

Visibilities and Invisibilities in Urban Development: Small Business Communities and the London Olympics 2012

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Abstract

The principal stated rationale for bringing the 2012 Olympic Games to London was that it represented a once in a generation opportunity to regenerate the city's East End. And yet, its arrival opens up questions over how problem places within cities are characterised and how selective and power-infused visualisations shape the form and character of urban policy interventions. This paper draws on research conducted on a community of over 200 small businesses that existed on the proposed Olympic Village site in east London before they were evicted in the summer of 2007. It documents the effects of the regeneration on their competitiveness and explores the highly circumscribed politics of contestation that emerged. Collectively, it argues that there should be a greater policy and academic concern with the less visible and 'spectacular' elements of cities and communities who cannot easily be seen, but are vital to urban vibrancy, diversity and sustainability.

Introduction

The coming of the London 2012 Olympic Games has been presented as a unique opportunity for the regeneration of east London. Since the early 1980s, the Games have become intertwined with the broader discourses of urban renewal, image change and redevelopment to the extent that the International Olympic Committee now

wants to ensure that the host cities and their residents are left with the most positive legacy of venues, infrastructure, expertise, and experience (International Olympic Committee, 2001, p. 3; see also Essex and Chalkley, 1998).

The main infrastructure for the London Games will be built in some of the poorest inner-city neighbourhoods in England

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and it is widely argued that the focus on regeneration legacies played a key part in the success of the bid in July 2005 (see Gold and Gold, 2008; Poynter, 2009; Vigor *et al.*, 2004).¹ As the original bidding document (London 2012 Committee, 2004, p. 3) claimed, only an Olympics has the capacity to “transform one of the most underdeveloped areas of the country for generations to come”. From the outset, therefore, the plans sought to legitimise the bid by presenting east London as a ‘problem place’ in urgent need of sweeping physical regeneration. It was argued that only a mega-event could mobilise the resources, political will and institutional co-ordination that could bring about the area’s physical and social transformation.

And yet the mega size of the Olympic plans also raises a number of policy and academic questions over the effectiveness of regeneration programmes and their impacts on the form and character of cities. Development agendas often reflect and reproduce dominant imaginations and *visualisations* of how cities function and should appear. Narratives are constructed in which so-called problem places become re-imagined as ‘blank slates’, ready for comprehensive redevelopment. New characterisations are formed that deliberately overlook and/or misrepresent the significance of what Lefebvre (2000) terms the relatively invisible, ‘quotidian’ or day-to-day socioeconomic activities that make and remake urban living. Far from regenerating urban areas, the process of site clearance for new infrastructure can destroy pre-existing socioeconomic practices and paradoxically can erode employment opportunities and the quality of life for existing residents. As Healey notes such conditions result from the very narrowness of conceptions of the city that are deployed by policy-makers and

a tendency for dominant meanings to crowd out those which provide identity and material benefit to politically weaker groups (Healey, 2002, p. 1778).

This in turn means that in many places projects have generated development *in* deprived neighbourhoods, but have not led to the widespread regeneration *of* those neighbourhoods or generated significant benefits for the communities residing within them (Sayer, 1992; see also Jones and Evans, 2006; Swyngedouw *et al.*, 2002).

This paper draws on research that was conducted on the small businesses (SMEs) that existed on the Olympic Village site in east London before they were evicted in the summer of 2007. The visibility of the SME community was relatively low. Their clearance was seen as a prerequisite for the construction of highly visible and necessary Games infrastructure. Research in other urban areas has shown that this group is particularly vulnerable to land clearance as they often exist in unsightly, low-cost neighbourhoods and are easily written-off as ‘old-fashioned’, uncompetitive firms whose decline is inevitable (see Berry *et al.*, 1968; Imrie *et al.*, 1995). The paper argues that their treatment is indicative of the ways in which those governing large redevelopment projects visualise the regeneration process and create imaginations of urban economies and communities. On a broader canvas, their experiences also reveal much about the processes of problematisation that shape contemporary urban planning and wider conceptions over desirable and undesirable urbanism, what is valued and what a ‘good’ city is imagined to consist of.

The discussion is divided into three parts. The first examines the literature on planning for mega-events and discusses the importance of visibilities and invisibilities in regeneration discourses and practices. It also outlines the existing evidence on the treatment of SMEs within regeneration programmes and their significance to the socioeconomic character of cities. This is followed by a second section that briefly discusses the coming of the London Olympics before turning to the treatment of the SME community, the effects of sites clearances

on their competitiveness and the ways in which they responded to the threats posed by the Games. Collectively, the discussion shows that, thus far, local interests have had little real impact on development planning and that this is unlikely to change as the project progresses. The overriding significance given to the Games as a 'spectacle' and the externally imposed time-limits placed on local development agencies, mean that its production overrides other priorities. The paper concludes by arguing that regeneration policy should focus less on the creation of visible and spectacular mega-projects and more on the preservation and enhancement of less visible urban diversities. It also highlights key themes and agendas for further research.

Planning for Mega Projects: Regeneration, Small Business Communities and Urban Visualisations

Urban (In)Visibilities and the Regeneration Process

In many ways, urban regeneration is principally concerned with highly geographical visualisations of places and spaces. It is both a normative process in which policy-makers and others determine what an urban area should look like, in an ideal sense, and a practical process of identifying and selecting particular places and spaces for concerted action in order to bring these visions to fruition. How these spaces and places are 'seen' from different perspectives and the processes through which they become visualised are therefore critical elements in shaping any regeneration project. Some interests and actors are more visible than others. Some are able to mainstream their particular visions for cities, whereas others remain relatively invisible. The form and character of these visibilities have played an important part in writings on urban politics and urban political processes,

from the debates between pluralist and élitist authors in the US in the 1960s, to contemporary writings on the visualisations inherent in the public management and auditing cultures of the 2000s (see Dahl, 1961; Harding, 2005; Clarke *et al.*, 2007). In short, questions of (in)visibility are concerned with who has the power to influence development visions, how this power is mobilised and who it is that determines which visions are prioritised.

In British cities this politics of visualisation has taken on particularly complex and contested forms. Deindustrialisation has left significant tracts of vacant, brownfield land in many urban areas that pose significant development challenges and opportunities (DCLG, 2007). One response has been to use powerful, localist quango agencies to 'fast-track' initiatives and ensure that major, property-led projects are carried out on sites with a minimum of local opposition and involvement (see Cochrane, 2007). This approach reached its zenith in the 1980s and 1990s with the establishment of Urban Development Corporations whose resources and development visions were handed down by central government departments (see Imrie and Thomas, 1999; Newman, 2005). The UDCs, in the main, conceived of places as 'blank slates' for development that could be converted into highly visible regeneration landscapes through major engineering programmes and projects (see Dixon *et al.*, 2007). As blank slates, it was assumed that there were few, if any, socioeconomic activities of value that needed protecting or supporting. During the 2000s, comparable initiatives, including the creation of the Infrastructure Planning Commission and the Sustainable Communities Plan, prioritised the strategic importance of grand projects to national competitiveness over and above the needs of local communities (see English Heritage, 2004; DCLG, 2008).

