

# The Change in Prevalence of the London 2012 Olympic Legacy Discourse

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## Introduction

Since the 1980 Olympic Games in Atlanta, sport mega events have increasingly received significant investment, spectatorship, and academic interest. The Olympic games in Atlanta were considered the first to use the term “legacy” to encapsulate these benefits and as a subsequent justification for the public expenditure necessary to host the games. These benefits are not just viewed as a concomitant of the games, but also as occurring in the aftermath of the games, often taking on an existence of their own. For instance, many sport mega events have legacy programs and development teams focused on continuing the legacy of the games as a standalone organisation. For instance, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was set up by stakeholders associated with the 2012 London Olympic Games to deliver the legacy of the games.

The increasing use of the term “legacy” by event managers and

politicians who are bidding or planning to host the Olympic Games has been met with limited academic consensus on the benefits of legacy and the “conceptualisation of legacy” (Thompson, 119). Despite the limited academic consensus on what defines a legacy, the term has increasingly appeared in the media, notably newspapers. For instance, Misener and Mason suggest that newspaper coverage has increasingly brought greater levels of attention to the issue of legacies. There have been studies published after the Atlanta Olympic Games where legacy became a focus of policy development, and these have developed discourse on the positive and negative outcomes of the games. This discourse has used legacy as a framing tool to take the emphasis away from the Olympic Games and instead add weight to the narrative and historical context of the afterlife of each Olympic Games (Misener; Mason). However, the conceptualisation of legacy as a framing tool has not been understood with regard to the role that the media plays in enhancing the public discourse of legacy development. Only Misener and Sant and Mason have developed an understanding of the impact that media outlets play in developing the legacy discourse of the Olympic Games. These studies contained critical discourse on how the media shaped public attitudes toward the legacy of the games for disabled and female athletes. However, these studies are limited in their coverage of the temporal nature of legacy discourse. Grey literature and policy documents that explore the tenets of legacy also fail to look at the historical coverage of legacy discourse prior to, during, and after the games. Instead, the question of whether a legacy will occur takes precedence during the games. It follows that investigation is necessary to explore how the coverage of legacy from prominent media outlets may change prior to Olympic Games, during the games, and then in the aftermath of the games, where such legacy is proposed to be realised.

Therefore, this paper investigates the prominence of the term “legacy” with reference to the 2012 London Olympics by reporting quantitative data from a media search of British newspapers dating between the 27th of July 2005 and the 12th of August 2017. This paper

will discuss the legacy discourse through a grounded theory approach, where the themes and issues found within the articles explored are extracted and studied in detail. Again, being grounded means that no theories are projected onto the data. Instead, theorising is extracted from prominent issues and themes within the data discussed. In taking this approach, I intend to make an important contribution to how Olympic Legacies are understood, especially regarding the temporal nature of media coverage and the discourses related to this.

### **Olympic Legacies and Media Framing**

Legacy has become ambiguous terminology and is relatively recent in terms of conceptualisation within the academic discourse of the Olympic Games. The concept of legacy has been analysed regarding the impact of the Olympic Games on host cities (Cashman). Yet there is no standardised definition of legacy as impacts, outcomes, consequences, and structures have been used to describe legacies. These are linked to something that follows or something that comes afterwards. This can be seen in how both Thompson and Preuss address the historical origin of the word when highlighting how, in French, legacy means heritage, and in German: legacy means inheritance. Both Thompson and Preuss explain how the legacy of sport mega events is intended for a wider population and not just for the competitors or spectators at the event. The population of a host city and country are the intended beneficiaries of the legacy; in this way, becoming proprietors to what is inherited from the event (Preuss). Legacy documents indicate the connection between the games and the increase in jobs for local people during and after the games. Therefore, Brown and Massey noted that most legacy studies have focused on economic, urban, and infrastructural regeneration, which Preuss adds is because there are “tangible needs for the political justification of investing scarce public resources in an event” (213). These were particularly prominent tenets within the legacy discourse of the 2012 Olympic Games, where the justification for the biggest infrastructure spend in British history was made.

