nature. A key aim and objective of this chapter is to consider the different ways giga-events can foster sites of liminality to transform the marginalised and invisible, to an included and visible stakeholder group, and more specifically, ensure event visitor economy benefits are evenly distributed across host communities for both external, global interests – and - internal, local interests. This is achieved by drawing on a multitude of historical case studies linked to large-scale events like the Olympic Games, including major events right through to regional cultural and sporting festivals. Moreover, engagement with other sources combines official Olympic candidature, governing body policy and independent event-related reports. The authors’ perspectives are also captured using their own observational data: audio and visual data collected as part of the RioZones (2016) project (approx. 2500 photos, and over 5 ½ hours of recording) which examined the conditions, processes and spaces in and around official Host Event Zones (HEZs), Last Mile transit zones, and Live Site areas (see Cade, Everett & Duignan, forthcoming; Duignan & McGillivray, forthcoming;). This observational data was collected between 31 July – 8 August 2016, and research conducted post-Games. Here, photographs and digital vlog recordings enabled the researchers to understand and reflect upon their first-hand experiences and observations (Pink, 2013).

Structurally, we outline the theoretical framework and affordances of liminality; specifically, liminal thinking, liminal spaces and the creation of liminoidal environments that engender communitas and the celebration of all things local. We then illustrate how such concepts can disrupt the flows and consumption patterns of Olympic visitor economies: a process we argue to be the shift from ‘neoliberal consumption’ to ‘critical consumption’. We then introduce a new, but highly applicable framework by Duignan, Everett, Walsh and Cade (2017) dubbed the ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’ (FELC) to illustrate how such event-led policies provide ideal physical and digital spaces for micro and small businesses to leverage. Our penultimate section proceeds to amalgamate our analysis of liminality, the need to shift consumption, and the affordances of the FELC – and extends the complex by overlaying the different types of liminal spaces identified in the context of large-scale events, like giga-events. Our conclusion presents a succinct conceptual and practical wrap of all key points and outlines a series of policy and managerial implications, followed by a call for future scholars and practitioners to embrace liminal thinking as a way of democratising event outcomes.

**Liminality: Liminal thinking, liminal spaces and creating the liminoidal environment**

Our earlier discussion provides a neat segue into our conceptual thinking and framework: the power of liminality, liminal thinking and the production of liminal spaces as a way to disrupt and (re)configure the manner in which mega-sport events are planned and delivered. We argue such thinking provides a unique opportunity for policy makers and managers to gain a new perspective on the way events can be (re)organised and (re)engineered in a system that produces a more equitable outcome for internal, incumbent – and - external, contingent stakeholders of such projects. Yet, liminality in conjunction with the context of large-scale sporting events like the Olympics has received little consideration and analysis, despite its usage in other event contexts (Chalip, 2006, 2014, 2017; O’Brien & Chalip, 2006). Neglected too is a particular focus on the conditions and processes that inhibit or foster liminality and communitas in a giga and mega-sporting event situation (Chalip, 2017).

Liminal thinking distinguishes a break from the instrumental rationality school of thought (see earlier work of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, namely Habermas) that most certainly guides the organisation of mega-sport events. Stemming directly from the field of anthropology (e.g. Turner, Harris & Park, 1983; Ziakas & Boukas, 2013), it offers an abstract, but deeper explanatory framework to indicate why – and most importantly for this paper: how – mega-sport events can build inclusionary environments that balance a range of global and local interests. As such, this focus frames and fuels our search for the ‘how’: namely, the physical and digital sites where liminality may exist. This is critical for emphasising ways to secure micro and small business benefits and promote conditions for local forms of entrepreneurship to flourish. Yet, as noted by Giulianotti et al., (2016):

*‘the system (organisation of mega-sports events) has notable negative effects on economic activity, specifically for local businesses’ (…) and that ‘local stakeholders indicate that at the everyday level major Olympic related economic opportunities tended to bypass politically marginalised social groups’ (…) resulting in a ‘stark division between global and local economies’* (p. 131).

