

# From Fan Parks to Live Sites: Mega events and the territorialisation of urban space

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## Abstract

This article draws on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to consider the phenomenon of Live Sites and Fan Parks which are now enshrined within the viewing experience of mega sports events. Empirically, the article draws upon primary research on Live Sites generated during the London 2012 Olympic Games. Live Sites are represented as new spaces within which to critically locate and conceptually explore the shifting dynamics of urban space, subjectivity and its performative politic. The authors argue that the first, or primary, spaces of mega sporting events (the official venues) and their secondary counterparts (Live Sites) simply extend brandscaping tendencies but that corporate striation is always incomplete, opening up possibilities for disruption and dislocation.

## Keywords

corporate striation, cultural consumption, deterritorialisation, mega sports events, urban space

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## Introduction

Even in a period defined by global economic austerity, mega sports events retain a transformatory mystique that makes them much-coveted spectacles for nation states and urban centres, alike. However, these global titans have come under an intensifying critical gaze as critics decry their separation from the primary interests of the citizens of host cities or nations, cynicism of bidding, corruption and scepticism over legacy benefits (Eick, 2010; Hiller, 2012). Moreover,

while studies in the geography and socio-cultural theory of major, hallmark or mega events have produced insights into the city as marketing beacons (Stevenson, 2003), spectacles of diversion (Kellner, 2013), or class politic and displacement (Getz, 2007), a deeper analysis of the dialectic between events and urban space has long been called

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for (Gotham, 2005). This article responds to these calls by presenting an analysis of the spatio-political relations between mega sports events, their strategic extension into urban civic space and the engineering of performative practices that support modern consumer capitalism.

Over the last 15 years the host cities of consecutive mega sports events in tandem with their sanctioning bodies have advocated the creation of specially designed temporary venues located within urban civic space. Various titles Fan Parks, Fan Zones, Live Sites, Celebration Zones or public viewing areas (Eick, 2010; Frew and McGillivray, 2008; Schechner, 1995) these spaces are now enshrined in contractual obligations as sites to enhance both residential and visitor experiences. As festive gatherings they play a performative function mediating positive emotional energy to accentuate the vibrancy of the host city, portraying corporate partners positively and, ultimately, enhancing the (corporate) power of mega sports events themselves.

Whilst the study of the two greatest sporting mega events, the Olympic Games and the football World Cup, is extensive and growing exponentially (Rojek, 2013), the dynamics of these new spaces have received surprisingly little critical attention. Building on the authors' examination of the last five mega sports events, culminating in the 2012 London Olympics, these specially designed spaces are placed under the critical lens of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to explain the territorialisation of urban civic spaces that mega events initiate and institutionalise.

Structurally, the article opens with a historical overview of the globalising power of mega sports events, before examining the evolution of the secondary spaces created outside of officially sanctioned venues, framed by Deleuze and Guattari's theories of space. The sequestration and brandscaping of urban civic spaces through the cloak

of Olympic Live Sites are then evidenced through the use of observations, short interviews and documentary analysis to form the empirical substance and methodological preoccupations of the article.

In discussion the authors argue that mega sports events reveal a new dialectic between urban civic space and subjectivity. In contracting with sanctioning bodies, mega sports events demand host nations and cities cede sovereignty to both sporting and civic spaces. To achieve their strategic economic and political agendas, the mega sports event family now looks to the wider urban environment as a site for brand extension. Live Sites transform civic spaces into contained, controlled and brandscaped sites in which a prescribed performativity is enacted. Unlike the relatively passive experience of sporting spectatorship in formal venues, these secondary sites encourage audiences to perform festivity and participate in experiential consumption. Urban civic space is a canvas willingly given over to the territorialising tendencies of brandscaping where parks, squares and buildings are opened up to commodification processes.

However, these tendencies are always incomplete and imperfect as an ongoing dynamic exists between planned commodification and the creative responses of citizen-consumers. Urban brandscaping is always accompanied by its own expressions of resistance as new lines of flight produce new configurations.

### **Mega sports events: From control to commerce**

Events are one of the main players on the stage of modern cultural consumption, having risen to become a core component in the socio-cultural, economic and political fabric of modern life (Andersson and Getz, 2007). Spectacular mega sports events like the Modern Olympic Games and FIFA World

Cup are rooted to a history that can be traced to ancient ceremony, religious tradition, harvest celebrations and rites of passage (Roche, 2000). Because of their cultural universality and longevity there is a tendency to dismiss mega sports events as mere sites of fantasy and fun, intense month-long periods of great spectacle but, ultimately, unimportant in terms of their political and economic worth. Yet, as several commentators have shown, events possess a paradoxical quality, masking their power to dominate. Mega sports events have historically been used successfully as mediums of manipulation, social control and symbolic power (Roche, 2000; Rojek, 2005; Schechner, 1995). For example, the Berlin Olympics of 1936, the first internationally mediated mega sports event (Horne and Whannel, 2010), overtly demonstrated the political manifesto and power of Nazi Germany.