These understandings highlight the inconsistencies in conceptualisations of legacy (Chappelet; Gratton & Preuss; Preuss). As Olympic Games increasingly included legacies, legacy becomes a taken-for-granted term (Cashman) which is not properly defined, yet the media have continually covered legacy with reference to these perceived positive outcomes (Cashman; Thompson; Preuss). With media attention, there has been an increase in policies in terms of how hosting an Olympic Games will develop a positive outcome for host cities. Organisers have been obliged to create organisations that focus on connecting a robust legacy strategy to the games. When bidding for the London 2012 Olympic Games, The London Olympic Games Organising Committee (LOCOG) was required to create the London Legacy Development Corporation and publish policies on legacy. Much of this policy emphasis stems from the charters of the global organising committee, the International Olympic Committee (IOC Legacy Report), for ensuring each games retains the values of the modern Olympics. Article 14 of Rule 2 of the Olympic Charter states that “the mission of the IOC is to promote Olympism throughout the world and to lead the Olympic Movement. The IOC’s role is to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries” (IOC Legacy Report). Additionally, candidate cities are given questionnaires so they can formulate what legacy they want to create for hosting the games. Within this questionnaire, prospective hosts were asked to outline the expected long-term benefits with respect to sport for all, competitive sport development, social development, human skills, networks, cultural development, environmental benefits, and economic benefits (IOC Legacy Report). These legacy ambitions are formulated around seven years before the Olympic Games begin in the host city, allowing the host city to ensure that the legacy will be delivered after the event (IOC Legacy Report).

A host city must manage relationships with many stakeholders to successfully deliver Olympic Legacy objectives. Additionally, the Olympic Games impact study was developed to empirically measure

these impacts by requiring whole cities to evaluate Legacy in terms of venues, infrastructure environment and experience. So, the creation of the London Legacy Development Corporation ahead of the London Olympics and the London Legacy Master Plan was a clear indication of legacy objectives. The focus was around the concept of sustainability with strategies for the country relating to five key themes: climate change, waste, biodiversity, inclusion, and healthy living. These strategies are in addition to the sporting legacy that Olympic host countries typically develop objectives for. What is interesting about the legacy strategy for the London Olympic Games was that it followed critique from previous governments as to whether legacies for sport mega events could be delivered.

The way that legacy was framed for London 2012 brings light to the strategies used by event managers to sway public opinion in favour of hosting the Olympics but also how the prevalence of coverage changes depending on how far away the event is. Particularly, given one of the aspects of developing a strategy for legacy development is to understand the temporal nature of the games and of the legacy (Thompson). However, because media interest begins years prior to the Olympic Games, audiences are exposed to information that might never have been reported if not for media interest generated by the event (Green). To understand how this media interest increases, media framing and prevalence studies have been conducted (Mason and Misener; Misener). Framing and prevalence structures and characterises a situation to convey, interpret and evaluate information (Misener). Through emphasising specific issues, the media presents theories of what happens, exists, or matters (Brewer; Scheufele). The difference in the salience of frames and the prevalence of issues in the media can cause various issues to have different importance to different readers. Bernstein argues that the media does not “simply just cover the Olympic Games, they have become an integral part of them” (7).

Sport mega event studies have continually ignored the varying temporal dimensions of legacy coverage (Roche) despite acknowledging

the importance of temporality in formulating official legacy strategies (Thompson). But there is insight on how the legacies of other sport mega events can be understood across different temporal stages. For instance, Poulton and Maguire and Falkheimer have investigated the changing coverage of sport mega events before, during, and after. Falkheimer studied the media framing and coverage of the Pre-Regatta Cup in Sweden and found that there were 1800 articles in the eight months running up to the event. There is a sparsity in similar research of media framing and media coverage of Olympic Legacies that is understood across these different temporal dimensions. Misener et al. have conducted two studies on the frequency and discourse that the media has used and framed Olympic legacy. Misener researched the legacy discourse for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games but leaves blind spots by not specifying how many articles are analysed and whether they were analysed before, during or after the games.

