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Relocating Communities: From The Boleyn Ground to The London Stadium

Declaration:

Being a dissertation submitted to the faculty of The Built Environment as part of the requirements for the reward of the MSc Urban Regeneration at University College London: I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and that the ideas, data and images, as well as direct quotations, drawn from elsewhere are identified and references.

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"They fly so high,
Nearly reach the sky,
Then like my dreams,
They fade and die.
Fortune's always hiding,
I've looked everywhere

I'm forever blowing bubbles,
Pretty bubbles in the air
When shadows creep,
When I'm asleep,
To lands of hope I stray"

- Adopted in 1920

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ABSTRACT

The 2012 Olympic legacy promises emphasised the perpetual use of infrastructure and in March 2013, 'E20 Stadium LLP' confirmed that West Ham United Football Club would be the London Stadium's long-term concessionaire.

The relocation to the London Stadium was the catalyst for supporter resentment. Many opposed the relocation from their former home, and vocally demonstrated their opposition on the grounds that the decision to move co-opted the identity of the club for commercial gain. Negative sentiment peaked on 10 March 2018, with a riot erupting during a football match at the London Stadium which was targeted at the clubs owners.

The supporter community had become disenfranchised as a result of decisions taken by the club. There was scant democratic consultation which bypassed supporters who failed to see tangible benefits materialise at the London Stadium and felt that the match-day experience was inferior to the one at their former home. Supporters had lost their beloved Boleyn Ground which had existed as a zone of contact for the 'cockney diaspora', serving as a relational space and contributing to the creation of a collective identity.

The investigation looks at the topics of; stadia redevelopment; contractual landscapes in regeneration; concepts on being at home; the commercialisation of football and community displacement. In doing so, this paper begins to elucidate the perspectives of a community who's experience reveals a clash between the values of commerce, communities, legacy and dividend.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context of the study

The London 2012 Olympic Games ran from July 27 to August 12. The games of the XXX Olympiad were the third occasion that they had been awarded to London. The Olympics presented a unique opportunity to regenerate the Borough of Newham, improve the lives of East London residents and tackle chronic inequality and deprivation.

The legacy promises emphasised the long term use of their infrastructure. On 11 February 2011, the OPLC voted unanimously [13-0] for West Ham United Football club [WHUFC] to take ownership of the London Stadium. This was subsequently annulled and a second bidding process, this time for a 99-year long lease, was initiated, WHUFC also won this competitive bid. In March 2013, it was announced that WHUFC would become the Stadium's principal concessionaire (Allen & Overy 2016).

The football club were widely regarded to be benefiting from state-funded infrastructure and questions were raised on the social integrity of the move (The Guardian, 2011). Supporters were frustrated by the lack of consultation from the Club's owners. When the Olympic stadium re-opened in 2016, supporters felt the match-day experience was inferior to the one at their former home ground at Upton Park. The negative sentiment peaked during a match at the London Stadium between West Ham United and Burnley on 10 March 2018. A pre-planned protest by supporters in the West Stand caused the match to be halted amid violent scenes. The riot escalated to include three stands of the 57,000 seat venue. The confrontation was targeted towards the owners of WHUFC, who were escorted out of the venue by police.

Although the scenes captured the attention of media commentators and journalists, there has been limited academic research into the cause of this event. Yet, the socio-cultural backlash and the impact on the 'West Ham community' has been excluded from the 'legacy' discourse. The football-led regeneration of which WHUFC play a prominent role is only a small part of the legacy story, yet it is a significant one. The move throws the divide between football as a commercial venture and football as a community endeavour into sharp relief.

1.2. Aims and Focus of the Study

The Olympic Games have had a direct impact upon the urban built environment, influencing the production and consumption of space. The supporters of WHUFC have played an influential role in the process of East London's transformation (Cohen, 2013; Fawbert 2011). Yet, the behaviour of this group of people who actually experienced the new built environment

are not well understood. This paper looks to explore the causes of the backlash following the relocation and looks to provide an account of the perspectives held by an East End community.

1.3. The Research Question

Why was there a backlash from the West Ham United Football Club supporters at the London Stadium?

1.3.1. The Research Hypothesis

The former stadium represented a “zone of contact” (Pratt 1991) and contributed to the supporters’ sense of identity. There was a strong attachment to the symbolic home that was the Boleyn Ground and some supporters saw the decision to move as one driven by commercial interests, one which sacrificed their identity.

The relocation from the Boleyn Ground at Upton Park to the Olympic Stadium was executed via a top-down manner that bypassed consultation and authentic engagement procedures. Supporters’ opinions were disregarded by Decision Makers at WHUFC. Consequently, there was resentment towards the Board, this culminated in the crowd rioting in an attempt to demonstrate their resentments.

CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW

The review is split into three sub-sections. The first provides an overview of the mega-event and Olympic discourse in the context of urban regeneration. The London 2012 Olympic Games is then discussed, at the site specific level of the London Stadium, with a focus on the political rhetoric and the promise to transform communities. The second section begins to dissect other meanings of community; Distinctions between geographical communities and supporter communities are established by examining historical and sociological perspectives on the history of WHUFC and the 'east end' identity. The third section draws on the existing knowledge on the role of hooliganism and collective identity formation within the context of contemporary football.

2.1. PART A: OLYMPIC-LED REGENERATION

A variety of interrelated disciplinary perspectives contribute to contemporary knowledge on the way hosting the Olympic Games impact the built environment. According to Smith and Fox, (2007), among others (Chen et al. 2013; Rosentraub 2009; Rosentraub and Joo, 2009), event-led development is a popular tool used by policy makers as they are a catalyst for regenerating inner-city areas. In this review, the term regeneration refers to the "positive transformation of a place that has previously displayed symptoms of physical social or economic decline" (Evans & Shaw, 2004 p8).

The Olympic Games are a common physical development strategy, however, critics of this approach highlight the high-risk it entails as an economic-strategy (Kidd 1992) and regard the events as a wasteful public expenditure (Lenskyj, 2002).

2.1.1. The London 2012 Olympic Games

In the urban regeneration discourse, the 2012 London Olympic Games assumes a prominent role (Cornelissen 2004; Gold & Gold 2008; Hiller, 2000). Thompson's (2018) quantitative review of 305 publication titles, found 'London' and '2012' are cited 56 and 59 times respectively (p.8). The results are indicative of the centrality of the 2012 Olympic Games to the current understanding of event legacies.

Leveraging legacy is a central theme in the urban development discourse (Essex and Chakley, 1998; Pound, 2003; Leopkey and Parent, 2011; Smith, 2012). The term 'legacy' first appeared in Melbourne's 1956 Olympic bid and it is now detailed in the IOC Bid Book (Leopkey and Parent, 2011). Preuss (2007, 2015) and Thompson et al. (2018) have categorised the dimensions of 'legacy' but it remains a contested concept. For the purpose of this research,

legacy will be used to mean the positive and negative impacts of hosting the Olympic Games.

A majority of the legacy literature has focused on the more measurable, economic impacts (Gratton *et a*l. 2000, 2006; Walton *et al*. 2008). Studies typically employ quasi experimental approaches, comparing outcomes for 'treated' areas (e.g., host cities), to a group of 'control' areas (e.g., similar cities that did not host an event). Using this approach, Smith (2012), Smith et al. (2014) and Azzali (2017) make claims of an evidently positive legacy for London, particularly in physical terms which encompasses the venues, infrastructure, and facilities.

