Race, Multiculturalism and the 'Progressive' Politics of London 2012: Passing the 'Boyle Test'

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Abstract

This paper will examine the ways in which race, multiculturalism and nation have been constructed, used and evoked in the London 2012 Olympics bid, branding and promotion. The paper will focus on the two-pronged strategy promoting modern, diverse, multicultural Britain and the more conservative traditional, historic Britain, and the tensions and contradictions between these. These are tensions and contradictions which have been exposed and exacerbated by 7/7, recession and riots, as well as the shift in government from New Labour to the Tory-led coalition. The paper will examine the ways in which race and nation have played a role historically and politically in the Olympics, and then examine the place and use of race in three aspects of the 2012 Games: the bid and branding, the opening ceremony and the representation of the athletes themselves. The paper will argue that far from being progressive and inclusive as has been promoted and claimed, what has occurred around London 2012 has been a conservative hegemonic re-articulation of a 'Britishness' that is 'progressive' and includes immigrants and black and minority ethnic individuals based on a logic of integration and performance that does not threaten, criticise or make demands of more traditional visions of Britishness. Moreover, athletes such as Mo Farah have been positioned in such a way as to challenge racism and xenophobia and re-brand Britain as inclusive in narrow terms and at the same time serve as aspirational individual role models through which to set expectations for and make demands of immigrant, black and minority ethnic youth and wider communities.

Keywords: Race and Racism, Multiculturalism, Integration, British Nationalism, Olympics, Fascism

Introduction

1.1 The successful London/British bid for the Olympics, as well as the Games themselves, were a complex and at times contradictory balancing act. Of course, the Olympics always are as they must balance the tensions between individual achievement, national competition and spirit of 'internationalism' in a geo-political system rife with inequality and conflict, as well as mitigating domestic tensions between public, state, political and commercial interests, particularly in the context of recession, austerity, cuts, growing inequality and privatisation. The London bid and branding of Britain involved a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, a vision of a modern, international, progressive, youthful, diverse, cosmopolitan and harmonious multicultural London and post-colonial (and New Labour) Britain, albeit without the inequality and racism; on the other, British heritage and tradition and the less diverse rural countryside, its geography, culture and leisure pursuits, as a signifier of 'Britishness' (or more accurately 'Englishness'), that not only obfuscated the country's role in colonialism but would appeal to nationalism and fit with the next government's 'our island story' nostalgia. This would be an awkward balancing act, not least because these two 'Britains' not only did not sit comfortably together but were also idealised representations. This balancing act would be threatened, undermined and rearticulated numerous times and in many different ways between London being awarded the Olympics on 6 July 2005 and the Games themselves in July and August 2012, as the country experienced the crises of the 7/7 terror attacks in London, which occurred on the day after the city was awarded the Olympics, recession, austerity and the 2011 riots.

1.2 This paper will examine the branding, selling and politics of the Olympics and the different ways in which they were presented, most notably as a progressive, inclusive multicultural project. I will argue that this was in fact a hegemonic ideological project that not only contradicted the more traditional strategy, but also failed to address social, political and economic realities for the most disenfranchised. Moreover, it attempted to distract from these realities and even discipline those marginalised communities and

individuals (e.g. youth, the unemployed, disabled, black and minority ethnic and immigrant) who refused to comply with or aspire to the collective celebration, representation of the nation, demands of integration and work ethic and values of the 'role model' athletes. Yet, as the gap between the projected fantasy and realities on the ground was so wide, this approach and the various crises which occurred only served to highlight tensions and contradictions, including: A. The cost of hosting the Games during a recession, austerity and cuts; B. The promotion of the Paralympics in the context of cuts to disability benefits; C. Calls for volunteers in the context of high unemployment, cuts to jobseekers allowance and the failure of David Cameron's 'Big Society'; D. The promotion of sport while youth sport programmes are cut; E. The promotion of 'youth' as part of the Olympic bid and 'Brand Britain' in the context of high youth unemployment, riots, sport's cuts and increased HE tuition fees; and F. The promotion of diversity and multiculturalism in the context of a post-7/7 backlash against multiculturalism and immigration, a rise in Islamophobia, as well as conservative nostalgia for Empire and 'our island story' nationalism. Characteristically, Cameron defended the scrapping of targets for the amount of sport children play in school, claiming that some youngsters spend time performing 'Indian dance' (Press Assoc. 2012), thus undermining the sport, youth and diversity arguments. This paper will specifically concentrate on the promotion of racial and ethnic diversity and multiculturalism, which will be examined in three parts: the bid and branding of London 2012, the opening ceremony, and the athletes. It will begin by discussing the racial and national politics of the Olympics.

