

Institution: University of Liverpool		
Unit of Assessment: 34- Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management		
Title of case study: Increasing the value, visibility and efficiency of cultural programming at the Olympic Games		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2006-2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period employed:
Dr Beatriz Garcia	Director, Institute of Cultural Capital & Senior Research Fellow, Communication & Media	2006 onwards
Tamsin Cox	Research Associate, Institute of Cultural Capital	2012-2013; 2017
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013- July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Since 1912, the Olympic Games have included a cultural programme known as the Cultural Olympiad, comprised of commissioned artworks and festivals in the Olympic city. Research conducted by Dr Garcia since 2006 (within the Institute of Cultural Capital since 2010) found that the Cultural Olympiad has been consistently under resourced and isolated from the Games hosting process, lacking visibility and operational support. Our research offered recommendations for enabling the Games to take root in host cities in more sensitive and place-aware ways, to engage diverse audiences, and to secure longer-term cultural legacies. As a direct result of our recommendations, since 2013, the International Olympic Committee has made policy changes, introduced new roles and staff functions, and created new forms of engagement with the Cultural Olympiad. Consequently, the organisers of the Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Games also adopted our recommendations and evaluation framework. Follow-up research has also shaped how other major event organisers (e.g. UK Cities of Culture, Edinburgh Festival, Commonwealth Games) plan for, resource, deliver and evaluate cultural programming.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Cultural Olympiad (CO) is the official cultural programme of the Olympic Games. It has evolved from niche art competitions (1912-1948) into broader culture and art festivals taking place before and during the Games sporting competitions. The CO is the responsibility of respective Olympic Games Organising Committees (OCOGs), organisations that only exist in relation to each Games edition and are based in specific host cities. OCOGs are in turn overseen by the International Olympic Committee which is the leading Olympic body and has existed since 1894, overseeing the Olympic Movement in 206 nations as well as coordinating the summer, winter and youth Olympic Games.</p> <p>Due to the significance of the Games as the largest international mega-event, with 206 participating nations, the CO offers Olympic host cities the opportunity to push forward cultural policy priorities and showcase their local culture in a global setting. To Games stakeholders, it offers the opportunity to appreciate the context to the sporting competitions and engage more meaningfully with the Olympics and other Games participants. CO activities are often small in scale but also include iconic events such as the World Shakespeare Festival (London 2012), music performances on top of the Great Wall of China (Beijing 2008), and acrobatics on the Sydney Opera House rooftop (Sydney 2000). Despite these few iconic instances, the CO itself lacks recognition as an entity, and the direct connection with the Olympic Games is often missing from public perception. Garcia has led a longitudinal programme of international research since 1999, securing multiple funding to document developments at each Games edition. We outline below the key projects that underpin the impacts listed in section 4.</p> <p>Research carried out by Garcia and funded by the British Academy in 2008 (3.1) revealed that the Cultural Olympiad lacked funding, specialist teams and centralised support from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) – in existence since 1894 - as well as within respective Games organising committees at both the summer and winter editions of the Olympics. This in turn resulted in no brand recognition amongst Olympic audiences and poor to non-existent media</p>		

coverage during Games time. The research further revealed that underfunding was a direct result of the absence of concrete references to the CO in Olympic policy, strategy and operational frameworks. The research concluded with a series of recommendations to the IOC. These included i) the creation of a clear global Olympic cultural policy framework and action plan, ii) the establishment of specific culture objectives for each Games edition, iii) better integration of cultural, educational and sporting responsibilities for Games staff, iv) the introduction of clauses about the Cultural Olympiad in Olympic marketing and branding guidelines, and v) the appointment of culture specialists as dedicated staff with executive powers within the IOC headquarters. As noted in section 4, all of these recommendations have been eventually adopted and led to major changes in the positioning of the CO as a strategic asset.

This ongoing research led to García's 2012 book (3.2), the first on the subject of global cultural policy and mega-events, and the first to document the limitations and potential of the Olympic Games cultural policy framework. The book argues that the cultural relevance of a major event, like the Olympic Games, is highly dependent on coherent policy frameworks linking the event's long-term global aspirations with the specific needs and context of respective host cities. Without this, major events fail to leave long-term cultural legacies. The research also highlights that major events are often unable to provide an experience that fully engages the host community due to their over-emphasis on a global economic rather than a locally rooted social and cultural agenda.

