

The Routledge Handbook of Global Cultural Policy

Cultural policy intersects with political, economic, and socio-cultural dynamics at all levels of society, placing high and often contradictory expectations on the capabilities and capacities of the media, the fine, performing, and folk arts, and cultural heritage. These expectations are articulated, mobilised and contested at – and across – a global scale. As a result, the study of cultural policy has firmly established itself as a field that cuts across a range of academic disciplines, including sociology, cultural and media studies, economics, anthropology, area studies, languages, geography, and law. This *Routledge Handbook of Global Cultural Policy* sets out to broaden the field's consideration to recognise the necessity for international and global perspectives.

The book explores how cultural policy has become a global phenomenon. It brings together a diverse range of researchers whose work reveals how cultural policy expresses and realises common global concerns, dominant narratives, and geopolitical economic and social inequalities. The sections of the book address cultural policy's relation to core academic disciplines and core questions, of regulations, rights, development, practice, and global issues.

With a cross-section of country-by-country case studies, this comprehensive volume is a map for academics and students seeking to become more globally orientated cultural policy scholars.

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Cultural policy and mega-events

Beatriz Garcia

The notion of ‘mega-events’ has attracted considerable academic attention since the late 1990s. It first attracted scholars within leisure and tourism-related disciplines, but interest progressively expanded into sociology, geography and communication studies to name just a few of the other most dominant disciplines. This chapter considers the mega-event debate from a cultural policy perspective, touching on key issues such as the interdependence between local and global agendas, the reliance on global media conglomerates to project (as well as finance) event narratives, the importance of myth-building and the production of collective cultural meanings to frame what is often articulated as a ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ opportunity to tell stories of place and community that can resonate across the world.

The chapter focuses on examples from what is considered the largest ‘mega-event’ of all the Olympic Games and notes the way in which cultural policy issues have been viewed (or ignored) by its umbrella organisation, the International Olympic Committee, during most of its 100 year history. In particular, it discusses the contrast between the strong relevance of a cultural agenda for local event stakeholders and its low priority amongst the event global stakeholders.

Mega events as platforms for global cultural policy

Major events such as the Olympic Games and Football World Cup Finals have become dominant cultural actors at a global level due to their ability to attract the attention of international media, the large financial contributions of multinational corporations they involve, and the extensive use they make of global marketing and promotional campaigns (see Getz 2008; Gold and Gold 2012; Hall 1989; Roche 2000). Major events are thus shaped by their global stakeholders, but they are also shaped by the locations where they occur, in particular, by the leading stakeholders within the chosen host-city. This is so because local event stakeholders view the opportunity to attract worldwide attention over a concentrated period of time as a key platform to secure ongoing legacies at a local level. The contrast between the time and place-specific aspirations of local host stakeholders and the long-term international agenda of the event’s global partners pose important questions from a cultural policy point of view that merit detailed interrogation. First, however, it is critical to understand what we mean by ‘mega-event’ and how this type of intervention differs from many other forms of cultural policy implementation.

What is a mega-event?

The term mega-event has been rapidly generalised since it first made an appearance and became popular in practitioner as well as academic circles during the late 1980s and 1990s. The term followed in the footsteps of previous denominations for staged national or international event interventions such as 'special events', 'planned tourist events' and 'hallmark events' (Getz 1991; Hall 1989). By the 1990s, it was common for policy agencies to have a formal 'special event' definition so that such interventions and their outcomes could be regularly monitored and documented. In Canada, for instance, special events were defined as a type of event that is:

open to the public...; its main purpose is the celebration or display of a specific theme; it takes place once a year or less frequently; it has predetermined opening and closing dates; it does not own a permanent structure; its programme may consist of separate activities; all activities take place in the same local area or region.

(National Task Force on Data in Canada, cited in Haxton 1999, p. 13)

This definition and approximate variations have been applied to a rapidly growing number of itinerant events since the 1990s. In this context, the notion of a 'mega-event' was considered a necessary addition to identify the largest scale and less frequent types of special events that, typically, involve considerably larger and more internationally diverse numbers of participants, audiences and media coverage.

In 2008, Getz mapped the main types of special events by considering the levels of demand and 'value' they generate from a tourism strategy point of view (see Figure 24.1).

POSSIBLE MEASURES OF "VALUE"

- growth potential
- market share
- quality
- image enhancement
- community support
- environmental value
- economic benefits
- sustainability
- appropriateness

