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# ASSESSING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PARIS 2024 OLYMPICS

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## ABSTRACT

The Olympic Games occupy an ambivalent position in contemporary public debate, celebrated as a global cultural event while increasingly criticized for cost overruns, financial deficits, and contested legacies. This study assesses whether the Paris 2024 Summer Olympic Games can be considered economically sustainable, particularly in light of the broader framework of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The theoretical approach builds on the state of the art in Olympic economics, drawing on the British, German, and Swiss schools of thought, with particular attention to cost overruns, financial exposure, budget balance, and long-term legacy. Methodologically, the study adopts a case-study design, focusing on the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The design is mixed-methods, combining bibliographic and documentary research with ethnographic fieldwork and interviews. Quantitative analysis is based on secondary data from official budgets, IOC and OECD reports, and comparative datasets on Olympic revenues and costs, while qualitative insights are derived from ethnographic fieldwork in both the staging and post-event phases, including in situ observation and interviews conducted in Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis between July 2024 and April 2025. This approach enables triangulation between quantitative indicators and qualitative insights, ensuring both reliability and contextual depth. When data are available, a comparison with London 2012 and Rio de Janeiro 2016 is made, as the latter have set the ambitions for Paris 2024 and also aid in broadening sustainability assessments for future policy decisions. The results indicate that Paris 2024 implemented unprecedented sustainability-oriented governance mechanisms, including venue reuse, restrained construction, and a high share of private financing, aligning closely with international recommendations, though it experienced significant cost overruns and only moderate short-term economic gains. While it may serve as a partial benchmark for future hosts, its ultimate economic sustainability will depend on long-term legacy outcomes that are still unfolding within the 17-year evaluation horizon established by the organizers.

**Keywords:** Olympic Games; Economic sustainability; Sporting mega-events (SMEs); Paris 2024; United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda.

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