

## Re-thinking the Legacy 2012: the Olympics as commodity and gift (draft)

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## *Introduction*

In 2007, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published the following ‘5 legacy promises’. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games aim to do the following:

- To make the UK a world-class sporting nation, in terms of elite success, mass participation and school sport.
- To transform the heart of East London.
- To inspire a new generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural and physical activity.
- To make the Olympic Park a blueprint for sustainable living.
- To demonstrate that the UK is a creative, inclusive and welcoming place to live in, to visit and for business.

These promises underpin a more detailed document forming a part of the UK government’s ‘Legacy action plan’ (DCMS, 2008). Each promise serves as a ‘headline’ for a programme of projected events and initiatives. Notwithstanding the content of the outline plan there are indignant voices which argue that this is where serious commitment ends: as mere **headlines**. Critics proffer an understanding of ‘legacy-talk’ as a smokescreen for wasteful and opportunistic expenditures on a ‘white elephant’ mega-event—and little else.<sup>1</sup> Even Olympic Minister Tessa Jowell acknowledges that ‘legacy’ has become something of a watchword. However, Jowell’s counter-suggestion is that there is a once-in-a-generation opportunity ‘to turn the rhetoric of Olympic legacy into fact’. The DCMS action plan document purports to be a key to the delivery of these legacy outcomes (DCMS, 2008, p. 2). This paper does not aim to assess the credibility of the 2012 legacy promises.

Instead, the paper is an attempt to open discussion about the nature of ‘legacy’ and an attempt to articulate a contradiction in the way ‘legacy’ is conceived—suggesting that Jowell’s negotiations between ‘rhetoric’ and ‘fact’ might not be easy. The legacy promises serve in part as legitimations to set against the ‘bottom line’. This five-point articulation of ‘legacy’ aims to serve as justification for large-scale programmes of investment attached to the 2012 Games and the surrounding East End of London. It is likely that only time will tell the depth, effectiveness and extent of any legacy. However, it is clear that an agenda has been set and it would be difficult to argue that legacy is not ‘centre stage’.

However, establishing working definitions and parameters for ‘legacy’ is a difficult task. Defining ‘legacy’ is problematic especially if conceived as an entirely predictable or measurable set of objectives. Indeed, the definition of ‘legacy’ is partly constitutive of the legacy itself, a component of achievements that the city might make. Such a ‘legacy definition’ will become a functional term in the complex planning and evolving conceptions underpinning urban change for some time—if successfully negotiated and if governable. As such, ‘legacy’, and the activities and values entailed to it, can come to provide a catalytic ‘vocabulary of motives’ and a legitimating discourse enabling politicians, communities and their individual representatives to justify investments, evolving strategies and activities connected to and connecting developmental gains in a more or less healthy fashion. It is because of this that legacy and its various meanings come to matter.

An incoherent, contentious or inconclusive understating of ‘legacy’, or a radical disjuncture in the meanings of ‘legacy’ as understood by leading institutions (e.g. governmental bodies, The Olympic Sponsors (TOP) sponsors and delivery authorities, for instance) or between any of these high-level and influential bodies and the communities they aim to serve: such disjuncture will destabilise and diminish beneficial legacy. Instead of a

developmental process linking event planning to creative agendas for urban regeneration the Games and investments in them will become a site for stand-offs and disengagement. The Games and legacy planning in this scenario becomes a further arena for the displaced enactment of the many socio-cultural contradictions which operate in the wider world and in the east end in particular; between local and national government, between city and state, between local communities and commercial redevelopment agendas, and so on. Such fractiousness produces inertia and not the catalytic effects underpinning ‘legacy momentum’.<sup>2</sup>

Legacy matters from an international perspective too. Legacy has assumed considerable significance to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), to host cities and to governments and sponsors over recent decades.