In the 19th and most of the 20th century, the political and cultural functions of mega sports events were more important than their commercial ones. However, the de-industrialisation of cities and nations across the developed western world from the 1970s onwards led to greater emphasis being placed on the potential of mega sports events as mass-media spectacles which could precipitate the transformation of dilapidated urban landscapes, reinvigorate economic activity and showcase entire cities (and nations) on the world stage. As competition to host mega sports events intensified, pro-growth public-private sector coalitions formed to coordinate bids, offering up the host city's cultural, civic and architectural assets for commercial exploitation by major sports federations' corporate sponsors (Eick, 2010; Foley et al., 2011; Hiller, 2012).

As the power differential swung towards the two main supranational sanctioning bodies, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), hosts were

expected to construct new sporting venues, build state-of-the-art media facilities and introduce legislation to protect the rights (commercial and legal) of sponsors (Miah and Garcia, 2012; Toohey and Veal, 2008). The Host City Contract requires that the major Olympic sponsors have (essentially) a blank canvas to work with at Games time, including the removal of existing advertising space to permit this takeover of the urban realm (Eick, 2010). This colonisation of urban environments as branded spaces is enabled by fast-tracked legislation which *must* (as part of the HCC) be passed to protect sponsor investments as city spaces are zoned and secured to ensure the gaze of spectators is fixed only upon the 'official' partner offerings. However, as Foley et al. (2011: x) caution:

Whilst these events may satisfy the lifestyle aspirations of the sought-after tourist audiences, they may also exacerbate the exclusionary processes that exist within the urban milieu of post-industrial cities ... instead of opening up the city and its civic spaces to a wider section of the population, corporate culture can colonise, mark space and define who belongs and who does not.

Mega sports events also contribute to the securitisation of space (Cornelissen, 2011), evident in the way that special measures are put in place by host governments to outlaw, or severely curtail, the sorts of dissent and protest that are permitted at other times and in other spaces. The power dynamic created by the contractual obligations of the HCC leads to the introduction of measures which effectively negate national sovereignty in favour of the requirements of the event sanctioning body, including ushering in the new normal of curtailed citizen rights to protest (De-territorialisation Support Group, 2011).

In Olympic terms, Live Sites are now regularly trailed as being one way in which a wider public can congregate collectively to

celebrate the spirit of the Olympics. As the IOC's own technical manual stresses, the main goal of Live Sites is to, 'provide a forum for people to come together in peace to celebrate the excitement of the Host City during an Olympic Games' (IOC, 2005: 86). The FIFA World Cup, hosted in a number of cities across the host nation every four years has been incredibly successful at generating significant numbers of visitors to Fan Parks, especially in Germany 2006 (Frew and McGillivray, 2008) and in South Africa 2010. It is to a critical reading of these new spaces that the discussion now turns.

### **Brand(scaped) territories**

Part of the HCCs for both the Olympic Games and for the FIFA World Cup is the provision of celebration areas where visiting spectators, residents and other key stakeholders can congregate to enjoy the sporting and cultural activities on offer outside of officially sanctioned venues. As McGillivray (2011: 20) has suggested, Live Sites 'provide a means to interact with the host population and the opportunity to produce co-created experiences for event hosts, sponsors and spectators alike'. However, the contrived spaces created at mega sports events have extended beyond mere ancillary events (Chalip, 2006) to become carefully planned, orchestrated and mediated events, designed to produce very specific outcomes for host cities and event sanctioning bodies, alike.

Importantly, while Live Sites (and their football counterpart, Fan Parks) are designed and promoted as festive spaces with an array of entertainment, food, beverage and merchandising they are fundamentally different from the privately owned and Disneyfied (Bryman, 2004) spaces of theme parks. Firstly, Live Sites, like their major and mega event masters, are nomadic and temporal in their nature, being located in urban civic spaces (e.g. parks and city

squares) for temporary use. Secondly, they are not privately owned spaces but are instead a partnership between the event owner and public authorities, with the local state often taking on the costs of creating, programming and securing the venue. Whilst they are open to commodification processes (experiential marketing activities are rife) and resemble private venues with their perimeter fences and security cordons, they are normally free. These spaces certainly mimic Disneyfied experiences in the techniques used to extend dwell time, survey audiences and ease the means of consumption (Ritzer, 2008) but they are not owned privately nor do they aim to generate profit for those staging them, directly.

