Managing Digital Olympism: The International Olympic Committee's Strategic Management of Olympic Broadcasting Partnerships in the Digital Age

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MANAGING DIGITAL OLYMPISM:
THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE’S STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
OF OLYMPIC BROADCASTING PARTNERSHIPS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

By

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To my mother Edith Kerr Hills.
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships. In particular, the analyses were centered on the processes and practices by which the International Olympic Committee (IOC) managed Olympism through Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. Previous research has addressed the tension between the ideals and practical realization of Olympism, from which competing interpretations of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand have been proposed. An examination of the IOC’s leveraging of the Olympic values within the commercial area of sponsorships has concluded that the IOC used Olympism as a commercial brand rather than a philosophy of social reform. This study further examined the tension between the ideals and practical realization of Olympism, but within the commercial area of broadcasting.

A gradual shift in Olympic broadcasting has occurred with the emergence of digital media platforms, culminating in London 2012 being regarded as the first truly digital Games. This change in the ‘mediascape’ of sport, whereby control of content is now shared by broadcasters and consumers, has required the IOC to adjust its strategic management of their Olympic broadcasting partnerships. Accordingly, the research questions addressed in the dissertation were: (1) What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age; (2) how does the IOC manage these processes and practices; and (3) why does the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way?

To answer the research questions, a qualitative approach, based upon constructivist assumptions, was taken. A case study design was adopted, focusing on the organization of the IOC, but also considering the important role of broadcast partners in Olympic broadcasting. Data
were collected from: (a) IOC documents; (b) personal written accounts from former IOC executives; (c) semi-structured interviews with a key IOC broadcasting executive, the British Broadcasting Corporation’s Head of Major Events, and the IOC’s former Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights; and (d) reviews of the BBC’s Sochi 2014 broadcast and the IOC’s use of digital media platforms outside of Games time. These data were analyzed using a content analysis technique.

The findings established that the IOC leveraged digital media platforms to execute several of its key strategies in its management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships: (a) Seeking to sustain Olympism by re-engaging the World’s youth; (b) operating an access for all policy based upon achieving the widest possible reach and ensuring equitable access to the Olympic Games; (c) expanding the Olympic window (e.g., increased coverage) to enhance the Olympic broadcast; (d) seeking to transcend sport using the unique attributes of the Olympic Games; and (e) accommodating the commercial interests of their broadcast partners. The most effective strategies were those in the mutual interest of both the IOC and their broadcast partners.

According to the narrative of the IOC, their raison d’être is to serve society, and their strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships seeks to maximize the inspirational effects of the Olympic Games. However, a more credible claim is that the IOC’s strategic management is commercially driven. Recognizing the necessity of commercial engagement for the sustainability of the Olympic Games, it is recommended that the IOC should strike a more practical balance between their social and commercial agendas. Notably, upholding of the Olympic values would bring greater credibility to the IOC’s promotion and commercial leveraging of these ideals.

*Keywords:* strategy, digital media, broadcasting, Olympic Games, Olympism
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Dear @nbc: the ratings are good because you have monopolized our access to the #olympics.
NOT because your coverage is good.#nbcfail.” (@SiMichele, 2012)

United States broadcaster NBC’s coverage of the London Olympics was met with strong criticism on the social media website Twitter. ‘#NBCFail’ was used as a method to categorize the messages on Twitter (referred to as tweets) which criticized NBC’s broadcast of the London Olympics. Criticisms of NBC included their tape delayed coverage of the opening ceremony and marquee events, excessive commercial breaks, editing out a tribute to the London 7/7 terrorist attack victims, overly nationalistic coverage, and editing gymnastics coverage to create fake suspense. These elements of NBC’s broadcast can be considered in conflict with the spirit of the Olympic Games. Despite such criticisms, the London Olympics was the most-watched event in United States television history with a total of 219.4 million viewers and an average audience of 31.1 million viewers at any point (Nielsen, 2012). Such viewing figures justify the revenues spent by advertisers for commercials around the Olympic coverage, with NBC making a profit of $120 million on its $1.28 billion investment for the rights to exclusively broadcast the London 2012 Olympic Games in the United States (Szalai, 2012). Prior to London 2012, NBC paid the International Olympic Committee (IOC) $4.4 billion for the exclusive rights to broadcast the four Olympic Games following London 2012 (IOC, 2011), and despite the criticisms of NBC during London 2012, the IOC subsequently awarded them the rights to exclusively broadcast the Olympic Games in the United States from 2021 to 2032 for a $7.65 billion rights fee. IOC
President Thomas Bach contradicted previous criticisms of NBC as an Olympic broadcaster, stating:

NBC’s expertise in sports broadcasting, as well as their passion for the Olympic values, will mean we shall be able continue to offer first-class broadcast coverage of the Olympic Games to the widest possible American audience for many years to come. (IOC, 2014a, para. 4)

This example illustrates the increased complexities that the IOC face in strategically managing Olympism through Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms. Although the Olympic brand received record-breaking exposure, that justified the rights fee charged by the IOC, the broadcast was met with criticisms that suggested it was not reflective of the Olympic values. In recent years, the IOC has been the subject of much criticism for not practically realizing the Olympic ideal. Notably, for engaging with corporate sponsors whose actions do not always reflect the Olympic ideals. However, the IOC is facing a new challenge in the strategic management of Olympism through Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms, as evident in the above example.

Whereas broadcasters had full control over content with traditional television, broadcasters and users now share equal and reciprocal control over content in the use of digital media platforms (Crosbie, 2006). This creates both opportunities and challenges for the IOC in their management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships and how Olympic broadcasting contributes to Olympism. The concept of Olympism shall be critically unpacked as part of a brief review of the key interpretations of Olympism. This process will inform the interpretation of Olympism adopted for the purpose of this study, so to provide a clear perspective from which the
IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships will be analyzed and from which recommendations in the discussion chapter will be made.

**Interpretations of Olympism**

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the IOC and the Modern Olympic Games, conceived the concept of Olympism. According to DaCosta (2006), Olympism is “a development derived from Coubertin’s protophilosophical attempts-that often takes the form of a metanarrative aimed at preserving the modern Olympic Games and their claims of universality” (pp. 169-170). So to achieve these ends, there have been successive accounts of Olympism adapted to changing views in philosophy and the social sciences. However, DaCosta (2006) is critical of the justification of such adaptations in that they are being made without any further epistemological claim. Similarly, Girginov (2010) identified that there are various competing interpretations of Olympism. He states:

The core values and principles underpinning the Olympic ideal, as well as the sport practices accompanying them, are social constructs which are created, learnt, accepted, challenged, rejected and changed. During this construction process various actors form specific perceptions, strive to establish personal or group identities, question established norms and formulate visions about the future of Olympism. Therefore, there will always be competing interpretations of what constitutes the Olympic ideal and how it is to be achieved. (p. 2)

As such, Olympism is a contested concept. Critically unpacking the concept of Olympism identifies two key competing interpretations: (a) Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, which is adopted by the IOC in their official narrative; and (b) Olympism as a commercial brand, which has emerged as critics of the IOC have questioned their embracing of commercialization.
Olympism as a Philosophy of Social Reform

Girginov (2010) defined Olympism as “a philosophy of social reform that uses sport for the betterment of the world” and as “a philosophical anthropology advocating an idealized vision of human being and a just society” (p. 1). The Olympic motto of “Citius – Altius – Firtius” (IOC, 2013b, p. 23), which translates to faster, higher, stronger, can be interpreted from the perspective of personal and social advancement (Girginov, 2010). Such a conceptualization of Olympism stems from the words of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who initiated the modern Olympic Games and was one of the first to recognize the power of sport “to help in the tasks of moral education and social peace” (Coubertin, 1896, cited in Loland, 1995, p. 49). This interpretation of Olympism is reflective of the first fundamental principle of Olympism in the Olympic Charter (IOC, 2013b), which states:

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.

(IOC, 2013b, p. 11)

This interpretation of Olympism in the Olympic Charter (2013b) represents the official narrative of the IOC given that the Olympic Charter “serves as statutes for the International Olympic Committee” (IOC, 2013b, p. 9). Within this document, the IOC lists seven fundamental principles of Olympism.

The second fundamental principle of Olympism establishes that “The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity” (IOC, 2013b, p.
11). This principle establishes the IOC’s recognition of the power of sport to achieve human
development. This potential was long recognized by Coubertin but has only relatively recently
been recognized and leveraged by governments (Kidd, 2008).

The third fundamental principle of Olympism offers a definition of the Olympic
Movement:

The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organized, universal and permanent action,
carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are
inspired by the values of Olympism. It covers the five continents. It reaches its
peak with the bringing together of the world’s athletes at the great sports festival, the
Olympic Games. Its symbol is five interlaced rings. (IOC, 2013b, p. 11)

Rather than being used as a label to define the collective Olympic stakeholders, this fundamental
principle establishes the Olympic Movement as an act rather than a group, reflective of the literal
meaning of the concept. It brings in a potentially infinite number of stakeholders with the criteria
of being to be inspired by the principles of Olympism self-determined. However, this inclusive
and action-oriented definition of the Olympic Movement is restricted and contradicted by the
Olympic Charter’s seventh and final fundamental principle of Olympism, which states
“Belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and
recognition by the IOC” (IOC, 2013b, p.12). The third fundamental principle of Olympism also
establishes the Olympic Games as a practical manifestation of Olympism, which is defined as the
peak of Olympism. Similarly, Girginov (2010) views the Olympic Games as the highest practical
manifestation of Olympism.

The fourth fundamental principle of Olympism is that sport is a human right, with the
Olympic Charter stating:
The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. (IOC, 2013b, p. 11)

Types of discrimination that are opposed to the principles of Olympism are defined in the sixth fundamental principle of Olympism, which states “Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2013b, p. 12). The fourth fundamental principle also considers the concept of Olympic spirit, defined as “mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11). However, no definition of what constitutes ‘fair play’ was offered.

The fifth fundamental principle of Olympism is related to the governance of sport, with the Olympic Charter stating:

Recognising that sport occurs within the framework of society, sports organisations within the Olympic Movement shall have the rights and obligations of autonomy, which include freely establishing and controlling the rules of sport, determining the structure and governance of their organisations, enjoying the right of elections free from any outside influence and the responsibility for ensuring that principles of good governance be applied. (IOC, 2013b, p. 11)

Here, contrary to the third fundamental principle of Olympism, the Olympic Movement is defined as the collective Olympic stakeholders. More importantly, this principle establishes the need for sports organizations within the Olympic Movement to be autonomous (i.e., independent and self-governing). Indeed, the Olympic Movement has long sought to be independent from
political influence, which is problematic considering the government funding required to host the Olympic Games and the political protest platform that the Olympic Games represents, as evident in the long history of countries boycotting the Games in protest of the actions of other countries.

Related to the fundamental principles of Olympism are the Olympic ideal and the Olympic values. The Olympic ideal refers to the realization of the fundamental principles of Olympism, with the pursuit of this ideal giving rise to a series of values (Olympic Museum, 2013). The Olympic Charter makes reference to the “essential values of Olympism” (IOC, 2013b, p. 9), which are consistently referred to in conjunction with the fundamental principles of Olympism throughout the Olympic Charter. For example, “The Olympic Charter, as a basic instrument of a constitutional nature, sets forth and recalls the Fundamental Principles and essential values of Olympism” (IOC, 2013b, p. 9). Also, within the third fundamental principle of Olympism, the Olympic Movement is defined as “all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11). The Olympic values are excellence, friendship, and respect (Olympic Museum, 2013). The value of excellence is defined as “giving one’s best, on the field of play or in life, without measuring oneself with others, but above all aiming at reaching one’s personal objectives with determination in the effort” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3). The value of friendship is defined as “building a peaceful and better world through solidarity, team spirit, joy and optimism in sport” and overcoming “political, economic, gender, racial or religious differences and forge friendships in spite of those differences” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3). The value of respect is linked to fair play and is defined as “the ethical principle that should inspire all who participate in the Olympic programmes” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3), and covers respect for oneself, one another, rules, and the environment (Olympic Museum, 2013).
The fundamental principles of Olympism, the Olympic ideal, and the Olympic values combine to represent the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. According to the Olympic Charter, the IOC has two missions, which are “to promote Olympism throughout the world and to lead the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2013b, p. 16). Furthermore, according to Chappelet (2006), the IOC collaborates with a range of organizations to place sport at the service of society, with promoting the values of Olympism being their main goal. These accounts suggest that the IOC is focused on promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, rather than as a commercial brand, as suggested by critics of the IOC.

To summarize, the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform is the interpretation adopted by the IOC in their official narrative. The principles and values of Olympism, which represent an ideal, advocate the use of sport for the harmonious development of humankind. This includes the promotion of a peaceful society, the preservation of human dignity, the removal of discrimination, and the establishment of a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play. According to the official narrative of the IOC, this interpretation of Olympism is their primary responsibility, with the Olympic Games representing the practical manifestation of Olympism, and thus a tool for promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. However, in recent years, as the IOC has become increasingly reliant upon commercial revenues, a new interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand has emerged.

**Olympism as a Commercial Brand**

The interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand does not dispel the principles and values of Olympism previously identified, but it argues that rather than seek to promote these principles and values, the focus of the IOC is on leveraging these principles for commercial gain. Such an interpretation is particularly evident in the work of Maguire, Barnard, Butler and
Golding (2008). They argued that the Olympic ideal claims of fostering and developing unity, friendship and cosmopolitan identities were leveraged by the IOC’s ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign. From their interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, the IOC claimed that their Celebrate Humanity campaign reinforced the principles of Olympism by highlighting “the specific non-commercial qualities and ideals associated with the Games” (Maguire, et al., 2008, p. 64). In contrast, the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand views these non-commercial qualities and ideals as nothing more than brand associations that the IOC seek to leverage. That the Celebrate Community campaign was conceived in the IOC’s marketing department and designed in response to research on consumers’ perceptions of the Olympic brand with an objective of harnessing and understanding the power of the Olympic brand (Maguire et al., 2008) demonstrates how Olympism can represent a commercial brand rather than as a philosophy of social reform. Such leveraging of Olympism establishes it “as a brand sold to sponsors and the wider public” (Maguire, et al., 2008, p. 65).

Barney, Wenn, and Martyn (2004), in their book ‘Selling the Five Rings’, also adopted the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand. They identified that in the last two decades of the twentieth century the Olympic Movement has capitalized on 100 years of history and tradition to generate revenues. They argue that the many constituents of the Modern Olympic Movement now resemble “elaborate corporate business entities rather than simply sports organizations” (p. xi). Similarly, Papanikolaou (2012) identifies that the Olympic symbols “have become the object of commercial exploitation, in particular the Olympic flame, which in its course from ancient Olympia to the new Olympic Games city is exploited by a multitude of commercial companies, and the flag as well as the Olympic rings have been transformed into trade marks” (p. 3).
Reflective of DaCosta’s (2006) analysis of interpretations emerging so to preserve “the modern Olympic Games and their claims of universality” (p. 170), this interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand has emerged as “the IOC, whilst claiming to promote the ideals of Olympism, has accommodated commercial pressures to ensure the success of the games” (Maguire, et al., 2008, p.65). According to Maguire et al. (2008), the IOC seek “to enhance the brand rather then promote the values of Olympism per se” (p. 65) and to “compete as global brands and not to promote humanitarian values per se” (p. 66), suggesting tension between the two key interpretations of Olympism.

**Tension between Competing Interpretations of Olympism**

These competing interpretations of Olympism contribute to “tensions existing between the ideal and its practical realization” (Girginov, 2010, p. 2). The interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform is the official narrative of the IOC, which echoes the original conceptualization of Olympism by Coubertin, who initiated the modern Olympic Games. The interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand reflects the practical realization of modern day Olympism as analyzed by critics of the IOC following the IOC’s embracing of commercialization. Tension between these two interpretations of Olympism can occur because they are not wholly compatible, requiring sacrifices to be made (i.e., Olympism is leveraged as a commercial brand at the expense of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and vice versa). According to Papanikolaou (2012), “The commercialization of the Games may, on the one hand, help the organizing countries meet the enormous costs of their organization, but it may, on the other hand, undermine the Olympic values” (p. 4).

The incompatibility of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and Olympism as a commercial brand is evident when considering that the principles of Olympism include achieving
a balanced whole of body, will and mind, setting a good example, being socially responsible, and respecting ethical principles (IOC, 2013b). Abiding by such characteristics, in some instances, places limitations on the profits that can be achieved by commercial partners. For example, longtime TOP Programme partners McDonalds and Coca-Cola’s core products are high in fat and calories. To achieve profit, which is McDonald’s and Coca-Cola’s primary objective, they must sell these products. Sponsoring the Olympic Games provides a platform for McDonalds and Coca-Cola to sell their high fat and high calorie products to the Olympic Games audience. This is in direct opposition to the Olympic Games promoting and encouraging its audience to achieve a balanced whole of body, will, and mind. The conflict for the IOC is their desire to maximize commercial success, which is partly achieved through the sponsorship fees paid by McDonalds and Coca-Cola, for which they will only pay if the sponsorship facilitates profit making. This is in conflict with encouraging a balanced whole of body, will, and mind, a message that loses credibility when the Olympic rings are associated with McDonalds’ golden arches. This conflict is put further under the spotlight as obesity becomes a growing global problem. The IOC’s awareness of this conflict was evident in an interview with the Financial Times former IOC President Jacque Rogge stated “For those companies, we’ve said to them, ‘Listen, there is an issue in terms of the growing trend on obesity — what are you going to do about that?” (Blitz, 2012, para. 5). The Olympic Marketing fundamental objective of “To control and limit the commercialisation of the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2012, p. 5) further illustrates the IOC’s awareness of the potential tension between Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand.

According to Girginov (2010), “there will always be competing interpretations of what constitutes the Olympic ideal and how it is to be achieved” (p. 2). Questions that are yet to be
conclusively answered include: (a) Is part of the Olympic ideal not eating or drinking high fat and high calorie products? (b) What is the scope of responsibility of the IOC in promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform? (c) Should the IOC allow corporations whose practices are in conflict with the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform to be associated with the Olympic Games? To answer these questions from a realistic perspective requires consideration that potential sponsors who are most aligned with the Olympic ideals, do not have the marketing budget to pay the rights fee to sponsor the Olympic Games. The high rights fees are reflective of both the value of partnering with the IOC and the Olympic Games and the costs required to stage the Olympic Games, which continue to escalate. For example, the budget for the Sochi 2014 Winter Games was estimated at $51 billion, surpassing the previous most expensive Games of Beijing 2008, which cost $40 billion (Businessweek, 2014). Therefore, before a change can be made in the choice of corporate partners, a change needs to be made in the cost of the Games. Until then a more realistic interpretation of Olympism that finds some middle ground between Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand is required.

**Olympism as a Commercially Leveraged and Viable Philosophy of Social Reform**

Rather than interpret Olympism as strictly a philosophy of social reform or as a commercially leveraged brand, this study interprets Olympism as a philosophy of social reform that has been commercially leveraged and is thus financially viable. This interpretation becomes apparent when analyzing the middle ground between Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand, which identifies that, in addition to relating in a negative way, there are positive ways by which Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand can relate.
Commercially Leveraging a Philosophy of Social Reform

So to leverage Olympism as a commercial brand requires that Olympism retain its positive attributes (i.e., the Olympic values). For example, it is in the interest of sponsors of the Olympic Games to be viewed as socially responsible (i.e., promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform). This is because the image of the Olympic Games can transfer to the sponsor and an enhanced image (i.e., socially responsible through association) can lead to increased profits (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). For example, McDonalds and Coca-Cola can both benefit from being associated with a sports organization that seeks to enhance “a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11). Although image transfer would not create healthy brand images for McDonalds and Coca-Cola, it may position them more favorably in relation to their competitors, such as Burger King and Pepsi.

Furthermore, it is in the interest of broadcasters that the Olympic Games is a distinct and unique sporting event, so to differentiate the Olympic content from other programming, attracting both viewers and advertisers. IOC commissioned brand studies of the Olympic Games have found that consumers view the Olympic Games as transcending sport, and as a peaceful and festive forum for cultural exchange and fair play. The Olympic brand had values of inspirational, heritage and tradition, diversity, optimistic, excellence, global, and inclusive (IOC, 2013a). These brand values are reflective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, thus making this interpretation of Olympism the source of distinction for the Olympic Games. Sequin and Preuss (2004) state that:

The ideals provided partners with a unique marketing platform, not available on other properties, which defined meanings and context of values towards consumers.

Consequently, the offering of brand associations that other properties can’t offer or
imitate provided the partners with a point of differentiation or competitive advantage. (p. 193)

Recognizing this, the IOC launched the Celebrate Humanity global promotional campaign, developed by Saatchi & Saatchi, at the Sydney 2000 Games to promote the Olympic values.

Maguire et al. (2008) are critical of such leveraging, stating that the IOC’s actions are “to enhance the brand rather then promote the values of Olympism per se” (p. 65) and “to ensure that the IOC and TOP sponsors could more effectively compete as global brands and not to promote humanitarian values per se” (p. 66). However, Maguire et al. (2008) fail to identify why the presence of Olympism as a commercial brand forces the absence of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. There is an assumption in Maguire et al.’s (2008) criticism that by using Olympism as a commercial brand that there is no remaining scope to use it for social reform. However, this assumption is unfounded given that commercial partners are seeking image transfer from Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. Therefore, there is in fact increased demand upon Olympism achieving social reform, adding greater accountability to the original altruistic motives from which Coubertin conceived Olympism.

**A Financially Viable Philosophy of Social Reform**

It should also be considered that realizing Olympism as a philosophy of social reform requires revenues. The IOC is a not-for-profit organization (IOC, 2013b). As a not-for-profit organization the IOC do not seek to generate profits and are not required to deliver a dividend to share holders. However, the IOC still requires the generation of significant revenues due to the significant costs in staging the Olympic Games, as was evident in the financial insecurity of the Olympic Movement prior to the new commercial financial model originated at Los Angeles 1984. Furthermore, the IOC has broader responsibilities than staging the Olympic Games, and in
line with its status as a not-for-profit organization, re-invests any surplus back into sport and
Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. This is evident in the Olympic Marketing
fundamental objectives, one of which is:

To generate revenue to be distributed throughout the entire Olympic Movement –
including the OCOGs, the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and their continental
associations, the International Federations (IFs) and other recognised international sports
organisations – and to provide financial support for sport in emerging nations. (IOC,
2014c, p. 5)

The official narrative found in the Olympic Marketing Fact File identified the fundamental
objectives: “To ensure the independent financial stability of the Olympic Movement, and thereby
to assist in the worldwide promotion of Olympism” and “To create and maintain long-term
marketing programmes, and thereby to ensure the financial security of the Olympic Movement
and the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5). Therefore, according to the official narrative of the
IOC, revenues are sought so to stage the Olympic Games, to invest back into sport, in particular
for emerging nations, and to promote Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. These
objectives are difficult to cost and in many ways have no ceiling (i.e., there is always more that
can be done to invest back into sport and to promote Olympism as a philosophy of social
reform). Although we can be confident that the revenues currently gained by the IOC cover their
present financial responsibilities for the staging of the Games, and that, as an organization, they
are financially stable; there is no clear figure by which the IOC can be said to be operating as a
commercial entity. As such, there is no clear point at which the IOC’s efforts to generate
revenues from the leveraging of Olympism as a commercial brand contravenes their efforts to
promote and uphold Olympism as a philosophy of social reform.
In many ways the success of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform is reliant upon mutually beneficial financial relationships between the IOC and its corporate partners. The IOC grant corporate partners access to the Olympic Games. This benefits partners by either serving as a marketing platform for sponsors or as content that generates record audiences for broadcasters. In exchange for these benefits, sponsors and broadcasters pay vast sums to the IOC, which the IOC can use to achieve its goals (including promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform), thus making their relationship mutually financially beneficial.

It is in the interest of the IOC that corporate partners benefit financially (i.e., make a profit) from their relationship with the IOC. Corporate partners will only pay the large rights fees for sponsorship and broadcasting if these rights are commercially viable (i.e., allow partners to break even or generate a profit). For example, the broadcaster NBC, who has held the American rights to broadcast the Olympic Games since 1988, will only continue to outbid its competitors if it is able to make a profit or break even through selling the advertising slots around the Olympic Games, transferring the Olympic audience to other broadcasting content, and leveraging the prestige of being the Olympic broadcaster. Indeed, as previously stated, NBC made a profit from the sale of commercial slots for the London 2012 Olympic Games. In this sense, the IOC’s commercial success is dependent on commercial success of their corporate partners. With the IOC’s own commercial success so closely tied to the commercial success of their corporate partners, they face the challenge of being a not-for-profit organization, not required to deliver profits, but who must facilitate profits for corporations.

Beyond finances, a positive relationship can exist between Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand, where, through their activation of their sponsorship rights, sponsors engage in socially responsible activities. This is evident in Jacque Rogge
backtracking from his previously quoted questioning of Coca-Cola and McDonalds with a statement to Reuters that read:

I would like to clarify comments attributed to me in several media reports regarding Coca-Cola’s and McDonald’s Olympic sponsorship. The IOC hugely values the long-term sponsorship and support of both McDonald’s and Coca-Cola. Through the years we have personally witnessed the positive impact that they make as TOP sponsors.

(Grohmann, 2012, para. 2)

This retracement focuses on sponsors’ behavior as partners of the IOC, rather than their behavior as corporations. This is important to the IOC as evident in the Olympic Marketing fundamental objective of “To enlist the support of Olympic marketing partners in the promotion of the Olympic ideals” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5).

Further common ground between Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand exists in the specific context of this study with the common desire to maximize the Olympic audience. As previously established, commercial success for broadcast partners is achieved by maximizing the Olympic audience. More eyes on the Olympic Games can only facilitate the promotion of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform with the Olympic Games representing the practical manifestation of Olympism (Girginov, 2010), and thus a platform from which Olympism as a philosophy of social reform can be promoted.

To summarize, the interpretation of Olympism adopted for this study is Olympism as a commercially leveraged and viable philosophy of social reform, which seeks to find the middle ground between Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand by identifying the positive ways that these interpretations can relate, rather than solely focusing on the negative ways by which these interpretations relate. To achieve the objective of Olympism as
a successful commercial brand requires that Olympism retain its positive attributes derived from its origins as a philosophy of social reform. Sponsors seek these attributes for image transfer and broadcasters for unique programming content. The leveraging of the Olympic values does not detract from achieving them, as assumed by some critics (e.g., Maguire, et al., 2008), but rather adds accountability to their promotion. To achieve the objective of promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform requires revenues. Although the IOC is a not-for-profit organization, revenues are required to stage the Olympic Games, to reinvest in sport, and promote Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. This requires a mutually beneficial financial relationship between the IOC and its corporate partners. Promotion of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform is not only achieved through the financial support of corporate partners, but also through the socially responsible activation efforts of sponsors and the shared desire of the IOC and broadcasters to maximize eyes on the Olympic Games, which can serve as a platform for promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform.

**The Historical Evolution of Olympism**

Interpreting Olympism as a commercially leveraged and viable philosophy of social reform infers an order of Olympism originating as a philosophy of social reform, which has subsequently been leveraged as a commercial brand, and from which financial viability has been achieved. Such an interpretation is evident in the historical evolution of Olympism. Baron Pierre de Coubertin originally conceived Olympism as a philosophy of social reform (Loland, 1995). Having initiated the International Athletic Congress of Paris in June 1894, from which the IOC was constituted and plans for the first Modern Olympic Games agreed (IOC, 2013b), Coubertin could be regarded as the father of the IOC and the Modern Olympic Games. For Coubertin, the Olympic Games were not an end in themselves. Rather they were conceived as a promotional
tool for his belief in education through sport (The Olympic Museum, 2013). As such, the concept of Olympism was originally developed as a philosophy of social reform alongside the IOC and the Modern Olympic Games from their origin in 1894.

From the first Modern Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens up until the Los Angeles Games in 1986, the IOC had limited the impact of commercialism on the Olympic Games and as such Olympism can be primarily interpreted as a philosophy of social reform, as originally conceived by Coubertin. However, even up until the first leveraging of Olympism as a commercial brand on a large scale at Los Angeles 1984, and subsequently, there have been significant controversies where the IOC would undoubtedly have been actively engaged in managing the Olympic brand, even though such management was not always defined as such at the time. Some notable controversies that required brand management were: (a) The IOC selected Berlin as the host of the 1936 Summer Games, but following Adolf Hitler’s Nazi party gaining power there were fears that the Games would be exploited for propaganda purposes, resulting in calls for a boycott and relocation of the Games. (b) Palestinian terrorist group Black September took hostage and murdered several members of the Israeli Olympic team at the Munich 1972 Summer Games. (c) The Moscow 1980 Summer Games were boycotted by many countries in response to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, resulting in only 80 countries participating in the Games. (d) In response to the boycott of the Munich 1972 Summer Games, the Soviet Union and fourteen of its allies boycotted the Los Angeles 1984 Summer Games. (e) The most high profile case of doping, although there have been many, was likely Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson after he had won the 100 meters gold medal but was subsequently disqualified for testing positive for steroids. (f) It was uncovered that during the bidding process for the 2002 Winter Games several IOC members had accepted inappropriately
valued gifts (or bribes) in exchange for voting for subsequent bid victor Salt Lake City, resulting in the IOC members being expelled or resigning. (g) The IOC selected Beijing as the host of the 2008 Summer Games, despite China’s poor human rights record. (h) The IOC selected Sochi as host for the 2014 Winter Games, but following this selection Russia passed legislation that bans ‘gay propaganda’, resulting in calls for a boycott and protests due to this legislation being perceived as oppressive and homophobic. These controversies have resulted in the Games being entangled in politics and contravened the Olympic values, requiring the IOC to engage in some form of brand management. For example, in response to the bidding scandal of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games, the IOC were required to demonstrate stronger ethics and more transparent governance systems. As identified by Misener (2009), so to protect the Olympic brand, the IOC set up: (a) The IOC Ad Hoc Commission to consider changes in the host city bidding process and to investigate the conduct of IOC members associated with the Salt Lake scandal; (b) the IOC 2000 Commission to examine the governance of the IOC; and (c) the Ethics Commission to develop and regulate a new IOC members Code of Ethics. This brand management has largely been responsive, however, a more strategic form of brand management has emerged as the IOC have embraced commercialism.

Prior to Los Angeles, sponsorship and broadcasting rights had not been leveraged to their full potential, generating only relatively small revenues. For the Montreal 1976 Summer Games, the commercial leveraging of the Olympic Games by the Organizing Committee had been limited, as evidenced by the generation of only $7 million via domestic sponsorship and $34.9 million via broadcast rights (IOC, 2014c). The IOC had not sought to fully commercially leverage the Olympic Games because, up until the 1976 Summer Games, the Olympic Games was financially viable in terms of balancing revenues and costs. Therefore, they did not require
the revenues that greater commercial engagement would bring. Such independence reflected the original vision of Baron Pierre de Coubertin. However, this position could not be maintained following a failure to balance revenues and costs for the Montreal 1976 Summer Games. Here, the federal government did not underwrite any deficit, leaving the Organizing Committee and the city of Montreal with the sole responsibility to finance the Games. Although the revenues generated by Montreal were in line with previous Games, by 1976 the cost of hosting the Olympic Games had grown significantly. Infrastructure investment, mismanagement, construction worker strikes, and market conditions lead to Montreal suffering a deficit of $2.729 billion (Preus, 2004).

Although this substantial discrepancy between revenues and costs did not impact the bidding for the 1980 Summer Games, as Moscow had already bid for and won the right to stage these Games, the risk of such a deficit had an impact on the bidding for the 1984 Summer Games. Cities and states did not want to expose themselves to the risk of the debt facing Montreal, resulting in only Los Angeles and the Iranian capital of Tehran bidding for the 1984 Games. When Tehran withdrew, there was only a single city bidding for the Olympic Games, which undermined the authority of the IOC. When there are multiple bidders to host the Olympic Games the IOC have greater power to dictate the terms of hosting the Games because potential host cities may feel that if they do not accept the IOC’s conditions, a competing bidding city will. However, with only Los Angeles bidding for the 1984 Summer Games, the IOC was in no position to dictate terms. Rather, the Los Angeles Organizing Committee was in a strong position to host the Games on their own terms. The example of Montreal encouraged citizens of Los Angeles to vote against public financial support, resulting in the state of California and the city of Los Angeles not investing any public funds in the Games. Contrary to regulations in the
Olympic Charter, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) also removed themselves from any financial responsibility. As such, the only funds available for the Los Angeles Organizing Committee were from the private sources of corporate sponsors and broadcasters.

With only private sources available to fund the Olympic Games, resistance of commercialization was no longer financially viable. The continued staging of the Olympic Games required the IOC allow the Los Angeles Organizing Committee to leverage the commercial power of the Olympic Games, resulting in the 1984 Summer Games being the first to be funded entirely from purely private sources (Preus, 2004). The Los Angeles Games generated $286.9 million from the sale of broadcast rights, a 722% increase over the $34.9 million generated from the selling of broadcast rights for the Montreal 1976 Summer Games (IOC, 2014c). The sponsorship program utilized a product category exclusivity approach for the first time. Although the exact revenue total from sponsorship for the Los Angeles Games is not readily available, that the Organizing Committee generated $1.065 billion in total, suggests that there was a considerable increase in sponsorship revenues over the $7 million generated by the Montreal 1976 Summer Games. The total revenues resulted in an official surplus of $380.6 million (Preus, 2004), re-establishing the financial viability of the Olympic Games, and cities began to again line up to host the Olympic Games.

Subsequently, the IOC has taken control of the commercial leveraging of the Olympic Games, creating The Olympic Partners (TOP) worldwide sponsorship program for the 1988 Summer and Winter Games, based upon the 1984 Los Angeles model of product-category exclusivity. Also, the IOC took over the negotiation of the sale of the right to broadcast the Olympic Games in all major markets, with the sale to smaller markets being negotiated by agencies on behalf of the IOC. Other revenue sources, including domestic sponsorship, ticketing
and licensing programs within the host country are managed by the host Organizing Committee, but under the direction of the IOC. These marketing initiatives, in leveraging the commercial assets of the Olympic Games, are evidence of the IOC interpreting Olympism as a commercial brand. This management of the Olympic brand has resulted in substantial revenues for the IOC, as evident in the most recent Olympic cycle from 2009 to 2012 having generated $3.914 billion from broadcasting and $957 million from the TOP Programme (IOC, 2014c).

This review of the evolution of Olympism establishes that from 1894 until 1984 Olympism had not been leveraged as a commercial brand. This is despite numerous instances throughout the history of the Olympic Games that undoubtedly required some form of brand management. There was no uninfluenced shift in the IOC’s approach to commercialization. Rather, the large scale leveraging of Olympism as a commercial brand from 1984 was at a time when the power of the IOC and options available to the IOC were so limited that it was no longer financially viable for them to reject commercialization. However, the escalated embracing of commercialization has culminated in the most recent Olympic cycle from 2009 to 2012 generating close to $5 billion. This level of revenue is far beyond the revenues needed for the survival of the IOC and the Olympic Games. Therefore, from the historical evolution of Olympism, it is possible to determine that the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform preceded the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand. However, it is less clear as to whether the actions of the IOC lean more towards a philosophy of social reform or a commercial brand. It is out of the scope of this study to make such a judgment, which would require a holistic analysis of all of the IOC’s activities. However, by analyzing the IOC’s strategic management of Olympism in its business area of broadcasting following the emergence
of digital media platforms it will be possible to shed some light on the extent to which Olympism is more practically realized as a philosophy of social reform or as a commercial brand.

**Digital Olympism**

Olympic broadcasting in the digital age represents a strong forum within which to assess the IOC’s strategic management of Olympism. Olympic broadcasting represents a window across both Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand. Olympic broadcasting is the “principal means for people around the world to experience the magic of the Olympic Games” (IOC, n.d.b, para. 1) and thus the IOC’s principle tool for promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. It is also the IOC’s primary source of revenue, accounting for 47% of their revenue (IOC, 2014c). As discussed above, the digital age is a particularly interesting time at which to view this window as the emergence of digital media platforms has resulted in a transition from broadcasters having full control over content with traditional television, to broadcasters and users sharing equal and reciprocal control over content in the use of digital media platforms (Crosbie, 2006), thus creating both new opportunities and new challenges for the IOC in their management of Olympism.

In summarizing the business area of Olympic broadcasting, the Olympic Marketing Fact File states:

The IOC is the owner of the broadcast rights, including television, mobile and internet, for the Olympic Games and Olympic Winter Games. The IOC is responsible for allocating Olympic broadcast rights to media companies throughout the world through the negotiation of rights agreements. The IOC manages Olympic broadcast partnerships to ensure that the long-term interests of the Olympic Movement are protected. (IOC, 2014c, p. 20)
The total revenue raised from broadcast rights for the 2009 to 2012 Olympic Cycle was $3.9146 billion (IOC, 2014c) indicates that, thus far, the IOC’s strategies to leverage Olympism as a commercial brand via broadcasting partnerships have been effective. Olympic broadcasting can also play a role in the promotion of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, such as providing the global Olympic audience access to role models. The emergence of digital media platforms may alter the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships.

In recent years we have witnessed the emergence of digital media platforms that have been embraced by the IOC and their broadcast partners, culminating in the London 2012 Olympic Games being labeled “the first truly digital Games” (BBC, 2012). The emergence of digital media platforms is a significant development for the IOC and other sport organizations, impacting the ever-evolving relationship between sports and media.

Sport occupies a position of immense importance in the media. Since the late 1980s media has prioritized the coverage of sport over political, economic, and social events (Jhally, 1989). According to Raney and Bryant (2006), the relationship between sports and media is a mutually beneficial relationship that represents a “win-win-win for media outlets, sports leagues, and fans alike” (p. xiii). This mutually beneficial relationship has developed as new key broadcasting platforms have emerged. In the early twentieth century radio first brought live sport to an audience outside of the venue, before the emergence of television allowed the relationship between sport and the media to develop further. Television has provided sports organizations with increased audiences, increased revenues from sponsors and advertisers, and significant revenues from the sale of television rights. Indeed, “revenues from national and local television – once a minor supplement to the revenue gained from ticket sales and related activities – now constitutes the major source of financial support for professional sports” (Euchner, 1993, p. 29).
This is particularly the case in large, rich nations (Noll, 2006). To facilitate their relationship with television broadcasters, sport organizations have implemented television friendly rules, such as a ‘TV timeouts’ in the National Football League (NFL), and scheduled competition around the requirements of broadcasters. For example, the swimming finals for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games were scheduled in the morning Beijing time so that a prime time American audience could follow Michael Phelps successful quest for eight gold medals.

Just as television has brought significant revenues and audiences to sport, sport represents critical content to enhance television audiences and broadcaster revenues. According to Sullivan (2006), “the unpredictable and inherently conflict-oriented nature of sports contests provides television with immediate, unscripted dramatic events – content that is perfectly suited to the medium and to broadcasting’s commercial interests” (p. 139). This is supported by Burton (1999), who argued that sport drove the success of television. There is the possibility that we are now witnessing another watershed moment in the sport and broadcast media relationship with the emergence of digital media platforms, which are again changing the way that fans consume the sport product.

According to Hutchins and Rowe (2012) “digital-convergent media are playing an ever-increasing role in the production, presentation, and consumption of media sport” (p. 2). Digital media platforms have emerged as a force in sports broadcasting as three shifts have combined to create the ‘perfect digital storm’. First, Broadband Internet has provided the capacity for content to be delivered in a high quality manner, a quality that was not present with dial-up Internet connections. Similarly, mobile phones have developed into genuine content providers as ‘smart’ phones, using 3G and now 4G high-speed mobile networks that are able to deliver content in a high quality manner. Second, this technology has been embraced by consumers with huge uptake
of broadband access and smart phones in key markets. Third, seemingly unlimited information and increasing time pressures have led to consumers seeking new ways to consume sport products, resulting in a trend towards an on-demand content world (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2007). These three shifts have combined to make broadcasting sports via digital media platforms a viable business model.

Such a viable business model is evident in the division of television and digital media broadcast rights in some sports organizations, which suggests that the value of digital media broadcast rights is now such that it is worth sports organizations selling these rights separately from television rights. Notably, this has occurred in the cases of both the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games. Prior to this, sports broadcast rights had been solely made up of the right to broadcast via the television platform, with digital media rights included as an added incentive to purchase the television rights or simply assumed to be part of the deal. As a relatively new platform in broadcasting, there are various labels that have been used. These are considered below, with a single label being adopted for consistency of discussion.

Digital media is also commonly referred to as new media within the broadcasting industry. New media refers to the recency of the emergence of the media, whereas digital media refers to the method of storage and transmission of media content or data, whereby the media is stored and transmitted in digital form. The label new media becomes increasingly problematic as time elapses and the form of media that is new changes. However, the label digital media also has a limitation in that labeling on the basis of method of storage and transmission no longer distinguishes between traditional television and digital media given traditional television’s recent shift to operate from a digital signal, rather than analogue. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, this new broadcasting platform will be labeled in terms of the ‘end product’ of digital
content delivered via digital media platforms. According to Hutchins and Rowe (2012), the
digital media platforms of “Broadband Internet, webcasting, social networking, user-generated
content, mobile television, ‘smart’ television sets, and a host of other digital media technologies
are the baited hooks signaling that the analogue-broadcast era is passing into history” (p. 2).
These digital media platforms are distinct from traditional television for two key reasons
according to Crosbie (2006). First, the content produced is uniquely individualized. Second,
producers and viewers share equal and reciprocal control over that content. According to Hall
(1973), audiences play an active role in interpreting media messages, and do so differently
depending on their own social context. The increased control over content that digital media
platforms provide allows audiences to play an even more active role in media consumption.

To summarize, the label digital media is preferred to new media, but is further specified
as digital media platforms. This provides a focus on the ‘end product’ of digital media rather
than the method of storage and transmission, which fails to distinguish between traditional
television and digital media platforms. To further distinguish between traditional television and
digital media platforms, the label digital media platforms will only apply to those that allow
consumers to share equal and reciprocal control over the sport content, and therefore includes
Internet-connected computers, smart phones, and ‘smart’ television. Such a definition is
consistent with sport organizations’ distinction of their broadcasting platforms. The emergence
of digital media platforms is changing the way that the IOC manage their broadcasting
partnerships, with digital media platforms bringing both new opportunities and new challenges.

**Strategies of the IOC**

The strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the
emergence of digital media platforms shall be explored from the organizational perspective of
the IOC. According to Miller (1987), changes in the environment of a sport organization, such as technology changes, require the organization to respond with appropriate strategies if they are to be successful. Barney and Clifford (2010) define a firm’s strategy as “its theory of how to achieve high levels of performance in the markets and industries within which it is operating” (p. 3). They also state “a firm’s strategy is its theory of how to excel in the game it is playing” (p. 3). According to the interpretation of Olympism adopted, the game that the IOC is playing is that of both leveraging Olympism as a commercial brand and promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. More specifically, Chandler (1962) defines strategy as “the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” (p. 13). Similarly, Thompson, Strickland, and Thompson (2006) define strategy as “The combination of competitive moves and business approaches that managers employ to please customers, compete successfully, and achieve organizational objectives” (p. 3).

In line with these definitions, this study shall focus on the IOC’s competitive moves, business approaches, goals and objectives, courses of action, and allocation of resources in their management of Olympic broadcasting, which are summarized within the research questions as processes and practices. Understanding these strategic processes and practices “can help sport managers analyse and diagnose more effectively the problems they face, and enable them to respond with appropriate solutions” (Slack & Parent, 2006, p. 7). Indeed, a sport organization’s success or failure can “rest on an underlying theory of the firm and an associated theory of strategy” (Porter, 1991, p. 95). The processes and practices by which the IOC implements its strategies operate within the governance structure of the IOC.
Governance Structure of IOC

Chappelet (2006) provided an overview of the governance structure of the IOC. The IOC Administration is located in Lausanne, Switzerland, and is lead by a President, currently Thomas Bach, who serves on a voluntary basis. Serving the President is the Chief of Staff, who is the head of the President’s Executive Office. Reporting directly to the President is the Director General, who serves as a chief operating officer. Reporting directly to the Director General is the Olympic Games Executive Director. There are 12 departments with functional links to the Olympic Games (and thus overseen by the Olympic Games Executive Director, but the directors of which report directly to the Director General). These departments are (a) Communications, (b) Marketing, (c) Technology, (d) Sports, (e) NOC Relations, (f) Legal, (g) Olympic Museum, (h) Information Management, (i) Medical and Scientific, (j) Finance and Administration, (k) Olympic Solidarity, and (l) International Cooperation. There are also two departments which do not have a functional link to the Olympic Games, which are the Human Resources department and Planning department. External to the IOC are three bodies that serve a controlling function over the IOC Administration. The IOC Session is an annual general meeting of the 115 IOC members, who, like the President, serve as voluntary representatives. They have full power, including electing Olympic Games host cities and amending the Olympic Charter, except powers given directly to the President or IOC Executive Board by the Olympic Charter. The IOC Executive Board is smaller and meets more frequently, being made up of 15 elected IOC members who meet four times a year or more. They prepare all the Session’s decisions, pre-select Olympic Games host city candidates, propose new Executive Board members for election, and check all of the President’s urgent decisions. The IOC Commissions cover a range of important subjects to the IOC and the Olympic Games, including television and digital media.
rights and ethics. Members are appointed by the President and meet once a year, providing an advisory role only.

**Statement of the Problem**

Slack and Parent (2006) identify a need for research into strategic management in sport, with many questions left unanswered. They argued, “since sport organizations, like all other organizations, implicitly or explicitly formulate strategy, which in turn influences many other aspects of management, more work needs to be undertaken on this topic in sport management” (Slack & Parent, 2006, p.127). Although this call to action is now eight years old, the strategic management of sports broadcasting remains a content gap in the literature. Despite revenues from broadcasting being the most valuable sources of income for the majority of sport organizations, there is a disparity of strategic management literature on this topic in comparison to topics related to other significant sources of income for sport organizations, such as sponsorship.

There has been research into Olympism and factors that limit its practical realization. According to Girginov (2010) “most social sciences perspective collections on the Olympics tend to address in different ways the tensions existing between the ideal and its practical realization” (Girginov, 2010, p. 2). This research seeks to add to the literature on the practical realization of Olympism, which has previously been explored by looking at specific areas of inquiry, such as history, politics, media, commercialization, and drugs (Girginov, 2010). As previously stated, the area of commercialization includes both sponsorship and broadcasting as the two greatest sources of revenue for the Olympics (IOC, 2014c). Existing Olympism research has considered the practical realization of Olympism through Olympic marketing and sponsorship, but this study focuses only on broadcasting, and even more specifically, focuses on
broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms. This specific area of inquiry has not yet been explored within the literature.

Of the research into the sports broadcasting, limited research has been conducted from an organizational theory (i.e., the strategies of whole organizations) and strategic management perspective. Research into media representations and production has been conducted from a consumer or organizational behavior perspective (i.e., individual behavior and group dynamics), and research into the commodification of sport and regulation of sports broadcasting has been conducted from a policy or government perspective. Only a limited amount of the sports broadcasting research has utilized primary data. Much of this research has been conducted within the same setting of the Olympic Games, but, like the general sports broadcasting literature, this has not been from the perspective of the IOC and has not been based upon primary data.

Research into digital media platforms in sport has documented the emergence of digital media platforms and the impact on sports broadcasting. Although this research is taken from the relevant perspective of the sports organization, it has not been based upon primary data. However, there has been research based upon primary on the use of digital media platforms in Olympic broadcasting, but this has been from the perspective of the consumer rather than the IOC.

**Research Questions**

On the basis of the above statement of the problem, the research questions (RQ) posed by the present study are:

RQ 1: What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age?

RQ 2: How does the IOC manage these processes and practices?
RQ 3: Why does the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way?

**Research Setting**

These research questions are specific to the setting of the IOC and the Olympic Games. This research focuses on the particular commercial activity of broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms. The setting of the Olympic Games is ideal for such a focus because it provides a window through which to study the interaction among economics, organizational and corporate practices, and technological change on both national and global scales (Spa, Rivenburgh, & Larson, 1995), with this study seeking to explore organizational and corporate practices following technological change. Furthermore, in focusing on the business area of broadcasting, the Olympic Games represents a ‘critical case’ (Yin, 2009) in sports broadcasting because the Olympic Games is the most valuable sports broadcasting event and broadcasting is the most valuable source of revenue for the IOC. As previously stated, the total revenue raised from broadcast rights for the 2009 to 2012 Olympic Cycle (covering both the Vancouver 2012 Winter Games and the London 2012 Summer Games) was $3.9146 billion (IOC, 2014c), which ranks the Olympic Games ahead of the FIFA World Cup in terms of broadcast value. Broadcast rights for the equivalent World Cup cycle (covering the 2010 South Africa World Cup) were sold for $2.408 billion (FIFA, 2010). The selling of these rights is the IOC’s most important source of revenue, accounting for 47% of their revenue, which is marginally greater than the revenue contribution of sponsorship, which accounts for 45% (IOC, 2014c).

Not only does this setting represent a ‘critical case’ based upon the value of Olympic broadcasting, it represents a ‘case in point’ as it is a setting that has been significantly impacted by the emergence of digital media platforms. Since the first official Olympic Games website at
Sydney 2000, digital media has grown in prominence at each Olympic Games, culminating in the broadcast of the London 2012 Summer Olympics being labeled as “the first truly digital Olympics” by the host broadcaster (BBC, 2012). Evidence of the recognition of the growing importance of digital media platforms is that the IOC has been negotiating the sale of digital media rights separately from television rights since the 2008 Beijing Summer Games (IOC, 2008a). As such, it is a setting within which the strategic management of broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms can be studied. Answering the research question within this setting is socially significant.

