

# **A Successful Bidding for Hosting International Sports Mega-Events: The Case of the London 2012 Olympic Games**

**Ping-Chao Lee**, Department of Physical Education, National Taichung University, Taiwan, Taiwan, p.c.lee@ntcu.edu.tw

**Chia-Hui Lin**, Department of Physical Education, National Taichung University, Taiwan, Taiwan

---

Keywords: Olympic Games, London

## **Abstract**

### **Introduction**

More than just a sporting event, the Olympic Games, which generates much enthusiasm and great expectations, is seen by many as ‘the greatest show on earth’ (Vigor, Mean & Tims, 2004). Given this, the bid to host the Olympic Games has always generated intensive competition among the major countries and cities in the world, in particular after the successful and profitable 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. There was no exception in 2005 in Singapore as London ‘surprisingly’ beat the long-term favorite Paris to win the 2012 Olympic Games Bid. A number of comments relating to the decision were released immediately after the result was announced. Among these comments provided by various parties, the British press analyzed London’s winning elements from different perspectives in depth. As the media textual materials contribute to reflect and document the factors evident in this successful bid, this study has used these commentaries to help understand and analyze the main factors that supported London’s bid in political, economic, social and cultural terms.

### **Methods**

This study, as outlined in the Introduction, seeks to understand and explain the key factors that supported the London’s 2005 successful bid for the 2012 Olympic Games. In tackling this issue, a media analysis has been conducted to elucidate how and to what extent the issues associated with the successful bid were portrayed in the media in Britain. This involves looking at all the materials collected, which includes the British press such as Daily Mail, Daily Express, Daily Telegraph, The Independent, The Times, The Guardian, Daily Mirror, and The Sun. The textual analysis has taken the form of a qualitative content analysis and has been guided by four main themes in political, economic, social and cultural perspectives which have been subsequently identified and coded via NUD\*IST computer software. In total, 138 media reports were reviewed and 89 commentaries were finally identified to conduct this research.

### **Results and Discussion**

The main contributory factors behind London’s successful bid are set out in the introduction. In terms of political factors, we will focus on the tactics and strategies

which were employed after London first announced it would bid for the 2012 Olympic Games. Amongst many successful key tactics employed in Singapore, were strong support by the Blair's government, agreement among major political parties and Lord Sebastian Coe's tactic to form an alliance with the team for Madrid's bid, together with full commitment from The Royal family (Queen, and Princess Anne), were identified. In economic terms, the boost of hosting the summer Olympic Games, it will bring energy and opportunities to regenerate the poorest part of the city, creating jobs and placing a formerly neglected part of London on the international map (Akbar, 2005). Additionally, more than 100,000 adults are currently on benefits in Newham and almost two-thirds of children in that area presently grow up in poverty. To some extent, such transformation claims were welcomed by the IOC as it could use this 'transformation' to shine 'IOC Brand'. With regard to social factors, London's successful bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games, London has received backing from every level of the country, via different events and approaches which were conducted during the year-long race. All in all, this could be summarized by Coe's words "The guarantees are in place at every level" (Bose, 2005). The presentation of multiculturalism of London city, legacy of children and support from disability groups all promoted the benefits of sport participation, and also helped promote Olympic education programs as well Olympism and Olympic values. The strong message delivered to the IOC by the London team in Singapore (along with 30 children from East End of London) pointed out the importance of the cultural perspective of sports for the new generation, that it had become an obligation for the UK to integrate the so called 'computer generation' into the Olympic Games was another influential factor., and put on the table the issue of why sport matters (Kelso, 2005). In addition, the successful presentation delivered by Coe and the strong messages in the film showed to IOC members in relation to the active use and display of culture and creativity (which consisted of different generations and ethnic groups) brought an emotional atmosphere and promoted the values of Olympian internationalism and thus helped London gain the hosting of the 2012 Olympic Games.

## References

- Akbar, A. (2005, July, 7th, 2005). Residents hail one-off opportunity to transform east London. Independent, from <http://sport.independent.co.uk/olympics/article297388.ece>
- Bose, M. (2005d, July, 6th, 2005). London team believes victory is in sight. London Telegraph, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/main.jhtml?xml=/sport/2005/07/06/sofron06.xml&sSheet=/sport/olympics/london2012bid/ixolymbid.html>
- Kelso, P. (2005, 7th, July). One sweet word: London: Coe and Blair get the praise as favourite Paris loses. Guardian, from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,5233160-112218,00.htm>
- Vigor, A., Mean, M. & Tims, C. (2004). Introduction. In Vigor, A., Mean, M., & Tims, C. (Eds.). After the gold rush - A sustainable Olympics for London. London: Demos.