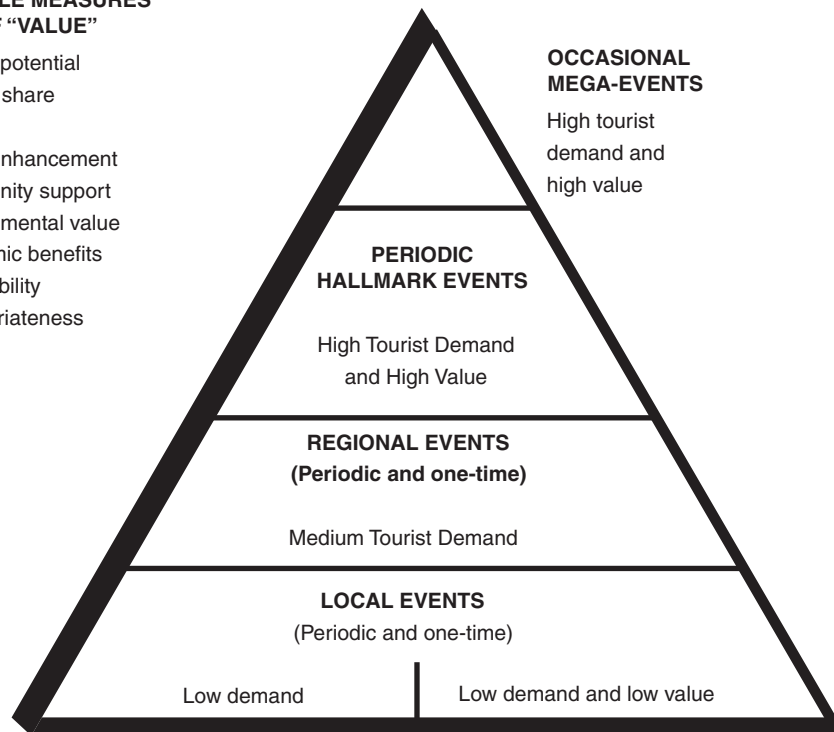


Figure 24.1 Types of special events from a tourism point of view

The above diagram followed on previous classifications, including a first attempt at indicating specific volume suggestions to mark the scale of mega-events, as indicated in Box 1:

Mega-event figures

- *number of participants*: 'over 100, 000' and 'usually more international than local'
- *number of spectators*: 'from approximately 100, 000 to one million or more'. 'They are mainly domestic but a large international contingent move to the place because of the event'
- *media coverage and live demand*: 'very high levels of international coverage and exposure. Very high demand of live coverage. Rights for extended media coverage typically require bidding to an international governing body'. (Adapted from: Getz 1991)

Beyond the above markers, mega-events are also characterised by the diversity of nation-states represented (e.g. more than 200 nations compete at the Olympic Games and are involved in the World Cup preliminaries); the volume of simultaneous broadcast audiences they attract (e.g. organisers claim that the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony regularly attracts billions of viewers worldwide – see IOC 2012). Although the veracity of the most spectacular metrics is regularly questioned (see Harris 2012), it is broadly accepted that mega-events regularly secure record broadcast viewing figures (see Laffin et al. 2012).

The Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup were rapidly identified as the two leading mega-events of the last three decades. Other events, such as the Universal Expo, were categorised as mega-events in the 1990s due to their historical trajectory up to that time and the diversity of nations involved (Roche 2000); however, they have failed to meet some of the 'scale' requirements listed above since the turn of the millennium. In particular, the Universal Expo has failed to keep up with its sporting event counterparts in terms of media coverage and, most noticeably, it has failed to secure simultaneous and high-profile live coverage across all participant nations.

The capacity to guarantee worldwide live media coverage is key to create 'global moments' (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009) and thus, despite some contestation (see Rowe 2003), live coverage has become the most determinant factor in achieving mega-event status. As discussed by Moragas et al. (1995), mega-events become so due to being media-events in their own right, that is, events designed to maximise mediatization where all key components are perfectly attuned to address media and, specifically, broadcasters' needs (see also Dayan and Katz 1994). This dependence of the mega-event on (as well as influence over) global media stakeholders has important implications for cultural policy, as discussed in the next section.

What counts as cultural policy within a mega-event?

As just noted, a mega-event is defined by its international media dimensions. As such, event activities are planned, staged and narrated to address media requirements. From venue design (set up to accommodate, first and foremost, professional camera needs); to timing schedules (set up to meet the prime-time live television requirements of the most dominant stakeholder country),¹ these are all event components that have evolved from varied origins

into an increasingly standardised form, dictated by the latest technological advancements and journalistic trends. At heart, thus, over the last few decades, mega events have been designed to *look good on TV*.

As I have discussed previously (Garcia 2014), the consequence of such a media imperative is that part of the live experience may be sacrificed (e.g. from the need to reserve the best seats to the cameras, to the push towards hard-to-access but spectacular – iconic – locations). However, over the last 25 years, the increasing loss of a collective festival atmosphere has been broadly accepted by leading event stakeholders as a necessary compromise to fulfil broadcaster needs and secure maximal audience ratings worldwide. As a result, mega-events have often risked their festival feel and become best experienced away from the collective live action, in the comforts of private living rooms.

Of course, much of what is being noted above was characteristic of a television-dominated area, where event feeds were mainly distributed by mainstream broadcasters at a given time and consumed by people around the world via fixed screens inside their homes. The advent of on-demand digital media and social media has opened other avenues for event consumption and created other types of demands in event staging and event narration (Rivenburgh 2002). Regardless, a series of core characteristics remain unchanged and retain similar implications for cultural policy-making in a global context:

- first, mega-event cultural policy must relate to and be informed by broader communication media policies;
- second, mega-event cultural policies should be understood primarily as image strategies;
- third, event narratives and image strategies are framed by an ongoing tension between local and global stakeholder needs and expectations.