The 2006 FIFA World Cup held in Germany was the first mega sport event where the spectator experience outside of official venues had been taken seriously. The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games organisers planned Live Site experiences that helped deliver a widespread cultural engagement legacy for the Games, but in the course of the last decade the sophistication of the public viewing offer has increased significantly. In 2006, Fan Parks were formalised as the 'official' public viewing areas in-country for visiting football fans and residents alike (Frew and McGillivray, 2008). Each of 10 host cities had a Fan Park, officially endorsed by FIFA, attracting over 13 million people during the tournament. They were also extremely successful events for FIFA's corporate sponsor family, providing them with access to a captive audience for marketing and promotional activities, protecting their commercial assets by securing the space of the Fan Park to ease the means of consumption. In contrast, although China used the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as a massive coming out party to the rest of the world, this was achieved without ever having to embrace the notion of 'public' assembly – which has had problematic connotations in

this nation since the Tiananmen Square massacre in the 1990s (Schechner, 1995). During the Beijing Olympic Games, Live Sites were underplayed, with the Chinese authorities never likely to permit, never mind actively promote, opportunities for public gathering and instant mediatisation.

The socio-historical context of South Africa post-apartheid influenced the design of Fan Parks for the 2010 World Cup. Unlike in Germany, a spatial hierarchy was put into operation around this mega sports event, partly in order to present South Africa as a safe tourist destination (Cornelissen, 2011), whilst also ensuring the benefits of hosting the World Cup were distributed equitably across the socio-economic spectrum. In South Africa, there were three public viewing spaces created. At the top of the hierarchy sat the official FIFA Fan Parks. These were marketed and promoted through official FIFA channels, located close to urban centres (i.e. not located in unsafe locations), heavily secured and policed (barriers, bag checking, CCTV) and were frequently visited by the international media which reported the desired narrative of fun and festivity which host organisers (and FIFA) sought to promote. They also attracted 11 million visitors. At the second level were city fan parks, endorsed at local state level. These spaces were supported but not promoted as spaces for ticketless visiting football fans to congregate. Finally, community public viewing areas were located much more 'locally' within the ghettos and targeting local people that could neither afford nor wished to travel to the officially sanctioned public viewing areas (e.g. Cape Town had four of these).

Returning to the Olympic Games, London 2012 organisers took a similar approach to South Africa, in that its Live Sites were as distributed as possible, part of a strategic objective to bring the Games closer to the host population across the

nations and regions of the United Kingdom. The London 2012 Games organisers extended the reach of public space broadcasting by developing permanent Live Sites as part of a network of 22 venues spread across UK towns and cities. These venues incorporated large outdoor screens and were run in partnership between the London 2012 Organising Committee, the BBC, local authorities and in association with British Telecom and Lloyds TSB. Funding came from the National Lottery through the Olympic Lottery Distributor. The vision was one of local ownership, not only of the Games-time viewing experience, but also of the content created and shared on the public screens.

In addition to permanent installations, temporary Live Sites were created in a number of strategic locations around Games time, predominantly in and around official Host and Venue cities (e.g. Weymouth and Portland). They were funded and delivered by local authorities but had to comply with many features of the London 2012 brand focus, especially in terms of how they were dressed. At the third level were Community Live Sites. Local authorities hosted these spaces across the nations and the regions of the UK to deliver national vibrancy to the celebration of the Games. They were able to access Games coverage but also had to be dressed in London 2012 Olympic regalia. Even at this local level, these Live Sites were required to comply with a relatively stringent LOCOG Live Site Agreement. As McGillivray (2011: 21) has argued 'the three-tier model of Olympic Live Sites draws on the experiences of the football World Cup where the "official" Fan Parks were the outlet for FIFA-endorsed content and rights-owning media activity'.

