

GOVERNING THE OLYMPIC GAMES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HOST CITY: A LOOK AT THE SYDNEY 2000 AND VANCOUVER 2010 MODELS

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Abstract

The Olympic Games have grown in both size and popularity over the last century. Planning for and delivering the event includes many steps that take place over a 10 (+) year period include the bidding, planning and wrap-up phases (Parent, 2008). Addressing a complex project which requires multilateral coordination such as the hosting of an Olympic Games entails extensive collective effort and resource sharing between many event stakeholders within the Olympic Movement's organizational network including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Sport Federations (IFs), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs), host cities, and nations to name a few. While researchers have begun to examine the stakeholders of an event (e.g., Parent, 2008) and the stakeholder network during the bid (e.g., Turner & Westerbeek, 2004), deeper analyses are needed. As well, a recent focus of the Olympic Movement has been legacy since its addition to the Olympic Charter in 2003. The impact of legacy on the network of stakeholders remains to be investigated. As such, this paper will explore and compare the modes of network governance (i.e., the structures and controls responsible for monitoring and managing) utilized during the bidding, planning, and post games legacy phases of both the Sydney 2000 and Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games.

Networks, or groups of organizations that work together towards a variety of goals, have been increasingly accepted as a legitimate form of multi-organizational governance by academic researchers due to the many potential benefits associated with them such as resource sharing and dealing with complex issues. Network governance has been defined as "the use of institutions and structures of authority and collaboration to allocate resources and to coordinate and control joint action across the network as a whole" (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 231).

The type of governance utilized in the network can vary from shared governance to a brokered network where a central lead organization and/or network administration organization (NAO) governs (Provan & Kenis, 2007). We use this governance spectrum to further examine the network governance in each Games in order to compare and contrast them within the different phases of hosting. This research attempts to address some of the concerns with the network governance literature by investigating a network over time.

Case studies were developed for both SOCOG (Sydney Organizing Committee for the 2000 Olympic Games) and VANOC (Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games) (Yin 2003). These case studies were built from archival materials (over 300 documents), web site information and interview data (28 interviews), which provided the basis for the identification and analysis of the multi-organizational network governance structures and processes in this research. During the data collection key stakeholders and documents of significance influencing the event planning network were identified. For example, the municipal, provincial/state, and federal players for each case in addition to their Host City Contracts, Bid documents, and multiparty agreements were highlighted. The data were then open coded using the data analysis software ATLAS.ti by the first author in order to identify emergent and reoccurring themes relating to the governance of each Games. Following the identification and grouping of initial codes, axial coding was performed to further explore the relational aspects between the coded data (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Emergent themes and organizational information were then discussed between the authors, and included network governance modes, changes in the network and OCOG structure, the main actors involved, and the controls and documents that impacted the governance of the Sydney and Vancouver cases.

The findings showed that several forces had an influence on the overall governance of the Sydney 2000 and Vancouver 2010 editions of the Olympic Games. These included foundational documents and contracts, changes in organizational structure, as well as the power and position held by various network organizations. Structural changes appeared in the network for each case; these changes could be tied to the changes in organizational goals for each Games governance phase. It was noted that VANOC had a more stable organizational structure during the planning phase than Sydney, which changed several times between being awarded the bid and actually hosting the Games. The networks investigated both required a central lead organization and NAO to govern the activities throughout various phases of the event. In conclusion, it is evident from the above analysis that proper network governance and a strong joint effort from various network stakeholders is required to effectively plan and implement an Olympic Games and to leave a fruitful post-Games legacy.

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