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Disorganised Host Event Spaces: Revealing Rio's Fault Lines at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games

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Title: Disorganised Host Event Spaces: Revealing Rio's Fault Lines at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games

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Abstract:

Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theoretical framing of 'striated' and 'smooth' spaces and the idea around Olympic states of exception (Marrero-Guillamon, 2013), this paper investigates the extent to which the spatial organisation of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games territorialised a number of targeted event and venue spaces across the host city. The paper unpacks, using in-depth descriptive analysis, how Rio 2016's main Games sites and ancillary event zones were spatially organised. It also explores the variegated implications of the Olympic Games' spatial organisation for Rio's host communities. Observational insights serve as a snapshot in to the potential effects this had on local communities and small traders attempting to engage and leverage from the Games through the researcher's perspective. Empirically driven and qualitative in its focus, the study's in-depth insights are shared through the use of narrated observation and photo and video diaries captured in advance of the Rio Games and during its operation. These audio-visual findings will be presented at the CTS 2017 presentation to illustrate local dynamics at play, and to illustrate exactly how micro-level empiricisms helped to build the findings and theoretical developments discussed. The author will touch up on how, through using qualitative coding and Attride-Stirling's (2001) 'Thematic Network Analysis' (TNA), research themes were developed.

Specifically, in terms of the findings, the paper illustrates that, whilst the city of Rio and associated event spaces became controlled and striated in a variety of ways, they simultaneously emerged disorganised, somewhat chaotic but in turn more open, fluid, and 'democratic'. The authors argue that host community, venue, and Last Mile spaces offered greater propensity for creative resistance, plurality of voice, and the affordance of alternative narratives. As a result, local stakeholders across host communities, including local smaller traders who may have represented vulnerable and excluded actors under previous mega-event conditions (e.g., London 2012) (see Pappalepore and Duignan, 2016; Duignan, 2017), appeared to have been more effective in leveraging event-related and -induced benefits (e.g., event visitor economy consumption). In return, this is argued to have helped support the redistribution of leveragable benefits across a wider spectrum of stakeholders, and not just those with social and economic capital, who have historically been the only ones able to access such opportunity (Ziakas, 2014). This has, and continues to be, of critical importance to the field of critical event studies, in the context of mega-event analyses.

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