An IOC conference in 2003 offered a wide-ranging and multifaceted conception of legacy:

*the effects of the legacy have many aspects and dimensions, ranging from the more commonly recognized aspects—architecture, urban planning, city marketing, sports infrastructures, economic and tourist development—to others that are just as, if not more important, but that are less recognised. In particular, it is necessary to point out the importance of so called intangible legacies, such as production of ideas and cultural values, intercultural and non-exclusionary experiences (based on gender, ethnicity or physical abilities), popular memory, education, archives, collective effort and voluntarism, new sport practitioners, notoriety on a global scale, experience and know-how, etc. These intangible legacies also act as a motor for the tangible ones to develop a long-term legacy. (IOC, 2003)*

As with the 2012 legacy promises we see wide-ranging and open-ended ideas about legacy. However, such imaginative and optimistic accounts of legacy are not the only version of legacy ‘in town’, nor the most influential. Media reporting of the Games, in London in particular, has amplified a trend evident in numerous statements of government policy and in business and academic literature: there is a focus upon cost–benefit approach to planning and accountability, projecting and evaluating the impact of the Games and its legacy upon East London and the wider economy in terms of a limited and limiting conception of the Games.

‘Legacy’, in a much reduced conception, has become the answer to any number of questions about the Games: questions based on two underlying anxieties:

*. What will it cost me/us/them?*

*. What will I/we/they get out of it?*

This second version of legacy has a relevance in that it radically undermines the power of the open ended ‘legacy-script’. This paper suggests that the emphasis of such cost–benefit ways of thinking and planning (necessary as they certainly are) affirms what I want to call the ‘commodity character’ of the Olympics. The commercialisation of the Games is only one component of the commodification of the mega-event and not the major focus of this paper. The identification of the ‘commodity character’ of the Games is primarily an attempt to identify the way that accounts of and accountabilities related to the Games and its legacy are principally conceived under rubrics of monetization, and financialisation. These processes lead to the disembedding of the event and its planning from the social worlds and localities within and upon which it is intended that they catalyse the future developmental gains earmarked ‘legacy’. This analysis in some ways parallels, on a small scale, Polanyi’s (1944) arguments about the disembedding of economy from society. Like Polanyi I am arguing for a re-integrative moment—one where economic legitimations are re-subordinated to societal ones. The over-determination of this disembedding commodity-ontology regarding the Games and its legacies in particular subordinates ideas of ‘city-building’ and ‘community-based regeneration’ to the exigencies of the market and the ‘only at arm’s length’ direction of local and national government. The nature of the Games, should, I want to suggest, be considered within additional and further paradigms— in particular to allow attunement to the potential affective sociality of—and so engagement with—the event and its planning.

‘Good city building’, if it is to be catalysed by the Olympic mega-event, demands a broader perspective on the Games—a different but complementary conception of the kind of intervention constituted and transacted (on a grand scale and compressed, initially over a period of five years) under the heading Olympics 2012. This conception invites and supports various engagements in and contributions to the Olympic project as a crucial supplement to the rational economism necessary for, but not sufficient to thinking and delivering a Good legacy and a Good Games. The reframing I suggest examines two modes of social and economic relationship, both of which are enacted in the intervention made via the Olympic mega-event. The first and dominant, as mentioned, is the ‘commodity-mode’, typically reflected in cost–benefit economism. The secondary mode is also in evidence as 2012 approaches—a conception which characterises much IOC and other promissory cultural discourses of Olympism and which has a root in the pre-history of the modern Games. This supplementary mode can be usefully called the ‘gift-mode’. The ‘gift’ Olympics describes an identification of and with of the nature and impact of an Olympic-related economy actively embedded in and engaging socio-cultural life and relations—especially in the various accumulations and effects corralled under the term ‘legacy’—in particular ‘soft’ legacies, such as city reputation, social integration, civic pride, and so on. ‘Legacy’ has become the all-important and avidly deployed term in the plan. It owes much of its semantic potency to its appeal to socially embedded (familial) economies. The notion of legacy is more closely connected to gift exchanges in normal usages, e.g. passing on between generations far more than to the cost–benefit economism that describes commodity-based forms of exchange. Gregory (1983) draws out the gift/commodity distinction in a useful way:

Commodity exchange is an exchange of alienable objects between people who are in a state of reciprocal independence that establishes a quantitative relationship between the objects transacted, whereas gift exchange is an exchange of inalienable objects between people who are in a state of reciprocal dependence that establishes a qualitative relationship between the subjects transacting. (p. 104)

This paper revolves around this dichotomy in the conception and characterisation of the Olympic project—its interventions and transactions—a contradiction whose ongoing management is worthwhile attending to as a component in the work of thinking about, planning and delivering the London 2012 Olympics—towards better assuring a dynamic and developmental legacy as a major component in the

future transformation of East London. Simulating or stimulating the gift economy?

