

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: Oxford Brookes University
Unit of Assessment: 30 - History
Title of case study: London 2012, knowledge transfer and the challenge of Olympic legacy
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>A concern for enduring positive outcomes has lain at the heart of staging the Olympics since the birth of the modern Games in 1896. Professor John Gold's research has shown how Games-makers in cities that have hosted the Games – the so-called 'Olympic cities' – have repeatedly framed and reframed their pursuit of those outcomes in light of the perceived values and needs of their particular times. Drawing on that research, he has contributed to public and policy debate about the lasting impact of London 2012, first, by identifying the challenges posed by demands for achieving a discernible legacy from staging the Games and, secondly, by helping to build a critical understanding of the formal and informal procedures by which knowledge is transferred from host cities to their successors.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>John Gold is Professor of Urban Historical Geography at Oxford Brookes University and, over the last 25 years, has also held visiting positions at the London School of Economics, Surrey University, Birmingham University, Bowdoin College (Maine, USA), and Queen Mary, University of London, where he has twice been Visiting Professor. The case study outlined here builds on his longstanding interest in cities staging cultural and sporting festivals, with particular interest in the role of the Olympic Games in urban development. This interest is notably expressed in three books co-written or co-edited with Margaret M. Gold (London Metropolitan University):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cities of Culture: Staging International Festivals and the Urban Agenda, 1851-2000</i> (Ashgate Press, 2005, ISBN 1840142855), which sets the historical development of the Summer Olympics and their urban impacts alongside those of other sporting and cultural mega-events. • <i>Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896-2016</i>, (Routledge, 2007, ISBN 0415374065; Second edition, 2011, ISBN 9780415486583), which provided the first full overview of the ever-changing relationships between the Olympic movement and their host cities from Athens 1896 through to current preparations for Rio de Janeiro 2016. • <i>The Making of Olympic Cities</i>, a four volume set published in 2012 by Routledge in their Major Works series (ISBN 0415553512), which brought together important historic source materials on cities staging the Olympic and Paralympic Games, along with an integrating overview that elucidates the key implications for the cities concerned. <p>These works, which feature strongly in reviews of key literature produced by the Library of the International Olympic Committee [see section 5.iv], are supported by the articles and essays that appear in section 3 [below, numbered 3.1-3.6, and referenced in square brackets]. Driven substantially by invitations from publishers, symposia organisers and Games-makers, these publications deal specifically with the experience of London 2012 and focus on such issues as city branding, [3.1, 3.4], historical experience of funding [3.2], environmental sustainability [3.5] and stadia conservation [3.3].</p> <p>All reflect John Gold's critical approach towards the enduring outcomes of hosting the Olympics, arguing that the current emphasis on 'legacy' reflects and presents a qualitatively different fusion of past experience and contemporary practices than seen previously—a complex amalgam of thinking derived from Olympic philosophy ('Olympism'), lessons drawn from the disaggregated experiences of previous Olympic cities, and general principles drawn from contemporary urban development. As such, he has continued to ask questions about how legacy can be delivered given the extended time frame over which it perforce operates after the conclusion of the Games and points to the lack of clarity involved in the pursuit of legacy alongside other kindred goals, such as those associated with sustainability [3.2, 3.4, 3.5]. John has also considered the technical legacy of the Games in the form of knowledge transfer. Established as an ambulatory event, it is all too often the case that cities hosting the Olympics create their Games <i>de novo</i> rather than building on the lessons of predecessors. In an</p>

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effort to improve practice, Professor Gold most notably participated in the pioneering evaluative study of knowledge transfer practices to, at and from London 2012 that is described in section 4 [also 3.6].