Race, nation and 'politicising' the Olympics

2.1 It is somewhat curious, as well as possibly disingenuous, that criticism of aspects of London 2012, such as cost, securitisation and branding, has been met with claims that the Olympics are not political, and that such criticisms are a form of politicisation. While most critics would not deny that their criticisms are political (in the sense that they are concerned with power, equality and justice), they would likely reject the notion that the Olympics are apolitical, particularly as they are a state-managed, funded and resourced project from bid to 'legacy' and occur in a context of international conflict and war, and in a domestic context of recession, austerity and cuts, party politics, social inequality and a backlash against multiculturalism and immigration. Moreover, they are promoted, defended and legitimised to the public and press in terms of the alleged progressive social, political and economic benefits they can bring to the nation – and to the government that oversees the successful Games.

2.2 This denial of the politics of the Games may be possible because of the way sport is represented as apolitical and in the case of the Olympics appealing to the apparently neutral ideals of the original Greek Games, the 'International spirit' of the modern Games and the unity of the nation in support of their Games and athletes. Yet, it is not just the Olympics and athletes that the nation was being called on to support for London 2012 but a particular, hegemonic notion of 'Britishness'. As an international competition between nations, the Olympics (particularly for the host country) have a social and political function and provide an ideal opportunity in which to re-articulate the nation and discipline the population in the name of support and/or the political demands of the presiding government, dominant ideology or context, including national trauma and international conflict. According to Ben Carrington, while sport is often seen as disconnected from formal politics 'it is accorded great power by its boosters to produce both "social cohesion" and "community integration" in moments of national crisis' (Carrington 2011, 141). For London 2012, such crises would be 'Britishness' after empire, 7/7, the recession and riots. The use of sport to address national and international crises and needs can be seen in the very origins of the modern Games. Baron Pierre de Coubertin who established the modern Olympics, wrote about the function of the Olympics in not only bringing together young athletes from across the globe, but also contributing to the well-being of young French men following their 'demoralizing defeat' in the Franco-German War (Bairner 2009).

2.3 In 'Towards a Sociological Analysis of London 2012', Michael Silk points out that sport plays a role in the construction of what Stuart Hall terms 'narratives of nation', in which 'sporting discourses, practices and experiences have often been mobilised and appropriated by dominant groups to (re)define the parameters of *the* "sanctioned identity"' (Silk 2011, 736). 'In Britain, re-examinations of British identities in the context of wide-ranging transitions associated with the post-imperial, post-Cold War era have featured sporting manifestations in varying ways' (ibid.). Sport also provides 'a tool par excellence for negotiating ideas of nation, class and race "after Empire", and the apparent "void" of Englishness given alienation and displacement following disruption to an accustomed place in the United Kingdom' (ibid.). Silk goes on to argue that 'Sporting contests have served as spaces through which assertions of devolved multicultural "Britishness" have been played out', and that 'these post-imperial re-anchoring are not necessarily more inclusive and egalitarian; they are frequently underscored by myopic and jingoistic xenophobia' (Silk 2011, 741). In the context of post-colonial Britain in 2012, it is unsurprising that appeals to progress, equality and inclusiveness were underscored (as well as paralleled by) nationalist appeals to tradition and the past, and constructed in the most acceptable and conservative terms so as to comply with government policies and ideology. Furthermore, such appeals to progress, equality and inclusiveness were constructed in such a way as to not affect or demand resources that could be ploughed into the Olympics, which the nation was expected to accept. This would be a party to lift up the 'whole nation' because or in spite of the recession – much like the Diamond Jubilee celebrating monarchy and privilege the same summer.

2.4 Such political deployments of the Olympics are by no means new. According to Silk, '... the Olympic Games have been closely sutured with various socio-political-economic trajectories' (Silk 2011: 733), the most well-known examples being fascism and the cold war. Race has also been central to the politics of the Olympics in terms of both racism and the argument that the Olympics are progressive, egalitarian and democratic. One of the best-known and frequently cited examples is Jesse Owens' gold medal performance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics (and Joe Louis' defeat of Max Schmeling in 1938). In these examples, the supremacy of the African-American athlete over Hitler's Aryans is often represented as a defeat of Nazi racism and fascism by the forces of American egalitarianism and democracy. However, such 'egalitarianism' occurs only through the narrow and racist route of black physicality and when they returned to America, the two athletes found themselves in the land of white supremacy and segregation. Another example of the Olympics serving as a platform for racial progress during the Cold War was the

infamous black power salute at the 1968 Mexico Games, in which John Carlos and Tommy Smith gave the salute in protest against American racism while receiving their medals. Ironically, they were demonised and censured for their 'politicisation' of the Games. Perhaps the only recent protest that has seen widespread support was the booing that Chancellor George Osborne received when handing out medals at the Paralympics in 2012.