### **Methodology**

To investigate the media framing and temporal dimensions of London 2012 Olympic Games media coverage, I draw upon the media framing practice used by Misener. However, the difference is that the focus of my analysis is to explore the change in coverage over time and then conduct a grounded analysis of the discourse within the articles included in the study. Therefore, this study continues the use of media frame analysis from Misener et al. In essence, a media frame analysis is a content analysis of Olympic legacy in media publications. Poulton and Maguire conducted a content analysis to investigate the way that framing in 6 daily English newspapers lay bare the construction and representation of national identity in Team GB's athletes. Whilst this study has no relevance to the legacy of the London Olympics, it does provide knowledge of the wider ways in which media coverage of the games may change. For instance, between July 2011 and July 2012, Poulton and Maguire found 156 articles on the games media coverage to analyse, whereas during the period of the games and for one week after,

they only found six articles to analyse. The media's coverage of legacy made no comparison between the different time periods or made any reference to the London 2012 Olympics (Misener).

This discourse analysis is conducted with a grounded approach, where data is being collected before any theme or theory is used to make the analysis. In this way, the frames and discourse presented by the media can be discussed in an unbiased way (Poulton and Maguire; Misener). Grounded theory is an approach to conducting discourse analysis via pragmatic philosophical assumptions, where a researcher is not making assumptions that dictate the methodological position for their research. Instead, the methodology is structured on the effectiveness of the methods used and the units of analysis applied, hence the deductive approach to grounding the analysis in the data that is found within the articles (Gray, 27). Due to the pragmatic nature of this research, my approach is neither positivist nor interpretivist, but instead an amalgamation of both (Gill and Johnson). Sant and Mason take a similarly pragmatic and critical methodological approach when defining their sample as "elite" because their focus was to highlight the power structures shaping the discourses they discuss (46). Likewise, Misener also used media frame analysis to contend with the discourses surrounding how para-athletes are viewed in the media. Essentially, media frames are used to subtly shape newspaper reader's opinion of the potential legacy of the London 2012 Olympics. Therefore, to open the discussion on the agendas and assumptions within Olympic legacy discourse, which shapes how the public may view legacy potentialities, I have focused the data collection and analysis on four contrasting UK newspaper outlets (Thomas, 2).

### **Data collection**

Given the two aims of this study, firstly, to highlight the change in prevalence in coverage of the London 2012 Olympic legacy and secondly to produce a discourse analysis grounded in this coverage, prominent and widely read newspapers were included in the sample. Particularly

four (at the time of conducting the research) popular and varied newspaper outlets. These are *The Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Sun*. These papers have been selected as they represent the varying political ideologies (right or left-wing) within society. These papers also vary in nature (broadsheet, tabloid, mid) and ownership; this creates a broad and nuanced reflection of the media framing possible within a solo study (Hardman). For Hardman, *The Daily Mail*, *The Telegraph* and *The Sun* reflect a right-wing identity on editorials, whereas *The Guardian* represented a left of centre ideology. A much more comprehensive study would be beneficial in future, which can fully encapsulate the media framing of more popular daily UK newspapers, and possibly international comparisons, with the analysis being conducted in more detail.

To gather the articles, I used the Nexis database by Lexis. This is an online information database that has newspaper archives that cover the period of my study. The database required searches to be made using search terms and allowed up to 4 terms to be used. I used the terms “Olympic,” “legacy,” “London”, and “2012” in that order. This meant that the results would only be articles where all 4 of the words appeared in either the title or the text. I chose the period of results to be between 28/07/2007 and 12/08/2017 as this date range is five years before and after the games. My first attempt at searching for articles returned more than 3000 results. Therefore, I searched for articles within 12-month periods, and my first search covered 28/07/2007 until 27/07/2008 and returned only 312 results, of which 177 belonged to the four selected newspapers. I read the articles chronologically from each newspaper, and if the paper was relevant or covered any of the five legacy domains appropriately, then I downloaded a PDF of the article and saved it into a folder. The folders were organised based on the period (before, during, or after the games) and had a subfolder for each newspaper and a subfolder for legacy domains. The legacy domains folder then had a folder for each of the domains (sporting, economic, environmental, socio-cultural, and political or urban).

I repeated this process for each of the five years before the games, and this allowed me to identify the total number of articles published, how many articles each newspaper published and how frequently each legacy domain was mentioned. This enabled me to produce a quantitative comparison of the three-time periods, which included percentages of how many articles each newspaper published and the percentages of each legacy domain. From there, I could construct a clear general narrative of the themes covered in the articles. The PDFs meant I could refer from my notes to the original article if I needed something clarifying or detailing.

