

# A Critical Perspective on the Legacy of the London 2012 Paralympic Games

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## Introduction

Despite the fact that there has been a large body of work produced over the last decade or so that has examined major sport event legacies and event leverage, largely with respect to the Olympic Games, Misener et al. claim that 'few studies have evaluated the comparative outcomes, legacies and event leverage that the Paralympic Games have generated<sup>1)</sup>'. This is despite the fact that, in many ways, the Paralympic Games, and their forerunners the Stoke Mandeville Games, were actually founded upon the basis of a kind of 'legacy plan' designed to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Before the Second World War, there is little evidence of organised efforts to develop or promote sport for individuals with disabling conditions, especially those with spinal injuries who were considered to have no hope of surviving their injuries. Following the war, however, medical authorities were prompted to re-evaluate traditional methods of rehabilitation which were not satisfactorily responding to the medical and psychological needs of the large number of soldiers disabled in combat<sup>2)</sup>. According to McCann, Dr Ludwig Guttmann (the universally accepted founder of the Paralympic movement) recognised the physiological and psychological values of sport in the rehabilitation of paraplegic hospital inpatients<sup>3)</sup> and so it was at that point that sport was introduced as part of their rehabilitation. The aim was not only to give hope and a sense of self-worth to the patients, but to change the attitudes of society towards the spinally injured by demonstrating to them that they could not only continue to be useful members of society, but could take part in activities and complete tasks that most of the non-disabled society would struggle with<sup>4)</sup>.

## 1. Legacy and the Paralympic Games historically

Guttmann highlighted three main areas in which participation in sport could benefit people with disabilities: i, improving the health of people with disabilities in order to improve their day to day living; ii, to use sport to help develop an active mind, self-confidence, self-dignity, self-discipline, competitive spirit and camaraderie, all of which are essential in helping to overcome the all-consuming depression that can occur with sudden traumatic disability; and iii, to create a better understanding between people with disabilities and their non-disabled peers that then aids in their social re-integration through the medium of sport<sup>5)</sup>. Indeed the message below the Stoke Mandeville Games flag in the 1950s included the line 'No greater contribution can be made to society by the paralysed than to help, through the medium of sport, to further friendship and understanding amongst nations<sup>6)</sup>'.

### (1) Sport as a curative factor

According to Guttmann, sport represents the most natural form of remedial exercise and can be used to successfully complement other forms of remedial



Stoke Mandeville Games flag and sign (1955)  
at International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS)

exercise. Sport can be invaluable in restoring the overall fitness, including strength, speed, coordination and endurance, of someone receiving a disabling injury. Tasiemski et al. point out how sport can be of particular benefit to individuals with certain disabilities. Following a pilot study on individuals recovering from a spinal cord lesion, they state:

Systematically practised physical activity and sports allows the disabled person to keep the high level of physical fitness that was obtained during rehabilitation. It also helps to maintain compensatory processes and prevent complications caused by inactivity. Physical activity and sports are amongst the most important factors that determine the effectiveness and final outcomes of physical rehabilitation<sup>7)</sup>.

They also found that the annual frequency of hospital readmissions following discharge was three times less in athletes than it was in non-athletes, adding weight to their claim that those involved in activities away from the home, especially physical ones such as sport, are physically fitter, more independent and have fewer avoidable complications. Similar claims have been made by Groff et al. who state:

Several studies have suggested that participation in sport may impact elements of quality of life such as one's overall enjoyment with life, sense of well-being, and ability to complete daily life activities. Researchers have concluded that athletes with disabilities exhibit higher levels of positive mood, increased wheelchair mobility skills, lower levels of tension and depression and have better perceived health and well-being<sup>8)</sup>.