In comparison to the research into economic impacts, there has been a lack of robust research into the social impacts, particularly concerning community effects and quantitative research is not widely used for sports and culture impact evaluation.

For Pappalepore (2016), Souliotis *et al* .(2014) and Van Wynsberghe et al. (2013), the true 'legacy' has actually been more about recovering from the traumatic urban changes and escalating costs of the games. Others, such as Kuper and Szymanski (2010) suggest the regeneration rhetoric is a myth, supported by false legacy claims and circulated by the few who can benefit from hosting the Olympic Games.

There is much to be drawn from Raco's work on the privatisation of the Olympic Games (2012, 2013a, 2014) by the ODA. Raco surveys the "contractual packaging" (2013; p.181) model and observed the management-consultancy-like approach used for the London Olympic projects. It is suggested that, by establishing "substantial contractual packages"(Raco, 2012; p.188), with 1,433 "Tier 1" and 7,500 "tier 2 contracts" (Ibid), policy concerns were compartmentalised (2013a, 2013b).

The public-private hybridises that govern the operations are masked by a "pyramid of accountability" (Raco, 2012 p457) and this "creates opportunities for the consolidation of elite power," (Froud et al. 2017). This idea is reinforced by Coaffee, (2012) Hayes and Horne, (2011) and Müller (2015), who analyse how Olympic agendas serve elite interests. Pillay (2008) has also explored the bypassing of democratic procedures with partnership arrangements. Flyvbjerg assists the argument and suggests that the "democracy deficit (Flyvbjerg 2003, 2007), is facilitated by the ever-complex evaluation criteria, produced by the elite.

2.1.2. A Legacy Promise: 'Transforming Communities'

Sustainability was at the heart of the London 2012 Olympic legacy agenda, which hoped to inspire a generation of young people who have suffered from the chronic deprivation in their

local area, despite their location in one of the most affluent cities in the world (LOGOC, 2011).

Community' is an important pillar within policy documents and political rhetoric in regenerating cities. For London, "Transforming Communities" was one of the five 'Legacy Promises' (DCMS, 2008:8). Wallace, (2010) pointed out that community is used as an indicator of successful regeneration as it shows that "regeneration is being created on a human scale, 'for the people" (p.236). By weaving a narrative of community into the technical details of strategic plans, regeneration can appear to be tangible and valuable to individuals.

There are inconsistencies in the definition of community throughout official 2012 documents (see LOGOC, 2005; 19: LLDC, 2012;12). Watt (2013) believes that the absence of coherent policy objectives for community and social integration can be partly attributed to the vague definition.

In community legacy literature, there are certain locales which receive particular attention. One example of this is the neighbourhood of Hackney Wick Fish Island. A high-profile renovation initiative (Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016) was termed in policy as a 'Creative Industries Project' (LLDC 2018) which was aiding the 'community'. The initiative's key features were said to be "born out of the need to give the artistic community a public face" (LLDC, 2012: 66).

Critics suggest that the community legacy that the initiatives represent articulate the political visions of which communities should have a place in the regenerated future of the neighbourhood.As Pappalepore (2016) notes, the selective representation of 'community' is problematic and results in exclusion, rather than 'inclusion' of other cultures.

Armstrong *et al*. (2011:3169) also suggest that the legacy discourse adopted by the Olympic 'power brokers' was a deliberate attempt to shape the contracts, deals and developments for their own interests. The language of 'community' results in groups being overlooked or deliberately excluded and identifying which community is included in formal policy - which is dominant and which is marginalised - reveals which groups benefit and which lose out from urban development.

Too often, urbanist literature views the community in static terms (Apparundai, 1996). An alternative approach is proposed by Andrews (1998), whose work offers other conceptualisations of 'community', namely; communities of geographic locale, communities of a social system, communities of an ideology and communities of a sense of belonging.

There are some academics (cf. Cohen and Watt 2017) who abandon the mega-event analysis altogether, condemning the treatment of the host city as a 'tabula-rasa' on which to imprint a

masterplan. Instead, they trace the vicissitudes of the Olympic regeneration project through micro histories of transition.

2.1.3. The London Stadium

According to Getz (2013); "Today's modern stadia … usually have an extraordinary positive impact on the host region" (p.8). Jones' (2002) work reviews the millennium stadium in Cardiff and made some important observations in relation to stadium redevelopment. These include observations on the lack of evidence that local structures were adequately serving democracy and accountability and argues that there are not methods in place to ensure that all viewpoints regarding the development were heard equally. McCarthy's work (2002) analysed stadium regeneration efforts in Detroit and found that issues of governance helped to explain the development of a pro-growth regeneration agenda.

Urban planning literature has explored numerous aspects of the Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the main venue built for the 2012 Olympic Games. Gold and Gold (2011) describe how, in an effort to avoid 'white elephants,' the Government and the Office of the Mayor set up the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) in 2009. The OPLC's first task was to oversee the bidding process for the purchase of the Stadium.

Brenner and Theodore (2002) comment that the governance strategies around the post-olympic park was part of the Sir Robin Wales' assertive strand of civic entrepreneurialism. As the Mayor of Newham, Wales' approach had a distinctive localism, within WHUFC had a particular place (Allmendinger, 2011; Boyle and Rogerson, 2006).

2.2. PART B: WEST HAM UNITED

WHUFC has a distinctive history and is positioned as representing East London as a whole by Fawbert (2011:177). The FC began in 1895 as a worker's team for Thames Iron Works, the last major ship-building firm in London, located in Canning Town. The Club was registered as a professional football company on 5 July 1900 under the name West Ham United Football Club (WHUFC).

The newly formed Club moved to the Boleyn ground, referred to as 'Upton Park,' in 1904. For Taylor (1971, 1984, 1995), WHUFC grew out of the concern of working-class men to develop their primary group relationships. The mostly homogenous, working-class supporters (Spaaij, 2006) encouraged a territoriality, solidarity and a fierce local pride (Fawbert, 2005; 2011, 2017).

2.2.1. The East End and a Cockney Diaspora

Today's 'East End' has been restructured using a political narrative built on ideas of regeneration, Olympics, and 'community'. This narrative omits a legacy of struggle, of resiliency, of the working class militants who faced political defeats with a sense of fellowship and collective hope (Davidson & Wyly, 2012).

Sociologically speaking, East London has frequently been considered "the archetypal working-class community" (Fawbert, 2005:172). For over a century, an "omnipresent feature of East London has been the attraction football has held for its residents" (Korr, 1978:211). The popularised 'cockney identity' is regarded by Korr (1978) as synonymous with loyalties towards the Labour party, trade unions and WHUFC.

Football Clubs are claimed to be a key contributor "to an individual's sense of identity with, or belonging to, a group" (Mason, 1988). Holt argues that affiliations with a football Club can create and reinforce collective social entities. Holt examines the emergence of professional football and explains that it coincided with a period of rapid urbanisation. During this time, traditional communities were dislocated and there was a destruction of social integration. As a result, belonging to a football Club supplied a cultural expression of urbanism that addressed the need for rootedness.

Holt's idea is supported by the work of academics like Giulianotti (2005), who also explain that urbanization and rural community destruction caused an unswerving loyalty to a football community in the newly formed working class neighbourhoods of Britain's industrial towns.

For Ha-Ilan (2017), football fan practices are "a form of collective behaviour conducted within social networks" (p.13). Similar views are expressed by Cleland *et al.*(2018; 18) who cite Blackshaw (2008: 336), stating that a "football's community is a profound agreement of cultural identity, companionship and breathing space, one of the most intimate things permissible in a modern public space."