Each of these characteristics is discussed in turn, below.

Culture, media and communication policies

The global media and communications framework so characteristic of all mega-events is important as it gives a marked focus to what counts as ‘culture’ within the event staging process. In my monograph, *The Olympic Games and Cultural Policy*, I dedicate a chapter to cultural policy in the context of globalisation, revisiting the early discussions that dominated institutional discourse as led by the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation (UNESCO) between the 1960s and 1990s. A key turning point in the discussion, which coincided with the emergence of mega-events as a distinct phenomenon, was the pressing need to understand the interdependence between cultural and communication policies.

In the 1960s and 1970s, UNESCO pioneered international cultural policy debates by highlighting the notion of cultural democracy as a substitute for the principle of ‘cultural democratisation’ so popular in the 1950s (Garcia 2012, p. 5). This was a stepping stone to establish broader notions of policy-worthy cultural practices, e.g. grassroots (as opposed to institutional) culture (Kelly 1984) and led to formalising the debate around popular culture as well as interrogating traditional distinctions between high and low culture (Gans 1974). However, by the 1980s, such discussions were overshadowed by the need to understand the effect of an increasingly active and pervasive private sector within local and international cultural production and consumption trends. By this point in time, it became evident that cultural matters were of interest to private corporations and would, increasingly, be funded and promoted independently from public administration (Kong

2000). This process was termed '*privatisation of culture*' and motivated dedicated research programmes in institutions such as New York University, under the guidance of Toby Miller and George Yúdice (see Goldstein 1998 and early cultural policy monographs by Lewis and Miller 2003; Miller and Yúdice 2002). The work of García Canclini is central to these studies as it argues that the process of privatisation is a direct effect of the movement towards globalisation (Goldstein 1998: Contexts and Conditions of the Support of Culture, paragraph 3).

Discussion around the 'privatisation of culture' came along the re-emergence of the concept of 'cultural industries', first coined by Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) but taking a new meaning within cultural policy circles in the 1990s that has extended up to today. This heralded a new era in international (though Western dominated) cultural policy discourse, this time led not only by the likes of UNESCO but myriad academic institutions as well as policy think tanks and so-called 'cultural observatories' (Garcia 2012, p. 6). Key to the discussion was the realisation that global media networks were a leading cultural and creative industry with ever-expanding influence on cultural production and consumption patterns. Cultural policy, thus, needed to be understood in the context of broader media and communication policies. In other words, communication media were discovered as key to understand global cultural trends, and communication policy was argued by many to be a serious influencer on cultural policy – if not, as noted by Mirrlees (p. 108), as essentially the same thing.² In this context, media events can be seen as the ultimate example of global cultural policy merging with global communication policy.

Returning to the starting point for this section, understanding mega-events as fully dependent on their media and communication framework helps explain what counts as 'culture' within the event staging process. Cultural activity that does not occupy a clear media stage – and thus, enters the 'global' event viewers arena – can play no significant role within the event narrative during its staging nor, most significantly, throughout its aftermath. This, in turn, means that cultural policy-making in the context of mega-events tends to operate, primarily, as a platform for image-building and image projection.

Cultural policy as an image strategy

The use of cultural policy as an image strategy for cities and nations has been a common focus for debate, with discussions and analysis developing parallel to those around special and mega-events over the last three decades. My research demonstrates that image-making is one of the most dominant legacy aspirations within event-led regeneration plans (see Garcia 2004), and 'image-renaissance' is one of the most frequent references utilised to back up success claims post-event (see Garcia and Cox 2013). In 1993, Bianchini listed a few typical characteristics of cultural policy understood as a form of image strategy:

Prestigious cultural projects acted as *symbols of rebirth*, renewed confidence and dynamism in declining cities like Glasgow, Sheffield and Bilbao... Cultural policies were used as *symbols of modernity and innovation* in cities like Montpellier, Nimes, Grenoble, Rennes, Hamburg, Cologne, Barcelona and Bologna, that wished to develop sectors of the economy such as fashion, crafts and design based manufacturing and high-tech industry....[C]ultural flagships like the Burrell collection in Glasgow...[and] the 160 new public squares created in Barcelona in the build up to the 1992 Olympics all became powerful physical *symbols of urban renaissance*.

(1993, pp. 15–16, *emphasis added*)

This aspiration, considered new a few decades ago, has become so dominant in contemporary event rhetoric that it may feel unnecessary to discuss it as a distinct characteristic. However, in the context of events aspiring to reach out to a global audience, the use cultural policy as a catalyst for image projection takes on expanded connotations: rather than subtle images, the kinds of images to be projected need to be bold and simplified so that they can be easily recognised by media audiences with little understanding of the local host environment. They are thus closer to a form of contemporary myth-building exercise, relying as they do on established (often tokenistic) international place associations and mainstreamed historical imagery.