## (2) The recreational and psychological value of sport

Guttmann claimed that the big advantage of sport for the disabled over other remedial exercises lies within its recreational value in that it restores 'that passion for playful activity and the desire to experience joy and pleasure in life, so deeply inherent in any human being<sup>9)</sup>'. Guttmann also pointed out that much of the restorative power of sport is lost if the person with the disability does not enjoy their participation in it. As long as enjoyment is derived from the activity, then sport can

help develop an active mind, self-confidence, self-dignity, self-discipline, competitive spirit and camaraderie, all of which are essential in helping to overcome the all-consuming depression that can occur with sudden traumatic disability.

### (3) Sport as a means of social re-integration

There are certain sports where people with disabilities are capable of competing alongside their non-disabled peers e.g. archery, bowls and table tennis, as Neroli Fairhall of New Zealand proved when she competed from a wheelchair in archery at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles<sup>10)</sup>. Guttman claimed this was especially true at a recreational level, which provided people with a disability the opportunity to integrate into their local community by competing on an equal footing against non-disabled sportsmen and women. Guttman believed this creates a better understanding between people with disabilities and their non-disabled peers and aids in their social re-integration through the medium of sport.

## 2. IPC and legacy

The three areas highlighted by Guttman above still provide the underlining driving force for much of the International Paralympic Committee's Vision and Mission Statement as well as the Paralympic legacy plans put forward by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee with regard to the London 2012 Paralympic Games. However, there has been virtually no academic investigation of whether the Paralympic Games actually helps achieve these aims or not. According to the IPC Strategic Plan (2015-2018) the ultimate aspiration of the Paralympic Movement is "to make for a more inclusive society for people with an impairment through para-sport<sup>11)</sup>". They follow this up with the claim that:

The Paralympic Games are the world's number one sporting event for transforming society's attitudes towards impairment. By broadening the reach of the Paralympics, growing para-sport events and furthering brand awareness, the Paralympic Movement's transformational legacy will be amplified<sup>12)</sup>.

It is clear then from these claims that the IPC believes in the potential for a

transformational legacy from the Paralympic Games, especially in changing non-disabled attitudes towards people with disabilities. However, these claims have been challenged by a number of individuals as I will now outline.

### 3. Alternative perspectives on the Paralympic Games and legacy

Despite the claims made by the IPC, highlighted above, regarding the Paralympic Games and disability, there are many individuals with disabilities and groups that represent people with disabilities who consider that the Paralympic Games actually work against their interests rather than in their favour. These include three academics, who also happen to be former Paralympians and Paralympic medallists - Stuart Braye and David Howe (Athletics) and Danielle Peers (Wheelchair Basketball). Peers<sup>13),14)</sup> is quite scathing of those involved in the running and promotion of the Paralympic Movement, painting them as self-serving and claiming that the IPC 'continually reproduces the figure of the tragic disabled in order to reproduce itself<sup>15)</sup>'. She claims that historically the IPC and its forebears, beginning with Ludwig Guttman and the Stoke Mandeville Games, have utilised the image of the 'tragic disabled' in order to justify their aims and existence and that IPC continues this practice today. Purdue and Howe posit that the IPC attempts to market the Paralympic Games as an elite sports competition that operates within a self-contained social vacuum whereby negative social attitudes regarding disability are expected to be overcome by making the athletes' sporting performances the focus of attention rather than their individual impairments. However, they claim this is problematic as the athletes must perform for two distinct audiences - a non-disabled audience that is expected to only focus on the sporting performance and a disabled audience that is 'encouraged to identify with the impairment the athlete has, whilst also appreciating their performance<sup>16)</sup>'.

Following interviews with 32 members of the United Kingdom Disabled People's Council (UKDPC) regarding their views of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, Braye et al. came to the conclusion that 'the portrayal of equality in the Paralympics is an apparent misnomer when compared with the lives of ordinary disabled people<sup>17)</sup>'. They further highlighted this issue by way of a quotation from one of their participants, Colin, who stated:

I'm afraid that the focus on elite Paralympians promotes an image of disabled people which is so far from the typical experiences of a disabled person that it is damaging to the public understanding of disability<sup>18)</sup>.