**Social Significance**

To achieve practical importance this study must have significant practical implications for clearly identified stakeholders (Campion, 1993). The clearly identified stakeholder that this research seeks to serve is the IOC, whom own and manage the Olympic Games. This study seeks to analyze the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms. Identifying the IOC’s processes and practices, how they manage these processes and practices, and why they manage these processes and practices in this way will inform recommendations as to how the IOC can best manage Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms. The interpretation of Olympism adopted for this study is Olympism as a commercially leveraged and viable philosophy of social reform. In adopting this interpretation, the study seeks to identify opportunities and challenges relevant to both promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and leveraging Olympism as a commercial brand. Analysis of these opportunities and challenges will inform recommendations.
Leveraging Olympism as a commercial brand is of paramount importance because, as previously established, Olympic broadcasting is the primary source of revenue for the IOC. This has implications for stakeholders beyond the IOC, who retain only 10% of its revenues for operational and administrative costs. The remaining 90% of revenues are distributed to the National Olympic Committees, International Federations, and Organizing Committees so “to support the staging of the Olympic Games and to promote the worldwide development of sport” (IOC, 2014c, p. 6). As such, this study carries significant financial implications for many other Olympic stakeholders, including those that organize, deliver, and compete in the Games. Former IOC President Jacques Rogge sums up the implications of successfully leveraging Olympism as a commercial brand on the staging of the Games:

Without the support of the business community, without its technology, expertise, people, services, products, telecommunications, its financing - the Olympic Games could not and cannot happen. Without this support, the athletes cannot compete and achieve their very best in the world's best sporting event. (IOC, n.d.a, para. 3)

This claim of importance that the Games could not occur without commercial support is evident in the financial viability of hosting the Olympic Games prior to the embracing of commercialization, as suffered by Montreal in 1976.

A failure to stage the Olympic Games would remove a spectacle consumed by 3.6 billion people via broadcasting (IOC, 2012). The staging of the Games creates this spectacle, but so to impact such a significant amount of people requires that the Games be broadcast. According to the IOC (n.d.b, para. 1), “broadcast coverage is the principal means for people around the world to experience the magic of the Olympic Games”. The strategic management of Olympic
broadcasting and the effective use of new technologies through which to consume the Olympic Games impact all viewers of the Olympic Games.

Not only does the Olympic broadcast provide joy and national pride by allowing Olympic fans to follow their sporting idols, but it is also a “global representation and promotion of the Olympic Games and the Olympic values” (IOC, 2013b). As many governments argue in justifying the spending of public money on the hosting of the Olympic Games or in the funding of elite sport development programs to send athletes to compete at the Olympic Games, the Olympic Games can have an inspirational or ‘trickle down’ effect (Hindson, Gidlow, & Pebbles, 1994) on individuals to participate in sport and physical activity themselves, thus deriving health benefits. Further societal benefits can be gained from “the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles” (IOC, 2013b) that the IOC seeks to promote through the Olympic values and principles of Olympism. In that sense, this study carries more than financial implications but also development through sport implications.

In summary, not only does the Olympic Games need to be staged, not only does it need to be globally broadcast, but it needs to be broadcast in a manner that promotes Olympism as a commercial brand and as a philosophy of social reform. Only then will the full social significance of the Olympic Games be felt. The practical implication of understanding and informing the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms contributes to these requirements, and thus this study has meaningful social significance in itself.

The social significance of this research is confirmed by its timeliness. According to Campion (1993), research should address new and emerging topics and be timely in terms of current trends. As discussed above, there have been significant changes to Olympic broadcasting
as a result of the emergence of digital media platforms. Technology has developed to the extent that digital media platforms are now able to deliver Olympic content to a high standard. Combined with increased access to broadband for Olympic consumers, who desire on-demand content, digital media platforms now represents a viable business model for broadcasters. Although digital media platforms were first evident at Sydney 2000, it is only as recently as London 2012 that we have witnessed “the first truly Digital Games” (BBC Sport, 2012a). The following chapter traces the emergence of digital media platforms on a ‘Games by Games’ basis, tracing both Olympic broadcast partners’ adoption of digital media platforms and the Olympic audience’s consumption of digital media platforms from Sydney 2000 through to London 2012. Timeliness is also evident in the changes that have occurred in sport broadcast rights generally. There has been a readjustment in what was previously a synergistic relationship between the sports leagues, teams, and media, due to technology now allowing sports properties to communicate directly with their fans (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2007). This has resulted in the forming of new alliances, as television broadcasters seek to gain a foothold in digital media.
CHAPTER TWO

OLYMPIC BROADCASTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The academic literature has not documented the emergence of digital media in Olympic broadcasting. However, this can be traced from a review of the official reports of Olympic broadcasting published by the IOC, broadcast partners, and a written account from former IOC chief marketing officer Michael Payne (2006). From these sources it is possible to approximately trace (1) the adoption of digital media platforms by broadcasters and (2) the consumption of digital media platforms by the Olympic audience, using a variety of measures such as hours of broadcasting and audience size. These measures will be traced ‘Games by Games’ before overall trends in the adoption of digital media platforms by broadcasters and the consumption of digital media platforms by the Olympic audience are established and conclusions drawn with regard to the extent of the emergence of digital media platforms in Olympic broadcasting. This is necessary to establish the appropriateness of the setting of the Olympic Games as a ‘case in point’ and to establish the timeliness of the research on the basis that a significant shift has recently occurred in Olympic broadcasting, with the Olympic audience consuming the Olympic Games in multiple and new ways via digital media platforms. This analysis will serve to evaluate the accuracy of the BBC’s (2012) labeling of London 2012 as “the first truly digital Games”.

Sydney 2000

Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption

According to Sports Marketing Surveys (2001), “there were a plethora of alternative real time media available to follow events – the internet being the best example” (p. 8). However, this was in fact only the first tiny step in what was to become a genuine plethora of digital media platforms. Prior to Sydney 2000 there were more than 24,000 sites using Olympic imagery for
news, editorial and other purposes (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2001), indicating a lack of control over the Games’ intellectual property. There was a single official website for the Sydney Games (www.olympics.com).

**Global Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption**

The official site of Sydney 2000 that was the most popular Internet destination during the Games with Olympics.com achieving 8.7 million unique visitors, 11.3 billion hits, and over 230 million page views during the Games (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2001). Olympics.com peaked at 1.2 million hits per minute, which at the time represented a record for a sports event web site.

**Table 1. Digital media platforms audience consumption at Sydney 2000**

| Official Website Unique Visitors | 8.7 million |
| Global Internet Audience        | 20 million  |
| Hits                            | 11.3 billion |
| Page Views                      | 230 million |
| Peak Audience (hits per minute) | 1.2 million |
| Average Page Views per Visitor  | 26.44       |


The Sydney 2000 Summer Games had been heralded as the first digital media Games, as attempts were made to stream Olympic content over the Internet for the first time. However, the level of technology had meant that streams were of a poor quality and the global Internet audience was less than 20 million people, which amounted to just over 0.5% of the global TV audience of over 3.7 billion (Payne, 2006). Global Olympic broadcast advertising revenue had exceeded $1 billion, making broadcasters a respectable profit on their Games telecasts, whereas global Internet ad revenue connected to the Olympics only reached $20 million, making a substantial loss (Payne, 2006). Revenues from digital media platforms advertising equated to only 2% of television advertising revenue.
Table 2. A comparison of digital media and television audience and advertising revenues for Sydney 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
<th>Advertising Revenue</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>0.02 billion</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>$0.02 billion</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>3.6 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$1 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from Payne (2006)

**Salt Lake City 2002**

**Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption**

Digital broadcast coverage was introduced for the first time by many broadcasters at Salt Lake City 2002 (IOC, 2002). This lead to a dramatic increase in coverage as digital media platforms allowed for extra coverage. Notably, there were 500 extra hours in the United Kingdom through and 400 extra hours in Germany through a dedicated Olympic Channel (IOC, 2002). As with Sydney 2000, there was a single official Olympics website (www.olympics.com) which was created jointly by the Salt Lake Organizing Committee and U.S. broadcast partner NBC, with the support from technology partners. However, rather than viewing the Internet as an additional broadcast platform, the Internet was described as only having a “complementary role in providing information to the sports fan” (IOC, 2002).

In looking forward to the use of digital media at subsequent Games the IOC and its broadcast partners tested new technologies to enhance the Olympic viewing experience. For example, in Switzerland a closed network broadband video-on-demand test was conducted. This test was successful in providing Swiss Olympic fans with multiple live video streaming feeds of Olympic coverage and on-line access to the commentator information systems (IOC, 2002). Also, the Salt Lake Games were used by the IOC as a platform to launch its own website (www.olympic.org). Although this website did not broadcast content where the rights had been
sold to broadcast partners, the site provided highlights of the Olympic Games, athletes and sports, as well as the organization of the IOC (IOC, 2002).

**Global Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption**

The official Salt Lake City 2002 website attracted 3 million unique visitors per day during the Winter Games, peaking at 5 million unique visitors on Day 14, and amassed around 325 million page views during the full duration of the Games, which equated to an average of 20 million views per day (IOC, 2002).

| Table 3. Digital media platforms audience consumption at Salt Lake City 2002 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Unique Visitors              | 51 million |
| Average Unique Visitors per Day | 3 million |
| Peak Unique Visitors per Day  | 5 million  |
| Page Views                   | 325 million|
| Average Page Views per Visitor | 6.37      |

Data generated from *Salt Lake City 2002 Marketing Report (2002)*

In comparing the audiences of digital media platforms and television, the digital media platforms audience only equated to less than 2.5% of the television audience.

**Athens 2004**

There was very limited data on digital media platforms adoption and consumption.

**Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption**

At Athens 2004 live coverage was available on the Internet for the first time, but only in some key territories (IOC, 2014c). Key territories from the perspective of the IOC are those with a large Olympic audience and where the broadcast rights fee paid is typically high.

**United States Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption and Audience Consumption**

In the most valuable market of the United States, the rights holder NBC only streamed
highlights via it's website, with live coverage only available via it's television platforms (Athens 2004 Global TV Report, 2004). However, even with only highlights they were able to attract 12.2 million visitors (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2004).

Table 4. A comparison of digital media platforms and television audience for Salt Lake City 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Website</td>
<td>0.051 billion</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>2.1 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Torino 2006**

**Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption**

Technology had progressed further by the 2006 Torino Winter Games when coverage also became available on mobile phones or cell phones in some key territories (IOC, 2014c). Torino 2006 was the first Winter Games that offered live Internet video streams and live and highlights video streamed to mobile phones (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2006). Olympic broadcasters were realizing the power of the Internet and mobile, providing more access and choices for viewers.

There were an increased number of broadcasters offering digital media services since these were first utilized at Athens 2004.

**United States Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption**

NBCOlympics.com delivered 9.1 million video stream views, totaling more than 125,000 hours of coverage being consumed, which more than doubled the coverage they provided at Athens 2004 (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2006). However, only two hours of live action was
streamed live, which was the men's gold medal hockey game, mostly as a back-end test (Sandomir, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Stream Views</th>
<th>9.1 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Coverage Consumed</td>
<td>125,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Beijing 2008**

**Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption**

It was not until the Beijing 2008 Summer Games that digital media was fully established as a broadcasting platform, when it became available in the majority of territories, heralding Beijing as the first truly digital Games that harnessed the power and potential of digital media (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008). Beijing 2008 saw Olympic broadcasting “come of age, as superb sporting action was delivered to the world via television, the internet and mobile phones, offering fans unprecedented choice of what, when and where to watch the Games” (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008, p. 2). Internet broadcasts far exceeded television broadcasts. Advances in ‘geo-blocking’ and anti-piracy made it possible for the IOC to guarantee broadcasters exclusive digital rights within their territories (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008), which removed many of the fears that broadcasters had about the cannibalization of their rights.

Digital media rights were sold to the majority of markets, where Internet coverage was made available via official broadcaster websites, but the IOC also provided digital media via its own website to 78 countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa (IOC, 2014c). The IOC launched its own Internet channel ‘Beijing 2008’, which was available on YouTube.com to territories where digital media rights had not been sold.
Global Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption

There were a total of 8.2 billion pages views and over 628 million video streams views (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008). The IOC’s YouTube platform received 21 million video views during Games time (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008). Reflective of the increasingly viable business model for digital media platforms, digital media rights for some markets were separately negotiated for the first time, not part of the overall broadcast rights.

Table 6. Digital media audience consumption at Beijing 2008

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>8.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Videos Viewed</td>
<td>628 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *Beijing 2008 Global Television and Online Media Report* (2008)

Host Country Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption

In China, CCTV broadcast more than more than 4,000 hours of live video streaming on CCTV.com, compared to only 1,310 hours of live coverage on its television platform (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008).

The power of digital media platforms was becoming apparent at Beijing 2008, where the host broadcaster’s digital media platforms broadcast three times the hours of live coverage of television.

Table 7. Host country digital broadcaster adoption of Beijing 2008

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website Hours of Live Coverage</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television Hours of Live Coverage</td>
<td>1,310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *Beijing 2008 Global Television and Online Media Report* (2008)
Table 8. Comparison of host broadcaster website and television hours of live coverage at Beijing 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hours of Live Coverage</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>305.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *Beijing 2008 Global Television and Online Media Report* (2008)

**Host Broadcaster Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption**

Beijing 2008 represented the first significant uptake of digital media platforms by a host broadcaster audience. CCTV.com had the highest unique reach of all Olympic websites, with 153 million unique users having watched a live broadcast, 15.3% of the television audience, and 237 million utilizing the video-on-demand service, 23.7% of the television audience.

There was also evidence of the uptake of digital media on mobile platforms as the host broadcaster saw 20 million page views per day.

Table 9. Comparison of host market television versus digital media platforms audiences of Beijing 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television Audience</td>
<td>1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video-on-demand Audience</td>
<td>237 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Live Streams Audience</td>
<td>153 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *Beijing 2008 Marketing Report* (2008)

Table 10. Host market mobile consumption of Beijing 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobile Phone Platform Page Views</th>
<th>20 million per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Data generated from *Beijing 2008 Marketing Report* (2008)

**United States Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption and Audience Consumption**

The holder of the U.S. Olympic broadcast rights NBC, who held both television and digital media rights, broadcast 2,200 hours of live streaming on NBCOlympics.com, compared to only
700 hours of live coverage on its television platform. Additionally, NBCOlympics.com had a total of 3,000 hours of on-demand video, with the remaining 800 hours that were over the 2,200 hours broadcast live online being events that were scheduled for live broadcast on NBC and the company’s cable networks (Gigacom.com, 2010). A total of 72 million streams were consumed on NBCOlympics.com.

Table 11. United States Digital Delivery and Consumption for Vancouver 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Live Television Coverage</th>
<th>700</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Live Website Coverage</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of On-demand Video</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Stream Views</td>
<td>72 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *NBCOlympics.com* (2008)

The ratio of digital media platforms to television hours of live coverage, that was evident for the host broadcasters, was also evident was the United States rights holder.

**Vancouver 2010**

**Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption**

The Vancouver 2010 Winter Games continued the trend of digital media platforms uptake and was the first Winter Games available on more than 100 websites, available to 1.3 billion people, equivalent to 19.4% of the World's population (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2010). Broadcast partners were able to augment traditional television coverage with on-line content and streaming. There was approximately 5,000 hours of coverage broadcast on mobile phone platforms, contributing to half of the overall broadcast out put for Vancouver 2010 coming from digital media platforms (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2010).
Table 12. Comparison of United States Website and Television Hours of Live Coverage at Beijing 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hours of Live Coverage</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>314.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from NBCOlympics.com (2008)

Table 13. Digital media platforms broadcaster adoption at Vancouver 2010

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Websites</td>
<td>100+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites Potential Audience</td>
<td>1.3 billion (19.4% of the World’s population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone Broadcast Hours</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from Vancouver 2010 Global Television and Online Media Overview (2010)

Global Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption

For Vancouver 2010 there were over 1.2 billion page views from over 73.6 million unique visitors, with over 272 million video streams viewed, of which at least 125 million were live (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2010).

For Vancouver 2010 it is apparent that the digital media platforms audience is still far short of the television audience, equating to just over 4% of the television audience. Although far short, this can be partially explained by the potential audience ratio, with digital media platforms only having a third of the potential audience of television.

Table 14. Digital media platforms audience consumption at Vancouver 2010

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Visitors</td>
<td>73.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>1.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Content Consumed</td>
<td>38 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Streams Viewed</td>
<td>272 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Video Streams Viewed</td>
<td>125 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Visitor Time</td>
<td>7 mins 6 secs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from Vancouver 2010 Global Television and Online Media Overview (2010)
United States Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption

NBC, holder of digital media rights for the United States, utilized their Internet platform NBCOlympics.com to provide over 400 hours of live coverage. Additionally, there was over 1,000 hours of on-demand access to replays covering all 15 sports in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games, as well as highlights including event recaps, best-of montages, commentator analysis and athlete-specific clips (SportsFeatures.com, 2010). NBC utilized Microsoft's Silverlight technology to present online video in high-definition and offer controls that allowed viewers to pause and rewind live Olympic streaming. NBC's mobile platform provided a results service, breaking news, and video highlights of every event. However, less than half of NBC's live coverage was online, and of that, none of the marquee events were shown live online, with coverage consisting primarily of less high profile sports such as cross-country skiing and the luge (Gigacom.com, 2010). For the first time, NBC was able to authenticate whether or not viewers had a cable subscription (Gigacom.com, 2010).

Table 15. Comparison of digital media platforms and television potential audience and audience for Vancouver 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Potential Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>1.3 billion</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
<td>0.0736 billion</td>
<td>4.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>3.8 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.8 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *Vancouver 2010 Global Television and Online Media Overview* (2010)

London 2012

Global Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption

The London 2012 Summer Games marked the first Games where digital coverage exceeded television coverage for the first time (IOC, 2012). In total there was 81,500 hours of
London 2012 Internet coverage that was available to 2.4 billion people (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012). Mobile devices, aided by the uptake of smart phones and faster mobile networks, became a significant broadcast platform. London 2012 content was available on 36 Apps and Mobile websites in 29 markets (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012). The IOC’s own digital broadcast channel on YouTube in sixty-four territories in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa broadcast live content for the first time, delivering 34.5 million live streams from a total of 59.5 million video streams (IOC, 2012). The channel provided over 2,700 hours of coverage (IOC, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16. On-line broadcaster adoption at London 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Broadcast Partners Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Online Video Content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There was evidence of digital media platforms adoption by broadcasters expanding beyond the Internet with 36 official apps and mobile websites across 29 territories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17. Mobile broadcaster adoption at London 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apps &amp; Mobile Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Global Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption**

There were 8.5 billion page views and 1.5 billion video views, equating to 425.5 million hours of coverage watched, from 621 million unique visitors on approximately 190 broadcaster websites (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012). Mobile content was vastly consumed with 1.1 billion...
page views and 376.5 million video views, equating to 21.3 million hours of content watched, from 38.7 million unique visitors (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012). The IOC’s YouTube channel received 34.5 million live stream views and a total of 59.5 million video stream views (IOC, 2012).

*Table 18. On-line consumption at London 2012*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Visitors</td>
<td>621 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>8.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Video Views</td>
<td>1.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Content Consumed</td>
<td>425.5 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The development of mobile as a content provider was evident at London 2012, with videos now being viewed by Olympic fans, and page views exceeding 1 billion for the first time. However, unique visitors on mobile were only 6.23% of the unique visitors to Internet, showing that on a global level Internet remained the dominant digital media platform.

*Table 19. Mobile consumption at London 2012*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Visitors</td>
<td>38.7 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>1.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Video Views</td>
<td>376.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Content Consumed</td>
<td>21.3 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


By London 2012, the consumption of digital media platforms was becoming more significant in relation to television on a global level. Significantly, there was still evidence of a ‘digital divide’, with potential online audience only 50% of television’s digital audience. However, global consumption of digital media platforms is still significantly lower than 50% in
ration to television consumption, with the online audience equivalent to 17.25% of the television audience and the mobile audience only equivalent to 1.08% of the television audience. This ratio becomes even lower when looking at hours of consumption with, with the online hours of consumption equivalent 1.53% of the television hours of content consumed, and mobile hours of consumption only 0.08% of the television hours of content consumed. Furthermore, the trend of three times amount of coverage on digital media platforms versus television for host broadcasters was not evident on a global basis at London 2012, with online coverage offering 18.49% less coverage than television, again indicating a significant difference between host markets and global consumption of digital media platforms.

**Host Country Digital Media Platforms Broadcaster Adoption**

The host broadcaster, the BBC, had an ambition for their broadcasting of London 2012: “We wanted the 2012 Olympics to do for digital media what the Coronation had done for TV” (Gallop, 2012). The key mission for the BBC’s coverage was that the British audience “would ‘never miss a moment’ – built around offering every sport as it happened” (Gallop, 2012). The BBC delivered a total of 2,500 hours of video in up to 24 different video streams at any one time (BBC Sport, 2012a). Every sport was available across computer, mobile, tablet and connected TV (BBC Sport, 2012a). The BBC launched a live interactive video player. Viewers were able to switch between live different HD video coverage, navigate to key moments through chapter markings, and access live data, statistics and information (BBC Sport, 2012a).

**Host Broadcaster Digital Media Platforms Audience Consumption**

According to BBC Sport (2012a), London 2012 achieved the largest national television audience since current measuring systems began, with an audience of 51.9 million, which equates to 90% of the UK population, watching at least 15 minutes of coverage. The BBC Sport
website attracted 55 million global browsers and 37 million UK browsers during the Games, with an average of 9.5 million global visitors and 7.1 million UK browsers per day (BBC Sport, 2012a). There were 106 million requests for video content across all online platforms, 62 million of which were for live streams, 35 million of which were for clips, and 8 million of which were for on-demand streams (BBC Sport, 2012a). On the busiest days of London 2012, total traffic to the BBC website exceeded the traffic received for the entire BBC coverage of the FIFA World Cup 2010 (BBC Sport, 2012a). The BBC also labeled their broadcast as the “first truly mobile games” with 9.2 million UK mobile browsers, which equated to 34% of all daily browsers to BBC’s London 2012 coverage, and 12 million requests for videos from mobiles (BBC Sport, 2012a). BBC’s Olympics mobile App was downloaded 1.9 million times by smartphones using the iOS and Android platforms. Approximately 24.2 million people, which equates to 42% of the population, watched at least fifteen minutes of interactive digital television coverage via BBC’s Red Button (IOC, 2012). Audiences were spread across the 24 channels, with each channel receiving at least 100,000 viewers at some point (BBC Sport, 2012a).

Table 20. A comparison of digital media and television potential audience and audience for London 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Potential Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
<th>Hours of Content</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
<th>Hours of Content Consumed</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>2.4 billion</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.621 billion</td>
<td>17.25%</td>
<td>81,500</td>
<td>81.51%</td>
<td>0.4255 billion</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0387 billion</td>
<td>1.08%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0213 billion</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>4.8 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.6 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>99,982</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27.9 billion</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The consumption of digital media platforms in comparison to television is not significant on a global level, even when considering that digital media platforms have half the potential
audience of television. However, this ratio is significantly different in the host market for London 2012, where the website audience was 71.29% of the television audience, the interactive digital television audience was 46.63% of the television audience, and mobile was 17.73% of the television audience.

Table 21. Digital Delivery at London 2012 by Host Broadcaster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Channels</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Coverage</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *BBC Sport* (2012a)

Table 22. Digital audience consumption at London 2012 by Host Audience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience Type</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television Audience</td>
<td>51.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Global Audience</td>
<td>55 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website UK Audience</td>
<td>37 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Video Content</td>
<td>106 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Live Video Content</td>
<td>62 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Clips</td>
<td>35 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for On-demand Streams</td>
<td>8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Audience</td>
<td>9.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests for Mobile Videos</td>
<td>12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Apps Downloads</td>
<td>1.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Digital Television Audience</td>
<td>24.2 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *BBC Sport* (2012a)

**Trends in Adoption of Digital Media Platforms by Broadcasters**

**Official Websites**

Digital media was first evident at Sydney 2000, but there was only a single official website (IOC, 2000). There were no significant developments in broadcasting the Olympics over the Internet in Salt Lake City with still only a single official website (IOC, 2002). However, there was evidence of recognition from broadcast partners as to how they could leverage the Internet, with the single official Olympics website being jointly created by the Salt Lake Organizing
Committee and U.S. broadcast partner NBC. London 2012 was delivered by 190 official broadcast partners websites and 36 official apps and mobile websites (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012).

**Availability of Technology**

The significant development at Salt Lake City was the use of digital media to provide additional platforms and coverage through television, although this was only in a minor amount of key territories (IOC, 2002). Other signs of the growing intent to adopt digital media were evident in testing a closed network broadband video-on-demand service in Switzerland (IOC, 2002). A more significant development in digital media delivery came at Athens 2004 when, in some key territories, live coverage was available on the Internet for the first time (IOC, 2012). Another step forward in the delivery of digital media came at Torino 2006 when coverage also became available on mobile phones or cell phones in some key territories (IOC, 2012).

**Table 23. A comparison of digital media and television audiences for London 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Digital to Television %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>37 million</td>
<td>71.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>9.2 million</td>
<td>17.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive Digital Television</td>
<td>24.2 million</td>
<td>46.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>51.9 million</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from *BBC Sport* (2012a)

**Use of Technology**

Although the technology to broadcast live via the Internet existed by Athens 2004, there were clearly some concerns over the Olympic broadcasting business model. For example, the United States rights holder chose to only stream highlights on their website, suggesting a fear of ‘cannibalization’ of their television rights (i.e., that availability of content on digital media
platforms would take away from television viewers). By Torino 2006 the technology of live coverage on both the Internet and mobile or cell phones was only being used in key territories. However, by Beijing 2008, this technology was now being used at some level in the majority of territories. There were no significant technology developments for Vancouver 2010.

**Balance of Coverage Hours**

Up to and including Torino 2006, although the technology to broadcast live via the Internet and mobile or cell phones was being used, the amount of coverage hours was still small in relation to television. There was a major shift at Beijing 2008 when, for the first time, Internet broadcasts far exceeded television broadcasts in key territories (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008). This was evident in the host country China where 4,000 hours of live coverage were broadcast via the host broadcaster’s website, which was 205% greater than the 1,310 hours of live coverage broadcast on their television platform (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2008). This trend was also evident in the United States broadcast where 2,200 hours of live coverage were broadcast via NBC’s website, which was 214% greater than the 700 hours of live coverage broadcast on their television platform (Sandomir, 2008).

However, global Internet coverage of 81,500 hours was only 80% of the television coverage 99,982 hours (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012), indicating that the key territories trend of a far greater amount of digital media platforms broadcasts than television broadcasts was not a global trend. The London 2012 Olympic Games Global Broadcast Report (2012) reported that the digital media platforms coverage exceeded television coverage on a global level for the first time, which assumes that, despite hours of mobile coverage not being reported, these hours accounted for at least 20% of the television coverage.
**Potential Audience**

Vancouver 2010 demonstrated that television’s potential audience still far exceeded the digital media potential audience. For Vancouver 2010 the digital media platforms potential audience of 1.3 billion was less than 35% of the potential television audience of 3.8 billion (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2010). The reach of digital media platforms made progress at London 2012 with the online potential audience of 2.4 billion being 50% of the television potential audience of 4.8 billion (Sponsorship Intelligence, 2012), a 16% increase since Vancouver 2010.

To summarize, in analyzing the delivery of digital media, based upon the available secondary data, it is evident that there has been gradual adoption of digital media platforms by broadcasters. New digital media platforms have emerged at Athens 2004, Torino 2006, Vancouver 2010, and London 2012. Coverage hours from Internet platforms have significantly exceeded television in key territories since Beijing 2008, but television is still the leading platform in coverage hours as of London 2012. The potential audience of official websites is significantly increasing, but as of London 2012, had only half the global reach of television.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sydney 2000</th>
<th>Vancouver 2010</th>
<th>London 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Websites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Audience</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.3 billion</td>
<td>2.4 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Websites</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Audience</td>
<td>Digital to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data generated from</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City 2002</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Report</td>
<td>(2002),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver 2010</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television and Online</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Overview (2010),</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London 2012 Olympic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games Global</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast Report</td>
<td>(2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trends in Consumption of Digital Media Platforms by Audiences

It is problematic to assess overall trends due to gaps in data, notably there was no global data on digital media consumption for Athens 2004 and Torino 2006, leaving a hole in the trend analysis of the consumption of digital media, or inconsistencies in measures available.

Business Model

Analysis of the business model provides a strong baseline measure for the consumption of digital media platforms. For Sydney 2000, advertising revenue from digital media platforms was $20 million. However, this revenue did not offset the costs of the digital media, and in fact made a substantial loss (Payne, 2006). When looking at this figure in the context of Olympic broadcasting, it was only 2 per cent of the television revenue of £1 billion, so did not substantially impact the traditional television-focused broadcasting model. It was “with some trepidation that the IOC entered the Sydney Games, wondering whether [they] would see the meltdown of the broadcast industry” (Payne, 2006, p. 213). However, this did not materialize. Digital media had failed to become an entertainment medium to challenge television, with streaming video “a very expensive and somewhat far-fetched option” (Payne, 2006, p. 216). At the time of Sydney 2000, digital media was not a viable option for broadcasters, as identified by Payne (2006), “the business model, despite all the hype, was just not there” (p. 215). Although digital media platforms advertising revenue figures are not readily available, the IOC started separately negotiating the sale of digital media platforms rights and television rights for Beijing 2008, suggesting that the digital media platforms business model was potentially viable in its own right.

Unique Visitors

At the point when digital media was first delivered at Sydney 2000, consumption was
relatively very low with unique visitors of 8.6 million to the official website (IOC, 2000) and a global Internet audience of 20 million (Payne, 2006). Although such an audience could be considered large in some contexts, this was very low compared to the television audience and only represented 0.56% per cent of the television audience. For every 200 people watching Sydney 2000 on television, only one of them accessed it via the Internet.

The consumption of digital media significantly increased at Salt Lake City 2002. There was a 507% increase in unique visitors to the official website over Sydney 2000 with Salt Lake City’s official website receiving 51 million unique visitors compared to the 8.7 million unique visitors of Sydney 2000’s official website. This increase is even more significant when considering that Salt Lake City is a Winter Games, which are less popular than Summer Games, as evident in the global television audience of 3.6 billion for Sydney 2000 compared to the global television audience of 2.1 billion for Salt Lake City 2002. Therefore, to gain a more accurate understanding of the trend in digital media consumption it is necessary to look at the ratio between official website’s audience to the global television audience, thus allowing for the difference in popularity. This was a 913 per cent increase with Sydney 2000’s website audience only representing 0.24 per cent of the television audience and Salt Lake City 2002’s website audience representing 2.43 per cent of the television audience, a significant increase. However, despite this huge percentage increase, the ratio for Salt Lake City 2002 is still small at 2.43 per cent and the increase is still only little over 2%. Therefore, despite a significant increase in the digital consumers from Sydney 2000 to Salt Lake City 2002, the level of consumption of digital media was still very low.

Beijing 2008’s official website achieved 105.7 million unique visitors. This is a 107% increase over the 51 million unique visitors to Salt Lake City 2002’s official website and a
1,114% increase over the 8.6 million unique visitors to Sydney 2000’s official website.

However, it is not possible to draw any strong conclusions about global trends in consumption of digital media from these statistics for various reasons. As previously stated, there is a gap in data of two Olympic Games with no comparable data available from Athens 2004 and Torino 2006, leaving a significant gap of six years between the Salt Lake City 2002 data and the Beijing 2008, or if making a comparison to the most recent Summer Games, an eight year gap. The comparison between Beijing 2008 and Salt Lake City 2002 is a comparison between a Winter and Summer Games, which have differing levels of popularity.

**Ratio of Website to Television Audience**

A more valuable statistic is the ratio of official website audience to television audience, which serves to account for the differences in popularity. This ratio is 2.43 per cent for Salt Lake City 2002 and a near identical ratio of 2.46 per cent for Beijing. Although this might suggest a non-significant increase in consumption of digital media between Salt Lake City 2002 and Beijing 2008, the data on official website consumption between these two Games is not a strong indicator. Whereas the official websites of Sydney 2000 and Salt Lake City 2002 had minimal or no competition, there was significant competition for the Beijing official website, especially from broadcast partners website able to stream live content and highlights, which the official website did not provide.

**Page Views from Official Websites**

The 325 million page views of Salt Lake City’s official website only increased by 41% over Sydney 2000’s 230 million page views. This increase in total page views is even more significant when considering the 76% drop in the average page views per unique visitor to the official websites with Salt Lake City 2002’s official website receiving an average of 6.37 page
views per unique visitor compared to 26.44 average page views per unique visitor of Sydney 2000’s official website, indicating a dramatic increase in total audience, although these totals are not provided. This increase in page views, which indicates a dramatic increase in official website audiences, is even more dramatic when the comparison is with a Summer Games, which carry greater audiences than a Winter Games.

Such a difference is evident when comparing page views between the Beijing 2008 Summer Games and the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. There were 8.2 billion page views for Beijing 2008 and 1.2 billion for Vancouver 2010. This indicates a decrease in consumption of digital media platforms even when calculated as a percentage of the television audience to account for the difference in popularity between Summer and Winter Games. Beijing 2008’s total page views as a percentage of the television audience being 228% and Vancouver 2010’s 67%.

The upward trend in page views resumes for London 2012, with London 2012’s page views exceeding the previous high of page views at Beijing 2008. There were 8.2 billion page views for Beijing 2008 compared to 8.5 billion page views for London 2012, which is a 4% increase. However, in considering London 2012’s label as the first “truly digital Games” (BBC Sport, 2012a), this represents a minor increase over a four-year period.

**Ratio of Global Internet Video Views to Television Audience**

There were 628 million video views for Beijing 2008 and 272 million for Vancouver 2010. To account for the difference in popularity between Summer and Winter Games, the total Internet video views as a percentage of the television audience was calculated. This ratio was 17% for Beijing 2008 and 15% for Vancouver 2010. This data indicates a slight dip in the consumption of digital media platforms from Beijing 2008 to Vancouver 2010. However, as was
evident in official websites page views, this declining trend was reversed for London 2012. Beijing 2008 recording 628 million Internet video views and London 2012 recorded 1.5 billion, an increase of 139%. This is a like for like comparison with Beijing 2008 and London 2012 having approximately the same global television audience.

**Ratio of Host Official Website Unique Visitors to Television Audience**

A like for like comparison is not possible when comparing digital media consumption at the host market level. Although Beijing 2008 had a far larger number of unique visitors to its host website with 153 million compared to 55 million for London, it is necessary to account for the huge differences in population between China and the United Kingdom by calculating these figures as a percentage of the host television audience. In making this comparison Beijing 2008’s host website visitors as a percentage of the host market television audience was 15.3% compared to 71.29% for London 2012, an increase of 366%. This is a very telling statistic as we can see that the majority of the host Olympic audience for London 2012 were also following the Olympic Games via digital media platforms, whereas this behavior was of a minority for Beijing 2008.

**Ratio of Host Interactive Television Unique Visitors to Television Audience**

A similar statistic is the percentage of the television host audience who also accessed Interactive Television. 23.7% of the Beijing 2008 host television audience and 46.63% of the London 2012 host television audience, an increase of 97%, used this. Although this indicates a significant increase in the consumption of digital media platforms from Beijing 2008 to London 2012 on a host broadcaster level, this may be reflective of the general differences between China and the United Kingdom on digital media platforms consumption.
Ratio of Global Internet Audience to Television Audience

The trend between Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 is difficult to determine due to the difference in popularity between Winter and Summer Games. However, when accounting for this by taking a percentage of the global television audience there are two telling statistics to establish this trend. First, Vancouver 2010’s global Internet audience was 73.6 million, which is 4.09% of its global television audience, whereas London 2012’s global Internet audience was 621 million, which is 17.25% of its global television audience. This is a significant increase of 322%.

Ratio of Global Internet Video Views to Television Audience

Vancouver 2010 had 272 million total Internet video views, which is 15% of its global television audience, compared to 1.5 billion total Internet video views for London 2012, which is 42% of its global television audience, an increase of 180% from Vancouver 2010.

To summarize, Sydney 2000 is the appropriate point from which to start tracing the uptake of digital media platforms by the Olympic audience. Payne’s (2006) account of the 2000 Sydney Games gives an account of the organizational perspectives of both the IOC and broadcast partners as digital media platforms started to emerge. This account and figures cited by Payne (2006) establish that the consumption of digital media platforms were not financially viable as a business model, with the only digital media platform of the single official website representing only 0.24% of the global television audience. There was a nine fold increase in this percentage at Salt Lake City 2002, but the ratio of official website audience to global television audience was still only 2.43%, so despite a large ratio increase, the increase was only 2.19%, still leaving the consumption of digital media platforms very low at this point. There is a void of data for Athens 2004 and Torino 2006, and despite data on digital media platforms consumption existing for
Beijing 2008, it was not comparable to Salt Lake City 2002 for a variety of reasons, so no conclusions about trends in consumption can be drawn at this point. However, in looking at Beijing 2008 in isolation it is possible to conclude that the consumption of websites was significant with 8.2 billion total page views, but that Internet video views were still limited with 628 million, which was only a ratio of 17% when compared to the global television audience. From the comparable data between Beijing 2008 and Vancouver 2010, there was a significant drop in the ratio of page views compared to the total television audience, but an approximate plateau in the ratio of Internet video views to global television audience. There is no evidence of an increase in digital media platforms, rather an indication of a drop. The global digital media platforms audience of 73.6 million for Vancouver 2010 is only 4.09% of the global television audience, showing a clear dominance of television over digital media platforms. On a global level, there was not a significant increase in page views between Beijing 2008 and London 2012, but there was in total Internet video views with a jump from 628 million to 1.5 billion, an increase of 139%. This suggests that on a global level consumption of earlier technology has plateaued but the consumption of new technology has significantly increased. An increase in the consumption of digital media platforms from Beijing 2008 to London 2012 is also important at a host broadcaster level in the ratio of website to television audiences, which increased from 15.3% to 71.29%, an increase of 366%. However, this is not a global trend and may reflect the general difference in digital media platforms consumption in China and the United Kingdom. This recent dramatic increase in the consumption of digital media platforms is also evident in the Vancouver 2010 to London 2012 global level data on the ratio of Internet audience to television audience, with an increase from 4.09% at Vancouver 2010 to 17.25%, which is an important increase of 322%.
Table 25. Global trends in consumption of digital media platforms by audiences

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Television Audience</td>
<td>3.6 billion</td>
<td>2.1 billion</td>
<td>3.6 billion</td>
<td>1.8 billion</td>
<td>3.6 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Internet Audience</td>
<td>20 million</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73.6 million</td>
<td>621 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Internet to Television Audience %</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.09%</td>
<td>17.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Page Views</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.2 billion</td>
<td>1.2 billion</td>
<td>8.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Page Views to Television Audience %</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>228%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>236%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Internet Videos Viewed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>628 million</td>
<td>272 million</td>
<td>1.5 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Internet Videos Viewed to Television Audience %</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of Content Consumed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38 million</td>
<td>425.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Website Visitors</td>
<td>8.7 million</td>
<td>51 million</td>
<td>105.7 million</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Website Unique Visitors to Television Audience %</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Website Page Views</td>
<td>230 million</td>
<td>325 million</td>
<td>-</td>
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**Conclusion**

In looking at all this data, despite gaps and inconsistencies in data, we can conclude that, from Sydney 2000 to London 2012, we have witnessed the emergence of digital media platforms in Olympic broadcasting. This has been evident in both the adoption of digital media platforms by broadcasters and in the consumption of digital media platforms by audiences. However,
adoption by broadcasters and consumption by audience has increased at different rates. Adoption of digital media platforms by broadcasters has been gradual. No more than a single technology change occurring at an Olympic Games. Furthermore, extent of adoption has been gradual with technology changes first adopted in key territories before being adopted on a global level. For example, although live Internet streaming was adopted by Athens 2004 in key territories, it was not adopted on a global level until Beijing 2008. In contrast, the consumption of digital media platforms by audiences has seen dramatic increases. Overall, we can conclude the first significant consumption of the Olympic Games via digital media platforms was at Beijing 2008. Although data on the global Internet audience was not recorded, the global page views for Beijing 2008 was 8.2 billion, narrowly less than the global page views for London 2012 of 8.5 billion, which drew a global Internet audience of 621 million. This represents substantial consumption of static Olympic websites. There is no evidence of a significant increase in static websites since Beijing 2008, but there is evidence of a significant increase in the consumption of Internet streaming of Olympic content with a jump from 628 million Internet video views at Beijing 2008 to 1.5 billion at London 2012, an increase of 139%.

In assessing the BBC Sport’s (2012a) label of London 2012 as “the first truly digital Games”, this claim can be upheld in terms of the adoption of digital media platforms by broadcasters on the basis that a full suite of technologies have become available and are being widely and extensively utilized, with coverage of the Olympic Games via digital media platforms exceeding coverage on television for the first time at London 2012. However, in terms of consumption of digital media platforms, the label of the “first truly digital Games” is not completely accurate on a global level. London 2012 saw a dramatic increase in the consumption of Internet videos over Beijing 2008 and a dramatic increase in the percentage of television
viewers also accessing the Games via the Internet. However, on a global level, the Internet audience is still only 17.25% of the television audience, suggesting that the first truly global digital Games is still to come. Rather, the BBC’s label of “the first truly digital Games” is only fully accurate in key territories. For example, within the BBC’s United Kingdom market, 71.29% of the television audience also accessed content via the host broadcaster’s official website and 46.63% of the television audience accessed Interactive television. Although such a ratio is not available for cell or mobile consumption, we can conclude that approximately half of the UK Olympic audience are accessing the Games via three platforms, the traditional television platform and now, at least two digital media platforms.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host Website Unique Visitors</td>
<td>153 million</td>
<td>55 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Market Television Audience</td>
<td>1 billion</td>
<td>51.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Website to Host Television Audience %</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>71.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Market VOD/Interactive Television Audience</td>
<td>237 million</td>
<td>24.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Market VOD/Interactive Television Audience to Host Television Audience %</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>46.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This difference in the emergence of digital media is reflective of what the IOC have labeled the ‘digital divide’ (IOC, 2009), which refers to widely varying rates of adoption of digital media platforms at different paces in different regions and among different populations.
(Compaine, 2001). The digital divide is not just about access to technology, but also knowledge of how to use it (Hargittai, 2002; Hooley, Hutchinson, & Watts, 2010). The challenge of the digital divide is of particular interest to the IOC, who state that:

As part of its obligation to ensure the widest possible global reach, it is therefore important that this is addressed and that appropriate technologies are used to ensure that all have access to the Olympic Games and Olympism in a legitimate and equitable manner and that the issues presented by the digital divide are addressed. (IOC, 2009, p. 224)

On the basis of this chapter, it is possible to confidently conclude that the Olympic Games is an appropriate setting as a ‘case in point’, where digital media platforms have had a significant impact on Olympic broadcasting. Also, it is possible to conclude that this research is timely. Although the emergence of digital media platforms has been traced as far back as Sydney 2000, it is only since London 2012 that the label of a “first truly digital Games” has been applied. This label is only accurate for key Olympic broadcasting territories, which is important so that this research can be conducted at a time following the emergence of digital media. However, as the first truly global digital Games has not yet occurred, this research is more timely as it is able to deliver practical implications at a time when the digital age has not matured globally and global strategies are still developing. The conclusions drawn from this study will establish the new opportunities and challenges that the IOC face in managing Olympism via Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. These conclusions will largely be drawn from the markets where digital media platforms have emerged, but can be applied to the markets where digital media platforms are still emerging.
CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will cover a number of topics that reflect the elements of the research question. The elements of the proposed research question are (a) what are the processes and practices, (b) by which the IOC manages Olympism, (c) through its broadcasting partnerships, and (d) in the digital age. A wide range of literature was reviewed to determine the literature that was of relevance to these elements of the research question. The elements of the research question correspond to the following sections: (a) strategic management, (b) Olympism, (c) sports broadcasting, and (d) digital media platforms in sport, which will be covered in turn. Next, a critical analysis of the literature will establish any content gaps in the prior research and any problems with the methodology used in prior research. Next, based upon the critical analysis of the literature, the research questions shall be stated, identifying the gaps that this research seeks to fill. Finally, an Operational Definition of Terms section shall be produced that defines all of the key concepts from the research questions.

Strategic Management

The processes and practices element in the research question are a summary of the elements of strategy taken from strategy definitions in Chapter 1. Strategy definitions were analyzed because, as evident in the dissertation title, the phenomenon being studied is the IOC’s strategic management. As such, the strategic management literature is reviewed, first considering the fields of study of organization studies and organizational theory within which strategic management sits, before looking at strategic management within the sport context.

Organization Studies and Organizational Theory

In examining the IOC, the field of study within which this research sits is organization
studies. The study of organizations becomes an applied science when the resulting knowledge is relevant to problem solving or decision-making in organizations (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1970). According to Pfeffer (1997), organization studies provides:

An interdisciplinary focus on a) the effect of social organizations on the behavior and attitudes of individuals within them, b) the effects of individual characteristics and action on organization, c) the performance, success, and survival of organizations, d) the mutual effects of environments, including resource and task, political, and cultural environments on organizations and vice versa, and e) concerns with both the epistemology and methodology that undergird research on each of these topics. (p. 4)

Organization studies encompass the study of organizations from multiple viewpoints, with a traditional distinction being between the study of organizational behavior at a micro level and organizational theory at a macro level. Organizational behavior focuses on the individual and group dynamics in an organizational setting (Whyte, 1969), whereas organizational theory studies whole organizations, their adaption, strategies and structures (Scott, 1961). This study goes beyond individual and group dynamics, instead using organizational theory to study the IOC and how they have adapted their Olympic broadcasting strategies to manage the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success following the emergence of digital media platforms.

The growth and magnitude of the sport industry combined with the integral and pervasive role played by sport organizations in the sport industry, has been used to justify the study of sport organizational theory (Slack & Parent, 2006). Organizational theory can help sport managers by providing “a better understanding of the way sport organizations are structured and designed, how they operate, and why some are effective when others are not” (Slack & Parent, 2006, p.7).
In terms of application, “understanding can help sport managers analyze and diagnose more effectively the problems they face, and enable them to respond with appropriate solutions” (Slack & Parent, 2006, p. 7), which will help this study achieve the practical implications detailed in the social significance section in Chapter 1. The element of organizational theory that this study focuses upon is strategy.

**Strategy**

Changes in the environment of a sport organization, such as technology changes, require the organization to respond with appropriate strategies if they are to be successful (Miller, 1987). According to Chandler (1962) strategy is defined as “the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” (p. 13). Slack and Parent (2006) distinguished between different levels of strategies. Corporate-level strategies are followed by the organization as a whole, and are required when the organization competes in a variety of industries, whereas a particular business unit competing within a particular industry follows business-level strategies. Corporate-level strategies that can be engaged by an organization are growth strategies, stability strategies, defensive strategies, and combination strategies (Hodge & Anthony, 1991). Business-level strategies that can be engaged to gain a competitive edge for a particular product or service are cost leadership, differentiation, and focus (Porter, 1980). For this study, both corporate-level and business-level strategies will be considered. Managing the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success is a corporate-level strategy as it is an objective that exists across all of the IOC’s commercial activities. However, for this study, managing the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success will studied as a business-level strategy as it is only being studied within the
context of Olympic broadcasting in a digital age, and thus from the perspective of the broadcasting business unit within the IOC. All of the IOC’s strategies on this matter will be considered, including deliberate strategies, which are intended courses of action that become realized, and emergent strategies, which are those that are not necessarily intended, as distinguished by Mintzberg (1978).

**Strategic Management of Sport**

Organizational theory has been applied to sports management across a variety of areas, including the increasing value of sport franchises (Mauws, Mason, & Foster, 2003), intercollegiate athletic program success (Smart & Wolfe, 2000), and the impact of playing and coaching resources on Major League Baseball team performance (Smart & Wolfe, 2003). Of most relevance to this study is research into the strategic management of sport sponsorships, considering that sponsorship is the IOC’s primary source of revenue alongside broadcasting.

**Strategic management of sport sponsorships.** Amis, Pant, and Slack (1997) applied organizational theory to offer a conceptual extension to the sponsorship literature. A theoretical framework based upon the resource-based view of the firm (RBV) approach was used to explore sponsorship strategies within two case studies. These were two international companies, both of which had been extensively involved in sport sponsorship, but who have had differing levels of success. Application of organizational theory demonstrated that the disparate returns from the two companies’ investments were predictable.

This study established the importance of image objectives with sponsorship. Sport sponsorship is shown to be a valuable tool to develop a firm’s image and reputation. A firm’s image and reputation is extremely specific, since it has no value when separated from the firm. When a resource is intangible and tacit, it has a longer duration as a source of advantage.
Therefore, since company or product image and reputation depreciate relatively slowly, they represent important intangible resources that are valuable and non-imitable sources of sustainable advantage. According to Amis et al. (1997), considering sponsorship’s ability to develop these resources, sponsorship in itself should be viewed as a valuable resource with the potential of realizing a sustainable advantage. Sponsorship is considered to be most likely a resource of sustainable advantage when it is heterogeneously distributed across a market or industry, imperfectly imitable, imperfectly mobile, and linked with ex-ante limits to competition (Amis et al., 1997). The case study that met the requirements of this framework had far more successful sponsorship outcomes than did the case study whose sponsorships did not meet the four antecedents.