It is possible to illustrate some of the tensions at play in operating a ‘commodity-Olympics’ in the notional space of a ‘gift-Olympics’. In order to do this I will briefly refer to a recent advertisement, one which (in familiar advertising style) shows a folkloric gift network—a community bound by relations of concern,

exchanging knowledge, material goods and care. It is the kind of idealising nostalgia for community that advertisement directors specialise in. What is significant here is that the film mobilises a highly familiar advertising trope: the commodity re-figured and enlivened by being inserted into the plane of cultural/gift exchange—Here, the commodity (Stella Artois lager) is re-presented as being of a piece with all the

surrounding cultural objects and transactions—in a French peasant village. The lager is transposed from the network of commodity provision and market relations and re-

embedded—apparently seamlessly—into a depicted network of cultural and social reciprocity and sharing.

This simulated transformation of commodity into gift—the advertiser’s act of embedding commodity exchange into a social script—can be illustrated with a still image too, also an advertisement—a promotional beer mat picked up in 2007 in Prague. Prague, of course, is a candidate city for 2016, and this image captures the idea of the Olympics occupying the commodity-cultural space typically reserved for beer, in a country where that particular commodity is so deeply embedded in cultural life as to have attained the dual status of ‘gift’—binding Czech to Czech in an open-ended system of engagements and connections—and commodity.

Advertising, of course, tends to simulate such cultural dynamics. The Olympics, it is promised, will stimulate and actually deliver such cultural engagements on a grand scale, inducing feelings of community and well-being—as well as having more quantifiable economic impacts.

To what extent are such complex and variously promised social legacies of London 2012 Olympics really to be stimulated by the Games? And, on the other hand, to what extent are the Olympics bringing about merely a simulation of socially reconstructive intervention—a simulated gift? It seems that the terms and conditions being outlined in current anxious debating (from all sides) are likely to deliver mainly market supported legacy outcomes sustainable within and informed by solely market-based conceptions of regeneration and the public good, i.e. minimizing costs and recouping expenditures on the park and other investments by selling assets post-games on the open market. I now want to illustrate the extent to which cost–benefit conceptions of the Games hold sway in important discourses about 2012.



### ***‘Cost–benefit’ games***

On 29 January 2008, the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee met to discuss ‘London 2012’ with Tessa Jowell, the Minister with responsibility for the Games and London. The Committee was questioning ministers, civil servants and 2012 officers for the fourth time about the Games in a little over three months. On opening the meeting, the Chair, immediately raised the main issue: ‘Chairman:

Thank you. Inevitably, we are going to get into the money quite rapidly.’ The Committee’s concerns about ‘the money’ reflected a wider media and public interest in the cost of the Games, an interest that was stirred, in particular, by government announcements in March 2007 that the cost of the Games was set to rise from an initial estimate of £2.4 billion to a revised budget of £9.3 billion. The additional money was to be raised through a further commitment by government of £6 billion (including £2.2 billion from the National Lottery, of which £675 million was extra funding). The revised costs were driven by several factors including the rising price of land remediation, the increased allocation to contingency, tax (the imposition of value added tax (VAT)) and the rising costs of security. To address this cost problem, government and the Mayor of London committed in November 2007 to the sale of park land post-2012 to offset any deficits that might arise from the event not covering its costs. Hence, the Committee’s interest in the rigour of the business planning for 2012 and the form that the agreement between government departments might take to ensure the ‘realisation of assets’ to pay back the monies owed to the lottery fund:

Q432: Helen Southworth: Can I ask you if you can focus around the new memorandum of understanding which is setting out some of the processes by which Lottery monies will be repaid from the benefits of realisation of assets rather than profits. . . . We are very particularly interested in how focused organisation is currently on having

a very robust business planning process to ensure that there is an actual return on assets, that the amounts are delivered and that the memorandum will actually operate, that it is not going to be a gentleman's agreement that starts disappearing into the future.

This line of questioning the Minister reflects a broader consensus amongst many business and academic authors on how best to evaluate the economics of the 2012 Games. In turn, the Minister's reply responded reassuringly on the 'rigour' of the business case whilst also indicating that the social or regeneration 'legacy' of the Games could also be accommodated within the framework of the business model.