In sum, the evolution of Live Sites and Fan Parks since Germany 2006 points towards greater choice for audiences and opportunities to experience Olympic or

World Cup atmospheres without having to purchase tickets or reside in the host city. However, in each case, Live Sites and Fan Parks are inseparable from the corporate-media nexus that increasingly defines the mega sports event phenomenon. Given their capacity to dramatise and globalise, mega sports events are able to penetrate consciousness and speak to the 'lives, dreams, memories and time of mass publics' (Roche, 2003: 102). Live Sites and Fan Parks are attractive to global corporate brands and the mass media industries because they provide these corporate actors with unfettered access to consumers, facilitated by the resources of the host city in the form of security and promotional support. A number of mega sports event actors are engaged in a power struggle to territorialise (and de-territorialise) host city space every four years. Before moving on to discuss the findings from the study of the London 2012 Olympic Games it is now necessary to explore the work of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and the usefulness of their theoretical lens for the study of the Live Site phenomenon.

### *(Re)territorialising urban space and subjectivity*

In their work on the FIFA World Cup Fan Parks, Frew and McGillivray (2008) developed a Foucauldian theoretical position to explain the disciplinary function of the Fan Park as a managed and surveyed space, helping to secure commercial return for sponsor partners and producing the sought after positive media narrative for organisers. However, while a Foucauldian approach was ideal for unravelling the discursive arrangements that underpinned the emergence and institutionalisation of Fan Parks and Olympic Live Sites, it also suffered from some deficiencies.

Foucault's view of power as a productive network, constructing its own resistance

(Foucault, 1980), does not demonstrate how resistance works in practice. In fact, Foucault's position on power and resistance restricts insights into embodied practice. Although he asserts that his 'objective' was 'to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1982: 208), the subject is often empirically missing.

The work of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari is widely acknowledged for advancing postmodern theory (Jordan, 1995) and lauded by Foucault who claimed the 20th century as Deleuzian (Foucault, 1977). However, their work has also been subject to critique for its conceptual density and for being abstracted from everyday applications. It has been claimed that too often Deleuze and Guattari's concepts sit in theoretical 'phrase regimes' (Sim, 1998) rather than being located in the cultural specifics of subjects. Yet, we would argue that for Deleuze and Guattari, the subject is a project engaged in perpetual transformation within an ever-changing socio-cultural dynamic. This philosophy is easily translated to the subject matter of this article as there exists an interplay between the subject (the visitor, spectator or resident) and external agents trying to 'fix' and territorialise urban space to secure planned objectives around mega sports events. It is their work on space that is particularly useful in explaining the dynamic processes of governance that exist in and around mega sports events like the Olympics.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest that there are two principal spatial arrangements and, like two sides of the same coin spinning with oppositional force, striated and smooth space emerges in contestation (Stevens and Dovey, 2004). The former is perceived to be state-oriented and static and the latter nomadic and fluid. For this article, the explanatory potential of these concepts is significant, especially as a way of considering the extent to which institutional arrangements around

mega sports events like the Olympics lead to order, striation and territorialisation. Striation enables certain things to happen. It is a productive mode of operation but its tendency is towards regulation and re-territorialisation (Lysen and Pisters, 2012) rather than distributedness, multiplicity, emergence, and open-endedness (Nunes, 1999), features of the narrative of smooth space. Take the earlier discussion of how mega sports event sanctioning bodies require host cities to create venues, dress them, secure them and withdraw them from public use for extended periods before (and sometimes after) the events themselves.

In contrast, smooth spaces are the site of de-territorialising creative resistance and escape. There is constant spatial tension as the governance of striation produces the 'misunderstanding, resistance and flight' (Legg, 2009: 131) of smooth space. If the context or force is significant towards striated space (we might say the desire to territorialise host city urban space by sanctioning bodies is such a force) then the more *determined* the sorts of relations that can occur within that space are. A determined striated topography, then, is efficient in capturing smooth space and transforming it into a mode within its regime (Nunes, 1999). The Olympic movement and its relationship with the host city it 'occupies' provides a good example of a determined striated topography. In colonising host city spaces, the Olympic movement requires the 'assembly' of concrete sites (official venues and Live Sites) engineered to achieve commercial and institutional ends.

In the forthcoming discussion, we are interested in the way the officially-endorsed Live Sites can be considered striated spaces, with 'fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativise movement' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 386). We also want to highlight how lines of flight always exist, whereby unforeseen and contingent elements are in tension with the governance of striated space. In the

context of this research these lines of flight might be expressed in the formation of alternative spaces or creative responses within public spaces (e.g. artwork, collective viewing experiences outside of Live Zones) but they are also, increasingly, possible through the deployment of digital media platforms like blogs and social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook). These new spaces might provide individuals and collectivities with the potential to subvert imposed structures and meanings associated with an events space by re-constituting its frames of reference.