According to Brown *et al.*(2006): "communities are today (in a formal sense at least) as likely to be the agency-defined 'communities of disadvantage' or 'social problem communities that exist in urban centres as they are the broadly defined supporter communities that sports historians and sociologists of sport have traditionally discussed" (2012 p.310).

2.2.2. The role of the Boleyn Ground

Several factors, including the closure of the docks during the 1980s left a pattern of

unemployment, urban neglect and socio-economic deprivation (Davidson & Wyly, 2010) in the East-End area. As a result, there has been a “cockney exodus” (Watt *et al*. 2014) to places including Essex and Hertfordshire. The ‘Cockney Diaspora’ term has been coined and has slowly gained credence in describing a selective portion of a re-territorialized “group with shared social, cultural and urban origins” (ibid. p.143). Cohen (2013) and Fawbert (2005) have employed the term to illuminate the migratory flows of the former East London residents. They suggest that the periodic return movements on a fortnightly basis to Upton Park, are key to the communities Diaspora identification (Gilroy, 1993).

Despite an exodus, attendance on match days increased (WHUFC Statistics, 2015: 262). This may be explained by Collins’ (2004) interaction ritual theory which highlights the small repetitive actions that underpin everyday interactions. Collins (2004) names four factors that lay the foundation of an interaction ritual: barrier to outsiders; group assembly; mutual focus of attention; and shared mood. The repetitive aspects of these factors produce a collective, emotional energy that bonds the participants. For Goffman, the rituals create the symbols of a social relationship, “represents a way in which the individual must guard and design the symbolic implications of his acts while in the presence of an object that has a special value for him” (Goffman 1967: 57).

As such, rituals can be said to (re)create group identity, solidarity and standards of morality. Robson (2000) argues that for the émigré community, the ritual visits to the symbolically charged stomping ground resonates with an atmosphere of the past (p.149). The club’s shipbuilding roots are commemorated by two crossed hammers on the club’s badge, signifying a symbolic tribute.

The Boleyn Ground is regarded by many theorists as a “zone of contact” (Pratt, 1991),existing as a symbiosis between emotion and physical structure and acting as the “locus of memory, extending the relationship between physicality and emotion, to memory and place” (Baker, 2019: 628). A significant contribution to the literature is Stone’s research which posits that the stadium and fan practices express “notions of self-identity, belonging and interpersonal relations” (2007: 170). In this relationship, the space of the Boleyn ground holds both imagined and real memories. Selective attachment to a place is regarded as a complex mix of rational calculation, sentimental appeal, gut feeling and pressure (Savage *et al*. 2005). Cultural affiliations to a place articulate personal histories and geographies (Stephenson 2008). For Fawbert (2011), trips to the Boleyn were a symbolic representation, where “community persisted as communion”(p.181).

Attachment to the ‘communal’ group is a fluid and multidimensional process which, according to academics such as Cohen (2013), involves existential, moral, aesthetic and cultural and social choices (Savage *et al.*, 2005; Lewicka, 2011; Watt, 2009, 2013).

2.3. PART C: HOOLIGANISM

To understand the origins of the backlash, it is important to understand the prominence of violence in football culture.

Football Hooliganism has been associated with football since the 1960s and is used to describe the issue of football crowd disorder. Rockwood and Pearson define a hooligan as “an individual who attended matches with the intention of becoming involved in violence with rival supporters, or a fan who became involved in physical violence, but not other disorder or criminal activity” (2012:151).

2.3.1. Expressions of Territory and hooliganism

In the 1970s through to the 1980s, a notoriety was given to hooliganism and in particular, the English football hooligan group associated with WHUFC, known as the Inter City Firm [ICF] (Cleland & Cashmore, 2015: 128). The name derived from the use of Inter City trains used to travel to away games. At its height in the 1980s the “Inter City Firm” boasted 150 core members, with numbers swelling to 500 in larger confrontations (Murphy *et al*. 1990: 92).

Involvement by the media in soccer hooliganism and sensationalised documentaries such as ‘Hooligan’ (1985) elevated the status of football hooligans and contributed to the "intensification of the status" (Murphy *et al.* 1990: 124) of hooligans. The media's "appalled fascination" with the ICF and its leaders "only served to heighten the mythologies around them” (Williams & Wagg, 1991; 167). The violent sprees conducted by the Firm at football matches were notoriously described by former Sports Minister, Colin Moynihan, as a “cancer in an otherwise healthy body” (Armstrong & Hobbs, 1994; p231). In this period, hooliganism was regarded as “one of Britain’s more serious social problems” (Dunning *et al*., 1984: 215) and academics began to focus on the possible causes and origins of such behaviour (Armstrong, 1994; Giulianotti, 2002; Stott and Pearson, 2007).

A collective element of resistance is a continued feature of modern research on football violence such as the work of Giulianotti and Armstrong (2002) who illustrate the interactions that take place between hooligan groups. The cultural practices of supporters and the significance of collective identity is a principal element in the research on football hooliganism. For Giulianotti, (1999) ‘identity’ is played out in group behaviour associated with Hooliganism. Giulianotti’s views are reiterated by Dunning (1999;) Dunning *et al.* (2012) and Williams *et al.* (1988) who suggest that a working-class subculture used football to enhance their identity. Ayres and Treadwell (2012) reaffirm this view and explain how violence at football matches reflects “an effort to reassert their identity and regain some autonomy” (2012; 93). Others, like

Armstrong (1998), see football violence as an opportunity to construct a sense of belonging whilst allowing individuals to gain status and prestige.

Stead & Rockwood (2007) explain how crowd management and security measures have reduced violent displays at matches, with CCTV and the banning orders effectively reducing displays of violence. Nevertheless, hooliganism has gradually evolved to a “persistent, traditional subculture that continues to attract significant numbers of young men” (Spaaij, 2008; p 370).

2.4. Summary of the Review

Much of the appeal of the Olympic ideal is that it offers a universal langue of sport and a vision of international solidarity. A new stadium does far more than simply invest money in regeneration projects, it adds the element of rootedness to a physical site. However, distinctions between fan and resident communities could be more effectively bridged to allow stadia to become more embedded locally.

The catalytic effects of the Olympic venues are the focus of infinite debates, with each claim there is a rebuttal. “In this war of facticities between the positivists and the negativists, the issue of local redistributive intervention established by a mega-event is ignored” (Cohen & Watt, 2017; 67).

There is a small body of work which has made use of comparative case studies (c.f. Brown *et al*., 2006) to put forward pre-requisites to develop stadia to benefit communities. Despite growing attention in event-led regeneration, the literature tends to look at the years leading up to the Olympics and the period immediately following its close. Rarely is there an equivalent long-term analysis of social and cultural impacts of any event.

The concept of ‘community’ held by planners is remarkably different to the concept of ‘community’ held by those who experience an area. Giulianotti and Armstrong, among others, demonstrate how the collective WHUFC identity allows us to identify it as a community.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to Methodology

This study offers a behavioural perspective on members of the football community who were affected by the Olympic-led regeneration initiatives in East London.

This study has the primary aim of producing a substantive account and insight into the community who routinely visit the Olympic Park to better understand; the rationale behind the relocation, the governance and how this influenced the outcomes, the meaning attached to sports stadia and how this can be created and experienced.

The research will answer the main research question, “Why was there a backlash from the WHUFC Football Club supporters at the London Stadium?’