The exchange in the House of Commons DCMS Committee is perhaps unsurprising. The Committee was tasked to investigate the preparation for the Games and the implications of government policies toward achieving its objectives and managing public funds to meet the Games costs. The exchange does, however, reveal the dominance of the 'business case' mode of analysis and how regeneration, in this case of the Lower Lea Valley, may arise as perhaps a fortunate 'remainder' or residual consequence of the contractual approach.

### ***London's 'transformational gift'***

Such 'legacy' is a somewhat diminished version of the legacy that might emerge where the 'gift' character of the Olympic Intervention is more fully supported. Indeed, the cost accounting implicit here is really an investigation of impact—the kind of short-term economic stimulus that can readily be understood (in its nature as brief and un-sustained) as the opposite of legacy. To paraphrase Hippocrates:<sup>3</sup> impact is short; but legacy is long. This is not so much a matter of any increase in the quantities of what might clumsily be referred to as 'legacy outcomes'. Instead, it is to do with the capacity of the Games to induce a dynamic and transformational set of legacies—spanning a narrative—whereby the definition of the Olympic 'Good' is informed and embedded in accountabilities to community and local

political visions and imperatives, and rather less than in the accountabilities of abstracted accountancy.

### ***The Dynamic gift***

The idea of the Games as gift is a useful counterpoint to the cost–benefit conception. Gifts induce a different set of human relations (Simmel, 1950) than commodities—relations of engagement and reciprocity. The transformational nature of the (dynamic) gift is at the heart of a number of accounts of ‘bounty’ which comes as a reward, but also as a trial or test for the protagonists of folktales. We might see an analogy with and understanding of the Olympics is both a prize and a challenge for the host city. One way into this is to think in more detail about Gifts—especially as understood as creative transformation. Hyde (2006) builds a compelling synthesis of myths and theories of gifts as ‘transformative’ and creative interventions in individual and collective life—indeed the subtitle of his book *The Gift* is ‘how the creative spirit transforms the world’. While the folk and fairy tales he cites hardly constitute sociological evidence, his line of argument is traced equally through the detailed anthropological fieldwork of Malinowski as well as accounts from Marcel Mauss and Marshall Sahlins. His central proposition that ‘the gift keeps on moving’, embedding giver and receiver within society and human relations, is synthesised from his eclectic range of academic and folkloric sources. It provides a powerful critique of the commodity—instituted in cost–benefit-contractual relating as a static; an exhausted and exhausting modality; cut off from key aspects of human and social relationship. Hyde elaborates:

*In folktales the gift is often something seemingly worthless—ashes or coals or leaves or straw—but when the puzzled recipient carries it to his doorstep, he finds it has turned to gold. Typically in increase inheres in the gift only so long as it is treated as such—as*

*soon as the happy mortal starts to count it or grabs his wheelbarrow and heads back for more, the gold reverts to straw. The growth is in the sentiment; it can't be put on the scale. (Hyde, 2006, p. 35)*

There is some value in Hyde's analysis in opening up thinking about the desire for and anxiety about Olympic 'Gold', not least because Olympism stakes its claim as connected to a (no doubt mythologised) ancient past—of ritual and collective solidarities. The Modern Olympics constitute a mega-event and, as such, and in their scale, perhaps speak more of modernity, or, to follow Auge (1995) 'supermodernity' than of the ancient festivals of religion, sport and culture from which they derive their name:

*When the people of Elis had sacrificed, then the ambassadors of the Greeks, whoever happened to be there, were expected to offer a sacrifice. (Philostratis, 1987, p. 214)*

It is clear that the Olympic festivals were in some respects reminiscent of some of the pre-modern gifting ceremonies that inform Hyde's and others' anthropological accounts of gift economies<sup>4</sup>—lavish festivals which, while ostensibly wasteful, served as a kind of clearing house for the redistribution of social capital and reciprocal commitment to the priorities of the community—bringing unanticipated returns. Returns (following the dynamic of the gift) that induce real accumulations, virtuous circles but that are immanent in communities however occluded within in the paradigms of quantitative economism. Notwithstanding the tenuousness of such telescopic Olympic 'history'—the Games' explicit engagements with the languages of familial connection, community building, regeneration and, lately, legacy, constructs (if it does not affirm) a genealogy connecting the Games at least in part to gift-economies—and their 'powers' of cultural restoration/regeneration—and more than other types of mega-events (expos/world fairs and or even extended tournaments, such as the World Cup or national sports festivals such as the Superbowl) which are unashamedly festivals of the commodity.<sup>5</sup>