In this context, cultural policy focuses on providing tools for the identification and projection of iconic imagery that stands out and can be understood across widely diverse cultural contexts. It is about condensing broadly known characteristics and mixing them with a few contemporary twists that can work well across media platforms and – with social media increasingly dictating tone and focus – can be shared easily.

Given these pressures towards ‘packaging’ cultural narrative and maximising external projection, another underlying ambition of cultural policy frameworks within global events becomes the provision of background information and guidelines so that stakeholders can negotiate local sensitivities and the choice of projected images is not totally rejected at home. In this sense, a key task of mega-event cultural policy is to build bridges between local and global interests.

The local and the global in a mega-event

The final distinctive characteristic of mega-event cultural policy is the need to respond to and merge local and global stakeholder interests. Although it is often claimed that mega-events require different layers of cultural programming, with some activities aimed at a local audience and others aimed at national or international followers, decades of trial and error prove that the most broadly revered event editions have been those able to produce iconic imagery that works simultaneously across local and global communities of interest. One of the best-known examples is that of competing divers at the Barcelona 1992 Games: the divers plunged into the pool with the city skyline, dominated by the recognisable towers of the Sagrada Familia, as background.³ This became the most iconic image of the 1992 Games and projected Barcelona as a globally desirable cultural centre. It was the result of an architectural decision: a roofless Olympic diving pool set on top of the Montjuic hill, a well-known and locally appreciated location that also hosted the main stadium. The outcome was the production of powerful city images fully integrated into the competitions broadcast to exemplify the idea that the city was a key protagonist within the sporting mega-event.

Other iconic images bridging local or national symbols with global spectacle include the ‘Rocket Man’ that protagonised the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Opening Ceremony, epitomising the dominance of Hollywood as the home of ‘show business’ and the role of the USA landing on the moon or the use of bold op-art graphic design inspired by early Mexican cultures and folk-art as the unifying (i.e. global avant-garde as well as indigenous heritage) look for the Mexico 1968 Games.

The pressure towards iconic and spectacular imagery poses important questions about the depth and authenticity of event cultural narratives. Ultimately, it also suggests that there is a thirst for collectively owned statements, ‘collective moments’ or ‘collective memories’ that

people from the most diverse backgrounds can feel an attachment to (see Nas 2011). I contend here that mega-events grounded on globally informed cultural policy frameworks have the capacity to create and project such statements.

Given its consistent standing as the largest global media event over the last three decades (with media coverage regularly reaching out to over 200 countries), the chapter now turns to the Olympic Games as a key example of global cultural policy-making in action.

The Olympic Games and cultural policy

The Olympic Games have always been framed, implicitly, by cultural policy, with broad requirements for the inclusion of official cultural programmes dating back to 1912 and the expectation that cities should host 'Olympic art competitions' extending between 1912 and 1948 (see Garcia 2008). However, culture has not been part of an active IOC-led strategy until 2014, with the creation of the first executive department dedicated to Culture and Olympic Heritage. This has been largely because, ever since the transformation of the Games into a global media event phenomenon in the 1980s, there has been a marked divide in the value given to culture by local as opposed to global stakeholders.

At a transnational level, while extensively detailed international marketing guidelines have existed since 1980 (e.g. the IOC 'Olympic Marketing Fact File', which is updated annually), the first explicit 'Olympic cultural policy' paper was not produced until 2000 (IOC 2000). Further, while media operations toolkits have always been part of the Games hosting process (especially since the advent of international broadcasts, pioneered at the Rome 1960 edition), formal statements on the centrality of culture as part of the 'Host City Candidature File' have not been apparent until 2008 (IOC 2008) and the first operational guideline on how to deliver cultural activity alongside the Games was not produced until 2011 (IOC 2011).

In contrast, locally, the importance of a strong cultural framework has been in the radar of host cities for decades, with the Berlin 1936 and Mexico 1968 editions as pioneering exemplars (see Garcia 2008) and more generalised interest by all Games organisers since the Barcelona 1992 edition. Barcelona showed the value of using a sporting mega-event as a platform for cultural identity projection and city representation, going as far as designing sports venues so that athletic competition media shots included the city skyline (see Figure 24.2). Subsequently, local stakeholders have become more strategic in their attempts to ensure that the city has some protagonism in Games coverage.

The latter trend has run parallel to the broader trend towards 'culture-led regeneration' as a dominant policy strategy in post-industrial cities (Garcia 2004). However, without the official backing and encouragement of global partners (i.e. sponsors and broadcasters) many attempts at Olympic cultural policy-making have remained invisible to international audiences, thus incapable of transferring from one Games edition to the next.

Prior to discussing how the interests of international stakeholders differ from those of local groups, it is worth reflecting on the key sources of cultural value and/or platforms for cultural production within an Olympic Games. I have discussed the merits and potentials of each of these areas in previous studies (see Garcia 2011). This chapter will provide a quick overview first (see Box 2), followed by some examples of their application within specific Games editions.



