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Paper entitled: The 3 R'S of Olympic Legacy; regeneration, renaissance, rejuvenation

The word regeneration features prominently in the official documentation of the London 2012 organisers, the International Olympic Committee, various books, articles and journals, especially in relation to justifying the hosting of mega-events.

Exactly what does the word mean and is it the correct word to use?

London 2012 intends to transform the lives of the people of East London through the social, physical and economic changes, in that 'regeneration' means keeping the same social classes and improving the facilities and infrastructure for their benefit. However, experience from past Games has proven that in most cases the ex-athletes village properties' become sort after accommodation through their location, historical significance and in particular with Sydney, their high environmental standards. These properties therefore appreciate in value very quickly and become occupied by middle class, thus causing a renaissance of the area rather than regeneration (Mace et al, 2007). In addition there is also social rejuvenation relating to reversing the decline of an area without specifying for whom the improvements are necessarily intended.

Is it feasible to accommodate mix use housing? Will the Games organisers eventually need to maximise their return on the sale of the properties and therefore reduce the size of the affordable housing stock? Will the true locals benefit from the organisers plans for the area? Many of the answers to these questions can be considered by studying past Games' experiences, particularly lessons to be learnt from Barcelona and Sydney.

Several in-depth interviews with stakeholders of the Games have been conducted, using stakeholder theory for the theoretical underpinning (Friedman and Miles, 2002). A phenomenological stance is taken as it is an approach that focuses on how life is experienced and the use of interviews from past-Games will help with predicting what could happen in London. It is the perceptions, meanings, attitudes and feelings that are important to discuss as these experiences tell a story. Whilst the interviews were conducted by city, the semi-structured approach to interview protocol has allowed each interview to be iterative, in that new themes emerging are included in subsequent interviews. The sampling is purposive, whereby each interviewee has a role within the Olympic planning from the perspective of the local community.

The data from the interviews has been analysed via thematic analysis, using Ritchie and Spencer's Framework (1994).