The passing of the Olympic flame—the ‘spirit’ in which the Olympic asset is at once enshrined and let free/passed on—from hand to hand—from host to host—is the most potent symbol of this aspiration and it ritualises Hyde’s maxim that: ‘the gift must always move’. As Hyde (2006) argues:

*There are other forms of property that stand still, that mark a boundary or resist momentum, but the gift keeps going. (p. 4, original emphasis)*

Even without this antecedent connection to ritualism and collective and public sacrifice and feasting, the Olympics poses for us the dichotomy of gift and commodity exchange—a prominent articulation of a dichotomy that (as Frow, 1997, and others have argued), is constitutive within contemporary everyday life.<sup>6</sup> This is by no means an argument for the Olympics to be treated as a kind of public gift/sacrifice (a kind of lavish and unaccountable endowment upon the East End of London<sup>7</sup>) from a beneficent government under the banner of the IOC. But it is to suggest that in foregrounding acknowledgement of the necessarily hybrid (gift/commodity) nature of the Olympics—notably around volunteering, sponsorship and other various modes of ‘contribution’—and the legacy entailed to the Games (in anticipation)—is a worthwhile precursor and ongoing gloss on thinking and planning for the kinds and types of investment around 2012; and, also, for better assuring the social character and modalities of disbursement and accumulation that can be hoped for, facilitated and sustained under the headings ‘Olympic’ and ‘legacy’ - including building a legacy in social capital and capacities for as yet unanticipated dynamic renewals.

It is important however to be as suspicious of gifts as we might be of market logics. Nor can we be too satisfied with the gift/commodity dichotomy—save, perhaps, as a heuristic device enabling a better apprehension of some less often spoken potentialities and dynamics around

the Olympic festival. Appadurai (1986, p. 11) warns against ‘exaggeration and reification of the contrast between gift and commodity’, pointing at anthropological writings in particular. Certainly it is important to acknowledge a degree of necessary ‘concurrency’ across and between these two modalities of exchange and engagement. The modes are hard to conceive of in isolation from their shadow opposites. Frow (1997) comments that social life is permeated by just this tension:

*the realm of the everyday is the place where, through the constant transformation of commodity relations into gift relations, it becomes difficult to hold the two terms in their categorical purity. (Frow, 1997, p. 217)*

However, this necessary hybridity can be acknowledged without accepting, as Appadurai (1986) seems to, Bourdieu’s (1977) insistence that: practice never ceases to conform to economic calculation even where it gives every appearance of disinterestedness by departing from the logic of interested calculation (in the narrow sense) and playing for stakes that are non-material and not easily quantified.(p. 177) As Mauss (1954/2002) proposes in his essay on the gift—there is a value in keeping open the space of the gift as a significant and qualitatively different order of activity and potentiality, since to not do so—to too readily collapse the distinctions between narrow contractualism (driven by money and finance-driven accountabilities), and variously elaborated reciprocities and engagement—driven by gratitude (Simmel, 1950)—or the ‘erotic life’ (as Hyde puts it), of ‘the gift’—would be, to necessarily foreclose the (optimistic) possibility of a genuine accumulation of social and collective benefit from the 2012 Games for London—in terms of both intangible as well as tangible benefits and ongoing engagements. Mauss (1954/2002) makes a general point in his classic examination of *The Gift* which is timely prescient in the run up to this, our 21st-century

version of an ancient festival transplanted from Athenian society: It is a good thing possibly that there exist means of expenditure and exchange other than economic ones. . . . I believe that we must become, in proportion as we would develop our wealth, something more than better financiers, accountants and administrators. The mere pursuit of individual ends is harmful to the ends and peace of the whole, to the rhythm of its work and pleasures, and hence in the end to the individual. (Mauss, 1954/2002, p. 75)