This study was successful in applying organizational theory to develop a sports sponsorship specific framework that could be used by sport managers to select sponsorship resources that could develop into sustainable competitive advantages or by sponsorship sales managers to position their products in a way that demonstrates their potential for a sustainable competitive advantage. However, the authors correctly identify that they only provide an ex-post facto justification of the viability of organizational theory, and that longitudinal analysis providing an a priori examination of the key characteristics of sponsorship agreements is required to determine if they comply with their conceptual framework. A further criticism of this study is the potential selection bias of the case studies, given that the study collected from 31 firms, but only used data from two firms. The method states “although interviews were conducted in 31 firms, when the data were analyzed it was decided that because of the limitations of space, just two case studies would be included in the paper.” (Amis et al., 1997, p. 88). In analyzing the two companies included in the study, they represented the extremes of a
successful sponsorship and a failed sponsorship. This can be a valid approach in case study research when establishing ‘critical cases’ for a research topic (Yin, 2009). However, selection criteria are required to establish ‘critical cases’, but these were not discussed. Furthermore, the selection of ‘critical cases’ would need to be made in advance, rather than during data analysis. There is a risk that the two firms were presented because they provided the strongest support for the theoretical framework being tested, and thus there is a risk of selection bias.

Further application of organizational theory to sport sponsorship came from Amis (2003). To understand the dynamic processes and mechanisms by which a firm can establishes a favorable resource position a case study approach was again utilized. The case study of Guinness examined the ways in which sport plays a central role in the development of their image and reputation. The dynamic processes and mechanisms used by Guinness that are highlighted in this study include the development of a key brand benefit that “would not only provide a global coherence but could also be articulated in ways that would resonate at a country and, in the case of Africa, a continental level as well” (Amis, 2003, p. 209). Additionally, local initiatives were required to dovetail with the key brand benefit, which was a radical shift since Guinness had previously been content to let local markets manage image and reputation in their own way. Development of a Global Brand Executive and the uncovering of a key brand benefit provided a focus for Guinness that was identified as being necessary in a global age.

Although these dynamic processes and mechanisms were discussed in great detail to offer deep understanding, the implications for practicing managers is highly questionable. The dynamic processes and mechanisms that Guinness uses to establish a favorable resource position are specific to Guinness, with no evidence to suggest that such tactics would be effective for managers at other companies. Furthermore, despite presentation of a highly detailed conceptual
framework that demonstrated a link between intangible resources and competitive advantage based upon the RBV approach (summarized above in discussion of Amis et al., 1997), there is very limited use of the framework in the findings. This makes it difficult to establish the extent to which the data supported the theoretical framework proposed.

Although enhanced understanding facilitates better management, previous research has not taken the next step of identifying how the theoretical frameworks can influence the strategy decisions made by sport organizations. Thus far research has only provided an ex-post facto justification of the viability of the strategy theories applied. Such research answers the question ‘what has made these existing strategies effective?’ A more important question for sport managers, however, is ‘what strategies could be effective?’ Rather than reviewing decisions about strategy theory after-the-fact, sport managers should consider a priori what strategies could be effective and pursue a proactive rather than retrospective approach to strategic thinking. Such an approach will serve to develop our understanding of organization studies and strategy in sport. This approach is adopted in this study because, as established in Chapter 2, digital media platforms have not fully emerged on a global level. Therefore, although the existing processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age are being analyzed, the understanding of the opportunities and challenges created by digital media platforms can be applied proactively to markets where digital media platforms have not fully emerged. The concept that is being strategically managed by the IOC is Olympism.

Olympism

The research question element of Olympism is a subject in itself within the sport management literature. Literature shall be reviewed that considers the defining of this concept before the literature concerning the practical realization of Olympism, which is the most
extensive literature on the subject, is reviewed. Furthermore, in recognizing that Olympism is a contested concept, as established in the introduction chapter, the interpretations of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand shall be acknowledged by reviewing literature on sport for social development and brand management of sport.

**Defining Olympism**

Girginov (2010) has analyzed the concept of Olympism. He defines Olympism as “a philosophy of social reform that uses sport for the betterment of the world” and as “a philosophical anthropology advocating an idealized vision of human being and a just society” (p. 1). According to Girginov (2010), this philosophy draws from a number of intellectual and material sources, including the English educational system, Greek heritage, philosophical ideas of enlightenment, and internationalism.

However, DaCosta (2006) has reviewed the history of philosophical accounts of Olympism and concludes that there is a continuous controversy in the defining of Olympism as a philosophy. DaCosta (2006) identified successive accounts of Olympism have been adapted to changing views in philosophy and the social sciences. However, no further epistemological claim has been made to justify such adaptation. As such, DaCosta (2006) argued that Olympism more accurately represents a ‘process philosophy’, which is “a speculative construction of philosophical positions or directions without internal coherence that asserts that reality is constantly in a process of change” (DaCosta, 2006, p. 157). This is evidenced in the historical absence of a fixed Olympic philosophy, with successive attempts to adapt Olympism to changing views suggesting that Olympism remains a work in progress. According to DaCosta (2006), Olympism is “a development derived from Coubertin’s protophilosophical attempts—that often takes the form of a metanarrative aimed at preserving the modern Olympic Games and their
Girginov (2010) identified a further challenge in the defining of Olympism due to various competing interpretations. He states:

The core values and principles underpinning the Olympic ideal, as well as the sport practices accompanying them, are social constructs which are created, learnt, accepted, challenged, rejected and changed. During this construction process various actors form specific perceptions, strive to establish personal or group identities, question established norms and formulate visions about the future of Olympism. Therefore, there will always be competing interpretations of what constitutes the Olympic ideal and how it is to be achieved. (p. 2)

These competing interpretations of Olympism contribute to “tensions existing between the ideal and its practical realization” (Girginov, 2010, p. 2).

**The Practical Realization of Olympism**

According to Girginov (2010), this tension has been a focus of “most social sciences perspective collections on the Olympics” (Girginov, 2010, p. 2) and has been explored by looking at specific areas of inquiry, such as history, politics, media, commercialization, and drugs.

**The Olympic Games as a platform for protest.** Literature on the tension between Olympic ideals and its practical realization in some ways represents protests from the academic community. Timms (2012) acknowledged how the distinctive ethos and reach of the Olympic Games makes it an ideal platform for protesting. Timms (2012) identified how global social justice groups have pursued the Olympic Games as a platform to further their agendas. Protests have taken place over the prioritizing of corporate interests, which is particularly relevant to this
study. Using a methodology that combined interviews, document analysis, and participant observations, Timms (2012) presented a case study of the Play Fair campaign for the rights of workers producing official Olympic merchandise. This campaign mobilized the Olympic Games platform to question and hopefully influence working practices of transnational supply chains. Timms (2012) concluded that “by targeting London 2012 corporate discourses of ‘ethics’ and ‘sustainability’ in its campaign to ensure a ‘sweat free’ Olympics, Play Fair connects the production of major sporting events to wider issues of global inequality, poverty and structural problems in transnational labour markets” (p. 355).

**Global citizenship.** An Olympism-related tension identified by Roche (2010) is that of global citizenship. According to Roche (2010), the Olympic Movement “remains the pre-eminent international cultural movement in global society” (p. 108). It is engaged in processes of nation building, internationalization, and globalization, with the Olympic Games an international cultural arena connected with the politics of national identity, citizenship and rights. An example of global citizenship is the Olympic Truce tradition, which dates back to the Ancient Olympic Games, when a ‘laying down of arms’ occurred to ensure that athletes and spectators could travel safely to and from the Games. The IOC has sought to continue this tradition with the Modern Olympic Games, calling upon all nations to observe the Olympic Truce. This truce was most famously evident during the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Summer Games when the divided countries of South and North Korea walked together under the Olympic flag.

According to Roche (2010), tension exists between the concept of global citizenship as an Olympic ideal and its practical realization for several reasons. First, citizenship is a status and set of rights defined in relation to the nation-state, which is contradictory to the Olympic Movement’s status as an international organisation. Second, the Olympic Movement has
experienced problems in operationalizing its interests in universal citizenship in spite of its universalistic ideology. For example, the Olympic Movement is compromised by its political imperative to support China in its role as Olympic host and China’s poor human rights and drug abuse records. Third, there is a lack of democracy and accountability at the heart of the Olympic Movement. For example, bribery and corruption were present in the bidding process for the 2002 Winter Games won by Salt Lake City.

**Commercialization.** The growing commercialization of the Olympic Games and the ways by which it is problematic for Olympism and the Olympic ideals has received reasonable attention in the literature, reflective of the importance of the challenge of managing the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success.

Maguire et al. (2008) conducted an analysis of the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ marketing campaign implemented by the IOC. The ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign was used as a specific strategy of the IOC by which to assess “the seemingly paradoxical relationship between the ideals of ‘Olympism’ and the realities of the modern Olympics in practice” (p. 69). Maguire et al. (2008) conceptualized the ideals of Olympism as being about fostering and developing unity, friendship, cosmopolitan identities, the “positive role that sport plays in building social capital and international understanding” (p. 63), and the power of sport “as a progressive and liberating phenomena that opens up the potential for greater human contact, dialogue and identification with others” (p. 63). According to Maguire et al. (2008), it is these ideals that the IOC is claiming to reinforce with their ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign. Using a methodology of document analysis and interviews with TOP program sponsors personnel and representatives from their advertising agencies, Maguire et al. (2008) looked at how this campaign was framed by the IOC marketing department. They posed the question: “How does what is essentially a
marketing campaign, promote the ‘core values’ of the Olympic movement; hope, dreams and inspiration, friendship and fairplay, international understanding?” (p. 69).

In answering this question Maguire et al. (2008) relied significantly more on document analysis than interviews. This is understandable considering the perspective from which they were conducting their research. The IOC and its corporate partners are unlikely to engage in research that might show them in a bad light and damage their brand, which, according to this article, is of paramount importance to them. As such, only minimal evidence of interviews with corporate partners is evident in the article.

Maguire et al. (2008) acknowledged that there are different perspectives through which the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign can be described: (a) From a sympathetic approach as “designed to promote Olympic values while at the same time adding value to the brand” (p. 65). (b) From a realist view as “a necessary part of the strategy to deflect the criticism of the Olympic movement that developed in the 1990s” (p. 65). (c) From a critical perspective as “a sophisticated attempt to develop Olympism as an international brand to be sold to corporate sponsors, the political and economic elite and the wider consuming public” (p. 65). They positioned themselves as conducting this research from a realist-critical perspective. However, their findings and conclusions suggest that they were positioned far more towards the critical perspective. Indeed, their opening line “This paper sets out to examine how exponents of global mega-sport events, while claiming that they foster and develop unity, friendship and cosmopolitan identities, are in fact increasingly concerned more with our identities as consumers” (p. 63), details the position from which they ‘set out’ with. They do not shift from this position, nor do they offer much discussion of “the sympathetic approach” (of which the choice of labeling is rather condescending), suggesting that this research is biased towards pre-determined conclusions.
Maguire et al. (2008) analyzed the IOC commissioned market research that contributed to the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign, including its methodology, the IOC’s branding approach, and the messages in the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign. They found that the campaign highlighted “the specific non-commercial qualities and ideals associated with the Games” (p. 64). However, rather than using these qualities and ideals for educational purposes, the campaign was conceived by and served the purposes of the marketing department. Maguire et al. (2008) provided evidence from IOC documents that it was designed to better understand consumers’ perceptions of the Olympic brand at a time when the IOC was seeking to harness and understand the power of the Olympic brand. They stated, “we see that the market/consumer research conducted by the IOC to identify core values was designed to ensure that the IOC and TOP sponsors could more effectively compete as global brands and not to promote humanitarian values per se” (p. 66).

Maguire et al. (2008) related the campaign to marketing literature and describe it as “an exercise in enhancing brand equity - for the benefit of the IOC and TOP sponsors” (p. 65) and as “an attempt to enhance the brand rather then promote the values of Olympism per se” (p. 65). They argued the campaign “is best understood as celebrating consumers, not humanity” (p. 65). They surmised, “the IOC, whilst claiming to promote the ideals of Olympism, has accommodated commercial pressures to ensure the success of the games” (p.65). Maguire et al. concluded “the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign is characterized by a basic contradiction between the ideals of ‘Olympism’ and the realities of the modern Olympics in practice” (p. 74). They argued that the IOC “is concerned less with the values underpinning Olympism per se […] and more with how such values can help build markets, construct and enhance brand awareness and thus create ‘glocal’ consumers/identities” (pp. 74-75).
These findings are much more reflective of the critical perspective in the way that they are framed, which seems to assume that taking a strategic marketing approach is an inappropriate approach for the IOC to take. A more realistic perspective might consider that strategic marketing is a necessary process for any sports organization that owns and manages a mega-sporting event, even one that is grounded in amateur sport and developmental ideals. A more complete analysis would consider how the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ has sacrificed Olympism. The evidence shows that the Olympism ideals have been leveraged by the IOC for commercial gains, but does not specific how commercial gain is “a basic contradiction” to the ideals of Olympism. Analyzing a marketing campaign does not have the scope to conclude that the IOC is concerned less with the values underpinning Olympism and more with their marketing power. A holistic analysis of all of the IOC’s activities (commercial and non-commercial) would be required to make such a conclusion.

There has been limited research into the role of commercialization in Olympic broadcasting. The only existing research dates back to an analysis of the United States rights negotiations for the Seoul 1988 Summer Games. Min (1987) described how the continual escalation of the price of the United States television rights resulted in the IOC and Organizing Committees becoming heavily financially dependent upon the United States broadcasters. This manifested in NBC, who had acquired the United States’ rights to broadcast the Seoul 1988 Summer Games, realizing the high dependence of the Seoul Olympic Organization Committee upon them. As a result, they requested and succeeded in changing the schedule of events to fit their television prime time, which maximized the revenues they could charge their advertisers. According to Min (1987), this concession further accelerated the process of commercialization of the Olympic Games. Indeed, NBC have subsequently been successful in changing the schedule
of the swimming finals at the Beijing 2008 Summer Games to fit their prime time schedule. The tension between the ideal and practical realization of Olympism reflects the conflict between social and commercial agendas. The literature relevant to these two agendas shall be reviewed, starting with the use of sport to achieve social development.

**Sport for Social Development**

Relevant to the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform is research into sport for social development. Kidd (2008) labels sport for development and peace as a new social movement, despite sport long being promoted as a tool for social development by the Olympic Movement, as reflective of Coubertin’s original vision. According to Kidd (2008) such a use of sport is now being more widely adopted, notably by governments, non-governmental organizations, national and international sports organizations, universities, and schools. Coalter (2007a) identified that sport has been promoted as a solution to a range of social exclusion problems, such as poor health, high crime levels, educational underachievement, lack of social cohesion, and economic decline. Evidence of this comes from Kidd (2008), who identified specific programs and their aims, notably the IOC’s Olympic Solidarity program to assist sports development in developing countries, Playing for Peace to achieve post-war reconciliation, Right to Play to deliver humanitarian relief, and Kicking AIDS Out to achieve broader social development.

According to Coalter (2007a), literature reviews of the existing evidence for the presumed social and economic impacts of sport have produced “rather ambiguous and inconclusive findings” (p. 1). Coalter (2007a) attributes these findings to (a) conceptual weaknesses, such as vague definitions of sport, (b) methodological weaknesses, such as a lack of systematic and robust evaluation of sport interventions, (c) a lack of consideration of the
conditions for success (i.e., the processes that cause the outcomes, recognizing that sport alone is not a sufficient condition to obtain the supposed benefits), and (d) a failure of the literature to provide information on the full complexities of interventions. As such, from Coalter’s (2007a) review of the literature, there is little evidence to support the power of sport, including Olympism, as a tool for social reform.

A more recent review of the evidence concerning sport’s capability to achieve social development comes from Bailey, Hillman, Arent, and Petitpas (2013) and found the evidence that Coalter (2007a) did not find. Bailey et al. (2013) suggested that there is a general under-appreciation of the importance of physical activity to individuals and wider society. The academic literature and policy documentation have discussed the significance of physical activity in terms of the dangers of its absence, with outcomes focused on health risks, primarily obesity and coronary heart disease. The relationship between physical activity and health benefits are well established, with large cohort studies establishing a 20% to 40% reduction in mortality (Jansen & LeBlanc, 2010). However, other areas of social development to be achieved through sport-related physical activity have received less attention. The traditional focus on the health benefits from physical activity is limited, according to Bailey et al. (2013), with growing evidence that physical activity is related to multiple demands of lifelong functioning and development, including physical growth, biological maturation, and behavioral development, and that outcomes can be achieved in psychological and social well-being, cognitive and academic performance, and future career attainment.

Bailey et al. (2013) applied the concept of human capital so to understand these other areas of development for which sport-related physical activity can make a difference. A ‘capital’ is defined by Bailey et al. (2013) as a resource that can be built on and drawn upon throughout
life and that can be owned and allocated, promising future utility. The human capital literature is primarily located within the education literature and is defined in terms of skills, qualifications, and schooling (Baron, Field, & Schuller, 2000). In applying this concept to physical activity, ‘capital’ is a resource that contributes to future well-being. According to Bailey et al. (2013), physical activity is a key driver of ‘capital’ formation. Furthermore, the capitals influence physical activity and each other, “forming a synergistic feedback network whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Bailey, et al., 2013, p. 290).

Bailey et al. (2013) developed their Human Capital Model on the basis of a literature review, group workshops, and interviews with a range of authorities on the outcomes of physical activity. They argued, “the HCM takes a broader and more inclusive view of physical activity – one that takes on the urgent health agenda, but that also locates that agenda within a holistic view of human development” (p. 290). Their proposed model considers a broad scope of physical activity positive outcomes, adopting the World Health Organization definition of health: “a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 2005).

Bailey et al. (2013) conceptualized development as six forms of ‘capital’, for each of which an evidence base was established: (a) Physical Capital: Physical health and positive influences on healthy behaviors. (b) Emotional Capital: Psychological and mental health benefits. (c) Individual Capital: Elements of a person’s character, such as life skills, interpersonal skills, and values. (d) Social Capital: Networks between people, groups, organizations, and civil society. (e) Intellectual Capital: Cognitive and educational gains. (f) Financial Capital: Personal gains in earning power, job performance, productivity, and job attainment, as well as reduced costs of health care and absenteeism. Within these six capitals, Bailey et al. (2013) identified 88
specific benefits. Evidence in the review established that investments in these capitals using sport-related forms of physical activity yielded significant and sustainable development.

For these social benefits to be achieved by sport in the form of the Olympic Games requires that the Olympic Games are able to increase participation in sport. Although we are unable to conclude that an Olympic Games has never raised participation, the existing literature does enable us to conclude that of the Olympic Games studied there is limited evidence of a sustained increase in participation, with any increases in participation being short term (Cashman, 2003; Coalter, 2007b; Murphy & Bauman, 2007), and that after an Olympic Games participation in some sports has increased whilst in others participation has decreased (Veal, 2003). To achieve a sustained increase in participation it is necessary to place the Games in a broader development strategy seeking to build on the heightened profile of sport (Coalter, 2007b). The trickle down effect has limited evidence and has been heavily criticized (Hindson et al., 1994; Veal, 2003). There is stronger evidence of Olympic Games delivering other benefits, such as trade and tourism (Preuss, 2004; Cashman, 2006). Despite this evidence, Olympic Games host countries continue to set overly ambitious targets for increased participation in sport, especially in countries with existing stagnant levels of participation (Coalter, 2007b).

To summarize, there is growing use and evidence of sport as a tool for social development, which serves to justify interpreting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. However, it is less clear how Olympic broadcasting can contribute to Olympism as a philosophy of social reform given that there is limited evidence of the inspirational effect of the Olympic Games (i.e., that those who watch the Olympic Games are going to start living their lives according to the Olympic values or become more physically active). In contrast, the ability to leverage Olympism as a commercial brand has already been demonstrated by the revenues that
the IOC is able to secure through the sale of broadcast rights. Literature on brand management will serve to identify frameworks that can contribute to the understanding of how the Olympic brand is managed.

**Brand Management in Sport**

Relevant to the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand is research into brand management in sport, which has received much attention in the literature, primarily looking at the concept of brand equity, but also related concepts such as brand associations. Sports organizations attempt to position themselves as brands so to capitalize on the emotional bond they share with their fans, which is stronger than any other industry (Couvelaire & Richelieu, 2005). Such a strategic brand management approach is profitable for sport organizations, as discovered by Couvelaire and Richelieu (2005) in examining the strategies and actions of four French soccer teams to build and exploit their brand. Such strategies and actions were also evident across the Atlantic. Gladden, Irwin, and Sutton (2001) concluded that the primary concern of North American Major League professional sport teams in the twenty-first century is brand management on the basis that there was a trend of long-term appreciation of franchise values, despite annual operating losses. They recommended brand management focus on the acquisition of assets and the enhancement of customer relationships. Effective brand management seeks to achieve brand equity.

**Brand equity frameworks.** Models or frameworks of this concept originated in the mainstream marketing literature, but more recently have been developed in the sport literature. Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add or subtract from the value provided by a product or a service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (p. 15). Brand equity was conceptualized as an aggregate
variable of four categories or dimensions of brand assets: (a) brand awareness, (b) brand associations, (c) perceived quality, and (d) brand loyalty. According to Aaker (1991), brand awareness is the starting point from which to develop brand equity and also the anchor to which other associations can be attached. Brand associations are anything linked to the brand. Perceived quality refers to consumer judgments of a product’s overall excellence. Brand loyalty is the ability to attract and retain customers. Aaker (1991) proposes that brand equity provides value to a firm through its impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing programs, customer retention, price and margins, brand extensions, trade leverage, and competitive advantages, and that brand equity provides value to customers by enhancing their confidence in the purchase decision and user satisfaction.

Keller (1993) proposes a conceptual model of brand equity from the perspective of the individual consumer. This model adds to the work of Aaker (1991) by defining the relationships between the four components of brand equity, and brings originality by focusing on the perspective of the individual consumer. Keller (1993) defines brand equity as “when certain outcomes result from the marketing of a product or service because of its brand name that would not occur if the same product or service did not have that name” (p. 1). According to Keller (1993), customer-based brand equity occurs when both familiarity and positive brand associations are present for the consumer. This results in increased probability of brand choice and consumer loyalty and reduced vulnerability to competition (Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) details the ‘associative network memory model’, which proposes that semantic memory or knowledge is made up of nodes and links, with brand knowledge made up of a brand node to which brand associations link.
Berry’s (2000) service-branding model offers originality and a new important angle from which to approach brand equity. Previous brand equity models had largely focused on goods, but Berry (2000) moved brand equity research in a new direction by considering brand equity for services. In packaged goods, the product represents the primary brand. However, with services, the company represents the primary brand. According to Berry (2000), “branding plays a special role in service companies because strong brands increase customers’ trust of the invisible purchase” (p. 128). A strong service brand is viewed as a promise of future satisfaction. “It is a blend of what the company says the brand is, what others say, and how the company performs the service – all from the customer’s point of view” (Berry, 2000, p. 129).

Berry (2000) views the principal components of a service brand as (a) the presented brand, (b) brand awareness, (c) external brand communications, (d) brand meaning, (e) customer experience, and (f) brand equity. The definition of the presented brand is the company’s controlled communication of its identity and purpose, which is achieved through its advertising, service facilities, and appearance of service providers. Brand awareness is recognition and recall of the brand. External brand communications refer to uncontrolled information, such as word-of-mouth and publicity. Brand meaning refers to dominant perceptions of the brand. According to Berry (2000), “the source of the experience is the locus of brand formation” (p. 130). In turn, brand awareness and brand meaning both contribute to brand equity, but with brand meaning having a stronger role. It is this difference in degree, rather than kind, which distinguishes Berry’s (2000) service-branding model from a packaged-goods branding model. The salient role of service performance is the principal difference. According to Berry (200) “product intangibility and the salient role of service in customer value creation focus attention on the company as an entity” (p. 130).
In considering these different conceptualizations of brand equity, Berry’s (2000) framework is most relevant to the Olympic Games in that the Olympic Games is more of a service than a physical product, although neither a service or a physical product accurately conveys the Olympic Games. However, from the perspective of sponsors and broadcasters, the IOC is offering a service to them via the rights that allow sponsors and broadcasters to partner with the IOC and the Olympic Games. However, from the perspective of Olympic fans, the Olympic Games are neither a physical product nor a service. In considering the social dynamics involved in the consumption of the Olympic Games, it is more accurately conceptualized as a shared event. The control shared by Olympic fans and producers following the emergence of digital media platforms (Crosbie, 2006), as well as the interaction between fans and athletes through social media platforms, such as Twitter, add to the conceptualization of the Olympic Games as a shared event. So to better understand the brand equity of the Olympic Games it is necessary to consider the sport-specific frameworks.

Gladden, Milne, and Sutton (1998) provide sport’s first brand equity model by building on Aaker’s (1991) theoretical structure, which was specifically applied to Division I College Athletics. This framework provided a closed-ended system whereby antecedents create brand equity, which then results in marketplace consequences. These consequences in turn feed into a marketplace perception that, through a feedback loop, impacts the antecedents of brand equity. Gladden et al. (1998) provide understanding of which antecedents produce the desired consequence, which enables enhancements to be made that will augment brand equity through a feedback loop. They propose their framework as a starting point for research exploration, proposing that understanding brand equity should help the sport manager to achieve a multitude of positive benefits.
Robinson and Miller (2003) utilized Gladden et al.’s (1998) framework to assess the impact of Bobby Knight on the brand equity of the Texas Tech basketball program. Application of the framework demonstrated that Texas Tech’s decision to utilize a ‘hiring a proven winner’ strategy, despite Knight being a controversial figure due to several high profile incidents over the course of his career, was successful in strengthening the program’s brand equity and consequently created positive benefits for the program and institution. Applying the framework to the case of the University of Notre Dame Football, Bruening and Lee (2007) examined the impact of head football coach Tyrone Willingham on the brand equity of the University of Notre Dame. Although this research does not empirically test Gladden et al.’s (1998) framework, it does demonstrate the applicability of the framework and its ability to stimulate considerations of various factors that contribute to brand equity. However, these studies only provide an ex-post facto justification of the use of Gladden et al.’s (1998) framework. A longitudinal analysis providing an a priori examination of brand equity strategies is required to determine if they comply with a conceptual framework.

Gladden and Milne (1999) expanded the framework of Gladden et al. (1998). Aaker’s (1991) model was again adopted but this time was applied to the broader context of professional team sport. Gladden and Milne (1999) tested elements of their model by comparing the importance of brand equity and winning. Secondary data was gathered from Major league Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), and the National Hockey League (NHL), from which logistic regression analyses identified that both brand equity and winning significantly contributed to attaining merchandise sales. However, the impact of brand equity and winning differed by league. Brand equity was more important to realizing merchandise sales in the NHL and MLB, whereas success was more important in the NBA. This provides evidence
that “in addition to winning, a focus on strategic brand management is also warranted in professional sport” (Gladden & Milne, 1999, p. 28). It was shown that it is not always the case that winning results in positive marketplace outcomes.

Richelieu (2004) discussed building the brand equity of professional sports teams. His framework consisted of three culminating levels that built brand equity, which was depicted as the top level in the framework. The first level is identity, which consisted of the attributes of the brand or values, and coherence between the values of the sports team and the perceptions of the fans. The second level is positioning, which consists of target market, and differentiation of the brand. The third level is brand strategy and marketing actions, consisting of internal catalysts, external catalysts, constraints, and moderating variables.

Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) applied the framework of Richelieu (2004) to examine the strategies and actions of four French soccer clubs. Using the framework, these case studies identified that where a strong brand is relevant, it is able to transcend the sports arena, and make customers live the brand at different moments of their daily lives.

More recently, Ross (2006) developed a spectator-based brand equity framework, utilizing Berry’s (2000) conceptualization of service-based brand equity. This framework departs from the traditional brand equity frameworks that relied primarily on a goods perspective by advocating the importance of the service-oriented nature of sport products and acknowledging service-marketing principles. The unique characteristics of spectator sports, according to Ross (2006), are recognized through organization, market, and experience-induced antecedents. These antecedents contribute to spectator-based brand equity. Ross (2006) suggests the need for an emphasis on the experiences of sport consumers.
Ross, Russell, and Bang (2008) empirically tested Ross’ (2006) spectator-based brand equity model. Using a sample from professional basketball consumers, the results of the study demonstrated that the model had a reasonable fit to the data. Although only a reasonable fit, this still represented progress in developing better methodologies to improve understanding of brand equity in sport.

By comparing common attributes, the frameworks of Gladden et al. (1998), Gladden and Milne (1999), Richelieu (2004), and Ross (2006) can be assessed:

**Antecedents.** Managers are able to manipulate antecedent conditions to improve brand equity. Gladden et al. (1998) identify team-related antecedents of success, head coach, and star player. Winning can produce all of the desired consequences of brand equity, with the basking-in-reflected-glory theory suggesting why people long to identify with a winner. Coaches with a proven track record are able to enhance brand equity through publicity and expectations of success. Similarly, a star player can gain national media exposure. Other antecedents are identified as university-related antecedents, which include reputation and tradition, conference and schedule, and entertainment package / product delivery. Win or lose, a school with a strong academic grounding can generate a faithful following, while working within a conference framework can lead to national television exposure. Also, marching bands, stadium music, tailgating, and other traditional activities may all serve to enhance the overall experience of attending. Finally, market-related antecedents were identified, including local/regional media coverage, geographic location, competitive factors, and support. Local and regional media arrangements may generate brand equity by increasing affiliation and interest, whereas brand identities are often formed based on geographical location. Competition with professional sport teams or other college teams can negatively impact corporate support and ticket sales, but the
group of supporters that do attend and subsidize athletic competitions is central to any college’s brand equity.

Gladden and Milne (1999) modified Gladden et al.’s (1998) antecedents to expand the framework to professional sport. University-related antecedents were re-labeled organization-related antecedents, and included the additions of the design of a team’s logo and the stadium/arena in which the team plays as antecedents of brand equity. They argued that brand equity can be created based on the logo and name of the team, and that the building in which a sport team plays can significantly impact the development of brand equity, since the relationship between the stadium and organization varies across the sport industry. More control over the stadium or arena allows for increased marketing activity and consequently increased brand equity. Also, the stadium tradition and design may play an important part in the development of brand equity, through significant histories, nostalgic themes, location, all of which can enhance brand associations in the viewing experience and with the team sport product.

The third level in Richelieu’s (2004) model represented the factors and variables to be considered in the building and leveraging of a sports team brand. Similar to antecedents, Richelieu (2004) identified both internal and external catalyst factors. Similar to organization-induced antecedents, internal catalyst factors consisted of factors to help fans bond with the team, including entertainment experience, team’s involvement in the community, and physical facilities. Marketing actions were another set of internal catalyst factors, including on field jerseys, merchandise sales, promotional campaigns, commercial partnerships, and customer relationship marketing programs. The external catalyst factors included market size, industry changes, and technological advances, which are similar to market-induced antecedents.
Separate from antecedents or catalyst factors, Richelieu (2004) identified constraints and moderators to brand equity. Constraints included fashion, decrease in loyalty from customers and players, life cycle of sports leagues, and general entertainment offering. Moderating variables included legal framework, such as centralization in managing the league’s brands and legal status of the team, finances, and on-field performance.

Ross (2006) proposed three groups of antecedents. First of all, organization induced antecedents are proposed, consisting of the seven P’s of the marketing mix. In addition to the traditional marketing mix elements of product, promotion, price, and place, Ross (2006) included the elements of participants, physical evidence, and service process, in reflection of sport requiring a service marketing mix. The unpredictability of sport services and the inability of sport managers to control the composition of the core product make these elements very important. Market induced antecedents are identified as the sources that consumers use to absorb information about the brand that is both uncontrolled and unpaid for by the organization. The main market-induced sources are word-of-mouth and publicity. Experience-induced antecedents are identified as the actual service experience encountered by the customer, which is proposed as the primary influence for consumers. Customer experience will strongly influence the brand associations held by consumers, since spectator sport is a service product that is an intangible, subjective, and unpredictable occurrence.

**Brand Equity.** Conceptualizations of brand equity are not consistent throughout all the brand equity models in sport. Both Gladden et al. (1998) and Gladden and Milne (1999) adopt Aaker’s (1991) brand equity conceptualization. According to this model, the ways in which brand equity can be improved are through (a) perceived quality, (b) brand awareness, (c) brand associations, and (d) brand loyalty.
Ross (2006) adopted a conceptualization of brand equity similar to Berry’s (2000) conceptualization of service brand equity, rather than as a composite of four consumer behavior variables. However, on further analysis, his conceptualization consists of brand awareness and brand associations. According to Ross’ (2006) conceptualization, a consumer must first be aware of a brand before associations can be made. This is more reflective of Keller’s (1993) model. Also, in line with Keller’s (1993) model, brand loyalty is considered a consequence of equity rather than a specific component, and perceived quality is considered a specific type of brand association rather than a component. Keller’s (1993) consumer-based brand equity concept is re-labeled spectator-based brand equity in reflection of the sport context.

**Consequences.** According to Gladden et al. (1998), consequences of brand equity form a perception of the sport product. The consequences of brand equity, identified by Gladden et al. (1998), are merchandise sales, national media exposure, corporate support, individual donations, atmosphere, and ticket sales. National media exposure includes live television coverage, televised news stories, and national coverage in newspapers, magazines, and sports talk radio. Merchandise sales include the sales of apparel and other items that contain the university or athletic name or logo. Donations may be due to respect for the university’s reputation, hoping to help the university succeed, or out of obligation due to years of support, whereas corporate support is a result of corporations allying with teams that possess equity in order to transfer pride in the team to their product. Atmosphere is the excitement and level of entertainment provided by attending an event, which is more electric and energized with more brand equity. Increased ticket sales can often lead to increased ticket prices, creating additional revenue for athletic departments.
Gladden and Milne (1999) adopted the same consequences as Gladden at al. (1998) but in applying to professional sports expanded Gladden et al.’s consequence of individual donations to additional revenues in reflection of the many miscellaneous marketing outcomes that result from brand equity. They propose that if a team possesses high brand equity, that its ability to create revenue-generating marketing extensions will increase, including donations to the university, increased applications and enrollments to the university, team-owned or licensed restaurants, practice facilities, and merchandise stores.

Ross (2006) also based his consequences on those of Gladden et al. (1998), but makes adaptations in line with the service-based focus. Brand loyalty is moved from the conceptualization of brand equity to the consequences of brand equity, and labeled team loyalty. Ross (2006) retained media exposure, merchandise sales, and ticket sales as consequences, but individual donations and corporate support are replaced by revenue solicitation. It is proposed that this better represents the generation of additional revenue at varying levels of sport. At the collegiate level, it refers primarily to the acquisition of funds from donations made to the athletic departments by various individuals, whereas at the professional level, it refers to the ability to attract and maintain corporate sponsors and naming rights. The additional revenue component was relabeled extension opportunities, which includes the offering of additional products and services beyond the organization’s core product. Although Gladden and Milne (1999) recognize brand extensions in their framework, Ross (2006) correctly identified a misapplication of the extension principle, since donations are related to fundraising rather than brand extensions. Finally, Ross (2006) proposes the movement of atmosphere as a consequence to the brand association component, since atmosphere is “a subjective perception of the event held by
spectators created through an amalgamation of organizational and experimentally induced antecedents” (p. 31).

Of these four models reviewed, three are specifically designed in relation to sport teams, which is not appropriate for considering the brand equity of the Olympic Games. For example, the antecedent of winning is not relevant to the brand equity of an event. Therefore, the perspective from which Ross’ (2006) framework taken is most appropriate in the context of this study. However, this model is ambitiously claimed to be generalizable to all spectator sports. To achieve this, the proposed antecedents were significantly more generic than those proposed by Gladden et al. (1998) and Gladden and Milne (1999). For example, the organization-induced antecedents included only the marketing mix, specifically the seven P’s for services. In contrast, Gladden et al. (1998) included tradition, conference/schedule, and product delivery, with Gladden and Milne (1999) adding logo design and stadium/arena. Such antecedents are context-specific, making the models of Gladden et al. (1998) and Gladden and Milne (1999) more externally valid. As such, Ross (2006) framework is of limited use.

Brand associations in sport. Specific elements of brand equity have also received attention via the sport management literature. Gladden and Funk (2002) adapted Keller’s (1993) theoretical framework of consumer-based brand equity to create the Team Association Model. This model proposes 16 dimensions of brand associations in sport, which were derived from the sport literature. These dimensions were divided into three categories as follows: “ATTRIBUTE (success, head coach, star player, management, stadium, logo design, product delivery, and tradition). BENEFIT (identification, nostalgia, pride in place, escape, and peer group acceptance), and ATTITUDE (importance, knowledge, and affect)” (p. 54). Gladden and Funk’s
(2002) scale was tested using a national sample of sport consumers, which provided support for the model.

An understanding of brand associations in sport has implications for marketing in that sport fans can be segmented using brand associations. Ross (2007), using cluster analysis, identified segments of sport fans based upon the brand associations they held for a National Basketball Association (NBA) team. Such understanding allows sport organizations to better leverage the associations fans have with their brand, as the IOC did in their Celebrate humanity campaign. Here, the IOC utilized the Olympic values as brand associations, which were leveraged so to create value for the IOC and its sponsors (Maguire, et al., 2008). Given the use of brand associations to leverage the Olympic brand, the relationship between brand associations and brand equity in the previously discussed frameworks may be the most important element of these frameworks for the purpose of this study. Applying the logic of Maguire et al. (2008), the ways by which broadcasting can communicate brand associations is likely very important to the IOC’s management of the Olympic brand.

**Sports Broadcasting**

Relevant to the research question element of Olympic broadcasting partnerships is literature on sports broadcasting. There have been many texts addressing the relationship between sport and media (Wenner, 1989; Wenner, 1998; Jeanrenaud & Késenne, 2006; Raney & Bryant, 2006). Such attention is reflective of the importance of the relationship between sport and media. Rowe (1996) argued that sport and media have become “mutually and internationally indispensable” (p. 565). Pedersen (2013) views communication as an essential element in the sport industry and Bellamy (2006) argued, “the contribution of sports to media is difficult to overstate” (p. 66). Sport and media benefit each other in that sport has allowed media to reach
desirable audiences, and sport has become more profitable and culturally important due to publicity and money from media (Bellamy, 2006). Raney and Bryant (2006) argued, “the importance of sports on the contemporary global entertainment landscape is undeniable” (p. xiii). Such accolades are evidenced by CBS, a United States broadcaster, prioritizing sports coverage over political, economic, and social events from the late 1980s (Jhally, 1989). The importance of the sport and media relationship shows no sign of wavering, as Bellamy (2006) observed a “seemingly insatiable appetite for sports content” (p. 66). However, such widely agreed importance cannot be taken for granted, as this relationship is “ever-evolving” (Raney & Bryant, 2006, p. xiii). Combined with the view that “there is no guaranteed or essential manifestation, experience, or indeed definition of sport” and that “a more productive interpretive strategy is to locate particular sport forms and physical cultural experiences in the sociohistorical context within which they came to exist” (Andrews & Giardina, 2008, p. 395), there is a constant need to reconsider the relationship between sport and media at new points in time and within different contexts.

**Media Representations**

Much of the research into sport and media has considered how the sporting product is represented in the media. A seminal theory applicable to media representations comes from Hall (1973), who proposed the ‘encoding/decoding’ model of communication to explain how media messages are produced, disseminated, and interpreted. According to Hall (1973), ‘encoding’ is the process whereby a producer of the message first creates meaning, after which ‘decoding’ occurs, whereby the receiver consumes the encoded message. The meaning garnered by the audience changes based upon their social contexts, with interpretation dependent upon cultural background.
This process is particularly important in the context of Olympic broadcasting. Although the IOC provide a central feed of content via the Olympic Broadcasting Services to its broadcast partners, these messages are coded and influenced by the broadcast partners’ own producers, resulting in what can be vastly different versions of the Olympic Games, as evidenced in research later discussed in this chapter. Not only can producers from different broadcast partners encode Olympic messages differently, they can also be decoded differently due to the vastly different social contexts and cultural backgrounds of the Olympic Games’ global audience. This is challenging for the IOC in their use of the Olympic Games as a platform through which to promote Olympism to a global audience, with control over their messages potentially compromised by the selling of their broadcast rights.

**Media Representations in Sport**

Gruneau, Whitson, and Cantelon (1988) examined the construction of meaning in sports telecasting. According to Gruneau et al. (1988), the meanings present in sports telecasts are not natural, but, rather, are highly mediated representations that promote certain ‘readings’ of sport. In line with Hall’s (1973) theory, Gruneau et al. (1988) found that meaning was negotiated through the ‘deconstruction’ of social and textual structures.

Silk (2001) analyzed the construction of media representations at the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games. Silk (2001) used interviews, observations, and verbal descriptions to analyze the mediations of, and the interactions between, the host broadcaster and a broadcast partner focusing on the conditions of production, the production practices, and the meanings embodied within the Commonwealth Games messages to the broadcast partner’s audience. Silk (2001) found that the Malaysian government, in partnership with the host broadcaster, redefined Malaysian histories, traditions, and cultures, using the opening ceremony to inaccurately portray
Malaysia as a unified country, when the truth was that the regions of the country were very
decentralized. In analyzing the production of the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand, Silk
(2001) observed the localizing of content and highlighting the successes and downplaying the
failures of New Zealand athletes.

Via an ethnographic study, Silk (2002) utilized the same context to study how the Kuala
Lumpur 1998 Commonwealth Games was used “to reposition, redefine and realign Malaysian
cultures within contemporary political, economic, technological and cultural sphere” (p. 775).
Silk (2002) found that producers reframed the culture of Malaysia via “a series of nation-
building narrative performances that attempted to legitimize the contemporary nation-state
cartography” (p. 791).

These studies identify a risk of Olympic broadcasts being manipulated to achieve
stakeholder goals through misrepresentations. Such portraying of inaccurate information to
benefit stakeholders is contrary to the ethical principles of Olympism, as is overly focusing on a
nation’s own athletes, which is contrary to a spirit of global friendship and solidarity.

**Pressures in Sports Television Production**

Silk (1999) conducted some original work on the contexts, pressures, and discourses that
operate at the level of production in sports broadcasting. In conducting an ethnographic study of
the 1995 Canada Cup of Soccer, Silk (1999) found that conditions created by global capitalism
altered the production of the event, with the interpretation of the Canada Cup of Soccer being
consumer-oriented. Such pressures are also evident in the work of Genovese (2013), who
examined the relationship between sports television producers and the corporate ownership at the
regional sports network RSN. Genovese (2013) found that this relationship is becoming
increasingly complex and difficult, with producers required to navigate an organizational setting that exerts a significant influence.

Silk, Slack, and Amis (2000) conducted an ethnographic study of the television production process for TSN at the 1995 Canada Cup of Soccer, which considered the institutional pressures that shape the production process. Macro and microanalyses were used to explain the organization context of production operations and decisions. Silk et al. (2000) found that “Institutionally prescribed codes or industrial wisdom operating at a macro-cognitive level served to constrain the production team in their everyday practices of production” (p. 18). Producers did not have a choice of discourses and images to broadcast, but were instead “constrained by the institutionally prescribed correct way of doing things” (p. 18). Producers were also subject to macro institutional processes, which served as “a context for the values/structure relationship at the network” (Silk et al., 2000, p. 18). These external values and structures prescribed and constrained operations and were adopted as part of TSN’s values system. Producers were required to work within clearly defined boundaries of an industry prescribed and legitimated model, which considered “political, cultural, economic and social imperatives” (Silk et al., 2000, p. 18). For example, the state regulates TSN with their broadcasting license granted under the conditions that it covers sports with relatively narrow broadcast appeal commits to Canadian programming.

Of particular relevance to this study is the tension between commercial and public service responsibilities. Johnson (2013) explored this tension through a case study of the BBC (the Olympic Games broadcast rights holder in the United Kingdom). Johnson (2013) found “a tension between the corporation’s attempts to ensure that all activities support its public purposes and its need to ensure separation between public and commercial work” (p. 314). To negotiate
the relationship between its commercial and public service activities the BBC has adopted strategic brand management. Johnson (2013) concluded that commercial activity and public service broadcasting are not inherently contradictory and that public service broadcasters should better communicate the relationship between their commercial and public service responsibilities.

These studies shed some light on how tensions in upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success can occur in Olympic broadcasting. Competing pressures are in existence when considering the multiple stakeholders involved in Olympic broadcasting, including the IOC, broadcast partners, sponsors, and governments, and the different agendas they represent. Forces at the micro level, such as a television network’s responsibilities to its advertisers, can potentially conflict with forces at the macro level, such as a responsibility to the IOC to promote Olympism.

**Commodification of Sport**

The commodification of sport is whereby “a ‘free’ national cultural service” is “expropriated by corporate capital” (Rowe, 1996, p. 565). According to Rowe (1996), this is “the most contentious issue of all” (p. 565) in the sport and media relationship on the basis of the claim that:

TV has taken over sport, and that in the process it has debased and debauched it. Such criticisms of the sport-business-TV nexus take on a social justice dimension when the commodification of TV sport develops to the level that it must be paid for directly.

(Rowe, 1996, p. 565)

Publicly funded broadcasting has high social and cultural value (Johnson, 2013). Rowe (1996) suggested the need for government intervention “if the rights associated with ‘cultural
citizenship’ are to be safeguarded against an aggressively globalizing and a seductively consumerist union of commerce, sport and television” (Rowe, 1996, p. 566).

Rowe (1996) called upon governments “to act strategically in those spheres of culture where it still retains the power to influence outcomes in the interests of social equity and cultural citizenship” (p. 581).

Scherer and Whitson (2009) further examined the issue of cultural citizenship within the setting of Canadian sports broadcasting. They argued that providing free-to-air broadcasts of ice hockey was an issue of cultural citizenship for Canadians, and as such, a matter of national interest. They analyzed the case of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and the broadcasting of National Hockey League (NHL) games via their Hockey Night in Canada show. Despite heightened competition for the most desirable sports rights leading to an increased price, CBC invested in a new contract with the NHL. Although Scherer and Whitson (2006) viewed such an investment as an appropriate mandate of a public broadcaster, this investment was made on the basis that the show acted as a critical promotional platform for the public network, and provided a sizeable revenue stream.

According to New and Le Grand (1999), sporting events and championships are natural monopolies. Broadcasters who acquire the rights to such events are monopoly suppliers. The price wars for the right to monopolize sporting rights can result in monopoly pricing being passed off to the consumer via subscription charges. In line with Rowe’s (1996) recommendation, New and Le Grand (1999) recommended that regulatory agencies control the pricing activity of subscription broadcasters. They also suggest that the most important sporting events to a nation must be available via free-to-air broadcasters.

Hoehn and Lancefield (2003) identified that the broadcasting of sport is heavily regulated
across Europe and the United States. They found that government interventions influence the quality, quantity, and price of televised sport across Europe and the United States. Government interventions were found to impact the organization and governance of sports, the conduct of broadcasting companies, and the structure of broadcasting markets, and. Like Rowe (1996), Hoehn and Lancefield (2003) identified access of viewers to major sporting events as a significant policy issue requiring attention.

The European Union (EU), which is a political and economic union of twenty eight member states, has passed legislation via the list of major events mechanisms, which includes the Olympic Games, and seeks “to guarantee the public’s right to information and to safeguard sports’ social and cultural importance” (Evens & Lefever, 2011, p. 45). However, this policy is limited in that member states are not obliged to implement this mechanism, so access and cultural citizenship is not guaranteed. Therefore, Evens and Lefever (2011) argued for a more stringent fulfillment of the listed events mechanism, which could be achieved by clearer definitions and criteria. They advocate “finding a new balance between the economic, cultural, and social interests of sports, between the interests of all stakeholders involved in the game—media providers, sporting organizations—and, last but not least, the public” (Evens & Lefever, 2011, p. 45). However, a challenge to this approach is the criticism of European public broadcasters for spending large amounts of public money to cover major sports competition at a time when they are faced with significant budget cuts due to the economic crisis (Evens & Lefever, 2011).

The commodification of sport is an issue highly relevant to Olympic broadcasting and the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success. Safeguarding sport “in the name of equity” (Rowe, 1996, p. 580) is particularly relevant in
upholding the principles of Olympism via Olympic broadcasting. Given the global importance of the Olympic Games, as indicated by the global viewing audience, the recommendations from Rowe (1996) and New and Le Grand (1999) have major implications for the IOC if they are to continue nurturing their fan base via disseminating the Olympic Games and associated Olympism messages as widely as possible.

**Centralized versus Decentralized Rights**

A debate existing within the regulation of sports broadcasting is the issue of centralized versus decentralized sports broadcasting rights. Noll (2007) distinguished between centralized and decentralized rights. Centralized rights involve leagues representing the rights of all teams, whereas decentralized rights involve teams representing their own rights. The characteristics of a centralized approach, according to Noll (2007), are that leagues take into account more effects on attendance, scarcity is created in rights through reduction of supply of matches, and decisions are reached by agreement amongst most teams.

