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Response to Olympic Legacies: International Conference: 'Impacts of Meg-Events on Cities'

Localism and a Sustainable Olympic Legacy: London 2012 and beyond

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Given that the Olympic Games and its Legacy programme are two separate time-spans, we cannot abandon previous literature on staging Mega-Events, despite a rush for immediate media gratification. Coaffee argues that the execution of Olympic Events can be thought of in paradigmatic evolutions. Thus, the holistic invocation of the London Legacy as the first “sustainable” games, which is already influencing developments in Rio 2016, can be said to be bringing us into a new paradigm of Mega-Event execution.

There has been significant criticism of London hosting the Games and the urban transformation of Stratford, which we would expect to find in any major regeneration project. Furthermore, the Localism Bill which changes the planning legislation with a new focus on planning at the neighbourhood level complicates the implementation of this vast regeneration project, with the assumption that there is already a pre-given consensus on “local community”.

This paper presents findings from the second-year research of my PhD. It seeks to explore whether Sustainable Urbanism and Localism, are mutually beneficial planning paradigms. Ultimately, can a newly formed governance regime of less integrated more isolated planning departments meet the great infrastructural challenges in order to meet the commitments of a Sustainable Olympic Legacy? Methods comprise analysis of policy, interviews with local organisations, urban designers and architects, as well as quantitative analysis of survey data based on usability and environmental interaction. The research site is based around two or three sites along the redeveloped “greenway”, a pedestrian corridor providing a key link between the Queen Elizabeth Park and other regeneration sites.