To categorise the types of legacy within the newspaper article, the 2015 IOC Legacy Report was used as it provides suitable typologies. This meant that the analysed newspapers were categorised based on whether they were published before, during and after the games, and they were categorised if they covered one or many of the five legacy themes (socio-cultural, environmental, economic, urban, and sporting legacy (IOC Legacy Report)). Theoretically, deriving frames from the IOC is a deductive approach to framing that is common in content analysis studies (Matthes; Matthes and Kohring). Developing a set of yes or no questions helped determine the relevance of the media text for the study (Misener). These questions were:

1. Does the article mention legacy?
2. Is the legacy that of the London 2012 Olympics?
3. Which legacy domain(s) does the article relate to?

Whilst organising the collected articles, I took notes of the themes being discussed in relation to the four key terms and the domains of legacy. This shaped the discussion of the discourse within the sample. Following the outline of the findings, the media frames discourse will be discussed with reference to these themes.

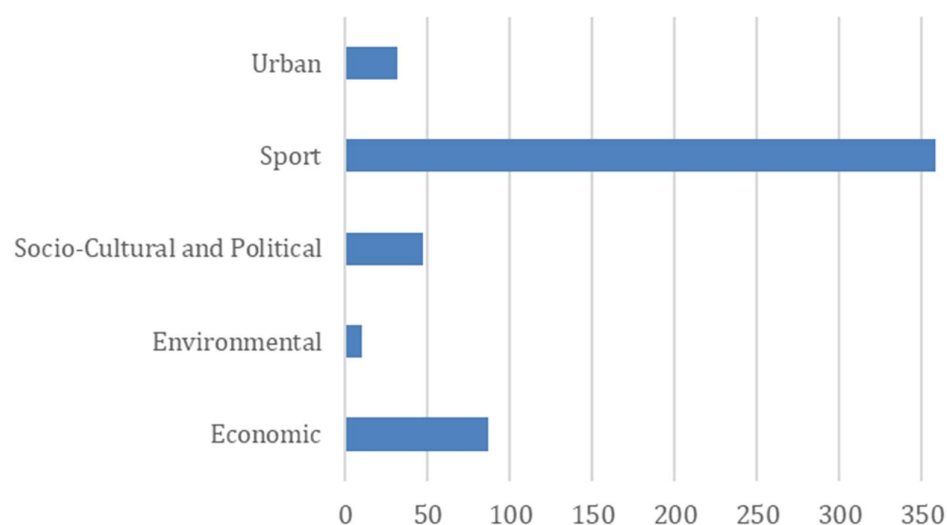
## Findings

The results from the study are split by the temporal dimension, in

chronological order. In each temporal section, the prevalence of Olympic legacy domains is outlined. Also, comparisons of the year of publication and the specific legacy domain covered are provided.

### Overall

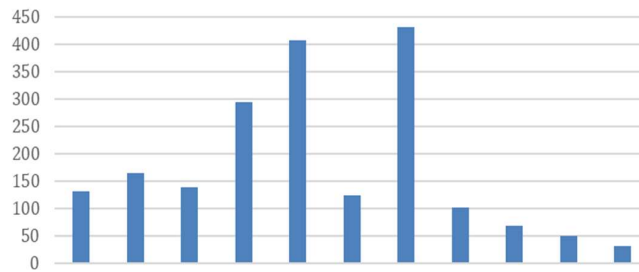
In total, 1943 articles were included in the analysis, and of these, 704 could be classified as referring to the domains of Olympic Legacy recognised by the IOC. Sporting legacy was referred to the most in articles that were published. This was a common trend in each temporal dimension, but overall, the difference is much greater. The sporting legacy was covered in 358 articles, the economic legacy was covered in 87 articles, the socio-political legacy was covered in 47 articles, the urban legacy was covered in 32 articles and the environmental legacy was covered in 10 articles.