Cave and Crandall (2001) identified that such collective selling can exploit a dominant or monopoly position of the rights market and leverage that market power in broadcasting, which is problematic for consumers. However, they argue that the collective sale of rights is not inherently objectionable, but becomes a source of significant competition problems when combined with exclusivity, where a limited number of matches are sold to a single broadcaster with further sale being prohibited. Furthermore, Noll (2007) argued that the centralization of rights sales does not improve competitive balance. Rather, the centralization of rights will actually harm consumers through restricting their choice and raising the prices they pay. Evens and Lefever (2011) confirmed such a negative outcome for consumers. They argue that the exclusivity of sports broadcasting rights forecloses new markets and deprives the public of
access to major sports coverage. To avoid these drawbacks Evens and Lefever (2011) argued for a concise regulatory framework in order to grant fair access to mediated sports.

Cave and Crandall (2001) argued that the problem of a dominant or monopoly position is exacerbated by political influence when governments exempt sporting organizations from national competition law. The legality of a centralized rights approach has been questioned by Edelman (2008), who argued that the 'single entity' defense can never be applied to leagues such as the NFL due to clubs lacking sufficient unity of interest.

Related to this debate is the issue of cross-ownership. Evens and Lefever (2011) predicted that the value of sports broadcasting rights will decrease as a result of the increasing cross-ownership between media and sports corporations. Such cross-ownership consolidates the demand for sports broadcasting rights, leading to an oligopolistic market structure reflective of cartelization that decreases rivalry for sports broadcasting rights.

Gerrard (2003) adopted a structuralist perspective in analyzing the centralized versus decentralized rights debate. He argued that the price mechanism can only ensure an optimal allocation of resources under the condition of markets being perfectly competitive, where the forces of supply and demand determine market price. Any departure from a perfectly competitive market structure, such as acquisition of monopoly power, would result in sub-optimal allocation of resources. The view that professional sports leagues are cartels against the consumer interest is underpinned by such a structuralist approach to competition (Gerrard, 2003). The EU adopted this position in their opposition to collective selling of television rights by UEFA and domestic soccer leagues.

The debate of centralized versus decentralized broadcast rights is not directly relevant to Olympic broadcasting when considering that the IOC controls mega sporting events, rather than...
teams under a league structure. However, from the perspective of broadcast partners this research is relevant when considering that broadcast partners have previously formed unions, much like teams within a league, from which they have negotiated the purchase of Olympic broadcast rights. Most notably, the European Broadcast Union’s purchasing of Olympic broadcast rights reduced bidders and competition, lowering the broadcast revenues gained by the IOC from this market.

**Contracting Models**

According to Rein et al. (2007), the current sports-media model was built on network television, pioneered by NBC’s coverage of the Olympics and CBS’s Sunday afternoon football. In this model, the sports properties sold their rights to the media, who in turn sold the sports content to advertisers. Similarly, Cameron (1997) described a three-party relationship in sports broadcasting, with consumers demanding sport, sport organizers or bodies representing players or clubs, who sell the sport to broadcasting or production companies. Rein et al. (2007) noted that this historical model has changed over time, as cable television networks came onto the scene as competitors to the traditional broadcast networks and fragmented what had previously been a scarcity-driven market.

Foster, Greyser, and Walsh (2006) identified three different contracting models that media companies and sports properties can adopt. The most common model for major sporting properties involves the media company paying fixed up-front fees, a model that is most commonly adopted by the IOC. Foster et al. (2006) identified the benefit of revenue certainty, putting the risk of any downturn in ratings or advertising rates on the media company. An alternative model is the revenue-sharing model, where a component, or even the entire rights fee, is a function of revenues associated with the broadcast of the event. This works best with a
broadcast free-to-air partner where the advertising revenues stream can be identified with the sport broadcast and where there is uncertainty over future revenues, which requires joint risk sharing. Finally, Foster et al. (2006) identified a model where the sports property buys time on the media outlet and keeps all advertising revenue it sells. Opposite to the media company paying fixed up-front fees model, the revenue certainty is to the media outlet and the risk of a downturn in ratings or advertising revenues falls on the sports rights holder. Foster et al. (2006) advocated creating a negotiating dynamic of more bidders than slots to increase competition.

Other literature on broadcast rights has considered sales strategies, including windowing and exposure maximization. Gaustad (2000) proposed that sports properties should always sell as long as the contract price exceeds the distribution costs of the transaction. This is a phenomenon known as windowing, where a producer’s average costs will decline for each new customer and for any given price, it will be in their interest to sell to as many as possible. The goal is to make each consumer pay the highest price they are willing to pay, but at the same time sell to as many consumers as possible. This approach generates interest through expansion of the home market. Mondello (2006) contends that despite always looking for methods to increase revenues, sport organizations sometimes leave money on the table to ensure greater exposure by selling rights to broadcasters with the highest reach even if they are not the highest bidder. Also, sports properties bundle their lesser-valued products with their most highly demanded products, so to increase the exposure of the lesser products (Mondello, 2006). Notably, the NCAA has mandated that their broadcast partner CBS televise a number of games from the women’s basketball tournament and other lower profile tournaments, as part of the original broadcast deal for the men’s basketball tournament. This is a similar approach to the IOC’s bundling of Summer and Winter Games.

This literature is relevant to the element of this study that considers how the IOC
maximizes its revenues from Olympic broadcasting. The differing contracting models described in the literature can offer different advantages to the IOC in the selling of their broadcast rights in different markets. With regards to appropriate sales strategies, the IOC appears focused on maximizing exposure of the Olympic Games rather than maximizing revenue from broadcast rights sales. For example, a fundamental objective of Olympic marketing, as stated in the Olympic Marketing Fact File is “To ensure that the Olympic Games can be experienced by the maximum number of people throughout the world principally via broadcast coverage” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5). Furthermore, rule 48 of the Olympic Charter states “The IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013b, p. 92). This objective and rule have manifested in the IOC rejecting bids from subscription-based broadcasters, such as Sky Television in the United Kingdom, even when bids were higher from free-to-air broadcasters, such as the BBC in the United Kingdom.

**Big-Event Theory**

Given that collective broadcast rights have escalated dramatically, networks have reduced their coverage of regular season contests in the major sports while abiding by a big-event theory (Sullivan, 2006). A network will pay the big rights fees to secure one or more of the marquee sports events that are among the year’s most highly rated programs to generate massive advertising revenues, distinguish from other networks and raise its status above cable competitors with regular-season coverage. For example, in the United Kingdom, BBC is the rights holder for the Olympic Games, but does not hold any rights to the United Kingdom’s most popular regular season league of Premier League soccer, which is only on subscription based channels, such as Sky Sports. Such an approach by broadcasters is advantageous to the IOC
given that, according to Real (1989), “the modern Olympic games are, via media, the most widely shared regular event in human history” (p. 222) and “a truly global ritual” (p. 223).

**Olympic Broadcasting**

More specific to the research question element of Olympic broadcasting partnerships is broadcasting literature specific to the context of the Olympic Games. Empirical research into Olympic broadcasting has primarily focused on media representations, with other literature representing commentaries and essays on the topic. This is reflected in a comprehensive project undertaken by Spa et al. (1995) that took a multidisciplinary approach to explore the Barcelona 1992 Summer Games as a communications event. According to Spa et al. (1995), television has shaped the Olympic Games into a global media event of unprecedented size and reach, with the Olympics evolving in conjunction with changes in the communications environment. They labeled the Olympic Games as “a site of converging technologies and showroom for the major actors in the global communications industry” (p. 9). In reviewing the economic dynamics of the Olympics, they concluded that broadcasting, as well as sponsorship, has played a major role in the organization of the Olympics. The empirical research conducted as part of this project was a comparative analysis of 28 broadcasters from around the world in their communication of culture, politics, and Olympism in the opening ceremony, and a review of the viewing experience. Reflective of the work of Hall (1973), Spa et al. (1995) found that global producers ‘encoded’ culture, politics, and Olympism differently, and that global audiences ‘decoded’ Olympic opening ceremonies differently. The research on Olympic broadcasting following this project has continued to focus on media representations.

**Media Representations and Interpretations**

Research into media representations in Olympic broadcasts has addressed various factors
of representation. In a more general analysis of media representations and interpretations, Pujik (2000) conducted an international comparative study of the media coverage of the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Games. Broadcasters from different nations covered, or ‘encoded’ (Hall, 1973), the Games differently. The host audience of Norwegians was “absorbed in a truly festive atmosphere” (p. 309). However “the involvement of most countries in the Games was partial” (Pujik, 2000, p. 327), evidenced by little coverage and low ratings across many sports. Where sports were able to generate large audiences this was due to the potential of a nation’s own athletes or teams. Pujik (2000) concluded that this represents a “paradoxical situation” in that the most popular sports in a country are those “that are most directly embedded in a nation’s discourse, and this opposes the view that the Olympics will increasingly generate a ‘global’, shared meaning” (p. 327).

Both Billings and Eastman (2002) and Billings and Eastman (2003) analyzed several factors, which were gender, ethnicity, and national biases with Billings and Eastman (2002) analyzing host and reporter commentary of the 2000 Sydney Summer Games before Billings and Eastman (2003) analyzed host and reporter commentary of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games. Other research has focused on the specific factors of gender, nationalism, and ethnicity.

**Gender.** The most heavily analyzed factor in Olympic broadcasts is gender. Andrews (1998) analyzed NBC’s broadcast of the Atlanta 1996 Summer Games and concluded that NBC’s Olympic broadcast was designed to seduce female television viewers. According to Andrews (1998), “NBC consciously mobilized traditionally feminine codes within, and through, the content and structure of its prime time televisial discourse” (p. 5). This study concluded, “NBC’s feminization of Olympic reality accentuated the essentialist and hierarchically ordered notions of gender identities” (p. 5).
Eastman and Billings (1999) conducted a more comprehensive analysis of gender parity in Olympic Games broadcasts. They compared over 20,000 mentions of names, sports, and associated descriptors during the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Games, the 1996 Atlanta Summer Games, and the 1998 Nagano Winter Games. They found that the proportions of mentions of women and men athletes and women’s and men’s sports was imbalanced across the three Olympic Games analyzed, and that this imbalance was consistent across all the Games analyzed. They also concluded that there is tension between official network goals and their implementation and that such imbalanced discourse is used to meet network’s commercial needs.

In subsequent research analyzing the United States broadcast of the Sydney 2000 Summer Games, Billings and Eastman (2002) found an imbalance in broadcast coverage of men and women, with men receiving over half of all airtime and of all mentions of athletes. They also found that men were characterized as more athletic and committed than women athletes. In their subsequent analysis of the United States broadcast of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games, Billings and Eastman (2003) found that the majority of coverage was of men, in terms of total time of coverage, the majority of the top 20 most mentioned athletes being men, and most of the athlete mentions and descriptors being devoted to men.

The most recent analysis of gender occurred at the Beijing 2008 Summer Games. Billings, Angelini, and Duke (2010) analyzed the United States broadcast of this Games and found that the gap between coverage time of men and women's sports was 8.4%, which is a difference that is widening when compared to the 4.6% differential at the previous Summer Games of Athens 2004. Also, they detected significant dialogue differences between male and female athletes on the basis of descriptions of success, failure, and personality. In similar research, Angelini and Billings (2010) analyzed NBC’s coverage of the Beijing 2008 Summer
Games and found significant dialogue differences between male and female athletes in four out of five sports analyzed. There were significant differences in gymnastics, swimming, track and field, and beach volleyball, with the most significant differences evident in beach volleyball. There were no significant differences in diving.

**Nationalism.** Another factor that has received attention in Olympic broadcast analysis research is nationalism. In analyzing nationalism in the United States broadcast of the Sydney 2000 Summer Games, Billings and Eastman (2002) found that the most-mentioned athletes and half of all athletes mentioned were American. However, in their subsequent analysis of the United States broadcast of the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games, Billings and Eastman (2003) found non-American athletes were mentioned more frequently than American athletes were. Although Billings and Eastman (2003) found these results surprising, this could be attributed to the many European nations who are more competitive at the Winter Olympic Games. When mentioned, American athletes were characterized as more composed and courageous. Also, the success of non-American athletes was attributed to experience. Other analysis of nationalism came from Angelini and Billings (2010), who analyzed NBC’s coverage of the Beijing 2008 Summer Games and labeled it as ‘Americanized’. They found that, despite 28 sports being competed in, five sports received more than 90% of the prime-time coverage. These five sports were gymnastics, diving, swimming, track and field, and beach volleyball. They were selected by NBC as the sports most relevant for Americans to watch.

Analysis of nationalism in Olympic broadcasts has also been conducted from a South Korean perspective. Lee and Maguire (2011) examined the South Korean broadcast of the Athens 2004 Summer Games focusing on the discourse around the unification of North and South Korea. It was found that a dominant discourse of unitary Korean nationalism was evident
in the South Korean media coverage of the Athens 2004 Summer Games. The authors concluded that this sporting nationalism was more evident than political nationalism, with political tensions and conflicts present.

The most recent analysis of nationalism in Olympic broadcasting came from Tang (2013). In analyzing a range of stakeholders of the London 2012 Summer Games, it was found that this Games instigated nationalistic sentiments, which were harnessed by nation states and commercial sponsors. Tang (2013) concluded that tension exists between these nationalistic sentiments, which serve the interests of stakeholders and underpin the Games' popularity, commercial success and state investment, and the Olympic value of internationalism.

**Ethnicity.** Finally, the factor of ethnicity in Olympic broadcasts has also been analyzed. In reviewing the United States broadcast of the Sydney 2000 Summer Games, Billings and Eastman (2002) found that white athletes were portrayed as succeeding because of commitment, whereas black athletes were portrayed as succeeding because of innate athletic skills. In their subsequent analysis of the United States broadcast of the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Games, Billings and Eastman’s (2003) analysis of ethnicity biases identified that four fifths of all athletes mentioned, and the top 20 most mentioned athletes, were white. However, rather than these findings indicating a broadcasting bias towards white athletes, these findings could be explained by an issue of access, with winter sports predominantly participated in by white athletes.

**Effectiveness of Olympic Broadcast as a Promotional Platform**

A justification for the high rights fee charged for the Olympic Games is the potential to use it as a platform from which to promote a broadcast partner’s prime time shows. Billings, Eastman, and Newtown (1998) analyzed 183 promos for prime-time shows carried within prime-time coverage of the Atlanta 1996 Summer Games. They found that these promos had a large
effect on NBC's prime-time ratings, suggesting that the Olympic Games is an ideal platform for promoting a broadcast partner’s prime-time shows, offering justification for the high broadcast rights fees paid.

Eastman and Billings’ (2004) analysis of promos during the Sydney 2000 Summer Games did not confirm Billings et al.’s (1998) findings. They found that, for United States broadcaster NBC, only a quarter of their promoted shows rose in the ratings after Sydney 2000 promos, half of their promoted shows experienced no change in ratings, and a third of their promoted shows went down in the ratings. Eastman and Billings (2004) suggested that these findings are partially explained by NBC’s unusual promotional practices, which involved insufficient exposure time.

**Digital Media Platforms**

Relevant to the research question element of the digital age is literature on digital media platforms. Crosbie (2006) predicted that consumers of digital media platforms will be receiving information from their choice of a myriad of broadcasters. Since these consumers will be sharing content choices and control with publishers and broadcasters, digital media platforms serve not just as a 'one-to-one' or 'one-to-many' medium, but also as a 'many-to-many' model. According to Crosbie (2006) publishers and broadcasters failing to capitalize on this new media model, and all of its new potential, will be left behind.

**Digital Media Platforms in Sport**

As technology has advanced in recent years, more communication platforms have emerged, providing fans with several options for consuming their chosen sport product. Rein et al. (2007) identified that as a result of technological innovations, sports leagues and teams are changing how they communicate with their fans, with communication being much more direct in nature. Fans have gained unprecedented access to information on numerous, and still emerging, distribution channels. Many properties have developed their own network and are able to reach
out to fans globally through live streaming on their websites, as well as providing content via mobile phones. Rein et al. (2007) viewed such digital media platforms as the future of sports media. According to Hutchins, Rowe, Ruddock, and Leonard (2009), “it is now time to think less in terms of the longstanding relationship between sport and media, and more about sport as media given the increasing interpenetration of digital media content, sport, and networked information and communications technologies” (p. 89).

Impact of Digital Media Platforms on Sports Broadcasting Economy

According to Rein et al. (2007), digital media platforms have caused a readjustment in what had been a synergistic relationship between sports leagues, teams, and media. Sports organizations are now becoming their own media companies, able to interact directly with their fans without the filter of traditional media. Rein et al. (2007) argued that sport content providers now have the power to withdraw completely from the television arena. According to Rein et al. (2007), the rise in fees for sports rights has lead to media companies to look at sports organizations not as partners, but rather as integral units of their business strategies. Rein et al. (2007) described two models of media/sports club development are emerging. In one, properties are viewed as part of wider media organizations, such as Atlanta braves, who are owned by Time Warner. In the other, properties are developing multiple platform strategies either by themselves or in partnership with media companies. For example, the IOC have partnered with YouTube in delivering an Olympic Games platform that can be viewed in territories where digital media rights have not been sold. Rein et al. (2007) predicted that over the coming years the media landscape will look considerably different. For traditional media pipelines, such as television, to survive, they will have to connect to the content providers, such as the IOC, in innovative ways. Rein et al. (2007) observed increased bartering, cost-sharing, and integrated multiplatform
distribution strategies. According to Rein et al. (2007) technological change is softening the rigid division of roles in the sports-media model and is encouraging vertical integration as broadcasters are buying into sports firms and sports firms are buying into broadcasters. Hutchins and Rowe (2009) argued that digital media platforms possessed “the potential to dramatically alter the mediascape of sport, especially once broadband speeds sufficiently increase to enable real-time, full-motion video streaming for a majority of house-holds and users (p. 355).

Hutchins and Rowe (2009) argued that “sport has not been quarantined from the manifold impact of networked digital communications technologies on media content production, distribution, and reception, which have demanded substantial adjustment and transformation in the publishing, film, music, and related media industries” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009, p. 366). They argued that the long-established broadcast model is one characterized by `scarcity'. Exclusivity of rights and high barriers to access, such as cost, have restricted the number of broadcasters and sports organizations able to broadcast sport content that is popular and of a high quality and ensured value as competition was removed for viewers and advertisers. The emergence of digital media platforms has ushered in a new broadcast model, which is characterized by `digital plenitude'. Broadcasting via the Internet has significantly lowered barriers of access, as cost is lower, which has increased the number of broadcasters and sports organizations able to broadcast. Such change “demands adjustment and reorganization in both media and sport industries” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009, p. 355).

According to Noll (2006) digital media platforms have made the broadcasting market more competitive. The broadcasting of sports content via the Internet has served to drive the growth of the digital premium content marketplace. According to Evens, Lefever, Valcke, Schuurman, and Marez (2011), this success has more recently led to mobile service operators entering the sports
rights market, with sports content viewed as strategically important in the development of sustainable business models. However, the domination of established broadcasters in the markets for live sports broadcasting provides significant barriers to access premium sport content.

Evens and Lefever (2011) identified that sport was a driver for the development of digital television markets. In turn, this market’s demand for content was a driver for increasing rights fees, due to an increase in competition. Evens and Lefever (2011) argued that these markets will become fully established once the Government enforced switchover from analog to digital signals is complete. They predict that once digital television markets are fully established, the importance of sport as a catcher for new subscribers will drop, leading to platform operators becoming reluctant to invest huge sums to acquire digital sports broadcasting rights.

Hutchins and Rowe (2009) identified some key challenges as sport responds to the emergence of digital media platforms. First, there is a lack of clear distinctions between broadcasting platforms, increasingly so as functionally convergent communications devices emerge. For example, what does viewing a video on a smart phone constitute? Second, there is uncertainty over the appropriate level of control to be exercised by the content owner in its subsequent use via digital media platforms. For example, the use of highlight clips by news broadcasters and whether this contravenes the rights of the content owner. Third, there is uncertainty over the appropriate rights of sport fans to edit and distribute content, especially when this content includes controlled symbols and images. For example, sport fans may attend a sporting event that they record on their smart phone and upload onto a social media site, such as Facebook, or YouTube. Four, there is uncertainty of appropriate levels of policing of athletes, fans and other broadcasters in their use of digital media platforms. For example, the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) banned athletes from maintaining blogs during the Beijing 2008
Summer Games, fearing ambush marketing against AOC sponsors, before soon overturning this decision and instead providing detailed guidelines and restrictive conditions under which athletes could broadcast via digital media platforms.

These shifts in the sports broadcasting economy contribute to the timeliness of this study. As digital media platforms continue to have an increasing impact on the Olympic Games, the IOC will face the challenges identified by Hutchins and Rowe (2009), “requiring quick responses and adaptive planning” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009, p. 366). However, that is not to say that digital media platforms are going to completely replace television in sports broadcasting, with television “likely to continue in its preeminent role in the live broadcast of global media events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup for many years to come” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009, p. 367). As such, television and digital media platforms will need to “coexist and interact with complementary and competing content” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009, p. 367). Hutchins and Rowe (2009) concluded that there is a need to trace the economy of sports broadcasting through empirical investigation, which serves to justify the research questions posed in this study.

**Regulation of Digital Media Platforms in Sport**

The potential for the emergence of digital media platforms to drastically impact the regulation of the broadcasting of sporting events has long been predicted (Cameron, 1997). Changes to the economy of sports broadcasting as a result of digital media platforms have led to government intervention in the control and ownership of media sport. Hutchins and Rowe (2010) reviewed the 2009 Australian Senate Inquiry into ‘Sports News and the Emergence of Digital Media’, an inquiry attended by the IOC. Their analysis concluded that “emerging media sport markets are characterized by complex interaction, tense competition, and awkward overlaps between broadcast media and networked digital communications” (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010, p. 367).
1). It was evident from the Inquiry that:

Media sport no longer revolves mainly around capturing and maintaining a singularly conceived mass audience and rigorously policing access to it. Audiences are multiply-constituted and segmented, even during a live sports event (for example, those who watch television only; experience the event online; watch and follow simultaneously on television and online; view live and via mobile; watch on mobile alone; check news sites and/or specialist sports sites; and take advantage of the different experiences available to viewers on television, the Web, and mobile). (Hutchins & Rowe, 2010, p. 16)

In considering the regulation of digital media platforms and in response to criticisms of the commercial nature of the Internet, Ramsey (2013) advocated the establishment of a civic commons online, which is a space free from corporate and state influence, but which still receives some form of public funding. Such a policy is particularly relevant to the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success.

This literature is relevant to this study because the IOC will need to manage its digital media platforms within restrictions set by regulating bodies. As evidenced by their attendance at the Inquiry, the IOC will need to influence regulating bodies so that their interests are protected.

**Digital Media Opportunities and Challenges**

Existing literature has established opportunities that sports properties can take advantage of through the use of digital media platforms, notably international expansion and revenue generation, and has also established some key challenges, notably the cannibalization of television rights and the digital divide.

**International expansion.** Mahan III and McDaniel (2006) described how professional sports leagues have used the Internet to promote their brands and extend them into new markets.
Both the NBA and the NFL have developed Chinese language websites in an effort to cultivate fan bases in China (Lai, 2004). Such ‘cyber-branding’ can aid in the future exploration of coverage and licensed merchandise to a largely untapped foreign market.

**Revenue generation.** Cameron (1997) identified how technological progress has increased the potential for additional revenue through directly charging sport consumers for their consumption. Direct charging takes the form of ‘pay-per-view’ on satellite, cable and online. In 1996, it was estimated that the potential revenue that could be obtained from ‘pay-per-view’ by the English Premier League was $4 billion and that high profile clubs such as Manchester United could obtain $100 million (Cameron, 1997). To supplement television revenues sports are seeking new revenue sources through the utilization of new media technologies. Real (2006) reported data to demonstrate the popularity and economic viability of sports online. In 2003, annual income from advertising on sports-themed web sites was nearly $4.7 billion. In 2003, NASCAR had 150,000 subscribers paying $19.95 for live audio of races, alongside telemetry feeds of technical and performance information of cars on the track and the two-way radio conversations between drivers and pit crews. Similarly, Major League Baseball used a subscription model for play-by-play audio plus real-time data. Subscription was $14.95 per month to 300,000 subscribers. Major League baseball netted a profit of nearly $6 million on an income of $80 to $90 million from its 31 web sites (Holt, 2004). However, contrary to these findings, Evens and Lefever (2011) questioned whether digital media developments, such as dedicated club channels, personalized mobile content, and online news portals, will develop into profit centers as revenues have been disappointing thus far.

**Cannibalization of television rights.** Although the use of digital media can bring significant benefits, it also carries an inherent risk to a sport property’s television rights, which
can potentially be cannibalized by the sport property’s broadcast rights. Burton (1999) was an early predictor that the Internet could bring about the demise of television, referencing Nielsen’s report that online homes were watching about one hour less of television per day. However, Real (2006) noted that most Internet and television rivals have formed partnerships. Although many independent web sites still exist, “the trend has clearly been toward consolidation of ownership and convergence with other major media entities” (Real, 2006, p. 176). McChesney (2004) identified how cross-ownership and operating agreements were removing competition between television, the Internet, newspapers and radio, as a result of six major conglomerates owning and dominating a large part of the media world. Sport web sites had become members of mega corporations’ diverse media families, designed to maximize the publicity and control of media products and information channels. Burton (1999) suggested that such partnerships are potentially self-destructive, through contributing to greater web usage, which could undercut sports rights fees. This belief is shared by Jordan (2000), who referenced the 56 million page views recorded by the official Olympics web site and 46 million page views recorded by Yahoo Sports, in concluding that the web pulled away television viewers of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games on NBC.

**Digital divide.** Bennett (2008) considered another challenge with the issue of the ‘digital divide’, defined as rates of differing uptake of digital media technologies, in the context of public service broadcasting, where, like the IOC, there is a responsibility to provide everyone with equal access. In looking at the case of the BBC, Bennett (2008) identified how they were able to create several outreach partnerships with United Kingdom Government that encouraged and supported ‘hard to reach’ audiences to get online. Interactive television was used as a ‘portal’ to drive viewers to online spaces and the BBC brand was leveraged to open up targeted audiences.
to digital media platforms via a ‘trusted guide’. This case study provides understanding of the ‘remediation’ of public service broadcasting’s role in the digital age.

Evens and Lefever (2011) identified the risk of exclusive digital rights agreements to broad access to sports content. The shift of live sports coverage from analogue toward digital forms “could lead to a siphoning effect excluding analogue households from major sports events” (Evens & Lefever, 2011, p. 45).

These opportunities and challenges are relevant to the IOC in determining how they can manage the tension between upholding the principle of Olympism and maximizing commercial success. For example, although digital media platforms may bring extra revenue, they can exclude some Olympic fans due to the ‘digital divide’.

**Digital Media Platforms in the Olympics**

More specific to the research question element of the digital age is digital media platforms research conducted within the context of the Olympic Games. As digital media platforms have started to play a more important role in the broadcasting of the Olympic Games, there has been increasing research into their use. Related to this is the notion of technology development, which has culminated in the use of digital media platforms, but which has been important throughout the history of Olympic broadcasting given that “major sports events are often used by broadcasters to kick-start the latest forms of TV technology” (Liang, 2013, p. 473).

**The Olympics as a Platform for Technology Development**

Liang (2013) observed that the International Broadcasting Center (IBC), which provides the central feed for the Olympic Games, “acts as an exposition of the newest TV technologies” (p. 478) and serves as a learning environment for the world’s broadcasters. Focusing on the Chinese broadcaster China Central Television Sports, Liang (2013) studied the role of technology in Olympic broadcasting. Significant developments observed have been the use of
computer graphics during the 1996 Atlanta Games, virtual technology, such as designing a virtual site for studios, at the 2000 Sydney Games, a remote production system that enabled the production of television across physical sites at the 2004 Sydney Games, and a Network Production and Broadcasting System, which combined production and broadcasting processes on a single virtual platform, at the 2008 Beijing Games. Liang (2013) found that just because technology is available, it does not mean that its full potential will be utilized. The new technology should have optimized TV operation, raised efficiency, and enhanced creativity. However, in the case of the Chinese broadcaster, there were characteristics in Chinese broadcasting of political risks in live broadcasting. Liang (2013) concluded that:

> On the one hand, sports media events, and especially the Olympic Games, are ideal occasions for broadcasters to experiment with the newest forms of TV technologies. However, on the other hand, the Beijing Olympics was an outlier in this TV genre because it was charged with too much political significance for the Chinese broadcaster, which eventually forced objectives that prioritized creativity and efficiency to give way to objectives that underscored safe broadcasting. (p. 485)

**Fans’ Consumption of Olympic Digital Media Platforms**

The majority of literature on digital media platforms in the Olympic Games has looked at fans’ consumption. Tang and Cooper (2011) examined the influence of the Internet on consumption of the Beijing 2008 Summer Games. They found that four statistically significant factors combined to explain 34.6% of the variance in consumption of the Beijing 2008 Summer Games. The significant factors were the amount of time that individuals spent watching the Olympic Games via digital media platforms, perceived benefits of watching the Olympics via digital media platforms, time spent following sports news via digital media platforms, and
preferences for various Olympic sports. Notably, viewers who consumed the Olympic Games via
digital media platforms consumed the Olympic Games in greater quantity and indicated stronger
motivations to watch sports than viewers who did not use digital media platforms. Based upon
these findings, Tang and Cooper (2011) concluded that broadcasters should continue to use
digital media platforms in their broadcasting of the Olympic Games.

Further analysis of digital media platform consumption of the Beijing 2008 Summer
Games came from Cooper and Tang (2012). They examined differences and commonalities
between sports fans and nonfans multiplatform experience (i.e., consuming via both television
and digital media platforms, of the 2008 Beijing Summer Games. Cooper and Tang (2012)
identified differences between sports fans and non-fans in their overall behaviors, motivations,
and preferences). Notably, although sports fans watched the Beijing 2008 Summer Games
significantly more than non-fans, there were not significant differences in their use of digital
media platforms or motivations for watching.

In a third study that analyzed digital media platforms consumption of the Beijing 2008
Summer Games, Tang and Cooper (2012) examined differences between males and females use
of digital media platforms. They found that men and women were significantly different in sports
viewing and general media use, but shared similarities in seeking Olympic content on multiple
platforms.

Extending their research to the London 2012 Summer Games, Tang and Cooper (2013)
studied audience’s multiplatform media. Results indicate that significant positive relationships
existed between consuming the London 2012 Summer Games via television and digital media
platforms. Motivations, preferences, audience availability, and media use routine were able to
significantly predict London 2012 Summer Games consumption on various platforms.
This section of literature explores the specific context of this study (i.e., digital media platforms in the Olympic Games). However, these studies are focused on the behavior of consumers and patterns of viewing the Olympic Games on both television and digital media platforms. These findings have implications for this study in that effective strategic management of Olympic broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms should consider how digital media platforms are being used and also the relationship between consuming via digital media platforms and consuming via television. The research that is closest to the current study is that of Hutchins and Mikosza (2010), who considered the opportunities and challenges created by digital media platforms in Olympic broadcasting.

**Opportunities and Challenges from Olympic Digital Media Platforms**

According to Hutchins and Mikosza (2010), the Internet is transforming and intensifying the ‘digital mediatization’ of Olympic sport with dramatic increases in the amount and types of content available across multiple platforms. Their study of the Beijing 2008 Summer Games established that it was “an event in which online media was a dominant presence” and the IOC was “embracing the Internet much like the mediums preceding it” (Hutchins & Mikosza, 2010, p. 280). Examples of this were the ‘Voices of the Summer Games’ promotion, featuring over 100 athletes blogging about their personal Games experience, and the official Beijing 2008 YouTube channel. Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) describe these developments as:

A ‘post-broadcast’ Olympic communications environment in which the function and meaning of the long-dominant medium of television is complicated, challenged and complemented by its interaction with online audio-visual platforms, viewing practices such as time-shifting, and the emergence of dedicated online audiences, especially among younger users. (p. 280)
The Olympics had previously been a ‘closed communication system with only “a limited number of broadcasters possessing the technical and human resources, expertise and requisite spectrum to successfully bid for and te" (Hutchins & Mikosza, 2010, p. 281). However, this scarcity of channels has been replaced by ‘digital plentitude’ (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009) with the accessibility and affordability of digital media platforms multiplying the number of broadcasters, sports organizations, teams, athletes, and fans able to produce and distribute sports content, such as the Olympic Games. Such developments are labeled as possessing “a Janus-faced character, simultaneously offering additional avenues to promote the Olympic brand and experience across the globe and challenging their capacity to maintain control over Olympic related media in unpredictable online environments” (Hutchins & Mikosza, 2010, p. 281). This situation is the result of long-established broadcasting strategies colliding with the networking capacity of digital media platforms, such as blogs and Facebook.

Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) sought to identify the contradictions, tensions and challenges created by this dual dynamic of opportunities and challenges via a combination of primary and secondary data. Primary data (i.e., data generated by the authors) was collected from six semi-structured in-depth interviews with an elite athlete, a communications director, two national sports organization media managers, and two print media journalists. Secondary data (i.e., data already in existence) was collected from Olympic policy documents and news media stories.

Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) identified that the Beijing 2008 Summer Games offered more sanctioned Olympic content to international audiences via digital media platforms than any previous Games, and concluded that “despite the potential to disrupt the Olympic Movement’s command over the control and flow of media information, the 2008 Games experienced limited
problems related to ambush marketing, broadcast media rights infringement, or unauthorized online communication by athletes or third parties” (p. 291). This study is relevant to the current study in that, like the current study, it considers how digital media platforms have created both opportunities and challenges. However, there is a difference in the focus of these opportunities and challenges, with the current study focused on the tension between upholding the principles of Olympism and maximizing commercial success. As such, it is necessary to also review existing literature relevant to this specific challenge.

**Critical Analysis of the Literature**

This literature review has sought to cover literature relevant to the research questions, so to establish content gaps in the literature and inform the methodology. The elements of the research question are (a) what are the processes and practices, (b) by which the IOC manages Olympism, (c) through its broadcasting partnerships, and (d) in the digital age. These correspond to the following sections in the above literature review: (a) strategic management, (b) Olympism, (c) sports broadcasting, and (d) digital media platforms in sport, which will be covered in turn.

The strategic management literature sits within the field of organization studies (Pfeffer, 1997), whereby the organization is studied at a macro level, thus representing organizational theory that studies whole organizations, their adaption, strategies and structures (Scott, 1961). In reviewing strategic management literature within a sports context, a content gap is evident. The strategies by which a sports organization manage their broadcasting, whether their own broadcasting or broadcasting through broadcast partners, has not been considered in the existing literature. Rather, the strategic management in sport literature has focused upon an organization’s management of sport sponsorships (McCarville & Copeland, 1994; Amis, et al., 1997; Amis, 2003; Crompton, 2004; Sam, Batty, & Dean, 2005; Cousens, Babiak, & Bradish, 2006; Doherty
& Murray, 2007). When considering that revenue from broadcast rights and sponsorship are the primary income for professional sport organizations (Euchner, 1993), an important content gap of strategic management of sports broadcasting becomes apparent.

The Olympism literature has considered challenges in the defining of Olympism (Girginov, 2010; DaCosta, 2006) and established the Olympic Games as a platform for protesting (Timms, 2012). Although the research of Girginov (2010) and DaCosta (2006) was not based upon primary data, Timms (2012) used interviews, document analysis, and participant observations. Research into the practical realization of Olympism has been conducted on the concept of global citizenship (Roche, 2010) and also on the increasing commercialization of the Olympic Games (Maguire et al., 2008, Min, 1987). Maguire et al. (2008) considered the practical realization of Olympism against the line of business of sponsorship and Min (1987) against the line of business of broadcasting. Although Min’s (1987) study looked at the same line of business as the current study, it was taken from the perspective of a broadcast partner and their influence over an Organizing Committee. This study is conducted from this perspective in reverse, looking at how the IOC strategically manages their broadcast partners. However, the perspective adopted by Min (1987) has relevance to the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting in that the IOC must be able to restrict the power and influence of broadcast partners if they are to most effectively uphold the principles of Olympism. The work of Maguire et al. (2008) is taken from the perspective of the IOC in focusing on their ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign, yet primary data is collected from the sponsors and their advertising agencies rather than the IOC themselves. Although this literature considers the strategic management of Olympism within the context of the IOC’s commercial activities, a content gap in the literature still exists in studying the line of business of broadcasting from the perspective of the IOC, given that Maguire et al. (2008) and
Min (1987) do not achieve both of these elements within a single study.

So to consider the interpretations of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand, literature on sport for social development and brand management in sport was reviewed. The literature on sport for social development has previously produced “rather ambiguous and inconclusive findings” (Coalter, 2007a, p. 1), but a stronger evidence base is now emerging (Bailey et al., 2013). However, there is a lack of evidence that the Olympic Games is able to stimulate the increased sport-related physical activity required to achieve the possible areas of development. The literature on brand management in sport has focused on the concept of brand equity. The key sport brand equity models (Gladden et al., 1998; Gladden & Milne, 1999; Richelieu, 2004; Ross, 2006) were reviewed and provide frameworks that could aid the discussion and interpretation of the findings.

Although there is significant literature on sports broadcasting, it has largely not been from the perspective of organizational theory and strategic management. Rather, sports broadcasting literature has primarily concerned media representations (Gruneau et al., 1988; Silk, 2001; Silk, 2002) and pressures in sports television production (Silk, 1999; Genovese, 2013; Silk et al., 2000; Johnson, 2013). When considering the distinction of organization studies, this research represents organizational behavior, focusing on the individual and group dynamics in an organizational setting (Whyte, 1969) in terms of the behavior of producers and the group dynamics they operate within and pressures they face. Media representations also consider ‘decoding’ (Hall, 1973) by consumers, a perspective external to the organization. Another extensive area of sports broadcasting literature concerns the commodification of sport (Rowe, 1996; New & Le Grand, 1999; Hoehn & Lancefield, 2003; Scherer & Wilson, 2009; Evens & Lefever, 2011; Johnson, 2013) and the regulation of sports broadcasting in terms of the
centralized versus decentralized rights debate (Cave & Crandall, 2001; Gerrard, 2003; Noll, 2007; Evens & Lefever, 2011). This literature comes from a policy perspective (i.e., it is concerned with the interests of society and how governments should protect these through the regulation of sports broadcasting). Furthermore, this literature is not based upon primary data. In seeking to explore the strategic management of sports broadcasting from the perspective of the sports organization who own the content being broadcast, this research seeks to fill a content gap left by sports broadcasting literature being conducted from alternative perspectives, such as that of producers, consumers or governments.

Sports broadcasting literature with relevance to strategic management has looked at the areas of contracting models (Cameron, 1997; Gaustad, 2000; Foster et al., 2006; Mondello, 2006; Rein et al., 2007). Although this research comes from an organizational theory perspective like the present study (i.e., it considers the contracting models that sports organizations should consider in their management of broadcasting), it is directly related to the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand. Furthermore, this literature is not based upon primary data. Therefore, in considering a middle ground interpretation of Olympism using primary data, the research question addresses a content gap in the sports broadcasting literature.

Considering the strategic importance of the Olympic Games in sports broadcasting, it is not surprising that this context has been heavily used in the sports broadcasting literature. Reflective of the sports broadcasting literature, research into media representations and interpretations (Pujik, 2000; Billings & Eastman, 2002; Billings & Eastman, 2003) has dominated the Olympic broadcasting research. Within this literature, specific factors have been analyzed, including gender (Andrews, 1998; Eastman & Billings, 1999; Billings & Eastman, 2002; Billings & Eastman, 2003; Billings et al., 2010; Angelini & Billings, 2010), nationalism (Billings &
Eastman, 2002; Billings & Eastman, 2003; Angelini & Billings, 2010; Lee & Maguire, 2011; Tang, 2013), and ethnicity (Billing & Eastman, 2002; Billing & Eastman, 2003). This literature is taken from the perspective of producers, reflective of organizational behavior research rather than organizational theory. Furthermore, this literature is not based upon primary data. As such, a content gap in the literature is still present.

Other Olympic broadcasting literature has considered the effectiveness of the Olympic Games as a promotional platform for a broadcast partner’s other shows (Billings et al., 1998; Eastman & Billings, 2004). This literature is relevant to the current study in that it considers how the Olympic Games broadcast rights fees can be justified, which is related to Olympism as a commercial brand. However, this literature is primarily from the perspective of Olympic broadcast partners, rather than the IOC, and does not consider the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. Therefore, a content gap in the literature is still present.

The timing of this research is such that it is researching sports broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms. Several pieces of literature have focused on the emergence of digital media platforms in sports broadcasting (Rein et al., 2007; Hutchins et al, 2009) and specifically the impact of digital media platforms on the sports broadcasting economy (Rein et al, 2007; Hutchins & Rowe, 2009; Noll, 2006; Evens et al., 2011; Evens & Lefever, 2011), and the regulation of digital media platforms in sport (Cameron, 1997; Hutchins & Rowe, 2010; Ramsey, 2013). This literature is also not based upon primary data, but rather comes from essays and commentaries taken from the industry perspective and policy perspective. As such, although this literature is informative for the current study in understanding the context of the unit of analysis, a content gap in the literature still exists in the form of primary data research from a sport organization’s perspective.
Some literature on sports broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms has been conducted from the perspective of the sports organization, but has focused on specific opportunities and challenges created by the emergence of digital media platforms. Opportunities include international expansion (Mahan III & McDaniel, 2006; Lai, 2004), and revenue generation (Cameron, 1997; Holt, 2004; Real, 2006; Evens & Lefever, 2011). Challenges include the cannibalization of television rights (Burton, 1999; Jordan, 2000; McChesney, 2004; Real, 2006) and the ‘digital divide’ (Bennett, 2008; Evens & Lefever, 2011). This literature is relevant to the current study, taken from the perspective of the sports organization. It considers opportunities relevant to how the IOC can most successfully leverage Olympism as a commercial brand (international expansion and revenue generation), challenges relevant to Olympism as a commercial brand (cannibalization of television rights), and challenges relevant to Olympism as a philosophy of social reform (digital divide). However, as with the majority of other literature considered thus far, this literature is not based upon primary data. Therefore, a content gap is still present in the digital media platforms broadcasting in sport literature.

This study is not the first to consider Olympic broadcasting following the emergence of digital platforms. The Olympic Games has been established as a platform for technology development (Liang, 2013), which justifies the context chosen for this study. The majority of literature has focused on Olympic fans’ consumption of digital media platforms (Tang & Cooper, 2011; Cooper & Tang, 2012; Tang & Cooper, 2012; Tang & Cooper, 2013). This research is relevant to the current study in that it considers the behavior of Olympic fans in consuming digital media platforms, which must be taken into consideration by the IOC in determining their strategies for managing Olympic broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms. However, although this literature can influence strategy, it is not research of strategy,
as is the case with the current study, which, therefore, addresses a content gap in the literature.

The broadcasting-related literature that is most similar to the current study is that which identifies opportunities and challenges that emerge from digital media platforms being used as part of Olympic broadcasting (Hutchins & Mikosza, 2010). First, it considers Olympic broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms, although at a point in time six years prior to the current study. Second, it considers how digital media platforms have created both opportunities and challenges. The identification of opportunities and challenges is at the heart of strategic management research (as being conducted in the current study), so the findings from Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) can be compared against the findings from the current study so to trace how these opportunities and challenges have evolved in the last six years. Although there are clear similarities between the present study and the work of Hutchins and Mikosza (2010), there is a difference in focus of opportunities and challenges. Whereas Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) looked at opportunities and challenges from a more general perspective, as reflected in the broadness of the roles of their interviewees, this study will only consider the opportunities and challenges faced by the IOC in their management of Olympism through broadcasting partnerships. Therefore, although this research provides a foundation of understanding for the current study to build upon, a content gap in the literature is still present.

From this critical review of the literature, it can be concluded that the proposed research question addresses a content gap in the literature. The elements of the research question are (a) what are the processes and practices, (b) by which the IOC manages Olympism, (c) through its broadcasting partnerships, and (d) in the digital age. The content gap is apparent on three levels. First, literature on these elements has largely been taken from a perspective other than that of the sports organization, including from producers, governments, and consumers. Second, where
literature has been conducted from the perspective of the sports organization, it has largely not been conducted using primary data, rather it has been essays and commentaries based upon secondary data. Third, although these elements have all received attention in the literature, never before has a research question brought all of these elements together. For example, the three most relevant studies to this research are Amis (2003), Hutchins and Mikosza (2010), and Maguire et al. (2008). Individually, these studies address some of the elements of the research question, but not all. The work of Amis (2003) effectively identifies management strategies (element 1). The work of Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) partially identified management strategies (element 1), but most effectively studied sports broadcasting (element 3) following the emergence of digital media platforms (element 4). However, it is not exclusively from the perspective of the IOC (element 2), notably failing to interview IOC broadcasting executives or even broadcast partner executives. The work of Maguire et al. (2008) considered managing Olympism (element 2), from the perspective of the IOC (element 2), although, as with Hutchins and Mikosza (2010), no primary data was collected from the IOC and the focus was on sponsorships rather than broadcasting (element 3). Therefore, an analysis of these studies serves to confirm the proposed research question on the basis of a clear content gap in the literature.

Furthermore, these most relevant studies are able to inform the methodology of the proposed research. The majority of literature reviewed was not based upon primary data in that it represented essays or commentaries or was research based exclusively on secondary data, as was the case with media representations. Methodologies that were evident in the literature were ethnographies in the case of the research into pressures faced by broadcasters in sports broadcasting, which represented organizational behavior research, or survey based research that considered consumer behaviors in the consumption of sport via digital media platforms. The
primary data research that represented organizational theory adopted methodologies that combined both interviews and document analysis. These studies shall be used to inform the proposed methodology.

**Research Questions**

On the basis of the above critical review of the literature, the research questions (RQ) are confirmed as:

RQ 1: What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age?

RQ 2: How does the IOC manage these processes and practices?

RQ 3: Why does the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way?

These research questions include an exploratory “what are” question, which seeks to ‘map’ the processes and practices by which the IOC strategically manage. Additionally, a “how” question looks more closely at these processes and practices to see “how” they are managed. Finally, a “why” question is included to identify why the IOC enacted or chose their strategies. As such, this represents a study of process (what they do) and of perception (what perceptions do organizational actors have that lead them to developing those processes in a particular way).

**Operational Definition of Terms**

This section details how I will be using the following terms. It should be noted that many of the terms have contested definitions. Therefore, wherever possible, definitions from the perspective of the IOC taken from documents such as the Olympic Charter were used.

*Olympic Games* – “The Olympic Games are competitions between athletes in individual or team events and not between countries. They bring together the athletes selected by their respective National Olympic Committees, whose entries have been accepted by the International Olympic
Committee. They compete under the technical direction of the International Federations concerned. The Olympic Games consist of the Games of the Olympiad and the Olympic Winter Games” (IOC, 2013b, p. 21).


*Olympism* – “A philosophy of social reform” (Girginov, 2010, p. 1), conceived by the founder of the International Olympic Committee and father of the Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin (IOC, 2013b) and retained by the Olympic Movement as their primary goal, that contributes to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced in accordance with Olympism and its values (IOC, 2013b).

*Principles of Olympism* – The principles and essential values that underpin the IOC’s philosophy of Olympism, which advocate the use of sport, as a human right, for the harmonious development of humankind, the promotion of a peaceful society, the preservation of human dignity, the removal of discrimination, and the establishment of a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play (IOC, 2013b).

*The Olympic Movement* – “Encompasses organizations, athletes and other persons who agree to be guided by the Olympic Charter” (IOC, 2013b, p. 15). The three main constituents are the International Olympic Committee, the International Sports Federations, and the National Olympic Committees, but it also encompasses the Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games (IOC, 2013b).
International Olympic Committee – “An international non-governmental not-for-profit organization, of unlimited duration, in the form of an association with the status of a legal person” (IOC, 2013b, p. 31). They are the supreme authority and leaders of the Olympic Movement, with a mission to promote Olympism throughout the world (IOC, 2013b).

International Federations – “International non-governmental organisations administering one or several sports at world level and encompassing organisations administering such sports at national level” (IOC, 2013b, p. 53).

National Olympic Committees – National level representatives of the International Olympic Committee, with a responsibility “to develop, promote and protect the Olympic Movement in their respective countries, in accordance with the Olympic Charter” (IOC, 2013b, p. 57).

Organizing Committee – “The organisation of the Olympic Games is entrusted by the IOC to the NOC of the country of the host city as well as to the host city itself. The NOC shall be responsible for the establishment, for that purpose, of an Organising Committee which, from the time it is constituted, reports directly to the IOC Executive Board” (IOC, 2013b, p. 71).

Rights over the Olympic Games and Olympic properties - The International Olympic Committee is the owner of all rights in and to the Olympic Games and Olympic properties, which rights have the potential to generate revenues for such purposes (IOC, 2013b).

Olympic Broadcasting - “The International Olympic Committee is the owner of the broadcast rights, including television, mobile and internet, for the Olympic Games and Olympic Winter Games. The International Olympic Committee is responsible for allocating Olympic broadcast rights to media companies throughout the world through the negotiation of rights agreements.”
The International Olympic Committee manages Olympic broadcast partnerships to ensure that the long-term interests of the Olympic Movement are protected” (IOC, 2014c, p. 20).

*Digital Media Platforms* – Broadcasting platforms utilizing digital media content, which allow consumers to share equal and reciprocal control over the sport content (Crosbie, 2006), including Internet-connected computers, smart phones, and ‘smart’ television.

*Commercial Success* – For the International Olympic Committee to be commercially successful they must achieve “independent financial security of the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5), which requires sufficient revenues to stage the Olympic Games, to invest back into sport, in particular for emerging nations, and to promote Olympism (IOC, 2014c).