At the same time, urban policy-makers, in response to contemporary political and

economic orthodoxies, have sought to make their cities more attractive to potential investors, tourists, visitors and what Richard Florida (2005) has labelled 'creative class' workers. As Peck (2005) argues, regeneration projects play a key part in this process with policy-makers keen to make their cities as visually attractive as possible, whilst also providing new gentrified work, leisure and housing spaces for the creative classes (see Christophers, 2008). The formal politics surrounding these developments have often been deeply consensual in nature and depoliticised to the point that authors such as Baeten (2009) and Swyngedouw now refer to the politics of urban development as essentially 'post-political' or

radically reactionary, one that forestalls the articulation of divergent, conflicting, and alternative trajectories for future possibilities (Swyngedouw, 2007, p. 26).

As Lefebvre (2000) argues, the production of urban spaces is a key element in both reflecting dominant understandings of what cities should be and creating environments that reinforce and make real such understandings. Urban development becomes converted into the production of commodified urban spaces that radically restructure the quotidian, day-to-day lives of individuals, businesses and communities, but in ways that are hidden from view and embedded in transitory decision-making processes.

At the same time, however, under the Labour government there has also been a proliferation of local initiatives, underpinned by partnership bodies usually working at the neighbourhood level. The New Deal for Communities programme, for example, promotes neighbourhood action and involvement, and is part of a wider government agenda to devolve welfare services to local communities and active citizens (see Blears and Hain, 2007). This empowerment agenda has ostensibly shifted the terrain of

urban development politics and created a new pluralism in which institutional avenues and opportunities have been opened up to local interests to shape policy objectives and practices. Even where quango bodies, such as UDCs, have been (re)introduced to promote regeneration, they have explicitly been characterised as 'community-friendly' or benign (see Raco, 2005). There has, therefore, been an effort to make local communities increasingly visual players in the governance of regeneration. There is nothing 'new' in these agendas, but they have become omnipresent in policy frameworks in the UK and beyond.

Under Labour, therefore, urban policy has become a complex mix of flagship, landmark development projects, such as the Olympic Games, on the one hand and community-focused, neighbourhood-based projects on the other. The former approach treats cities like commodities to be improved and made more visually appealing for sale to a wider set of audiences, whereas the latter sees development as a product of decisions made by actors at the local scale, albeit working to national policy targets, directives and frameworks. It is in this context that the treatment of specific communities, like SMEs, takes on an ontological and epistemological significance and it is to a discussion of their experiences in regeneration programmes that the paper now turns.

SMEs and Urban Regeneration

The role of industrial SME communities in contributing to the success and sustainability of urban economies is relatively opaque when compared with the activities of visible, high-profile investors and 'creative-sector' firms. This is because in many instances SMEs occupy marginal spaces within cities, outside the 'view' of mainstream populations and policy-makers. These sites are not only cheap but also have the advantage of being flexible when firms need to adapt their practices and/or expand (Imrie and Thomas, 1992; Thomas and Imrie, 1989). However,

this source of strength is also a vulnerability. In many instances, firms become *dependent* on the characteristics of their sites and the incremental investments that they have made to cater for changing business practices. Many come to rely on the established, close-knit networks that some have characterised as small area clusters (see Amin and Thrift, 2002; Porter, 2000). These qualitative and quantitative SME interdependencies emerge over time and can easily be lost through forced relocation, particularly as CPO schemes do not adequately compensate firms for rises in property values. As Thomas and Imrie note clearance schemes are often introduced with an indifference to the future of SMEs and

a presumption against so called low order uses ... in favour of more marketable, and profitable, land uses (Thomas and Imrie, 1989, p. 49).

The government's *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* (United Kingdom 2004) was designed to speed up the CPO process in order to facilitate regeneration and the Olympics presents an important test for the new legislation.

This combination of processes can often have significant qualitative effects on business practices. Marshall (1995), for example, argues that the periods of uncertainty generated by regeneration projects can blight SMEs' investment plans, thereby undermining their longer-term competitiveness. Customer and supply chains can also be adversely affected and the resources required to negotiate and address the legal and financial implications of CPOs can erode management time and divert attention away from the day-to-day running of firms. As Blackburn and Ram (2006) and Storey (1998) have shown, in order to sustain their competitiveness, SMEs require access to finance, a degree of medium-term certainty over their location, the availability of reliable labour and the ability to adjust flexibly to changing market demands. Direct and indirect threats to any of these can undermine

their competitive position relatively quickly. This is significant because SME communities provide goods and services that are essential to the formation of balanced urban economies (see Jacobs, 1968; London Assembly, 2007).

In addition to these practical problems, SMEs often face political difficulties in making visible their wider social and economic value. For policy-makers intent on creating marketable urban images of 'creativity' and 'vibrancy', they represent visible symbols of earlier eras of economic activity, whose presence may be seen as a physical block on economic change and regeneration. This situation is often compounded by the failure of SMEs to organise themselves into effective collective groups. As with other urban communities, they tend to mobilise in response to perceived threats and are much less likely to engage in the key upstream phases of urban planning and policy-making (see Taylor, 2007). Where firms have formed local business associations, these are often fragmented by internal differences and tensions over the extent to which business organisations primarily exist for political lobbying or economic networking purposes (see Raco, 2000). Overall, there is little evidence that SMEs have been able successfully to shape or influence regeneration projects, particularly if those projects are high-profile, mega-events (see Flyvbjerg and Bruzelius, 2002) Indeed, their difficulties are further compounded by the common perception that the business sector as a whole represents a 'privileged' interest in the politics of urban development (see Wood, 2004).

And yet, research has also shown that, as with other types of urban communities, SMEs are not merely passive actors in the governance of regeneration. In some instances, they can act reflexively to develop coping strategies and establish strategies and tactics to contest and challenge programmes. Owners can be adept at mobilising support from local development agencies in order to extract maximum concessions within the compulsory

purchase process or, in some cases, actually prevent relocations from going ahead (see Raco, 2002). Institutional processes and spaces of action can be opened up and modified by co-ordinated and targeted political action. The politics of visibility, therefore, has many dimensions and provides opportunities for urban communities as well as limitations.

In summary, this section has argued that the treatment of SMEs represents a litmus test for the broader aims, objectives and ideologies underpinning urban regeneration projects. For development agencies, low-value marginal sites represent both problem and opportunity spaces that need to be worked on and transformed in order not only to generate capital returns but also to demonstrate visibly that regeneration efforts are having a 'positive effect' on cities. The case of the London Olympics provides a salient example of these processes in action and it forms the focus of the remaining discussion.