Figure 24.2 Iconic images: bridging local and global narratives in Mexico 1968

Box 2: Sources of Olympic cultural production

The main sources of Olympic cultural production could be summarised as:

1. *The symbols of the Games and the Olympic Movement*: These include the logo and emblem of each Games, the official Olympic posters, the mascots, all merchandising materials and commercial applications of Games symbols (e.g. accessories, clothing, decoration) and traditional collectables such as Olympic stamps and coins.
2. *Olympic ceremonies and rituals*: These include both the opening and closing ceremonies, which are considered the peak events of the Games in terms of public awareness and claim to be the most widely live-broadcast event in the world, and the torch relay, which is aimed at maximising direct public participation and community interest by taking place throughout the host country.
3. *The promotional strategy for the Games and 'brand image' of the host-city*: This includes the use of distinctive graphic design features to 'dress the city' (i.e. the so-called 'look of the Games' programme, involving building-wraps, flags, crowd sign-posting etc.), as well as staff uniforms, stationery, publications and venue design. Olympic slogans are also part of this category.
4. *The cultural activities programme or Cultural Olympiad*: This refers to the organisation of special cultural and arts events prior to and during the two weeks of Olympic competition. This is the least regulated of all the areas listed here and is becoming the strongest area of opportunity for the implementation of distinct cultural policies. (Adapted from: Garcia 2011, pp. 154–155)

While, traditionally, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has focused on setting the rules and providing guidance towards the first two areas and overviewing the (increasingly dominant) role of the third area, the cultural activities programme has remained separate from the rest and has lacked a clear direction. In the following two sections, I discuss how host city stakeholders have tried to appropriate the least regulated sources of cultural narrative within the Olympic Games to fulfil local agendas, while global partners have limited their expectations to narrow heritage representations and/or standardised commercial interpretations.

Local framework

Olympic host cities have always shown an interest in exploiting the cultural policy possibilities presented by hosting the Games and attracting global attention. Most cities have focused on the opportunities for image projection, but there are some relevant examples of Games editions being used to advance broader economic, social and creative agendas through their Olympic cultural programming. In many cases, the pressures emerging out of operating within an outward-facing context, with national – or indeed, global – audiences and stakeholders in mind, have played a defining role to push new (or more ambitious) cultural policy frameworks than those in place pre-event.

Since the 1960s (the time when Olympic cities started to feel more empowered to develop a cultural narrative) the most dominant local agendas behind Olympic cultural programming can be summarised as:

1. 'Politics and identity'
2. 'Economics and regeneration'
3. 'Entertainment, look and feel'
4. 'Cultural and social change' (Garcia 2016, in press)

The first, ‘politics and identity’, occurs when the official cultural narrative intends to grow or reignite national pride. This was the most frequent priority for Games editions during the Cold War era in the period from the 1960s to 1980s. Recognisable examples are the Moscow 1980s Games, which presented a large cultural programme celebrating Russian folklore as well as high culture icons in the areas of classical music and dance and the Los Angeles 1984 response, which focused on a celebration of the USA ‘way of life’ through the lenses of postmodernism and popular culture as represented by the Hollywood film industry. Other editions with a strong political angle include those taking place in cities aiming to project minority cultures or to showcase a cultural identity distinct from larger nation states: Montreal in 1976 and Barcelona in 1992 used the Games cultural programme to present Quebecois and Catalan culture and explain their differences in the context of Canada and Spain respectively (Garcia 2016, in press).

Economic impact and city regeneration became the most noticeable agenda in the 1990s, with Barcelona and Sydney being two outstanding cases. Their cultural programme was linked to a larger tourism positioning strategy that saw the promotion of urban centres in opposition to outdated views of their host countries as loci for ‘beach tourism’ ‘cheap food’ and ‘good weather’ exclusively. The Cultural Olympiad thus emphasised activity that could highlight the most recognisable city skyline and iconic venues: la Sagrada Familia and Las Ramblas featured strongly in Barcelona, while the Sydney Opera House was the sole performing arts venue for the Olympic Arts Festival in 2000 (Garcia 2012).

A broader emphasis on ‘entertainment, look and feel’ has been common in Games editions where organisers understand cultural programming mainly as a tool to assist with crowd management and expand public engagement during Games time. Games editions prioritising this over any other agendas have often relied on a generalist type of cultural offer, favouring standardised entertainment practices and design motifs that have done little to present a distinct view of the local host and advance autochthonous cultural policies. However, there are examples of innovative and internationally influential approaches in the 1960s and 1970s, when the Games showcased avant-garde trends in graphic design and advertising. Mexico 1968 and Munich 1972 are two of the best examples (Garcia 2016, in press).