*Strategic Management* – The management process of “the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” (Chandler, 1962, p. 13).
CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD

This dissertation has identified and analyzed the processes and practices by which the IOC strategically manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. This chapter details the various methodological aspects of this study: (a) the constructivist research design; (b) the case study strategy of enquiry; (c) the data collection strategies of interviews, document collection, and observations; and (d) the content analysis techniques. The chapter will conclude by considering the role of the researcher and the delimitations of the study.

Research Design

The research design is a flexible set of guidelines that focus on the research question to establish the data that will most appropriately answer the research question and which strategies will be most effective to obtain that data. The design “situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, people, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant material, including documents and archives” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 14). This section establishes the method of inquiry taken in this study and how this was determined. Additionally, this section addresses the role of research paradigms, their associated assumptions, and how these serve to guide and inform the methodology. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the design of a qualitative research project “begins with a socially situated researcher who moves from a research question, to a paradigm or perspective, to the empirical world” (p. xi).

Qualitative Research

This study engaged in qualitative research, which is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as “a situated activity that that locates observer in the world” and that “consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 3). Creswell (2012) views
qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding, which provides a complex and holistic picture in a natural setting. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that “qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world” and that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Although this study only engaged in qualitative research rather than quantitative research, it was not approached with a pre-determined methodological approach in mind. Instead, the researcher sought to first establish a socially significant and timely research topic, which represented a gap in the literature, from which well-defined research questions could be formulated. It is from these research questions that a scientifically rigorous methodology was developed. For example, the exploratory nature of the research questions is such that they were best answered taking a qualitative approach (Veal, 2006).

**A Research Question Driven Approach**

The process of defining and formulating the research questions enabled the researcher to clearly define a set of research concepts, which are detailed in the introduction chapter. The research questions included the research variable of strategy processes and practices, participants of the IOC and broadcasting partners, and a setting of Olympic broadcasting in the digital age. The research variable of the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through broadcasting partnerships was considered across three levels via three research questions: considering what are the practices and processes, how are they managed, and why are they managed in this way. As defined in the title of this study, looking at the IOC’s processes and practices across these levels, grounds the research in the approach of strategic management. This served to maximize the social significance of this research when considering that the
question of whether a sport organization will fail or succeed will “rest on an underlying theory of
the firm and an associated theory of strategy” (Porter, 1991, p. 95).

The Qualitative Nature of Strategy Data

Strategy is defined as "the combination of competitive moves and business approaches
that managers employ to please customers, compete successfully, and achieve organizational
objectives" (Thompson, Strickland, & Thompson, 2006, p. 3). Strategy is further defined as “the
determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of
courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals”
(Chandler, 1962, p. 13). It can be concluded that strategy data in itself is primarily qualitative in
nature when comparing the concepts within the definitions of strategy and definitions of the
qualitative approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that qualitative research practices “turn
the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations,
photographs, recordings, and memos to the self” (p. 3). Similarly, Creswell (2012) identified that
researchers taking a qualitative approach analyze words to report the detailed views of
informants. This qualitative nature of representations and words is evident in strategy data. The
strategy concepts evident in the above definitions are competition, moves, business approaches,
goals, objectives, courses of action, and allocation of resources. These can be primarily recorded
in qualitative words and representations, rather than quantitative numbers. According to Amis
(2003) the subtlety and complexity of strategy can only be understood in qualitative terms. As
such, the data required to answer the research questions was qualitative, which thus required a
qualitative research approach to be taken.

Linking Strategy to Paradigm

Undertaking a qualitative inquiry approach on the basis that the nature of strategy data is
in itself primarily qualitative is different to the approach of Amis (2003), who directly linked strategy research to the paradigm of constructivism, rather than the nature of strategy data. According to Amis (2003), it is recognized within the management discipline that positivist and post-positivist approaches do not allow the capture of detail required to understand strategies. This raises the issue of the research paradigm or worldview adopted by the researcher and the point at which paradigms should be considered in methodology development.

The Paradigm Driven Approach

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) “all qualitative researchers are philosophers” (p. 12), who are guided by highly abstract principles. These principles include beliefs about ontology, epistemology, and methodology, which “shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it” (p. 13). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue, “each generation must articulate its epistemological, methodological, and critical stance toward critical inquiry” (p. x). Researchers are “bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises” (Bateson, 1972, p. 314, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These contentions place limitations on the researcher, suggesting that a researcher must identify their paradigm or worldview and work within the boundaries prescribed. For example, a constructivist would seek to achieve meaning of phenomena through participants and their subjective views, viewing the phenomenon within its context, taking a qualitative approach. However, in this case, a qualitative approach was determined, not because of particular beliefs of ontology or epistemology that shall be considered later, but due to an analysis of the nature of the data of the phenomenon of investigation.

Paradigm Assumptions

Giardina and Laurendeau (2013) offer a bridge between the research question driven
approach and the research paradigm driven approach. They argue that we should “understand that the perspectives from which we write—and the particular ontological and epistemological assumptions to which we hold—are imbricated within the analyses we produce and the ways in which we participate in scholarly and popular dialogue about the social issues and positions we study, debate, argue, and advocate” (p. 239). This represents a paradigm driven approach, but more importantly, it acknowledges the link between paradigm and methodology, establishing the importance of understanding the assumptions associated with the research methods taken. To achieve this understanding, paradigms are operationalized as interpretive frameworks, which are “basic sets of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990a, p. 17, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Even if a paradigm is not exclusively held by the researcher and is not necessarily driving the research, an understanding of the paradigm is important because “each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, including the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13).

Therefore, this discussion demonstrates awareness of the assumptions made about gaining knowledge, which shape the process of research and conduct of inquiry. Such an approach tackles the problem of “a lack of understanding concerning the philosophy of inquiry and various paradigmatic approaches to research—and what those approaches mean for how one views being, living, and knowing in the social world” (Giardina & Laurendeau, 2013, p. 242). The researcher’s understanding of the philosophy of science and philosophy of inquiry is provided, which establishes what it means for the research act to be located in a particular paradigm, so that the practical implications identified in the social significance section of the introduction chapter can be achieved.
Pragmatic Position

In being driven by the research questions rather than the research paradigm, the position taken by the researcher is that of a pragmatist. Rather than being exclusively guided by a single set of beliefs or assumptions about research, this research used “whatever philosophical and/or methodological approach works for the particular research problem under study” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 5). For this study the research questions were of primary importance and were more important than the method or the paradigm that underlies the method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003b). As such, a practical and applied research philosophy was taken to guide methodological choices, which abandons the forced-choice between post-positivism and constructivism and the use of metaphysical concepts such as truth and reality (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The researcher took a pragmatic position, rather than perceive pragmatism as a paradigm or worldview in its own right. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) label pragmatism as a worldview, alongside post-positivism and constructivism. They argued that the worldview of pragmatism focuses on the consequences of research, is pluralistic, and oriented toward what works and practice. In contrast, Greene and Caracelli (1997) consider the pragmatist perspective a position rather than a more philosophically complex paradigm or worldview. In line with the view of Greene and Caracelli (1997), pragmatism was adopted as a position rather than a paradigm or worldview. Taking this perspective allowed for the assumptions that underlie the qualitative approach to be considered in the design of this research, rather than rejected in favor of a pragmatic paradigm or worldview. In this sense, this method chapter did not seek to engage or add to the well-documented philosophical debate labeled as the paradigm wars (Tashakkori &
Teddlie, 2003), but instead examined the research paradigms so to inform the methodology adopted.

**Examination of Paradigms**

Although many more than three research paradigms exist, an examination of all research paradigms was unfeasible within the scope of this dissertation. As such, only the three most prominent paradigms of positivism, post-positivism, and constructivism were examined. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined a paradigm as the net that contains a researcher’s ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises. Thus, these premises served as a basis for examining the paradigms.

**Ontology.** Ontology is defined as the worldviews and assumptions held in the search for knowledge (Schwandt, 2007). It addresses the question of ‘What is reality?’ Both positivists and post-positivists believe that there is a single reality. However, whereas positivists believe that this one reality can be perfectly measured, post-positivists acknowledge that the measurement of this one reality can often be imperfect, requiring the consideration of probabilities. The implication of this different belief is that positivists frame their findings as ‘proof’, whereas post-positivists provide evidence in support or opposition of their tested hypotheses (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). In contrast to both positivism and post-positivism, constructivists believe that there are multiple realities and that there can be multiple meanings or understandings of phenomena, which are shaped by the social interaction and personal histories of participants. In taking a pragmatic position, the ontological position of the researcher is that there are multiple realities, meanings, and understandings of this study’s phenomenon of investigation; the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age.
**Epistemology.** Ontology is closely linked to epistemology, which is defined as the relationship between what we know and see (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011) and addresses the question of ‘How can I know reality?’ Positivists believe that the knower and the known are independent and that the researcher can be completely objective and separate from the research. Post-positivists similarly believe that the influence of the researcher should be minimized as much as possible. In contrast, constructivists believe that it is not possible to separate the researcher and the findings, as it is not possible for a researcher to be completely objective and separate their own beliefs from the research process. In that sense positivist and post-positivist research are value free, whereas constructivist research is value-laden. For the qualitative approach taken in this study, it was not possible to separate the researcher and the findings, thus it was accepted that this study was value-laden and the role of the researcher was acknowledged in the methodology.

**Methodology.** The methodological premises are the theory of how inquiry should proceed (Schwandt, 2007). Positivists and post-positivists advocate empirical observation and measurement, viewing the goal of knowledge as to describe the phenomena that we experience and the purpose of science as to study only what can be observed and measured. This is achieved through reductionism, which is the process of narrowing and focusing on select variables to interrelate, with research being delimited to certain variables. Positivists advocate hypothesis testing through experimental design with high levels of control within laboratory settings. Variables are manipulated to infer cause and effect. Post-positivists also advocate hypothesis testing, but through quasi-experiments and surveys. Qualitative methodologies can also adhere to post-positivist principles where a saturation of themes is achieved, thus producing findings that can be generalized to a population. However, constructivism achieves understanding or meaning...
of phenomena through participants and their subjective views. Constructivists believe that the best way to understand any phenomenon is to view it in its natural setting.

Positivism and post-positivism advocate deductive reasoning, working from the general to the specific. A theory is narrowed down to specific hypotheses that we can test. Specific data is collected to test the hypotheses, which leads to the original theory being confirmed or rejected. In comparison, constructivism advocates inductive reasoning, moving from specific observations or individual perspectives to broader generalizations and theories or broad patterns and understandings. This method of reasoning begins with specific observations and measures, which are analyzed to detect patterns and themes from which tentative hypotheses are formulated. In exploring these tentative hypotheses, some general conclusions or theories are developed.

Positivists and post-positivists utilize measures of reliability and validity to ensure results and repeatable and that inferences and interpretations are accurate. Additionally, statistical benchmarks, such as effect size, are used to interpret statistical findings. However, in constructivist research “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13). Giardina and Laurendeau (2013) are critical of qualitative researchers “who continue to use concepts and practices like bias, objectivity, subjectivity statements, triangulation, audit trails, and interrater reliability that signal they are bound to logical positivism/empiricism, objectivism, and realism” (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 2, quoted in Giardina & Laurendeau, 2013).

**Constructivism Advantages**

This research explored the phenomenon of the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. Such a specific problem could not be understood
from a general perspective, as delivered by the positivist and post-positivist paradigms, because it is a phenomenon that is specific to the IOC and the Olympic Games. Rather, a high level of detail was required so to understand the subtle and socially complex ways by which the IOC strategically manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. Amis (2003) has supported such an approach, contending that the use of qualitative methods and the construction of detailed case studies are necessary to uncover the subtle and socially complex ways in which strategy is used.

Furthermore, the constructivist paradigm allows for interpretation of the data from relevant perspectives in a natural setting. If one was to adopt a positivist vocabulary, it could be said that conducting this research within the natural setting of the Olympic Games provides external validity, whereby the processes and practices of how the IOC manages Olympism through Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age will be captured within the setting of where the behavior occurs (i.e., the organization of the IOC). This approach sacrifices the internal validity that positivist research seeks to achieve from controlled settings that may account for extraneous and confounding variables. In this research, external validity was sought over internal validity because, rather than seeking to isolate causal relationships between research variables, this study was looking at phenomena of strategy, processes, and practices that are dependent upon the IOC, Olympic broadcasters, and the Olympic Games, and which could be best understood within their natural setting.

Although the positivist and post-positivist paradigms allow for time and context-free generalizations by inferring results from a sample and applying them to a population, generalization is possible in taking a constructivist approach by engaging in purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), as discussed later in this chapter, and also through the saturation of themes in the
data analysis. Strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age is a phenomenon specific to the IOC and its broadcast partners and, as detailed in the social significance section of the introduction chapter, the practical implications of this research are greatest for the IOC and its broadcast partners. Therefore, generalization of the findings to other sports organizations was not the primary objective of this research. However, on a more general level, the findings offer insight into the strategic management of multi-sport events broadcasting following the emergence of digital media platforms, and sports organizations managing similar events (e.g., Pan American Games) may gain some valuable insights from the findings of this study.

In summary, this study adopted a pragmatic position. Although some qualitative research experts limit the methodologies at their disposal according to the research paradigm they align with, the researcher was open to any method of inquiry that would best answer the research question. As such, the decision to adopt a qualitative approach was driven by the research questions and the nature of the phenomena investigated. This study investigated the strategic management of the IOC and strategy data is qualitative in nature, thus dictating that qualitative data was collected and a qualitative approach taken. That said, awareness of the paradigm assumptions associated with the qualitative approach was necessary for appropriate execution of the qualitative methodologies used. Examination of the assumptions associated with the primary research paradigms established that the constructivist paradigm best served the research questions, which required a detailed understanding of the subtle and socially complex ways in which strategy was used by the IOC, and external validity from studying the phenomena of strategies in their natural setting of the IOC, their broadcast partners, and the Olympic Games. Furthermore, so to best answer the research question multiple realities and meanings were
captured and it was recognized that the researcher’s values played a role in the research, which was value-laden.

Case Study

The strategy of inquiry adopted in this research was a case study. A case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). This constructivist strategy of enquiry was preferred over positivist and post-positivist strategies of enquiry, such as experiments and quasi-experiments. There are many advantages to such strategies of enquiry. They allow for the manipulation of variables in a controllable setting to make cause and effect conclusions. Survey designs are efficient, allowing for a wide variety of questions to be asked to a large sample in a short period of time and can be tested by future scholars in different contexts using different samples. This allows future research to replicate studies, compare findings, and test for differences and similarities across contexts.

Although these advantages are lost, the research questions in this study were best answered by looking at the phenomenon of investigation in depth and within its real-life context, which is essential as the phenomenon of the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age does not exist outside of the case being studied. Case studies are able to produce the type of concrete, context-dependent knowledge required to study complex subjects, such as strategy (Amis, 2003). Indeed, Flyvberg (2011) argues that “social science has not succeeded in producing general, context-independent theory and has thus in the final instance nothing else to offer then concrete, context-dependent knowledge” (p. 303). Case studies provide an understanding of context and process, and link causes and problems to understand the cause
of a problem (Flyvberg, 2011). This was important in understanding both the opportunities and challenges faced by the IOC in Olympic broadcasting, which have emerged with digital media platforms. In this sense, a case study of the Olympic Games “can ‘close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvberg, 2011, p. 309).

**Case Study Approach Selection**

The case study approach was confirmed by considering the research needs against a criteria proposed by Flyvberg (2011), which, if met, point towards the case study as an appropriate strategy of inquiry. By choosing to conduct a case study based upon research needs, the researcher made a pragmatic choice of what is to be studied rather than a methodological choice. This is in line with the pragmatic position established in the previous section of this method chapter.

First, according to Flyvberg (2011), “the decisive factor in defining a study as a case study is the choice of the individual unit of study and the setting of its boundaries” (p. 301). To answer the research question, which is specific to the IOC and its broadcast partners, naturally required a case study of the IOC. The boundaries of the case study are further defined when considering that the research question seeks to investigate the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. This requires the unit of analysis of the IOC to be further specified as the IOC’s broadcasting line of business.

Second, a case study is also appropriate when the context of the case also needs to be considered (Flyvberg, 2011). “The drawing of boundaries for the individual unit of study decides what gets to count as case and what becomes context to the case” (Flyvberg, 2011, p. 301). The context of the unit of analysis of the IOC is particularly important when looking at their line of
business of broadcasting because the rights to broadcast the Olympic Games, although owned by the IOC, are sold to broadcast partners, such as the BBC in the United Kingdom and NBC in the United States. Therefore, the research questions addressed how the IOC manages Olympism through Olympic broadcasting partnerships. As such, to answer the research question required that the perspectives of broadcasting partners also be considered. Therefore, data was also collected from Olympic broadcast partners. In addition to holistically studying Olympic broadcast partnerships via both parties that make up these partnerships (i.e., the IOC and Olympic broadcasters), inclusion of data from broadcast partners also served to verify the data collected from the IOC.

Third, a case study is suitable if the examination of the unit of study needs to be intensive and in-depth (Flyvberg, 2011). “Case studies comprise more detail, richness, completeness, and variance—that is, depth—for the unit of study than does cross-unit analysis” (Flyvberg, 2011, p. 301). It was necessary for the IOC to be studied intensively and in depth because the research variable of strategy processes and practices are used in subtle and complex ways (Amis, 2003). To reveal the subtleties, nuances, and complexities of strategies requires the construction of intensive and detailed case studies (Amis, 2003).

Finally, a case study is an appropriate strategy of inquiry when a change in the phenomenon being studied has evolved over a period of time. According to Flyvberg (2011), “a case typically evolves in time, often as a string of concrete and interrelated events that occur” (p. 301). This study analyzed the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. As established in Chapter 2, the emergence of digital media platforms in Olympic broadcasting did not occur overnight. Rather, it was a gradual process. As such, the IOC has gradually responded with new strategies. In this sense, although this study will provide a
‘snapshot’ of the strategies used by the IOC at the point of time at which data was collected, the point of time ‘in the digital age’ is a change that has occurred over a period of time.

**Case Justification**

Having confirmed the adoption of a case study approach, it was necessary to ensure that the case being investigated was appropriate. According to Yin (2009), a strong case is one that represents (a) a critical case, (b) a ‘case in point’, and (c) an information rich and illuminative case, as detailed below.

**A critical case.** A case that is critical should have strategic importance in relation to the general problem studied (Yin, 2009) and should represent an example of best practice that sets the standard (Flyvberg, 2011). Studying a case of strategic importance was necessary to maximize the social significance of the study in that if the case was not important, then the implications from the findings would also not be important. Also, in order for practical implications to exist beyond the case, a critical case that is valid for other cases must be established (Yin, 2009). So to represent a critical case with strategic importance for this study requires the IOC to be in control of a world leading sports broadcasting resource, which is determined based upon the value that broadcasters are willing to pay for the right to broadcast the sports property and also the global audience of the sports property.

Spa, Rivenburgh, and Larson (1995) recognized the strategic importance of the IOC and the Olympic Games. They described the Olympic Games as a window through which to study the interaction among economics, organizational and corporate practices, and technological change on both national and global scales. Spa et al. (1995) also contend “the primary arenas of international communications research lend themselves directly to looking at the Olympic Games” (p. 2). The economic importance is evident in the total revenue raised from broadcast
rights for the 2009 to 2012 Olympic Cycle, which was $3.9146 billion (IOC, 2014c). This exceeds the value of broadcast rights for the 2010 South Africa World Cup, which were sold for $2.408 billion (FIFA, 2010). According to the IOC (2012), a total of 4.8 billion people out of 6.8 billion globally had home access to dedicated London 2012 coverage aired by official broadcasters. This represents 71% of the world’s population. Of this 4.8 billion people audience, a total of 3.6 billion watched at least one minute of dedicated coverage, which represents 75% of the total potential TV audience and 53% of the world’s population. The value of the Olympic Games broadcast rights and the global audience of the Olympic Games clearly establishes it as a world leading sports broadcasting resource.

According to Yin (2009), if a critical case is established, it could be valid for other cases, allowing for the transfer of knowledge. The purposeful sampling by which a strategic choice of case is made can add to the generalizability of a case study (Patton, 2002). According to Flyvberg (2011), “it is incorrect to conclude that one cannot generalize from a single case. It depends upon the case one is speaking of, and how it is chosen” (p. 304). Although selection of a critical case is not considered formal generalization, that does not mean that this case cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation, or that the knowledge generated is not transferable (Flyvberg, 2011). According to Yin (2009), it remains true that case studies are not generalizable to populations or universes; they are generalizable to theoretical propositions when representing a critical case. As such, the goal of a case study is “to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization)” (Yin, 2009, p. 15).

Although generalizability was not a primary objective of this study, in that the research questions are specific to the IOC, findings on the general problem can still be generalized from
the IOC to other sports organizations on the basis that the IOC represents a critical case in sports broadcasting. Sport organizations that manage multi-sport events with similarities to the Olympic Games, such as the Pan Am Games and the Commonwealth Games, can benefit the most from the findings of this study. The specific and detailed knowledge gained from this case study of the IOC can be transferred to other sports organizations, expanding and generalizing theories on the strategic management of sports broadcasting in the digital age.

A ‘case in point’. A case should also represent a ‘case in point’ so that the phenomenon under investigation is present in the case, so to make the research valid. A ‘case in point’ for this study required (a) a sports organization that manages its own broadcasting rights, and (b) a sports organization that owns and manages a broadcasting resource that is consumed through digital media platforms as well as traditional television, so that the phenomenon of the strategic management of broadcasting partnerships in the digital age can be captured.

The IOC is a sports organization with ownership of the Olympic Games, which are defined as “competitions between athletes in individual or team events” (IOC, 2013, p. 21). The IOC has responsibility for managing broadcasting, and are defined as “the owner of the broadcast rights, including television, mobile and internet, for the Olympic Games and Olympic Winter Games” and are “responsible for allocating Olympic broadcast rights to media companies throughout the world through the negotiation of rights agreements” (IOC, 2014c, p. 20).

The Olympic Games represent a window through which to study technological change (Spa et al., 1995). This is particularly the case with broadcasting technology, where broadcast partners hold back new technology to showcase it via their marquee broadcasting resource of the Olympic Games. As detailed in Chapter 2, there has been a shift in the perceptions, use, and uptake of digital media platforms in broadcasting the Olympic Games in recent years. In advance
of the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, digital media platforms were viewed as a threat to Olympic broadcasting and as a medium that could cannibalize the Olympic broadcasting model that was built upon traditional television. However, by the Olympic Congress in 2009, the IOC was calling upon all of the Olympic Movement to be cognizant of digital media. We have also witnessed a dramatic shift in the use of digital media platforms. Nothing more than a single official website was available for Sydney 2000. This website was basic in form in comparison to the website technologies that exist today, only providing information. As digital media technology has developed we have seen a gradual increase in both the use and uptake of digital media platforms culminating in London 2012 being labeled as the first ‘truly digital Games’ (BBC Sport, 2012a). Evidence of the recognition of the growing importance of digital media is that the IOC has been negotiating the sale of digital media rights separately from television rights since the 2008 Beijing Summer Games (IOC, 2008a).

**An information rich and illuminative case.** Finally, the case needed to be information rich and illuminative (Patton, 2002), so to provide the detail necessary to capture the complexity, subtlety, and nuances of strategy (Amis, 2006). To be information rich and illuminative (Patton, 2002) the case needed to be complex in nature. Flyvberg (2011) suggests that an extreme or atypical case is richest in information:

When the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon, a representative case or a random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy. This is because the typical or average case if often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied. (p. 306)
The IOC represents a complex case that is extreme in terms of the complexity of the mega sporting event they manage. The Olympic Games are made up of a Summer Games and Winter Games. The most recent Summer Games had 302 events across 26 sports with over 10 thousand athletes competing from 204 nations. The most recent Winter Games of Sochi 2014 had 98 events across fifteen sports with over two thousand and five hundred athletes competing from 82 nations. The complexity of the sporting event is reflected in the complexity of the stakeholders, who comprise the context for the case. The IOC is the umbrella organization for the Olympic Movement (IOC, 2013), which is also comprised of the National Olympic Committees and the International Federations, as well as other bodies. The global network of broadcast partners adds to the complexity of this case, serving to make this information rich and illuminative.

The IOC represents a complex case that is atypical as a sports organization in the way that their primary mission transcends sport. Rather than having a primary mission to manage the sporting event that they own, as is the case with the vast majority of sport organization, according to the IOC, their primary mission is to promote Olympism throughout the world (IOC, 2013), with the Olympic Games representing the highest manifestation of Olympism (Girginov, 2010).

To summarize, a case study strategy of enquiry was chosen on the basis of the needs of the research questions. These were: (a) the choice of an individual unit of study; (b) the need to consider the context of the case; (c) the need to study a case intensively and in-depth; and (d) when a change in the phenomenon being studies has occurred over a period of time (Flyvberg, 2011). The case of the IOC is justified on the basis that it is: (a) a critical case of strategic importance, which would provide practical implications for social significance and allow for analytic generalizations from the general problem; (b) a ‘case in point’, so that the case
represented the topic being studied, making the research valid; and (c) an information rich and illuminative case, so to provide the detail necessary to capture the complexity, subtlety, and nuances of strategy (Amis, 2006).

**Research Strategies**

This study adopted research strategies specific to the case study design. According to Patton (2002):

Case data consist of all the information one has about each case: interview data, observations, the documentary data (e.g., program records or files, newspaper clippings), impressions and statements of others about the case, and contextual information—in effect, all the information one has accumulated about each particular case goes into the case study (p. 449).

This study relied upon document collection, interviews, and observations. This combination of data served to provide a strong sense of the IOC’s strategic management by uncovering the internal perspective of IOC executives, the outward facing documents available to the public, and observations of the broadcasts that resulted from the IOC’s strategic management.

**Document Collection**

Data from relevant documents were collected. These documents represented secondary data, in that the data were already in existence prior to review by the researcher, and were used as a way to provide new leads and to triangulate the key themes that were identified in the interviews (Amis, 2003). These data were collected in advance of interviews so to maximize time efficiency, as Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was required before interviews could be conducted. Also, the collecting of secondary data prior to the interviews better prepared the researcher as it allowed for an understanding of some of the sensitive issues faced by the IOC in
their management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships (e.g., where tension might exist between social and commercial agendas) and so informed lines of enquiry that IOC executives were unlikely to bring up from open questions.

This research provided a ‘snapshot’ of how the IOC strategically manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. As such, documents were required to meet two criteria: (a) relevance to the phenomenon of the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships; and (b) the latest available version of documents identified as relevant.

**IOC documents.** According to Patton (2002) suitable documents for case study research are organizational records, including official publications and records. The following official publications and records of the IOC were analysed in this study:

*The XIII Olympic Congress Proceedings (2009).* This document captures the proceedings of the thirteenth and most recent Olympic Congress, held in Copenhagen in October 2009. The Congress is a meeting of Olympic stakeholders (IOC members, representatives of NOCs, IFs, the OCOGS, athletes, coaches, media, sponsors and other stakeholders) that discusses what are regarded as issues of importance to the Olympic Movement. Over three days, Congress participants heard from expert speakers and participated in discussions on five themes regarded as issues of importance to the Olympic Movement. The rationale for inclusion of this document in this study is that one of the five themes was “the Digital Revolution” (IOC, 2009), which is a direct reference to the emergence of digital media platforms in Olympic broadcasting, and thus highly relevant to this study. This theme was discussed within three sub-themes of “a new management of sports rights, how to increase the size of the sports audience, and communication with stakeholders in the digital age” (IOC, 2009, p. 5). These sub-themes are also highly relevant to this study.
The Olympic Marketing Fact File (2014). This document is “a reference document on the marketing policies and programmes of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Olympic Movement and the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2014c, p. 2). The rationale for inclusion of this document in the study is that it reports on Olympic broadcasting as one of the four types of marketing activities of the IOC, alongside Olympic partnerships (i.e., sponsorships), Olympic Games ticketing, and Olympic licensing. The document’s overview included IOC revenues, revenue distribution, and the fundamental objectives of Olympic marketing, which are applicable to broadcasting, and thus relevant to this study. A full chapter of the document was dedicated to Olympic broadcasting and included the long-term Olympic marketing strategy objectives, performance data in terms of coverage, viewership, revenue generation, and a summary of significant developments throughout the history of Olympic broadcasting. This data is highly relevant to the phenomenon of Olympic broadcasting partnerships.

The Olympic Charter (2013). This document is “the codification of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism, Rules and Bye-Laws adopted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It governs the organisation, action and operation of the Olympic Movement and sets forth the conditions for the celebration of the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013, p. 9). The rationale for inclusion of this document in this study is that it includes the rules and bye-laws of Olympic broadcasting, which are highly relevant to this study. Also, the rules and bye-laws on the staging of the Olympic Games (e.g., selecting sports for the Olympic program) are relevant to this study because the Olympic Games is the content that populates Olympic broadcasting. Finally, this document “sets forth and recalls the Fundamental Principles and essential values of Olympism” (IOC, 2013, p. 9). These are highly relevant to this study in terms of the conceptualization of
Olympism through which the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships is partly analyzed.

**Published accounts by IOC executives.** Two books written by IOC executives with responsibility for managing Olympic broadcasting were used as data for this study. Like interviews with IOC executives, these books are the words of former IOC managers covering in parts the strategies, processes, and practices by which the IOC managed Olympic broadcasting partnerships, and so are highly relevant to this study.

*Olympic Turnaround by Michael Payne (2006).* The author of this book was the first marketing director of the IOC and director of Olympic global broadcast and media rights, serving for over twenty years. The foreword, written by Sir Martin Sorrell, identified that the author “was responsible for negotiating the multi-billion-dollar TV rights deal up to 2012” (Payne, 2006, p. ix). Such responsibilities make this author’s account very relevant to the study. According to the cover, this book “offers unprecedented access to the people, the negotiations, and the machinations behind one of the most dramatic and colourful turnarounds in business or sports history” which involved securing “lucrative broadcasting commitments” and parlaying “the symbolism of the Olympics into a brand”. The foreword identified that the author “recognised the emotional, human and financial worth of the Olympic Movement” (Payne, 2006, p. ix) and that his account “offers important insights into the future of the Olympic franchise and branding in general. The lessons – and mistakes – are here for all to learn from” (Payne, 2006, p. ix). However, it is necessary to acknowledge that such personal accounts can be limited in terms of inherent bias that protects the image of the author.

*Inside the Olympics by Dick Pound (2004).* This book is described on the cover as “A behind-the-scenes look at the politics, the scandals, and the glory of the Games”, and as such
details the processes and practices of the IOC, including how such processes and practices were managed, and why they were managed in this way. The author offered a relevant perspective because he identified that “For most of my years in the IOC, my primary responsibility was the generating of the revenues necessary to run the IOC and the Olympic movement, principally from television rights and international sponsorships” (Pound, 2004, p. xiii). Indeed, Pound was Chairman of the IOC Television Negotiation Committee from 1983 to 2001. He served on the IOC Executive Board and served two terms as vice-president from 1987 to 1991 and 1996 to 2000, and was acting president during the Sydney 2000 Summer Games. He unsuccessfully ran in the election to be the eighth president of the IOC in 2001. A declaration from Pound is useful in evaluating the perspective of the author:

I should declare, if not a bias, at least a mental set. I am convinced that the Olympic Games and the ethical practice of sport are wonderful contributors to the fulfilment of the youth of all countries. They assist in the development of social skills and abilities, and in the creation of a healthier society that does not draw on the social net as much as an unhealthy one and that can make genuine contributions to peace in the world. I am, in that respect, a self-confessed and unrepentant idealist. I am not, however, devoid of scepticism, especially as it relates to individuals and certain groups, some of whom appear to embrace the idealistic view but in fact do not. I have learned to look beyond bland assertions of commitment to ethical sport-grist for the public relations mill-and to compare what is said with what is actually done. In this process, I often find myself astonished at the degree of hypocrisy I encounter both within sport itself and in statements by public authorities. (Pound, 2004, p. xi)
This declaration indicates that this data, although from an idealist perspective, also offers a critical perspective of the Olympic Movement. However, as with the previous book, such a personal account can be limited in terms of bias to protect the author’s image and reputation. Indeed, throughout this whole book there was no indication that the author ever made a mistake in their management of the Olympic Games.

**Interviews**

The data collected from interviews represents primary source material given that these data were created for this study (i.e., would not exist otherwise). The research questions of this study include *what* (i.e., What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age?), *how* (i.e., How do the IOC manage these processes and practices?) and *why* (i.e., Why do the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way?). Interviews were appropriate to answer these research questions because they are designed to move beyond the *what* questions, to also explore the *how* and *why* questions (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Access to the case of the IOC was negotiated with the IOC’s Head of University Relations. Within a face-to-face meeting in Lausanne the proposed study was discussed, and the IOC’s Head of University Relations provided assurances of assistance in gaining access to data. The requirements of participants in the study were communicated to the IOC’s Head of University Relations. Participants were required to have responsibility for the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships. The IOC’s Head of University Relations identified a key IOC broadcasting executive and approached him on behalf of the researcher. He agreed to participate in the study. This executive had responsibilities across television, digital media platforms, and works with broadcast partners on a regular basis. As such, it was believed...
that the perspective of this executive was best suited to addressing the research questions of this study. The IOC’s Head of University Relations provided the researcher with this key IOC broadcasting executive’s contact e-mail address, following which initial contact was made, and a first interview scheduled. Due to the inconsistent availability of the IOC executive and the barrier of distance between London (location of researcher) and Lausanne, Switzerland (location of the IOC executive), all interviews were conducted via telephone. A total of nine interviews were conducted with this executive, ranging in length from one to two hours. The total duration of all interviews was approximately 14 hours.

To consider the perspective of broadcast partners, interviews were also sought with senior executives within Olympic broadcasters. Given the researcher’s location in London, the BBC represented a convenience sample given the location of the BBC’s offices in London. The BBC represent a critical case in point amongst Olympic broadcasters considering their long history as a partner of the IOC (since the London 1948 Games), their territory representing a key and well developed market that consumes digital media platforms (as established in Chapter 2), and their status as the broadcasters for the host territory of the most recent Summer Games. The researcher identified a potential participant through an Internet search for key BBC Olympic broadcasting executives. The researcher phoned the BBC switchboard and was put through to the executive’s secretary, who asked that I email the executive with details of my request and provided his email address. This executive was the BBC’s most senior executive with responsibilities for broadcasting the Olympic Games. He had previously served as the BBC’s Director of Sport (i.e., the most senior position in the BBC with regard to sport), and at the time was serving as the BBC’s Head of Major Events for Sports. This executive had worked on nine Summer Games and eight Winter Games, including taking the editorial lead for some of these
Games. It was believed that such high level experience over a long period of Olympic broadcasting would offer informative insights into the phenomenon of the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships, while being aware of the changes that have occurred since the emergence of digital media platforms. Following receipt of the researcher’s email, the BBC executive agreed to participate in the study and a face-to-face interview was scheduled at the BBC’s offices in London. Two interviews were conducted lasting for two hours each, for a total duration of four hours.

The third and final participant in this study was the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights. This individual was identified by the researcher’s existing knowledge of senior IOC executives. This former IOC executive served with the IOC for 17 years and was the IOC’s first Director of Marketing before also becoming the IOC’s lead executive for broadcasting. Having previously held the most senior position within the IOC in regard to broadcasting, this executive, although not able to comment on the specific processes and practices since his departure from the IOC in 2004, offered a strategic perspective and understanding of rationales, which complimented the perspective of the current IOC broadcasting executive, who could speak more towards processes and practices. This former IOC executive was reached via email, following an email address being identified on the participant’s professional website. The former IOC executive agreed to participate and a telephone interview was scheduled. Only a single interview lasting approximately two hours was conducted.

More participants were sought for this study, but not secured. Several efforts via email and telephone were made to contact key executives within United States broadcaster NBC, following identification via searches on the Internet, but no email was ever responded to or telephone call ever accepted. During the open coding of the final two interviews with the IOC
broadcasting executive, no new themes or categories were identified. Therefore, it was concluded that saturation of the data had been reached and that, when combined with the secondary data, the data was sufficiently rich and illuminative (Patton, 2002) to cease data collection.

Semi-structured interviews were used, whereby a question list was adopted. However, the researcher had the freedom to ask probing questions or to change the line of questioning in response to the interviewees’ answers. In adopting such an approach, the interviews progressed from the general to the specific. The interviews initially utilized open-ended questions (e.g., What are the IOC’s current strategies for managing Olympic broadcasting?) so to allow participants to be able to express their perspectives on the phenomenon, rather than have the researcher’s existing understanding of the phenomenon imposed upon the participant. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on their own perceptions of strategies (Amis, 2003) through the use of probes that serve to elicit “in-depth responses about people’s experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge” (Patton, 2002, p. 4). This enabled the capture of multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that executives engaged in Olympic broadcasting experienced. Follow up questions were asked to address the how research question (e.g., Can you tell me the process?) and the why research question (e.g., What factors were you prioritizing in making broadcasting decisions?). Further follow up was informed by the secondary data analysis, with interesting lines of inquiry that were identified in the secondary data (but which were not raised by the interviewees) raised via direct questions from the semi-structured interview guide.

Multiple interviews were conducted with two out of the three participants. Where this was the case, previous interviews were transcribed and initially analysed so to identify
interesting lines of enquiry for follow up questions. Given that Olympism as a philosophy of
social reform and Olympism as a commercial brand are not completely compatible, some areas
of interest were potentially sensitive for the IOC. Therefore, direct questions on sensitive issues
were left to the end of individual interviews or final interviews so not to jeopardize access. These
questions were also phrased in as neutral manner as possible (e.g., To what extent does the IOC
seek to accommodate or neutralize broadcasters’ attempt to emphasize nation-pride within their
telecasts to home nations?), so to avoid respondents being defensive and thus less open in their
responses.

Each interview, following consent from the interviewee, was fully transcribed to allow
for comprehensive analysis. Digital recordings were made of each interview and sent to a
professional transcription service to be transcribed, so to allow for efficiencies in time.

Media Review

Although this study was not an ethnography by which the actors and culture of the
strategic management of Olympic broadcasting could be studied, there was opportunity to
observe the broadcasted manifestations of the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices. The
researcher engaged in a review of the BBC’s Sochi 2014 broadcast, including BBC’s television
and digital media platforms broadcast. The researcher reviewed BBC’s Sochi 2014 red button
service (i.e., interactive television), the BBC’s Sochi 2014 website portal with multiple streams
(available on computer and tablet), and the BBC’s Sochi 2014 smart phone app. The researcher
also reviewed the IOC’s use of digital media platforms outside of Games time, including the IOC
YouTube channel, the Olympic Games Facebook account, the Olympics Twitter account
(@Olympics), the IOC Media Twitter account (@iocmedia), and the Olympics Instagram
account. Reviews of BBC’s Sochi 2014 broadcast and the IOC’s digital media platforms served
to verify some of the strategies, processes, and practices described in the documents and interviews.

**Content Analysis**

Content analysis is defined as “a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding” (Stemler, 2001, p. 1). According to Jorgensen (1989), content analysis involves sorting and sifting data, looking for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns or wholes, with the aim of assembling or reconstructing the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. According to Weber (1990), the specific type of content analysis varies based upon the problem being studied. The exploratory nature of the research question in this study requires conventional content analysis to be initially used.

**Conventional content analysis.** Initially, an inductive approach of coding was used, whereby categories were established based upon examination of the data (Stemler, 2001). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) regard this as a conventional form of content analysis. Categories and names for categories are determined from analysis of the data, rather than using pre-conceived codes (Hseih & Shannon, 2005).

The documents and interview transcriptions were analysed using a line-by-line open coding procedure so to “expose the thoughts, ideas, and meanings contained therein” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). To remain focused, this open coding was selective, only being applied to data that was relevant to the phenomenon being studied. Memos were used to identify segments of relevant and meaningful text (Spiggle, 1994) with initial codes being attributed. Following open coding, an axial coding process was undertaken, grouping the initial codes into larger abstract categories, so to sort, synthesize, organize, and reassemble the data in new ways.
Such coding produced five themes by which all the data were categorized. So to achieve a completely meaningful and comprehensible reconstruction of the data (Jorgensen, 1989) in a manner that provided a structure by which the research questions could be clearly answered, it was also necessary to adopt some ‘a priori’ coding.

‘A priori’ coding. Stemler (2001) describes the process of ‘a priori’ coding as establishing categories prior to the analysis and applying these categories as codes. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), this is a directed type of content analysis that starts with a theory or relevant research findings to guide coding. However, rather than use existing theory or relevant research findings, the ‘a priori’ codes and categories used were the research questions. Research question one of ‘What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age?’ was shortened to the code ‘What’, research question two of ‘How does the IOC manage these processes and practices?’ was shortened to the code ‘How’, and research question three of ‘Why does the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way? was shortened to the code of ‘Why’. Each theme was then structured with sections of what, how, and why, so to directly answer the research questions.

Theoretical coding. So to achieve a more meaningful and comprehensible reconstruction of the data (Jorgensen, 1989), it was still necessary to organize the categories within each theme. Once, the categories had been grouped according to their a-priori codes of what, how, and why, theoretical coding was used to conceptualize how the categories were related. Through multiple reviewing and comparing of the categories, intuitive ideas about their properties and relationships were developed and reviewed until more concrete categories were established and a meaningful order of categories within each theme was achieved (Munhall & Chenail, 2008).
Finally, the interview quotes that best represented and exemplified the themes were selected for inclusion in the write up of the findings.

Due to the time constraints of the interviewees, it was not possible to conduct member checks to ensure accuracy of the themes and categories established. However, as part of the supervision process, themes and categories were regularly discussed with the researcher’s supervisor, until agreement was reached as to the meaning and content of the themes (Munhall & Chenail, 2008). Furthermore, data from documents and interviews were analysed together, so to achieve cross-triangulation of different data sources, thus verifying the themes and categories established.

**Role of the Researcher**

In adopting a qualitative approach based upon the constructivist paradigm assumptions, this study accepted that the knower and the known are inseparable. As such, it is necessary “to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with ourselves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting” (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 124).

The Olympic Games is a controversial and topical area of research that has both many supporters, and many critics. Supporters are evident in the record audiences that the Olympic Games receive, but critics want more from the IOC and the Olympic Games. For example, Amnesty International wrote to the IOC urging it to live up to the principles that form the core of the Olympic Charter in response to human rights controversies associated with the Sochi 2014 Games (Amnesty International, 2014). The researcher was both a supporter and critic of the IOC and the Olympic Games. The researcher was a Senior Lecturer in Sports Management in London, the most recent host city of the Summer Games, and through classes taught on the
Olympic Games and Sports Development, was actively engaged in a dialogue about both the positive and negative aspects of the Olympic Games. The researcher was a fan of the Olympic Games as a sporting spectacle and attended several events at the London 2012 Summer Games. The researcher was also an advocate of the power of sport to achieve social change. The researcher has served as a paid consultant for high profile organizations, such as Premier League club Fulham FC, Barclays Bank, Nike, and Magic Bus on development through sport projects. As such, the researcher viewed the Olympic Games as a platform with the potential to deliver development *through* sport, but recognized that there are limitations in the work of the IOC in this regard. It was from this stance that this research was conducted. Rather than expose the shortcomings of the IOC as an agent for change, the research sought to inform the IOC’s strategies to better manage Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships. This approach is in contrast to previous research that appears to be exclusively focused on the negative aspects of the Olympic Games, where there may be bias towards the evaluation of the IOC’s strategies (e.g., Maguire et al., 2008). In contrast, the role of the researcher here is to allow the data to speak for itself as much as possible, even though the research and the researcher cannot be independent in the approach being taken.

**Delimitations**

The unit of analysis in the case study strategy of enquiry was the IOC. This case study was limited to the IOC’s business area of broadcasting, specifically their strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships. Other areas of Olympic business, such as sponsorships, were not considered as part of this research. To fully understand the IOC and their strategic management of Olympic broadcasting also required an understanding of its context. The IOC strategically manages Olympism through Olympic broadcasting partnerships. Therefore, this
study also considered the Olympic broadcast partners, who pay to own the rights to broadcast the Olympic Games within their territory.

This research established a ‘snapshot’ of how the IOC strategically manages Olympism through broadcasting partnerships in the digital age at the point of data collection, which is following the Sochi 2014 Winter Games. Although the point in time at which data is collected is following the emergence of digital media platforms (i.e., in the digital age), the problem that is being tackled is the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in general, so strategies, processes, and practices not specific to digital media platforms were also included in this study.

In taking a qualitative approach utilizing a case study strategy of enquiry this study was constrained in terms of ability to generalize back to a population or universe, with a focus taken on a specific sports organization and a specific problem that is unique to this sports organization. Although selection of a critical case aimed to maximize the generalizability of the findings, only analytic generalizability of the general topic, rather than statistical generalizability of the complete findings, was potentially possible.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

This dissertation investigated the processes and practices by which the IOC strategically manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. Diverse sources of qualitative data were collected. Primary data was collected via interviews with both present and past IOC executives. This primary data was supplemented by interviews with an executive of a notable Olympic broadcasting partner. The prior two sources of primary data were further supplemented by secondary data in the form of Olympic broadcasting documentation, such as the proceedings from the XIII Olympic Congress where ‘The Digital Revolution’ was a major topic of discussion. The processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age were grouped into six themes (e.g., Sustaining Olympism), so to reconstruct the data in a meaningful way. Within each theme, categories were established to address the research questions:

RQ 1: What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age?

RQ 2: How does the IOC manage these processes and practices?

RQ 3: Why does the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way?

These research questions cover; (1) what is being done? (i.e., a strategy or an approach), (2) how is it being done? (i.e., actions being executed to achieve a strategy or approach), and (3) why is it being done? (i.e., rationale and drivers behind a strategy or approach). To reflect the structure of these research questions, each category within a theme was pre-fixed with ‘What’, ‘How’, or ‘Why’, so to identify which research question the category was addressing (e.g., What: Re-engaging the World’s Youth).
Theme 1: Sustainable Olympism

A primary concern for the IOC with regard to managing Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships is to ensure that it is sustainable (i.e., that it has a future) through future generations of Olympic fans. The level of global engagement with Olympism through broadcasting is presently high. As pointed out by IOC member Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. at the XIII Olympic Congress, the size of the Olympic audience has been steadily increasing (IOC, 2009) from 3.2 billion at Atlanta 1996 to 3.6 billion at London 2012 (IOC, 2012). Indeed, the Olympic Games has even bucked the trend of declining ratings for prime-time shows in general, as described by Payne (2006): “Although prime-time ratings had declined year on year over the past two decades, the actual premium the Olympics gained in ratings, over normal prime-time programming, had risen dramatically” (p. 58). Ratings suggested that the Olympic Games were able to increasingly offer a ratings premium (i.e., an additional sum of viewers) over other prime-time programming. The draw of the Olympic Games was particularly evident in the UK when London hosted the 2012 Summer Games. The BBC’s Head of Major Events stated: “The opening ceremony […] was watched by 28.7 million viewers. I mean, it's astounding, there were actually still 20 million people watching at midnight. Astonishing really, but it was quite an extraordinary event.” In terms of what this audience volume represents as a percentage, the BBC’s Head of Major Events stated: “We expected an increase on Beijing but it exceeded our target significantly. We set ourselves an 85% target, but TV reached 91%. That's probably the most watched TV event in the history of British broadcasting.”

However, IOC member Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. points out a more worrying trend for the IOC, which is that as audience volume has increased, so has the median age of viewers (IOC, 2009), as indicated by data on United Sates audiences (the IOC’s most valuable broadcasting
The median age of viewers for Barcelona 1992 was 39. This jumped to 42 for Atlanta 1996 and then 45 for Sydney, before creeping up to 47 for Athens 2004, 48 for Beijing 2008 (IOC, 2009), and most recently 49 for London 2012 (Carter, 2012). This trend is a clear indication that the Olympic Games is decreasingly resonating with the world’s youth, thus requiring the IOC to re-engage with this audience if Olympism is to be sustained.

What: Re-engaging with the World’s Youth

A key strategy for the IOC in its management of Olympism through broadcasting partnerships is to re-engage with the world’s youth. IOC member Alex Gilady identifies an IOC communication goal of “to win and maintain the youth audience and their interest in sport” (IOC, 2009, p. 218). According to Sir Martin Sorrell, a communications executive asked to address the XIII Olympic Congress, delivering the next generation of fans is the most important legacy of an Olympic Games:

The most important legacy of any from the Olympic Movement is to deliver the next generation of sports fans and athletes. To do this, we must ensure that the iPod, iPhone generation is tuning in, not tuning out. (IOC, 2009, p. 190)

As evident in this quote, delivering the next generation is a new challenge for every Olympic Games. Historically, the Olympic Games had successfully engaged new generations, who are then maintained as Olympic fans. However, each Olympic Games faces a new challenge to deliver the next generation. Digital natives (i.e., those born during or after the general introduction of digital media platforms, who, from interacting with digital media platforms from an early age, have a greater comfort in the use of digital media platforms) represent a new challenge, as “sport and other physical activity now compete with sophisticated technology based entertainment and too often lose”, according to former IOC President Jacques Rogge
(IOC, 2009, p. 16). Therefore, engaging the next generation is a major challenge for the IOC, as the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights acknowledged:

And so, you’ve got to remind people how unique or special it is. You’ve got to be the best in bringing the next generation into it and not wait for them to sort of stumble across it. Sport that’s played for 365 days a year, everybody is exposed to, but […] they are not exposed to the Olympics. You’ve got to be the best at the marketing and the reach to remind everybody how special it is to engage each successive generation.