*Figure 1. The Legacy Domains Covered in a 10-year period.*

The coverage of the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics reflects the temporary nature of legacy discourse, in that the closer in time to the games, the more articles referred to the legacy or one of the legacy domains. Figure 2 illustrates this trend. This investigation confirmed the comments of Green and Misener in showing how the legacy

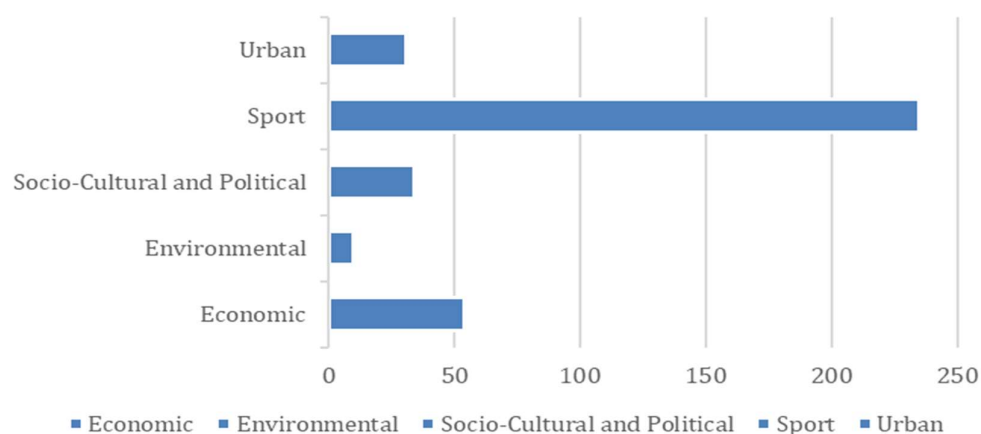
discourse increases as the game's approaches and gradually disappears in the time following the games. It must be noted the period during the games refers to two weeks, whilst each year was a full year, with the years prior to games running from 28/07 and the years following the games running from 14/08.



*Figure 2. Total London 2012 Olympic Legacy Coverage Year by Year*

### **Before the Games**

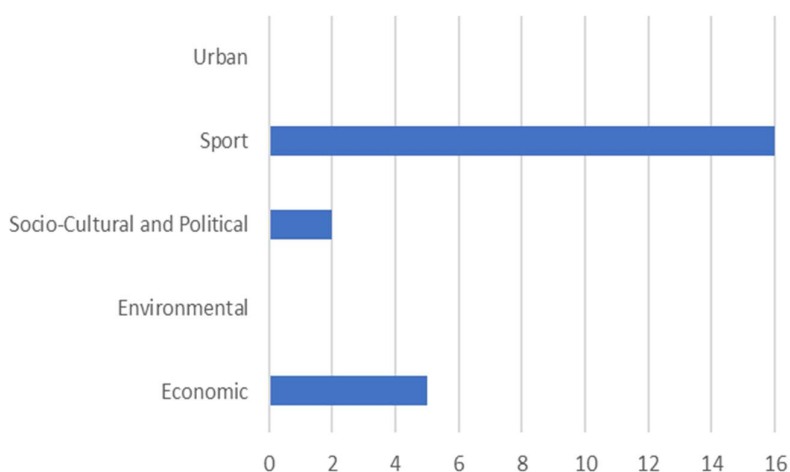
In the 5-years preceding the London Olympic Games, 1136 articles covered legacy. Of the articles which included the key terms “Olympic,” “legacy,” “London,” and “2012,” 364 could be categorised into the IOC established legacy domains. 54 were classified as economic legacy, 10 as environmentally focussed, 34 had a socio-cultural and political focus, 235 mentioned sporting legacy, 20.69% of the articles for the period and 31 covered urban legacy.



*Figure 3. Legacy Domains Covered Throughout the 5 Years Prior to the 2012 Olympic Games*

### **During the games**

Of the articles that were published during the games, 23 could be categorised into the legacy domains. 5 were classified in the economic domain, 2 had a socio-cultural and political focus, 16 mentioned sporting legacy. Urban legacy and environmental legacy were not mentioned throughout the period of the games. It is not surprising that sporting legacy is the most referred to legacy domain, given the Olympic Games is a sport mega event (Chalip; Green).