Finally, ‘cultural and social change’ can be interpreted as the most ambitious and recent policy agenda, an area gaining prominence particularly after 2000. Sydney 2000 was ambitious in its plea to bring contemporary Aboriginal art troupes to the mainstream, and its dedicated Aboriginal Olympic arts festival (‘Festival of the Dreaming’) was pivotal in bringing Aboriginal work to the Sydney Opera House for the first time, as well as generating the expectation that emerging Aboriginal art should be showcased regularly within high profile festivals (Garcia 2012). Similarly, London 2012 contributed to the repositioning of disabled artists as world-class performers and creators through its nationwide programme ‘Unlimited’, which was supported by the British Council to inform work at the Rio 2016 Olympics (see Rodenhurst 2013, pp. 9–27). The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad also placed a strong emphasis on advancing the role of young people as producers – not only consumers – of art and culture and made this ambition manifest through its approach to programing design and production (Rodenhurst 2013).

All in all, there are many examples of progressive cultural policy being applied in the context of the Games and resulting in local, national and, at times, international advancements to position and expand the role of previously ignored or minority cultural causes and actors. However, few of these examples have benefited from the Games as

a global communication platform. International media stakeholders have consistently failed to report on the Cultural Olympiad as a Games component, and official sponsors have provided no funding or promotional support for official cultural programming other than the (far less flexible or locally rooted) ceremonies and torch relay (see Garcia 2012). The final section analyses the key reasons and notes possible routes for change over the coming years.

International framework

Despite more than a century of aspirational rhetoric regarding the cultural foundations of the Olympic Games as the expression of a 'movement' aiming to 'blend sport with culture and education' in order to 'inspire the youth of the world' (IOC 2015), the opportunities to advance a global cultural policy framework adaptable to the 200 plus participant nation states officially involved in the Games have been limited. This is partly because, traditionally, Olympic culture has been defined through the narrow and (often) nostalgic interpretation of the ideals articulated by the Modern Games founder, Pierre de Coubertin, back in 1906 (see Muller 2000).

The International Olympic Committee established a Culture and Education Commission in 1968 in order to provide guidelines for these two named areas and their manifestation during Games time. The role of this group, however lengthy in time, has remained ambiguous and has focused predominantly on the preservation of early customs: from the value of documenting and promoting Olympic collectables such as coins and stamps, to the protection of protocol within the official Games pageant and the dissemination of pedagogic ideals as conveyed by de Coubertin at the start of the twentieth century. This focus on a vision around Olympic heritage as a (fixed) nineteenth century concept, has diminished (and, often, prevented) the IOC cultural leads' engagement with the discussions most common in international cultural policy circles from the 1980s onwards – including, paradoxically, engagement in the debate around the 'privatisation of culture' process, as heralded by the Olympics in that very period. As a result, Olympic cultural and educational policies have remained largely separate from the rapid evolution and transformation of Olympic communication policies and event management operations. However, with the advent of 'legacy' and 'sustainability' as essential keywords for the future of Olympic Games hosting (Moragas et al. 2003), the value and need for a more clearly defined (and contemporary) Olympic cultural policy has become increasingly apparent.

The way to address this need has been for the IOC to create, for the first time, a department dedicated to overseeing cultural matters with an explicit focus on 'International cultural relations' and a capacity to take on executive actions rather than just provide advice on an annual basis, as was the case with the Culture and Education Commission. One of the first actions by the new Department for Culture and Heritage has been to develop an 'IOC Cultural Action Plan' that can link to specific Games editions, while operating on an ongoing basis and retaining a transnational focus. This Action Plan is defined as a combination of 'networking/public relations' initiatives with cultural actors worldwide (e.g. a collaboration has started with the Victoria and Albert Museum in the UK); 'international programmes and diffusion' (e.g. artists in residence programme during the Rio 2016 Games, travelling exhibitions launched from Olympic Museum in Lausanne); and formal 'partnerships' with key Olympic stakeholders (e.g. proposing creation of 'cultural attaché' role within National Olympic Committees, International Sport Federations, sponsors) (Jamolli 2015).

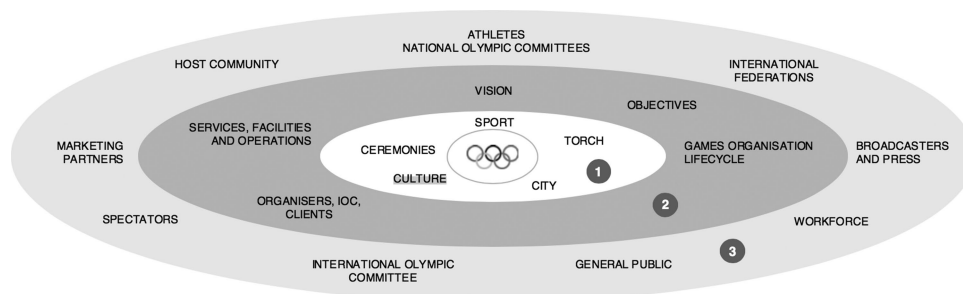


Figure 24.3 Visual representation of 'Olympic Experience' components

In order to best assist in the implementation of this Plan, the role and scope of the advisory Commission has also changed. For the first time since 1968, education matters are being handled by a separate Commission, while a new Culture and Olympic Heritage Commission has been formed to include not only champions of Olympic Movement historical accounts and traditions, but also expert representatives of contemporary cultural and creative industries sectors – an area never before fully considered part of the IOC definition of culture. Further, the definition of the official Games cultural programme or Cultural Olympiad is evolving and for the first time in 2008 was expressed as central to the 'Olympic experience' alongside the broader host city context. This was visualised in the following diagram to inform the candidature proposals of cities aiming to host the 2016 Games edition (see Figure 24.3)