2.5 That is not to say that protests are rare at the Olympics, though it has been states that have been able to protest other states, as opposed to individual athletes protesting a state. This can be seen in the Spanish boycott of Melbourne 1956 and American boycott of the Moscow Games in 1980, and in terms of race and racism, the removal of Apartheid South Africa from the Games between 1980 and 1992. Nevertheless, international opposition to the Olympics being held in Nazi Germany in 1936 were rejected by the IOC (Kruger 1999: 71), as was Soviet opposition to Franco's Spain participating in the 1948 Games (Kruger 1999: 82). While the Owens narrative has been taken to symbolise the progressive potential and politics of the Games (and of America) over fascism, an important part of the story is often left out: the link between the Olympics and fascism, as well as racism and anti-Semitism, and the IOC's lack of action on it. While Hitler hosted the Olympics in Berlin in 1936, secretary-general of the Italian fascist party Augusto Turati took up a position on the IOC and American IOC Executive Committee member Charles H. Sherrill even wrote a positive biography of Mussolini (Kruger 1999: 77). In spite of Owens' victory, the 1936 Games saw America come in second, sandwiched between Nazi Germany in first and Fascist Italy in second. The Olympics had in fact provided an ideal platform for Germany and Italy to promote their nations and legitimise their fascist programmes in the international arena.

London 2012: the bid and brand

3.1 In his examination of London 2012, Silk considers the creation and promotion of 'Brand Britain' which was designed to show Britain as the ultimate star, promoting not only the Games but tourism and economic investment (Silk 2011: 737). In it, he cites official documents submitted by the London 2012 bid to the IOC, which emphasised the city's role as a 'beacon for world youth, diversity and cultural experience' and notes that black and minority athlete ambassadors were given positions at the forefront of the campaign (Silk 2011: 741). The idea was to 'assert a "successful" multiculturalism as Britain's distinctive and *highly marketable* marker in the current world order', and this required the construction of a 'multicultural nationalism' in which the 'other' was not only 'let in, but redefined as integral to the self-image of the nation as "tolerant" and "inclusive"' (Silk 2011: 741). According to official London 2012 documents, the organisers also wanted the Games, and through them the nation, to be inclusive:

'... people who are not currently as fully engaged as they might be in our economic, sporting, social and cultural life: women, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, older people, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people, and people from different faith communities' (Silk 2011: 742).

However, Silk argues, they were only included as 'appropriate national subjects' to signify/through the 'dominant (white) sporting national culture' (Silk 2011: 742).

3.2 Albeit 'British', it was the diversity of London that was central to both the bid and representation. According to Carrington, 'It was the ordinary, everyday, lived multiculturalism of contemporary London, its cosmopolitan openness, that was seen to have swayed the IOC voting members' (Carrington 2011: 139).

3.3 In their examination of the way 'race' and the diversity of East London played a central role in the bid and its success, Kevin Hylton and Nigel Morpeth cite the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games' (LOCOG) document 'World in a City':

'During the bid process diversity was a key reason why London, one of the most multicultural cities in the world, was chosen to host the 2012 Games. The Games will be hosted by the UK with London at their heart. London is one of the most dynamic and diverse cities in the world. With a population of over 7 million people, a richness in language, culture, religions and beliefs. It is a world in a city. ... This diversity is particularly evident in the five Host Boroughs that will host the Olympic Park and River Zone of the London 2012 Games – Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich and Waltham Forest. In these boroughs over 160 different languages are used and minority ethnic populations make up 42 per cent of the people..' (LOCOG 2008: 7 in Hylton & Morpeth 2012: 10).

According to Hylton and Morpeth, the black communities in the Olympic boroughs (and the boroughs themselves) that were being promoted to get the Games and positioned as ambassadors and stakeholders, were represented in another manner at the same time: not as ambassadors, stakeholders or appropriate national subjects but as problems to be fixed by the Games themselves. They were, according to the authors, 'reified by [formal and official] Olympic stakeholders as fragmented and disadvantaged, therefore requiring an Olympic makeover to manage these social issues' (Hylton & Morpeth 2012: 9).

