

An Olympic Research Agenda: Draft for Comment

The research agenda set out below was compiled by the Members and Associates of the Australian Centre for Olympic Studies (ACOS) at the inaugural ACOS Associates Day held in Sydney on 1 December, 2006 and published to the ACOS website in February 2008. The purposes of developing the agenda are:

- to provide a focus for collaborative research among Members and Associates of ACOS;
- to stimulate research among colleagues in the academic community, including and doctoral and other students;
- to form a basis for international discussions on collaborative and comparative research;
- to provide a framework for discussions with potential research funding agencies.

We invite comment from colleagues in Australia and around the world and will take account of such comments in periodic updates of the agenda.

A great deal of research has been conducted over the years and this is partly reflected in the on-line bibliography available elsewhere on the ACOS website. And a substantial program of research is currently underway:

- in Australia, as indicated by the Research Register available elsewhere on the ACOS website; and
- internationally, as indicated by the entries in the Olympic Studies International Directory, located on the website of the Olympic Studies centre at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (<http://olympicstudies.uab.es/eng/index.asp>).

A suitable citation for this agenda is as follows:

Australian Centre for Olympic Studies (2007) *Olympic Research Agenda*. Sydney: ACOS, available at: www.olympic.uts.edu.au/research.

The Agenda

Our experience as Olympic researchers during the lead-up, hosting and aftermath periods of a recent Olympic Games in our own country has alerted us to the difference between the roles of researchers in a host country and their roles when their own country is not hosting a Games.

Host country researchers have an opportunity – and to some extent a responsibility – to exploit their ‘on-the-spot’ advantage to undertake a wide range of research on the individual Olympic Games being hosted. They also invariably play a role in facilitating research by scholars from other countries, by hosting visitors in their research institutions and by engaging in collaborative research with overseas colleagues. It can be said, therefore, that there is a potential ‘host-country’ research agenda for every Olympic Games. The research agenda below can be seen in part as a checklist of research which might be undertaken in relation to each Games. In some cases it is necessary to plan ahead to ensure that certain types of data are collected before, during and after the Games. In other cases the challenge is to ensure that key research materials are conserved for future research use: this is particularly important in the current era when so much material is stored electronically on organisations' websites and can be deleted at the press

of a button. It should be noted that the local organisations responsible for the Games are disbanded very soon after the Games are completed; personnel move on to other jobs; and government agencies turn their attention to new challenges. It is often only the local researcher who is interested in researching the event after the event.

In addition to research on individual Games there is an on-going generic research agenda which researchers in any country might engage in, either in regard to the Olympic Games generally or in regard to the involvement of the researcher's country in the Games.

For the initial draft, we have divided Olympic research into seven categories:

1. History
2. The Olympic Movement – conceptual/philosophical
3. Management
 - 3.1. Global
 - 3.2. National
 - 3.3. Individual Games
4. Media, and Communications and Cultural
5. Education
6. Impacts/Legacies
7. The Paralympics

Comments and suggestions should be sent to: Tony.Veal@uts.edu.au

Topic	Comment
1. History	
1.1 Biographies of individual Olympians	What biographies/autobiographies have been completed? Need to compile a list + a list of those to be written ... criteria for inclusion? A biographical dictionary of Olympians?
1.2 Critical multi-disciplinary accounts of individual Games	Barcelona's <i>Keys to Success</i> (De Moragas & Botella) and Sydney's <i>Staging the Olympics</i> (Cashman & Hughes) provide models.
2. The Olympic Movement – conceptual/philosophical	
2.1 The ideals of Olympism compared with practice.	Participation vs winning. Fairplay vs cheating (doping, corrupt judging). Individuals vs nationalism. Education (see below) and 'sport for all' vs elitism. Environmental footprint. Content, development and implementation of the Olympic Charter.
2.2 The Olympic organisation	Continuing analysis of the activities of the International Olympic Committee, International Federations and National Olympic Committees.
3. Management/economic	
<i>3.1 Global</i>	
3.1.1 Impacts	Evaluation of Olympic Games Global Impact (OGGI) – as data become available.
3.1.2 Olympic Games finances and impacts	Comparative analysis: being continued by Holger Preuss?

3.1.3	Alternative national funding systems & outcomes	Comparative studies: supported by national studies (see 3.2.2 below).
3.1.4	Assessing the level of success hosting Games	Comparative studies: supported by national studies (see 3.3.2 below).
3.2 National (non-hosting)		
3.2.1	Bidding for the Games	Accounts of unsuccessful bids and campaigns.
3.2.2	Analyses of national efforts to improve Olympic performance	Successful and unsuccessful measures. See 3.1.3 above.
3.3 Individual Games		
3.3.1	Safety and security	Monitoring of responses to changing international security climate; human rights dimensions.
3.3.2	Models for assessing the success of a Games	Sporting, economic, social, political.
3.3.3	The case for public funding of the Games	National studies of arguments for hosting the Games and evidence collected to support claims.
3.3.4	Environmental	Assessing 'green' credentials of individual Games.
4. Media, communications and cultural		
4.1	Media coverage of the Olympic Games	Ensure studies are undertaken for each Games.
4.2	Different countries' media coverage of the same Games	International collaborative research.
4.3	Cultural programs	Accounts/evaluations.
5. Education		
5.1	Olympic education projects	Monitoring, evaluation and development of: Olympic academies; school-based programs in Olympic-hosting countries and elsewhere; university courses; specific Olympic-related management training.
6. Impacts/Legacies		
6.1	Studies of actual impacts compared with claims made in bid documents etc.	Economic, sporting (facilities, performance, mass participation), educational, environmental – link to OGGI (see 3.1.1 above).
7 The Paralympics		
7.1	<i>General</i>	Replication of above research undertaken for the Olympic Games.
7.2 Specific		
7.2.1	The development of Paralympic sports	Sport-specific and/or country-specific accounts of the development of Paralympic sports.
7.2.2	Organisation	Accounts/analyses of relationships between Paralympics and Olympic Games organisation.

Notes

1. For example, see:

Faulkner, B., Pearce, P., Shaw, R., & Weiler, B. (2003) Tourism research in Australia: confronting the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. In L. Fredline, L. Jago and C. Cooper (eds) *Progressing Tourism Research – Bill Faulkner*. Channel View Publications, Clevedon, UK, 303-40.

Hede, A-M., Jago, L., and Deery, M. (2002) Special event research 1990-2001: trends and issues. In L. Jago, M. Deery, R. Harris, A-M. Hede and J. Allen (eds) *Events and Place Making, Conference Proceedings*. Sydney: Australian Centre for Event Management, available at www.acem.uts.edu.au under 'Publications and resources', pp. 305-327 (includes a section on 'Contemporary gaps in special event research').

Lynch, R., & Brown, P. (1995) *An Australian Leisure Research Agenda*. Canberra: AGPS.

Lynch, R., & Brown, P. (1999) Utility of large-scale leisure research agendas. *Managing Leisure*, 4(2), 63-77.

Ritchie, J. R. B. (1994) Tourism research: policy and managerial priorities for the 1990s and beyond. In Pearce, D. G. and Butler, R. W. (eds) *Tourism Research: Critiques and Challenges*, London: Routledge, 201-216.