The Olympic Development and the Relocation of SMEs

The Coming of the Games

The acquisition of the London 2012 Games represented a significant achievement for development agencies and policy-makers in London and the UK. The bidding process has been discussed in detail elsewhere (see Gold and Gold, 2008; Poynter, 2009) but from the outset one of its key stated objectives was the creation of *development legacies* in and around east London and the establishment of lasting benefits for local communities. The notion of legacy, or what the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as 'anything handed down by an ancestor or predecessor', has been deployed discursively as a new way of thinking about regeneration that will tackle the paradoxes and tensions discussed earlier. For the London Assembly (2007, p. 4) the Games will *only* be successful if they bring about a "transformation in the life chances of

London's most deprived communities". These discourses signify a significant shift from the Beijing Olympics of 2008, with its emphasis on external image-building, whatever the impacts on local populations (see Becker, 2008).

As research in cities such as Barcelona and Athens has shown, the Olympics represents an extreme example of urban regeneration policy in action in which the considerations that generally affect projects elsewhere are amplified to a higher degree (see Catalan *et al.*, 2007; Gospodini, 2009). Unlike other, more open-ended developments, they have a set time-frame by which projects have to be delivered, whatever the extent of local planning and infrastructural challenges to be overcome. They also have visions that are relatively fixed and structured and are created, primarily, for the consumption of an external international body, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), with its own rules and requirements. Once an Olympic project is underway, there is a political imperative for it to be delivered, whatever the objections of local and extra-local interests. Market considerations are also rather different. Sponsorship agreements with national and international firms are fixed early and, in the case of the London Games, the key sponsors were already in place by May 2008 (*The Guardian*, 2008). Development projects are signed and sealed after the event has been won and, whilst changing market and credit conditions have an impact on the trajectories of development, they are unlikely to derail an Olympic project entirely or stop development going ahead given the investment of political capital by governments and development agencies. As the Beijing Games of 2008 also demonstrated, there is nothing intrinsically democratic about 'successful' Olympic development planning (*The Economist*, 2008). This is particularly significant in east London where there has been a long history of comprehensive regeneration and local political activism and contestation (see Brownill, 1999; Dines, 2009).

However, the high visibility of the Olympics also provides opportunities for a variety of local interests to make visible, and draw political attention to, the broader effects and impacts of development plans. Whereas in 'ordinary' regeneration areas it can be difficult for less visible groups to capture political and media attention (see Thomas, 1994), the Olympics lends itself to attention-grabbing media campaigning. In the London context, the focus given to legacies and regeneration 'benefits' by Olympic planners makes the event particularly vulnerable to local campaigns and establishes a new level of scrutiny on urban and regional planning in and beyond London. Not since the controversial regeneration of the London Docklands in the 1980s have debates over urban policy, and fundamental questions over the regulatory capacities of the state to create 'better' cities, taken on such a high and very public profile.

The governance arrangements for the Games reflect the British tendency to deliver major, flagship regeneration projects through strong, centrally accountable and centrally funded quango agencies with a tacit recognition that such bodies should work in partnership. A new agency, the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) was established in 2005 to take this leadership role, with responsibility for managing the clearance of local SMEs given to the Mayor of London's executive body, the London Development Agency (LDA). Local authority business officers and planners, who had been working with local firms for a number of years, were marginalised from the process as the LDA became legally entrusted to manage the CPOs and firm relocations. The LDA's co-ordinating role also reflected the Games' integration into the spatial strategy for London, The London Plan, and its ambition to bring about the regeneration of the East End. As the former Mayor Ken Livingstone recently claimed

I didn't bid for the Olympics because I wanted three weeks of sport. I bid because it's the only way to get the billions of pounds off of the government to develop the East End (Livingstone, 2008, p. 1).

In other words, the Olympics were seen as an important part of a wider national and city-wide campaign to increase state investment in London's infrastructure (see Imrie, *et al.*, 2009; Tewdwr-Jones, 2009).

The initial development plans were relatively silent in relation to SMEs. It was clear that their presence came into direct conflict with the need to create new, highly visible, infrastructure for the Games. From the outset, therefore, representations of what became known as the Order Lands (see Figure 1) characterised the neighbourhood as one bereft of activity and ripe for wholesale redevelopment. The early Legacy Report (Prior, 2006, p. 23), for example, referred to the Games' power "to transform 200 hectares of degraded land into a magnificent new legacy park". Much of the area, it claimed, is "itself contaminated, derelict or abandoned" (p. 23). So-called low-density activities were characterised as a particular problem owing to the 'strategic importance' of the Olympic site, with its close proximity to central London. As the ODA's own Legacy Report argued

whilst certain industries and economic activities perform valuable functions, certain other activities do not use the land effectively or efficiently, employment densities are on the whole low and the area is dominated by manufacturing activities, a sector that is forecast to decline in the future (Prior, 2006, p. 9).

Such characterisations claim to speak a truth about the changing nature of this part of London. They not only paint a bleak picture of the area's marginal and invisible spaces but also set out a prophetic logic of 'inevitability' over the decline of existing manufacturers. This logic is then used to legitimate and justify their removal. At the same time, the area is also feted as an 'opportunity space', or