*Figure 4. The Legacy Domains Covered During the 2012 Olympic Games*

### After the games

In the five years after the games there were 674 articles published which had mentioned the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics. Like with the periods prior to and during the games, sporting legacy was most prevalent in the reference to the legacy of the London 2012 Olympics. This domain was covered 107 times, with the economic legacy included in 28 articles, the socio-cultural legacy covered in 11 articles, the urban legacy in 1 article, and no articles covering the environmental legacy of the games.

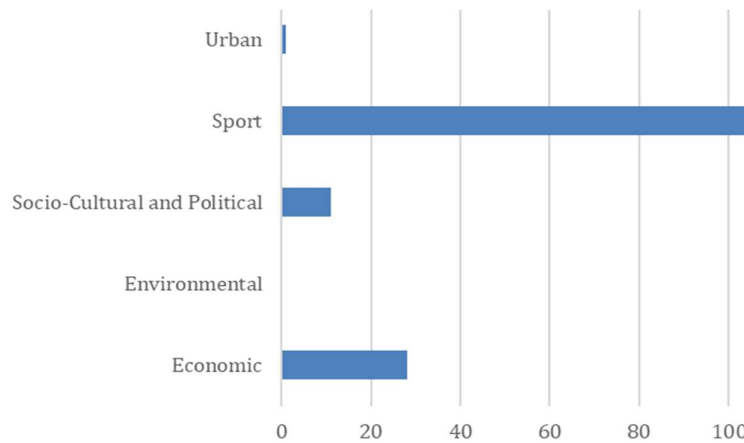


Figure 5. The Legacy Domains covered in the five years following the 2012 Olympic Games.

### Framing of Legacy Domains

#### ***Sporting Legacy***

The sporting legacy of the games was included in a larger number of articles throughout the three-time periods and across the four publications compared to any other of the Olympic legacy domains. The sporting legacy of the games was a key theme in justifying the games. It was used as a selling tool for the Olympic Games and was central in the Legacy Master Plan published by the Government during 2008. The launch of this document was covered in detail but without reference to other legacy domains besides urban legacy. Overall, the plan was a theme in 10 of the articles within *The Telegraph* during the early

summer of 2008. *The Guardian* framed the launch of this publication with emphasis on the sporting and urban legacy but used quotes from Boris Johnson to critique the plan as a hugely disappointing betrayal of the legacy promise to inspire the next generation. *The Guardian* claimed that due to a decrease in swimming participation from young people, the plan was wasted by being targeted towards over 60s, leaving a negative sporting legacy.

The prominence of this frame can be explained by coverage of the future of the venues, as this was framed with reference to the sporting legacy of the games. For instance, the future of the stadium was discussed extensively as West Ham and Tottenham Hotspur were in contention to inherit the stadium after the games, with West Ham being the eventual inhabitants. *The Sun* included this legacy domain when proposing that West Ham would be suitable inhabitants, which focused the sporting legacy on football. However, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* covered the issue in more detail, questioning whether this would be an appropriate sporting legacy for the games and both outlets highlighted a suggestion from Ed Warner, the CEO of UK Athletics, that West Ham should work with UKA to ensure that athletics is part of the legacy linked to the stadium. This included an argument from Sebastian Coe, the President of the International Athletics Committee, that this should only be made if the running track is still used. *The Daily Mail* covered this issue more critically, highlighting that there is a history of Olympic Stadium's ending up as white elephants, in which they become abandoned after the games. White elephant is a term that originates in Southeast Asia where elephants were given as gifts and referred to keeping expensive purchases as useless, yet prized possessions (Davis).

In every period, sporting legacy was the most prevalent legacy domain; this was also explained by the additional sporting events that the legacy of the London Olympic Games was linked to. For instance, during 2008, there was an increase in articles referring to sporting legacy because the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games was

linked to that of the 2008 Beijing Games. Likewise, the World Athletics Championships held biannually in 2017, 2015, 2013, 2011, and 2009 had articles that referred to the sporting legacy of the London 2012 Olympics. This was to a greater extent when London, through the LLDC and UK Athletics, submitted a successful bid to host the 2017 Championships. The sporting legacy was included in issues of political contention, particularly with relation to criticisms of the Government's Sport Policy and participation agenda and the perceived lack of female role models that the newspaper outlets highlight throughout the 10-year period.