The findings from the document analysis and interviews will allow the researcher to:

1. Examine the significance of WHUFC for the supporters and stakeholders in terms of brand loyalty and ‘identity;’
2. Ascertain the way a stadium can become a place of meaning and community;
3. Discover how the process was managed and where benefits and losses materialised.

The approach employed draws upon fields beyond the urban environment to explain the social and emotional influences behind the backlash (Pryce and Levin, 2008: 16). The phenomenological research uses qualitative methods to obtain the necessary insights from participants.

3.2. Data Collection

Obtaining data from more than one source was necessary to improve understanding and to increase reliability through data triangulation (Jick, 1979). Exploratory research looked at archival documents relating to the bid for the Olympic Stadium and the promises set out for the WHUFC occupation period. Following a desk-based analysis, 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who were involved in the relocation, the football Club and/or involved in organising the riot.

Archives from the years 2012-2019 were analysed and used to crosscheck the interview responses. The archives include official documentation, the bid book, post-event reports, policy documents, Press Statements and released commercial reports. The exploratory

research looked at archival documents relating to the bid for the Olympic Stadium and the promises set out for the occupational period. The secondary data coupled with the interview data assist in providing a rich picture of events.

3.3. Interviews

The research included a series of interviews to examine the behaviours and attitudes of people who self-identify as a member of the WHUFC Community. Interviews grant insight into individuals 'perceptions and feelings' (Crouch and Mckenzie 2006:485) and allow specific events to be examined in more detail than alternative methods.

Interviewees were found through forums, online contact forms and the researcher directly contacted individuals within organisations that were referred as appropriate for the study. For this study, individuals were purposively chosen because they offered comparative perspectives on the events and effects of the stadium relocation. According to Barbour & Schostak (2005), using an interviewing technique which selects participants "because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population" (2005; 46) ensuring a focused research strategy.

Individuals are categorised according to the 3 ascribed profiling groups [See Appendix C]:

(1) Currently registered season-ticket holders, referred to as Supporters

(2) Stakeholders in West Ham United Holdings, referred to as Decision makers

(3) A supporter of the club who was involved, and supported, the events of 10 March 2018, referred to as Opposition Group Members.

An early speculative interview was conducted with a 'supporter' and following the pilot interview, a list of questions were produced which provided the researcher with an element of control (Bryman, 2001). The flexibility of this first interview ensured that several subjects were discussed, drawing attention to specific topics that were worthy of further investigation, both in terms of literature and data collection. All participants were subsequently able to introduce new elements into the discussion and allowed the exchange "unfolded in a conversational manner" (Longhurst, 2003;103).

Semi-structured interviews "allow researchers to develop in-depth accounts of experiences and perceptions with individuals" (Cousin, 2009; 71). According to Blaxter et al. (2006: 172), this method offers researchers the opportunity to uncover information that is "probably not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations." Moreover, this approach allows "depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005: 88).

Accordingly, 12 semi-structured interviews, lasting between 1h10 to an 1h30, were conducted between May and July 2019.

Interviews were audio-recorded and occurred under the agreement that any potentially sensitive information would not be disclosed. Transcripts were produced with the aid of NVIVO software and checked for accuracy. The participants have viewed the transcripts and (will be) provided with copies of this study. Participants could withdraw from the study after reviewing their interview. Due to confidentiality and the commercially sensitive nature of the discourse, the participants are referred to under pseudonyms [Appendix C].

3.4. Organisation of the Analysis:

The thematic structure allows the researcher to draw out aspects that are relevant to a phenomenological analysis of supporter accounts (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). The findings and analysis are separated into two parts. The first uses the archival analysis to explain the bidding process, timeline of events and process of relocation. The second section evaluates the changing experiences of a home stadium and the significance of the move for individuals. The accounts from participants were sub-divided around emergent themes until the following 'best-fit' (Smith & Osborne, 2003) was achieved:

Theme 1:The controversies surrounding the Olympic Stadium
Theme 2: How individuals experienced the Boleyn Stadium and their social relations
Theme 3: How the Built environment can influence experiences and actions
Theme 4: Variables that affect collective identities.

The analytical technique assumes that the interviewees' description of events are indicative of their representations. Although controversies exist as to whether participants' accounts can represent evidence, particularly concerning 'violent' crowd events (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992; Wetherell & Potter, 1989), the techniques used in this review here allow a theoretical explanation of the events that occurred and are therefore justified.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter begins by explaining the Olympic Stadium bid and controversies surrounding the agreement made between the LLDC and West Ham United Holdings. The research concentrates on three aspects of this process; the terms of the contract, lack of engagement and consultation with supporters, and the impacts this had on accountability. A description of the events is followed by an analysis the rationale behind the move. The chapter then evaluates the constructed meaning of the Boleyn Ground and the transformed match-day experience.

4.1. PART A: The Relocation Process

The Club engaged in two competitive bidding processes in order to secure the long-term concession of the Olympic Stadium. The archival analysis revealed the extent of the controversies surrounding the bid's made by WHUFC , this is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Timeline of key events of WHUFC's bid for the Olympic Stadium.

Date	Event	Source
12 November 2010	OPLC announce that two bids are shortlisted	BBC News. (2010a, 2010b); WHU (2010b).
11 February 2011	OPLC names WHUFC as the preferred bidder	BBC News. (2011); WHU (2011c).
3 March 2011	The relocation is approved by the British Government and Mayor of London	BBC News. (2011); HM Government. (2013)
9 May 2011	Tottenham apply to the High Court for judicial review of the decision	ESPN ,Soccernet (2011)
23 June 2011	High Court judge Mr. Justice Davis dismisses judicial review	Haringey Independent, (2014); Haringey Report for Cabinet,(2012)
22 August 2011	Tottenham Hotspur FC end their legal challenge	Panton, M (2013)
11 October 2011	OPLC abandoned talks with WHUFC and begin a new tender process	ESPN Soccernet. (2011);The Guardian (2011); Sampson A (2011)
1 February 2012	16 new bids made for tenancy, including from WHUFC	Inside the Games (2012)
23 February 2012	WHUFC present their bid to the Supporters Advisory Board (SAB)	KUMB (2013): Robbins, (2015).

5 December 2012	OPLC names WHUFC as the preferred bidder	BBC Sport (2012).
5 December 2012	WHUFC given three months to improve the terms of the deal	Gibson, O. (2013); The Guardian (2013).
6 March 2013	Leyton Orient call for a judicial review	BBC Sport (2013a, 2013b)
22 March 2013	WHUFC become anchor tenants with a 99 year lease	Allen & Overy (2016); Gibson, O. (2013b)
19 September 2013	Leyton Orient lost their bid to win a judicial review into the decision	London Assembly Regeneration Committee (2014); WHU (2013, 2014)
8 May 2014	Request to the Commissioner to release details of the agreement	London Assembly Regeneration Committee (2014)
6 August 2015	BBC documentary details conversion costs of £42 million	BBC (2015).
9 October 2015	LLDC release the 207-page agreement with redacted sections	Allen & Overy (2016); Gillard (2019).
3 September 2015	Commissioner ruled LLDC to reveal details of the agreement	LLDC (2015)
4 April 2016	Full contract revealed by LLDC detailing that WHUFC pay £2.5 million	BBC Sport. (2016); Dalleres & Gill. (2016); Matheson, Schwab, & Koval, P. (2018)
10 May 2016	Final WHUFC match held at the Boleyn Stadium	Fawbert (2017); Cohen & Watt (2017)
21 August 2016	WHUFC played at the London Stadium against Bournemouth	Gillard (2019)
8 May 2018	In response to FOI request, E20 stated the WHUFC Community Plan is not yet approved	LLDC (2018);Gillard (2019).