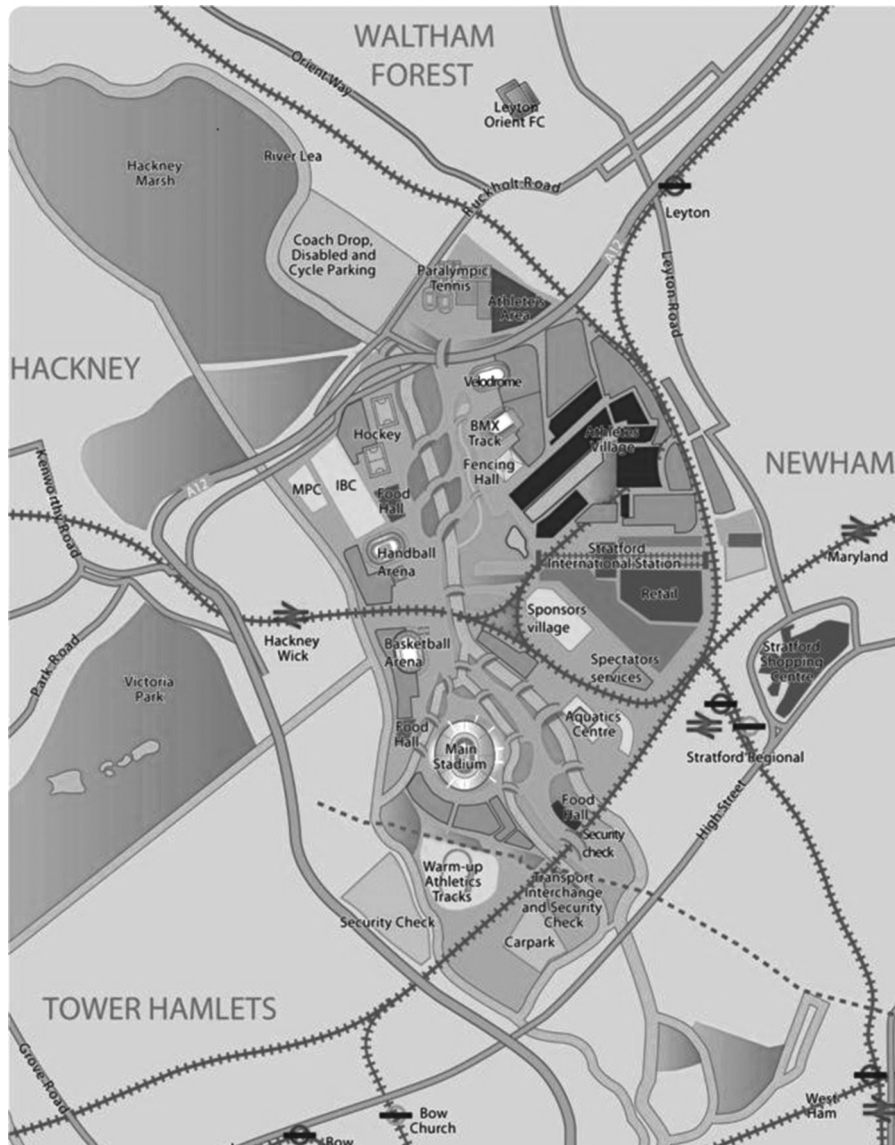


Figure 1. The Order Lands and Olympic Park.

a valuable resource that has the potential not only to bring about the physical transformation of this part of London but also to help the city, more broadly, to entrench its global status. It became

recognised as an area greatly in need of regeneration but at the same time offering considerable opportunities to provide for London's needs (LDA, 2005, p. 3).

Again, the Legacy Report was more explicit, arguing that a

new proactive approach to regenerating this part of London was required so that it made a full contribution to reinforcing London's world city status (Prior, 2006, p. 6).

It was in this context that the research for this paper was conducted between February 2007

and January 2008. A total of 201 businesses had just been served compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) and were actively being ‘transferred’ or removed from the site where the Olympic Village is to be constructed. By July 2007, all of the businesses had been relocated. In this respect, the research captured a key moment in the development process and one that, owing to the wider need to prepare the sites by a set time-frame, was shorter and less protracted than in regeneration projects elsewhere. Data collection drew on a mixed methods approach. It began by collecting and analysing the CPOs that had been made in order to document and characterise the existing local business community. This process also helped to make the research subjects more ‘visible’. A survey was then undertaken of as many firms as could be contacted, followed by a series of in-depth interviews with respondents who were willing to participate. Some were left with self-completion and return questionnaires, others were completed face-to-face. The total number of respondents was 84 (a 47 per cent response rate) and a full breakdown is given in Table 1.

The respondents were diverse but nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) were in the manufacturing, wholesale, car repairs and transport sectors, a distribution that is consistent with other research on urban SMEs. A third (34 per cent) had an annual turnover of less than £1 million, with 10 per cent turning over more than £30 million. Notably, two-thirds of firms employed more than 10 people and 79 per cent had been on their sites for more than 5 years, with 20 per cent occupying their sites for 16–20 years. In this sense, the firms were

usually well established, indicating a relatively high degree of competitiveness and sustainability. Site freeholders accounted for 19 per cent of respondents, with 58 per cent leasing their sites long term from a diverse range of local landowners. In many cases, respondents reported a longevity of leasing arrangements and highlighted their importance in giving them the ‘confidence’ to invest in their sites and to plan for the future.

In addition to the survey, a sample of nine firms were used as case studies for in-depth research before, during and after their relocation.³ The respondents were asked to identify the factors that influenced their competitiveness, with a particular focus on the importance of the sites that they occupied and their socioeconomic connections to local SMEs and residential communities. Respondents were also asked about their treatment by development agencies, the impacts that uncertainties and CPOs had had on their business practices and what, if anything, they had tried to do individually and collectively to try and influence the regeneration process. There was a particular emphasis on the theme of visibility and the extent to which firms felt that they were ‘seen’ as an important part of the development. Finally, the firms were also interviewed after they had moved, to gauge the impacts of relocation on their competitiveness and their *post hoc* views on the overall process. The rest of the discussion is now divided into two sections. The first examines the SMEs’ experiences of the CPO process and the pressures that many were under to make rapid and complex decisions in a challenging

Table 1. Types of SME response

<i>Total number of firms contacted</i>	<i>Self-completed returns</i>	<i>Completed face-to-face</i>	<i>Total number of responses</i>	<i>Refused or no return after reminders</i>
178 ^a	37	48	84	94

^a Even though 201 firms had received CPOs at the time of the research, the ownership situation was so complex that it was not possible to trace all the firms before they moved out.

environment. The second then turns to the issue of contestation and the politics of SME clearances that emerged.

The Compulsory Purchase Process and the Impacts on the SME Community

The period 2001 to 2005 was a time of growing uncertainty for the SMEs on the Olympic site. The high visibility of the Olympics meant that local firms were well aware that major regeneration initiatives might be on the way. However, the erratic nature of the bidding process created acute and hard to anticipate forms of instability. Many commentators in the early 2000s believed that the chances of London actually acquiring the Games were relatively low (see Vigor *et al.*, 2004), a view reflected by most SMEs. However, firms also noted an additional concern that a successful bid would lead to a strict and absolute regeneration timetable suddenly being imposed, with a minimum of consultation. It is not therefore surprising that only 21 per cent of surveyed firms felt that, in hindsight, the length of notice they were finally given to find alternative premises was sufficient. As one printing firm claimed

There should be a longer time-scale. It is like they are holding a gun to your head.

The first set of difficulties faced by firms was the practical one of relocation and the perception that CPO compensation undervalued the *real* costs of moving. SMEs in marginal sites face the double problem of being awarded relatively low levels of compensation, based on pre-regeneration market values, whilst also having to find resources to take up new and more expensive accommodation elsewhere. The existing area had significant advantages. Its closeness to central London, yet relatively affordable property and land prices (owing to its 'undesirability' for other uses), made it perfect for SMEs. The CPO process was also built on a series of geographical assumptions over the availability and existence of 'equivalent' sites

elsewhere, or places that are qualitatively and quantitatively comparable with those that firms are moving from. In the context of the London commercial property market of the mid 2000s, such assumptions had significant consequences for the CPOed firms.