By examining the different ways mega-sporting events can be disrupted, attempts can be fashioned to transform negative effects to positive effects for local, micro and smaller businesses, to visibilise this often-marginal social group, and bridge the divide between a project for a few – to a project for the many. Indeed, we recognise this thinking may come across as rather utopian, yet this is in line with Turner’s (1992) writing before the turn of the 21st century, where he suggests liminality is inherently, ‘plural, fragmentary and experimental’ (…) ‘subversive’ in nature (…) providing a ‘radical critique of central structures and proposes a utopian model’ (p. 57). In effect, the aim of this chapter is to consider the practicesevents may be increasing democratised, where host cities may reflect and celebrate multidimensional conceptions (Healey, 2002), mobilise and invite marginal communities, like micro and small businesses to the Olympic party. Daring to dream and to be disruptive reflects our positionality: an alignment with Turner’s optimistic take on (re)configuring and transforming social, economic and organisational processes.

Going one step further, what we do know about Turner’s liminal thinking, is the power of coming together and of collective celebration to subvert naturalised social and economic practice in society i.e. practices that marginalise, that exclude – like those described in the context of the Olympic Games (O’Brien & Chalip, 2007; Turner, 1992). Indeed, event activity heighten a community’s sense of place as argued by Cresswell (2014), perhaps even sacred yet usually existing within secular environments (O’Brien & Chalip, 2007; Ziakas & Boukas, 2013). Liminal practices in events can be viewed as a way of creating memorable and meaningful visitor experiences through experiential elements and animation of, let’s say, a host community (Voase, 2018). Here, a ‘feel good’ factor and the celebratory atmosphere is created and maintained across the lifecycle of the project, a sort-of social camaraderie (Balduck, Maes & Buelens, 2011). These key dimensions that foster liminality, liminoidal and ‘communitas’ (Chalip, 2006) have been applied theoretically and sector-specific across both leisure studies and cultural policy (Thomassen, 2014). Communitas, refers to a sense of belonging – and of connectedness to, with and among a community – helping to create relationships between the host city, citizens, entrepreneurs and the event itself (Chalip, 2017). Turner (1969, 1979) emphasises the symbiotic relationship between the liminal, liminoidal and communitas, and as formulated later in this chapter, the notion of rituals enabling these events to traverse or even penetrate the conditions for positive outcomes attached to certain social groups (i.e. in our case, micro and small businesses). Here, such concepts, when juxtaposed against the social and economic dilemmas of local marginalisation, helps to open up new lines of rhizomatic thinking (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), a mode of creative resistance central for potentially transforming the fortunes of those on the margins of giga-event planning and delivery.

Turner (1979) defined three different, sequential forms of communitas: i) spontaneous, ii) ideological, and iii) normative, defined as:

* *Spontaneous*: types of interactions and experiences engendered temporally. For example, during the course of an giga-event life cycle like the ‘pre-event’ (i.e. bidding, planning, preparation), ‘live staging’ (i.e. execution), and ‘post-event’ phase (i.e. closure and hand-over);
* *Ideological*: concepts which describe the interactions of spontaneous communitas. This can be linked to policy drivers, political involvement and relationships between key stakeholders in the host city or region;
* *Normative*: a group hoping to derive and maintain lasting spontaneous communitas and relationships, such as the local organising committee or authority.

Extending Turner’s earlier work Thomassen (2009) demarcated three different types of liminal experiences:

* *Subject*: associated with three types of subject - single individuals (e.g. local organising committee members), social groups (e.g. community organisations) and whole societies (e.g. city citizens and the wider national population);
* *Space*: spatial aspects of liminality leading to the emergence of liminal experiences connected to geographical and/or specific zones. Turner (1984, p. 21) refers to as ‘rituals of the second type’ in public places like city squares (i.e. the multitude of official giga-event spaces, like venues, Last Mile and Live Site areas across the host city and HEZs);
* *Time*: temporal dimensions of liminality interspersed by moments: short-term, longer-term, and epochs. In this case, various project deliverables (i.e. the planning of the Cultural Olympiad programme 4 years prior to the Games), the immediate live staging phase, through to the post-Games legacy intergenerational city or regional effects.