This was echoed by research carried out for Channel 4 television, the Paralympic host broadcasters in 2012, by Bournemouth University in the UK which found that for some disabled people the Paralympic Games 'was a source of deep frustration because the Paralympics represented something distant from their everyday reality<sup>19)</sup>'. Braye et al. concluded that, for the London 2012 Paralympic Games at least, 'the IPC's positive rhetoric on improving equality can also be regarded as having a limited effect on the negative daily reality faced by disabled people living in the UK today<sup>20)</sup>'. However, it should also be noted that this is not a new finding as Cashman and Thomson with regard to the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games found that people with disabilities in Australia 'had reservations about the Paralympians and did not regard them as relevant to their situation<sup>21)</sup>'.

#### 4. London 2012 and legacy

On 6th July 2005, London was elected as the host city for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games at the 117th IOC session held in Singapore, beating Madrid, Moscow, New York and Paris in the process<sup>22)</sup>. The London bid was made with a major legacy element to it that incorporated intended legacies for both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The document '*London 2012: A legacy for disabled people*<sup>23)</sup>' outlined those intended legacies relating to the Paralympic Games as follows.

##### (1) London 2012 Paralympic legacy plans

Theme 1: Transform the perception of disabled people in society - with a focus on changing the perception of disabled people's economic contribution to society.

This theme contained two priority areas. The first was to promote economic inclusion for people with disabilities by changing the perceptions of non-disabled society regarding the economic contribution made by people with disabilities by targeting access to goods, services and employment opportunities. The second priority area was to raise awareness of people with disabilities' talents by working

with the media and ensuring that the principles of the social model of disability underpinned the process.

Theme 2: Support opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity

This theme was mainly aimed at increasing the capability of national governing bodies and national disability sports organisations to deliver disability sport by increasing their capacity through the training of additional volunteers and coaches. In order to kick start this process, Sport England were to invest £8million over two years in order to allow more opportunities for people with disabilities to access sports and physical activity either as participants or volunteers.

Theme 3: Promote community engagement through the Games

Again this theme had two main priority areas. The first was to improve the transport network and support the regeneration of East London. The second was to increase the capabilities of communities to identify and remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.

## 5. Differing perspectives on post-London 2012 Paralympic legacy

Reading through the various accounts and different findings of the claimed impacts of the London 2012 Paralympic Games on British society one thing becomes very clear - there is a marked difference in opinion between the findings and focus of the British government and the London Organising Committee on the one hand and those of Disabled People's Organisations and the experiences of individuals with disabilities on the other.

### (1) UK Government perspective

In a report published in July 2013, nearly a year after the London Paralympic Games had ended, the UK Government and Mayor of London cited the following headline achievements under the chapter entitled 'The Legacy of the Paralympics'<sup>24)</sup>:

- 81% of people surveyed thought that the Games had a positive effect on how disabled people are viewed by the British public.
- Disabled people's participation in sport is increasing.

- Increased funding for Paralympics GB through to Rio 2016.
- Increased funding to support access and participation in sport at community level.
- Increased accessibility on the transport system, in venues and in other environments.
- Paralympic Legacy Advisory Group established to support the Cabinet Committee.

In contrast to the Government and Mayor of London findings, however, the findings of research by some Disabled People's Organisations and the experiences of individuals with disabilities reached markedly different conclusions.

(2) The perspective of people with disabilities and their representative organisations

A report by the charity Scope<sup>25)</sup> published at around the same time as the UK Government/ Mayor of London report highlighted the following findings after interviewing around one thousand disabled people:

- 81% of disabled people said that attitudes towards them hadn't improved in the last 12 months.
- 22% said that things had actually got worse.
- One in five (17%) disabled people report they have either experienced hostile or threatening behaviour or even been attacked.
- One in five (16%) disabled people say they cannot keep up with rising costs of living.
- Disabled people are three times more likely to take out high interest, high risk loans to pay the bills.
- ONS data showed that nearly half of disabled people have had issues accessing leisure activities.
- A 2012 polling for Scope showed that three-quarters of disabled people had experienced people refusing to make adjustments or do things differently.