Specific factors made relocation difficult. The simultaneous relocation of over 200 firms within a strictly defined time-scale saturated local commercial property markets in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Olympic area. For many SMEs, the temporary loss of working premises is not an option, a factor that makes them particularly vulnerable to change. There was also some evidence of landowners engaging in profiteering. As one construction firm commented

As soon as we mention that we are from this area, quoted prices double, as we are from the 'desperate list'. It's hard anyway because in this area you have a lot of dirty companies and there are not many areas left in London to accommodate them and as we are all being pushed out, that has pushed up land prices.

Or as a manufacturer recounted

the price has gone up 100 per cent from about £5 per square foot to £10 per square foot after the Olympics. They know that you have to take something, so they offer you places that you wouldn't even look at unless you were desperate.

Others noted that even through they were given sufficient notice of eviction, this did not help them to find another site given the problems already discussed. In the words of one manufacturer

Yes, we were given sufficient notice, but there is nowhere else affordable. No matter what they give us, it can't replace our site.

Or as a wholesaler pointed out

Technically they gave us long enough, but if the properties aren't available it doesn't matter. They don't seem to understand that

even if you get a site you can't throw up a building overnight.

Similar problems were reported by SMEs renting their sites. As one respondent noted

If I had been [evicted], without the Olympics, I'd have been able to find another site with no problem—there were plenty around this area at a reasonable price ... they assumed that local estate agents would be able to find like-for-like rent, but they can't. Because of the Olympics and of all the businesses that have to move, the rents have shot up.

The CPO process created other affordability gaps for SMEs. One principle of eviction is that recipients should not 'benefit' from the process financially at the expense of taxpayers or from the inflation in property values that follows. As many respondents suggested, this led to major underestimates of the true costs of relocation. As one manufacturer noted

when you are looking at a piece of land, you are not in fantasy land but in the real world where the Olympics is happening and you can't say to a seller 'can we pretend that the Olympics isn't happening' ... The LDA is offering us £1million per acre of our land but even if we moved 7 miles away from the Olympic site the price of land is already over £2.5million per acre and the LDA refuses to make up this difference in price.

In broader policy terms, the net differences in these values played a key part in the government's Olympic funding plans, as it was estimated that £800 million will be generated from property sales *after* the Games, effectively representing a transfer of benefits from existing SMEs in the area to the development agencies and property companies who will inherit the post-Games premiums.⁴

In addition, as with regeneration clearances elsewhere, the CPOs failed to give SMEs adequate return on their capital investments and outlays for fixed machinery or equipment. Some firms, for example, complained that the

LDA would not provide a 'new for old' policy and expected them to acquire machinery and other investments at second-hand rates. CPO law does not allow any state aid to a firm that that might lead to its 'betterment'. As one respondent found to its frustration

The rules are that you are not supposed to get anything better. So if your carpet cost £x per square metre 7 years ago then now you will only receive £y per square metre even though it will cost more than that to replace because in their eyes you will be getting a better carpet. But you are not asking for it, you are happy to stay but you can't and can't move these things.

The consequence of all these pressures was that the competitiveness of firms began to be squeezed, even though market conditions in the mid 2000s were relatively buoyant. In the survey, 12 per cent of firms expected to cease to trade as a direct result of the CPO, a further 7 per cent hoped to transfer but had failed to find suitable alternative sites. The process also exposed cleavages in the SME community to a greater degree than those documented in similar regeneration areas elsewhere (see Imrie *et al.*, 1995; Raco, 1997). There were structural differences between single owner-manager SMEs and other types. Smaller SMEs, for example, were particularly vulnerable (see Table 2). In the survey, all those who reported facing immediate liquidation had an annual turnover of less than £500 000 and had fewer than 50 employees. The burden of change therefore fell disproportionately on those least able to adapt. Such differences were brought out in the survey that demonstrated diverse perspectives on the extent to which the Olympics represented a potential opportunity or threat.

Alongside the physical costs of relocation, the biggest problem facing firms was the disruption to their customer and buyer/supplier bases and the impossibility of replicating them elsewhere. As one construction-related respondent noted

Table 2. Perceived levels of new opportunities and threats resulting from the development of the Olympic sites (percentages)

<i>Whether location of the Olympic Park will provide opportunities for business</i>	<i>Annual turnover 2005–2006</i>			
	<i><£500 000 (n = 17)</i>	<i>£500 000–£1 million (n = 12)</i>	<i>£1 million–£10 million (n = 22)</i>	<i>>£10 million (n = 13)</i>
Provides opportunities	–	7	47	47
Poses a threat	88	83	55	15

Table 3. SME views on the quality of new sites (percentages)

	<i>Better</i>	<i>The same</i>	<i>Not as good</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Question not answered</i>
Proximity to customers	5	25	54	9	7
Proximity to existing staff	5	34	52	2	7
Proximity to suppliers	7	39	32	9	13
Transport connections	21	27	32	7	13
Quality of buildings	52	20	14	–	14

We've been here for 17 years now and we have to move, which is a problem because we can't find anywhere with close to the same level of rent as here with a similar proximity to the city.

Or as another claimed

We can't find another affordable place, all rents are ten times as much as here so we won't be able to afford to pay—I have no idea what I'm going to do.

Such concerns were borne out by the survey. Of those who had accepted sites to relocate to, 55 per cent were moving to places 'significantly more expensive' and 15 per cent to sites 'slightly more expensive', whilst only 13 per cent had found equivalent sites and only 2 firms reported finding cheaper premises. As Table 3 shows, frequently the location of the new sites was significantly inferior, particularly in relation to the proximity of customers, employees and suppliers.

In many cases, SMEs accepted that, for a period at least, relocation would inevitably mean both higher costs and the loss of customers. As one printer conceded

We will lose customers because we will be further away. We will have higher rent to pay and possibly lose some employees. We had to accept the higher costs of rent, as the deadline is getting so close.

The finality of the CPOs meant that SMEs had no choice but to make 'a decision', even if this was likely to have a significant negative impact on their longer-term competitiveness. Another firm in the same sector noted that

We want to stay in the local area as a lot of our business is local but we will have a doubling in rent.

Whereas a neighbouring manufacturer claimed that

Due to the relocation of our business we are incurring an immediate increase in rent and rates and moving our business will undoubtedly mean a loss of business.

At the same time, other respondents highlighted the disruptive effects that the CPO process had had on local business clusters in both quantitative and qualitative ways. One effect has been to encourage a new realisation

amongst some companies of the strength and value of local clusters and the real significance of the *co-evolution* of interdependent relationships between firms and the places in which they operate. One motor-trade firm, for instance, reported that

As businesses started to move, I started to lose customers because all of the businesses round here are linked.