The IOC have been required to undertake specific processes and practices so to engage the next generation of Olympic fans because, as identified by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights, the Olympic Games do not have the same constant exposure that other sports properties enjoy. As such, it cannot be assumed that the world’s youth will “stumble across it”. The IOC have engaged in two specific practices so to re-engage with the world’s youth, as identified by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights:

You could have great content, but if you are not making it available for them, they are not going to know about it. And equally, if you have boring content, it doesn't matter what platform you are on, it’s not going to engage them.

These two practices are (a) developing youth-appealing sports content, and (b) developing youth-appealing communication platforms. These two practices are co-dependent, as identified by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights, in that one cannot succeed in re-engaging the world’s youth without the other (i.e., good content on the right platforms). Olympic content will not reach the youth unless it is on youth-appealing platforms, but also, the digital media platforms will not engage them unless it is populated with youth-appealing content. Nancy Lee of the Olympic Broadcasting Services confirms such co-dependence:
If the programming content is not compelling – if it does not matter to the viewer – people are not going to watch or use it, no matter how many channels or streaming options are available. Now, while the media actually produce the programming for audiences, the content first takes shape at the event. (IOC, 2009, p. 212)

This address to the XIII Olympic Congress establishes the starting point for the IOC in re-engaging with the world’s youth, which is the shaping of content at the event.

**How: Developing Youth Appealing Sports Content**

This order of first ensuring strong content is confirmed by the key IOC broadcasting executive, who argues that the sport content is important to first “start the conversation” with the world’s youth and only once that conversation has started is the IOC able “to engage the youth and track them towards the broadcasting platforms.” Nancy Lee goes on to state that “If the content is compelling, and if it matters to the audience, they will tune in on the Internet, television, on their mobile phones – or whatever medium is coming next” (IOC, 2009, p. 212).

In developing youth-appealing sports content the IOC must address the questions “Which new sports and events will drive future media rights?” and “What are the benefits and risks of these sports and events?” as rose by IOC member John D. Coates (IOC, 2009, p. 200).

According to the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights, the IOC must “make sure that your sports program is contemporary and relevant to what people practice today.” The IOC have added sports to the Olympic program that they believe are contemporary and relevant with a clear trend towards adding what are perceived as extreme sports. The former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights goes on to state that “The inclusion of sports, such as snowboarding, and rebel image athletes, such as Shaun White, have been very important because you want to make sure that the sports that are played on the program are connecting with the
younger generation.” This IOC perspective is shared by broadcasting partners. The BBC’s Head of Major Events states:

It’s got to be modern day, and it’s got to have relevance to our audiences around the world. At the end of the day, they’ve [sports] got to have relevance, of course, for the younger people because they are the audience in the future.

IOC Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. specifically attributes the addition of snowboarding to the Winter Games and BMX to the Summer Games on the basis that they are “youth-oriented sports” (IOC, 2009, p. 208), but also states that International Federations (IFs) have implemented format changes so to appeal more to the youth, citing Basket 33 as an example (IOC, 2009). Basket 33 is a three on three format of basketball, regarded as more accessible. According to IF Representative Sarah Lewis, “There can be a misconception that new technological tools will solve issues with the product (i.e., the sport event itself). Technology cannot repair the fundamentals of the sport; it is the role of the IF to ensure that the product is sound and the format attractive” (IOC, 2009, p. 220). As such, existing Olympic sports must adapt to ensure they are appealing to the youth, a strategy that can be supported by adding youth-oriented sports to the Olympic program. The inclusion of youth-appealing sports into the Olympic program is subject to the rules set forth in the Olympic Charter (IOC, 2013).

**How: IOC members’ selection of the Olympic program.** According to the Olympic Charter (2013), the IOC reviews the Olympic program after each Olympic Games. The process by which Olympic sports are selected involves three groups. First, the Olympic Programme Commission is a working group that supports the IOC in their determination of the Olympic program. This commission is made up of nominations by the IOC President, including eleven IOC members (one of whom is Chair), five experts, and an IOC executive (the IOC’s Sports
Director). This commission feeds into the IOC Executive Board information and recommendations with regard to the Olympic program. The IOC Executive Board consists of four IOC Vice-Presidents and ten other IOC members and is elected by the IOC Session (i.e., annual meeting that include all IOC members). The IOC Executive propose the inclusion of sports into the Olympic program to the IOC Session (i.e., all members), from which: “The Session shall vote en bloc on the inclusion of the core, its decision being taken by a majority of the votes cast” (IOC, 2013, p. 85). Once the sports are determined, the IOC Executive Board determines the disciplines and events of the sports to be included in the Olympic program. Such layers of decision-making, culminating in a vote by all IOC members, indicate the importance by which the IOC regards the content of the Olympic program.

According to the Olympic Charter, the only pre-determined criteria by which IOC members select sports for inclusion in the Olympic program is that: “Only sports that adopt and implement the World Anti-Doping Code can be included or remain in the programme” (IOC, 2013, p. 82). Other than that: “The choice of all sports for the programme, as well as the determination of the criteria and conditions for the inclusion of any sport in the programme, falls within the competence of the Session” (IOC, 2013, p. 82). The competence of the session can be interpreted as the experience and expertise of the IOC members being such that they are free to make such decisions based upon whatever criteria or conditions they see fit. As discussed above, the IOC is actively seeking to include youth-appealing sports into the Olympic programme (which members are free to set as their condition of voting for the inclusion of a sport). However, appealing to youth is not alone sufficient for a sport to be added to the Olympic program, with several other factors also considered by the IOC.
**How: Factors considered in sport selection process.** According to the key IOC broadcasting executive, “The Olympic Program Commission consults with many stakeholders and takes into consideration factors, such as the broadcast coverage and audience numbers.” The governance structure of a sport is one such factor considered. The former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights states:

In the Summer Games, there has been some progress with adding things like BMX, mountain biking and everything. I think if there were some structure, the IOC would have jumped at getting skateboarding onboard.

This quote illustrates that more than the extent of appeal to today’s youth is considered in the process by which the IOC selects which sports will be included in the Olympic program. As the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights states, despite its appeal to youth, skateboarding has not been included in the Olympic program because of a lack of structure (i.e., strong governing body to run the sport):

A further important factor, identified by Pound (2004), is the universality of a sport:

The inclusion of boxing on the Olympic program has always been problematic, mainly due to concern about the serious brain injuries that can result from blows to the heads of the athletes. It is probably still on the program because it is a sport that many small and developing countries practice and the universality of the Olympics is one of the main objectives of the Olympic movement. (p. 42)

A further factor is that Olympic sports must also be sustainable and commercially viable, according to the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights. He states “You want to make sure that they are not here today, gone tomorrow, that there is some substance to them.”
The BBC’s Head of Major Events provides further detail as to what it means for a sport to be commercially viable:

They’ve got to be absolutely competitive. I think in this day and age, they’ve got to have sufficient media exposure. I think they’ve got to be TV friendly. [...] I know it’s in the Commonwealth Games, but I’ve always sort of questioned whether squash is really a TV sport. Personal views, not the BBC’s.

The BBC’s Head of Major Events, in addition to global interest, also considers the importance of the Olympic Games to the sport in determining whether a sport should be part of the Olympic Games. He states: “I think adding a sport like Taekwondo, which has global interest, I think that’s a very important. Personally, I would certainly question golf because I would question whether it would be the most important thing in the sport.” This belief presents the commonly held belief that if the Olympic Games are not the premier event for a sport, then it should not be part of the Olympic program. For example, winning a ‘Major’ in golf (the Masters, the US Open, the British Open, and the US PGA) or a ‘Grand Slam’ in tennis (Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, US Open) is heralded as a greater achievement than an Olympic gold medal. Once a change to the sports program has been approved, the process by which any changes are implemented also requires careful management by the IOC.

How: Implementing changes in the Olympic sport program. The Sports Department within the IOC executive has responsibility for implementing changes in the Olympic program. The key IOC broadcasting executive identified that: “Many stakeholders are involved in the decision, but the Sports Department manages the implementation of changes in the Olympic program.”
The process of implementing new sports is more favorable in the Winter Games, according to the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights, who states: “The Winter games in some ways is easier to add those types of sport. One, because the program is not so full, so you’ve got a bit more scope on flexibility and, two, there is more choice of those types [youth appealing] of sports.” However, the process of adding new sports also brings in the possible need to drop existing sports. The BBC’s Head of Major Events states: “I think the challenge for the IOC is not as much adding the younger sports, it’s being brave enough to lose one or two of the existing sports to make room for the younger sports.” Considering the government funding implications of being an Olympic sport or not (i.e., Governments are willing to invest in sports in return for success on the stage of the Olympic Games), such decisions are tough to make. However, the decisions made with regard to the Olympic sports program have thus far proved successful in re-engaging with the world’s youth.

This is evident in feedback that the IOC has received from their broadcasting partners, as reported by a key IOC broadcasting executive, who states: “The feedback from the broadcasters is also positive in the sense that these sports or disciplines have helped their cause to engage the youth.” This also indicates that re-engaging the youth is a common objective for both the IOC and its broadcast partners. Having determined and implemented a strong portfolio of youth-appealing sports, the IOC has then been able to determine the mechanism by which this content is broadcast and has sought to support the youth appealing content by providing a platform for the sports that is also youth appealing.

**How: Developing Youth Appealing Communication Platforms**

Whereas the IOC work primarily alone in determining the sports to be included in the Olympic program, they work through broadcast partners to achieve the practice of developing
youth-appealing communication platforms. Although the IOC have their own broadcasting platforms (e.g., Olympic.org website, YouTube portal, and social media accounts), having sold the broadcasting rights to broadcasting partners in the vast majority of markets, the Olympic Games is primarily consumed on broadcast partners’ platforms. However, the IOC has a very clear and established vision of how communication platforms can be youth-appealing so to contribute to the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth, a belief stemming from the very top of their organization, as indicated by this account from former IOC President Jacques Rogges: “Television transformed our Movement and brought the Games to a global audience. New digital and social media have expanded our reach and will help us build new relationships, especially with young people” (IOC, 2009, p. 17). This expectancy is based upon the media consumption habits of younger audiences. According to the BBC’s Head of Major Events, younger audiences want to be communicated to on their cell phones, other portable devices, and computers:

We want to communicate with younger audiences in the way they want to be communicated with. The younger audiences, by and large, are the generation that lives life on their mobiles. They live life on their other portable devices; they live their lives on computers.

As such, according to the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights, it is important for the IOC and their broadcasting partners to be in these spaces: “Make sure that you are talking to them in the space or environment that they are in, which means digital social media, community engagements.” NOC Representative Norman Bellingham confirms such a view: “This [digital media platforms] is where the 12-to-35-year-old demographic spend a huge percentage of their time, and this is where we should be engaging them” (IOC, 2009, p. 209).
According to IF Representative Jerome Valcke, the younger generation is more likely to consume Olympic content on digital media platforms:

While traditional fans may continue to watch an event on TV at home or in a bar, the younger generation is more likely to watch a game, live, or view exclusive features and interviews on demand on a mobile phone. (IOC, 2009, p. 204)

IF Representative Sarah Lewis identifies that presenting Olympic sports via digital media platforms is relevant to the younger audience because such presentation is in “their style and language” (IOC, 2009, p. 221) and can potentially sustain Olympism by offering a connection of greater depth than traditional television by allowing the younger audience to interact and connect with Olympic athletes:

One of the key aspects of the Digital Revolution is that it provides a way of reconnecting with young people. For today’s generation, following sport is about multi-technology and the ability it gives them to interact and connect with their heroes. Our goal is to attract young people to participate in sport themselves, and there may be opportunities to reach out to them by portraying it in their style and language. (IOC, 2009, p. 221)

Further detail on what makes content presented on digital media platforms more relevant to younger audiences comes from Sir Martin Sorrell, who addressed the XIII Olympic Congress. According to Sorrell, the formats of short and fast, customizable and easy to share, are sought by the youth:

Give content to youth in formats they want: short and fast, customisable and easy to share. Extend the franchise through music and cultural partnerships to leverage fresh support and momentum, and learn from franchises such as X Factor and Pop Idol. Make
involvement a rewarding and relevant experience, and get them to be your trusted co-
conspirators in “what should you do next”. (IOC, 2009, p. 188)

The implications of communicating to the youth in a relevant manner are long term.
According to IF Representative Patrick Baumann, the use of digital media platforms provides
access to the younger generation and the potential to keep them interested in sport (e.g.,
sustaining Olympism):

As the younger generations of digital natives embrace technology at a faster pace, the
Olympic Movement, and the IFs in particular, will be able to reach these generations,
remain relevant to them and keep them interested in sport (as spectators and athletes), if
the Revolution is fully embraced. (IOC, 2009, p. 198)

Sir Martin Sorrell’s address to the XIII Olympic Congress identifies the one shot opportunity for
the IOC and its broadcast partners to become part of the world’s youth’s media habits, so to
sustain Olympism:

Allow young people ready access to the content you create for them. The young take their
media habits with them, so if you are not part of their habit now, you most definitely will
not be in their future. Even if the young are watching television content, it will tend to be
increasingly delayed or on a device other than a television set. Inspire young people to
engage through channels and with a tone that is relevant for them. (IOC, 2009, p. 189)

So to develop youth-appealing platforms, has required that the IOC work with their broadcasting
partners by both enforcing and facilitating the partners’ use of digital media platforms.

**How: Facilitating broadcast partners’ use of digital media platforms.** As stated
above, although the consumption by the Olympic audience is primarily through partner platforms
rather than the IOC’s own platforms, the IOC is able to influence the use of platforms by
broadcast partners through contractual negotiations. The desires of the IOC for Olympic broadcasts to engage youth across all platforms is incorporated within the contracts that the IOC signs with broadcast partners, as identified by a key IOC broadcasting executive:

We work with our broadcast partners to ensure that we cover the youth and one of the key core broadcast principals for the IOC that we negotiate in the broadcast partners’ contracts is to engage the youth with every platform possible.

The IOC set technical regulations and requirements regarding media coverage of the Olympic Games via a Technical Manual on Media, which is set by the IOC Executive Board. This document “forms an integral part of the Host City Contract” (IOC, 2013, p. 92) and is “binding for any and all persons involved in media coverage of the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013, p. 92), as established in the Olympic Charter.

Beyond contractual negotiations, the IOC also conducts knowledge sharing sessions with different broadcasters, so to facilitate and encourage their use of digital media platforms. According to the key IOC broadcasting, the IOC “Persuade broadcast partners to use all different digital media means, granting those rights to the rights holders, and confirming with them that they are exploiting those rights.” However, the IOC believes that the desire to engage youth via digital media platforms is shared by broadcasters: “It’s the name of the game nowadays anyway. We don’t need to push broadcasters to use digital media platforms.” An incentive for broadcasters to engage in all digital media platforms is that it protects their rights from piracy, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “We run an anti-piracy program that protects their rights and one of the biggest deterrents of piracy is that broadcasters exploit the Games fully on all media.”
The IOC is also able to facilitate the use of youth-appealing digital media platforms via the Olympic Broadcasting Services, who provide the necessary feeds to broadcast partners so that they can broadcast the Olympic Games and Olympic content on the platforms identified as appealing to the youth. The key IOC broadcasting executive surmises:

We work with our partners to ensure that the broadcast is made available on every platform possible, whether it’s on IPTV [Internet Protocol Television] platform, which are more oriented towards youth in some territories, or mobile or tablets or Internet consumption that are targeted towards youth.

The key IOC broadcasting executive goes on to identify an important technology development that occurred at Sochi 2014, which aids broadcast partners in utilizing youth-appealing communication platforms:

Staring with Sochi, the host broadcaster, which is OBS, they have started producing a wide label solution for digital media platforms and it is to reduce costs for the broadcasters and it is a solution that can be used by multiple broadcasters. They can easily ‘plug and play’ with it. It is playable on the website, it is playable with an app, so it encourages broadcasters to fully embrace all medias.

According to the key IOC broadcasting executive, the IOC also support their broadcast partners’ use of youth-appealing digital media platforms by promoting these platforms (i.e., direct visitors to the IOC’s platforms are redirected to broadcast partners platforms for content that the IOC have sold the rights to in a specific territory):

We work with them in terms of ensuring that they get the required promotion on every platform during the broadcast. Wherever possible we engage ourselves directly like I
think the present broadcaster with YouTube for London so those are different ways
where we engage in terms of broadcast strategies directly speaking to engage the youth.
Although the IOC adopt a business model of selling the majority of their broadcast rights, they
do retain partial rights that allow them to engage with their younger audiences through their own
digital media platforms.

**How: In-house youth appealing digital media platforms.** The IOC’s Communications
Department is responsible for managing the IOC’s own digital media platforms. Their primary
digital media platform is their website, www.olympic.org, which, according to the key IOC
broadcasting executive “provides users with up-to-the-minute results and behind-the-scenes
experiences of Olympic Games”. Flash animations are used to explain Olympic sports. Users can
compete online against contestants from across the globe and can access training tips and advice
from Olympic athletes. Former IOC President Jacques Rogge describes Olympic.org as:

> The ultimate resource on the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement. The website is
> an important part of our effort to keep the Olympic spirit alive for future generations. The
> Olympic values do not change, but we are always looking for new ways to share them,
> especially with young people. (Olympics Blog, 2008, para. 4)

From the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, re-engaging with the
world’s youth is important because the Olympic Games can provide role models to the world’s
youth. It follows that the IOC should leverage their relationships with Olympic athletes to
provide ‘contact points’ with the Olympic Games that deepens the world’s youth’s relationship
with the IOC, as suggested by NOC Representative Norman Belligham:

Athlete blogs can be extremely impactful and should be encouraged. Imagine an aspiring
12-year-old swimmer or sprinter having the opportunity to follow Michael Phelps or
Usain Bolt through their daily training regimen, or while they compete at a world championship. Super-hero athletes using Twitter to build interest in their sport or an iPhone application that interfaces directly with the Olympic.org website are other examples of using digital media to connect with our target audience. (IOC, 2009, p. 209)

Sir Martin Sorrell supports such an approach in his address to the XIII Olympic Congress. As both Belligham and Sorrell advocate, the IOC use athlete blogs on their website Olympic.org, but also on their social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube:

Get personal by leveraging the power of the athletes as ambassadors for the Games and their individual sports. Recognise the new generation of sports heroes such as Usain Bolt and use them to grow the appeal of the Games. Help and empower athletes to share their personal experiences through blogging and personalized content on sites such as YouTube and Twitter. (IOC, 2009, p. 188)

IOC member Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. identifies interaction between Olympic athletes and the Olympic audience as an approach that will allow the IOC to re-engage the world’s youth (IOC, 2009). The reason why the IOC is seeking to re-engage the world’s youth can be interpreted from both the perspectives of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand.

**Why: Inspiring the Next Generation**

The official narrative of the IOC, as represented by former IOC President Jacques Rogge’s opening ceremony speech at the XIII Olympic Congress, presents this strategy as driven by a desire reform the social problem of youth inactivity. Rogges states:
Coubertin highlighted the problem of youth inactivity more than a century ago. He would be dismayed to know it is still a problem. But he would be relieved to know we are doing something about it. (IOC, 2009, p. 15)

Rogge goes on to establish the link between consumption of the Olympic Games (e.g., via broadcasting) and benefits to the world’s youth:

The Games are not an end in themselves. They are a means to an end. We owe it to the athletes, to offer them a perfect organisation of the Games. The most important is to preserve the capacity of the Games to ignite a dream in youth. The mission of the IOC is to perpetuate this dream. (IOC, 2009, p. 17)

Such ignition of a dream is a reference to the role model effect, whereby Olympic athletes can act as role models that inspire youths to engage in positive behavior, such as increased physical activity. Such a belief was evident in London 2012’s motto of ‘Inspire a Generation’, and also in former athlete and IOC member Frankie Fredericks’ address to the XIII Olympic Congress.

Everybody remembers Jesse Owens, Bob Beamon, Abebe Bikila, Nadia Comaneci, Jean-Claude Killy, Mark Spitz, Alberto Tomba, Michael Phelps, Usain Bolt and what they did. They all became heroes, examples to follow in sport and in life. They have inspired generation after generation throughout the world. Today, in our evolving society, the athlete is similar to a movie or pop star as a role model or hero for the younger generation. He makes them dream, gives them hope and even helps them to find their own way and own goals in life. (IOC, 2009, p. 24)

This account establishes the role model effect from the perspective of the IOC in more detail, presenting Olympic athletes as examples to follow, with the ability to inspire towards achievement of goals in life. In this sense, such an effect on youth is a form of legacy (i.e., a
remaining benefit) of hosting the Olympic Games. However, as much as re-engaging the world’s youth can be interpreted as a developmental endeavor, with the IOC seeking to sustain Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, this strategy can also be interpreted as a commercial endeavor, with the IOC seeking to sustain Olympism as a commercial brand.

**Why: Delivering the Next Generation of Revenue**

From the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand, the strategy of re-engaging can also be interpreted as a desire to retain the commercial viability of Olympism in the future. Such a commercial focus is evident in both the key processes and practices of (1) developing youth-appealing sports content, and (2) developing youth-appealing communication platforms.

From the perspective of broadcast partners, there is some indication that their primary concern in re-engaging the youth via the development of youth-appealing sports content is to maintain them as a future audience, rather than to benefit the younger audience by inspiring them. An indication of this comes from the BBC’s Head of Major Events, who states “They’ve [Olympic sports] got to have relevance of course for the younger people as well because they are the audience in the future.” As discussed above, in contrast to the Olympic Charter process for selecting sports, such decisions are commercially motivated. As acknowledged by the key IOC broadcasting executive, differences can exist between the Olympic Charter and the practical realization of selecting a sport to be included in the Olympic program:

The IOC has a clear set of criteria [for inclusion of sports in the Olympic Games], which is set out in the Olympic Charter. […] But the reality is that when it comes to actually including a sport in the Games the IOC will prefer commercially viable sports.

As with developing youth-appealing content, there is also an indication that broadcast partners’ decisions to develop youth-appealing platforms are motivated by sustaining the youth
as a future audience, as indicated by the BBC’s Head of Major Events, who states: “We thought very carefully about what [in terms of platforms] our audiences want and the younger audiences are important to us, probably extra important to us because they are our audiences in the future.” The key IOC broadcasting executive shares this evaluation: “They are the audience of the future. There is no question that we need to target them.”

The commercial implications of the IOC failing to re-engage the world’s youth by developing both youth-appealing content and platforms is mapped out by Sir Martin Sorrell, with a lost generation manifesting in reduced fees from broadcasters, and ultimately the risk of Olympism not being sustained:

If the Olympic sports themselves, and the way they are promoted online and on mobile, do not appeal to the younger audience, they will lose that audience. Broadcasters will reduce their fees and the Movement will be at risk. (IOC, 2009, p. 190)

To summarize, the IOC is seeking to sustain Olympism through the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth. The practices by which this strategy is being achieved is through developing youth-appealing sports content and broadcasting this content via youth-appealing digital media platforms. The determination of the Olympic sports program belongs to the IOC membership, a decision that “falls within the competence of the Session” (IOC, 2013, p. 82). Although the IOC members are free to make such decisions based upon whatever factors they see fit, the increasing inclusion of youth-appealing sports such as BMX and snowboarding suggest that a conscious effort is being made to appeal more to the world’s youth. The IOC administration work with broadcast partners to develop youth-appealing platforms, making such practices part of broadcast partner contracts. However, having sold the broadcast rights, the influence of the IOC as to how their content is delivered is somewhat limited. Fortunately,
attracting a younger audience is as equally beneficial to broadcasters; so youth-appealing platforms are being used to broadcast the Olympic Games. The strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth can be interpreted as both a developmental endeavor when considering the role model effect from the broadcasting of the Olympic Games, but equally can be considered a commercial endeavor, when viewing the world’s youth as a future audience and revenue stream. The official narrative of the IOC membership suggests the rationale is to inspire the next generation, but the description of the processes and practices from the IOC administration and broadcast partners indicates that the strategy is about securing future audiences (and thus future revenue), so to sustain Olympism as a commercial brand.

**Theme 2: Olympism for All?**

The Olympic Games are regarded as the practical manifestation of Olympism and Olympism is regarded as being at its peak during the Olympic Games (Girginov, 2010). As such, Olympism is most readily accessed through the Olympic Games. Historically, the IOC has been lauded for an ‘access for all’ approach, and despite leveraging their broadcast rights for $3.9146 billion for the 2009 to 2012 Olympic Cycle (2014c), the official narrative of the IOC in the Olympic Charter is that ‘Access for All’ is sought above all else (e.g., prioritized over revenues), as evident in by law 48 of the Olympic Charter (stated below). The accuracy of this account is analyzed within this theme, as well as a review of the IOC’s ‘access for all’ approach following the emergence of digital media platforms. According to Sir Martin Sorrell, with regard to digital media platforms, “…the opportunity for sports rights-holders such as the IOC is huge: in terms of broader access to new markets and audiences (IOC, 2009, p. 190). The IOC is seeking to take advantage of this opportunity via two ‘access for all’ strategies, which are evident in by law 48 of the Olympic Charter. This by law states: “The IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure
the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013b, p. 92). From this, it is possible to differentiate between two ‘access for all’ strategies of (a) reaching the widest possible audience, and (b) providing the fullest coverage by the different media (i.e., equitable access).

**What: Reaching the Widest Possible Audience**

According to the key IOC broadcasting executive, “reaching the widest possible audience is key with regard to the Olympic Charter. It is definitely the most important strategy for the IOC and is equally important for broadcasters.” The key IOC broadcasting executive goes on to state: "One thing which is key for Olympic Games is that it is among the top if not the top sports property in terms of Broadcast Rights in every territory.” Such a lofty goal has thus far been achieved, according to the key IOC broadcasting executive: "Our broadcast rights are sold in all parts of the world on all platforms" and "It’s [the Olympic Games] definitely the top property in different parts of the world, it’s key in every country." Such an achievement is fueled by the IOC strategy described by Michael Payne as ‘Access for All’. This strategy is about the Olympic Games being consumable in all corners of the world (i.e., equitable access). According to Payne (2006), “Access for all is at the heart of the Olympic Movement. It would have been a fatal error for the IOC to have ever compromised on this issue” (p. 32). The compromise Payne (2006) was referring to was the situation of broadcasters, who could not guarantee reaching the widest possible audience, were the highest bidders for rights. The IOC has been able to achieve the strategy of reaching the widest possible audience by prioritizing this over other goals (e.g., maximizing revenues from the sale of broadcast rights).
How: Prioritizing Audience Access

The IOC’s prioritization of audience access is evident in their official documentation, as referred to above. Notably, the Olympic Charter states: “The IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure […] the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013b, p. 92). That such a strategy is included in Olympic Charter indicates the importance of it and the level at which it was formed. The Olympic Charter is the codification of the Fundamental Principles, Rules and By-laws adopted by the IOC and takes precedence over all other Olympic documentation. This document can only be amended at an IOC session, which is a general meeting of all IOC members (Loup, 2006). The IOC administration is responsible for administering the wishes of the IOC membership, as set forth in the Olympic Charter. This is evident in a quote from the key IOC broadcasting executive, who is part of the IOC administration:

The Olympic Charter states that Olympic Games need to be made accessible to the widest possible audience. This comes from Rule 51, if I’m correct. And coming from that, we try our best to make this happen at every edition of the Games whether it’s summer, whether it’s winter.

The importance of this policy and the relationship between IOC member decisions and IOC administration implementation is evident in how the policy has fed through to the Olympic Marketing Fact File, which identifies a fundamental objective of Olympic marketing as “To ensure that the largest possible audience around the world can view and experience the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5). As a reaction to the prioritization of this strategy, the primary means by which the IOC administration can maximize audience access is through their partner selection processes.
How: Broadest Coverage Partner Selection

The Olympic Marketing Fact File states that “Broadcast rights to the Olympic Games are sold principally to broadcasters that can guarantee the broadest coverage throughout their respective territories” (IOC, 2014c, p. 20). An example of this practice is the selling of Olympic broadcast rights in the United Kingdom. The British Broadcast Corporation (BBC), who has held the United Kingdom’s rights to the Olympic Games since 1960, is able to guarantee the broadcast coverage in the United Kingdom because it is a ‘Free View’ channel (i.e., other than the payment of a television license fee (a fee of £145.40 that all television viewers must pay), there is no additional cost (i.e. subscription) to view the BBC channels). In contrast, the British broadcaster BSkyB cannot guarantee the broadcast coverage throughout the United Kingdom because they are a subscription service, to which not all television viewers subscribe. The cost to subscribe to BSkyB’s sports channels is £46 per month (£552 per year), which would have to be paid on top of the £145.40 television license fee that all television viewers are legally required to pay. As a result, not all households are able to access these channels due to the barrier of cost. An equivalent example in the United States is that of free-to-air broadcaster NBC and cable channel ESPN.

According to the key IOC broadcasting executive, although the IOC typically work with free-to-air broadcasters, they will also work with subscription-based broadcasters if they have a broad reach, or are willing to sub-license sufficient hours to a free-to-air channel:

If the broadcaster is not free-to-air, it is mandatory to make the broadcast available on the most available platform. If the platform is accessible by more than 95 % of the population in a territory, it’s a valid platform that meets the access for all requirements. For example, even if Sky Italia [a non free-to-air broadcaster] has an agreement with the IOC, Sky
Italia has an obligation to sub-license a certain number of broadcast hours to a free-to-air channel. Generally, 200 hours of Summer Games and 100 hours of Winter Games, but in some territories that is not always possible.

Whereas most sports properties are focused on finding the highest bidder in the sales process, according to the key IOC broadcasting executive, there are several conditions that must be met by potential broadcast partners of the IOC:

We are not just looking at the maximum rights, […] but also the broadcast plans as well and what numbers they put in terms of their planning and that is very key. So there may be a Pay TV channel or just an Internet broadcaster who want the rights but we need to ensure that everything else is ensured. So they ensure a free-to-air commitment, having the widest possible audience, and making all sports coverage available.

The former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights adds further detail to this partner selection process by identifying the importance of the status of the broadcast partner in their market: “I think the IOC must be very careful with the selection of its broadcast partners and making sure that it is the broadcast partner who is the dominant player in the market.” Having reached the widest possible audience, the IOC has a responsibility to provide the Olympic audience with equitable access (i.e., they should be able to consume the Olympic Games in the same way).

**What: Providing Equitable Access**

Given that national scale television broadcasts dated back to the 1920s, the equitable access to such technology is not a concern for the IOC in 2014. However, equitable access to the relatively recently emerged digital media platform technology is a challenge for the IOC. IOC member John D. Coates identified the question of “How can the IOC maximise access to
Olympic content [via digital media platforms] in developing countries?” (IOC, 2009, p. 201) as a pressing issue for the IOC. This challenge is confirmed by NOC representative Veda Bruno-Victor, who stated: “We are challenged to find ways of determining the best media through which we can reach audiences in different geographical constituencies, with varying levels of economic, socio-cultural and technological development” (IOC, 2009, p. 204). As Bruno-Victor identifies, this challenge is due to varying levels of access to digital media platforms. This challenge is commonly referred to as the ‘Digital Divide’, which is the gap between those who have access to the latest information technologies and those who do not (Compaine, 2001). A further challenge to the IOC is second-level Digital Divide, which is varying degrees in people’s online skills (Hargittai, 2002; Hooley, Hutchinson, & Watts, 2010). The IOC seeks to limit the challenge of the ‘Digital Divide’ by acting as the digital media platforms broadcaster themselves in developing markets.

How: Prioritizing Equitable Access

As with reaching the widest possible audience, the IOC prioritizes equitable access by making it a by law within the Olympic Charter: “The IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media […] for the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013b, p. 92). A key IOC broadcasting executive identifies the link that equitable access has to maximizing the Olympic audience:

It [responsibility for equitable consumption] comes from the Olympic charter and […] the version says in Article 48 that the IOC has the responsibility of making available the Olympic Games broadcast to the maximum possible audience worldwide and that means that it has to be made available to every viewership possible including all devices possible whether it’s television or any other new device coming up.
Having reached the maximum possible audience, the next step is to make the Olympic Games available to that audience on all digital media platforms. The IOC attempt to meet this priority by acting as a digital broadcaster themselves.

**How: IOC as Digital Broadcaster**

In territories where the IOC has been unable to sell their digital media rights (NB: Although in most major markets, such as the United States, the television broadcaster also purchases the digital rights, it is possible for a single market to have different television and digital media platforms rights holders) they provide access via their own digital media platform in the form of the IOC YouTube channel. A key IOC broadcasting executive identifies that: “We took the responsibility and we did our own thing on YouTube platform with the maximum reach possible for the Internet viewership in territories of Africa and Asia.” The IOC Director of Television and Marketing Services, Timo Lumme, described this practice at its launch ahead of the Beijing 2008 Games:

> For the first time in Olympic history we will have complete global online coverage, and the IOC will have its own broadcast Channel and content production facilities. The IOC’s Channel will make fantastic Olympic footage available where young generations of sports fans are already going for online entertainment, and will complement the footage offered in these territories by our broadcast partners across all media platforms. (IOC, 2008b, para. 6)

This IOC digital media platform broadcasts video highlights to territories where digital video-on-demand rights had not been sold (IOC, 2008a). A total of 78 countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East had access highlights on the IOC’s YouTube Channel, although live coverage was available on the channel for London 2012. This was the first time that the IOC had
produced and delivered Olympic content directly to the Olympic audience (IOC, 2008a). As identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive, the IOC are able to define access to this platform, so to provide presence in between Games (a strategy that will be discussed in detail in a later theme), but not infringe upon rights during Games time:

> We can define the access. For London, the IOC showed live coverage on their YouTube channel, but for Sochi it was only highlights. Access to this channel is restricted during Games time to territories where digital media rights have not been sold, but turned back on afterwards.

This platform was a success for the IOC, according to IOC member Alex Gilady:

> Our video channel on YouTube during the Beijing Games, which provided highlights to those territories where digital VOD rights had not been sold, was a great success and generated millions of views and substantial amounts of traffic. (IOC, 2009, p. 218)

Although the IOC broadcasting executive was unwilling or unable to explain this practice “in terms of divulging any details”, he was able to confirm “the IOC act as a broadcaster and YouTube was the hosting platform for this conduct.” This practice and the overall strategy of equitable access for the widest possible audience, as with the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth, can be interpreted from both the perspectives of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and Olympism as a commercial brand.

**Why: Maximizing Inspirational Effects**

From the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, the strategy of maximizing the Olympic audience can be interpreted as seeking to maximize the inspirational effects of Olympism and the Olympic Games. This official narrative of the IOC is evident in the following quote from the IOC Director of Television and Marketing Services, Timo Lumme,
who states: “The IOC’s priority is to ensure that as many people as possible get to experience the magic of the Olympic Games and the inspirational sporting achievements of the Olympic athletes” (IOC, 2008b, para. 6). As with the justification of the strategy to re-engage the world’s youth, the IOC are reliant upon the role model effect that the Olympic Games can provide to achieve social reform.

It follows that the inspirational effects of the Olympic Games may be enhanced by consumption via digital media platforms in addition to consumption via traditional television (this notion shall be further explored in the following theme). According to IOC member Ching-Kuo Wu, equitable access to the Olympic Games is a right of all Olympic fans: “We [the IOC] are far too slow in developing better means of communication to reach these people [emerging markets] who also have the right to share the rich experiences of sport and the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2009, p. 202). Ching-Kuo Wu goes on to establish that meeting this right is a core Olympic Ideal: “It is our responsibility not to disregard one of the core Olympic Ideals, namely sharing our experiences and benefits with them” (IOC, 2009, p. 202). Therefore, the strategy of equitable access is a right of Olympic fans for which the IOC has a responsibility to provide.

This right of access has been prioritized above revenues in some instances. Payne (2006) identifies how:

The IOC was not seduced by higher offers from private broadcasters. Instead, it chose to keep the broadcast on free-to-air broadcast. This ensured that everyone in the world can afford to watch, and that economic access is not a barrier to following the Games. (pp. 16-17)
IF Representative Marisol Casado identified that prioritizing exposure over revenue can be dependent upon the territory: “Some territories are more important in terms of exposure than of revenue. Having influence on distribution in house ensures the best possible balance of exposure for the sport, and revenue to reinvest in its future development” (IOC, 2009, p. 206).

Although revenue may have been sacrificed by the IOC in some cases, in analyzing this strategy from the perspective of Olympism as a commercial brand, the IOC’s shortcomings in implementing this strategy become apparent, as do the commercial advantages of the reaching the widest possible audience strategy.

**Why: A Long-term Strategy of Developing Markets**

The IOC’s prioritization of exposure (although more valiant than a prioritization of revenues) cannot be separated from the pursuit of revenues. Payne (2006) establishes the link between reach (i.e., ‘Access for All’) and value to advertisers, which in turn increases the value of Olympic broadcast rights to broadcasters: “The global reach of the Games, with their broad demographic appeal and their ability to engage the whole population, makes the Games a uniquely attractive proposition to advertisers” (p. 29). This link is also evident in the key IOC broadcasting executive’s observation of the increasing audience size and increasing value of Olympic broadcast rights: “It’s a remarkable increase not just in rights value, but interest as well as the exposure.” The IOC’s practice of principally selling the Olympic Games to free-to-air broadcasters maximizes the exposure of the Olympic Games and thus the value to advertisers. It follows that free-to-air broadcasters can generate the greatest revenue from advertising sales and are thus willing to pay higher rights fees than subscription channels (although there have been occasions where subscription channels have bid higher). Additionally, for many countries, the law stipulates that the Olympic Games can only be broadcast via free-to-air broadcasters. In
considering this, the practice of principally selecting free-to-air broadcasters as partners may not
be as devoid of a commercial consideration as it appears. Indeed, ‘Access for All’ and revenue
for the IOC come hand in hand. Furthermore, the use of ‘principally’ rather than ‘exclusively’
indicates that the IOC may be willing to sacrifice the broadcast coverage of the Olympic Games
for higher revenues in some instances.

The IOC practice of providing equitable access to digital media platforms through their
own IOC channel can also be interpreted as having some commercial consideration. The IOC
were not willing to divulge the structure of the deal with YouTube, so it is unknown whether this
practice of providing digital equitable access came at a cost for the IOC or whether the IOC is
receiving any revenues from this arrangement. In accessing the channel from the UK (NB:
During Games time this platform is not accessible in markets where digital media platforms
broadcast rights have been sold), there are no advertisements on the channel and subscription to
the channel is free, so there is no obvious evidence of revenue generation. However, it is still
possible to identify some long-term commercial consideration in that this practice can be
interpreted as the developing of markets.

The IOC is acting as a broadcaster via YouTube only where they have been unable to sell
the digital media rights. Digital media rights have not been sold because the market in some
territories is not yet developed. However, by providing Olympic content via the digital media
platform of YouTube the IOC is developing these markets. As such, this can be viewed as a
long-term strategy to increase revenues by developing the markets where rights could not be
sold. By developing an Olympic Games audience via digital media platforms, the IOC will be
able to sell their digital media platform rights in the future. The following quote from the key
IOC broadcasting executive identifies how the IOC is monitoring the development of markets and an indication of their long-term strategy:

The exposure of Olympic Games is going to grow and hence the rights value is growing in different parts of the world, and the key here is that the markets where the rights value have not been very high is developing.

Although the ‘Digital Divide’ (i.e., varying degrees of technology uptake in different markets) is a barrier to equitable access to the Olympic Games via digital media platforms, the below quote from IOC member Richard Carrion indicates that the varying degrees of market development is a more primary concern:

Unfortunately, broadcasting markets do not move at the same pace as broadcasting technologies. The regions that received broadcast signals from the first ever televised Olympic Games, the 1960 Summer Games in Rome, still dominate the international TV market. The United States, Europe and Japan still account for 80% of Olympic broadcast rights fees, even though their populations amount to only about 20% of the world’s population. (IOC, 2009, p. 191)

This monitoring of developing markets in terms of their contribution to the revenues the IOC received from the sale of broadcast rights suggests that rather than these markets primarily representing 80% of the Olympic audience who can benefit from Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, these markets primarily represent an insufficient contribution of 20% towards Olympism as a commercial brand.

Further evidence that this practice is more reflective of Olympism being managed as a commercial brand is that, despite the IOC promoting their YouTube channel as an effort to overcome the ‘Digital Divide’, this practice does nothing to address access to technology.
Rather, this practice only provides content to be consumed where the technology already exists, but where the market was not sufficiently developed to allow the IOC to sell their digital media platform rights. According to Manolo Romero of the Olympic Broadcasting Service, the IOC has a responsibility to help isolated NOCs, so to avoid a two-tier system:

A further consideration is the importance of ensuring that digital communications do not create a two-tier system, whereby those countries with access to the Internet and mobile communications have an increasing advantage over those developing countries where communications are still difficult. Although the signs are that technology is developing quickly in remote corners of the world, it is important that the IOC supports and helps isolated NOCs to develop effective communication systems. (IOC, 2009, p. 216)

The IOC is not supporting isolated NOCs to develop effective communicate systems, as Romero advocates.

To summarize, much of the processes and practices engaged by the IOC through their broadcasting practices are about providing access to the Olympic Games and thus Olympism. The strategy of maximizing the Olympic audience has been prioritized by the IOC and has been implemented via the practice of partnering with broadcasters with the broadest coverage. However, ‘Access for All’ is not just about maximizing the audience, it is also about the audience being able to consume the Olympic Games in the same way. The ‘Digital Divide’ is a challenge of the IOC, which does not appear to be a priority to tackle at present. Since 2008, the IOC have been providing access to digital media platform coverage in markets where their digital media platform rights had not been sold. However, this does not address the ‘Digital Divide’, which is about access to technology, rather than access to content. The IOC are not doing anything to develop the technology infrastructure in isolated NOCs that do not have
effective communication systems, but instead appear to be focusing on developing markets that are closer to being able to purchase digital media platform rights.

**Theme 3: Expanding the Olympic Window**

Spa et al. (1995) described the Olympic Games as a window through which technological change can be observed. Nineteen years after their study of television in the Olympics, technological change has changed the window through which the Olympic Games are consumed in many ways. Sir Martin Sorrell, in referring to technological change in the form of digital media platforms, identifies that “…the opportunity for sports rights-holders such as the IOC is huge: […] deeper fan experiences through leveraging digital technologies, and longer event access through distributing new content in fresh ways” (IOC, 2009, p. 190). Such changes come about because “for technology companies, the Games offer a unique platform – a world stage to demonstrate state-of-the-art technological sophistication and vision” (Payne, 2006, p. 198). As a result, “over the years, the Olympics have become an important global showcase for new technology” (Payne, 2006, p. 198). The key IOC broadcasting executive identifies several factors that make the Olympic Games the ideal test site for new technology:

In terms of reach, extent, and technology scalability, I think this is an ideal test because the Olympic Games is 17 days, more than 3,500 hours of broadcast content produced, and engaging a 4.8 billion television audience, and targeted at all Internet social media users.

Based upon these factors, the key IOC broadcasting executive concludes that: “If it works for the Olympic Games, it will work for everything else. [There is] no better platform and everybody are looking forward to this event to launch new technologies.” As such, the Olympic Games are in an enviable position of being the first to exploit new technologies.
What: Exploiting New Technologies

The Olympic Games has contributed to developing broadcasting technology, culminating in London 2012 being heralded as the first truly digital Olympic Games, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

The Olympics has always traditionally been a time when we can actually move broadcasting technology on. […] Well, in 20 years time, we might be looking back at London 2012 thinking actually that’s where it all started. I think 2012 was truly the digital Olympics and we are very proud of that.

This has been achieved by a strategy of exploiting the latest technologies, as identified by BBC’s Head of Major Events: “We are looking to push the boundaries here and take full advantage of the latest technology to ensure our audiences get maximum choice.” This is an exciting strategy moving forward with the broadcasting of the Olympic Games because, in terms of the next technology, the future is unknown, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

I think we will continue to exploit all platforms. The fascinating thing to me is we don’t actually know whether there might be a new technology or a new content idea that comes along just before Rio. It might be something we haven’t even thought about. The fact that in Beijing did we think about apps in Beijing, did we think about tablets in Beijing? No, we didn’t.

Technology continuously develops, with changes evident at the most recent Olympic Games, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “Sochi 2014 was the first Winter Games consumed on the tablet. It was the most accessible Winter Games ever.” So to exploit new technologies, the IOC and its broadcasting partners engaged in a practice of monitoring and evaluation of (a) the Olympic audience, and (b) the available technology.
How: Audience and Technology Monitoring and Evaluation

To monitor and evaluate the Olympic audience the BBC conducted research to determine their needs and wants, described by the BBC’s Head of Major Events as their hopes and aspirations:

We appreciate that every one of the 60 million people in the UK will have their own idea of how to enjoy the Olympics. […] We wanted to hear what our audiences wanted too, so we did a lot of audience research, we held focus groups just to make sure that our thoughts truly reflected our audiences' hopes and aspirations.

To monitor and evaluate the available technology the IOC works closely with their broadcasting partners to identify the upcoming technologies that they need to adapt to, recognizing Olympic audience expectations, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

Working with our partners and working with different strategies. What do we need to adapt to? Whether it was social media, whether it’s a new broadcast technology. Just working with our partners just to ensure that we are there where users expect us to be. Sometimes before, sometimes we may lead and that’s how we evaluate the platforms, evaluate the upcoming technologies.

This monitoring and evaluation informs the practices by which the IOC and broadcasting partners adopt and use digital media platforms, with research needed to establish whether a new digital media platforms is secure, robust, and reliable, as identified by Manolo Romero of the Olympic Broadcasting Services:

The significant delay in the adoption of 3G technology for mobiles should remind us that it is not the technology itself that changes the way we communicate, but how we choose to adopt and use that technology. Above all, it is vital that new digital technology be
secure, robust and reliable, or it will be quickly rejected by an increasingly discerning audience. (IOC, 2009, p. 214)

According to the key IOC broadcasting executive: “The Television and Marketing Services Department, along with the higher management and the relevant commission, determine which technologies are going to be exploited.”

The successful adoption of new technology potentially leaves a digital legacy (e.g., new digital media platforms that can be exploited for other sport events). However, not all technology leaves a legacy. For example, the BBC’s Head of Major Events questions the adoption of 3D television, suggesting that there might not be a consumer demand for it:

Undoubtedly, the digital legacy will reflect the increased choice; the new technology offers all of us. And you just pick out couple of other things, for 3D coverage, we need to understand whether there is genuine audience demand for it. We’ll do some analysis of what is the support of it and how to use the service. I think the question I would ask is, is there a real consumer demand for live sport in 3D, or is it really a case of manufacturers wanting to build the sets and sell it to us?

The monitoring and evaluation of the Olympic audience and technology available allows the IOC and its broadcasting partners to “walk the fine line between what is possible technologically and what is practical and affordable. Fall behind and you risk looking out of touch. But get ahead of the curve and you risk failure and financial ruin” (Payne, 2006, p. 220-221). Thus far, the IOC and its broadcasting partners appear to be walking this fine line and have successfully leveraged digital media platforms in achieving their strategy of increasing Olympic Games coverage.

**What: Increasing Olympic Games Coverage**

The most critical strategy for the IOC in expanding the Olympic window is to increase the
hours of coverage of the Olympic Games. Historically the Olympic Games could only be viewed through the single window of television. This only offered a partial window to the Olympic Games as the hours of coverage available through television was far lower than the hours of content produced by the vast number of sports and events in the Olympic Games. On a global level, digital media platforms provided more coverage hours than television for the first time at London 2012 (IOC, 2012). However, for major markets, digital media platforms have been providing considerably more coverage since Beijing 2008, notably where United Sates broadcaster NBC provided 2,200 hours of live coverage via their website, which was 214% greater than the 700 hours of live coverage broadcast on their television platform (Sandomir, 2008).

According to a key IOC broadcasting executive: “It is just not possible to broadcast everything on television." Although FIFA is not considered a competitor of the IOC in that they are part of the Olympic Movement as the IF for the Olympic sport soccer, their marquee event of the World Cup does offer an interesting comparison with the Olympic Games in that these two events carry the greatest audience for sport mega events. Whereas it is not possible to offer complete coverage of Olympic Games content via a single screen, it is possible to provide close to complete coverage of the FIFA World Cup via a single screen. The only exception in the current format is the final group stage game whereby the four teams in the same group play their final two group stage matches at the same time, so to remove any advantage the teams playing in a later game have. This allows for near maximum coverage of the FIFA World Cup via a single screen. A FIFA World Cup fan could watch every minute of 56 out of the total of 64 games played at the Brazil 2014 World Cup, having to only choose between two matches for each of the
eight groups (four teams in each group playing in a round robin format before two qualify for the knockout phase).

In comparison, the London 2012 Summer Games had 302 events across 26 sports. An event can represent a tournament in itself. For example, for the men’s soccer tournament at London 2012 (1 of 302 events) a total of 32 matches were played. Clearly, the volume of competition for the whole Olympic Games is not possible to broadcast via a single screen, as recognized by Pound (2004):

> There are some 3,000 hours of events during a Summer Games, and only a tiny portion can be included in traditional network coverage. [...] Only about 5 percent of the sports action will be seen on the network broadcasts. Whole sports are regularly ignored and never seen at all by the viewing public. (p. 185).

The BBC’s Head of Major Events recognized this challenge: “Obviously with the World Cup you can watch every game if you just had your single screen, you could see the whole of the World Cup. Well that’s not the case for the Olympic Games.” To overcome this challenge the IOC and its broadcast partners have expanded the coverage of the Olympic Games and thus user choice through increasing the number of screens through which the Olympic Games can be consumed.