In order to better understand these differences it is important to gain an appreciation of the relationships between the Government and people with disabilities

in the UK and how these might impact upon each group's perspective regarding the extent to which legacy objectives have been realised.

## 6. London 2012 and the Paralympic Games - challenging the legacy benefits

In April 2013 the UK Government, as part of their plans for the UK's economic recovery, introduced a series of changes to the welfare system that they had initially tested in 2011 and which had a direct impact upon those people with disabilities claiming benefits. They closed the Independent Living Fund, introduced Personal Independence Payments (PIP) as well as a tax on anyone who is a council or housing tenant of working age receiving housing benefit and renting a home that has 'spare bedrooms', which became known generally as the 'Bedroom tax'<sup>26)</sup>.

Gentleman states that in 2010 the government had promised to reduce working age expenditure on PIP by 20% on the forecast expenditure for 2015/16<sup>27)</sup>, leading some campaigners to claim that the changes were motivated more by the desire to cut costs than to improve the way that benefits are distributed. Gentleman goes on to cite Richard Hawkes from the charity Scope as saying "How can you decide that [a reform] is going to save 20% in advance? I would think that this is driven by cost reductions and that they have come up with a way of assessing people that will result in the cost savings they want to make<sup>28)</sup>". As part of the introduction of the new Personal Independence Payments the Government contracted a private company, Atos, to provide 'fitness for work assessments', whose role will be mentioned shortly.

### (1) Media coverage of benefits cuts

The media plays a pivotal role in keeping the public informed about what goes on in the world, especially in those areas that the public has no direct knowledge or experience of<sup>29)</sup>. At some point in 2010, Inclusion London commissioned a report investigating the ways in which the media portrayed disability in its coverage and how this impacted upon public attitudes towards people with disabilities. This was achieved through a comparative study of five British newspapers and the way they covered disability in 2010-11 and a similar period in 2004-05, together with a series of

focus groups. The final report<sup>30)</sup> was published in 2011 and pointed to a number of key findings that highlight the wider implications of how disability is represented within society:

- There had been a significant increase in disability related articles (713 in 2004-5, 1015 in 2010-11).
- There was an increased politicisation of the way disability was reported in 2010-11 compared with 2004-5.
- There had been a reduction in the proportion of articles that described people with disabilities in sympathetic and deserving terms.
- Articles focusing on disability benefit and fraud increased from 2.8% in 2004-5 to 6.1% in 2010-11.
- The use of terms such as 'scrounger', 'cheat' and 'skiver' was found in 18% of articles in 2010-11 compared to 12% in 2004-5 and these changes reinforced the idea of disabled claimants as undeserving.
- Disabled people are feeling threatened by the changes in the way disability is being reported and by the proposed benefit changes, and these two are combining and reinforcing each other.

Taylor-Gooby claims the UK is witnessing increasing inequality, yet decreasing sympathy for those living in poverty, including benefits' recipients<sup>31)</sup>. Quarmby claims that coverage of welfare reform has led to the categorisation of sick and disabled people as either victims - unable to speak for themselves and wholly dependent - or villains - sick and disabled people who do not deserve state help who were falsely claiming benefits<sup>32)</sup>. One anonymous responder to a poll carried out on the Scope website commented, 'people's righteous anger towards those who falsify their claim for disability and other benefits has come to over-shadow their goodwill towards those who are 'genuinely' disabled and deserving of support<sup>33)</sup>'. Garthwaite claims that government rhetoric around benefits changes with its focus upon 'fairness for taxpayers' has fostered the notion that disabled people are a separate group who make little or no contribution to society<sup>34)</sup>. That all of this was taking place against the backdrop of final preparations for the London 2012 Paralympic Games and the legacy claim of changing public attitudes towards disability in a positive manner, demonstrates something of the legacy dilemma that was taking shape at that time.