The interviews reveal that the first competitive bid to buy the stadium was annulled because:

> *"The EU received a number of complaints on the grounds that it broke EU laws on the basis of competitive opportunity. The LLDC decided to cancel the sale-tender because they didn't want to face the judicial review."* *(Decision Maker 2)*

Following the annulment of the first tender, the LLDC were only prepared to lease the Stadium and initiated a new bidding process. WHUFC were awarded a 99 year lease and announced as the main tenants in March 2013 and UK Athletics as its summer concessionaire.

To make the London Stadium fit for use, the Legacy Corporation's Planning Committee granted permission in May 2013 for the structure to be transformed into a 60,000-seater venue with a capacity of 54,000 for football use and 80,000 for concerts. In July 2013, the contractors were announced; these included a £41m contract to Balfour Beatty Group Limited for works on the Stadium roof, a £25m contract to Imtech G&H for electrical and plumbing work and a £1.5m contract to Carey's PLC for preparatory work.

According to official bid documents, West Ham United Ltd agreed to pay £2 million in annual rent and contribute £15 million to the refurbishment costs. The remaining funds were reported to come from; a £148.8 million one-off settlement from the exchequer, £40m from Newham council, £40 million from the original £9.3 billion Olympic budget, and a further £25 million from 'the government' (BBC, 2013a; 2013b).

In response, WHUFC released a statement defending the agreement on the grounds that WHUFC do not have the stadium 'naming rights', which would generate substantial profits. Appendix D has identified other areas of lost opportunities.

Despite WHUFC pushing a rhetoric of their bid aiding legacy promises, the partnership agreement is a far more lucrative deal for WHUFC than the LLDC. Considering the London Stadium cost an estimated £600 million to build, it is not surprising that the use of public funds and state funded infrastructure to facilitate the football club's move challenged claims of financial viability and value for money regeneration.

The announcement provoked a sense that WHUFC were directly benefiting from state funded infrastructure.This sentiment was even echoed by the Chief Executive of the LLDC, Ganer, who stated at the London Assembly meeting: "the elephant in the room is the fee that they pay us in a usage cost does not cover the event-day costs, and that's before we go anywhere near a commercial advantage. It simply does not cover the costs of running the events on a day-to-day basis" (BBC, 2018).

The LLDC established a commercial subsidiary, E20, to provide all match-day stewarding, catering and maintenance services and E20 take profit from franchise fees as well as from catering concession (BBC Sport, 2016). In 2011/2012, WHUFC prepared a Community Plan and a Foundation Plan: In 2018, a FOI request forced E20 to reveal that neither of which had been approved (LLDC, 2018a). The omission of E20's reasons for blocking the plans demonstrate a lack of transparency, which is justified and maintained on the grounds of commercial confidentiality (Rumsbey & Burt, 2018).

The terms of the contract also dictate that WHUFC cannot alter the stadium's layout or structure. The LLDC rejected WHUFC's offer of £300,000 in 2018 which was made to change the colour of the running track to the club's colour of claret (LLDC, 2018b). The reduced accountability is put very simply by a Decision Maker at WHUFC:

> *The Olympic Games meant that there was going to be an Olympic Stadium. West Ham had nothing to do with it. We (WHUFC) were not consulted on that bid. This was a UK initiative.* (Decision Maker 3)

The Club leveraged their position of lesser power (than the LLDC) and used a rhetoric of no alternatives in order to maximise profits. Decision Maker 1 contents that, as WHUFC cannot make physical changes to the stadium, it was both unnecessary and impossible to undertake consultation:

> *"We were only allowed to make limited changes and mayor Boris Johnson who refused to rent us the stadium with a running track."* (Decision Maker 1)

The restriction of potentially beneficial initiatives echo Raco's (2012, 2013) finding that the complex governance arrangements may create undesired and even harmful public outcomes [see Appendix E for example of lost initiatives].

4.1.1. Exclusion from Decisions

Amidst financial and legal disputes, a parallel issue surfaced which was concerned with whether or not supporters wanted to move at all. As predicted in the hypothesis, the supporter community became disenfranchised as a result of a bypassing of democratic consultation and the supporters were made to feel overlooked when their views was continuously disregarded by the Club. The only two consultation meetings consisted of forty-nine supporters, all of whom

Table 2: Statement of agreement for independent poll by YouGov (BBC Sport, 2013a)

Statement of agreement	percentage in agreement
Support the move due to a better fan experience	12%
Support the move as it will provide resources to improve the squad and Club	51%
Support the move as it will grow the level of support	6%
Support the move because of trust in the directors	16%
Would consider supporting the move but need more information	10%
Against the move under any circumstances	5%

had been selected by WHUFC and part of designated West Ham membership schemes.

In reality, many of the supporters did not approve of the plans because they were not aware of their existence. The consultation process, or lack thereof, was regarded as calculative and some people were unhappy that WHUFC made claims of progress and support. For example, in an interview with a supporter, it was stated that:

> "*We were not asked if we wanted to move, that was decided for us. Although, that happens today in football. But, they [The Decision Makers] added insult to injury by going to the press. They were claiming they asked supporters and held polls which prove there was full support. I have been a season ticket holder for over 20 years… I was not aware there was a poll…couldn't find a single person who was."* (Supporter 3)

It became increasingly obvious that the Club were ignoring the concerns of supporters and a campaign group called 'WHUFC View' was set up in October 2011, with the sole aim of persuading the Club to commission an independent poll.

Table 3: The commissioning bodies and results of the polls

Commissioned by	Date	Percentage in Favour of Moving	Percentage Against Moving	Percentage Undecided
KUMB	**January 2010**	54	21	25
KUMB	**May 2010**	18	72	10
Premier League (For WHUFC)	**April 2010**	87	-	-
KUMB	**January 2011**	57	32	11
KUMB	**February 2012**	22	60	18
WHU View	**May 2012**	13	87	-
SMG YouGov	**December 2012**	85	5	10

The Club were forced to issue a statement promising to 'step up' consultation with supporters and finally commissioned a poll to SMG YouGov (Fawbert, 2017), the results are displayed for each statement in Table 2.

Overall, the various polls conducted[1], which are displayed in Table 3, provide inconclusive evidence regarding the desirability of the move by the WHUFC fans. The results vary widely according to who commissioned the poll and according to information that was released at the time of the poll[2].

4.1.2. The Rationale Behind the Move

Football is a commercial activity, the practice of managing a football club occurs in a climate where its value is openly challenged. The relocation is a reiteration of the commodification of professional football [Hudson, 2001], a process accelerated by the emergence of the Premier League [in England] and the Champions League [across Europe] (Conn, 2011; Matheson er al. 2018).

The structural changes to elite professional football has changed how the game is experienced by supporters and stakeholders:

> *"We [WHUFC] were very conscious because of our stadium constraints at The Boleyn and the importance of attendance revenue to our business model. To put it into perspective, Arsenal's new stadium took £3,000,000 pounds revenue per game, West Ham were receiving between £500,000 and £600,000."* (Decision Maker 2)

He continues:

> *"The view 10 years ago was that if we could somehow procure or obtain a bigger stadium, with more revenue per game which would narrow the difference with our key competitors. That logic has become outdated because the TV money is now huge and makes up the bulk of the Clubs' revenue…attendance money is relatively less important than it was at the time of the Olympic decision"* (Decision Maker 2).