**How: Multiple Screens for Multiple Sports**

It has been possible for the IOC and their broadcast partners to increase the number of windows through which the Olympic Games can be consumed by embracing digital media platforms. In comparing the impact of digital media platforms on the Olympic Games and the World Cup, the BBC’s Head of Major Events identifies that the adoption of digital media
platforms has been much more advantageous for the Olympic Games than it has for the FIFA World Cup:

Does that kind of create an advantage for the Olympic games [over the FIFA World Cup]? Absolutely, yes, because I think the exciting thing now is we have got enough digital technology to take account of multiple sports, multiple fields of play, you know it’s fascinating to think about what you could go on and do from that.

Whereas the FIFA World Cup is not in need of multiple screens to allow their audience to be able to consume the vast majority of their content, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events, the Olympic Games can greatly benefit from the multiple screens provided by digital media platforms due to the “multiple sports” and “multiple fields of play” that make up the Olympic broadcast.

Simply put “more platforms result in more coverage, more audience” according to the key IOC broadcasting executive. Such expanded coverage allows for coverage of all the sports that are part of the Olympic program, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “Expanding the sports coverage […] so that all the sports that are seen from Olympic Games are made available. We don’t want to hear any more that Water Polo was not shown in Haiti.”

The IOC’s broadcasting partners delivered the expansion of coverage. As described by the BBC’s Head of Major Events, for the first time at the London 2012 Games the BBC was able to broadcast every session of every sport so to never miss a moment of the Games:

For the first time we were able to broadcast, live from every venue from the start to the finish of each day's action. Our boast was every session of every sport, everyday as we delivered more sport content from Olympics than has ever been broadcast before. We promised to never miss a moment.
Previously, broadcasters were required to made editorial judgments on what sports they would show, according to the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “At least we’ve moved on from those sort of days when we have to make a big decision, are we going to show athletics, are we going to show swimming? We can do them both.” Now that choice is in the hands of Olympic fans: “It is putting the choice in the hands of the viewers, so you can watch what you want, when you want. I suppose, the only missing link is you can’t choose the language you want”, the BBC’s Head of Major Events identifies. Technically, this was achieved via multiple high definition streams which could be consumed via the BBC’s website and also via the BBC’s Red Button (The BBC’s digital television interactive service whereby viewers can access multiple live streams and also access on-demand content such as highlights):

So, how do we do this? We offered 24 simultaneous high definition streams on the BBC website. Now that compares with just six from Beijing, so quite a quantum leap. It all added up to actually a massive two-and-a-half thousand hours of unique sport. When you think our coverage from Sydney 2000, a mere 12 years previous, was limited to some 300 hours of sport programming across the main TV channels, BBC One and Two, it was before the Red Button, before web streaming, how far have we come in the last 12 years, quite phenomenal. And we are now able to just offer our audiences more and more action until we can now offer virtually unlimited choice.

The BBC’s Head of Major Events identified how this impacted the experience of fans of specific Olympic sports:

In the past you have the greatest event taking place, but you could only watch 5% of what was actually happening. So, if you are interested in BMX and everything else, you would sort of sit around and wait for it to happen. Now you can follow it.
Multiple screens are not just limited to multiple streams that Olympic fans can choose from (i.e., choosing which stream to watch from a single digital media platform). By broadcasting the Olympic Games across multiple types of digital media platforms, Olympic fans are able to consume multiple events or multiple screens of the same event simultaneously, according to a key IOC broadcasting executive:

People are now being able to watch more than one sport at a time and that’s where the second screen or the third screen comes in. Picture where people are not just watching television, people love to watch television, and most of the sports are being watched on television, but people are accessing an alternate stream or alternate video conference on their tablet device or mobile device or on their PC or laptop in addition to what they’re watching on television. As identified by Manolo Romero of the Olympic Broadcasting Services, the multiple screens provided by digital media platforms have increased user choice:

The different media platforms have enabled people to watch footage or receive information from the Olympic Games in a variety of ways. As the volume of information has grown exponentially during the Digital Revolution, so has the accessibility of this information to a global audience. This technology is what lies behind the ability of audiences now to choose, and indeed demand, when, how and where they watch the Olympic Games. (IOC, 2009, p. 214)

Such increased choice raises the issue of the impact of consuming the Olympic Games via digital media platforms on consuming the Olympic Games via traditional television, with the risk that providing Olympic fans with the ability to consume the Olympic Games via digital media platforms could limit their consumption of the Olympic Games via traditional television.
This is referred to as cannibalization in marketing strategy, whereby a reduction in market share of one product (i.e., traditional television) is the result of the introduction of a new product (i.e., digital media platforms) by the same producer (i.e., Olympic broadcasters).

**How: Complimenting not cannibalizing.** According to IOC member Richard Carrion, the IOC and its broadcasting partners use digital media platforms to fill the gaps left by traditional media platforms: “Digital fills the gap between other media and builds on this principle. Beijing brought an end to the myth whereby digital media had been considered to have a cannibalising effect on television” (IOC, 2009, p. 191). This involves the strategic use of content whereby a single gatekeeper exploited the content across multiple platforms (e.g., the BBC strategically controls the exploitation of content across traditional television and digital media platforms) so that the platforms do not compete against each other, as identified by IOC member Richard Carrion:

Today, Olympic right-holder broadcasters acquire and can monetise five thousand hours of Olympic Summer Games content and a thousand hours of the Olympic Winter Games in high definition for multi-platform exploitation. The different components of the platform do not compete against each other, but are complementary. (IOC, 2009, p. 191)

In acting as a single gatekeeper, the BBC shares its content across all platforms, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

Producing sort of a consistent offer on shared content. I think the important thing for us is to make the best content we can and make the best programs we can, showcase the sport in the best way we can, and our aim is to do that across all platforms and to share that content. We try not to make content that’s specific to one platform or another.
Such sharing of content allow digital media platforms to combine with and extend upon traditional platforms, as identified by IOC member Alex Gilady: “Digital has not yet replaced the printed word, television or any other medium, but combines, extends and complements them” (IOC, 2009, p. 217).

BBC’s Head of Major Events recognized that such conventional platforms, despite the sophisticated offering of digital media platforms, still attract the largest audiences:

This is TV under your control. The technology is fantastic. But, despite the technology, we always knew that no matter how sophisticated the digital offer was, there would be big audiences who wanted to share the experience in more conventional ways.

This is further confirmed by Payne (2006), who states: “‘New technology’ will continue to help the ‘old media’ to broaden the entertainment experiences for the fan, but television will, from the entertainment perspective, remain the engine for many more years to come” (p. 220). As such, the BBC, despite their digital media platform offerings, retained BBC One as its primary screen for their Olympic broadcast, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “It's not difficult to imagine families and friends gathered in their living rooms enjoying the games together, so we didn't forget BBC One, which we consider to be the channel, which would feature the best of the Olympics all-day.” Such a view of the importance of television is shared by IF representative Sarah Lewis:

Such forms of reporting [digital media platforms] are not designed to compete with or replace television, which remains the single most important means of transmitting sports events live, not to mention the main source of revenue, but data and text feeds add to the range of opportunities for fans and viewers to obtain information. (IOC, 2009, p. 221)

The above quote identifies that digital media platforms are able to provide a range of
opportunities for Olympic fans to obtain information in support of television. For example, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events, digital media platforms provide live data and information that enhances the television broadcast:

You can access live data in the middle of events so you could look at the timing and position data, extra statistics during team sports like football, and also you could access that extra information about the sports and competition formats too.

Having consumed an event on television, digital media platforms provide the opportunity to watch an event again and get additional information that was not available on the television broadcast. IF representative Goran Petersson identifies how information from new technology can provide performance information that can be shared via digital media platforms to enhance the television broadcast:

We should investigate new ways in which technology can bring our sports to life and follow the example of market leaders like Formula 1, using advances in technology to provide our audience members with a better service. How about heart-rate monitors on shooters and archers, or perhaps on each member of a rowing team? Gear sensors on cyclists or pinpointing tracking on sailors? We should carry out a detailed analysis of each sport to discover the key data requirements, and how they can be monitored and presented in a meaningful way. (IOC, 2009, p. 211)

The use of digital media platforms to support television needs to be carefully managed, ensuring that digital media does not infringe upon the core sporting content on television, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

You know there are some different ways of using it. You sort of try to tailor it to different platforms. I mean; you can have a constant Twitter stream on the website page.
Fine. If we put a constant twitter feed up on BBC 1 on the bottom of the screen, we’ll drive our audience nuts. So, you’ve got to be practical about it.

In taking an approach whereby digital media platforms aim to support and compliment television, the fear that digital media platforms would cannibalize television viewership has not materialized. Rather, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “There is no cannibalization, its simply more consumption of Olympic Games.” Manolo Romero of the Olympic Broadcasting Services further explains this result:

While people may still watch live broadcasts of key events, in full HD with surround sound, they are also likely to watch these broadcasts online, or to study and share special moments and replays via websites, possibly while in contact with friends and colleagues. What we are seeing is not, therefore, the wholesale replacement of traditional media such as television, radio and print, but rather the convergence of these different media, which together deliver multimedia broadcasting to a more varied audience than in the past.

(IOC, 2009, p. 215)

The increase in consumption is quantified by the key IOC broadcasting executive, who identified that “people consuming on all these devices consume more than twice that of television alone, so it’s definitely extended consumption”, which has created what he refers to as “super fans or users who consume on multiple devices at the same point of time.” As reported by Sir Martin Sorrell in addressing the XIII Olympic Congress, in addition to digital media platform consumers viewing double the amount of Olympic content via television, these ‘super fans’ have greater brand recall, which can enhance the value of Olympic broadcast rights:

In research conducted by NBC, the average amount of time Internet and TV viewers spent watching the Olympics was roughly double the amount of time TV-only viewers
spent with the event. Six hours and 57 minutes of Olympic action was consumed by Internet and TV viewers compared to just three hours and 26 minutes by TV-only viewers. For brands, internet viewers absorbed ad messages more effectively than TV-only viewers. Brand recall for internet & TV viewers was 46 %, compared to 35 % for TV-only viewers. (IOC, 2009, p. 188)

In addition to increasing coverage of the Olympic Games, the IOC and broadcast partners are further leveraging digital media platforms to implement the strategy of providing Olympic fans with a deeper experience.

**What: A Deeper Interactive Olympic Games Experience**

This strategy provides a new dimension to the Olympic window in terms of depth. IOC member John D. Coates identifies a critical question for the IOC as: “How can the IOC ensure maximum levels of engagement and interaction by fans?” (IOC, 2009, p. 200). According to Sir Martin Sorrell, the IOC and broadcasting partners can provide “deeper fan experiences through leveraging digital technologies, and longer event access through distributing new content in fresh ways” (IOC, 2009, p. 190). The IOC and its broadcasting partners have achieved a deeper experience by adding an interactive element to the Olympic broadcast. The key IOC broadcasting executive stated: “We have worked with our broadcast partners so that their [digital media] applications are as engaging as possible as well as, as interactive as possible.” Indeed, an interactive broadcast is more engaging for the Olympic audience because it provides a multi-directional exchange between the IOC and the Olympic audience. This provides a deeper connection than the single direction and passive nature of consumption via television. Payne (2006) describes the digital media platform of the Internet as having the ability “…to expand the marketing opportunities, because of its multi-directional scope, rather than the single direction of
television” (p. 217). Similarly, IF Representative Goran Petersson identified how digital media platforms provide the capability for Olympic fans to interact with other Olympic fans and Olympic content: “Online games and interactive forums provide a chance for audience members to become completely active, not just choosing their content and data, but interacting with it” (IOC, 2009, p. 211). In taking advantage of such capabilities the IOC and its broadcasting partners are achieving the strategy of providing a deeper experience for Olympic fans through two specific interactive practices of (a) allowing the customization of Olympic content, and (b) facilitating digital Olympic communities through social media.

**How: Allowing Customization of Olympic Content**

Sir Martin Sorrell, in referring to the Olympic audience, stated, “You have to let them play – with your content, your assets – in their own way” (IOC, 2009, p. 189). As predicted by Payne (2006), digital media platforms have enabled Olympic fans to consume the Olympic Games in their own way by allowing the customization of the Olympic viewing experience:

In the coming years, there is no doubt that new technologies will present exciting opportunities. The challenge will be to find the right balance – making sure that the end result is really enhancing the viewer experience – giving the viewer greater choice of when to watch, what to watch, how to watch, in which language to watch and so on. Effectively this will allow everyone to create their own customized Olympic viewing experience. (p. 283)

Similarly, IOC member Richard Carrion identifies that “Digital gives more options, tailored to individual preferences, whether people tune in to watch Michael Phelps or Usain Bolt perform live or visit the Beijing Olympics Channel on YouTube” (IOC, 2009, p. 190). He goes on to explain the customization options that have existed for the Olympic audience since Beijing 2008:
When Michael Phelps and Usain Bolt captured the imagination of the world at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, audiences everywhere were able to watch repeats of their historic performances at their convenience, set them to their own music theme, and watch them again after work, during work, at home or on the move – an advantage Olympic fans did not have in 1976. The contrast shows what digital technology can provide: digital… gives us more. (IOC, 2009, p. 190)

The BBC’s Head of Major Events described the BBC’s interactive video player developed for London 2012:

Our Technology teams and Feature Media teams built this great interactive video player that you could use through the website and do almost anything with it. Now, you could watch the action; get more information on each individual athlete. Let’s say Bolt, the athlete in this case. After the event you are one click away from watching it again, several data options available as well, extra information, you can set alerts for different events so you didn't miss them.

These options exist because digital media platforms provide users with the capabilities to produce, distribute, consume, and personalize Olympic content, according to Sir Martin Sorrell, who was invited to address the XIII Olympic Congress:

The Digital Revolution has led to a user revolution through the democratisation of the tools of production, distribution, consumption and personalisation. Consumers are no longer satisfied with consuming content that the television networks create. Consumers are more active and creative than ever. The widespread adoption of blogs, podcasts, YouTube and Wikis enables people to create their own content, while exchanging content with thousands of other “non-professional” sources. (IOC, 2009, p. 187)
For example, the IOC posted an interactive app (i.e., an application or game on digital media platforms) on their Facebook page titled “Which Olympic City should I love in?” which took users through a series of questions (e.g., Pick your favorite Greek god) before allocating the user with the Olympic city that is best suited to them (e.g., Your result is London. The Square Mile. London rocks you just like it rocked the Olympics three times in 1908, 1948 and 2012), which the user can then share on their own Facebook page.

This represents democratization of such tools because previously they were restricted to the broadcasters. This speaks to the very nature of digital media platforms whereby the control exerted by broadcasters with traditional television is now shared with consumers (Crosbie, 2006). Although this nature contributes to the strategy of a deeper experience, the loss of control provides a platform for criticism of Olympic broadcasting (e.g., ‘#NBCFail’). The spirit of sharing is also evident in the practice of facilitating digital Olympic communities, whereby information and ideas related to the Olympic Games can be shared, exchanged, and created via social media.

**How: Facilitating Digital Olympic Communities**

A type of platform that has become prominent following the emergence of digital media platforms is social media. Social media websites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are virtual communities and networks that facilitate social interaction amongst users through the sharing, creation and exchange of information and ideas. As previously discussed, the IOC has its own accounts on these platforms, as identified by IOC member Alex Gilady:

The IOC is using a number of the most popular “virtual communities” to promulgate the Olympic Movement and its social network, through which athletes, trainers, directors,
sponsors and public authorities could have access to content of common interest. (IOC, 2009, p. 217)

For example, the IOC’s Facebook page is titled ‘The Olympic Games’ and has close to 10 million ‘likes’ (i.e., followers). Facebook users who like this page will receive status updates posted by the IOC, such as a ‘selfie’ (i.e., a photograph taken of oneself by oneself) by IOC President Thomas Bach of himself and Youth Olympic Games athletes was posted on 16 August, 2014, with a message of “Good luck to all the athletes”. This same photograph was posted by the ‘IOC Media’ Twitter account and ‘re-tweeted’ (i.e., shared) by another of the IOC’s Twitter accounts simply titled ‘Olympics’. The Olympics also has an Instagram account titled ‘Olympics’, which is a social media site focused on sharing photographs and videos. These social media sites serve as a platform through which the IOC can develop a sense of community, which, according to IF Representative Goran Petersson, is at the heart of the Olympic Movement:

The Digital Revolution has brought about a huge range of new developments in social networking. Community is at the heart of sport and the Olympic Movement. The IOC is the central hub around which these communities can revolve and interact. (IOC, 2009, pp. 211-212)

The IOC also encourage its broadcast partners to have a presence on social media, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

IOC keeps engaging itself on social media platforms as well as encourages all the stakeholders to be present on respective social media platforms and in terms of content; of course, it has to be the appropriate content as per the interest as well as, as per our contractual commitments with our stakeholders.
For example, for the London 2012 Games the British broadcaster the BBC had a Facebook page titled ‘BBC London 2012’, which had over 23 thousand likes. Sir Martin Sorrell, in addressing the Olympic Congress, reported on MEC Access’ online media audit of Olympic-related social networking, blogging and micro-blogging:

This work clearly demonstrated a huge volume of Olympic-themed conversations and a deeper association with Olympic events across all forms of online media, surpassing other events such as Wimbledon and Formula 1. With over 250 million people around the world now actively using the Facebook social networking site, this can only increase.

[…] You need to think: How can you be a part of the conversation and leverage communities and social networks to your advantage? (IOC, 2009, p. 188)

In response to Sorrell’s question of how the IOC can leverage communities and social networks, the IOC view such presence as essential so to connect the IOC with different Olympic stakeholders, who can also connect with each other through IOC social media platforms, as identified by IOC member Richard Carrion:

Having a presence on digital-media platforms is essential, connecting you with the communities of athletes, volunteers, collectors and spectators. It also allows those communities to connect with each other. (IOC, 2009, p. 192)

This broadens the relationships that exist in Olympic broadcasting. Previous findings have focused on the relationship between the IOC and Olympic broadcasters and the relationship between Olympic fans and both the IOC and Olympic broadcasters. However, social media adds the relationship between Olympic fans and Olympic fans. A further relationship of Olympic athletes and Olympic fans is added by the IOC engaging Olympic athletes in the Olympic conversation on social media sites, as identified by Manolo Romero of the Olympic Broadcasting
Services: “The involvement of the athletes themselves in digital communication is a growing phenomenon and one that raises the possibility of greater audience interaction and social networking” (IOC, 2009, p. 216). The key IOC broadcasting executive describes an example of this:

We asked the users to upload their own best content or what they can do best and to put all together with the greatest athletes and their Olympic performances. So, we have really adapted to this team of interactivity and engaging the users and this is what the user wants basically so we definitely [know] that’s how we can promote Olympics always.

This example involves the controlled leveraging of Olympic athletes on digital media platforms, but given that many Olympic athletes have their own social media profiles, engagement of Olympic athletes on social media can also be uncontrolled. As a result, the IOC produced detailed guidelines on social media use by athletes for the London 2012 Games.

Athletes were actively encouraged and supported to take part in social media via the posting, blogging, and ‘tweeting’ of their experiences. These guidelines permitted athletes to write first person, diary type entries, but required that athletes did not act as reporters. Postings were required to be dignified and in good taste and not contain vulgar or obscene words or phrases. Athletes were permitted to upload still photographs taken at venues, but were not permitted upload videos or audio from inside Olympic venues. They could upload videos and audio taken elsewhere. Athletes were not permitted to use the official Olympics symbol (the Olympic rings) and any reference to the word Olympic had to be factual and could not be associated with any third party. URLs including the word Olympic were not permitted, unless approved by the IOC. Athletes were required to respect the Olympic Charter, notably they were
banned from making any political demonstration. Athletes could have been thrown out if their postings breached IOC guidelines, but this did not occur.

United States luger Kate Hansen posted a fake video of a wolf in her Sochi hotel hallway, with the assistance of talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, on YouTube under the title ‘Epic #SochiFail: Wolf in my hall’, and despite much media attention, was not subject to any punishment by the IOC. Indeed, the IOC may have welcomed the attention (over 1 million views) on an external platform, which supports their strategy of drawing fans into the Olympic Games.

**What: Drawing Fans into the Olympic Games**

A further strategy related to the theme of expanding the Olympic window is drawing fans into the Olympic Games. The notion of the Olympic Window (i.e., the portal through which the Olympic Games can be consumed) is not only limited to IOC and broadcast partner platforms, but also external digital media platforms. The strategy of drawing fans into the Olympic Games raises the question of: “How much control should the IOC retain over how new media rights are used?” (IOC, 2009, p. 200), as identified by IOC member John D. Coates, because to draw fans into the Olympic Games requires the IOC to place its content on external digital media platforms. In this sense, the Olympic window is being expanded in terms of breadth. This practice can be described as ‘digital outreach’ (i.e., an activity of providing Olympic content to populations who might not otherwise have accessed Olympic content).

**How: Digital Olympic Outreach**

The practice of placing Olympic content on external platforms is in contrast to the historical Olympic broadcasting model, which has been built upon fierce protection and control of Olympic content. For example, the existence of digital media platforms in Barcelona 1992
created anxiety for the IOC and broadcast partners that their content could be out of their control and broadcast from unofficial Olympic platforms (Payne, 2006). However, Olympic content being placed on external platforms is now being viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat. Sir Martin Sorrell, in addressing the XIII Olympic Congress, advocates a shift from controlling rights to leveraging assets:

This will involve rights-holders letting go more than they ever have, shifting from controlling rights to leveraging assets. Be true to yourself by maintaining the fundamental values of friendship, excellence and respect, but allow their expression and form to look very different. (IOC, 2009, p. 188)

Sorrell goes on to advocate a presence on external digital media platforms where many potential Olympic fans are present:

Media partners such as YouTube receive at least as many viewers as broadcast for global marquee moments such as Usain Bolt’s record-breaking 9.58 100m result in Berlin. You need to be present in these environments and have a credible voice, not restricting access through copyright. Let the children play… (IOC, 2009, p. 189)

The IOC is adopting such an approach as they seek to place their content on external platforms. Notably, the IOC is embracing social media platforms. As identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive, the IOC are seeking to engage in as many platforms as possible:

The IOC, on their own, are working on multiple platforms, whether it’s on television or on digital screens through our channels of YouTube, Facebook profile or Twitter, and we are also engaging more and more in as many platforms as possible. We are working on how we can devise a strategy for mobile as well as tablet. So, we will continue to evolve as the platforms are evolving.
Although the IOC are using external platforms, they are not giving up complete control of their content in that they are using their own channel on YouTube and their own accounts on Facebook and Twitter. However, this still represents an ‘outreach’ strategy in that the IOC are seeking to place their content on external digital media platforms, so to then draw the audience on these platforms back to the IOC’s and broadcast partners’ official digital media platforms, as identified by a key IOC broadcasting executive:

We are engaging with social media, looking to create relevant tweets or messages […] to target the users and send them to the official broadcast sites. Where they are looking for Olympic content, whether it was Google Search during the Olympic Games, any search related to Olympic Games, if you are searching for say an athlete, like Michael Phelps, you will get a knowledge panel and knowledge outcomes on the right hand side of the Google Search page along with their search results directing you to the official websites, as well as official broadcaster websites.

This collaboration with Google took advantage of new search engine technology to bring those showing an interest in the Olympic Games to the official platforms.

Broadcast partners also engaged in ‘outreach’ by placing their content on external sites. For example, the BBC were able to increase their reach by placing their streams on external platforms, according to the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “We made arrangements with providers like Sky, Freesat, and Virgin to make all the BBC streams available on their platforms, which increased the reach even further.” These practices served to increase the breadth of the Olympic window, and by enhancing the Olympic window; the inspirational capabilities of the Games are enhanced.
Why: Enhancing Inspirational Capabilities

Former IOC President Jacques Rogge prioritized preserving “the capacity of the Games to ignite a dream” (IOC, 2009, p. 17) and IOC member Frankie Fredericks’ identified how Olympic athletes “have inspired generation after generation throughout the world” (IOC, 2009, p. 24). Similarly, the IOC Director of Television and Marketing Services, Timo Lumme, recognizes “the magic of the Olympic Games and the inspirational sporting achievements of the Olympic athletes” (IOC, 2008b, para. 6). It is from these accounts that the ‘expanding the Olympic window’ strategies can be interpreted from the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. Enhancing the Olympic window enhances the consumption of the Olympic Games and thus enhances its capabilities as an inspirational tool: (a) The Olympic audience is able to choose the sports and events that are of most interest and thus most inspiring to them. (b) Interactive consumption of the Olympic Games provides a deeper experience for the Olympic audience and thus a stronger connection from which the audience can be inspired. (c) Drawing in new fans through ‘Digital Outreach’ provides a new audience who can be inspired by the Olympic Games. Essentially, any enhancing of the consumption of the Olympic Games can be interpreted as enhancing of the practical manifestation of Olympism or the strongest platform from which Olympism is promoted. The expansion of the Olympic window, whilst at the same time enhancing the experience of the Olympic fan, provides additional opportunity for revenue generation.

Why: Expanding Revenue Opportunities

The IOC is in the business of selling broadcasting rights to the Olympic Games, so the expansion of the broadcasting of the Olympic Games, expands the broadcasting rights that they can sell. The key IOC broadcasting executive identifies such opportunities:
Digital media has created more and more value in different ways. It has created more opportunities for broadcasting, for coverage, showbiz and technology, and also provided additional revenue opportunities to the broadcasters or potential broadcasters and this in return has helped IOC for additional rights before these platforms.

These revenue opportunities will continue to increase, according IOC member Richard Carrion, which will contribute to the cost of broadcasting the Olympic Games:

Digital develops broadcast value to help amortise the cost of broadcasting: the value of digital broadcasts on the web will accelerate as we continue to move away from internet productions based on TV-production formulas, as production costs continue to decrease, and as online advertising continues to evolve. (IOC, 2009, p. 191)

IF representative Patrick Baumann identifies the dual achievement of achieving strategic objectives and revenues:

The Digital Revolution is not about revenues (only). […] The search for direct revenue should not be an IF’s (sole) driver in developing/adopting new technologies. The changes should be geared primarily to helping achieve strategic objectives and ensuring a long-lasting competitive advantage for the organization itself, its members and the sport.

Revenue will be the “cherry on the cake”, (and hopefully there will be many cherries and many cakes!). (IOC, 2009, p. 199)

This account suggests that revenues are not the focus, but the ‘cherry on the cake”. However, as with the previous theme of ‘access for all?’, it is very difficult to separate strategic objectives, long-lasting competitive advantage, and revenue.

To summarize, the IOC have been able to greatly expand the window through which the Olympic Games is consumed by exploiting new technologies. The Olympic Games is the
primary platform for the launch of new technologies, which the IOC and its broadcasting partners have taken advantage of. A strategy of expanding the coverage of the Olympic Games has sought to remove a major challenge for the broadcasting of the Olympic Games, which is that it has only been possible to broadcast a fraction of the Olympic Games content via television. Digital media platforms have provided multiple screens (multiple streams on a single platform and also multiple platforms that can even be consumed concurrently) to consume the multiple sports of the Olympic Games. The IOC and its broadcast partners deliver content across these multiple screens in a manner which is complimentary to the traditional television broadcast, so to remove the threat of cannibalizing television viewers, which are still the most important Olympic audience. The IOC and its broadcast partners have also implemented a strategy of deepening their relationship with the Olympic audience by taking advantage of the interactive capability of digital media platforms. This capability has allowed the IOC and its broadcasting partners to execute practices of providing customizable Olympic content and facilitating digital Olympic communities, with social media sites playing a particularly important role. These two interactive strategies have the potential to enhance the quality of the consumption of the Olympic Games for existing Olympic fans, but the Olympic window has also been expanded to draw new fans into the Olympic Games. Through placing their content on external digital media platforms, such as social media sites, the IOC (and to a lesser extent broadcasting partners, who appear to control their content more) are engaging in a practice of ‘digital outreach’ that seeks to direct a new potential audience back to the official Olympic channels of either the IOC or its broadcast partners.

The theme of ‘expanding the Olympic window’ again illustrates the collaborative relationship between, and shared interests of, the IOC and their broadcasting partners. Both are
motivated to enhance the experience of the Olympic audience. From the broadcasters’ perspective a better experience could lead to a more loyal and larger audience, leading to greater revenues from advertisers. From the IOC’s perspective, in adopting the interpretation of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, a better experience can enhance the inspirational effects of the Olympic Games. However, the additional screens that lead to an enhanced experience also provide additional revenue with broadcasting rights no longer restricted to only television rights. Although broadcasters may enjoy the enhanced broadcast they can provide through digital media platforms, the direct revenue that the IOC secure is from the broadcasters. Although digital media platforms have been found not to have a cannibalizing effect on television, broadcasters in major markets are seeking to protect their television audience by also controlling the digital media platforms rights. However, it is not clear whether these platforms represent the same direct revenue source for broadcasters in that broadcasters may be purchasing these rights to protect their television rights, rather than on their merit as revenue generators. As such, the expansion of the Olympic window, although driven by the technology of broadcast partners, is most greatly benefiting the IOC.

**Theme 4: Transcending Sport**

According to Payne (2006): “The Olympic Games represents the highest summit of sporting achievement. Yet, the Olympic Games have always transcended sport” (p. 3). This establishes that the Olympic Games are more than just a sporting contest, which is established by several attributes that transcend sport. Existing research (Maguire et al., 2008) has established how the unique attributes of the Olympic Games play an important role in Olympic sponsorship. This theme uncovers how the unique attributes of the Olympic Games also play an important role in Olympic broadcasting. Indeed, the unique qualities of the Olympic Games are appealing
to broadcasters, according to the key IOC broadcasting executive: "There is a definite interest from every country with scores of broadcasters interested in broadcasting the Games because it’s just a unique product in sports." Such evaluation is confirmed by the BBC’s Head of Major Events, who stated: “These are really special global events and our audiences recognize that and want to be a part of that.” Payne (2006) identifies that the majority of broadcasters share this view: “The Games are regarded by most broadcasters as signature programming, by which all sports programming is judged” (p. 28).

In transcending sport, IOC member Richard Carrion identifies that the Olympic Games is able to draw in “the non-sports fans” (IOC, 2009, p. 207). Evidence of this comes from the BBC’s Head of Major Events, who identifies how the BBC segments their sports audience and which segment the Olympic Games attracts:

There are the sports nuts that come to us anyway on one extreme, one end. There are sport rejecters at the other end, and there are huge groups in the middle, who are sort of what we call the major eventers, [who] will come for the major events. It’s that sort of group of people who come to the Olympics because it’s something special, because it’s a national moment, […] a shared national experience.

This segment is also recognized by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights: “You don’t have to necessarily be an expert in any given sport to be interested in the broadcast as a whole because it is more of an overall experience of the world coming together than just focused on an individual sport.” Such a shared experience manifests in the Olympic Games being a family viewing experience. Payne (2006) warns: “In the rush to embrace new technology, we need to be careful not to undermine one of the critical elements of the Olympic presentation – the family viewing experience. The Olympics are about a shared experience” (p.
So to retain this shared family experience, the IOC must preserve the unique attributes of the Olympic Games that create the special character of the Olympic Games.

**What: Preserving the Olympic Character**

The IOC’s strategy of preserving the Olympic character is evident in the commercial objective of “to preserve the special character of the Olympic Games” (IOC, n.d.a) as listed on their website. To preserve the special character of the Olympic Games in Olympic broadcasting requires that the unique aspects of the Olympic Games as a broadcasting resource be protected and leveraged. These include (a) the rich history of the Olympic Games, (b) its status as the pinnacle of sport, (c) the Olympic cycle schedule, and (d) the variety and scale of the Olympic Games. Arguably of most importance unique aspect of the Olympic Games is the Olympic values, but this is of such importance that the IOC focus on this as a separate strategy.

The Olympic Games dates back to ancient Olympia, which represents a rich history evoking special feelings, as described by Pound (2004):

> I went to ancient Olympia, saw the original Olympic stadium, and put my feet into the gouges in the marble that served as the starting blocks centuries ago for the original Olympic athletes. It was an unforgettable experience, and I still get a tingle thinking of the ghosts of the athletes who must haunt the site of their own glory. (p. 14)

The importance of the rich history of the Olympic Games is recognized by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

> You have got the heritage from the ancient Greeks of course, modern day Olympics starting in 1896. You have got that proud history of the Olympics and the Olympic medal is the most sought after medal. It’s more sought after than the world championship.
This account also establishes the importance to the viewer of the Olympic Games’ status as the pinnacle of sport. Although this is not the case for all sports (e.g., golf, tennis, basketball) as discussed previously in Theme 1, it is the case for the majority of sports (e.g., athletics, swimming, rowing, sailing, track cycling), with the Olympic Games held in higher regard than each of these sports’ world championships. This status as the pinnacle for sport differentiates the Olympic Games from other sporting events according to a key IOC broadcasting executive: "The Olympic Games is a pinnacle of that excellence in multiple sports, so that makes it different for sure."

Linked to this is the schedule of the Olympic Games, with Summer and Winter Games only occurring every four years. According to the BBC’s Head of Major Events, this further differentiates it from world championships and adds value as a broadcasting resource:

If it’s an annual event, it devalues the event. Less is more. I think its part of the mystique. The Summer Olympics is every four years. That’s fine in the sporting cycle. The Olympics is going to be the pinnacle. If you have it every year, it’s just like a world championship.

A key IOC broadcasting executive also recognizes this unique feature as a point of differentiation:

In terms of sports content, it’s different to some different leagues, which happen probably every week or regularly every year, but the Olympic Games are coming for a period of 17 days and then everything is getting condensed within these 17 days.

Finally, a further unique aspect of the Olympic Games is its variety and scale, as identified by a key IOC broadcasting executive: "It is an event which is multi-sports not just one or two sports but 26 in summer and 7 in winter including many disciplines of course. So, it
makes it unique and different." So to preserve the special character created by these unique attributes the IOC and its broadcast partners present the Olympic Games in a manner different to other sporting events.

**How: Producing Olympic Stories, Not Sporting Contests**

Whereas the primary focus of the majority of sports programming is the results and the winners, the Olympic Games is produced in a manner goes beyond this. Pound (2004) describes the Games as having “become a special and compelling drama, offering a unique set of heroes, moments of glory and disaster, and a lifelong set of extraordinary memories” (p. 2). For example, an important element of the Olympic broadcast is the personal interest stories of athletes, as shown in the following examples. First, Eric ‘the Eel’ Moussambani, a swimmer from Equatorial Guinea. His time in his heat of the 100-meter freestyle event at the Sydney 2000 Games was more than twice that of his fastest competitors finished a long distance from the event winners. Second, Eddie Edwards became the first competitor to represent Great Britain in Olympic ski jumping at the 1988 Calgary Winter Games despite no funding. He finished a distant last in both the 70-meter and 90 meter events. Third, the Jamaican bobsled team debuted at the 1988 Calgary Winter Games despite little experience of going down a bobsled track (coming from a tropical country) and having to borrow sleds from other countries. They did not officially finish after crashing their sled on one of their four runs. The former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights identifies the importance of such stories:

> For many of the broadcasters, the story line of people dreaming, hope, overcoming adversity, the friendship, all of that is often as important as the focus on the winner. So, the Olympics is probably unique in terms of the sporting presentation, where it's not just all about the winner, but a lot of other stories.
This form of broadcasting is described as storytelling, which is also acknowledged at the level of IOC members. Alex Gilady states: “The IOC acknowledges that we are not in the business of producing newspapers or television broadcasts. We are simply in the business of content and storytelling” (IOC, 2009, p. 218). Payne (2006) specifically identifies the practice of developing human interest stories, which results in greater engagement of the audience:

Personalising the athletes makes the television viewer more of a participant in the events. Viewers at home were given the human interest stories – the struggle, determination and endeavor – that are the hallmarks of Olympians. They felt a personal connection. (p. 31)

This personal connection is also developed via the practice of engaging Olympic athletes in social media, as previously discussed.

Similarly, the BBC’s Head of Major Events identifies how the BBC’s coverage of the Olympic Games was “accompanied by crafted features, which help tell the stories and explain the background of the sports and their stars.” Indeed, some of the most memorable events in the Olympic Games are those with a story behind them, with each country being able to identify with a particular special moment:

Part of the magic is how each country has its own special moment, and each has a different appeal: from gymnasts Olga Korbut in Munich through to Kerri Strug with her broken ankle in Atlanta; from skiers Franz Klammer in Innsbruck to Hermann Maier and his bone-crushing fall, amazing recovery and two gold medals, in Nagano. (Payne, 2006, p. 28)

Such storytelling is closely tied to the Olympic values because, rather than solely focus on the results and the winners, such broadcasting is reflecting of “the joy of effort” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11) and the value of excellence, which is defined as “giving one’s best, on the field of play or in life,
without measuring oneself with others, but above all aiming at reaching one’s personal objectives with determination in the effort” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3). Although this practice is reflective of the Olympic values, the IOC also implements a strategy of upholding the Olympic values in their management of broadcasting partnerships.

**What: Promoting the Olympic Values**

As previously identified, the Olympic values are an important unique attribute of the Olympic Games that allow it to transcend sport. The IOC work with its corporate partners (e.g., Olympic broadcasters) to promote the Olympic values or ideals, as established in the Olympic Marketing Fact File, which identifies an objective of “To enlist the support of Olympic marketing partners in the promotion of the Olympic ideals” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5) and the commercial objective of: “To protect and promote the Olympic image and ideals throughout the world, and to work with all marketing partners to enhance Olympism” (IOC, n.d.a, para. 8). This commercial objective establishes the link between Olympism, the Olympic ideals, and the Olympic image, establishing how these unique aspects that transcend sport play an important role in the image of the Olympic Games.

IOC member Alex Gilady identifies a communication goal of the IOC as to “demonstrate the Olympic values and inclusiveness of the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2009, p. 218). As a communication goal, this demonstrates the important role that the Olympic values play in the Olympic broadcast. The Olympic values make the Olympic Games a more attractive viewing proposition because, as identified by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights: "People want the values to succeed. They want to have the world come together, they want to have the whole sort of celebration."

According to Manolo Romero of the Olympic Broadcasting Services, the relationship
between the Olympic values and broadcasting is not just a one-way relationship in that the Olympic broadcast plays an important role in spreading Olympism:

The capture and broadcast of iconic Olympic images and moments is still the essence of the Olympic Movement, and an essential aspect of spreading Olympism and the Olympic message to all parts of the world. (IOC, 2009, p. 216)

As identified by a key IOC broadcasting executive, this is because: “It [Olympism] just reaches its peak during the Olympic Games or just around the Olympic Games of course.” The images that are delivered in the Olympic broadcast are able to enhance Olympism because they are inspiring, according to Payne (2006): “From the magic to the truly sublime, the Olympics continue to give us outstanding and inspiring images” (2006, p. 28). These inspiring images are for the Olympic audience, making the Olympic values for everyone, as identified by IOC member Richard L. Carrion: “The values of the Olympic Movement, such as commitment and dedication, are not just for athletes and spectators, but for everyone” (IOC, 2009, p. 207).

The strategy of promoting the Olympic values creates an extra challenge for the IOC because in promoting the Olympic values and ideals there is greater accountability to abide by these values and ideals, as identified by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights: "The Olympics was up on a pedestal and once you put it on a pedestal, you have got to make sure that you are staying true to those ideals." This was particularly evident following the Salt Lake City scandal, as identified by Pound (2004):

We had an ethical base that was different from other sports. The success of this differentiation was one of the reasons for such a violent reaction by the world when the Salt Lake City scandal burst in 1998 and 1999, exposing certain IOC members as having asked for and accepted money and other personal benefits from the bidding committee
for the 2002 Winter Games. The IOC itself had failed to live up to the ethical expectations it had created for the Olympic movement. (p. 17)

In addition to such aggressive reactions, there are different standards of expectation between the Olympic Games and other high profile sporting events. The former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights states: “Did the American public care about the NFL players being all doped up? No, but if it was the Olympics and it was a poor gymnast who had taken cold meds, then the American media wants to single him out.” The former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights goes on to question: “Why was there such an issue for the Olympics and yet doping was a far bigger problem in other sports?” The obvious answer is because the Olympic Games has been ‘put on a pedestal’ due to its association with the Olympic values.

Even some broadcast partners demand greater accountability from the IOC and the Olympic Games, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

We have a journalistic responsibility and just because we have the rights doesn’t mean that we aren’t journalistically rigorous. […] It doesn't mean we have to be cheerleaders for the Games. […] So whether it’s a doping scandal, a security issue, badminton players trying to fix the outcome of matches for a favorable draw in the next match, we will report all of that. […] It doesn’t mean we’re going to withdraw from the Olympics or anything like that.

Just as the IOC must promote the Olympic values, the IOC also requires the support of broadcast partners to achieve this strategy.
How: A Commercially Clean Platform

The strategy of promoting the Olympic values is facilitated by the practice contractually obligating a clean broadcast. First, there is no advertising in the content of the Olympic Games, with a policy:

To ensure that no advertising or other commercial message in or near the Olympic venues is visible to the Olympic Games venue spectators or to the Olympic Games broadcast audience. No advertising or commercial messages are permitted in the Olympic stadia, on the person of venue spectators, or on the uniforms of the Olympic athletes, coaches, officials, or judges. (IOC, 2014c, p. 36)

Second, there is a policy: “To ensure a clean telecast by all Olympic Games broadcasters. Images of Olympic events are not allowed to be broadcast with any kind of commercial association” (IOC, 2014c, p. 36). These policies allow the Olympic a voice clear from commercial messages values within the Olympic broadcast. The key IOC broadcasting executive explains:

Our agreements include certain rules. For example, no over-commercialization meaning the broadcast remains clean as much as possible and the advertising of commercial messages are differentiated from the broadcast coverage, meaning there is no subliminal positioning in the Olympic Games broadcast. This serves to provide a platform for promoting the Olympic values. To ensure that broadcasters take advantage of this platform, the IOC engage in a practice of hosting knowledge sharing sessions with broadcast partners that emphasize the Olympic values.

How: Knowledge Sharing Sessions

According to the key IOC broadcasting executive, long term partners of the IOC have a good understanding of the Olympic values: “We have long partnerships, so most of our partners
understand what the Olympic values are and what they stand for.” However, so to ensure understanding of all broadcast partners “the Olympic values are emphasized again and again” in knowledge sharing sessions, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive, who goes on to identify that:

All knowledge is shared in different working groups ran by either the IOC Television and Marketing Services department or OBS [Olympic Broadcasting Services], the host broadcaster, making sure the Olympic values are preserved and remain intact as part of the broadcast.

These groups do not expect that broadcast partners produce the Olympic values in their broadcasts. Rather, the neutral feed produced by OBS already carries the Olympic values, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “Our host broadcaster, OBS, ensures that the broadcast coverage produced [by OBS that is made available to broadcast partners] takes care of all the Olympic values and what can be transmitted.” For example, at Sochi 2014 the neutral feed included an act of sportsmanship by the Canadian cross-country skiing coach Justin Wandsworth, who aided Russian skier Anton Gafarov with a replacement ski when his left ski broke during the semifinal of the cross-country sprint because he wanted Gafarov to “have a chance to complete the race with dignity” (Cameron, 2014). Broadcasters would have been expected to emphasize this, and many did. However, just to make sure, the IOC engages in audience research that serves to audit the Olympic broadcasts.

**How: Auditing Olympic Broadcasts**

As identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive, the IOC conducts audience research to determine how the Olympic audience perceive and evaluate broadcasts:
Selective monitoring is done to make sure that broadcasters adhere to all the principles and there is also audience research conducted during and after each Games, which includes questions on how the Olympic values were incorporated into the broadcast.

Despite such education and monitoring of broadcast partners, not all broadcasts are effectively promoting the Olympic values. For example, the ‘#NBCFail’ case discussed at the opening of this study identified how the United States broadcast partner NBC was criticized by members of its audience for not closely adhering to the Olympic values during the Olympic Games. Broadcasting practices that were perceived as in conflict with the Olympic values were excessive commercial breaks, overly nationalistic coverage, and editing gymnastics coverage to create fake suspense. Therefore, rather than educating and monitoring, a more effective practice to enlist the support of broadcasters in promoting the Olympic values may be to develop partnerships with shared values and understanding.

**How: Partnerships with Shared Values and Understanding**

According to the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “It’s about each partner understanding each other’s aims and values and having shared aims and values.” Indeed, greater accountability to promote the Olympic values can be found when a broadcast partner has shared values, as evident in the following account from the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

At the end of the day, the BBC’s values, we’re accountable to our audiences for that. I mean if the IOC’s values coincide with BBC’s values that’s fine, but I don’t think we promote the IOC’s values. We certainly share a majority of values actually. Say we’re promoting sport and if you look at one of the legacies from London, the sporting legacy and getting people to participate in sport, a lot of people were looking at the BBC to be part of that process of disseminating sport around the country.
This indicates an effective method to have broadcast partners promoting the Olympic values is to partner with broadcasters who share the same values. The BBC’s shared values with those of the IOC are evident in their role in delivering a sporting legacy within the territory for which they hold the broadcast rights. The BBC’s Head of Major Events states:

Sporting legacy will largely be in the hands of others to exploit, but there is no doubt that the BBC will be expected to play its part – in increasing participation, encouraging youngsters to take up sport and continuing. […] Hopefully the Games and the BBC’s coverage of it have helped to inspire a new generation. […] All the Olympic sports are looking to us to publicize their sports helping increase participation levels.

The BBC supports Olympic sports by covering them in between Games and also helps to promote gender equality in sport. According to the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “Sport in the UK is pretty male focused. We can help address that with the sport we cover and also the talent we use. We’ve got just as many women presenters as male presenters, if not more, for instance.”

The BBC’s support of Olympic sports outside of Games time supports the IOC’s strategy of extending the presence of the Olympic values.

**What: Extending the Presence of the Olympic Values**

From the perspective that the Olympic Games is the practical manifestation of Olympism, and considering that it has a global audience of 3.635 billion (IOC, 2012), the Olympic Games represents the most important platform from which the Olympic values can be promoted. However, this platform is limited to 17 days every other year (i.e., London 2012 Summer Games, Sochi 2014 Winter Games, and Rio 2016 Summer Games). So to better promote the Olympic values, the IOC need to expand the presence of the Olympic Games beyond 17 days every other year.
As advocated by Sir Martin Sorrell, the IOC’s strategy is to leverage Olympic content beyond the duration of the Olympic Games: “Repackage the rich content and imagery that rights-holders such as the IOC have, and allow consumers to interact and become creative with the content beyond just the 17 days of the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2009, p. 188). IOC member John D. Coates identifies the important question of: “How to harness the digital opportunities to spread the principles and values of Olympism?” (IOC, 2009, p. 200). The first step in extending the presence of the Olympic Games beyond the period of the Olympic Games is to include such an obligation in agreements with broadcast partners.

How: Contractual Obligation

The key IOC broadcasting executive identifies that broadcasters are required to promote the Olympic values beyond Games time: "Broadcasters promote Olympic values throughout the period of their rights which usually they have for four years. They are obligated to keep promoting those values and promoting their broadcast throughout the full period of their rights." The IOC provides their broadcast partners with the capability to meet this contractual obligation by providing access to the Olympic archives.

How: Leveraging Olympic Archives

The IOC has been able to secure Olympic content of interest through the practice of leveraging the Olympic Games archive, as identified by IOC member Richard Carrion: “In the case of sports, archives in the form of still and video images, along with massive text data, provide a great opportunity to communicate with audiences outside of Games Time” (IOC, 2009, p. 192). So to be able to leverage their archive the IOC engaged in a project called the Patrimonial Asset Management (PAM), which served to digitalize all Olympic Games archive
and video material. According to IOC member Richard Carrion, this project has resulted in extensive archives that the IOC and broadcast partners can exploit:

Outside Games time, we need to exploit the mammoth resource of archives. As I mentioned earlier, the IOC has available, in digital format, more than forty thousand hours of video, seven hundred thousand still images, and data going back to 1896. It is a very long tail of Olympic content that we want to exploit and make available to the public. (IOC, 2009, p. 207)

The IOC has put resources into leveraging this content through Olympic dedicated channels.

**How: Continuous Presence on IOC Digital Platforms**

IOC member Alex Gilady states: “We see this [digital media platforms] as a great tool for staying connected with our customers between Games, and we shall be putting resources toward launching dedicated Olympic channels on all the leading social networking sites” (IOC, 2009, p. 218). The IOC leverages archive content on their own website (Olympic.org). According to IOC member, Alex Gilady:

The IOC’s website Olympic.org has taken on an increasingly important role in the communication, operation and promotion of the Olympic Movement and its events. It acts as the reference on Olympism, the Olympic Movement, the Olympic Games and the Olympic Museum, and is a hub for everything related to the Olympic Movement. (IOC, 2009, p. 218)

According to a key IOC broadcasting executive: “Digital media has helped in propagating this [Olympism and Olympic values] because you have more platforms now to showcase what Olympic Games or Olympism stands for.” These platforms include the IOC’s own YouTube channel, the Olympic Games Facebook page, the Olympics Twitter account, and the Olympics
Instagram account. These platforms are used to provide a continuous presence of the Olympic Games and the Olympic values. For example, an image of British rower Sir Steve Redgrave was posted on the Olympics Twitter page on August 4th, 2014, with the message “Not everyone can be Olympic champion. Not everyone can be the best in their field. But we can be better than we are. We can all improve and look for our own personal bests.”