3.4 As stated in the introduction, this bid and branding was a two-pronged and at times contradictory strategy, as juxtaposed to this multiculturalism were iconic and very traditional hegemonic images of 'Britishness'. The handover ceremony in Beijing emphasised iconic and traditional images such as bowler hats, bus queues, the Abby Road crossing and a hedgerow, while the Visit Britain strategy emphasised White Cliffs, Stonehenge, tea, Nelson's column, Windsor Castle, Parliament, the Angel of the North, London Eye and a red telephone box (Silk 2011: 739), which Silk argues, 'do little to challenge established hierarchies, traditions and power relations' (Silk 2011: 740), nor address the bid themes of youth, diversity and multiculturalism or represent the London Olympic boroughs.

3.5 In fact, such images and signifiers of traditional 'Britishness' would fit in perfectly with the conservative backlash against multiculturalism that emerged after 7/7. In many cases, such as Melanie Phillips' use of the term 'Londonistan', London's diversity was itself cast as a problem (Carrington 2011:

140). This backlash really took form once the Tories formed the coalition government in 2010 with statements and policies that attempted to reverse the multiculturalism promoted during the Blair years. The first clear indication of this development was Conservative Education Secretary Michael Gove's speech 'All pupils will learn our island story' on 5 October 2010. In it, he argued that 'One of the under-appreciated tragedies of our time has been the sundering of our society from its past ... Children are growing up ignorant of one of the most inspiring stories I know – the history of our United Kingdom' (Gove 2010). Following this, the Tory-led coalition attempted to reform both education policy and citizenship tests with 'our island story' at their centre. In addition to this, there has been an increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric, new restrictions on immigration and a rejection of multiculturalism. This was made explicit in David Cameron's speech at the Munich Security Conference on 5 February 2011 when he declared the failure of state multiculturalism and called for a stronger national identity and greater integration of different cultures (most notably Muslims) through, amongst other things, a new education curriculum:

'[...] these young men also find it hard to identify with Britain too, because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity. Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values. There are practical things that we can do as well. That includes making sure that immigrants speak the language of their new home and ensuring that people are educated in the elements of a common culture and curriculum.' (Cameron 2011).

This new Tory nationalism also allowed the more traditional branding of the Olympics and 'Britishness' to come to the fore. The tensions and conflicts between these two versions of Britain, as well as numerous other representations, narratives and signifiers, would find a stage during Danny Boyle's opening ceremony and the responses to it.

The opening ceremony and Boyle test

4.1 Boyle's opening ceremony began with a film tracing the Thames through rural Britain to London, followed by references to Victorian industrialists and the Industrial Revolution, Shakespeare and the two World Wars, the Beatles, Bond (a symbol and hangover from empire and the cold war), the Queen (a symbol of the tradition the Tories are espousing and privilege they also represent), a group of Pearly Kings and Queens, Mr Bean and a Mini Cooper. There was also a detour to signify iconic moments in British progressive politics: suffrage, the Jarrow Crusade and Empire Windrush. The latter, a belated embrace and inclusion of a long settled community that was not initially made to feel welcome, was the only notable reference to colonialism, immigration and multiculturalism, except for a Steel band and a few black and minority ethnic musicians and other musical references. In addition to these was a celebration of the NHS.

4.2 Boyle's vision, which attempted to serve all possible constituencies, did not escape criticism. While hardline Tories were critical of what they saw as a lack of celebration of British tradition and history and detours into left-wing moments, others were critical of the lack of space given to diversity and multiculturalism, and the disjuncture between the promotion of the NHS and the coalition cuts and threats of privatisation, although that could be taken as a protest against coalition policies. There is of course the interpretation that Boyle showed the political and ideological, if not the racial, ethnic and cultural, diversity of Britain. Moreover, by combining all that material in the way that he did and by privileging hegemonic signifiers of 'Britishness' (both quantitatively and qualitatively) over a limited number of symbolic signifiers of racial and ethnic diversity, a conservative middle road could easily be constructed, one that would be limited, hegemonic, tokenistic and integrationist as opposed to open, inclusive and constitutively diverse.

4.3 Following the ceremony, Tory MP Damien Green wrote 'The Tories have to pass the Danny Boyle test' in the *Telegraph*. In it, he took the conservative middle road arguing that:

'To succeed, the Conservative Party must be at home in modern Britain ... we should not become nostalgists promoting a better yesterday. We need to pass the Danny Boyle test, and cheer the numerous virtues of Britain in 2012.' (Green 2012).

