



## REPORT ON THE SECOND WORKSHOP OF THE RSA RESEARCH NETWORK ON MEGA-EVENTS, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

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## REPORT ON THE RSA EARLY CAREER CONFERENCE 2012

1st-2nd November 2012, HafenCity Hamburg University, Germany  
Pedro Marques, University of Kiel, Germany



On the 1st and 2nd of November 2012, the Regional Studies Association held its Early Career Conference at the HafenCity Hamburg University in Germany. This conference was organised for the first time outside of the UK, and both the city and the University offered a perfect setting for a meeting of early career academics thinking about future directions of research. The conference started with a plenary session by Gernot Grabher (HafenCity Hamburg, Germany) presenting results from his research on social networking, and Jane Pollard

(Newcastle University, UK) who used the case study of the Northern Rock in the North East of England to reflect on financialisation and regional development.

It was followed by several sessions on a wide range of topics such as innovation, urban planning, and foreign direct investment. Most of the presentations were from early career academics coming from several countries to share their research and thoughts on regional development. At the end of the first day, there was also a session on how to write scientific articles, led by Robert Hassink (University of Kiel, Germany) and Jane Pollard, with two short presentations followed by questions from the audience. Finally, the conference closed with another plenary session with Enrique Garcilazo (OECD) presenting the results from a major OECD review of regional development strategies, and Costis Hadjimichalis (Harokopio



Jose Enrique Garcilazo, Costis Hadjimichalis and Pedro Marques

University, Greece) reflecting on the way that Geography and Regional Studies can (and should) contribute to discussions about uneven spatial development. Overall, the conference provided a relaxed and supportive environment for over 50 early career and senior academics to reflect on current research and future ideas for the field of regional studies. The two local organisers for this conference were Tim Heinemann

(HafenCity Hamburg) and Pedro Marques (University of Kiel), together with the RSA staff and in particular Lesa Reynolds.

**Dr Pedro Marques** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Kiel, Germany. His research interests are on territorial innovation systems, global production networks and regional development.  
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## REPORT ON THE SECOND WORKSHOP OF THE RSA RESEARCH NETWORK ON MEGA-EVENTS, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

'Mega-Event Evaluation and Measuring Impacts', 25th June 2012, Cities Institute, London Metropolitan University, UK  
Graeme Evans, Brunel University, UK and Maastricht University, the Netherlands



The second workshop held by the Mega-Events Research

Network was hosted by London Metropolitan University (Cities Institute) and chaired by Professor Graeme Evans, one of the three conveners of the Network. It was held in the run up to the London2012 Olympics on the theme of *Mega-Event Evaluation and Measuring Impacts*. The workshop was also part of the London

Festival of Architecture (LFA) on the Olympic theme of *The Playful City* and featured in the LFA website and events programme: [www.lfa2012.org/events/view/mega-events-regeneration-322](http://www.lfa2012.org/events/view/mega-events-regeneration-322)

An impressive 60 participants attended, drawn from local government and academics from the UK, Australia, France, Holland,

Germany and research students, including nationals from Turkey, Romania, China, Korea and Russia. A panel of presenters representing academic, local government and international perspectives provided a lively and stimulating exchange on the impact, legacy and evaluation of regional-scale cultural and sporting mega-events.



Ozlem Edizel – (PhD student, Turkey), Professor Graeme Evans (Brunel University, UK and Convener of the Research Network), Dr Philip Lawton (CUES, University of Maastricht, the Netherlands) and Dr Lauren Andres (CURS, University of Birmingham, UK) at the Mega-Events Workshop

Dr Andrew Smith (Westminster University, UK) noted that mega-events are increasingly associated with urban regeneration. His presentation provided a broad overview of this relationship. An attempt was made to isolate the key dimensions of mega-event projects. These characteristics help to highlight the benefits and drawbacks of mega-events as regeneration tools. Interestingly, bearing in mind the subject of this conference, these characteristics also have important implications for evaluation. A series of Olympic host cities were used to illustrate the discussion; including Sydney, London and Vancouver. Andrew concludes that, while there are some emerging examples of good practice, often regeneration initiatives are employed as ways to justify staging mega-events. This means it is perhaps worth considering supplementing the traditional research question: how do mega-events contribute to urban regeneration, with the question: how do regeneration discourses contribute to mega-events?

Nicole Ferdinand (London Metropolitan University, UK) examined the Notting Hill Carnival. Despite attracting an audience of over 2 million and being dubbed Europe's largest street party, the Notting Hill Carnival, like other Caribbean

carnivals staged throughout the world has been plagued by financial difficulties and a steady stream of criticism in the media arising from festival organizers' alleged lack of entrepreneurial and organizational skills. Her presentation challenged the current consensus discourse both in popular media and within academia which suggests that the cultural entrepreneurs behind the Notting Hill Carnival, whilst being individuals of great creativity, lack managerial and financial skills. These assertions are typically being based on historical documents and extrapolations of financial data. Few studies include first-hand evidence from the cultural entrepreneurs themselves and even when this is the case, conclusions are made based on just on a few interviews. In contrast, Nicole engages with a range of cultural entrepreneurs including sound systems, steel bands, calypso singers, costume designers and event organizers and utilizes evidence from a variety of sources including first hand interviews, financial reports and other documentation. It paints a picture of an innovative, highly sophisticated group of entrepreneurs, who despite access to limited resources, has managed to create a complex cultural production system.

Roger Taylor (CEO London2012 Host Boroughs Unit and formerly Chief Executive of Manchester and Birmingham City Councils) then spoke. The Host Boroughs unit was established 7 years ago to support the Host Boroughs' in the planning for and activity around the 2012 Games. In legacy terms, it has been the driving force behind the articulation of a socio-economic legacy for the 1.25m residents of the Host Boroughs (the largest concentration of acute deprivation in England) to honour the UK's Bid promise to the IOC that "the most enduring legacy of the Olympics will be the regeneration of an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone who lives there." Roger presented the background and progress towards achieving legacy at a local authority level.

Dr Carol Scott evaluated the impact of the 2000 Games on Sydney's major museums and coordinated the successful bid by London's local museums to be an official project of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad – London 2012 stands at a defining moment in Olympic history. It is the platform on which the concept of legacy evaluation will be most comprehensively defined and tested. Since 'legacy' planning was introduced to the Olympic bid process in the early years of this millennium, the focus has been on the development of performance indicators to assess achievement. London, however, has developed a much more comprehensive approach to evaluation, admitting a range of data sources and allowing for some innovative thinking in terms of identifying legacy. Though this evaluation programme is ambitious, the task does not come unencumbered. This presentation explored the development of legacy evaluation, the London 2012

model and the challenges that it faces.

Menna Jones' (Liverpool University, UK) presentation examined how impacts of large-scale events are framed. By employing this framing task as a basis for analysis, she illustrated how impacts are presented to the public, in order to acquire support for such a style of urban regeneration. Beginning with some background information on framing, she provided information on how key stakeholders involved in urban regeneration demonstrate that investment in large-scale events impact on economic and social development. This was followed by analysis on how certain discourses around event-based regeneration have become prominent. She used data from European Capital of Culture 2008 in Liverpool as a case study, which includes strategic and promotional documents, and interviews with key stakeholders involved in urban regeneration. Research findings explored how expectations, investment and impact assessment findings are communicated and organised. Menna concluded with a discussion on how political discourses have manifested themselves into the framing of large-scale events at a local level.

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