It is within these liminal and liminoidal conditions that a sort-of ‘social limbo’ may be fostered with the force to reconfigure social, economic, power and spatial relations (Thomassen, 2016) – as described earlier as a key justification for this conceptual frame. Here, rather paradoxically, events can be seen as both simultaneously producing and resisting modes of domination, whilst offering an opportunity to subvert naturalised hierarchy and dominant values that we have come to expect of neoliberal environments (Getz, 2005). As noted earlier, we purposively focus on the power of events – as liminal spaces – to promote non-dominant values in less rigid, highly circumscribed and prescriptive spaces (Caudwell & Rinehart, 2014). Spaces free from the forces that determine action, offering freedom from the ties that control behaviour and typify the mundanity of everyday life (Shields, 1990), this complemented by the modification and transformation of existing behaviours that promote non-traditional behaviour (Robinson, 2006).

**Disrupting ‘corporate kettling’: ‘Neoliberal consumption’ to ‘critical consumption’**

Let’s take this one step further. What we are really talking about, beyond the abstractions, are the rather *real* issues around where event visitor economies spend and consume. When we talk about the marginalisation of host communities, specifically micro and small businesses and local forms of entrepreneurship in the case of this chapter, we mean the specific ways flows and circulations of people – both residents, regular visitors and event tourists – are reconfigured to spend in non-local spaces (McGillivray & Frew, 2015). By non-local spaces, we are concerned with diverting both the visitor gaze (Urry, 2002) and consumption toward official Host Event Zones (HEZs) lined with official sponsors, supporters and suppliers. Unquestionably, the commodity of urban space, place and even other cultural attractions like renowned beaches (i.e. Copacabana, for Rio 2016 Olympic Games) and UNESCO World Heritage sites (i.e. Greenwich, for London 2012 Olympic Games) are transformed into sites of official sports, cultural and commercial activity – a costly endeavour (Müller, 2015). Giga events not only take over central, touristic urban spaces but also dramatically impact residential neighbourhoods. Albeit temporarily, they reshape and disrupt the social, economic and spatial relations between stakeholders at both the national, regional and community level.

Numerous authors, including Osborne and Smith (2016) describe commoditised and corporate urban spaces as ‘brandscapes’ – where targeted urban spaces are dressed in the 5 Olympic rings regalia and littered with multinational global organisations and chains that pay for the ‘right’ to be there (McGillivray & Frew, 2015). According to McGillivray and Frew, in the context of London 2012, the city was, ‘kneeling at the altar of the Olympic brand’ (2015, p. 2658). Giulianotti et al’s (2016) analysis go one step further, exemplifying how transit spaces are subject to ‘corporate kettling’, detailing how routes to venues are crafted to maximise corporate spending. They note how for London, visitors were corralled through ‘Westfield’ shopping centre to and from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, situated in Stratford, Newham – away from the old town centre: home to non-official, local interests (Armstrong et al., 2017). Often, this occurred across other geographies: Central Greenwich (Vlachos, 2016), Hackney (Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016) – a challenge regularly featured by national and regional media outlets (e.g. Financial Times, 2012) and UK Government policy analysis too (e.g. Federation of Small Businesses, 2013; London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2012). However, the (re)diversion of visitor economies toward official sites of corporate consumption may well result in what is denoted as ‘economic leakage’ (Mills and Rosentraub, 2013). Effectively, economic leakage refers to the process whereby money spent – quite literally – leaks out of the local economy, and is not circulated in the locality and/or region. For example, this occurs when consumers opt to spend in global chains over local independent businesses. This is a particular challenge in the era of credit and the digitised economy, as revenue streams are directed toward centralised banking systems at international headquarters (i.e. Lausanne, Switzerland - headquarters of the International Olympic Committee, IOC), as opposed to being retained in the pockets of local people (Duignan et al., 2017). As a result, the economic benefits of consumption are diluted or lost: a frequent concern in the context of large-scale events (Osbourne & Smith, 2016), primarily mega-sporting events (Armstrong et al., 2017; Vlachos, 2016). Chalip (2004) argues that in order to secure positive event-related benefits (direct, indirect and induced) for the host community, spectator consumption must remain and spread within the locality.