Then, pushing the 'progressive' line, Green wrote that the party needed to update 'one nation' conservatism and 'encourage the better integration of all minority groups' (Green 2012). Although presented both as a test for the Conservatives and a 'progressive' strategy, the call 'better integration' does not challenge the long-term conservative assumption that it is 'minorities' who are obligated to change and adapt to 'us'. As such, while they no longer have to take Tebbitt's 'Cricket Test', minorities are expected to take another sport themed test. The question is how will 'better integration' be judged? From what occurred with black and minority ethnic athletes, particularly those with an immigrant background, representing Britain and winning gold medals can't hurt.

The athletes: race and the 'survival of the fastest'

5.1 Prior to Boyle's opening ceremony, the *Daily Mail* ran a series of stories on those athletes born in another country and representing Britain at the Games. It labelled these athletes, amongst whom would be Farah and Bradley Wiggins, 'plastic brits' (Sportsmail Reporter 2011; Eaton 2012). This alleged 'controversy' as the *Daily Mail* called it was widely rejected as Farah, along with other black and minority ethnic athletes were hailed as both symbols of the new diverse, multicultural, tolerant and inclusive Britain and potential medal winners for the country. While the potential (and eventual) success of black athletes allowed the country to embrace them, it also allowed for the reassertion of integrationist demands and opened the door to an uncritical revival of race science in some quarters.

5.2 Prior to the Olympics, Channel 4 ran the documentary 'Survival of the Fastest', hosted by former

Olympian Michael Johnson, which examined whether African-American and Caribbean sprinters have a 'superior athletic gene' that enables them to win medals (Beck 2012). What is particularly interesting about this revival of race science is that it emerges in what is clearly believed to be a 'post-racial' context. This is a context in which such racist and essentialist ideas and theories are either rejected based on individual achievement and exceptions (as if colour-blind) or, as in the case of race science, are cut off from their racist origins and history, presented as objective and positive and applied to 'individuals' based on their merit (although by no means colour-blind). Yet, such race science does have a history, one connected to fascism, colonialism and sport, as well as the notion of racial progress that are part of the Olympic argument. Patrick Miller points out that:

'Although many African-Americans had subscribed to the ideal that achievement in sport constituted a proof of equality, a mechanism of assimilation, and a platform for social mobility, the recognition successful black athletes actually received from many educators and journalists explained away their prowess by stressing black anatomical and physiological advantages or legacies from a primitive African past' (Miller 2004: 330).

While such theories, which developed in the mid-nineteenth century, at first tried to show European superiority in intellectual and physical areas, by 1900 there was a move to redistribute the virtues to account for the success of Black athletes and as compensation for their alleged lack of intellectual prowess (Miller 2004: 330–332). This would be the origins of the positive spin we are now seeing in 2012, only now the theory has travelled from Africa to slave colonies where the physical demands of slavery – and thus the institution of slavery itself – are seen as responsible for these individual successful athletes, who are held up as examples to other immigrants, black and minority ethnic people *and* also as evidence that Britain is not racist.

5.3 While undoubtedly great athletes, thanks to his immigrant background and her mixed race British heritage, Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis were made symbols of progress through sport and of British inclusiveness, as well as the limits of the latter. While both were demonised by the far right, the conservative press, commentators and politicians jumped at the chance to hail their individual achievement, values and character, as both exceptions to the rule and representative of Britain itself.

5.4 In his *Sunday Times* article 'If Mo's not British, I'm a Dutchman', London Mayor Boris Johnson identifies Farah as an exceptional individual who disproves racist and xenophobic stereotypes about immigrants and black and minority ethnic peoples, who at the same time not only shames the racists and xenophobes who espouse such stereotypes, but also shames those immigrants and black and minority youth who appear to confirm them (although just the negative ones). Rejecting the concept of 'plastic brits', Johnson claims that 'Britain had a new hero' in Farah, celebrating not only his medals but his 'Britishness' via a narrative of immigration, hard work and integration: 'He may have been born in Mogadishu in 1983, and it is true that when he came here ... he did not speak a word of English and could not read or write in any language. But when he welcomes you to his flat in Teddington, he speaks with an unaffected London accent' (Johnson 2012: 6). Johnson goes on to speak about Farah's supportive wife, who cooks 'Sunday roasts ... and other simple English cooking', and nuclear family (Johnson 2012: 6). Only the previous summer, conservative commentators and politicians had been blaming the broken and 'chaotic' families of black and working class youths for the riots. Farah is then positioned as a role model for them as he discusses his early 'wildness' before he found sport and 'knuckled down' (Johnson 2012: 6). Johnson then asserts Farah's Britishness using signifiers of traditional, non-multicultural Britain: 'Folks, let's be clear: Mo Farah is as British as a Beefeater in the Tower of London. He is as British as a pint of bitter, as British as a bulldog, as British as a wet bank holiday Monday or a bad pun in a Carry On film or a hot Cornish pasty [not taxed I assume] on a cold platform at Reading station' (Johnson 2012: 6). Johnson ends by arguing that Farah is a role model and 'advertisement for immigrants as a whole, and a withering retort to all those who said we should slam the door on asylum seekers' (Johnson 2012: 6). Turning to his right and displacing any xenophobia from the Tory party to Migrationwatch, Johnson then asks: 'Would they have kept him out and deprived this country of two gold medals and a sporting event that brought the nation together?' (Johnson 2012: 6)