(2) Atos sponsorship of the London 2012 Paralympic Games

Atos, a French IT services specialist, became the official IT services provider to the Olympic Movement in 2001 and is one of the ten official TOP sponsors<sup>35</sup>. At the beginning of 2008, Atos also became the official Worldwide Paralympic IT Partner, although the company had already been the IT Partner at all summer and winter Paralympic Games since 2002. However, in 2012 Atos came under extremely heavy criticism for its sponsorship of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, as a result of the way it had handled the UK government's Work Capacity Assessments. Many Disabled People's Organisations claimed they were little more than a cost cutting exercise, as highlighted earlier in the quote from Richard Hawkes of the charity Scope. In addition, a number of stories were circulating in the media about individuals that Atos Assessors had declared fit for work who either died from their illness shortly after the assessment<sup>36</sup> or even starved to death as a result of losing their benefits<sup>37</sup>. This resulted in a number of protests by Disabled People's Organisations and people with disabilities at the London Paralympic Games themselves and at various Atos offices around the UK. There was even a joke circulating on the internet at the time that the London Paralympic Games had been cancelled because Atos had ruled that the athletes were not disabled after all<sup>38</sup>. In April 2013 Atos signed a deal with the IPC to continue its sponsorship of the Paralympic Games until Rio 2016. However, in March 2014 it also announced that it was quitting its contract with the UK Government to carry out the Work Capacity Assessments early due to the negative coverage it had received and an inability to make sufficient profit. Atos had to pay considerable compensation to the government for breaking the contract. Atos claimed they and their staff had been vilified and that Atos had become a 'lightning rod' for public anger related to the Work Capacity Assessments<sup>39</sup>. It would appear, therefore, that despite their close links to the Paralympic Games and the legacy agenda set for the London 2012 Paralympic Games, particularly around raising the profile of disabled people's talents, both Atos (in terms of wanting to make a profit) and the British Government through the Department of Work and Pensions (in terms of wanting to cut budgets) were driven by an economic imperative. Such an approach appears to run completely counter to the legacy aims espoused by the British Government in the lead up to the London 2012 Paralympic Games.

## 7. Legacy and the 2012 Paralympic Games - the perception gap

What becomes especially clear when reading the comments by Disabled People's Organisations and disabled individuals is the disconnect they feel with both Paralympians on the one hand, and society in general and government policy in particular on the other. Walker commented 'The Paralympics showcases the amazing achievements and triumphs of a tiny percentage of disabled people - just as the Olympics demonstrates what a tiny percentage of 'able-bodied' people are able to achieve<sup>40)</sup>.' The importance of this differentiation is explained by Alice Maynard, Chair of the disability charity Scope, when she states 'The Paralympics has inspired a small number to be more involved in sport or the community. But ultimately it comes down to a simple point: if you don't have the support you need to get up, get washed and get out of the house; if you're struggling to pay the bills - it's a big task to join a tennis club<sup>41)</sup>.' Adding to this, Professor of Applied Social Sciences (Disability Policy) Alan Roulstone wrote on the policy press blogsite 'The most difficult aspect of the Paralympics for many disabled people has been the bizarre juxtaposition of seeing great sporting achievements (rightly) being applauded and poster girl/boy images of photogenic disabled people alongside arguably the most aggressing and top-down reform of welfare since the Poor Law<sup>42)</sup>.'

It is clear that media coverage from London 2012, combined with their successful sporting performances, has led to some British Paralympians achieving celebrity status in the UK. However, the difficulties for some people in differentiating between Paralympians on the one hand and the ordinary member of the British public with a disability, possibly driven by media coverage of both benefits changes and the Games themselves and government rhetoric around them, appears to have caused more problems than it solved. This is clearly indicated by the following quote from Bush et al.:

He'd already sensed the disappointment lurking behind people's eyes when he told them he was not training for a future Paralympics. People would now expect this, yet he was more worried about the day-to-day struggles of being disabled<sup>43)</sup>.