In response to this publication, in 2014, the IOC commissioned a report (3.3) from the Institute of Cultural Capital on the recurrent challenges hampering the CO. The report offered a SWOT analysis, based on ethnographic research and secondary data analysis. It recommended actions such as the inclusion of cultural experts (as opposed to only sport experts) within the Games organising committee board of directors; specific branding for the CO; and improving data collection, evaluation practices and archiving of Olympic cultural activities both within respective Games and at IOC level. A 2017 study (3.4) focused more closely on analysing Cultural Olympiad branding and promotional frameworks. It made recommendations such as the use of consistent hashtags to raise awareness of cultural activities associated with the Games.

Our programme of research also examined how the CO impacts on the branding, cultural infrastructure and communities of host cities. García and Cox's 2013 research on the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad (3.5) revealed that it encouraged visitors to engage with new locations and tourist attractions across the UK; encouraged young people to produce and participate in cultural activities in new ways; and advanced the disability arts movement. It also examined the cultural governance of London 2012 and how it had evolved after the 2008 Beijing Games. It highlighted how the lack of a single management structure for the CO impeded the development and delivery of a clear vision, and that the lack of a dedicated central budget for culture meant that funder conditions were not always aligned with the CO core vision.

Further research on the cultural policy of other global events (3.6) considered the role of culture in events such as Football World Cups and Universal Expositions, and included recommendations of resourcing and branding that benefit the cultural dimensions of major events beyond the Olympic Games.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Garcia, B (2008) [One Hundred years of cultural programming within the Olympic Games \(1912-2012\)](#), International Journal of Cultural Policy (vol 14, n.4), pp. 361-376. DOI: 10.1080/10286630802445849
- 3.2 Garcia, B. (2012) [The Olympic Games and Cultural Policy](#). New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203122921 [*]
- 3.3 Garcia, B (2014) [The Cultural Olympiad. Recurrent Challenges & Ways Forward](#) Commissioned report to the IOC. Liverpool: Institute of Cultural Capital.
- 3.4 Garcia, B. (2017) "Cultural Olympiads" in: Gold, J.R. & Gold, M.M. (Eds) [Olympic Cities: Urban planning, city agendas and the World's Games](#). London: Routledge, pp. 90-113. [*]

3.5 Garcia, B. & Cox, T. (2013) [London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Evaluation](#), London: Arts Council England. [Peer reviewed by key stakeholders including UK Department of Media, Culture and Sport, Arts Council England and the British Council].

3.6 Garcia, B. (2017) “**Cultural Policy and Mega Events**” in: Miller, T. O’Brien, D. and Durrer, V. [The Routledge Handbook of Global Cultural Policy](#). London: Routledge, pp. 365-381. DOI: 10.4324/9781315718408-24 [*]

* [Held in the institution and available on request]

4. Details of the impact

The research programme undertaken by Garcia and colleagues has changed the way that cultural programming is valued, planned for, resourced and delivered by the organisers of the Olympic Games and other major events. We have identified three major beneficiaries of our work: **4.1**) the International Olympic Committee, **4.2**) Olympic host cities, and **4.3**) other major event organisers. To facilitate understanding of the significance and diversity of impacts outlined in this section, find below a visualisation of our key beneficiaries and an abridged reference to key impacts.



4.1 IMPACTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC): These include changes in awareness and understanding, in policy and strategy, and in staffing.

Research by Garcia and her team has **enhanced the way culture is understood, valued and resourced** within the International Olympic Committee. The IOC Head of International Cultural Relations has built directly on Garcia’s work and notes how this research “has improved our knowledge about key issues affecting the delivery of sustainable Olympic cultural programming such as funding, branding and governance” (5.1a). Moreover, the main IOC Advisor for Public Engagement notes how this research has “inform[ed] the ... Olympic Movement regarding the potential for culture to play a greater role at future Games” in order to drive and diversify engagement with the Games (5.1b). Remarkably, in response to the research findings on the lack of visibility and weight given to the Cultural Olympiad (3.1), the Olympic Museum in Lausanne (with 300,000 visitors per year) created for the first time a permanent exhibit about the outstanding achievements of past Cultural Olympiads (see 5.2), all directly informed by Garcia’s research.