The findings reveal that the manner in which the Club made decisions positions the football club as a profit generating commercial venture who treat seating and tickets as commodities:

> *"We had to sell them what actually was there. The message communicated to*

1 Knees Up Mother Brown (KUMB) is a magazine and online forum for WHUFC supporters, it has the largest number of members of all registered groups

2 The Jan 2010 poll was conducted prior to the revelation that a running track must remain at the Olympic Stadium. The May 2010 poll was conducted once those plans has been revealed. The Jan 2011 poll was conducted after Tottenham FC revealed their own plans to move

> *supporters was very much: "This is wonderful because" not "what do you think," it was not a standard consultation. In retrospect, we regret not being more transparent as to the ramifications of the new stadium. Rather than telling them how good it was, we told them it couldn't be too bad because the worst seats at Wembley are worse than the worst seats at the London stadium. The fact is, there are a lot of seats at Wembley stadium that are closer than the seats at the Olympic Stadium."* *(Decision Maker 3)*

The commentary reflects the Martin's (2007: 638), dismay at the "commercialism" of football ; which was slowly selling of the soul of the "people's game" (Webber, 2014).

4.1.3. Governance and Security

With the creation of the Premier League in 1992 and the wider commercialisation of football, the Boleyn Ground was at maximum capacity by the end of the early 1990s. The 1989 Hillsborough disaster[3] and the subsequent Taylor Report (Lord Justice Taylor, 1989) led to the removal of the perimeter and lateral fencing and stadiums were converted into all-seater stadiums.

At the Boleyn Ground, Decision Makers put in place enhanced architectural deterrents, purposely designed for disorder attributed to crowds and hooligan activities. Additional methods looked to restrict movement in the stands, particularly those in close proximity to the pitch. Police were a persistent feature of the match day experience:

> *"Inside the ground, up and along Green Street, they would travel down with us [supporters] on the overground"* (Opposition Member 3)

WHUFC employed security who were allocated to a section of the stadium for the duration of the football season. Furthermore, interviews reveal that many supporters found in violation of the Club's code of conduct were reported to WHUFC and issued with banning orders. In contrast to the security measures taken by WHUFC at the Boleyn Ground, the security of the London Stadium[4] is managed by E20 and the contract prohibits the "designing-in" of security (Jacobs, 1978).

---

[3] During an FA Cup semi-final at Hillsborough Stadium, 96 Liverpool fans were killed and 766 were injured in a deadly crush from an overcrowded stand.

[4] A freedom of information request submitted by Sky Sports News revealed the cost of safety and security has cost the taxpayer £3,897,987.

The fractured relations between E20 and WHUFC partners had significant implications for public safety (Fussey, 2011: Mastracci & Bowman, 2015: Rumbsby 2013):

> *"The Legacy Company used independent contractors primarily rather than police, for budgetary reasons. Before the Burnley game, there was no dialogue between stakeholders to ensure that security was being handled correctly. We treated our arguments with legacy company as purely a business argument that would be won or lost in the courts based on the rights and wrongs of the contract."* (Decision Maker 3)

The backlash was allowed to escalate because WHUFC were not accountable for the London Stadium's security:

> *"There were a number of issues with security. Security was not WHUFC's area of responsibility. It (security) was controlled by the legacy company. Stewards might be fine at pop concerts but not at football matches."* (Decision Maker 3)

The stewards were not *fine* for a football club, one which have historically used violence to construct a sense of identity and evoke feelings of belonging.

4.2. PART B: EXPERIENCES OF MOVING FROM THE BOLEYN GROUND

The following discussion unpicks the significance of collective experiences at the Boleyn Ground. Interviews commenced with questions to establish the significance of the Club for individuals. The investigation reveals that WHUFC is 'more than a football Club' for many individuals.

4.2.1. Feelings of 'Home' and Belonging:

In 1904, when the club was officially formed, West Ham was not in London, in governmental terms, but as a suburb of Essex. The area was unique for being the only industrial centre in the region where the majority of the workforce resided within its borough (Korr, 1978: 215). For over 70 years, spectators could walk to the Stadium on Green Street from the suburb of West Ham, the working-class residential areas of East Ham and the poorer East London suburbs of Ilford and Stratford.

By 2010, only a few years before the move, supporters were travelling an average of 55 miles to attend matches (Premier League Survey for Season 2010/2011). With the move from Upton Park to Stratford, the number of people who can access the stadium within 20 minutes has increased 46%, from 538,421 at the Boleyn Ground to 847,614 for the London Stadium.

At the time of the move, WHUFC had a local, national and international following with 850,000 active supporters, as shown in Table 4. Within the United Kingdom, 70% of the supporters were in the East, South East and London areas, with 30% spread across other regions of the country. Despite individual residencies, members of all three profiling groups who were interviewed referenced the Boleyn Ground using terms such as 'home' and 'belonging'. Most participants made use of examples and narratives to describe certain situations, which granted an insight into their specific perspectives (Czarniawaska, 2004). The value of experiencing a community was a clear theme that emerged. For many, affiliations with the club date back to their early years:

Table 4: Active Supporters in a Registered Membership (West Ham Database, 2012)

Location of Residence	Number of active supporters
United Kingdom	680,000
Europe	95,000
North America	30,000
Asia/Oceana	20,000
The rest of the world	25,000
TOTAL	**850,000**

> *"I've been a supporter over 50 years. I attended my first match in November 1968. WHUFC is our most important affiliation. It is crucial to our happiness and general enjoyment of life. It's something that is intrinsic every day of the week."* (Supporter 3)

The respondents have elevated the status of the Boleyn ground through the application of memory and the use of language to represent a mysticism and symbolism. The interviewees refer to the former stadium with a sense of loss and place value on the relationships fostered there. The idea of 'feeling at home' adds emotional weight to the stadium through the application of memories and emotions of nostalgia:

> *"It was almost like the Boleyn was the family home, or the grandmother's home. Every part of it was small, it was compact, it wasn't an intimidating place. It wasn't as nice as everybody else's, everything was basic, everything was a bit tatty, and tight, and the pitch was a bit smaller than everybody else's pitch, but it was comfortable…It was very modest and maybe summed up the roots of the people who were the supporters, who'd come from a modest background and remember where they came from."*
>
> (Decision Maker 1)

Responses from all profiling groups interviewed share this sentiment:

> *"It's a family thing. We are all just clusters of mini families within the bigger West Ham family."* (Supporter 1)

This concurs with Baker's (2019) research which examines the 'home ground' existing as both a physical site and an emotional construct. Its existence as a relational space allows the 'feeling of being at home' to be uprooted from place based connections.

The interviewees describe themselves as a community due to the close-knit relations and practice of group rituals. The Boleyn Ground served as a relational space and as the hypothesis suggests, it operated as a zone of contact for the supporters and encouraged heightened feelings of community which are associated with social interactions. A recurring narrative emerged concerning the standardised rituals that took place at the former home ground and discussions triggered memories and a sense of melancholy loss (Watt et al. 2014:136).

> *"I still remember in detail how I used to go with my father to the games and we always traveled the same route. We always left at the same time, parked in the same place. We always walked through the Castle Street car park. We arrived at the same time, always did the same things. It was a religious devotion in that we did*

the same thing every other weekend." (Supporter 1)

The match day experience provided more than fortnightly entertainment, it offered the chance for supporters to connect with spatially distant communities.