### ***Economic Legacy***

The economic legacy of the games was the second most common legacy domain discussed. It was referred to in 87 articles throughout the 10-year period of the study. Most of these references were negative and critical of the UK Government for investing over £9bn into the Olympic Games. Initially, the increasing cost of the games was an issue covered. *The Daily Mail* claimed that the UK Sport Minister, Tessa Jowell, had “grossly underestimated spending” necessary for the games and “there is no indication of what the public will get for its money by way of a legacy.” A year later, they claimed that London Mayor, Ken Livingstone, admitted the initial costs of the games were a guess and that the costs would damage local sport. This was followed by *The Daily Mail* stating that the Olympic Officials were spending money like it was water. *The Guardian* also claimed that the officials were “willing to spend money like it is water.” *The Telegraph* dedicated two articles to critiquing the costs by suggesting that the Government had ignored true costs and that the credit crisis may cause Olympic costs to rise.

The negative framing of the economic legacy continued as outlets highlighted that the Government were aware that the games would have a negative economic legacy, as prior to submitting the bid in 2005 to host the games, the Government had published a 2002 grey paper entitled *Game Plan*, where Tony Blair provided a summary of the

Government sport strategy, in which it was highlighted that hosting sport mega events produced a negative economic impact (DCMS). This was highlighted by *The Daily Mail* throughout 2011. *The Telegraph* also referred to a report in which Professor Simon Chadwick stated that an economic legacy would be achieved through tourism, sponsorship, and the games being a historic event, which would create a business legacy for the UK. *The Telegraph* also reported concerns at this period, comparing the economic damage that the games would cause to the economic crisis in Greece.

Economic legacy was covered with more scepticism than any other legacy domain during 2012, and this was shown most in *The Guardian's* coverage. The paper reported that Jeremy Hunt, the (then) UK Government Chancellor, had economic plans in place for a business legacy but then made no mention of the term until June when they argued that the legacy buzzword was used before economic facts (23/06/2012), which was meaningless (18/07/2012) and that London Mayor Johnson was a moron bouncing from one buzzword to the next. *The Guardian* referred to reports by the new economic foundation (22/06/2012) and Visa (06/07/2012) in which the economic legacy was valued at £13bn but was based on old studies (NEF). This was a figure highlighted by *The Sun* and by *The Telegraph*. *The Daily Mail* also covered a negative report by The Foundation of Small Businesses which said the economic legacy would be a damp squib.

### **Other Legacy Domains Covered**

The environmental legacy of the games was covered in 10 articles throughout the 10-year period, and these all were covered during the five years prior to the games, with most articles covering this domain being published in 2012. Much of this coverage pertained to a project for clean air, The Campaign for Clean Air. This was launched by *The Guardian* when publishing articles on how the games would leave a legacy of littering. They claimed that much of the current legacy plans

undermined a sustainability focus and that banning plastic bags at the games would create an environmental legacy. They also published a statement by the WWF who expected a strong and sustainable legacy from London 2012. *The Telegraph* echoed this, stating that having a bag free and sustainable games would be beneficial for the sake of the legacy. *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* also highlighted how the games may have a negative environmental legacy. Whilst not in detail or in a great number of articles, the coverage of the environmental legacy domain is a prescient example of how the tone of legacy coverage shifts. For instance, it was only covered prior to the games, and much of this coverage was negative, meaning that after the games, the negative press disappeared. This echoes the issue that Misener highlighted regarding the temporal nature of coverage of legacy. The temporal issue was also present in the socio-political and urban legacy as these domains were also covered in more pre-games articles than post-games coverage, reflecting the broader suggestion that media interest in sport mega events is higher before the event, it increases as the event approaches and peaks during the event (Green).