Explicit reference to the Cultural Olympiad has also emerged within the IOC White Paper 'Olympic Agenda 2020', which offers a strategic roadmap for Olympic stakeholders over the next four years. This document includes three recommendations that have direct implications for cultural programming and offer a focus for the Action Plan:

Recommendation num. 26: 'Further blend sport and culture' both 'during Games time' and 'between Games'.

(IOC 2014, p. 15)

The Action Plan has responded to this recommendation by proposing the creation of an 'Olympic Laurel' award, to be offered to an outstanding artist or intellectual during a high profile Games moment from a media point of view. The first award was presented to Kipchoge Keino, the retired Kenyan distance runner, during the Opening Ceremony at Rio 2016. Other proposals include the aforementioned 'Artists in Residence' and 'Olympic Museum on the Move' programmes and the development of an Olympic House to showcase Olympic Movement heritage parallel to the well-established 'National Houses', which focus instead on providing an athletes' meeting point as well as entertainment and promotional opportunities for each of the national delegations participating at the Games.

Recommendation num. 33: 'Further involve sponsors in the Olympism in Action programme'.

(IOC 2014, p. 17)

This recommendation has not translated yet into a specific programme of actions, but in 2015 for the first time, the IOC – through its Culture and Heritage Department – was involved in conversations to encourage global Olympic partners (i.e. the sponsors holding exclusive rights of association with the Games worldwide) to become official presenters of cultural activity in Rio 2016 and thus maximise promotional opportunities and Olympic brand associations with culture.

Recommendation num. 36: ‘Extend access to the Olympic Brand for non-commercial use’.
(IOC 2014, p. 18)

Access to the ‘Olympic Brand’ is the area that requires more detailed attention from a legal point of view and did not result in specific actions on time for the Rio 2016 Games edition. It builds on decades of debate around the existing barriers for grassroots cultural programming to be directly associated with the Olympics. Given the stipulation that the official Olympic partners have exclusive rights over the use of the Olympic symbol (the five rings) and the prohibition for the use of the word ‘Olympic’ in connection with any activity not led or funded by an official Olympic partner, few cultural organisations have ever been allowed to promote their work as Olympics related (see Garcia 2001, 2008, 2012). This lack of explicit association has resulted in the paradoxical situation that the most advanced, socially relevant, transformative and/or locally meaningful cultural programmes and activities taking place in the context of the Games have rarely (if ever) been promoted as ‘Olympic’ or seen as related in any way to the Games by their immediate communities of interest. This situation applies to many of the examples presented in the previous section, best examples of programming oriented towards ‘cultural and social change’ such as the ‘Festival of the Dreaming’ in Sydney.

Discussion over the need to establish a non-lucrative extension of the Olympic brand gained prominence in the lead to London 2012 and resulted in a one-off concession by the IOC in the form of the ‘Inspired by 2012’ logo. The ‘Inspired by 2012’ programme, which encompassed a broad range of grassroots cultural and educational activities throughout the UK, used the same visual identity markers as the rest of official London 2012 programming but excluded the use of the Olympic rings (see detailed discussion in Garcia 2015, and Figure 24.4, below).

The existence of an ‘Inspired by’ programme was, however, articulated as an ‘exception’ and was not delivered under IOC leadership. The Agenda 2020 recommendation noted above could enable other, similar practices to become embedded in the Olympic



Figure 24.4 ‘Inspired by 2012’ as a referent for non-commercial Olympic branding

hosting process so that non-lucrative Olympic branding associations that can be implemented by cultural organisations in future host cities as well as by other interested parties between Games.

All of these factors combined suggest the emergence of a more clearly defined global cultural policy for the Olympic Games. It remains to be seen how the interests and pressures of leading commercial stakeholders (exclusive media rights broadcasters and sponsors, in particular) may shape the official IOC-sanctioned cultural narrative, but it is expected that, if nothing else, expectations around Games cultural programming will be raised, awareness of the possibilities and challenges of an Olympic cultural showcase relevant to audiences worldwide will grow and demand for the programme to take place and gain prominence will become more explicit.

Mega-cultural policy-making

Iconic vision, global moments, once-in-a-life time opportunities, larger-than-life experiences. ... The rhetoric and modus-operandi surrounding mega-events has traditionally led to unapologetic or grandiose takes on cultural statements. In this context, cultural policy becomes a tool to condense time and place into spectacular images and phrases that can reinvent (as well as dictate) the official rhetoric behind a given urban centre and its cultural representation for decades to come.