The Olympics project awakens an anxiety about what it is that ‘survives’ and what ‘withers’ outside the spread sheets and forecasting technologies through which, often with impressive efficiency, though sometimes not, the abstract vision—of a stadium, a cultural venue or a piece of restored land—materialises. Indeed, the very materiality—the quality and the temporality of the space—opened up by the Olympics—is a matter partly of the successful and integrative conjunction of modalities of provision and appropriation (gift and commodity) that will underpin them. The commodification of space in regeneration is a problem explored in detail by, for instance, Graham and Marvin in their excellent *Splintering Urbanism* thesis (Graham & Marvin, 2001). Table 1 suggests that their description of the ‘splintering’ mode of urban development can be equated with a commodity mode, and their

Gift	Commodity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disintegrative/splintering</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformative vision implemented by integrated governance actively including local, national, municipal and community interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro-management of ‘splintered urbanism’</li> </ul>

• Dynamic/engaging	• Static/exhausting
• Unpredictable	• Over-specific benefits
• Un-entailed legacy momentum	• Foreclosed outcomes/displaced conflicts and • consequent inertia
• Park as everyday resource, symbolic concrete and integrated/integrative enactment of the East London cosmopolis	• Park as a collocation of un-integrated premium sites
<b><i>Table 1. Governance: integrate the ‘tangible’ and ‘intangible’ legacies to contain tensions between the logics of commodity and gift</i></b>	

implied alternative ‘integrative’ mode embodies the logic of the gift. The integrative vision which I am proposing is necessarily and schematically polarised in this table. Conclusion: the park and the gift. The assumptions of market exchange may not necessarily lead to an emergence of boundaries, but they do in practice. (Hyde, 2006, p. 23) The Olympic infrastructure—the facilities and the park must not become redundant— everyone is agreed on that. It is the central truism of legacy planning. But there are desirable (shared, communal, developmental) modes of use, and engagement which, to reiterate, will develop or not and will depend upon some commitment to a suspension of the logic of the commodity—in favour of the logic of the gift.

In Barcelona the Olympic park stands as a monument to the legacy of the Games. It is both a symbolic and functional component of the cityscape and of its everyday life. It has a function for tourism and for place-making. It is of the city—part of the fabric of Barcelona.



As Carbonell (2005) argues:

*The various buildings were gradually incorporated into their functions in city life at an acceptable pace, both in economic terms and in terms of integration into the lives of the public. (pp. 8–9)*

*Table 2* outlines extremes in the register of practical legacy-scenario outcomes. Again I am suggesting that a conception of hybrid gift and commodity thinking will offset the undesirable or untenable extremes of both poles. Other event venues at other games have attracted the dreaded ‘white elephant’ tag.

<b><i>Table 2 Hybrid Gift / Commodity / Promises</i></b>	<b>Extreme gift conception: the games as contribution to:</b>	<b>Extreme commodity conception: the games as contribution to:</b>
<b>Underlying process</b>	Embedding and regenerating communities/local spaces and networks—giving and inviting engagement in an inclusive way	Disembedding and overlaying/ bypassing/displacing East London geographies/ networks/local governance and communities
<b>To make the UK a world-class sporting nation in terms of elite success, mass participation and school sport</b>	Continued public investment in accessible sport and leisure activities (such as the ‘free swim initiatives’ already announced). Investments in school sports, sports scholarships for gifted athletes and local initiatives tailored to the needs of specific and complex populations	Over investment in the Olympic spectacle and signifying elite success at the expense of ongoing practical assistance to grass roots’ initiatives in school sport, active leisure and sports education. A delegation of training and support to sponsors and private training providers
<b>To transform the heart of East London</b>	A straightforward commitment to developments of affordable housing suited to local communities, investment in local training and job creation initiatives. A vision of regeneration genuinely sensitive to the present inhabitants of the Olympic locale—and their offspring	A primarily market lead set of commercially driven developments privileging expensive housing and lucrative retail/leisure space, largely piggy backing on the economic stimulus of Stratford and Cross Rail. Profitable but exclusionary utilisation of space and new opportunities as the guiding principle
<b>To inspire a new generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural and physical activity</b>	Imaginative education and skills training programmes complementing and continuing the stimuli provided by the official games volunteering programmes. Support for continued and extended volunteering initiatives post-2012 and the export of volunteering expertise to other regions/ events	A highly regimented volunteering system entirely focused on specific Olympic issues without sufficient preand post-games support to ensure that the volunteering ethos does not dissipate
<b>To make the Olympic Park a blueprint for sustainable living</b>	The creation of the Olympic park as an open and accessible green space devoted to (partly) locally defined conceptions of the public good and handed in part or in totality back to the stewardship of local and London-wide government—without the pressure to maximise return on investment as soon as possible. The creation of centres of excellence developing and disseminating environmental technologies and education via leisure facilities and new local enterprises centred around the park	The fragmentation of the park in a cost-driven attempt maximally to recoup the Olympic investment in the short-term. The risk is that premium housing and exclusionary leisure facilities will disembed the park and its usage from the everyday flows and spaces over local life in East London—inducing and repeating the landscape of splintered urbanism evident around other large-scale East London regeneration projects. (Graham & Marvin, 2001)
<b>To demonstrate that the UK is a creative, inclusive and</b>	The Games as a ‘gift’ is evident in successful indications of emerging legacy and in the act of sharing and passing on	Investing in a traditional brand and place marketing campaign promising (via commercial inducements to business) specific