5.5 Farah, Ennis and others were also celebrated by chairman of the EHRC Trevor Phillips, who rejected multiculturalism in his speech 'After 7/7: Sleepwalking to segregation' following the attacks. Yet, far from retreating from this position, Phillips saw hope in a more conservative individualist version of diversity (and brought Boyle back into it):

'The surge of national pride and affection for new heroes such as Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis, Ellie Simmonds and David Weir has not come about by accident. We needed wonderfully gifted and determined individuals to become the catalyst for that revelation. We needed Danny Boyle's genius to dramatise it. But we also needed the talent, the wit and the sheer hard work of many people, inside and outside of the EHRC, to change our country's sometimes grudging toleration of our differences into an enthusiastic celebration of our diversity.' (Muir 2012a).

While Phillips, and to a greater degree Johnson, seemed to think that acceptance, if not celebration, of individual elite athletes that offer the nation gold, role models for minorities and a chance for the country to be seen as 'not racist' constitutes racial progress, the late Stephen Lawrence's mother Doreen Lawrence disagreed. In a December 2012 interview, Lawrence accused the coalition of squandering advances in race relations arising from her campaign, the Macpherson Inquiry and the Olympics, for which she carried an Olympic flag at the opening ceremony, saying: 'The community was so much for it; you saw enthusiasm and it was so infectious. It got people coming together ... but I don't think we have kept that going. I think people have gone back into their old little worlds and the austerity doesn't help.' (Muir 2012b). Moreover, she added, '[r]ace is definitely not on the government's agenda' (Muir 2012b). Yet, in a poll released boxing day 2012, it seems that not everyone is as disappointed, with 78% of voters saying that the Olympics 'did a valuable job in cheering up a country in hard times' (Clark 2012). Yet, in the opening months of the new year, the reality of those hard times and coalition austerity measures justified by them would have a direct impact on the legacy of the Olympics and subject the

government to criticism from one of the very icons of London 2012 and British diversity. In February 2013, Mo and Tanya Farah publically criticised the government's cuts to school sports and PE provision as both counterproductive and damaging to the Olympic legacy (Helm 2013). Less than a month later, in March 2013, it was announced that in addition to the numerous other sport training centres struggling and closing, the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield, where Jessica Ennis trained, would also be closed (Gibson 2013).

Conclusion

6.1 In conclusion, this paper has attempted to examine the ways in which the London 2012 Olympic bid and branding made use of the diversity and inclusiveness of multicultural London as a 'world in a city', as well as proclaiming the benefits of the Olympic legacy for these 'diverse' communities, youth and sport itself, to both win the Games and sell it to the British people. Although this was already a hegemonic project and the representation of diversity was coupled with a more traditional representation of 'Britishness' that had little to do with the diversity of the capital, these two contradictory representations of 'Britain' clashed with one another following 7/7, the recession and the 2011 riots, and in the context of Tory-led coalition's austerity measures, backlash against multiculturalism, nostalgic nationalism and crackdown on immigration. Out of these clashing representations of 'Britishness', in relation to diversity, ultimately the more conservative integrationist vision won out. Yet, if one thing appeared certain it was that sport would be invested in and supported, in light of both the nature of the Olympics and discussion about youth activities following the riots. The impact of austerity and cuts to sport resources and facilities, seemed to confirm to many that the progressive politics and promises about the legacy of the Games, as well as the 'diverse' communities and youth at the centre of the bid and their concrete social, political and economic needs, were being neglected if not betrayed by the government, its economic policy and wider ideological project.

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