Or as a printing firm commented

At the moment, 80 per cent of our business customers are within a 2-mile radius. A lot are moving or have already moved. Two of our main customers used to live next door—now we've lost them.

The disappearance of such traded interdependencies had a severe impact on the short-term competitiveness and survival of firms and, as the next section will demonstrate, firms also became aware of the importance of untraded dependencies (see Storper, 1997) and these were used to establish a politics of resistance in the area.

Local dependencies went beyond local business networks. For example, for many firms the local availability of skilled workers was essential to their competitiveness. Real difficulties were highlighted in terms of *retaining* staff and firms were forced to engage in complex trade-offs between the cost of moving to a new, more expensive local site in order to retain staff and moving to cheaper sites further away with the risk that staff may not be able to relocate. When asked if moving would cause them to lose existing staff, businesses were evenly split with 37 per cent reporting yes and 37 per cent reporting no (with the remainder 'unsure'). For those that expected to lose employees, 74 per cent stated that it would be 'difficult' to replace them, including 30 per cent who claimed it would be 'very difficult'. This was particularly problematic for highly competitive manufacturing SMEs, who had built up a supply of local workers. As one noted

It is extremely difficult to replace trained fabricators. So to stay in the area is a high priority but it's really going to cost us.

Or as another recounted

I have held meetings and encouraged them to stay. I'm hoping to pay them a retainer of £2000 each to keep them when we move.

A similar dilemma was reported by another manufacturer who recounted that

There are no sites available locally with what we need but if we relocate to, say, North London, we will lose the majority of our staff ... [This] would have a huge impact on customer service and the delivery of contracts. We would need a handover period of at least three months to train new staff, but the LDA will not pay compensation for double wages for three months.

The competitiveness of businesses was also affected in more qualitative ways. Many respondents reported an acute sense of anxiety about their futures and the ways in which the process had been handled by the LDA and others. Half reported that they had put off making important investment decisions because of the uncertainty created by the regeneration and some noted that this had led to short- to medium-term losses of competitiveness, with potentially long-term implications for their viability. As a manufacturing firm claimed

If the Olympics had not have happened our business would have carried on growing ... but instead four years of our life has been wasted in an uncertain position where we do not know what is going to happen to us. So, actually, it has had a four-year disturbing effect on our business. Is that something that we will be able to catch up on? I don't know.

Others noted that staff morale had collapsed because of the uncertainty and that the sense of security that workers had had was being eroded by the planning process. Managers also

complained that they had lost valuable business time in negotiating with the LDA. Whilst development agencies can call upon dedicated staff and resources to implement their programme, SMEs are required to navigate their way through complex legal and financial processes at the same time as they have to maintain their day to day competitiveness. Research has shown that the significant physical and mental strains of running an SME in ordinary circumstances often undermine the capacity of business owners to negotiate effectively, even though in many cases they possess a high degree of legal and procedural competence (see Storey, 1998).

Finally, firms were asked about their connections to local labour markets and the effects that relocation would have on employment. Thirteen per cent reported that ‘all’ their employees lived in the neighbourhoods around Stratford. A further 36 per cent ‘more than half’, 39 per cent ‘less than half’ and only 13 per cent ‘none’. These workers tended to come from relatively low- to middle-income households and the prospects of commuting relatively long distances was, for many, not an option. As one firm commented

We don’t pay that high wages because of the sort of businesses that we are so it is quite important to local people that they have easy transport to work, rather than people who might commute from Surrey or East Anglia or something, we don’t have that, we have local people that want to come to work and do their job.

Indeed, after re-location to a site further out in east London, one manager complained that life had become more difficult for his firm and his workers,

It used to take them [their workers], say, 15 minutes to get to work and now it can take up to an hour. I have to be elastic with them, at the end of the day they have worked with me a

long time and I don’t want to lose them or see them get into trouble so, I have to consider, if they are late, that I don’t say anything because they are good workers.

Once again development agencies made a whole series of assumptions—in this case believing that workers could simply relocate, commute or be replaced with the minimum of disruption. There is little acknowledgement of the peopled nature of SMEs or the relationships of trust and reciprocity that build up between social actors over time. Disrupting such networks has a potentially devastating effect on a firm’s competitiveness and the lives of those who work for it.

Overall then the Olympics has acted like a tidal wave crashing over local businesses and clearing them away as the first stage of a longer regeneration process. Their low visibility has made them relatively easy targets for ‘decisive’ action and this section has detailed some of the pressures that the firms faced in being evicted and the implications of their treatment for their longer-term competitiveness. Despite the rhetoric of community local firms have found themselves on the receiving end of the process of remaking this part of London and the production of new spaces in which they have no part. It has also demonstrated how bureaucratic visualisations shape the production of urban spaces and the routines and practices of everyday life. The paper has demonstrated some of the close relationships that firms have to the places in which they operate and the damage that breaking these relationships can have on both. Even though the area was characterised as a dead space, it was clear that a thriving SME sector *was* present, although relatively invisible. These experiences, however, also need to be put into the context of the broader politics of regeneration that has surrounded the Olympics and it is the processes of political contestation that the next section now discusses.

Contesting the Regeneration: Making Visible the Costs of Regeneration

The SME clearances did not go uncontested. From the outset, a number of local firms adopted a reflexive strategy of making themselves 'more visible' in the regeneration process in order to highlight the broader socio-economic effects of their removal and the perceived injustices at their treatment. However, the global scale of the Olympics and the inevitability that the SME sites would be cleared in order to deliver to a specific and unmoveable timetable, limited the scope and scale of policy negotiations and flattened out the potential politics of contestation. In response, many firms adopted a politics of mitigation towards the proposals and attempted to get the 'best deal possible' in financial terms. This meant that the SME community was divided, with some seeking to build up a collective response, whereas others were happy to enter into individual negotiations. As this section will demonstrate, building a 'legitimate' business and/or community voice in this context represented a significant challenge and made the task of implementing the regeneration a much easier prospect for development agencies.

As with community politics elsewhere, the existence of a collective threat acted as a source of political mobilisation. An existing group known as the Marshgate Lane Business Group (MLBG) quickly became a vehicle for more significant action.⁵ A member noted in interview that

We used to talk about little issues ... [but] as soon as the CPO notification came it became a big meeting session for businesses trying to cope with the threat of the Olympic Games and being thrown out.

And yet, despite the existence of the MLBG and the size of the collective threat to SMEs, the politics of representation quickly became polarised. Some firms, particularly those who were leasing premises, wanted

to make it clear that they 'backed the bid' and supported the coming of the Games, even if this had some detrimental impact on their business practices. The existence of such agendas highlighted some of the complexities that exist in the social relations of business politics, with the views of business actors reflecting a complex mix of business rationalities and broader social, cultural and political values. As one active MLBG member recalled

There was a split decision—back the bid or not back the bid. It got a bit polarised.