<b>welcoming place in which to live, to visit and for business (Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), 2007)</b>	(via emerging tourism and network connectivity/sharing know-how and future events) the innovative, exciting and distinctive vision of a re-figured/re-figuring (East) London on a global stage	and improved location factors and primarily targeting large, established business in areas such as financial services. The Olympics inducing only an extension of Canary Wharf-style commercial redevelopment
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We think ‘use’ and non ‘use’ do not adequately get to the point. Utilitarianism provides necessary but not sufficient criteria for evaluating legacy, just as the usefulness of the gift does not fulfil or exhaust its function. The closing off of a utility from its communities might ensure use—but if the privatisation of the gift means that accessibility is a matter for only a few who can afford premium prices—the utility will mask significant exclusion. Which is to say that if we witness a primarily commodity-Olympics the park will become a series of splintered fragments (Graham & Marvin, 2001) within the urban realm and the gift-based catalytic effects will not materialise. The gift will cease to move. The Olympic park, site of memory and the evolving history/legacy of London’s games will become instead a non-place.

There are two concepts from Auge (1995) which help to contextualise this argument. One is this well-known notion of ‘non-place’; the other is his understanding of the kind of contractual relating that inheres in a non-place environment—but also in cost–benefit conceptions of social relations. Clearly, the word ‘non-place’ designates two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relations to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces. Although the two sets of relations overlap to a large extent, and in any case officially (individuals travel, make purchases, relax), they are still not to be confused with one another; for non-places mediate a whole mass of relations, with the self and with others, which are only indirectly connected with their purposes. As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality (Auge, 1995). The park—and its extended facilities—extended geographically into the five boroughs, and temporally, in the emerging modalities of legacy—risk becoming non-space facilities bound to the logics of market exchange. The fear of ‘white elephant’ non-utilisation—of the commodity not being bought or the gift not being

received—might encourage those responsible (primarily the London Development Agency) into arrangements whereby the park becomes a functional non-space. Will we see the construction of Putnam's (2000) alleys for 'bowling alone' in the future park? That is one scenario for the commodified utilisation of a corner of the post-Games space—where cost and benefits are weighed and disembodied economic principles win out. By contrast a governance structure confident to pass the Olympic assets on in part in the mode of a gift—and translated into the political economy of contemporary city-building—that means in the form of community driven planned public amenity and access to soft benefits in the form of skills and training—to carry on giving to the local economy—depends upon dialogic reciprocities emergent from open and political processes and local engagements. These are a necessary complement to the cost–benefit planning and project management attached to the delivery of the Games and its legacy. To split the two apart (as seems to be happening) in the development phase risks instituting a disconnection 'down the line' and the stunting of the dynamism of the Olympic gift:

*When a gift passes from hand to hand in this spirit, it becomes the binder of many wills. What gathers in it is not only the sentiment of generosity but the affirmation of individual goodwill, making of those separate parts a **spiritus mundi**, a unanimous heart, a band whose wills are focussed through the lens of the gift. Thus the gift becomes the agent of social cohesion, and this again leads to the feeling that its passage increases its worth, for in social life at least, the whole really is greater than the sum of its parts. (Hyde, 2006, p. 36)*

It is the material and redistributive circulation of the Olympic asset—through the properly appointed materiality of the legacy assets—that will assure this accumulation of positive affect and effects around the Olympic Games. It is upon such accumulation that a lasting legacy depends