3. References to the research

1. Gold, J.R. and Gold, M.M. (2008) 'Olympic Cities: regeneration, city rebranding and changing urban agendas', *Geography Compass*, 2 (1), 300–318. DOI 10.1111/j.1749-8198.2007.00080.x.
Submitted to REF2014, Oxford Brookes University, UoA30-History, REF2, JR Gold, Output Identifier 7237.
2. Gold, J.R. and Gold, M.M. (2009) 'Future indefinite?: London 2012, the spectre of retrenchment and the challenge of Olympic sports legacy', *London Journal*, 34(2), 179-196. DOI 10.1179/174963209X442450
Submitted to REF2014, Oxford Brookes University, UoA30-History, REF2, JR Gold, Output Identifier 7235.
3. Gold, J.R. and Gold, M.M. (2012) 'After the Games: the Olympic architectural heritage', in D. Boulting (ed) *Building Conservation Directory*, vol. 19, London: Cathedral Communications, 196-8. ISBN 9781900915601
4. Gold, J.R. and Gold, M.M. (2012) 'Global competition, local agendas: Beijing, London, Rio de Janeiro and the unending Olympic cycle', in V. Girginov, ed. *The Handbook of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games*, vol. 1, 'Making the Games', London, Routledge, 291-303. ISBN 9780415671941
5. Gold J.R. and Gold M.M. (2013) "'Bring It under the Legacy Umbrella": Olympic Host Cities and the Changing Fortunes of the Sustainability Agenda', *Sustainability*, 5, 3526-3542. DOI 10.3390/su5083526
6. Girginov, V. and Gold, J.R. (2013) *London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: a report prepared for Podium*, published 11 June 2013, available at <http://www.podium.ac.uk/resources/academic-research>, accessed 1 September 2013.

4. Details of the impact

Professor Gold's impact rests on a portfolio, centred on London 2012, which demonstrate a close involvement with public and policy debate. The relevant activities come under three categories: knowledge transfer; expert advice/consultancy; and public understanding and broadcast media. (References to the corroborative sources listed in section 5 below are noted, as before, in square brackets; with written or media sources by Roman numerals and people by Arabic numerals.)

i. Knowledge Transfer

Sponsored by Podium, the co-ordination and communications unit created by HEFCE and the Skills Funding Agency to support academic researchers in their work relating to the 2012 Games, Professor Gold was a founding member of an interdisciplinary team that was established to study the steep learning curve that the four-yearly movement of the Olympics and Paralympics from one host city to another imposes on the Organizing Committees responsibility for staging the Games. Proceeding with unprecedented cooperation from the key Games-making agency—the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG)—the key data came from in-depth interviews conducted with senior members of LOCOG at four junctures between November 2011 and December 2012, thereby spanning the planning, implementation and wrapping up phases of the Games. John Gold's particular area of responsibility was closely based on his urban historical expertise, being concerned with the key Olympic venues, both stadia and villages. He and Dr Vassil Girginov (Brunel University) co-wrote the final report for the project, which was delivered to Podium in May 2013 and published on its web-site in June 2013. Its analyses pointed to the exceptional nature of LOCOG as a fixed-term task force organization and the demonstrable importance of knowledge acquisition for its functioning, with recommendations based on the forms of knowledge that it tended (or was required) to produce, and the way that its structure fostered knowledge transfer. [5.vii; 5.3, 5.4].

ii. Expert Advisor and Consultant

Professor Gold has served as specialist advisor/consultant on a number of occasions including:

i. Acting as invited chair and rapporteur for a high-level meeting entitled 'Olympics and Paralympics 2012: Creating a UK Legacy for the Future, Today' (24 March 2010). Organised by the events organisation 'Inside Government', the meeting included a front-bench spokesman from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the Shadow Minister for Sport and the Olympics, and representatives from business groups, the Olympic boroughs and Podium. Feedback thanked Professor Gold for delivering 'challenging, informative, thought-provoking speeches at the forum' and for his 'willingness to openly answer delegates' questions' [5.7].

ii. Serving in 2009 as a consultant to a putative Winter Olympics bid under discussion in Tromsø (Northern Norway) – one of four Norwegian cities then contemplating candidacy for the 2018 Games. Invited due to his expertise with regard to the experience of previous centres that had staged the Winter Games, he was asked specifically to address (a) the likely consequences for Tromsø if it was chosen to arrange the winter games and (b) the challenges involved. He met members of the local bid team, gave a public address that pointed to the difficulties such a bid would encounter on logistic, environmental and political grounds, and addressed a subsequent closed seminar. The visit attracted wide reportage in the regional press and broadcasting media [5.vi; 5.1].

iii. Contributing to the Economist Intelligence Unit's prestigious report on London 2012 entitled *Legacy 2012: Understanding the impact of the Olympic Games*, which was published during the Games. His contribution concerned the need for greater precision in measuring legacy, noting the need to blend qualitative and quantitative methodologies in order to build more self-critical bases for assessing legacy, to promote better event planning, and to facilitate greater accountability [5.i].

iv. Acting as invited discussant for a meeting at the Japan Foundation in London (June 2012) at which Tokyo's plans for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games were outlined by bid team member Yasushi Aoyama. Professor Gold assessed the bid's strengths and the nature of the legacy that might be anticipated, as well as making comparisons with the legacy strategies used by London and other previous successful host cities in framing their bids. His participation and insights, especially in sketching parallels between London and Tokyo, were commended as making 'the discussions richer and deeper' [5.iii; 5.2, 5.5].