Since August 2013, the International Olympic Committee’s improved understanding of the relevance of culture has resulted in increased emphasis on – and greater resources for – cultural planning and programming, evident in two additional types of impact:

First, **new policies and strategies for culture** at IOC level, evidenced in at least two key documents (*On-site Experience*, 5.3 and *Action Plan*, 5.4a). As a result of our recommendations, by 2019, the IOC Games department explicitly refers to the Cultural Olympiad (CO) as a distinctive dimension of the “Games experience” (see the strategic document visualisation entitled *Olympic Games On-site Fan Experience*, 5.3). Previously, in Games planning, explicit references to culture featured only in passing and there was no direct CO reference. The Public Engagement Advisor to the IOC noted how our research programme led to a “focus on culture and the arts as a tool for

public engagement and legacy [which] has contributed to a wider shift in Olympic policy”, that now “gives a higher priority to such [culture] factors in the planning and execution of future Olympic Games” (5.1b). Moreover, the IOC Head of International Cultural Relations writes that “Dr Garcia’s work has informed the IOC’s International Cultural Relations team decision to advance a new *Cultural Action Plan*” (5.1a). The same source notes, “key recommendations adopted by the team include the benefit of using a consistent hashtag to identify activities, i.e. #OlympicArt” (5.1a). The implementation of such principles is evident in the Buenos Aires 2018 and Lausanne 2020 Youth Olympic Games, where IOC-supported cultural activity was more clearly visible, and its traceability via social media was far stronger than in any previous Games edition, where dedicated Olympic culture hashtags did not exist (5.4b).

Secondly, our research brought about **new expert roles and changes in the functions of existing IOC staff**. As the IOC Head of International Cultural Relations has confirmed, our research “enabled the Games department to recognize the value of providing IOC-led operational support to the Cultural Olympiad programme. This has resulted in a range of new staffing and specialist advisory developments” (5.1a). This includes i) the expansion of the IOC Head of Engagement’s remit to include the direct supervision of Cultural Olympiad planning in coordination with respective Games organizing committees (see section 4.2, below), and ii) the appointment of the first dedicated Cultural Consultant to the IOC, with Garcia chosen into this pioneering role in 2019. The Head of International Cultural Relations notes that our research also “directly influenced the decision to include, for the first time, experts in arts programming as part of the IOC’s Culture and Olympic Heritage Commission” (5.1a). This took place in 2015, with Garcia being appointed as one of these experts, alongside the then director of the V&A in London, Martin Roth, and BBC Director Tony Hall (see full Commission members list: 5.5).

4.2 IMPACTS ON OLYMPIC HOST CITIES: This research has directly impacted on the way Olympic host cities set targets for the Cultural Olympiad and set joint cultural strategy plans between local stakeholders. This is amply apparent in Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024.

Our research findings (in particular, 3.5) have set the basis for the Cultural Olympiad **targets and impact indicators of Tokyo 2020**. This is evidenced in the policy planning documents produced by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (5.6) which directly implement our recommendations as programming goals and priority actions for these Games. The Tokyo 2020 Deputy Director for Culture notes that our research findings “helped [the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee Culture team] determine the direction of the [...] Games cultural programme” (5.7). More specifically, he asserts that our work enabled the Tokyo Organising Committee for the Games to set “performance indicators and targets that helped [them] justify significant funding and the strategic positioning of culture as part of the Games delivery” (5.7). The same source added that without those targets “the Cultural Olympiad would have remained a secondary priority” (5.7).

Our London 2012 findings and recommendations also underpin the **new joint cultural strategy for the boroughs hosting Paris 2024**. As noted by the Seine Saint Denis Director of Culture, our research and recommendations (see 3.5) “guide[d] [his team and key stakeholders] in the decision-making on cooperation and the design of partnership projects” and “enabled [his local authority] to make the teams in charge of cultural policy and sports policy better understand what a cultural Olympiad is” and how it can be a catalyst for local strategic development, in the way this took place across the London 2012 Olympic boroughs – e.g., ‘Newham’ (5.8). The importance given to our research and its direct impact on local strategic frameworks is evident in the multiple requests for Garcia to lead specialist workshops and consultations with Paris Seine Saint Denis local authority teams. As the same source notes, consultations conducted in October 2017 and February 2020, with Garcia invited as keynote speaker and advisor, informed the boroughs “in the development of a new joint territorial strategy” (5.8). This strategy, titled ‘*Plaine Commune*’, (see 5.9), represents the first time the nine boroughs surrounding the appointed Olympic site work together on a common cultural vision.