The coverage of these two domains was poorly conceptualised, which may explain the lack of coverage. For instance, the socio-political legacy was covered in articles that were referring to the cultural legacy and the political impacts of the games. As the change in coverage shows, this was not in great number, so it reflects the interest in the sporting legacy and the economic legacy of the games. Political references made within the socio-political domain reflected the political ideologies of the papers reporting. For instance, *The Daily Mail* blamed immigration with the Olympic village being needed to house overstayers and athletes facing deportation and that the skills legacy would be wasted as many of the 2012 construction workers were foreign. *The Sun* critiqued Team GB's single wrestler being born in Ukraine. *The Daily Mail* also criticised the British Olympic Association (BOA) for allowing the wrestler to compete, drawing on her being refused a passport. Both *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* covered the issue, but *The Guardian*

reported the selection of the athlete was made based on performance, and *The Telegraph* reported that wrestling would have its funding cut for having no legacy. *The Telegraph* also criticised G4S as undermining the legacy because their workforce was disposable. *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* were also unified in their critique of Tony Blair's appointment to be the legacy advisor for the shadow cabinet. *The Guardian* reported that Blair would be giving advice on the legacy, which would be his first role since leaving office and becoming an advisor to Kazakhstan on human rights. *The Telegraph* covered this positively, stating that this was an opportunity for Britain and Labour to maximise the legacy of London.

## Discussion

The legacies of sport mega events have become increasingly of interest to policymakers behind the events, particularly the Olympic Games. To ensure the games have a positive outcome, the IOC has developed a charter that emphasises the importance of legacy (IOC Legacy Report) and has launched a toolkit to support Olympic host nations with developing legacy strategies. However, commentaries have critiqued the temporal nature of Olympic legacies (Chalip; Green), suggesting that the positive outcomes are not long-lasting. Also, the media attention of these legacies is temporal in nature, in that it has been viewed as surfacing as the games approach and then receding over time (Misener; Green). It follows that this study attempted to understand the changes in coverage of the London 2012 Olympic legacy discourse by tracking the coverage of articles pertaining to legacy and specifically the legacy domains identified by the IOC (IOC Legacy Report). The objectives were to identify if a change occurred and to conduct a discourse analysis of the published articles that covered legacy.

The key findings were a change in the prevalence of coverage of the London 2012 Olympic legacy. Specifically, the coverage increased as the games approached and then reduced over the years following. Secondly, the discourse analysis unpicked some of the themes within the

coverage. The sporting legacy of the games was discussed in significantly more depth than any other domain, which was also reflected in the greater number of articles covering this domain. There were many factors for this additional coverage, as, throughout the 10-year period, two other Olympic Games were held, the World Athletics Championships were held in the London Stadium, and participation figures within each Olympic sport were criticised. The economic domain was also included in a large share of articles, and this reflects the sensitivity that was felt regarding the influx of tourists and the money and jobs that the Olympics were intended to generate but also the record-breaking public investment, where over £10 billion was spent on hosting the games and the subsequent facility development. The socio-political domain was covered with reference to political leaders, particularly Tony Blair, as outlets had attributed the success of the games partly to him and stated that his global relationships were a legacy of the games. This domain also included contentious coverage of political issues which revealed the contrasting political ideologies of the media outlets included in the sample.

The study echoes the findings of previous work by Misener, Green and Chalip and has implications for policymakers by revealing the importance of developing a long-term media strategy when bidding to host sport mega events such as the Olympic Games. Such a strategy should ensure national media outlets are able to report in an unbiased but sensitive discourse around the hosting of global events. Likewise, it would serve hosts to ensure that their legacy strategies are reported on in such widely read newspapers so that the conceptualisations of legacy have depth and consistency as there seems to be a consensus regarding the prevalence of media articles pertaining to legacy discourses withers after events. Future research would extend the findings of this study by exploring the discourse in more depth. Particularly by developing the frames used, such as the legacy domains from the IO.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, this study echoes the work of Misener, Green and Chalip with regards to the narrow time frame of coverage for the legacy of Olympic Games. The findings of this study show that pre-games hysteria creates an increase in media coverage of the Olympic legacy, but shortly after the games, this coverage disappears. The study has discussed implications and explanations of this, with there being a need for future research to further understand the ways to make legacy discourse more sustainable and to provide policymakers with tools to take a more strategic approach for how the legacy discourse can be shaped, utilised, and conceptualised, in ways which reflect broader media discourses. With the ongoing plans for the Olympics in Paris, there is time for a unified legacy discourse to be related to the IOC legacy domains so that the host nation's media outlets can ensure a consistent depth across domains and a sustainable strategy regarding long-term coverage.

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