

Exploring an Olympic “Legacy”: Sport Participation in Canada Before and After the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics

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Background

- Substantial costs associated with hosting an Olympic Games, a significant portion of which are paid for with public funds
- In 2003 the IOC initiated a program, now known as the Olympic Games Impact (OGI) program, for tracking the Games' "legacies", or long-term economic and social benefits



“Mission and role of the IOC

...to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries” (Source: The Olympic Charter, p. 16)



Background (cont'd)

- Occurring in a neoliberal context where other social and community services, both locally and nationally, are at risk of being cut (Donnelly, 2011)
- Increases to sport participation among the general public
- Part of VANOC's initial Olympic bid
- Is there evidence of a “trickle-down effect”?



Data Source and Analysis

- Microdata files of the 2005 and 2010 GSS on Time-Use, conducted by Statistics Canada and accessed through the University of Lethbridge RDC
- $N = 19,597$ and $N = 15,390$, respectively
- “Sport participants” was operationalized as respondents who reported some time in the previous 24 hours participating in sport

Data Source and Analysis (cont'd)



- Is the proportion of Canadians involved in sport higher in 2010 following the Vancouver Games than in 2005?
- Z statistics were calculated and one-tailed tests for increases between 2005 and 2010 rates of sport participation at the national, provincial, and municipal levels, and for varying time periods (i.e., yearly and bi-monthly), were conducted



Results

Table 1 Proportions of Canadians involved in sport on a typical or “average” day from March to December 2005 and 2010, by geographic area

Geographic area	<i>N</i> ^{a,b, c}	2005	2010	Z
Canada	15,671/12,841	6.1	5.2	-3.29
Provinces				
Ontario	6,078/4,981	6.2	5.3	-2.03
Quebec	3,721/3,002	6.6	5.1	-2.62
British Columbia	2,162/1,763	5.8	5.0	-1.11
Select cities				
Toronto	2,550/2,150	4.9	5.2	0.47
Montreal	1,750/1,450	6.3	4.0	-2.96
Vancouver	1,150/950	4.7	4.6	-0.11

^aReported *N*s refer to 2005 and 2010, respectively

^bSub-provincial *N*s rounded to base 50

^cTo help ensure that the proportions reported in Table 1 (as well as Table 2) are representative, all data were weighted and then adjusted down by a constant in order to obtain *N*s equal to those of the original unweighted data

* $p \leq 0.05$ (one-tailed)



Results (cont'd)

Table 2 Bi-monthly proportions of Canadians involved in sport on a typical or “average” day from March to December 2005 and 2010, by geographic area

Geographic area	Months	$N^{a,b}$	2005	2010	Z
Canada	Mar/Apr	3,126/2,555	5.2	4.7	-0.87
	May/June	3,454/2,563	6.1	5.4	-1.16
	Jul/Aug	4,045/2,567	8.7	7.6	-1.44
	Sept/Oct	3,336/2,575	4.8	4.1	-1.22
	Nov/Dec	1,710/2,581	4.2	4.1	-0.18



Results (cont'd)

Geographic area	Months	<i>N</i> ^{a,b}	2005	2010	Z
Select provinces					
Ontario	Mar/Apr	1,233/991	4.7	3.7	-1.18
	May/Jun	1,288/993	5.8	6.3	0.50
	Jul/Aug	1,571/996	9.2	9.8	0.50
	Sept/Oct	1,290/999	5.3	2.6	-3.37
	Nov/Dec	696/1,001	4.6	4.2	-0.39
Quebec	Mar/Apr	697/598	5.3	5.6	0.24
	May/Jun	914/600	6.4	5.5	-0.73
	Jul/Aug	937/600	10.7	6.3	-3.11
	Sept/Oct	891/602	4.4	4.9	0.45
	Nov/Dec	284/603	4.3	3.4	-0.64
British Columbia	Mar/Apr	430/350	4.9	6.1	0.73
	May/Jun	447/352	7.5	3.2	-2.76
	Jul/Aug	591/352	7.1	6.0	-0.67
	Sept/Oct	408/354	4.6	6.0	0.86
	Nov/Dec	286/355	3.5	4.0	0.33



Results (cont'd)

Geographic area	Months	<u>N_{a,b}</u>	2005	2010	Z
<u>Select cities^c</u>					
Toronto	Mar/Apr	550/450	4.0	3.0	-0.86
	May/Jun	550/400	4.7	6.8	1.36
	Jul/Aug	650/400	6.4	9.1	1.56
	Sept/Oct	500/450	4.0	1.9	-1.93
Montreal	Mar/Apr	300/250	2.8	2.4	-0.29
	May/Jun	450/300	6.4	3.3	-2.00
	Jul/Aug	400/250	9.4	6.9	-1.15
	Sept/Oct	450/300	5.9	5.0	-0.54
Vancouver	Mar/Apr	250/200	4.1	8.8	1.99*
	May/Jun	200/200	2.4	2.1	-0.20
	Jul/Aug	350/200	6.5	4.8	-0.85
	Sept/Oct	200/200	5.8	3.7	-0.99

^aReported *N*s refer to 2005 and 2010, respectively

^bSub-provincial *N*s rounded to base 50

^cThe proportion of sport participants at the municipal level for some of the Nov./Dec. bi-monthly time periods did not meet Statistic Canada's minimum cell size requirements and, therefore, could not be reported. For consistency, none of the Nov./Dec. proportions at the municipal level are reported. Notably, none of the Nov./Dec. bi-monthly proportions in any city showed a statistically significant increase in sport participation between 2005 and 2010.

* $p \leq 0.05$ (one-tailed)



Discussion

- Little support for the trickle-down effect overall, but some suggestion of a “bounce” in sport participation in Vancouver immediately following the Games
- Locally-situated, short-lived, and small
- Is the investment of public money into the Olympic Games worth it with respect to increases in sport participation?



Discussion (cont'd)

- When contrasted with the level investment in the Vancouver Games across all levels of government, the Games are simply NOT worth it as a vehicle for promoting mass participation
- On this score, the Vancouver Games were a failure



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