4.3 IMPACTS ON OTHER MAJOR EVENTS: Finally, our research has influenced and redefined approaches to major event delivery and evaluation, beyond the Olympic Games, including events to remember WWI in 2014, the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, the UK City of Culture edition in Hull 2017, and the Edinburgh International Festival.

Our research findings, in particular 3.4 and 3.6, have directly impacted on **major events best practice in terms of policy frameworks, design, planning, delivery and documentation**. This includes the programme of events to remember World War One in 2014, where our work “informed ... the structure of the organisation and delivery of the programme” (5.1b); and events such as the UK City of Culture edition in Hull 2017 and the Edinburgh International Festival, where our research helped “make decisions informed by the experience of cities and events elsewhere” (5.10a). Further, the Head of Culture at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games affirms that she has used our research “to help define policies and funding programmes in roles [she has] taken at Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government”, including the cultural strategy for Glasgow 2014 (5.10b). The same source adds that our work has encouraged better practices to document and acknowledge both the positive and negative outcomes of events: for instance, rather than ignoring the learnings emerging out of a previous failed event bid, she now builds on them, as specifically recommended by our programme of research (5.10b).

Lastly, our work has directly impacted on **major event evaluation practices, resulting in new holistic and long-term evaluations**. As noted by the Edinburgh International Festival Executive Director, prior to our work, amongst event planners and festival organisers, there had been a “longstanding failure to understand the importance of evaluation to secure ... legacy” (5.10a). The Director of Culture at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games corroborates this by noting that our research has enabled her to understand “how critical research and evaluation are as essential components of any undertaking, regardless of its scale” and has resulted in “new or increased funding for event evaluations” as well as “more meaningful evaluation” processes (5.10b).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 **IOC Staff Testimonials:** a) Head of International Cultural Relations; b) Advisor in Public Engagement.
- 5.2 **Olympic Museum Photography:** *Photograph of the Cultural Olympiad permanent exhibit and Museum credits* acknowledging Garcia’s contribution as key expert & provider of evidence.
- 5.3 **IOC Games Department Documents:** *Olympic Games On-site Fan Experience Visualisation (2019)*: including an explicit reference to the Cultural Olympiad for the first time, as recommended by Garcia (3.1, 3.2, 3.3); compared with a previous *Games experience Visualisation (2008)*, including a less specific reference to culture.
- 5.4 **Olympic Culture and Heritage Foundation Document & Photography:** a) *Workshop presentation of the IOC Cultural Action Plan (2014)*; b) *Pictures of #olympicArt* tagged banners in the Buenos Aires 2018 and Lausanne 2020 Youth Olympic Games. This evidences direct application of our research recommendation (particularly 3.1, 3.3, 3.4)
- 5.5 **IOC Culture and Olympic Heritage Commission Document:** *List of Members*, including art experts for the first time since the original commission establishment in 1968. This evidences the impact of our research on IOC governance and resourcing for arts and culture.
- 5.6 **Tokyo 2020 Document:** *Tokyo Metropolitan Authority Reporting*, using our key culture indicators (directly adapted out of our 3.4 report on London 2012)
- 5.7 **Tokyo 2020 Testimonial:** Deputy Director of Culture, Organising Committee for the Olympic Games
- 5.8 **Paris 2024 Testimonial:** David **Raynal**, Director of Culture, Heritage, Sport & Leisure, Paris Seine Saint Denis, host borough of the 2024 Olympic Games
- 5.9 **Paris 2024 Document:** *Plaine Commune*, the vision behind the nine Olympic host boroughs’ first joint cultural strategy, directly informed by our London 2012 research findings (3.4)
- 5.10 **Other Major Event Testimonials:** a) Executive Director, Edinburgh International Festival, and Former Deputy Director, Hull 2017 UK City of Culture; b) Former Head of Culture, Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, Director of Paisley’s failed bid to become 2017 UK City of Culture and Strategic Lead, Cultural Regeneration, Renfrewshire Council.