" The routine was so well-established that we didn't have to think about it. The routine was obvious to us, it was in our blood." (Supporter 3)

At the Boleyn Ground, the scattered and diverse Cockney Diaspora were allowed to co-exist for a moment in time, gathering as a community, recreating a socio-spatial reconnection with the imagined homeland

4.2.2. A Transformed Urban Experience:

Across East London displacement has been an ongoing theme and the impacts on community ties have been significant. It was clear from the interviews that there was a feeling of being 'out of place' at the London Stadium, with interviewees describing the experience in the London Stadium akin to being 'a guest in my own home.'

The commercial aspirations of the Club were perceived to be evidenced by the transformed experience of the built environment. The street-scene along Green Street was a visible articulation of personal and collective histories:

"The expectation of going to the stadium started to build because there was always gridlock within a two mile radius of the ground, the train station was totally packed, you couldn't get out of it. So, everyone would see the stadium but you had to approach it slowly, because either the traffic or the trains didn't let you get there. It was almost like you could see where you wanted to get to but you couldn't quite touch it or reach it."

(Decision Maker 3)

Another interviewee explains:

"If you walked down Green Street to the old stadium you had the vendors who had been there forever selling old programmes, badges and memorabilia. The new stadiums on the campus, It doesn't have that. It [the London Stadium] is different to the street scene and the urban feel of Green Street" (Supporter 2)

The image described sits in stark contrast to the new experiences of the London Stadium:

> *the stadium was transplanted into a normal residential area, the new stadium is just sitting in the middle of a park"* (Supporter 3)

The London Stadium and its modernist architecture represent an Olympic urbanism and legacy aspirations of extravagance and materialism. The physical structs asserts the power of the stadium institutions over the emergent spaces. The legacy dreams of corporate visionaries successfully designed the park on the principles of open access and total ground control. The creation of such a sterile environment is partly a carry-over from the strategy of ground control applied in the Olympic development (Minton, 2012).

Although many appreciate the aesthetics of the built structure, there is a sense that the stadium has 'something missing':

> *"It is beautiful in many ways but it isn't home. It doesn't feel like home. You walk the concourses. It's a big area and it feels different, it feels more like being at a big airport or a big train station than a small, modest home that wouldn't be out of place in the second or third league in the country."* (Decision Maker 1)

The backlash can be directly linked to the physical layout of the London Stadium in the statement made by Supporter 1:

> *"We didn't mind losing at the Boleyn ground because we could slump on our so-called local wounds and everything would be okay. In the Olympic Stadium there's no corners to hide and just slump and be miserable."* (Supporter 1)

Furthermore, there are implicit class differences made apparent in the environment of the Olympic Park:

> *"The old working class East End home has been replaced by the Essex mansion. People are less comfortable and it's just not home."* (Supporter 3)

The relationship between social improvement, class structure and the urban environment has been recognised since the 17th century: when the churiaroscuro effect came to symbolise a great class-divide between the respectable and the dangerous, and the differences between the capitalist elite and the workers (Nead, 1995; Edensor, 2016). The Olympic Park, with no unmonitored space, bright streets, metropolitan green areas, wide boulevards and 24-hour CCTV surveillance sits in stark contrast to Upton Park (Robbins, 2015), the dark side, with its familiarity, associations of belonging and feelings of home.

4.2.3. A Shuffled Community

In accordance with their pledge in respect of legacy, WHUFC were obligated to distribute 100,000 community benefit tickets to community groups for each year. General admission tickets are broken down into a hierarchy of price brackets, which open up the categories in Table 5. The impact of allocating a large number of the seats for 'non-supporters', is that:

> *"You cut your links by having too many corporates seats, and West Ham have given away too many. It was like 'oh we will give 500 tickets to Newham Council, 500 to the Community, 500 tickets to HSBC, 500 tickets to Heineken and 500 tickets to Pepsi' Do you somehow lose what you already had."* (Decision Maker 3)

A demographic change in the support base is an inevitable effect of the ticketing hierarchy. The working class supporter, who has passed football down through the generations, is at risk of being excluded from seeing the games because it is too expensive and access is restricted to either wealthy or corporate clients who can afford the ticket prices.

> *"People have compared football to religion, but if the masses are no longer able to participate in the religion does it become a minority interest rather than a religion?"* (Decision Maker 2)

The investigation revealed that:

> *"There was no rationale behind the organisation of communities within the Master West Ham community"* (Decision Maker 2)

Table 5: Seat allocations at maximum capacity (SoccerWay, 2012; WHU Statistics, 2011, 2015; Rumsbey & Burt, 2018)

	Per season	Allocated seats:	Per season
	General Admission tickets	56,400	
	Community Tickets	Estimated per game 4,545	100,000
	VIP/Box tickets	900	
	Executive box tickets	2500	
	Media tickets	200	4,545
Total	**60000**		

The Club overlooked the differential scales of a community formation, treating supporters as individuals, rather than collectives:

> *"We're a community that everyone thinks is one homogenous group. No we are 500 communities…We shuffled our communities.Stadiums all seats are now, but in large parts of all seater stadiums, people stand. If you look at Block 114 today, most of the people stand. What happens to all the people who picked Block 114 who like to sit down with their children? Who can't see if everybody stands up? What happened to them?*
>
> *What Happened is it damaged the atmosphere, it damaged the morale and it damaged the experience for a lot of supporters who were already uncomfortable because it was a change of experience."* (Decision Maker 2).

A lot of the early teething problems with WHUFC and the new stadium weren't necessarily the supporters having arguments with of other clubs, it was WHUFC supporters fighting each other:

> *"Because the people who wanted to stand on paid money and expected to stand the people who sat down wanted to sit down."* (Supporter 3)

For a lot of people not only were they dislocated by the new stadium, they were dislocated within their community, becoming individuals rather than part of a micro community within the larger WHUFC community. A general feel started to take hold, one of dissatisfaction from the supporters that the experience at the London Stadium was absolutely inferior to the experience at the Boleyn. The growing resentment and shared emotions became the "glue of solidarity, and what mobilises conflict," (Collins, 1990: p28).

Supporters groups started to meet and agitate and blame the Board and the principal owners in particular, for a move to a stadium with no soul, no tradition no history and for destroying what bonded West Ham together. For a number of people, the backlash was an attempt to force the WHUFC Board to change the situation:

> *"If they could not listen to us, we thought maybe they would see us"*
>
> (Opposition Member 2)

On the day of the riot, there was an emergence of a significant number of 'active' fans participating in the resistance. These supporters had not been previously engaged in the tensions regarding consultation and Cleland (2010) suggests that behaviour of this kind is

caused by a shared 'hope' for the interactions to instigate a sense of inclusion in the game.

It is somewhat promising to see that there is an acknowledgment of the Decision Makers' mistakes and perhaps riot may be a pivotal moment of change:

> *"The West Ham board had just looked at the statistics over 20 years and justified everything on the basis of the actual maths and the 'facts'. But when we saw the resentment, we truly came to appreciate the level of unhappiness, a genuine unhappiness, in our support. We realised that these were people who had been pushed to the absolute extreme."* (Decision Maker 1)

As Holt (1986) describes in his account in '*Working Class football and the City*,' collective class identities have united individuals at times of alienation. The feelings of dislocation in the early 20th century created strong loyalties to the Club (Korr, 1986). In many ways, the confrontational resistance of supporters is not dissimilar to the events of the 1960s, whereby perceived alienation from society spurred them to use violence at football to publicly demonstrate a collective resistance to authority.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This section will revisit the hypothesis, summarise the findings and offer conclusions based on the investigation.

