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**The rhetoric and reality of the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart: examining gentrification and situational rationality in Leeds.**

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Synopsis:

An examination of the wider context of the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart in Leeds. The paper explores the place of the event within the wider contexts of gentrification and sport policy.

Abstract:

This paper aims to understand the situational rationality of Leeds' decision to host the Grand Depart of the 2014 Tour de France. In doing so, it explores three distinct objectives. First, it considers the wider aspects of gentrification within the city and the extent to which the Grand Depart contributed to the consolidation of the gentrification programme. Second, it explores, using policy theory, the extent to which the sub-region of Yorkshire was able to win the right to host the event despite not being the first choice of UK Sport. Finally, the paper explores extent to which the event was marketed to the local population and their satisfaction with its delivery.

In accordance with the paper's three objectives it is underpinned by three broad bodies of literature. Hillier (2000) contends that all potential host cities for large scale sports events face two important issues: the urban impact of events and the ways in which they contribute to urban transformation; and the legitimisation of the event in order to achieve public support. Following previous successes in urban transformation (Gold and Gold, 2008), it is now generally recognised as a requirement that host cities demonstrate a legacy commitment as part of their bid (Bernstock, 2014). Watt (2013), however, contends that these legacy promises have led to a process of residential displacement in which traditional residents and business interests are side-lined in order to make way for those corporate interests associated with the event. Watt goes further to explain that process occurring is not replacement but instead displacement as a replacement downplays the significance of ongoing political and social struggles over space in modern cities. While the notions of class struggles involving manual working classes and ethnically homogenous populations is anachronistic in modern cities, we should not mistake the

changing appearance of class with the disappearance of class antagonism (Davidson and Wyly, 2012). Finally, the paper provides development of the currently growing, but limited body of literature concerning how policy decisions to host such events are made at the local and national levels.

The paper draws upon qualitative data in the forms of semi-structured interviews and document research. Interviews were carried out with stakeholders directly involved and affected by the Grand Depart and were carried out in the aftermath of the event. Interview data is supported by content analysis of documentation released before the event in order to draw up public support.

\*At this stage the data is being analysed, with a guarantee that the results will be available in time for the EASM conference. Tentatively, initial analysis seems to suggest that a process of gentrification, especially relating to the privileging of corporate interests. In addition, the event provides a useful opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the centralisation of UK bidding policy, in that UK Sport's preferred bidder was not successful.

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