## *Conclusions*

This paper has attempted to articulate the conflicting political, social and personal relations at stake in thinking about, engaging with, managing and delivering both a ‘legacy’ and a ‘profit’—the elusive ‘Olympic Gold’ sought by organisers, politicians, communities and sponsors—not to mention athletes. The ‘golden legacy’ of 2012, if it is to be delivered through the vectors afforded by the Games, requires sensitivity to the ‘mixed economies’ of commodity and gift. The fate of, and prospects for, a 2012 ‘legacy’ are imperilled in proportion to the extent to which the commodity modality dominates the gift (or indeed vice versa) and where the potential socio-economic dynamics set in train are unthought and inadequately ungoverned. Legacy—or ‘legacy momentum’—is predicated upon and assured by governance processes sensitive to the tensions in operation between ‘commodity Olympism’ and ‘gift Olympism’. This dialogism is placed at risk by the primacy of a foreclosing discourse of contractual-relations that permeates both economic and cultural life in the mega-project that is London 2012.

## *Notes*

1. Mendick (2006) offers a bleak characterisation of the afterlife of a host city’s Olympic developments. ‘Penguins and parrots occupy the velodrome, the rowing lake is derelict and the only spectator “sport” now staged at the Olympic stadium involves racing trucks crushing abandoned cars. Welcome to Montreal’s Olympic legacy—a potent, terrifying lesson in how not to stage the Games.’ Londoners, who may count the cost of the escalating bill of the 2012 Games, will now be fearful the errors of Montreal in 1976 are about to be repeated. See also *The Economist* (2007a, 2007b). Both articles focus on the cost over runs and damaging impacts of the Games. 2. In work conducted for the London assembly (London East Research Institute (LERI), 2007), legacy momentum was defined as follows. In the economic sphere legacy momentum refers to the capacity of the city and regional economy to continue an upward growth path following the immediate post-Games downturn in economic activity. The capacity to achieve momentum relates to several factors. First, the Games must complement an already existing regeneration plan that involves new phases beyond the Olympic event. Second, the knowledge-base derived from the preparation and staging of the event is not dispersed when the Games end but is utilised to promote further innovation with the city and region. Finally, the negative consequences and omissions from the Olympic-

related regeneration phase are addressed in subsequent urban development projects. Barcelona (1992) is the best example of a host city achieving legacy momentum.

3. Hippocrates is the first person to whom the dictum ‘life is short; art is long’ has been attributed.

4. Sacrifices, for Mauss (1954/2002, p. 20), are gifts of a particular kind—given to the Gods: ‘The relationships that exist between these contracts and exchanges among humans and those between men and the gods throw light on a whole aspect of the theory of sacrifice. First, they are perfectly understood, particularly in those societies in which, although contractual and economic rituals are practised between men, these men are the masked incarnations, often Shaman priest-sorcerers, possessed by the spirit whose name they bear. In reality, they merely act as representatives of the spirits, because these exchanges and contracts not only bear people and things along in their wake, but also the sacred beings that, to a greater or lesser extent, are associated with them. This is very clearly the case in the Tlingit potlatch . . . and in the Eskimo potlatch.’

5. A great deal of Super Bowl coverage is devoted to discussing the advertising that fills the exorbitant media spots between quarters. Perhaps a commercial potlatch of sorts!

6. For Frow (1997, p. 217) everyday life can be usefully understood as a conjunction of commodity and gift relations. Everyday life is ‘a realm permeated by the archaic patterns of gift-obligation—the dangerous, fluid, subtle generosity that bind members into crystallized orders of relation, in all dimensions of human life, from which they cannot easily be released. These patterns of obligation are, at the same time, in tension with the contractual rationality of the commodity, which produces quite different forms of the everyday. It may produce greater equalities as well as greater inequalities; it may enhance the sharing of wealth, or it may reduce it. It can be seen as a liberation from the “antiquated and dangerous gift economy”, or as a destruction of human sharing’.

7. Nor, however, would we argue for the Games to become an entirely private affair, as might emerge from a global auction of the ‘brand equity’ locked in the IOC’s five-ring symbolism. Both would be untenable, although the privatisation of a global asset seems the more plausible scenario.

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