**Mapping sites of liminality and extending the ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’**

In search for sites of liminality, researchers may play close attention to networked relationships between stakeholders within the setting of large-scale events (Duignan et al., 2017; Peachey, Borland, Lobpries & Cohen, 2015). Ziakas (2016) notes that event managers are to proactively structure and organize space in a way that fosters connectedness integral to the character and nature of liminal and liminoidal spaces. As well as, the non-traditional behaviour enhanced within these spaces (Yarnal & Kersetter, 2005). Chalip’s (2006) work, initially laid the foundation for considering the liminal in an events setting, as we wish to extend in this chapter. He suggested incorporating strategies like creating event-related social events to enable visitor social interactions, ‘event theming’ and the development of ‘ancillary events’ – with the hope of generating interest and consumption within, for example, marginalised communities. Girginov (2016) further emphasises that liminality may be fostered through strategic (leveraging) linkages between, for example, community initiatives and institutional rules and conventions. Here, an alignment between the objectives of the host community, the hosting city (at government and local authority level) and event itself emerged key (Ziakas & Boukas, 2013), alongside this, simultaneously planned social interactions between visitors and communities may well result in contemporary social and economic challenges being more openly debated(Ziakas, 2016). For example, Duignan and McGillivray (2016) noted that communities across so-called transit routes and close to event venues in Rio for the 2016 Games, opted to enliven residential communities through Brazilian culture: samba music, dancing and a slow food offer – a means to encourage visitors to ‘dwell’ and connect with local communities as opposed to solely with official sites of corporate consumption.

As a consequence of our analysis, we build on a new theoretical framework devised by Duignan et al., (2017) called the ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’ (see Figure 1). We extend the model by overlaying the mapped sites of liminality, to illustrate the complex physical and digital ways marginalised social groups (i.e. host communities, principally micro and small businesses) can visibilise themselves and/or engage in productive forms of ‘immediate leveraging’ in the context of giga-events. In many ways, these identified sites also apply to other event environments (e.g. mega and major events and other regional cultural and sporting events) that initially inspired Duignan et al., (2017) to develop the FELC. Essentially, sites of liminality identified represent potential spaces of disruption that can help promote a shift from ‘neoliberal consumption’ to ‘critical consumption’ during the live staging periods between the Olympic Games Opening and Closing Ceremony. Practices outlined can be considered by marginalised social groups themselves, and/or those responsible for constructing event environments and spaces required to stage official sporting, cultural and commercial activity. For those wishing to create socio-economically inclusive events, particularly micro and small businesses wishing to leverage visitor economies, we implore a range of stakeholders to integrate liminal space into the planning, design and creation of all kinds of events, top-down (i.e. giga events, mega-events) through to bottom-up, grassroots initiatives (e.g. local, regional cultural and sporting festivals). From National Organising Committee’s (NOCs) to delivery organisations, right through to local community groups, we encourage the development of co-created and co-curated Olympic spaces that celebrate and animate those at the local level to stimulate ‘communitas’ indicative of liminoidal spaces (O’Brien & Chalip, 2006).

**Insert Figure 1 here: [Figure 1. Extended ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’ (Adapted from Duignan, Everett, Walsh & Cade, 2017)]**

**Physical and digital (giga)liminalscapes**

During the live staging period, host city venues and zones can be assembled to afford micro and small businesses to access the event and overcome marginalisation. Practical digital and physical recommendations have been formulated to transfer greater levels of connectivity between the visitor economy and local host community. This corresponds to how giga-event spaces are designed to foster connected, liminal spaces and local service delivery. Urban host public spaces prioritised to house ephemeral and enduring event-related infrastructure developments have the propensity to enter and engender different states of liminality, types of liminal experience and forms of communitas (Turner, 1979; Thomassen, 2009). These temporary and permanent states of liminality function in various Host Event Zones (HEZs) and other prominent spaces more commonly found outside of ‘official’ Games areas. For example, public and visitor viewing territories like assigned Live Sites or Fan Fests. Accessible design of spaces can infuse local individuality and offer a more balanced consumption in the area. The planning of event venues and fan zones dispersed across the city alter consumption patterns in and around ‘Live Sites’, and contribute to opportunities such as short-term enterprise and promotional activities. At Rio 2016, organisers envisaged that the host city’s ‘Live Sites’ could act as platforms to support wider objectives including activating landmarks (e.g. Museum of Tomorrow), strengthening and enlivening the planning and design of urban sites (such as Porto Maravilha), and enhancing festivity and spectator experiences (Rio 2016, 2009a). There are significant factors which could influence the success of inner-city event spaces and venues, including the location choice for event spaces, careful placement of fan zones and selecting sites with sufficient land for employing and assembling temporary venues (ARUP, 2017; Gold & Gold, 2018). Temporary and moveable facilities and the conversion of key central buildings may aid micro and small business activity in urban city spaces. This is beneficial for stimulating the likes of food and drink stalls, pop-ups and permanent establishments (e.g. bars and restaurants), as well as transitioning public spatial changes and local trading levels from pre-Games, live staging to post-Games.

