

THE GOVERNANCE OF OLYMPIC LEGACY: A THEORETICAL MODEL

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Aim of paper/ theoretical background or literature review:

The incorporation of legacy into the bidding and planning for the Games precipitated several challenges such as the adaptation of event legacy specific to the needs and culture of the local context, as well as the complexity of the event planning process. This movement towards a proactive approach to sustaining legacy benefits over the long-term can be associated with the need for legacy governance. The concept of governance is a complex term that is used in a variety of ways throughout academia. For the purpose of this paper, reference will be made to Girginov's (2011) definition - the system responsible for guiding and steering the collective action of an event's legacy over the long-term. The institutionalization (cf. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) of legacy heightened the need for proper legacy governance. Moreover, there is still a need for practitioners to further understand this process in order to capitalize on the hosting of the event for the local community. However, no framework has been developed connecting the interrelated concepts. As such, the aim of this paper was to build a theoretical framework for the governance of legacy at the Olympic Games. The goal is to help provide a better understanding of the process and structures involved in governing legacies associated with hosting an event of this magnitude. This study draws on the sport event management (e.g., Parent, 2008), institutional (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), network (e.g., Knoke & Yang, 2008) and governance (e.g., Rhodes, 2000) literatures.

Methodology, research design and data analysis:

This paper is the culmination of a larger project on the governance of Olympic legacy. In this project, a historical review of legacy within the modern Olympic Movement (1896-present), as well as the investigation of two specific case studies (Sydney 2000 and Vancouver 2010) was undertaken. These case studies were built from archival materials, web site information and interview data, which provided the basis for the identification and analysis of the legacy governance structures and processes in this research. The data were then coded using ATLAS.ti for themes relating to the governance of legacy, its institutionalization, phases, the network of actors, and its democratic aspects (e.g., transparency, accountability, performance, and stakeholder participation).

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions:

The integration and synthesis of the management, institutional, network and governance literatures provided the opportunity to further explore the governance of legacy from a variety of perspectives. The use of institutional theory allowed for the investigation of the means by which the concept of event legacy has become an accepted norm within the Olympic field. Network theory provided a foundation from which to conduct analyses, take measurements, and examine the balance of power among key stakeholders within event legacy networks. As a result, a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the governance of legacy, including the stakeholders/actors involved, the types of relationships between them, and the controls used to guide the delivery of the Olympic Games' legacy was possible. The governance literature helped inform the critical analysis of the governance of legacy within the Olympic Movement.

The findings show how the institutionalization of legacy and the challenges associated with this impacted the phases of legacy network governance (i.e., conceptualization, planning & implementation, transfer, and post-Games governance) including stakeholder cooperation and adaptation. Moreover, it suggests that the network is made up of a combination of constant (e.g., government, International Olympic Committee), emergent constant (e.g., Paralympic committees), and context-specific actors (e.g., Four Host First Nations) that change over time due to evolving network goals. In the case of Olympic Games legacy, contracts and other formalized mechanisms also have an impact on the governance. Legacy network actors' (legacy stakeholders) power comes from a combination of sources including their position in the network, hierarchical authority, and control over resources. It is important to note at this level the high level of interconnectedness between the legacy network governance phases as each can have an impact on each other due to the cyclical nature of the situation and the actors. For instance, a multi-organizational network alternates between deliberation and action in its lifecycle; and as such, issues, agreements, and action plans must be constantly reviewed to ensure they are continuing to meet long-term objectives and stakeholder expectations. A figure that combines these findings illustrates the framework and will be presented at the conference.

In conclusion, while it is important to understand all the individual elements of the framework that are discussed, what is particularly critical to note is the fluidity and interconnectedness of the situation and the actors involved. As a result, it is suggested that each level impacts each of the other levels at varying times during the legacy governance process. This research expanded on both the structure and process of governance specific to managing legacy at an Olympic Games. From a practitioners' point of view, Olympic Games hosts/ organizers will be better prepared to plan for and govern the long-term legacy of the event.

References:

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