iii. Public understanding and broadcasting media

Professor Gold has always undertaken activities that transcend the normal boundaries of academic discourse about staging the Olympics. During 2012, while giving nine keynote presentations to academic gatherings in Britain and overseas, he also contributed widely to events outside of the academy. These included, for example, the 'Abandon Normal Devices' festival in Manchester and 'After the Party', a gathering at the Royal Institute of British Architects' bookshop in Portland Place London (both September 2012). His reputation as an expert commentator has been recognised by the frequent work that he has undertaken for the press and broadcasting media, both nationally and internationally (including *Time* magazine and major circulation newspapers in North America, Western Europe and South-East Asia) [5.ii]. His domestic broadcasting credits include Radio 3, Radio 4, BBC TV (national and regional), Carlton (ITV), BBC 1 (Scotland), local radio and cable TV [5.6]. Internationally, his broadcasting credits include :

- Sami Radio, May 2009, interview on the Tromsø bid and its environmental implications, especially for the fragile mountain environments.
- US National Public Radio's 'Only a Game' (April 2012), commentary on sporting legacy and environmental sustainability [5.v].
- Australian Broadcasting Corporation's National Radio influential and long-running discussion programme, 'Rear Vision', which examines the historical context of current news events. Professor Gold contributed substantively to the hour-long edition entitled 'Transforming the City through the Olympic Games', broadcast in April 2012, which dealt

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with the linkage of London 2012 to urban regeneration programmes [5.iii].

It must be stressed that involvement in all the above categories continued after London 2012. The preparation of further evaluative reports for the major stakeholders based on knowledge transfer, continuing contacts with Games organisers (especially after the successful application of Tokyo for the 2020 Games) and requests from media for analyses and commentaries on forthcoming sporting mega-events (e.g. the 2014 Commonwealth Games), *inter alia*, point to the continuing community value of Professor Gold's historically based analyses of Olympic legacy [5.5, 5.6].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- i. Economist Intelligence Unit' (2012) '*Legacy 2012: Understanding the impact of the Olympic Games*, <http://legacy2012.economistconferences.co.uk/>; '*Measuring the legacy: In search of greater precision*', <http://legacy2012.economistconferences.co.uk/#measuring-the-legacy> accessed 1 September 2012.
- ii. Gray, S. (2009) 'Olympics 2016: Chicago Makes Its Case' *Time Magazine*, 5 April, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1889532,00.html> , accessed 1 September 2012.
- iii. Japan Foundation (2012) 'Not the winning but the taking part', http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/japanuk150/events/academia/JPF_Not%20the%20winning.html , accessed 1 September 2012.
- iv. Library, International Olympic Committee (2013) *Jeux Olympiques: Héritages et Impacts*, http://www.olympic.org/assets/osc%20section/pdf/lres_7e.pdf , accessed 1 September 2012.
- v. Littlefield, B. (2012) 'Olympic Gold Going Green In London', NPR with WBUR (Boston), <http://onlyagame.wbur.org/2012/04/21/london-olympic-stadium> , accessed 1 September 2012.
- vi. Pettersen, J. (2008) 'Frykter at et ungdoms-OL vil svekke Tromsø', *Bladet Tromsø*, 6 May 2008.
- vii. Podium (2013) 'Report chronicles London 2012 knowledge transfer following unprecedented access', <http://www.podium.ac.uk/news/view/1271/report-chronicles-london-2012-knowledge-transfer-following-unprecedented-access> , accessed 1 September 2012.
- viii. 'Transforming the City through the Olympic Games', Rear Vision, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 22 April 2012, transcript available at: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/transforming-the-city-through-the-olympic-games/3930560> , accessed 1 September 2012.

People

1. Corroborative contact 1. Professor, Department of Sociology, Political Science and Community Planning, University of Tromsø.
2. Corroborative contact 2. Director-General, The Japan Foundation, London.
3. Corroborative contact 3. Former Director of Venues and Infrastructure, LOCOG.
4. Corroborative contact 4. Former Head of Village Management, LOCOG.
5. Professor, Graduate School of Governance Studies, Meiji University (Contact details available from Oxford Brookes University Research & Business Development Office upon request)
6. Corroborative contact 5. Producer, BBC Radio Features.
7. Programme Manager, Inside Government (Contact details available from Oxford Brookes University Research & Business Development Office upon request)