In addition, research carried out by the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) who interviewed spectators at sports events for athletes with a disability in Australia, appear to confirm this. According to Tony Naar, the former Knowledge Services Manager at APC, the results appear to indicate that it is only spectators' attitudes towards the actual athletes and not the disabled population in general that are changed by attending such events<sup>44</sup>.

## 8. It's not all negative !

From the paper so far it may appear that nothing positive came out of the London Paralympic Games, particularly for people with disabilities. However, it is not all negative particularly from a sporting perspective. Since London 2012, in the UK at least, there has been a big increase in athletes with disabilities appearing on TV and in the media including on game shows and other non-sports related programming.

To coincide with the Games the host broadcaster, Channel 4, introduced a new programme called the 'The Last Leg' presented by three comedians, two of whom have disabilities. They raise topical issues around disability in a humorous, but enlightening way in order to overcome many of the negative stereotypes around disability. They also introduced a way people could tweet using the hashtag "#isitokay" where the general public could ask any question they wanted about disability, but had possibly been too afraid to ask. The Last Leg is still running today nearly four years after the London Games ended.

Social media also played a significant role in spreading interest in Paralympic sport. A report published by Twitter revealed that the hashtag "#Paralympics" topped the table for the most trending UK sport event of 2012 beating off stiff competition from the Olympic Games and many leading Premiership football clubs. Around 50 leading athletes also took part in the Samsung Bloggers project which saw them record and post video blogs from behind the scenes before, during and after the London 2012 Games. Over 600 video blogs were uploaded and were viewed by over 300,000 people<sup>45</sup>.

The structure of elite disability sport in the UK was transformed in the lead up to London 2012 with the inclusion of many disability sports into their non-disabled National Governing Body. This has led to a professionalisation of disability sport at

the elite level in the UK to bring it into line with the same standards expected from non-disabled sports, and has had a positive impact on the results of British teams post-2012 such as the Men's Wheelchair Basketball team who have just won the European Men's Wheelchair Basketball Championships for the third time in a row<sup>46)</sup>.

The higher education sector in the UK has also seen big changes with regard to disability and Para-sport post-2012 with competitive sport for students with disabilities being added to the university sports structure<sup>47)</sup>. There is also a huge interest in academic enquiry in the field from students, lecturers and researchers alike, which can only bode well for the future of disability sport having graduates who understand the needs of people with disabilities working within the UK sporting structure at all levels.

There were records for the number of competing nations (164), number of athletes (4,237), number of tickets sold (2.7 million) with most events and sessions selling out and, perhaps most importantly the London 2012 Paralympic Games were televised in more countries than ever before, attracting their biggest ever international audience. According to the figures released by the International Paralympic Committee, the London Paralympic 2012 Games were watched by a cumulative international audience of 3.4 billion (excluding the host nation), which is an increase of around 37 per cent on the last summer Games in Beijing. The London 2012 Games were broadcast in over 115 countries and the number of hours broadcast outside the host market grew by 82 per cent on 2008 to over 2,500 hours of content<sup>48)</sup>.

Finally, London was left with a greatly increased stock of physically accessible housing due to the organising committee and the Government working together to ensure that all the accommodation for the Village was built with Paralympians and future potential owners with disabilities in mind. For example, all doorways in the village were made wider than the standard usually used in order to cater for wheelchair users.

## Conclusion - legacy and the Paralympic Games looking forward

What this paper really highlights is that sports mega-events do not take place in a vacuum. They are just as subject to outside pressures and (mis) uses as any other happening within society and, as such, it is extremely difficult to accurately and

effectively plan for any legacy to occur. Political, economic and cultural specificities can all work either for or against the legacy process in many complicated and often unexpected ways. It is clear that the austere economic situation, combined with UK Government plans for benefit cuts and the media reporting of these cuts, has had a negative impact upon attitudes towards disability manifesting in a hardening of attitudes towards anyone who requires state-aided financial assistance to survive. It is also clear that the ordinary everyday person with a disability feels little connection, if any, to Paralympians, in terms of the issues they face in their everyday lives, and the perceived expectation by the non-disabled population that all people with disabilities can perform like Paralympians only makes this sense of disconnection greater.