The study investigates the impacts of regeneration from the perspectives of a football community through discussing the following themes: stadia redevelopment; contractual complexities; feelings of home and belonging; physical and emotional landscapes; commercialisation of football; and community shuffling. The participants' have granted an insights into different perspectives, histories and relations of an overlooked East End community. The supporters of West Ham United share a distinctive history which is based on strong class, geographic and cultural identities (Korr, 1978; 1886).

West Ham United, as a club and a community, is a key part of supporters' 'real' lives: "a regular, structuring part of their existence that enables them to feel belonging in the relative disorder of contemporary social formations" (Brown et al. 2008). The former home ground, the Boleyn Stadium, existed as a relational space, in which match-days practices were translated into an expression of self identity and belonging. For respondents, this represented the culturally homogenising pressures which have historically threatened working class communities and their individuality.

5.1. Summary of Findings

The initial hypothesis recognised factors contributing to the riot, these include; a profit-driven rationale used by the Decision Makers; a lack of genuine engagement and the subsequent feelings of frustration. Other aspects were shown to be particularly significant, namely; the cynical view of change that was apparent before the relocation; the wider commercialisation of football and the contractual constraints that hindered the Club's chances of reconciliation with supporters and opposition members.

The overall aim of this research was to understand the backlash, the interviewees express a contempt for the influence those with power were able to exert on collective biographies (Armstrong and Hobbs, 1994). Displacement and concepts of community are narrowly defined and there has been an exclusion of certain forms of community in the literature.

It is clear from the literature and the investigation that the concept of 'community' held by planners is remarkably different to the concept of 'community' held by those who experienced the area. In redefining an East-End working class community, disputes and conflict have been omitted from the London 2012 Olympic regeneration discourse. The experiences and practices of the WHUFC community are connected to a location, but are not constrained by it. This

research is filling a gap in the literature through an exploratory investigation into the forces driving a backlash from the community.

The legacy power brokers used a ‘community’ discourse to validate their own interests in shaping the contracts, deals and developments (Armstrong et al. 2011:169).

A main finding is that those in positions of power saw moving the football club an opportunity for increased revenue. On the other hand, the supporters were concerned about the changes to the match-day experience as they failed to see benefits materialise. Interviews suggest that the material rearrangement of the community caused an emotional disconnect, with supporters feeling dislocated from an imagined *home*.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information Letter

Dear

As part of my Masters Degree in Urban Regeneration at University College London, I am undertaking a research project into the relocation of West Ham United's 'home' stadium.

Further to our earlier conversation, I would be pleased if you would confirm your participation in a recorded interview. This interview will take between 45 minutes and 90 minutes, during which, I will ask a handful of questions. The questions may be answered to in any way you deem fit and your responses will be audio recorded, unless otherwise requested.

It is acceptable for you to stop the interview at any point. Your participation or non-participation in this study will not affect my status in this organisation, furthermore, your participation in this study is not in response to financial or other inducements.

You will be able to review the transcripts at any point before 2nd September 2019. At your request, I will also make my other research findings available to you. All the information collected will be confidential and your details will not be passed on to any third party in a form that will identify you.

If you are interested to know more about the research, please contact me at alana.harris.13@ucl.ac.uk or contact my advisor at XXX. You can also contact either of us if you have questions after you have completed the interview. If you have any concerns about this study, please contact the University's Ethics Committee.

If you have read and understood the instructions, and you do not have any questions or related concerns, please sign below:

I volunteer to participate in this study:

Participant's signature: _____

Printed name (Optional): _____

Researcher's signature _____

Appendix B: Letter of Consent

Please circle as appropriate:

**Have you received, read and understood a copy of the Information Letter?

Yes No

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw at any time for any reason, and that all data collected from you at that time will be removed?

Yes No

Do you understand that your name will not be displayed in any reports, presentations or publications and you will be assigned a pseudonym for this purpose?

Yes No

Do you understand that data collated from the interview will be kept secure and deleted once the project is complete?

Yes No

Are you happy to have your voice recorded for the duration of the interview?

Yes No

Do you understand that the voice recording will be kept for the duration of the study and will be deleted once no longer needed for the study?

Yes No

Do you confirm that you have had an opportunity to ask questions and that your questions have been answered to you satisfaction?

Yes No

Are you happy to be contacted to give further clarification to any of your data?

Yes No

Name of Participant _____

Signature _____Date_____

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C: Interviewee profiles

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Location	Annual Visits	Attend with:	Supporter +10 years
Decision Maker 1	50-55	M	Middlesex	N/A	N/A	Not disclosed
Decision Maker 2	45-50	M	Lewisham	15 +	Colleagues	Y
Decision Maker 3	60-65	M	Not disclosed	15 +	Colleagues	Not disclosed
Decision Maker 4	40-45	M	Hertfordshire	0 to 5	Solo	N
Supporter 1	40-45	M	Dartford	5 to 10	Partner	N
Supporter 2	25-30	M	Barking	15 +	Father	Y
Supporter 3	25-30	M	Sevenoaks	15 +	Father	Y
Supporter 4	35-40	F	Havering	10 to 15	Partner	N
Opposition Member 1	70-75	M	Hertfordshire	5 to 10	Son	Y
Opposition Member 2	50-55	M	Redbridge	10 to 15	Colleagues	Y
Opposition Member 3	45-50	M	Kent	15 +	Son	Y
Opposition Member 4	30-35	M	Dagenham	10 to 15	Sibling	Y

Appendix D: Information provided by WHUFC on Lost Profits

Impact of the Move on Commercial Exploitation Potential	
Area of Lost Opportunity	Value over Length of Lease
Lost match day revenue from conference/banqueting	£ 208 million
Boleyn Ground hotel revenue	£ 99 million
Revenue from the letting of catering, hospitality, refreshments, portage and related rights	£ 166 million
10% of pitch signage	£ 9 million
Sponsorship / advertising opportunities restricted (as LLDC will have primacy of blue chip markets)	£ 99 million
Lost revenue from ticket sales and advertising in match day programme for space given to LLDC	£ 2 million
Lost revenue from ticket sales, with 100,000 tickets given to community groups	£ 430 million
Stand naming rights - assume precluded	£ 19 million
TOTAL	£1.03 billion

Appendix E: Proposed WHUFC Sports Trust Community Initiatives

Sports Initiatives Promised by WHUFC in the 2011 agreement (Allen & Overy, 2016)	
Borough	**WHUFC Sports Initiative Delivery Content**
Hackney	Housing Association courses, Talent ID
Tower Hamlets	Schools PE/After Schools Clubs (ASC) KICKZ, Training and Mentoring, PL/PFA
Newham	Schools PE/ASC, KICKZ, Training and Mentoring, PL/PFA Multisports Access and Retention Scheme (MARS), Premier League 4 Sport (PL4S), Health Projects, Talent ID
Barking and Dagenham	Schools PE/ASC, KICKZ, PL4S, Talent ID
Thurrock	Schools PE/ASC, Talent ID
Basildon	Schools PE/ASC, Talent ID
Redbridge	KICKZ, PL4S, Talent ID
Havering	KICKZ, Schools PE/ASC, Talent ID
Epping Forest	Schools PE/ASC, Talent ID
Chelmsford	Schools PE/ASC, Talent ID
Brentwood	Schools PE/ASC, Talent ID

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