Or as another recounted

We believed that it would be good, and improve the area ... we put up posters during the euphoria and then boys from other companies would come round and try to take them down because they were against it ... we supported the bid and put banners up. I thought that the area needed redevelopment and at least this way people would get some compensation.

The basis of this support was two-fold. First, the strength of the city-wide 'euphoria' over the Olympic bidding process was such that it was politically difficult to be seen to visibly oppose it. The 'I back the bid' campaign launched by the Mayor, the government and the GLA had been relatively successful in creating a post-political consensus over the Games. Such trends have been evident in regeneration and place-marketing politics elsewhere (see Kearns and Philo, 1993). As one activist recalled

The LDA did not want to know, the government would not help, the opposition wouldn't help, the media wouldn't help, because no one wanted to be seen to be supporting a group which would seem to be anti the Olympics coming to London, even though we weren't, but that is how they portrayed us.

Another noted

On almost any other scheme you would have been able to get your point across better. I liken the Olympics to the king's new clothes, they are great, they are fine, you can't argue against it because that is it, nothing Lord Coe does could be argued about.⁶

Secondly, many of the firms believed that the Bid would probably be unsuccessful and that even if it were then the LDA and others had promised that they would be protected in the regeneration plans. One respondent commented that

We went to the meetings and listened to what they had to say and they said the same thing for 18 months 'we are going to help you' ... so no, I wasn't overly worried".

However, as the full implications of an Olympics became clearer, a series of local campaigns were established and even some of the firms who originally backed the bid became critics of the new arrangements. As a leading campaigner noted, from an early stage it was decided that

Legally there is nothing you can do, so the strategy had to be one of being the biggest pain in the neck to these people, be the biggest thorn in their side, get as much media support as you can and, eventually, hopefully they will just pay you to go away because you will be a nuisance to them.

Another critic similarly recalled that

We just fought on and on and were as tenacious as possible and used the media as much as we could.

The MLBG's strategy was designed, primarily, to increase the visibility of the SME community and to contest the bid's dominant characterisation of the Olympic site as a 'derelict' area. Again, as a leading member commented

We were trying to sway minds and let people know that there were a lot of businesses in the area because they kept on portraying it as derelict land and some of it was, but that was the government's fault ... The reason we lobbied was because there were a hell of a lot of businesses round the back streets and in all the units and we provided a living for people and we didn't try and con anybody.

The businesses believed that enormous pressure was being put on the media and claimed that stories were being suppressed in the name of the 'unity bid'. One interviewee even noted that, in a BBC question-and-answer session with the Mayor of London, they were told beforehand that they were not allowed to raise critical questions in relation to the Games or the broadcast would be terminated. It was, of course, impossible to verify such claims through the course of this research, but the perception of being 'silenced' was clearly felt by a number of business respondents and this tallies with the experiences of community groups in other cities in which place-marketing campaigns have taken centre stage and sought to control the boundaries of political debate.

Despite this, the MLBG took every opportunity to bring attention to their cause. For example, they directly contacted the IOC and met its Visiting Committee when it toured London in 2005 in the run-up to the awarding decision. Their official line was that they could not support the bid as it currently stood because of the adverse impacts regeneration would have on SMEs and local residents. However, as one respondent recalled "*It made little difference*". Other efforts were made to get the support of the London mayor or any other groups or interests that could provide political support. However, in the run-up to the Games, it was difficult to find allies for a relatively invisible group of SMEs in a context where there was a strong possibility that the regeneration may not have gone ahead in any case. The only documented 'supporters' were the mayor of Newham and elements within

some of the local authorities who had established relationships with local firms.

In response the MLBG, in consultation with the mayor, adopted a different strategy. It wrote, and widely publicised the existence of, a Business Charter. The Charter stated that no firm should incur financial losses from the CPO process and the association asked the LDA and other agencies to sign up to it. However, rather than embedding the LDA in a series of agreements, the Charter became a focus for further political divisions and wrangling. The LDA was reluctant to sign any agreement that would guarantee financial returns for SMEs. As one prominent local firm noted

The LDA said it was a 'good idea' [but] they then basically hijacked the Charter, rewrote it and made it totally unacceptable to any of the businesses, and none of the businesses signed up to it. Then the LDA kept going on the media declaring that 'we have prepared a charter about how we are going to help the businesses, isn't it wonderful' but none of the businesses had agreed the charter so it was complete nonsense.

However, the announcement of the success of the bid in July 2005 transformed the character of local business politics. Leading representatives of the business association recalled that the concretising of what had been aspirational development plans undermined much of the collective sense of business politics that had grown up in the area. As one noted in interview

Everyone after that was more or less out for themselves, we couldn't win after that, we were all to be CPOed and it wasn't going to be reversed ... it was everyone for themselves.

The collective meetings stopped and as one firm recalled

After the CPOs were announced, everything kind of fizzled out.

Others highlighted the ways in which individual as opposed to collective action became more prominent. As one interviewee noted

As we got further down the line towards an individual settlement, we really detached ourselves from it [the business association]. Mainly because at that stage we were looking out for our own selfish needs

Or, as another openly declared

We used it for our own purposes. Wasn't that altruistic as soon as we got what we wanted we ducked out ... I didn't see the point in slagging off the LDA—the war was over.

Some firms argued that, as prominent critics of the LDA, they also received privileged or 'fast-track' treatment when having their individual cases dealt with. One campaigner argued that

We got sorted out better than others because we put up a fight and I know that that is not right but it is the way it is, it wasn't fair but it worked.

Others commented on the unequal treatment that firms had received depending on the extent to which they had made themselves visible critics of the regeneration plans. As one CPOed firm recalled

Gradually we were better treated because it became very political and it was in the public eye, it was in the radio, the news, and it was all about how this was affecting businesses. The publicity certainly helped us in our negotiations.

Or, as another noted

The LDA and the Olympic body didn't want bad publicity if they could help it, they had enough bad publicity of their own, generated by overspending and some of the mistakes they were making ... We made them aware that we wouldn't just roll over and they dealt with us reasonably fairly. There was an unwritten agreement that providing they kept dealing with us in a reasonable manner that we would not kick up a fuss.