Host city value can be derived by employing local community associations and small businesses to deliver services in HEZ’s and ancillary event spaces. Micro and small traders are often unable to access local entrepreneurial opportunities at the expense of larger corporations. Moreover, these traders may be unlikely to respond to demand, achieve more favourable sales and enhance their brand presence, compared to sponsors and international event partners. In order to realise potential gains, local organisations and small business need to possess the knowledge and skillset to sufficiently prepare for the event. Better cohesion between local groups and specific stakeholders (e.g. key state actors and local organising committee) may help in imparting collective knowledge and expertise. This context-specific knowledge could be valuable in enabling the enhancement of outcomes for an eclectic range of event stakeholders (Hede, 2007). A critical component for generating stronger impetus and benefits to smaller organisations relates to facilitating action at an inter-city level. Public authorities could offer incentives and access to local business support programmes, provide support e.g. assisting in developing supply chain partnerships and deals, and elicit advice from trade and other business organisations e.g. small business associations, trade associations and regional tourism boards. Activities driven from host community organisations and groups can be enacted to prolong long-term integrative event leveraging strategies, as opposed to piecemeal solutions engineered by the local organising committee. The presence of these networks and physical connections can be extended to enhance micro and small business resources, capabilities and foster spontaneous communitas (Turner, 1979). The construction and production of Live Sites and attractions, whereby areas to and from event venues are specifically targeted to stimulate local demand, such as through opening-up green spaces and enforcing relaxed legislatorial powers for small business traders. This can be explicitly accomplished by earmarking walkways connecting key city infrastructure (e.g. transportation, accommodation) leading to event venues, often known as ‘Last Mile’ spaces e.g. at London 2012 (Commission for a Sustainable London 2012, 2012). In the run-up to Rio 2016, reforms were enacted to increase the investment in transport networks and routes such as the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Vehicle (VLT), predominantly directed towards areas like Gamboa and Santo Cristo in the central district (incorporating transit arrangements such as the disputed and no longer operational Providência cable car), to the Santos Dumont terminal situated near Guanabara Bay - the Bay (specifically Marina da Glória formed part of the Flamengo Park cluster) was deployed as the primary sailing venue at Rio 2016 (Carvalho, Cavalcanti & Venuturupalli, 2016; CDURP, 2016; Rio 2016, 2009a; Zimbalist, 2017). Although, this planning and intervention failed to establish and solidify services and incorporate disparate key Olympic venues and facilities. To illustrate this, both locals and visitors struggled to move quickly and efficiently between sites located across the city. For example, Porto Maravilha (and Olympic Boulevard), a Live Site in the central area, Deodoro Park in the North Zone, Barra Olympic Park in the West Zone, Flamengo Park, and Lagoa Stadium - adjacent to Copacabana (South Zone), and home to the rowing and canoeing competitions and international broadcasters during the Games (Carvalho, Cavalcanti & Venuturupalli, 2016; IOC, 2016; Rio 2016, 2009a). As such, urban locations are largely dependent on giga-event planning, organisation and design which underpin these spaces. To capitalise on the co-creation of giga-event spaces and visitor flows, HEZ’s organisers could take advantage of digital and online technology as an emerging resource. Innovations in smart and cloud enabled devices and tools unlock the possibilities of users to co-curate the role and format of these live event spaces. Digital and virtual technological platforms (e.g. augmented reality) have the potential to facilitate liminal space and enhance the liminal event experiences for visitors and attendees (Robertson, Yeoman, Smith & McMahon-Beattie, 2015). As part of the live event hosting, digital communication upgrades can enable freer participation from micro and small businesses directly linked to these digital interactions. Technology development and tapping into deeper levels of physical engagement between locals and visitors were stipulated to be at the core of the Rio 2016 host city plans. Additionally, virtual reality technology was used for the first time at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games (ARUP, 2017). Rio 2016 (2009b) expressed their intentions for supporting connectivity and peak, digital engagement in competition venues and Live Sites. At Casa Brasil, a Porto Maravilha installation, state-of-the-art audio-visual technology and interactive spaces were integrated and exhibited for cultural events, seminars and workshops (Brazilian Ministry of Sport, 2016). Digital developments (e.g. an interactive port guide) and smart-based solutions in partnership with Cisco housed at the base of Porto Maravilha included an Urban Innovation Challenge and a connected urban platform unveiled in July 2016 (Uchoa & Barros, 2017; Carino & Dantas, 2017). Growth and opportunities arise from coordinating ‘Live Site’ giga-event digital, immersive environments to consequently increase spectator participation and visitor experiences, from the likes of virtual reality and hand-held devices (ARUP, 2017). Inaccessible host urban centres could be reprogrammed and initiated using digital platforms (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) to provide digital clues to harvest ‘liminoid spaces’ for local traders to engage consumers in critical consumption (Duignan et al., 2017). This attempts to divert and overcome the ‘core’ traditional business, in exchange for the cultivation of active digital engagement. Hence, recompensating and shifting demand to the peripheral locality to heighten micro and small business movements, interactions and desirable host community outcomes across giga-event spaces.

