



Considering legacy as a multi-dimensional construct: The legacy of the Olympic Games

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ABSTRACT

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) requires cities that bid for the Olympic Games to formulate a legacy strategy. This case follows a sport professional tasked with developing an Olympic bid for their city. Specifically, the case considers various legacy outcomes including: destination image, tourism, cost, venues, housing, and social legacies. The case is written with anonymity of the actual city so that the instructor can adapt the case to a specific city. The case is particularly useful for courses covering sport tourism, stakeholder management, event management, or sport economics and finance.

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Teaching note

Legacy has played an important role in the evolution of the Olympic Games as they have exploded in size, scope, and cost over the past thirty years. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) specific focus on the concept of legacy as seen in the IOC Charter, Rule 2, Article 14 states that the role of the IOC is “to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries” (International Olympic Committee, 2007, p. 15). Thus cities that bid for and subsequently host the Olympic Games need to consider the legacy or long-term strategy before even submitting their bid document.

This case highlights the learning process of Emilie Baccus, a sport professional tasked with heading up a consortium of public, private, and volunteer stakeholders during the period in which her city is developing a bid to become an Olympic Applicant city, the first stage in the bid process to host the Olympic Games. She begins by searching for a definition of legacy and then is faced with the task of outlining the legacy plan for her given city while balancing the varied demands of the event stakeholders. The case is written with anonymity of the actual city that Emilie is based in so that the instructor can have some flexibility in adapting the case to a specific city, whether that be the city where the class is based, or one on which the class content focuses.

This case is designed to be used in courses covering sport tourism, stakeholder management, event management, or sport economics and finance. It allows students to complete a variety of analyses including, but not limited to:

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1. conceptualizing appropriate legacy goals for a community with specific stakeholders and stakeholder objectives,
2. analyzing the ability of the Olympics to meet the stated legacies for image, tourism, venues, social change, and economic gains,
3. determining whether bidding for and staging the Olympics is the right decision for a local community, and
4. developing action plans for generating promised legacies or what is called legacy momentum.

1. Legacy

There is no simple definition of legacy. [Cashman \(2003\)](#) categorized legacies as: Economic; Built and physical environment; Information and education; Public life, politics, and culture; Sport; Symbols, memory, and history. Similarly, [Preuss \(2007\)](#) conceptualized legacy as a three-dimensional concept. He suggests that legacies can be planned or unplanned, positive or negative, and tangible or intangible although most pre-event studies focus only on the planned, positive, and tangible dimensions. To further complicate the understanding of legacy, it is of an undetermined duration which makes it nearly impossible to quantify ([Preuss, 2007](#)). Finally, as Preuss points out, the same legacy may be positive for one industry (e.g., tourism), and negative for another (e.g., the environment). The same legacy maybe viewed positively or negatively, depending on who is making the assessment.

Despite legacy's inclusion as a vital part of an Olympic bid, there is little incentive for the Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOG) to focus on generating legacy when their responsibility is to deliver the Games and the world press is busy critiquing the minutiae of their organizational strategies. Although legacy is required as an important part of an Olympic bid, it is the local community that gains or loses from an Olympic legacy, not the event organizers—especially as the OCOG disbands within two years of the completion of the event. This lack of vested interest on the part of the organizing committee often plays out as a series of broad legacy claims with no accountability leading to a slew of broken promises which serve as fodder for Olympic critics (see [London Assembly, 2007](#)). In part, this may be due to the multiple organizations and stakeholders involved in hosting an Olympic Games each with their own mandate and tasks. The London 2012 Olympic Games has had a focus on legacy since the bid process and in the build-up to the Games there was much discussion about the various forms of legacy that would accrue in the years after the event. The term legacy momentum was coined to describe the ability of a host city and region to continue positive economic growth in the post games period due to the regeneration and building of infrastructure, increased knowledge base and community spirit enacted before and during the Games ([London Assembly, 2007](#)).

The recent Olympic Games Global Impact (OGGI) project is the first step in creating some accountability for the promises made at bid time ([International Olympic Committee, 2009](#)). Although there are no repercussions for failed legacies, there is at least a twelve-year evaluation of consistent economic, social, and environmental variables that can help future event organizers be more realistic in their Olympic legacy expectations.

Possible discussion points for a class on the concept of legacy include:

1. Define legacy in a sport event context.
2. Who is responsible for ensuring that legacies come to fruition after the event?
3. How is accountability for event legacies enacted?

2. Stakeholder analysis

Planning and organizing an international sporting event requires careful management of private, public, and government stakeholders, all with different goals. Often, the most successful events are those that create effective synergies between stakeholders so that they can assist each other in achieving their objectives. Stakeholder theory draws attention to identifying and considering the position of individuals and groups who affect, or are affected by, a particular event or decision—past, present or future ([Clarkson, 1995](#); [Covell, 2004](#)). It has been suggested that when conducting a stakeholder analysis, the power, legitimacy, and urgency of each stakeholder's claims should be assessed ([Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997](#)), and one way of doing so includes developing a stakeholder map (cf. [Hede, 2008](#)). Questions for the class are:

1. Produce a stakeholder map that includes all major stakeholders that Emilie should consider in putting forth an Olympic bid for her city. It may be useful to peruse the [DCMS \(2007, 2008, 2009\)](#) and [London Assembly \(2007, 2009\)](#) documents to complete this task.
2. What should Emilie do to assist stakeholders reach their objectives? What should be done when there are conflicting objectives or motives between different stakeholders?

3. Sport tourism

To stage the Olympic Games, a variety of stakeholders invest in a variety of projects: governments build roads, airports, and trains, OCOGs funded by sponsorship monies and broadcasting rights fulfill a range of tasks such as coordinating the financing and building for sports venues, locating private developers to renovate or build new hotel facilities, and tourism

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