

# Analysing the federal government's governance and coordination mechanisms for the 2010 Winter Games

## Contact details

Name author(s): Milena M. Parent, Anne-Andrée Sirois, Becca Leopkey, Benoit Séguin & Christian Rouillard

Institution(s) or organisation(s): University of Ottawa

City and country: Ottawa, Canada

Email address for correspondence: milena.parent@uottawa.ca

## Aim of paper and research questions

Organising an Olympic Games is a huge undertaking. This is not only true for the organising committee but also for the various levels of government who must coordinate their efforts internally and between themselves in order to provide the necessary resources to the organising committee. The purpose of this study is to present the first set of findings from a longitudinal study on the democratic governance of the 2010 Winter Games, specifically, the analysis of the coordination mechanisms of the Canadian federal government.

## Literature review

We use an interdisciplinary approach combining sport event management (e.g., Parent, 2008), network theory (e.g., Rowley, 1997; Scott, 2000), and democratic governance/intergovernmental relations (e.g., Bevir, 2006; Pierre, 2000). More precisely, major sporting events go through three modes: planning, implementation, and wrap-up. Our focus for this study is on planning mode. Second, we are interested in how the 15 Essential Federal Service (EFS) and 30 non-EFS federal departments coordinate between themselves and the other key partners (the two municipalities, the province, and the organising committee or VANOC), thereby creating a network of coordination. Third, while there may not be a widely accepted model (Box, 2007), democratic governance is usually described following the lines of performance (efficiency and effectiveness), accountability, transparency, and participation.

## Research design and data analysis

The parameters guiding federal coordination and responsibilities for the Games were laid out in the multiparty agreement (MPA) signed between all major partners during the bid phase (Government of Canada et al., 2002). However, the MPA does not state how to coordinate the efforts. Therefore, in order to understand this process, we collected longitudinal data (2005-2008) in partnership with the 2010 Federal Secretariat (2010FS), which is the key point of entry into (and representative of) the federal government for the other partners. The 2010FS created 15 committees and issue clusters to help coordinate the efforts of the various departments. The data was gathered from three sources. First, archival material (committee terms of reference and reports) was gathered to get an initial sense of the coordination framework. Second, semi-structured interviews, lasting on average 45 minutes, were conducted with 17 department and committee/issue cluster representatives. Saturation was reached halfway through the interview process but interviews were continued to ensure representation from each committee. Third, ongoing notes were taken by the first author reporting informal conversations, meetings, and other information relating to the federal coordination framework.

These data were then inputted into ATLAS.ti 5.5 for general coding, followed by axial coding and higher-order theme identification (see Corley & Gioia, 2004) relating to the coordination

mechanisms. Actor (organisations, departments, committees) relationships were also identified and inputted into UCINET 6 for network analysis, which included degree, density, closeness, eigenvector, betweenness, and size measures (see Knoke & Yang, 2008; Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008 for more information).

## Results

Results provide a surprising depiction of the coordination for the 2010 Games at the federal level during the planning mode through to 2008 in comparison to its initial beliefs in 2005 (as depicted in the terms of reference and in the formative evaluation report, see Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive, 2008). The coordination network is much bigger (twice as large), complex and more diffuse than originally thought. For example, the degree is as high as 25, and the density includes 279 links with an average value of 0.0283. (Network diagrams and associated analyses (as noted above) will be presented.)

Participants agreed that the MPA facilitates the coordination of efforts of departments, committees and individuals across the country (covering over 4,500km from West to East). Coordination is done as needed by phone, email, or face-to-face, with the latter being the most effective. Given the wide geographic stretch, tele/videoconference and email are key. However, the lack of guaranteed funding from the start has been found to be an obstacle to sustained, effective and efficient coordination. Finally, the Games-specific performance and accountability framework is weak at best.

## Discussion and conclusion

Findings highlight the importance of proper procedures and funding from the outset (as early as the bid phase). They also show the importance of multi-method data collection in network analysis when we compare the “theoretical” (archival material only) and reality (interviews and observations). The changes noticed from the initial theoretical depiction through to 2008 underline the need to have a flexible coordination Games-specific framework which changes with the 3 event operational modes (Parent, 2008).

## References

- Bevir, M. (2006). Democratic governance: Systems and radical perspectives. *Public Administration Review*, 66, 426-436.
- Box, R.C. (Ed.). (2007). *Democracy and Public Administration*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Corley, K.G., & Gioia, D.A. (2004). Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 49, 173-208.
- Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, City of Vancouver, Resort Municipality of Whistler, Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, et al. (2002). Multiparty agreement for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. Retrieved from <http://www.canada2010.gc.ca/role/gc/MPA/MPA-e.PDF>.
- Knoke, D., & Yang, S. (2008). *Social network analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Office of the Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive (2008). Joint Audit and Formative Evaluation of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Federal Secretariat. Retrieved from <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/em-cr/evaltn/2008/2008-10-3/index-eng.cfm>.
- Parent, M.M. (2008). Evolution and issue patterns for major-sport-event organizing committees and their stakeholders. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22, 135-164.
- Pierre, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Debating governance - authority, steering, and democracy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Quatman, C., & Chelladurai, P. (2008). Social network theory and analysis: A complementary lens for inquiry. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22, 338-360.

- Rowley, T.J. (1997). Moving beyond dyadic ties: A network theory of stakeholder influences. *Academy of Management Review*, 22, 887-910.
- Scott, J. (2000). *Social network analysis: A handbook* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.