It is now important to explore empirically how the dynamic spatial arrangements described here work in practice in an Olympic host city with specific focus on the London 2012 Live Sites.

## Methodology

The authors have been involved in studying the phenomenon of Fan Parks since 2006 when they undertook participant observation at the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany (Frew and McGillivray, 2008). They also conducted documentary analyses of official reports, print media and social media generated from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 South Africa World Cup and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.

The empirical study from which the findings of this study are drawn focused on the London 2012 Olympic Games and involved the utilisation of a battery of methods before, during and after the event itself. The study included participant observation, short on-site interviews, and documentary analysis of print media, social media and other written materials published on Live Sites by host organisers and the main sanctioning body (IOC). The integration of observational techniques (Flick, 1999) alongside physical and online investigations provides a novel methodological insight into the Live Site phenomenon.

During Games time, from 27 July to 10 August 2012, the authors visited Live Sites in London, including: (1) the BT London Live Sites at Hyde Park and Victoria Park; (2) Park Live (BA) Screens at the Olympic Park; and (3) a local authority operated Live Site at Newham, East London. Additionally, the research team undertook observations of the Weymouth and Portland Live Site (the venue for the Olympic sailing competitions) and the regional Big Screen Live Sites operated in Leicester and Edinburgh.

Research interventions went beyond passive observation by describing (via audio and video dictation) the physical spaces of Live Sites and undertaking short audio interviews with audiences. To ensure wider participation in the research process from outside the small research team, field notes were translated into short reflective audio summaries each day (using free-to-use audio upload tool Audioboo) and these were shared widely on a research blog and circulated via social media. This approach generated further engagement from both researchers and the general public, with comments on the blog post and contributions to the project hashtag #livesites on the social media platform, Twitter. Content shared on the hashtag was archived systematically from the outset, providing another data source open to analysis and reflection. This approach provided mobility, immediacy and interactive engagement (Solis, 2012) with the wider communities at Live Sites and general public engaging with the Olympic Games. Moreover, it enabled an exploratory analysis of the audience experience with online sentiment of the Olympic Games and their strategic partners.

### *Live Sites: A strategy of striation*

In this section, we explore how the abstract notion of striation is made real through the arena of mega sports events and, in

particular, the spaces of Live Sites at the London 2012 Olympics. Working a well-worn path, mega sports events now invariably claim benefits associated with infrastructural development, economic impact, social inclusion and wellbeing (Foley et al., 2011). Olympic Live Sites are now entangled in policy protocols as vehicles to deliver on an instrumental set of outcomes associated with legacy.

Furthermore, Live Sites illustrate the assimilation of open spaces of civic interaction into striated spaces of rational governance. Mega sports events demand the sequestration and territorialisation of urban civic space in the name of some shared common good. Legislative sovereignty is ceded (Cornelissen, 2011) as civic spaces (parks, squares and streetscapes) are subject to change of use temporarily, and sometimes permanently for the benefit of external beneficiaries. For example, during the London 2012 Olympic Games, parts of London's historic Royal Parks (e.g. Hyde Park) were withdrawn from public use as they became official Live Sites, positioned behind six foot fences and emblazoned with the colourful livery of Olympic sponsors.

Whilst access to Olympic Live Sites was nominally free, there was a clear force towards striation that produced *determined* relations, limiting the conditions of possibility for city dwellers and visitors alike. The Olympic movement demands (and expects) the creation of officially-endorsed Live Sites. These Live Sites can be considered striated spaces which, like any spatial structure, possess what appear to be objective boundaries, providing the canvas upon which the rules of any game are played out. In the case of Live Sites this is intensified by what Cornelissen (2011:3222) has called the 'range of securitising actors ... and regimes of governance' that enable certain 'extraordinary rights' to be asserted under the veil of safety and security. Whilst observing the operation of Live

Sites during the London 2012 Olympic Games, this discursive legitimisation was in evidence with significant security procedures being implemented around these venues. To illustrate, visitors were prohibited from bringing their own food, drinks, unofficial merchandise, video cameras and numerous other items that would normally be permitted in a public park:

The security is fine and you can understand why that's enforced. I think restricting liquids is fine but taking away food is a bit silly I think, especially when it's not amazing food here. (Interviewee #1, Hyde Park Live Site)

I think the only thing that's not great is that you can't bring in your own picnics and stuff. (Interviewee #2, Hyde Park Live Site)

Justified on the basis of security, the effect is to reduce freedom and fluidity of movement around the city. The outcome of this discourse of securitisation was an over determination of space – stringent striation – that provoked negative reactions:

In Sydney all the sites were free to wander around. Here it's like having a large candy store as a kid and being told to stand outside. (Interviewee #1, Olympic Park)

I brought twelve teenagers from the States who want to be part of this experience ... now they are all disappointed and now I am going to have to give them an hour and a half in a Mall, which they can do in any American city. (Interviewee #2, Olympic Park)

Live Sites vary in size, scale and geographical location, and during London 2012 there were interesting variations evident depending on their position on the official–unofficial continuum. For example, the officially endorsed, 'presenting partner' supported Live Sites (BT Live Hyde Park, BT Live Victoria Park, Park Live Screens at Olympic Park) worked to order, striate and territorialise. Inside the Live Sites there was some

evidence of smooth topographies emerging, in the spontaneous displays of emotion, alcohol fuelled revelry and deterritorialising online photo sharing. However, the degree of creative resistance evident was limited, contained within the ridged rationalisation of site maps, detailed signage and controlled queues.

### *Becoming brandscapes: Live Sites and corporate striation*

Given that the pursuit and promotion of entrepreneurial capital is fundamental to the practices of mega sports event sanctioning bodies like the IOC, managing and mediating the activities of visitors and spectators are a necessity for host nations, cities and their brand partners. The Live Site phenomenon is now assimilated into the spatial hierarchies of neo-liberal consumption where pre-determined, demarcated and controlled spaces are the norm. Interestingly, Live Sites are promoted as free official family friendly venues, festival-like in design and operation (Frew and McGillivray, 2008). At London 2012 this discourse was deepened as Live Sites were promoted by official channels and the press as free and inclusive spaces:

London Live will be a thrilling highlight in a summer of highlights, allowing even more people to watch awe-inspiring sporting heroes in high definition action for free, and other fantastic attractions for Londoners and visitors alike. (Boris Johnson, London Mayor)

Live Sites will enable hundreds of thousands of people without tickets to the Games to view them en masse in public viewing areas in London. Hyde Park, Victoria Park and Trafalgar Square will all host free sports screenings and cultural events. (O'Callaigh, 2012)

I like the idea that is was free to come in and that there's loads of stuff you can see in terms of sport. (Interviewee #1, Hyde Park Live Site)

This is what I expected. Big Screens, bit of entertainment with lots going on. (Interviewee #2, Hyde Park Live Site)

Live Sites are sold as benevolent celebrations when, in effect, they are designed spaces, 'static, organised, predictable' (Klingmann, 2007: 6) that flow from the corporate structuring and securitisation of these events (Cornelissen, 2011). Key to this subtle shift of territorialisation, and the legitimisation of its striation is that visitors, spectators and residents need protection. The London 2012 Live Sites openly deployed the psychology of risk as a justification for search procedures, security and the segregation of space to organise activities within bounded walls and fences. The official stance where airport style security was imposed at all venues including Live Sites (London 2012, *Vision to Reality*, 2012) was exemplified at Hyde Park. From the moment of arrival visitors were corralled and searched, with VIP and fast track lines similar to the managed experiences of Disney theme parks. Furthermore, in Weymouth, the last mile initiative overtly sought to 'manage people throughout the town' to the Live Site where the '530 Ambassador Volunteers' would 'meet and greet visitors and provide essential information and support' (Weymouth and Portland Council, 2013: 11). In this managed environment, visitors passively acquiesce as Live Sites mirror other examples of striation, being directed along prescribed paths and called to enjoy themselves in contrived venues.

Based on supranational agreements struck between hosts and sanctioning bodies (often without much power to assert sovereignty), citizens actively surrender their freedom and citizenship. The commodification of the spatial arrangement within Live Sites and, crucially, the interests of sponsoring partners, are likewise secured. This trajectory of territorialisation has been evident since the Germany 2006 World Cup. Even

here the early machinations of striation were visible, fuelled by the promotional rights of corporate partners and sponsors that had, increasingly, become the focus of the IOC and FIFA. From Germany 2006 onwards, within contained festival zones, event production techniques encouraged spontaneous displays of emotion and excitement to enhance the collective (global) viewing experience. Instances of creative resistance were assimilated into the performance, essentially becoming mechanisms for the orchestration of atmospheres towards striation. By London 2012, the solidification of Live Site striation had evolved into the sophisticatedly managed, produced and commercially cloned spaces of mega sports events that demanded policing and protection. Moreover, given the reach and power of their media spectacle, Live Sites have also become sites for brandscaping, which:

means turning desire into pleasure, re-territorialising the atmospheric potentiality and multiplicity of space into a precise striation ... Brandscaping entails atmospheric management, clustering atmospheres into spatio-temporal enclosures, rigid definitions, precise regimes of signification. (Pavoni, 2010: 10)

