Governmentality and mega-events: London 2012 Olympics as a driver of sustainable innovation

ENDRIT KROMIDHA, LAURA SPENCE, STEPHANOS ANASTASIADIS, DARLA DORE

PRESENTED AT THE 6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY, 8-9 OCTOBER 2014, HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN
Introduction

- The London 2012 Olympics commitment to sustainability;
- Governed, monitored and organised by various bodies;
- Not just a sport event – a *learning legacy* of sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship.
Objectives and Scope

• To analyse how governing forces of innovation for sustainability and entrepreneurship work in the context of mega-events.
Previous Research

• Davidson (2013) recognised two purposes for such sustainability in major events;

• Current literature on nature of the Olympic Games and their association with sustainability seeks to explain their power through notions of legacy (Shipway, 2007, Girginov and Hills, 2008);

• Gap: Lack of research on sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship forces in the context of mega-events as large scale periodic projects.
Governmentality

- Is the procedures and techniques through which human behaviour is directed (Foucault, 2009) and used to explain particular forms of power (Spence and Rinaldi, 2012);
- Explains the particularities of neo-liberal forms of governance based on the active consent engagement of subjects (Clegg, Pitsis et al. 2002);
- The fluid neo-liberal society as a ‘risk society’ (O’Malley, 1999) has been applied in accounts of sustainability, CSR problems and business ethics (Spence, Rinaldi 2012, O'Malley 1998, Bäckstrand, Lövbrand 2006, Bäckstrand, Lövbrand 2007).
Elements of Governmentality

- Dean (1999, p.33) identifies four concrete dimensions for research when investigating the analytics of governmentality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields of Visibility of Government</th>
<th>Techne of Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Episteme</em> of Government</td>
<td><em>Identity</em> of Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) Visibility of Government

• Dean (2009, p.41) notes the use of diagrams of power and authority in illuminating the operation of particular regimes;

Key Theme: Sponsored Visibility

“I believe they had sold the construction image rights to – who’s the biggest image company, I don’t recall – but they had sold them and one of the conditions was there was no photographs allowed on the site. There were no photographs in any publications, newspapers or any brochures without strict consent from this company. And that closed down the use of cameras on the site to a large extent.”
Sponsored Visibility leading to Restricting Visibility

“I suppose again from a personal viewpoint, a personal annoyance is that there was a very strict control on taking photographs during the construction process and I was only able to gain photos in a fairly covert way which I don’t like doing but we had to have photos of our involvement, like this picture of the Athletes’ Village where we were involved in building some of the towers that housed the athletes.”

“We have to collect this kind of imagery and if it is not used in immediate construction process we have to be able to make some kind of marketing collateral in future and we have to be able to communicate these things to our other operating companies when they are building similar structures in the future and send them information to assist them. So that was quite a significant source of annoyance.”
2. The *Techne* of Government

- Dean (1995, 2009: 42) says all “means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies” that constitute authority and allow the accomplishment of rules are “techne of government”;

Key theme: Enforcing sustainability standards

“There was a lot of companies that wanted to work with the games. So we set our stance up quite early, saying, ‘Sustainability is really important to us and it’s going to be one of the key criteria whereby which we determine value for money’.”
Olympics legacy and the paradox of temporality for sustainability

“Yep. So there’s a whole London Legacy Report on that which details all the different criteria for the procurement process.”

“Yeah, I think London 2012 is quite specific in looking at using venues that already existed where they didn’t exist they would be built and be permanent if there was a legacy use. If there wasn’t a legacy use then it was temporary. I think aquatics is quite a neat example, you’ve got all this temporary seating just for the event and that’s taken down.”
3. Forms of Knowledge (*Episteme*)

- Dean (1995) calls this dimension "*episteme of government*"; it refers to the discourse and rhetoric of value, expertise, language and forms of thought employed in the practice.

**Key theme: Authority**

"...and it was my job to make sure they fulfilled their promise to deliver the most sustainable games ever and each of those organisations, certainly the ODA and LOCOG, had a head of sustainability reporting to one of the executive directors that reported to the chief executive."
Professional Rhetoric and Transferral of Lessons Learned

“There’s a lot of information there which is publically available and is being hosted by government websites, so obviously they’ve got a role to play in helping to transfer that knowledge but yeah people have to know it’s there and use it.”

“The governing bodies should be taking more responsibility than they do, so the IOC, FIFA, Formula One, you know etc., etc. “

“I believe people use it. I know xxxxx mentions it a lot too, other organisations, as do I but there’s not necessarily a huge push behind it. I don’t know what you would necessarily expect and obviously the information that’s there as each day goes on gets older but it was relevant at the time.”
4. Identity Formation

- This dimension of governmentality relates to the “forms of individual and collective identity through which governing operates” (Dean, 2009, p.43); the governmentality process allocates identities by groups rather than by role.

Key Theme: Identity Formation by Association

“Certainly within the organisation the boost to the morale that it provided and the prestige of being part of building the Olympic Park was very significant… all of our people involved were very proud….”

“To an extent a kind of virtual circle was created… of ‘yeah, our games are going to be sustainable.’ We've got the minister… a national treasury, a gold medal winning, record-breaking athlete saying it’s going to be sustainable, we've got this independent commission that's going to make sure it all happens.”
Findings

1) Sustainability was already embedded in the business processes of many who made procurement bids.

2) For smaller companies London 2012 presented an opportunity to transform their businesses and make them more competitive:

3) For larger businesses it improved their images.
Analysis and Discussion

- Visibility, techniques and identity are more the outcomes that governmentality focuses on;

- The direct relationship between knowledge (episteme) and governance is often taken for granted;

- Olympic Intelligence at London 2012 is the ability to use all four elements together, not just knowledge;

- London 2012: a global sustainable focus that prepared new technical manuals and created professional networks based on sustainability that defined the actors involved;
Preliminary Conclusions

• The translation of the four elements of governmentality into each other provided the potential for mega-events to carry on the lessons learned and legacy of London 2012;

• Transferring the legacy is key, but requires top-down leadership locally and globally;

• Top-down leadership and its role in mega-events in promoting global sustainable innovations presents a direction for future research.