**Conclusions**

In summary, our analysis indicates an array of liminal space attributes and informs and addresses a gap in knowledge examining the theoretical and applied works of liminality in the emerging giga-events research domain. Conceptually, the chapter contributes to the types of liminal experiences that can occur in giga-event contexts, principally the spatial and temporal dimensions of liminality (Thomassen, 2009). Although there has been a convergence between liminality and giga-event research, the conceptual tenets are not well understood, and practically speaking, there is scant evidence to illustrate how liminal spaces can be effectively re-imagined for host community benefit in the long-term. From an event organiser and policy perspective, salient recommendations proposed could be useful for designing and organising live event space, as well as securing greater participation and creating tangible economic returns for micro and small businesses. This is vital in an era of uncertainty and growing concerns tied to how global bodies such as the IOC achieve divergent multiple event stakeholder objectives.

Using past Olympic Games hosts (e.g. Rio 2016), prevalent issues concerning how to craft city physical, spatial and digital liminal spaces and experiences have been explored. Areas of enquiry relate to how liminality can assist in explaining live staging Host Event Zones (HEZs). This includes the significance of urban host city Live Site spaces and ancillary facilities, and how venues can be actively managed, integrating micro and small businesses to help disrupt spending and marginalisation. To amplify and synergise embryonic liminality we applied and extended the ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’ model to demonstrate how it is possible to leverage liminal spaces for host community benefit. Digital and physical steps present and establish a vision for how giga-event spaces can be realised to better coalesce with elements of liminality. In addition, our best practice examples and tactics endeavour to illustrate the interplay between prominent live giga-event sites and liminal experiences for locals and tourists alike. The authors instigate a call for empirically driven event liminality research, not only geared towards other giga-events but aligned to smaller-scale event categories (e.g. major sporting events), focusing on spectator interactions and small business intentions and experiences. Future research is posited to assess the short and medium term giga-event Live Sites - from HEZ location selection, design, implementation to conversion and/or removal, combined with longer-term assessments of spatial and temporal changes in giga-event hosting territories.

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**Figures and Tables**

**Figure 1.** Extended ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’ (Adapted from Duignan, Everett, Walsh & Cade, 2017).

Events produce ‘liminoid’ spaces

**Figure 1.** Extended ‘Festival-Event-Leverage Complex’ (Adapted from Duignan, Everett, Walsh & Cade, 2017).

Exploitation of liminal spaces by micro-entrepreneurs

Overcoming ‘core’ vs. ‘peripheral’ locality and stimulating small biz movements’ and outcomes across giga-event spaces

The presence of these connections can be extended to enhance micro and small business resources and capabilities

Activation of events as series of ‘leverageable’ resources

Organisational activities, barriers (e.g. access) or producer ‘resistance’