The London 2012 Live Sites advanced the process of brandscaping as the structuring striation extended its territorialising tentacles beyond actual Live Sites and into other city spaces. During the summer of 2012, London was a city kneeling at the altar of the Olympic brand. This was starkly illustrated with the walk from the underground station to the Hyde Park Live Site or from West Ham Station to the Olympic Park. Transitional travel routes were remarkable for their submission to the vagaries of capital. With civic spaces and streetscapes dressed in Olympic regalia and corporate sponsor logos emblazoning the eye line, London 2012 reflected its overt claim to be 'one of the most comprehensive retail

operations ever initiated for an Olympic Games' (IOC, 2012: 126). Following the LOCOG policy of the Last Mile, the easy access, dissipation and flow of visitors were directed and narrowly channelled by the army of Volunteer Ambassadors. The striation of London 2012 saw the civic spaces orchestrated in such a way as to facilitate the visual and physical brandscaping of the Olympic city. Here, urban geography is transformed into geographies of consumption (Ritzer, 2008) as the movement and gaze of consumers is zonally controlled around the city.

Again, on arrival at any of London's Live Sites, visitors were faced with a plethora of opportunities to consume. While 'restrictions on bringing food and drink into Live Sites ... hindered the capacity for spectators to have an affordable day and contravened the principle of it being everybody's Games' (Commission for Sustainable London, 2012: 10), the Live Sites had all tastes covered from burger bars to champagne stalls, Pizza Express, El Rancho to the official McDonalds outlet. The territorialisation and striation of London 2012 was overt as official merchandise was ever present. London 2012 was a slick brandscaped experience with '1200m<sup>2</sup> of Olympic retail space' at the Hyde Park Live site, '80 retail offerings available at all sporting venues; and the 70-day mobile retail operation also supported the Olympic Torch Relay' (IOC, 2012: 126).

London 2012 was an experience where the walk, the gaze, the consumption and the consciousness of both citizen and visitor was the subject of, and in subjection to, striation. A walk off the path offered a stark contrast to the controlling logic of striation as personal orientation, safety and protection could not be guaranteed. Similar to the South Africa World Cup 2010, visiting fans were directed to controlled zones of consumption in the name of security (e.g. airport/hotels/shopping malls/official Fan Parks/stadia). Atmosphere and pleasure in

Live Sites is re-territorialised and made to 'fit' within an ordered striation as spectators are urged to come and collectively enjoy the Olympics but by facing the screen, navigating linear security processes and operating within the fixed coordinates of a 'venue' that's been built and secured for your safety.

### **Lines of flight: Disruption and dislocation**

In moving from amorphous experiments to managed globalised spectacles, Olympic Live Sites represent yet another institutionalised commercial sphere during mega sports events. Today there is a generalised trend of creating event 'zones' within host cities. These event zones (including Live Sites) see public squares, parks, roads, pavements and airspace cocooned, controlled and commodified under a gaze of governance afforded by exceptional legislation passed to ensure the smooth operation of the event. Invariably sited near official venues and in city centre prime real estate areas, event zones, simultaneously, sanction behaviours of fun and frivolity whilst rendering others illegal. But this territorialising tension can also produce disorder, smooth space and deterritorialisation, evident in the creative, emergent or resistant impulses that take the spectator, visitor or resident off the well trodden path. London 2012 offered a few noteworthy examples of lines of flight and intimations new configurations taking place that offered an antidote to the prevailing brandscaping of the Olympic city.

Firstly, the official, brandscaped Live Sites, although facilitated and promoted as open festive spaces, were countered by instances of spontaneously organised community events. Across the country community pop-up events provided local alternatives to the officially endorsed pop concerts that official Live Sites resemble. Observations in the Potters Field area of London resonated here with no security, corporate brands

replaced by local food stalls, children playing games and groups with their own alcohol. These instances temporarily disrupt controlling logics and even imply the possibility of a smooth space of desire.

Secondly, the artist occupation of spaces for the expression of alternative Olympic narratives (Vasudevan, 2013) was also evident during the Games, with projecting onto, or close to, event zones (which include building frontages). Thirdly, although mega sports events have always been media events (Horne and Whannel, 2010) the London 2012 Games represented a game changing moment as these were the online Games, where technology and audience uptake were set to converge (Gallop, 2012).