Despite these perceptions, the reality of the politics of contestation in the Olympic area was one of limited local influence. Challenging and contesting dominant visions and narratives presents any community of actors with significant difficulties, particularly when visions have such wide-ranging and significant concrete effects. The SMEs' experiences exemplify those of businesses and residential communities in regeneration areas elsewhere. Their invisibility and their lack of political allies made it particularly difficult to establish an influential, alternative politics for the regeneration of their areas. For the LDA and others, the SMEs represented a relatively small problem in the wider context of project delivery. Empowered with legal and financial resources to undertake the SME clearances, there was little need to change significantly their practices and objectives. One of the political advantages of dealing with an SME community is that, once relocation has taken place, the focus of attention quickly moves on to what is then (visibly) created on the 'prepared' sites. By converting the relocation process into a 'technical' issue, overseen by dedicated experts working in quango agencies, the clearances were to a large extent depoliticised. They became a bureaucratic *fait accompli*, to be overcome as quickly and efficiently as possible. In the context of debates over the London 2012 Olympics, the issue of local SME competitiveness has all but disappeared, with the exception of some isolated local press reports indicating that some SMEs still have not received full relocation compensation (see *London Evening Standard*, 2009).

Conclusions

The attraction of the 2012 Olympic Games to London represents a potentially significant moment in the history of urban policy in the UK. Its core focus on 'legacies' and its promise to regenerate one of Britain's most deprived urban areas have given a renewed impetus

to longer-term debates over the relationships between mega-events, regeneration and urban change. The organisers have been explicit in stating that the Games will have failed if it does not leave a legacy of growth, employment and expansion and lead to the development of surrounding neighbourhoods. In this sense, it has been presented by the Labour government, the London mayors and others as a standard-bearer for a new generation of partnership-based, sustainable and socially responsible regeneration projects that avoid the polarising effects and short-term outlooks of earlier eras of Thatcherite, property-led regeneration. In explicitly drawing on the image of London as diverse, global city, the original bid presented socioeconomic diversity as a force for good, to be celebrated and nourished through sensitive regeneration projects and programmes.

And yet, as this paper has shown, the early phases of regeneration have reflected and reproduced the practices inherent in flagship regeneration projects elsewhere. As Healey argues such, projects often undermine more plural and progressive views of urbanism and the creation of

multidimensional conceptions of the city [which] reflect and interrelate the rich diversity and complexity of urban life, while generating a discursive public realm within which people can argue about what their city is and should be (Healey, 2002, p. 1779).

For Harvey (1989), one of the features of mega-events is their bread-and-circuses character in which the episodes leading up to the final 'circus' are quickly forgotten. The focus moves towards the ends rather than the means of regeneration. As Lefebvre (2000) argues, the contested and divisive decision-making processes that shape the final outcome rapidly become masked or hidden as cities become commodified spaces to be marketed and sold.

The spectacular and fleeting nature of global sporting events makes them particularly powerful vehicles for the mobilisation of such

processes (see Cochrane *et al.*, 1996; Poynter, 2009). The treatment of communities in and around the Olympic sites in Beijing in 2008, where huge areas were cleared to create space for the Games' infrastructure, demonstrates just how regressive policy-making can be (see Becker, 2008; Meyer, 2008). Whilst the London case has been nowhere near as extreme, the paper has shown that bureaucratic simplifications and assumptions play a key part in shaping urban visualisations. Whole neighbourhoods and those who reside and/or operate within them can still be written off as 'blank slates', with little consideration needed for existing activities and practices. The irony is that, ultimately, the London Olympics may lead to less diversity in this part of London, even though the products and services provided by the local SMEs play an important part in the supply of key industrial services in east London and provide significant and appropriate employment for local communities. Without them, urban economies as a whole become less functional and sustainable (see Porter, 2000).

The paper has also made an empirical contribution by documenting a particular moment in the regeneration process surrounding the London Olympics. It has highlighted some of the broader political tensions that exist over what a city could and should consist of and what physical, social and economic infrastructure it should possess. In this sense the Olympics has stimulated debate over spatial planning in London and the role of major regeneration projects in shaping the capital. However, the case study has also demonstrated how the politics of mega-events has involved attempts to make political plurality and conflict less visible in order to attract, and then roll-out, the Games. For authors such as Swyngedouw (2007) and Baeten (2009), this new form of politics exemplifies a 'post-political condition' in which a dominant consensus is used to stifle effective opposition to programmes in the name of a wider, uncontestable political good.

There was an effort to keep the difficulties associated with SME clearances relatively invisible and to use the politics of 'legacy-building' as a vehicle for overcoming local opposition. In Lefebvre's (2000) terms, what we have witnessed is the bureaucratisation of policy processes and the construction of new urban spaces with radically different, but politically desirable, quotidian or day-to-day uses.

In terms of further research, the paper has indicated that there is a real need to engage with the broader agendas surrounding urban visibilities and their impacts on regeneration processes. There needs to be a greater awareness of the alternative yardsticks that could be mobilised to measure the 'success' or otherwise of regeneration programmes and greater visibility of the plurality of activities and socioeconomic practices that create vibrant and functioning cities. Research should break open the multiple claims and needs that different groups have, particularly in a context where their enforced absence and/or mobility is seen as a policy priority. In short, there needs to be a move away from the dominant metaphor of visibility and the 'spectacular', to a greater concern with the less visible elements of urban society, or those who cannot easily be seen but are nonetheless vital to urban vibrancy, diversity and sustainability. Rather than treating regeneration as a technical exercise, catalysed by flagship events, it should be repoliticised as a process characterised by different vocabularies and imaginations. There should be greater value given to the diversity of economic and social activities and the strengths of incremental urban change, as opposed to crude dichotomies between regenerated and lifeless urban spaces.

Notes

1. Over 1.1 million people live in the Olympic boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Waltham Forest. Collectively, they possess 150 000 residents who are dependent on welfare benefits and 145 000,

mainly young people, have no qualifications. Rates of deprivation are extremely high with just over a third (36 per cent) of children growing up in households officially defined as 'poor' and average mortality rates that are 20 per cent higher than the rest of London.

2. In traditional writings on urban politics, pluralist systems of governance were equated with transparency and decision-making processes that were open and visible to all. Conversely, characterisations of élitism within political systems have been linked to 'invisible' decision-making structures that operate beyond the 'public gaze' and 'behind closed doors'. New public management writers have examined the visibilities of target cultures and performance indicators in the public sector that are designed to make visible, and in turn shape, the practices of actors (see Pratchett and Leach, 2007).
3. These firms covered a range of different economic sectors and were all single-owned. The respondents also expressed a willingness to be sampled in-depth from the original survey and had shown on their completed survey forms a breadth of knowledge and experience that made them excellent candidates for further research. The follow-up interviews had two main purposes, first to flesh out individual experiences and impacts, and secondly to try to obtain accounts of how the politics/tactics evolved over time.
4. Although the rapid decline in property markets in London in late 2008 is likely to have a major impact on the commercial calculations that underpinned the bid (see *The Guardian*, 2008).
5. Founded in 2002, the MLBG sought to improve the quality of the local physical environment and encourage firms to trade and co-operate with each other and to improve working relationships between the businesses and the local authority.
6. Lord Sebastian Coe, a former double Olympic gold medallist, was the official leader of and chief spokesman for the London 2012 bid.

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