In the wake of the 1968 Games, Mexico City became largely associated with a black and white op-art indigenous look; since 1992, the imagery of Barcelona has been dominated by variations of what could be termed eccentric *modernisme* by the beach. It is hard to imagine the same levels of local community support towards such niche reimaginings outside the context of a mega-event. This is hard to imagine because, even though mega-events, and the Olympics in particular, are also attractors of opposition movements, highly organised activism and contestation,⁴ their capacity to generate consensus and buy-in towards a collective image or shared cultural narrative is largely unrivalled.

The implications of such capacity to attain buy-in for cultural policy are vast but come with a warning: the rhetoric behind 'once-in-a-life-time' opportunities is believable only if it remains so, that is, if it is only resorted to in exceptional circumstances. Reversely, expecting cultural policy to deliver recurrent or continuous hype and euphoria as a measure of success is problematic and doomed to fail (see Waitt 2008).

Cities that choose festivalisation as their leading cultural strategy or, more drastically, cities that choose to focus on hallmark and mega-event bidding as their core cultural vision, tend to observe diminishing returns and/or a progressive lack of credibility. As an example, Barcelona, globally celebrated as a 'model' of urban regeneration and event hosting, failed to generate local enthusiasm and international interest for its Universal Forum of Cultures in 2004, a (new, self-awarded) mega-event that claimed to address the most pressing 'universal' issues of the day, from peace to diversity and sustainability (see Degen and Garcia 2012; Garcia 2004). Alternatively, Manchester, host of the 2002 Commonwealth Games, did not generate the same level of international attention but delivered a carefully conceived cultural programme (Garcia 2003) that provided the basis for its now well-established Manchester International Festival. The main difference between these two examples lies in the tone and approach of the cities' respective cultural policies in the aftermath of hosting a mega-event: while Barcelona basked in its success and resisted lowering the tone more than a decade after being in the global spotlight, Manchester progressively built its cultural narrative. Barcelona aimed to become the go-to place for cultural mega-events post 1992 (e.g. the city leaders

placed bids to host the Universal Expo as well as the European Capital of Culture title, failing in both instances) so it focused on grand narratives and itinerant one-off events rather than prioritising smaller scale but more locally rooted cultural initiatives. Alternatively, Manchester decided to focus on the creation of a regular, city-owned, arts festival with a clear niche and grow it from edition to edition.

By 2016, the mega-event cultural policy legacy of each city is considerably different. In Manchester, we find a solidly defined and increasingly respected arts festival, supported by a comprehensive cultural and creative industries strategy that built on an 'event themed' rather than 'event led' legacy plan in the wake of its Commonwealth Games experience (see Smith and Fox 2007). Barcelona has developed a very strong and competitive global image as an urban tourism hub – with shopping and gastronomy as growing calling cards – but has a mixed record in its event hosting strategy and is generating increasing social contestation towards its perceived focus on external image projection over community inclusion decades after its Olympic hosting experience (Degen and Garcia 2012).

Overall, the mega-event phenomenon seems to be here to stay, with emerging economies keen to build on the models that dominated the 1990s and early 2000s in the Western world. Acceptance that cultural policy should be an essential part of mega-event planning in order to ensure post-event sustainability is a relatively new trend, with few fully successful referents over the last two decades. Despite many good examples of valuable local cultural policy implementation, the lack of coherent and sustained global frameworks suggests an ad-hoc approach dominated by time and place-specific interests but very limited knowledge-transfer or capacity for adaptation in subsequent event editions. The international bodies behind contemporary mega-events have thus a critical role to play shaping future definitions of cultural policy, this time with a global outlook and the aspiration to fully build on the most established strength of a mega-event process: i.e. its transnational media dimension. As proven by decades of trial and error, such approach to cultural policy-making can have a noticeable impact on the imaging and reimagining of event host cities through the construction of collective moments and the illusion of a shared, collective identity that 'looks good on TV' while also helping advance broader social and economic causes. Equally, as also proven by the observable aftermaths of many a 'model' host city, it is essential to ensure that this global-outlook-led approach to cultural policy-making is complemented by other, non-event-driven or internationally oriented, cultural policy foundations. This is so because, no matter its global outreach and external image success, for cultural policy to be sustainable, it needs to address the many fragmented, contested and difficult to 'translate' (or *iconicise*) cultural needs and aspirations of respective host communities.

Notes

- 1 In the case of the Olympic Games, the most dominant broadcasting nation is the United States.
- 2 Mirrlees argues that 'the emergence of horizontally and vertically integrated media firms and convergent culture industry, media industry and telecommunication markets has rendered the distinction between media policy and cultural policy problematic, if not irrelevant' (p. 108).
- 3 See examples of the image online: <http://images.sports.cn/Image/2013/07/23/1106506039.jpg>.
- 4 A long-standing example is the 'Bread not Circuses' coalition that emerged in opposition to the Toronto 2008 Olympic bid in the late 1990s and continued operating over a number of years and produced a wide range of publications (see: Bread Not Circuses (2001) *Stop playing games with Toronto: The people's anti-Olympic bid book*. Toronto: Authors).

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