Importantly, throughout our investigations around the London 2012 Olympics digital deterritorialisation was evident. Although promoted as Big Screen festive experiences, consumers, armed with technologies of immediacy, interactivity and mobility, were able to resist the official directed gaze. Interestingly, the territorialising power of management is broken, driving digital deterritorialisation by the very uncertainty of the sporting spectacle and attempts to secure space. In the Hyde Park Live Site the failure of the Road Race big screen live coverage saw consumers shift from participating in a collective spectacle into expressing discontent across social media platforms. Moreover, there were security confrontations at the Weymouth Live Sites as local residents were ignorant of barriers demarcating the beach and sea space. These incidents were instantly mediated, breaking free of their original context as they were shared digitally. Observations within the Live Sites at Hyde Park, Victoria Park and the Park Live (BA) Olympic Park site reflected a generally passive and compliant consumer unconcerned with adverts being shown during the Games. However, this compliant and passive behaviour changed when

advertisements for sponsors interrupted their experience of the sport event itself – generating significant negative online comment (particularly via Twitter and Facebook) for sponsors and presenting partners alike. Digital disruption is an illustration of lines of flight as everyday consumer technologies in the hands of a mass public now enable the inversion of the power relationship between consumer and producer, opening up new avenues for the expression of protest and dissent.

Whether sited in official venues or subsidiary Live Sites, the mega sports event narrative can no longer be easily contained and controlled by either corporate sponsors or their media partners. Moreover, attempts by external agents to fix and territorialise fuel a resistance that, ironically, destabilises and disrupts striation. Video confrontations over containment, Tweets and posts due to over-zealous security or volunteers and images of over-priced food and drink or merchandising rapidly and virally corrupt the spectacle and striation of Live Sites and, at the same time, the Olympic brand. While traditions of spatial and embodied resistance continue, deterritorialising lines of flight and the formation of new configurations are accelerated by the digital turn.

Although the first, or historic, spaces of the Olympics (the official venues) and their secondary commercial clones (Live Sites) reflect the trajectory of territorialisation with brandscaping ambitions, deterritorial resistance is never far beneath the surface. The Live Sites phenomenon represents a geographical jump from the first/historical, second /cloned to, what we refer to, as third spaces of convergence. This third space opens up new possibilities for disruption and dislocation because it retains some of the features of smooth space that are less easily observed, captured and repressed by ordering tendencies. Social media channels, whilst not a panacea for e-democracy (Morozov, 2011)

or e-activism (Hands, 2011) permit rhizomatic activity to take place, enable new connections to be fostered, and spatial relations to be re-constituted. In the third space at least the possibility of escaping the 'comfortable certainty of planning' (Pavoni, 2010: 11) is afforded, utilising new tools and technologies to open up a space of doubt and uncertainty where territorialising tendencies are less effective.

## Conclusion

Throughout this article we have argued that mega sports events, and their development through Live Sites and Fan Parks, have brought urban space into spatio-political discourse. Drawing empirically on the case of the London 2012 Olympics we have shown how these mega sports events are Leviathan spectacles that now extend their tentacles beyond the limits of their historic traditions, physical venues and static displays. Urban civic spaces are brought under a territorialising gaze, secured and rendered open to modification, facilitated by national and local government agencies. Now, contractually enshrined by mega sports event sanctioning bodies, host nations are compelled to cede sovereignty, prostrate their urban civic spaces before the Olympic brand and provide contained Live Sites. Live Sites reflect extended processes of striation and territorialisation, demanding the demarcation, containment and control of urban civic spaces.

This article has revealed how the Olympic brand and, by association, Live Sites find themselves intrinsically linked to a global spectacle woven through an official media-corporate nexus. The passive spectator of old has been replaced with an active participant in the mediation of the spectacle. Live Sites are designed to engender a gregarious performativity essential for sustaining the global spectacle of the Olympics and its brand partners. In territorialising and

transforming urban space from civic canvases into striated brandscapes, Live Sites become a platform to puppeteer and exploit the embodied desire of consumers. Under the guise of fun and frivolity the striation, governance and managed assemblage of Live Sites comes as a sugar-coated spectacle easily beamed to a globally captive and media-saturated audience.

However, we have also argued that attempts to fix and territorialise urban civic spaces are never complete, always breaking free of striation through de-territorialising lines of flight. Specifically, spatial hierarchies are challenged by third spaces of digital de/re-territorialisation. A new digital frontier is evolving where the striation and territorialising tentacles of urban brandscaping do not conform.

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