On a positive note, Paralympians and the Paralympic Games may act as a positive influence on some disabled people to try and do more with their lives than society may have conditioned them to believe possible. The worldwide media coverage the Paralympic Games are now receiving make it an amazing platform from which to start a debate around disability issues. There is no other current platform that provides an opportunity to reach so many non-disabled people who are otherwise generally oblivious to disability issues other than the little, often politically charged, information they receive through the media or the often ableist views they are socialised into whilst growing up. As Richard Hawkes, Chief Executive of Scope, points out we should not write off the Paralympic Games effect because disabled people tell Scope that the greater visibility and public discussion of their lives does make a difference<sup>49)</sup>.

Overall then, whilst there are indications that the Paralympic Games does have agency in the sense that it provides a platform from which to engage in debate about disability issues, one important lesson for future hosts is that heightened expectations can create as many problems as they solve. This paper has highlighted deep societal, structural and ideological impediments to a more enlightened view of disability. No Paralympic Games can in itself, hope to counter such forces. In a very real sense, each Paralympic Games is a child of its time and location.

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## 2012年ロンドン・パラリンピック大会の レガシーに関する批判的観点からの考察

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パラリンピック大会は、実際のところレガシーを前提として創設されたものである。パラリンピック運動の創始者ルートヴィヒ・グッドマンは、スポーツへの参加は障害者に利益をもたらすとして、次の3つの側面を指摘した。すなわち、①治療的要素としてのスポーツ、②スポーツのレクリエーション的・心理的価値、および③社会的再統合の手段としてのスポーツである。とりわけ3つ目は今もなお、国際パラリンピック委員会が掲げる主な目標のひとつ「パラスポーツを通じて、障害のある人々にとってよりインクルーシブな社会を実現していくこと」の基盤となるものである（IPC 戦略計画2015－2018）。しかしながら、こうした目標を批判する研究者は多い。そして批判者は、期せずしてパラリンピックのメダリストである。

本稿の目的は、英国政府と2012年ロンドン大会組織委員会、そして英国の障害者団体の2つの異なる視点から、2012年ロンドン・パラリンピック大会がもたらしたと考えられる影響について検証することにある。同時に、そこから得た知見をよりグローバルな状況、すなわち当時発生した世界金融危機やそれに続く緊縮政策との関係において位置付けすることも試みた。結果として、英国政府と2012年ロンドン大会組織委員会が主張する2012年ロンドン・パラリンピック大会がもたらした影響と、一部障害者団体が伝える英国に住む障害者の実際の体験と比べると、大きな相違が認められた。

検証結果から総体的に言えることは、メガスポーツイベントが他の社会事象と無関係に行われることはないということである。メガスポーツイベントは、成果の意図を持って開催に携わる人々のコントロールがまったく及ばない世界的な出来事に左右されることが多い。したがってイベントがもたらすレガシーについて、的確かつ効果的な計画を策定することはきわめて難しい。加えて、レガシーのプロセスは複雑であり、なおかつ多くの場合予期しない数々の形で、政治的、経済的および文化的特異性からプラスとマ

イナス両方の影響を受けやすい。全般的に見て、パラリンピック大会の開催および関連報道から実際に利益を享受するのは障害のある競技者、そしておそらくはスポーツや運動に参加する障害者であって、諸般の理由からスポーツや運動に参加しない多数を占める障害者は利益を享受しないということが、明らかになってきた。とは言え、パラリンピック大会が世界的にメディアで取り上げられることで、障害をめぐる広範な課題に関する議論のきっかけとなる貴重な機会がもたらされることも、忘れてはならない。