The IOC also share the Olympic archives with their broadcast partners, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

- We encourage broadcasters to use all the archive materials from past Games that are made available to them. We work with them to activate their rights. All the different materials that are produced are made available to them in the build up to the Games.

- Sochi promotional material was made available to them one year in advance.

It is the hope of the IOC that broadcasters will use this material to expand the presence of the Olympic values beyond Games time.

- The audience for promotion of the Olympic values is highest during the Olympic Games (i.e., the practical manifestation of Olympism), but these digital media platforms are helping to sustain this audience, according to a key IOC broadcasting executive:

  - What Digital Media has done is to kind of help to sustain this higher level of engagement and interest post Games, and just after the events there is of course a lot of kind of audience or coverage around the Olympic Games or Olympism, but we are able to sustain a lot more audience just because digital media is present and just because we have more platforms now to engage the audiences regularly.

The ability of digital media platforms to help sustain the presence of the Olympic values reinforces the Olympic Games as an event that transcends sport. While the IOC have a
continuous presence via their digital media platforms, the BBC also promote the Olympic Games outside of Games time, a practice that was particularly evident in the build up to London 2012. This is not the case for other mega sport events, which do not receive coverage on the BBC until the time of the event.

**How: Host Nation Games Build Up**

As the rights holder for the host territory, the BBC was highly engaged in leveraging their rights in the build up to London 2012, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events: Activity must not just be confined to Games time; it should be about the landmark events throughout 2012, which will unite the nation. Yes, we have the rights for 17 days of the Olympics, but there’s so much more we can leverage and exploit in the build-up. Support programming in all genres was a must to help inform and excite audiences. The support programming to excite the host nation audience was not restricted to the BBC’s Sports team, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

Support programming was an important part of the BBC’s pre-games offering and to be fair all areas of the BBC played their part. Hundreds of ideas were generated by our music, arts, drama, comedy and factual teams and we also played a crucial role alongside the London 2012 box teams to produce a cultured Olympiad, which they could be proud of and we could be proud of too.

In contributing to the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth, the BBC’s children’s team was actively engaged, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

Our children’s teams got very heavily involved and we want to encourage that as they are our audience for the future as well. Blue Peter did a series of live programs on the torch
route. We mounted a great Olympic challenge website that had lots of features and things for kids to do.

This element of the BBC’s leveraging of their rights contributed to the educational element of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. However, according to the BBC’s Head of Major Events, the BBC’s coverage of the torch relay was the most effective of their support programming in the build up to London 2012:

If there is one event that I think helped create that passion and excitement for the Olympics it was the torch relay. From the moment it arrived in the UK, watched by a One Show [popular UK television show] audience of five million and throughout its seventy day journey around the UK and it just generated unprecedented interest in crowds. The BBC followed it every step of the way using a special media vehicle.

Such cross-department collaboration is critical to the BBC’s approach to broadcasting the Olympic Games, according to the BBC’s Head of Major Events, who identifies that the Olympic Games “goes to the heart of every single department right across the board.” In addition to leveraging the Olympic archives and support programming, the IOC encourages broadcast partners to promote different Olympic sports.

**How: Supporting Olympic Sports**

Encouraging broadcast partners to acquire their broadcast rights, such as their world championships, can support Olympic sports. That said, given that such rights are separate to Olympic Games rights, the IOC cannot enforce such an acquisition, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “We don’t have any enforcements, but we encourage them to sign up for different International Federations’ sports rights to make sure there is a year-round coverage of Olympic sports.” The question of why the IOC engages in strategies to leverage the Olympic
Games ability to transcend sport (e.g., promoting or upholding the Olympic values) is of critical importance to this study as this question speaks directly to the debate of whether Olympism is a commercial brand or a philosophy of social reform.

**Why: Raison d’être of Serving Society Funded by Commercialism**

The official narrative of the IOC is that the Olympic values, which play a key role in the Olympic Games being able to transcend sport, are the priority of the IOC, as established by former IOC President Jacques Rogge: “He [Coubertin] would be thrilled that the values he cherished – fair play, respect, friendship and excellence – are still the priority of the Movement he founded” (IOC, 2009, p. 15). Rogge labels society as the Olympic Movement’s “raison d’être. We exist to serve society, to place sport at the service of humanity” (IOC, 2009, p. 16). This prioritization reflects accounts in the Olympic Charter which states that “The mission of the IOC is to promote Olympism throughout the world” (IOC, 2013b, p. 16) and that “The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values” (IOC, 2013b, p. 15). Such a role is prioritized over the IOC’s commercial agenda, according to the Olympic Marketing Fact File, which states: “The IOC, in accordance with the Olympic Charter, continues to ensure the priority of sport in a commercial environment” (IOC, 2014c, p. 36). Rogge identifies the need “to adapt to societal changes while remaining faithful to its core values” (IOC, 2009, p. 16). The IOC’s adaptation to societal changes (e.g., financial pressures) has resulted in the IOC embracing commercialism in order maintain the sustainability of the Olympic Games.

As previously established, the escalated costs of hosting the Games left the city of Montreal with debt following their hosting of the 1976 Summer Games. At this point in time: “The ethics and ideas of the Olympic Movement were clear but their execution was built on a
fragile commercial edifice” (Payne, 2006, p. 17). This left the IOC with a challenge of “how to keep the Olympic soul and yet still provide the funding basis that allows the Olympic Movement to grow and thrive, is a formidable ongoing challenge” (Payne, 2006, p. 17). Their (arguably inevitable) response was to embrace commercialism. This shift was dictated to the IOC by Los Angeles, the only city bidding for the 1984 Summer Games. However, the IOC has subsequently taken control of the commercial assets of the Olympic Games themselves. According to Pound (2004), this has allowed the IOC to define the Olympic Games in their own way:

> Bringing this much money to the party increases the IOC’s influence and ability to define its product – the Olympic Games. We are no longer begging for candidate cities and we can assume the role of managing and promoting an extremely valuable and important franchise, instead of turning the whole thing over to the franchisees (the host cities) and crossing our fingers in the hope that they will not damage or destroy it. […] We cannot permit each host city to redefine the Olympic movement for its own short-term existence. (p. 195)

Although this embracing of commercialism can be considered somewhat inevitable, it has been the subject of much criticism, as identified by Pound (2004):

> One of the most persistent concerns about the Olympics has been the so-called commercialism associated with them. It has become almost dogma for the media to bemoan any commercial connection with the Olympics, and many members of the IOC and the sports movement share this concern generally. (p. xiii)

According to Pound (2004), this criticism of a sporting event engaging in commercial activities is unique to the Olympic Games:
I am always both perplexed and somewhat amused by the concerns that are expressed in the media about commercial support of the Olympic Games. This feature attracts more ink and electronic comment than almost any other aspect of the Games, often appearing in danger of overshadowing the Games themselves. This never seems to emerge as an issue in the context of any other sporting event. (p. 160)

That such criticism is specific to the Olympic Games is related to the Games being ‘put on a pedestal’, as previously discussed.

In considering whether the IOC is promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform or as a commercial brand, it is necessary to consider the necessity of embracing commercial. According to Pound (2004), the criticisms of the IOC ignore the reality that the staging of the Olympic Games and the upholding of the Olympic values require funding:

They [Governments] expect the Olympics to cure poverty, advance education, beat inflation, solve regional disparities and a plethora of other ills, all without costing them anything. (Pound, 2004, p. 133)

In accepting that funds are required to stage the Olympic Games and to uphold the Olympic values, the criticism of the IOC’s commercial engagement loses credibility when considering the alternative funding sources. Pound (2004) advises:

Before reaching a snap judgment on commercial involvement, we should consider the alternatives. The financial pressures on governments today make it unrealistic to expect them to be able to underwrite all the costs of a high-end event such as the Games. […] Where, then, does one look - to the athletes or participants themselves? This is a complete non-starter. (p. 160)
In accepting that funds are necessary to stage the Olympic Games and to uphold the Olympic values, and that there are no viable sources of funds other than the private sector, it is possible to argue that the IOC’s use of Olympism as a commercial brand does not necessarily mean that Olympism as a philosophy of social reform is no longer their raison d’être. That said, there is clear evidence that the IOC is actively leveraging the Olympic values for commercial gain.

**Why: A Commercial Broadcasting Brand that Transcends Sport**

According to the key IOC broadcasting executive: “The Olympic Games is a totally different event to other sports events because of its unique values and unique propositions”, which allow the Games to transcend sport. From the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand (i.e., the IOC seek to transcend sport for commercial gain), this differentiates the Games from other mega sports events and is what the IOC is selling, according to Pound (2004): “What we were selling, what the sponsors and broadcasters wanted, and what the public demanded, were precisely those ethical values that differentiate the Olympics from professional entertainment sports” (p. 16). Payne (2006) describes this as a paradox: “There was paradox here. It became clear that non-commercial values provided the Olympic brand with its true commercial value to the marketing partners” (p. 114). As such, the IOC views the Olympic values as a commodity to be sold. This is evident in the marketing objective of: “To protect and promote the equity that is inherent in the Olympic image and ideals” (IOC, 2014c, p. 5).

This interpretation of the role of Olympism and the Olympic values being to generate commercial gain is well established in the literature when analyzing Olympic sponsorships (e.g., Maguire et al, 2008). However, the IOC’s use of Olympic broadcasting to develop Olympism as a commercial brand is also evident from Payne (2006): “As broadcasters have defined the Olympic image for many people, how they continue to cover the Olympic Games will further
define the Olympic brand. Every Olympic telecast should become a living advertisement for the Olympic brand” (p. 71). For example, the Celebrate Humanity campaign has been critically analyzed to demonstrate the IOC’s use of the Olympic values for commercial gain via sponsorship (i.e., for image transfer), but it can also be interpreted as the IOC’s use of the Olympic values for commercial gain via broadcasting (i.e., creating differential content).

The IOC state that this campaign “was created to promote the ideals of Olympism and to reinforce the values of the Olympic Games, the values of the Olympic Movement and the values in which the Olympic marketing partners invest” (IOC, 2002, p. 30). This description of the rationale behind the campaign acknowledges the commercial benefit of promoting the ideals of Olympism and the Olympic values because marketing partners invest revenues in them. However, just as marketing partners invest in the Olympic values, so do Olympic broadcasters, as evident in this theme. Just as the Olympic values offer a distinct marketing platform, as discussed above, they also offer distinct broadcasting content, as identified by the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights: “The sponsors are associating with a brand image, so what does the Olympic brand stand for is key to them. The broadcasters are associating more with a content.” The distinct broadcasting content that incorporates the Olympic values is the foundation for the distinct marketing platform for Olympic sponsors because without the distinct Olympic broadcasting images, there is no distinction created in the mind of the consumers that sponsors are trying to reach.

This is evident in the use of Olympic broadcasting images in the Celebrate Humanity campaign. For example, the Celebrate Humanity television commercial titled ‘Courage’ shows footage of Great British 400 meter runner Derek Redmond pulling a hamstring in his event before getting back to his feet and completing the race with the help of his father. The
accompanying voiceover from Robin Williams is: “Strength is measured in pounds. Speed is measured in seconds. Courage. You can’t measure courage.” In promoting this campaign, as quoted by Payne (2006), Robin Williams stated: “Many of my favorite Olympic memories were not gold medal situations. They were inspiring moments of humanity that transcended borders, obstacles and languages — and unified people around the world” (p. 119). This account establishes the distinction between the Olympic Games and other sporting events (i.e., not about the sporting contest) and identifies these moments as inspiring. However, that such distinction is being used as part of a marketing campaign, suggests that this promotion is for commercial gain. Although previously interpreted as being for commercial gain through sponsorships (i.e., establishing a distinct sponsorship platform based upon the Olympic values), the promotional material (e.g., television commercials) does not promote any Olympic partners. As such, this campaign should be interpreted as seeking commercial gain from all areas of Olympic marketing that benefit from the distinctive capabilities of the Olympic values, including Olympic broadcasting.

This rationale and the previous rationale established (a) that the IOC are leveraging the Olympic Games’ capability to transcend sport for commercial gain, but (b) that upholding the factors which transcend sport (e.g., the Olympic values) remains their priority. These two competing interpretations of why the IOC seek to transcend sport in their broadcasting of the Olympic Games raise the issue of compatibility (i.e., whether the Olympic values can be upheld through Olympic broadcasting partners whilst seeking to achieve commercial gain).

Why: Serving Both Commercial and Social Agendas

Pound (2004) describes the IOC’s pursuit of both a commercial and a social agenda:
We had tremendous fun inventing marketing programs as we went along, persuading sponsors on the one hand that there was commercial value in being associated with the Olympic movement. On the other hand, we had to convince the Olympic movement that it was not compromising any of its values as a result of such association. (p. xiv)

To pursue both agendas is a balancing act, as identified by Pound (2004): “It was a series of exciting challenges to constantly increase the revenues and to balance this against the delicate sensibilities of those who loved the money but who did not wish to be seen actually earning it” (p. xiii). Careful execution of such a balancing act can remove the tension between commercialism and upholding the Olympic values, according to Payne (2006):

This tension [between commercialism and the Olympic values] is no longer a conflictual one, but rather a dynamic balance where the identity of the Olympics, as the embodiment of a special set of values, engages in a delicate dance with commercial entities eager to use that identity to sell products. (p. 17)

This can be achieved when separating the two agendas of promoting the Olympic values via the Olympic broadcast and leveraging the Olympic values to create equity in Olympic broadcast rights, as described by Pound (2004): “Although important, even essential, these [commercial] activities tended to be regarded as somehow separate from the main philosophical elements of the Olympic movement” (p. 15).

Viewing these agendas as separate, rather than directly competing agendas, allows them both to be achieved, even by the same processes and practices. For example, the nature of the Olympic broadcast, which reflects the Olympic values rather than just winning, may carry extra commercial value than typical sporting contest images, but that does not take away from their inspiring capabilities. Although the IOC and its broadcast partners are using the Olympic values

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and other unique attributes that transcend sport for commercial gain in Olympic broadcasting, there remains scope “to serve society, to place sport at the service of humanity” (IOC, 2009, p. 16).

Although there is scope to achieve each agenda, some processes and practices that seek to maximize the commercial value of Olympic broadcast rights cause tension between the two agendas. Such tension is acknowledged by Payne (2006): “There is an obvious tension between the idealistic and commercial principles which resonate with modern Olympic philosophy and the need to finance the world’s largest athletic and media event” (p. 17). This tension was discussed in the introduction whereby some commercial activities (e.g., commercial partnerships with companies whose core product are high in fat and calories) are incompatible with Olympism as a philosophy of social reform (e.g., balanced whole of body, will, and mind). As evident in the following theme, there are also some commercially driven processes and practices by which the IOC strategically manages their Olympic broadcast partners that are incompatible with the IOC’s key broadcasting principles and the Olympic values.

To summarize, due to several unique attributes, including the Olympic values, the Olympic Games is able to transcend sport. The special Olympic character that comes with such a status is preserved by a production approach that emphasizes Olympic stories and journeys, rather than solely the contest and winners. This practice is in the interest of both the IOC and broadcast partners.

For broadcast partners, it provides unique broadcasting contest, which every four years with the Summer Games, is consumed on mass for commercial gain. However, although the broadcast partners are for profit and the IOC are not-for-profit, the commercial gain in terms of profit margin size is relatively small for broadcast partners in comparison to the profit made by
the IOC. For example, Unites States broadcaster paid $1.28 billion for the right to broadcast the London 2012 Summer Games and made a profit of $120 million or 0.12 billion, which equates to a 9.3% profit margin. This was regarded as a major success for NBC, who on several occasions have made a loss against their investment in the right to broadcast the Olympic Games. This margin is similar to the 10% share of Olympic broadcasting revenues that the IOC retains for “the operational and administrative costs of governing the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2014c, p. 6), with the remaining 90% of Olympic broadcasting revenues going to the NOCs, IFs, and OCOGs “in order to support the staging of the Olympic Games and to promote the worldwide development of sport” (IOC, 2014c, p. 6).

There is an important distinction to be made between the development of sport and development through sport. The IOC’s raison d’être of placing “sport at the service of humanity” (IOC, 2009, p. 16) is development through sport, yet revenues are going to the development of sport. This leaves the IOC reliant upon the inspirational effects from the staging of the Olympic Games to achieve their raison d’être. As such, the IOC has not just an interest in the Olympic broadcast transcending sport, but is reliant upon it to uphold the Olympic values.

This shared interest in the nature of the Olympic broadcast that leverages the Olympic values does not extend to all broadcasters actively upholding the Olympic values. For example, NBC’s broadcast of London 2012 was heavily criticized via ‘#NBCFail’ for not reflecting the Olympic values and although the BBC reflect the Olympic values, they perceive any reflection of the Olympic values as the promotion of their own values, rather than those of the IOC. This manifests in the IOC being the chief exponents of the strategy of extending the presence of the Olympic values outside of Games time, a strategy they have been able to implement via the practice of leveraging the Olympic archives via their own digital media platforms and social
media accounts. However, although the Olympic Games have constant presence on the IOC’s
digital media platforms, the clear presence of the Olympic values is fleeting. Again, the IOC
seem over-reliant upon the inspirational effects of the Olympic Games to uphold the Olympic
values so to support Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. As such, it seems that the IOC
are more focused on promoting the Olympic values for commercial gain in order to ensure the
continuation of the Games. It is, therefore, not surprising that the IOC are very willing to
accommodate the commercial agendas of their broadcasting partners.

**Theme 5: Accommodating Commercial Partnerships**

The interpretation of Olympism as a commercially leveraged and viable philosophy of
social reform is located at the ‘middle ground’ between Olympism as a philosophy of social
reform and as a commercial brand. Within the previous themes it was found that there is scope to
interpret the rationale behind the strategies, processes, and practices as both commercially and
socially driven, which lends support to the interpretation of Olympism as a commercially
leveraged and viable philosophy of social reform. What starts to become apparent in these
themes is that, despite their differing natures (i.e., the IOC is a not-for-profit organization with a
primary objective of promoting Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, whereas
broadcasters are in the main for profit companies with a primary objective of promoting
Olympism as a commercial brand), there is a shared interest in many of the Olympic
broadcasting strategies. For example, there is a shared desire to maximize eyes on the Olympic
Games, which maximizes advertising revenues and the inspirational effects of the Olympic
Games. However, this theme considers the Olympic broadcasting strategies, practices, and
processes whereby the IOC accommodate the commercial interests of their broadcast partners at
the potential expense of their own agenda or values. Where such conflict might exist, a stronger
spirit of partnership is required than when strategies are mutually desired, such as maximizing the Olympic audience, and as such the IOC engage in a strategy of developing a spirit of partnership with broadcasters.

**What: Developing a Spirit of Partnership**

The previous theme established the important role of partnership in promoting the Olympic values. A spirit of partnership becomes even more critical when broadcasters’ commercial interests come into conflict with the agenda and values of the IOC. A key IOC broadcasting executive described the broadcasters as “partners, rather than clients.” Broadcasters also perceive this spirit of partnership. For example, the BBC’s Head of Major Events stated:

> We have a very close relationship [with the IOC] and we’re pretty proud of our association. I think it’s huge. I think we support each other actually. I shouldn’t really speak for the IOC, they’ll speak for themselves, but when you’ve got a global brand like the BBC then you have two true global brands. You’ve got the IOC’s five golden rings, now this is a global brand. Put the two of them together and you rather hope, hope that this sort of a whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Such a strong spirit of partnership, where both parties support each other, takes time to develop.

**How: Building Long-term Broadcast Partner Relationships**

A commercial objective of the IOC, as stated on its website is: “To create long-term commercial relationships to ensure the financial stability of the Olympic Movement” (IOC, n.d.a, para. 5). This practice of establishing long-term relationships allows a stronger spirit of partnership to develop as relationships have the capacity to develop over time. This practice is particularly evident in the IOC’s relationships with broadcasters, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “Partnerships are being established more and more as we sign our
broadcast agreements for longer terms. For example, we have signed with NBC until 2032. With these long term partnerships and the regular knowledge sharing sessions, we make sure our partnerships are enhanced.” The Sochi 2014 Winter Games was United States broadcaster NBC’s fourteenth Olympic broadcast. The United States broadcaster with the second most Olympic broadcasts in the most valuable and competitive market for Olympic broadcasting is ABC with ten Olympics. This allows NBC to position themselves as ‘The Olympic Network’ (NBC, 2014). The BBC broadcast the Olympic Games for the first time at the London 1948 Games and has continuously broadcasted the Games since the Albertville 1992 Winter Games, making Sochi 2014 their thirteenth consecutive broadcast. The BBC has secured the rights to the Olympic Games until Tokyo 2020, which will be their sixteenth consecutive Olympic Games (BBC Sport, 2012b). Although long-term relationships provide the opportunity for a spirit of partnership to develop between the IOC and broadcast partners, for the partnership to develop requires that this opportunity be taken advantage of by a practice of closely collaborating throughout the duration of the relationship.

**How: Close Collaboration**

The key IOC broadcasting executive describes the practice of close collaboration with broadcast partners:

> We work with them on a continuous basis, not just us [Television and Marketing Services department], but across all departments, including the host broadcaster OBS, taking their feedback into different things. For example, the lighting and the field of play. We work with them to produce the Olympic program.

Such cross-department collaboration was evident in the previous theme of ‘transcending sport’ whereby the IOC and OBS host knowledge sharing sessions with broadcasters, which contributes
to a better Olympic broadcasting product. In addition to working closely in promoting the Olympic values, the IOC and broadcasters also work closely on technology exploitation, resulting in greater satisfaction of the resulting broadcasting product, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “When we worked, we worked pretty closely, particularly in the development of web technology and exploiting the web. They [the IOC] were thrilled with what we did at the Olympics and just the breath of our offer.” There has been a shift in broadcasters’ perception of such close collaboration, according to Payne (2006):

Not so long ago, this would have been seen by the TV producers, as ‘bolshevism’ and the IOC interfering in the editorial content of the broadcast. Today, there is much greater understanding of the potential of the partnership, and the need for the two sides to work more closely together. (p. 71)

However, as with any relationship, not everything runs smoothly. For example, the BBC sought assurances of no further errors from OBS following a technical error that resulted in a lack of timing information during the men’s cycling road race at London 2012 (Gibson, 2012). A spirit of partnership is further developed by the practice of investing in the partnership.

**How: Investing in the Partnership**

The ‘Olympism for All’ theme established that broadcasters could only be selected as partners if they were free-to-air or had the capacity to reach 95% of their territory’s audience. A further requirement identified by Payne (2006) was an investment in the IOC and the Olympic brand: “The IOC, while needing the revenue to fund the Olympic Movement, had many other factors to consider, including the global and continuing promotion of the Olympic Games” (p. 50). Payne (2006) goes on to specify:
Networks would be challenged to look at all of their media and promotional assets, and explore how they might be used to build the Olympic brand. The final decision would not just be based on the financial rights fee on offer, but how a true promotional partnership could be formed. (p. 58)

In the highly competitive United States market, where there are several viable Olympic broadcasters, so to promote themselves ahead of competing broadcasters bidding for the Olympic Games, broadcasters have made large investments in a promotional partnership, as identified by Payne (2006): “NBC proposed a multi-year, multi-hundred million dollar promotional commitment to the Olympic brand – as well as a $10 million interactive library system to support the Olympic Television Archive Bureau” (p. 63).

So to support NBC's relationship with the IOC, their parent company General Electric became a global sponsor of the IOC, starting in 2005. NBC also dropped out of bidding for the broadcast rights of the major league American sports properties, including the National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), and the National Basketball Association (NBA), focusing exclusively on the Olympics to live up to its label of ‘The Olympic Network’. This was interpreted by the IOC as demonstrating a high level of commitment, as identified by Payne (2006):

Lest there be any doubt about NBC’s commitment to keep the Olympic franchise it had carefully nurtured since Seoul 1988, the network topped its offer with a unique $200 million proposal from its parent company General Electric, to become a sponsorship partner through 2012. (p. 63)
General Electric remains a commercial partner of the IOC and is currently committed until 2020. The IOC seeks to develop partnerships with their broadcast partners because a partnership relationship is stronger than a ‘seller-buyer’ relationship.

**Why: A Stronger Olympic Broadcasting Product**

Working in partnership presents the opportunity to create a stronger Olympic broadcasting product. For example, the knowledge sharing sessions with broadcasters facilitated by the IOC and OBS are designed to improve the Olympic broadcasting product and help each partner achieve their own objectives, with greater understanding contributing to each partner’s objectives being achieved. This strategy, as with others, can be interpreted from both the perspective of Olympism as a commercial brand and Olympism as a philosophy of social reform.

A stronger Olympic broadcasting product has more commercial value if it is able to attract a greater audience, and also is a stronger platform from which to promote the Olympic values with a view to them having an inspirational effect.

The practice of establishing long-term partnerships contributes to improving the quality of the Olympic broadcast, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

The experience we gain through doing it so regularly. It is the greatest show on Earth. I genuinely believe that and I don’t think that’s in dispute. To pull off broadcasting an enterprise like that takes a bit of experience and a bit of skill. No, more than just a bit; great experience, great skill.

The experience gained from a long-term partnership provides experience and skill that cannot be matched by new broadcasters, according to the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “New broadcasters often come into it and can spend too much time working out just the sheer logistics, rather than what they should actually be doing.”

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Having a long-standing Olympic broadcaster can also enhance consumption of the Olympic Games because “people know that this is the destination for Olympic Games”, according to the key IOC broadcasting executive. Indeed, if a long-standing Olympic broadcaster were to cease carrying the Olympic Games, there would be negative response from their audience, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

Our audiences expect to see the Olympic Games on the BBC. If you suddenly don’t have the Olympic Games on the BBC people will turn around and say “Why? Why should I pay my license fee?” They might suddenly say, “Well, I never get a lot from the BBC, why should I pay my license fee?” So that’s the important thing, BBC has got to have a book in every program genre, sport included, and sport at its best.

The final reason for the IOC adopting the practice of establishing long-term partnerships is that it serves to strengthen the power of the IOC over future organizing committees, as identified by Payne (2006):

The continuing conflicts [with organizing committees] became one of the key reasons for the IOC adopting a strategy of long-term agreements. Whenever possible, it [the IOC] has tried to award broadcast rights before a city’s election and the formation of the organizing committee. (p. 33)

This enables the IOC to plan firm budgets in advance, ensuring a more stable staging of the Olympic Games, as identified by Pound (2004):

In the end, the U.S. rights deal involved some $2.3 billion stretching to 2008. It provided stability for the IOC, the potential host cities, the Olympic organizing committees, and for NBC. The long-term nature of the deal helped spread the risk around for everyone. (p. 194)
However, there are also some risks attached to long-term partnerships, as identified by Pound (2004):

We may have picked the wrong partners. Relationships are negotiated between people who have confidence in each other. Those people may move on and their replacements may not have the same commitment. Economic conditions may change; we may turn out to have sold for too much or too little. The television broadcast industry may evolve into something none of us could have contemplated when we made the long-term deals. (p. 194)

An important part of any partnership is a willingness to accommodate each other’s objectives.

**What: Accommodating Broadcast Partners’ Commercial Interests**

The IOC is a not-for-profit organization yet the majority of its broadcast partners are for-profit private companies. As such, the IOC is required to accommodate some of their broadcast partners’ objectives that are not wholly compatible and complimentary to their own objectives. On being questioned with regard to instances where the IOC has had to accommodate broadcast partners’ objectives at the expense of their own agenda, such as the upholding of the Olympic values, a key IOC broadcasting executive responded: “There are no instances that I can recall”. Such a response indicates a lack of willingness to openly discuss any conflicts with broadcast partners. Although the practice of some of their broadcasters has been criticized for being commercial at the expense of the Olympic values (e.g., ‘#NBCFail’), the IOC have not criticized or even challenged the practices of their broadcast partners (e.g., Thomas Bach’s reference to “their passion for the Olympic values” (IOC, 2014a) following the renewal of their partnership).

This is in contrast to the example of former IOC president Jacques Rogge questioning the role of corporate partners in tackling the growing problem of obesity. Such solidarity is reflective
of a strong partnership. Even if some practices of broadcast partners are not wholly reflective of
the Olympic values, the IOC’s stance of solidarity indicates an appreciation that working with
broadcast partners so that their commercial objectives can be met is an important element of a
successful partnership. Requiring that broadcast partners operate in pursuit of only the IOC’s
agenda and not their own would not be in the spirit of partnership and would likely result in an
inferior Olympic broadcasting product and thus a weaker contribution to the Olympic values and
Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. This was evident in the IOC’s response to the
‘#NBCFail’ criticisms of NBC’s broadcast of London 2012. On questioning the key IOC
broadcasting executive about the IOC’s interpretation of this criticism, their response was: “It’s
freedom of speech, anyone can write what they want. London 2012 was a huge success for NBC.
There was no ‘#NBCSuccess’, but the numbers speak for themselves.” Despite not identifying
any instances of the IOC accommodating the commercial objectives of broadcast partners at the
expense of the Olympic values from open questioning, there are examples of the IOC making
such accommodations, which were discussed by the key IOC broadcasting executive from
specific questions.

How: Broadcaster Friendly Event Scheduling

Chapter One identified the example of the swimming finals for the Beijing 2008 Games
being switched to the morning, rather than their usual evening slot, at the request of Unites States
broadcaster NBC, so that their primetime (i.e., the hours that typically attract the largest
audience) audience could follow Michael Phelps quest for a record nine gold medals. This is
against the key broadcasting principle of equitable access to the Olympic Games in that a single
market should not influence the scheduling. Given that scheduling cannot equitably suit all
markets, scheduling (as is normally the case) should favor the host city audience. However, as
the broadcasters who pay the greatest sum for their right to broadcast the Olympic Games (nearly a third of all broadcast rights for London 2012), NBC have the greatest sway in influencing schedule, as this case illustrates. Following the Beijing 2008 Games there was speculation that NBC would again wield its influence so that the 100 meters track and field final at London 2012 would be run after midnight London time, so to coincide with the United States primetime (Scott, 2008). However, this speculation did not materialize and the event was run at 9.50pm London time and 4.50pm United States East Coast time.

Although the London 2012 men’s 100 meters track and field final was not scheduled to coincide with the United States primetime, the unusual scheduling of the swimming finals at Beijing 2008 demonstrates the practice of scheduling events in a manner that accommodates broadcasters’ commercial interests. According to the key IOC broadcasting executive, various internal stakeholders are consulted to determine the schedule of Olympic events:

Scheduling is always done consulting with the International Federations, with the concerned IOC Departments, as well as the production team from OBS, to ensure that the events are balanced. All the disciplines that are being held are balanced in terms of the transportation as well as in terms of broadcast.

In this instance, broadcasters are not considered internal stakeholders. However, OBS and the IOC’s Television and Marketing Services represent their interests, according to the key IOC broadcasting executive:

In terms of consulting broadcasters, OBS, as well as IOC’s Television and Marketing Services department, are the bodies that carry through the needs of the broadcasters. These departments represent broadcasters by seeking to schedule events within broadcasters’ primetimes, according to the key IOC broadcasting executive:
The IOC does work with our broadcast partners so that they are able to broadcast as many events as possible in the respective primetime. Having said that, it’s almost impossible to ensure that every broadcast or every territory meets the same standard because every region has their own priority in some sense and of course with the different time zones it’s clearly impossible that marquee events are held in every territory’s primetime.

As pointed out by the key IOC broadcasting executive, it is not possible to accommodate the primetimes of all broadcasters. Indeed, the nature of time zones is that primetimes are evenly spread across a twenty-four hour period. Therefore, although the key IOC broadcasting executive stated that broadcasters who paid higher fees were not prioritized, that television primetimes are considered at all suggests that consideration is given to the most influential broadcasters. That NBC’s broadcast fee equates to nearly a third of the IOC’s total broadcasting revenues is clearly influential. That the Beijing 2008 swimming was changed at NBC’s request suggests that the IOC is willing to influence the Olympic events schedule so to accommodate the commercial interests of their highest paying broadcaster.

That said, the influence of broadcasters does not come from rights fees alone. For example, as the rights holder for the host territory for London 2012, the BBC was particularly influential for London 2012. According to the BBC’s Head of Major Events, the BBC was engaged as early as the bidding stages for the 2012 Games, and continued to work closely with the Organizing Committee: “So there is a lot of planning that goes on, we work very closely with LOCOG, we as a broadcaster, all the other broadcasters, try and put together a competition schedule that works for our audiences too.” Notably, this account identifies that more than just the influential broadcasters of the BBC and NBC were consulted with regard to the schedule. However, this does not identify the level of influence that other broadcasters had. The influence
of the BBC at London 2012 was evident at London 2012: “You may ask us, why is the track cycling taking place between four and seven in the evening? Well, it took place in the evening alongside the athletics, you couldn’t watch both.” This account from the BBC’s Head of Major Events refers to two of the most popular Olympic sports for the British audience: track cycling and track and field (referred to as athletics in Great Britain). It would appear that the BBC was able to influence the scheduling of the finals of these sports so that they did not clash, thus maximizing their audience over a longer period in the evening. Although broadcasters have limited influence over the event schedule of an Olympic Games, they are able to determine their own schedule for broadcasting events.

**How: Scheduling Freedom for Tape-delayed Coverage**

It is in the commercial interest of broadcasters to broadcast marquee Olympic events during their primetime hours, which serves to maximize their primetime audience and thus maximize the revenues secured from advertisers. A practice that some broadcasters have engaged in, where Olympic marquee events are scheduled outside of their primetime hours, is to not show the marquee events live, but instead show ‘tape delayed’ coverage of the marquee event during primetime hours. Notably, United States broadcaster NBC has consistently engaged in such a practice. For example, the marquee event of the men’s 100 meters in track and field has not been broadcast live in the United States when it falls outside of their primetime hours.

For Beijing 2008, the 100 meters final was not broadcast live, rather it was held back for 12 hours until primetime. A spokesman for NBC was quoted on the Guardian’s website as saying: "We have an obligation to our affiliates and advertisers to show marquee sports at peak time, when the US is watching" (Scott, 2008). This same marquee event was again held back until primetime for NBC’s London 2012 coverage. This tape delayed coverage is against the key
IOC broadcasting principle of equitable access (i.e., some markets are able to access marquee events live whilst others are not) and so was strongly criticized on Twitter via ‘#NBCFail’. Regardless, the IOC do not influence such a practice, instead allowing their broadcasting partners scheduling freedom, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

There are no specific IOC requirements regarding tape-delayed coverage. It’s the broadcaster’s strategy what they deliver live because its more subject to their territory and audience. After all, they deal with them directly.

This account suggests that the IOC are happy to give broadcasters scheduling freedom because they know their audience best and so can best represent their interests. However, this ignores that many broadcasters also have to protect the interest of their advertisers. From the perspective of the audience, if a sport is not broadcast live, the value of this content decreases (Cowie & Williams, 2007). The IOC, as identified by a key IOC broadcasting executive, recognizes the increased value of live sport: “So, it is important that Olympic Games are live as well as on demand. The key thing is to reach out to the users.” Despite such recognition, the IOC has not intervened on behalf of the Olympic audience to ensure live broadcasts of marquee events. The key IOC broadcasting executive goes on to state:

Broadcasters know their territories and their potential audience best, so they are the best deciders in terms of what events to put in and of course they decide it in terms of what kind of channels or what kind of platforms they’re operating on.

This identifies that the emergence of digital media platforms has created additional decisions for broadcasters in their delivery of the Olympic Games. As established in the ‘Expanding the Olympic Window’ theme, the practice of using multiple screens for multiple sports opens up the scope for more coverage. This provides broadcasters with the dual option of
tape-delaying their television coverage of marquee events until primetime hours, so to maximize revenues gained from advertisers, and making marquee events available live via their digital media platforms, so their audience does not have to miss the live marquee event or wait until the primetime television coverage. Although the technology to implement such a practice was available for Beijing 2008, it was not until London 2012 that NBC showed the track and field men’s 100 meters final live via their digital media platforms. As was identified in the ‘Expanding the Olympic Window’ theme, this digital media platform coverage did not take away from viewers of the television broadcast. NBC’s ratings for the London 2012 men’s 100 meters track and field final was 2% higher than for Beijing 2008 where the race was not shown on digital media platforms in advance of the tape-delayed primetime television coverage (Magnay, 2012). This change in strategy is a result of greater understanding of the impact of live coverage being available on digital media platforms, according to the former IOC Director of Marketing and Broadcast Rights:

In this day and age, it [live coverage] is fundamental. I mean a decade ago it was different and it was important at that stage for NBC to protect their primetime shows, which represented 80% or more of the advertising. Subsequently, they have found out that, actually, you can watch the Olympics in the day and it will end up increasing your primetime during that night.

Television broadcasters, such as NBC, feared that if Olympic fans were able to consume an event live via digital media platforms (e.g., men’s 100 meter final in track and field) then they would not then tune in for the prime time television broadcast, resulting in a ‘cannibalizing’ effect, as previously discussed in the ‘Expanding the Olympic Window’ theme. However, broadcasters now have a greater understanding of the ‘cannibalizing’ effect and now view digital
media platforms as having a liberating effect whereby their Olympic audience can consume everything live via digital media platforms (protecting the interests of the Olympic audience), but that marquee events can also be held back for primetime coverage (protesting the interests of television advertisers). The BBC’s Head of Major Events identified such a liberating effect:

Clearly the technology was very liberating, but we always intended to cover a really wide range of content on our main channels and every medal that was won was seen on our main channels. We did a lot of preparation work, but broadcasters generally do a lot of work to make sure that big events don’t clash unnecessarily.

With the case of the BBC, they did not hold marquee events back to primetime. This practice can be at least partially attributed to their different funding model, as previously discussed. In being funded by a television license fee rather than advertising the only interest that the BBC needs to protect is their audience. Also, the BBC are under much less financial pressure than NBC, having paid $100 million for the rights to broadcast London 2012 compared to NBC’s $1.25 billion rights fee (Magnay, 2012). For those broadcasters who rely upon advertisers for money, the liberating effect of digital media platforms is more important. The challenge of balancing the interests of their audience and their television advertisers has been alleviated somewhat by the emergence of digital media platforms, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive, with live broadcast available regardless of time zone:

Digital Media has helped here considerably because time zone is not a factor anymore. People just want to watch their key primetime events at primetime but they are following all the events throughout the day or even night, thanks to all the different platforms that exist now. They don’t have to wait to switch on their television channel, which was a single channel few years back.
Although the emergence of digital media platforms has helped alleviate the threat of tape-delayed coverage to the Olympic audience’s desire for live coverage, digital media platforms are unable to influence the threat of nation-pride emphasized broadcasts.

**How: Editorial Freedom for Nation-Pride Emphasized Broadcasts**

In the above two practices, the IOC sacrificed their key broadcasting principle of equitable access so to accommodate broadcasters’ commercial interests. However, a greater sacrifice made by the IOC in accommodating the commercial interests of broadcasters is the allowance of editorial freedom by which broadcasters emphasize nation-pride within telecasts to home nations. Such broadcasts are in conflict with the Olympic value of excellence, defined as “giving one’s best, on the field of play or in life, without measuring oneself with others, but above all aiming at reaching one’s personal objectives with determination in the effort” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3). Depending on the level of emphasis of nation-pride (i.e., at the exclusion of others), such broadcasts can also be interpreted as in conflict with the Olympic value of friendship, which is defined as “building a peaceful and better world through solidarity, team spirit, joy and optimism in sport” and overcoming “political, economic, gender, racial or religious differences and forge friendships in spite of those differences” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3). A broadcast that overly emphasizes nation-pride can also be interpreted as in conflict with the Olympic spirit, defined in the Olympic Charter as requiring “mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11).

Despite the threat that an emphasis of nation-pride presents to the Olympic values and Olympic spirit, the IOC, having provided a neutral feed via OBS, provide editorial freedom to their broadcast partners, as identified by a key IOC broadcasting executive:
The broadcast feed [from OBS] is produced on a neutral basis; a non-partitioned broadcast is made available. From there, it’s up to the broadcasters what suits their national taste. [...] They will tailor their broadcast and commentary according to the taste of the audience, but still keep the sanctity of the Olympic Games and the Olympic values. Although the key IOC broadcasting executive identifies an expectation that broadcasts and commentary will keep the sanctity of the Olympic Games and Olympic values, they do not enforce this. The only contractual obligations for broadcasters is that their broadcast reflect their territory’s national interest and they maximize viewership, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive: “In terms of control, what our agreements or contractual agreements with our partners require is that broadcasts are done on the basis of their national interest, as well as making the Games seen more.”

However, neither of these conditions protects the sanctity of the Olympic Games or Olympic values. Rather, broadcasters are trusted to determine the best broadcast for their own audience, resulting in different natures of broadcasts in different territories, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

So, in terms of telling the story [it] differs of course from U.S. to U.K. What matters is that they do it in the trust of their own audience and broadcasters are in best position to say how or what kind of story they want to tell and definitely all the broadcasters have told it in their best possible way of course.

This shows trust in broadcasters, reflective of the spirit of partnership discussed earlier in this theme. However, assuming that broadcasters “of course” deliver the best possible broadcast could be interpreted as optimistic in light of the criticisms evident in ‘#NBCFail’.
Given the innate competitive nature of sports and the status of the Olympic Games as the pinnacle of sport, asking broadcasters to closely adhere to the Olympic value of excellence in terms of “without measuring oneself with others” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3) is unrealistic. The IOC adheres to such a standard by not comparing countries by medals won. However, broadcasters keep a medals table that they update and follow throughout their broadcast of the Olympic Games. Some territories rank countries according to total medals won, but the most common method (which is further from the Olympic value of excellence) is a ranking that only considers gold medals (i.e., winning is everything) with silver medals, and then bronze medals, only coming into play in the ranking if there is a tie.

Reflective of this competitive interest is a practice of broadcasters focusing on home nation athletes, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

Inside the BBC, we could access all the host coverage feeds from all the venues plus our own unilateral feeds at selected venues such as athletics, swimming, cycling, rowing, sailing. We had extra cameras at some of those main sports, just designed to focus on British and international athletes of note.

The BBC takes OBS’s neutral coverage and customizes it by adding their own cameras and interviews to focus on home nation athletes. Nation-pride can also be emphasized by changes to scheduling so to focus on home-nation athletes, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

In terms of events that are held, you never know what could be a primetime event. If you think that your athletes are great in football and football is your primetime event, but suddenly someone does so well in athletics or swimming, that becomes a primetime
event. Or even for so called smaller sports, in terms of archery or weightlifting, any medal event or medal prospect can become a primetime event.

The BBC typically do not change their schedule once determined, but there is scope for changes depending on the progress of British athletes, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

You can actually offer people multiple choice and we think very carefully. We actually work very hard to program our schedules and do not change them too much. It’s difficult in the latter stage of the team events, because you don’t know how far the British team is going to go, but by and large we try to stick to our listings.

The BBC are conscious that such focus could potentially reflect bias, but at the same time are conscious that a broadcast emphasizing home-nation pride is appealing to their audience.

According to the BBC’s Head of Major Events:

In terms of bias, it’s very difficult actually. You want to reflect what your audiences expect and if we don’t spend a significant proportion of our time following British sports men and women and their exploits, we are going to get criticized.

Just as the BBC were conscious that they could be criticized for not following British athletes, they were also conscious of the risk of being criticized for being overly passionate towards home-nation athletes. The BBC’s Head of Major Events stated:

But it’s a difficult balance, particularly so at a home Games [London 2012]. We were very conscious that expectations were different too. If we have to spend time and effort focusing on British competitors building them up, explaining to our audience who the personalities might be, I think we’d been criticized that our commentaries at times were overly passionate towards Great Britain. Very, very difficult. I think it’s something we thought about very carefully, even on a daily basis during the Games.
With such conscious consideration, the BBC emphasized a measured amount of home-nation pride in their broadcast, as identified by the BBC’s Head of Major Events: “We were never going to steer a neutral course, but we want to just steer a course to stay the right line of enthusing about the British competitors without being overenthusiastic.”

Such a measured amount of home-nation pride is not always the case, with different editorial approaches taken by different broadcasters, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:

Every broadcaster does it in their own way, of course. BBC has a different editorial way of broadcasting the Games than NBC would have and then similarly if you talk about France 5 Television, that will be different than how ARD ZDF in Germany broadcast the Games. It is different.

In comparing themselves to other broadcasters, the BBC’s measured emphasis on home-nation pride is confirmed. The BBC’s Head of Major Events views the United States broadcast as having a much stronger emphasis on home-nation pride to such an extent that others are excluded:

If we focus on British athletes to the exclusion of all others, we are going to get criticized. I think the BBC is quite good in the context of a lot of other broadcasters around the world who are myopic. When you experience the Olympics in America, if the American comes second you are not going to know who won the race or who came third. I do like to think that we are professional enough to actually dot the ‘I’ s and cross the ‘T’ s and also celebrate some of the great international stories.

An element of professionalism in the editorial process that the IOC now enforce is accurate broadcasting of the course of events, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive:
Of course we want consistency in terms of how the story is being told and that is put in our broadcast agreements. They are not kind of changing the course of the events […] but they tell it in their own way.

However, United States broadcasters NBC have previously been criticized for changing the course of events. Notably, in the women’s team gymnastics event at the Atlanta 1996 Summer Games, coverage was edited to make Kerri Strug’s vault on her injured ankle appear critical for victory over the Russian team, despite the Gold medal having already been won by the United States team, as identified by Payne (2006): “NBC’s prime-time programming was used to gradually intensify the drama surrounding the admittedly heroic, triumphant, yet ultimately irrelevant vault ” (p. 45). Such practice has not been eradicated with NBC again editing the women’s team gymnastics event as recently as London 2012. Russian gymnast Ksenia Afanasyeva had fallen during her floor exercise, resulting in a clear lead for the United States team, but this was edited out, resulting in accusations that NBC was creating fake suspense (Patten, 2012). The reasons for the IOC adopting a strategy of accommodating broadcast partners’ commercial interests is most obviously aligned with the interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand, but this does not mean that there is no consideration of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. Accommodating broadcast partners’ commercial interests is also in the commercial interest of the IOC, which maximizes the revenues that the IOC can re-invest in sport and support the sustainability of the Olympic Games themselves.

**Why: Accommodating Mutual Commercial Interests**

The IOC have sought to accommodate their broadcast partners commercial interests because their own commercial interests are dependent upon those of their broadcast partners. Although the IOC and broadcasters clearly work in the spirit of partnership, the relationship
comes into existence on the basis of broadcasters paying a fee to the IOC. Therefore, no matter the strength of the spirit of partnership, broadcasters are the clients of the IOC. It is no surprise that the IOC department who works closest with broadcasters is the Television and Marketing Services department. By definition, this department is there to serve broadcasters. Although as owners of the valuable broadcasting resource of the Olympic Games the IOC have considerable power, for every dollar in revenue they collect from a broadcaster, that power lessens in the sense that the power is being purchased by the new rights holder. This is particularly evident in the IOC’s partnership with United States broadcaster NBC. The broadcast fee paid by NBC to the IOC was $1.25 billion and they also incurred $150 million in costs (Magnay, 2012). This rights fee agreed by NBC is based upon what they believe they can recoup from advertisers, as identified by Pound (2004): “It is a business decision that is expected to generate a return on investment” (p. 161).

So to maximize the revenues that they get from advertisers, NBC needs to hold marquee events back until their primetime coverage. The IOC understands this and is aware that they are in no position to dictate terms to a for-profit organization that has paid them $1.25 billion. It is not in the interest of the IOC for broadcast partners to lose money, as identified by Pound (2004): “ABC [former United States rights holder] ended up losing money on the Calgary Games. That is not good for Olympic business. We want our partners and sponsors to be pleased with their Olympic experience” (p. 176).

If they required that NBC broadcast marquee events live so to adhere to their key broadcasting principle of equitable access (i.e., right to access sport live as other audiences do) then this would need to be established as part of the agreement. Such a condition would lessen the commercial value of the Olympic broadcast rights given that primetime advertisers would not
be willing to pay as high a fear for a replayed event (i.e., broadcast live and then again in the
prime time slot), and as such NBC would not be willing to pay $1.25 billion.

Advertisers are willing to pay higher fees for advertising slots when there are greater eyes
on the broadcast. It follows that, so to recoup their rights fee, NBC need to appeal to their
potential audience. Given the competitive nature of sport and the Olympic Games’ status as the
pinnacle of sport, broadcasts that emphasize home-nation pride are appealing to audiences.
Although this method of maximizing the Olympic audience is against the Olympic values of
excellence and friendship and the Olympic spirit, the IOC share NBC’s desire to maximize their
Olympic audience. This creates a conundrum for the IOC in that so to maximize the Olympic
audience and to maximize the revenues from broadcasters, they should allow broadcasters to
emphasize home-nation pride. In protecting their own commercial interests this strategy can be
interpreted as Olympism being a commercial brand on one level, but it can also be interpreted
from the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform when considering that the
IOC reinvest their revenues back into sport (IOC, 2014c).

Why: Reinvestment in Sport

The issues of tape-delayed coverage and broadcasts that emphasize home-nation pride
leave the IOC with the decision: Do they ask broadcasters to strictly adhere to their key
broadcasting principles, the Olympic values of excellence and friendship, and the Olympic spirit
and sacrifice revenue, or do they allow broadcasters the freedom to broadcast in a manner that
maximizes their commercial value and thus continue to generate huge broadcast fees that they
can reinvest back into sport? The strategies, practices, and processes of the IOC suggest that they
believe they can better achieve promote Olympism as a philosophy of social reform with the
extra revenues whilst accommodating Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. Pound (2004) confirmed this stance:

The television and sponsorship revenues provided us with the chance to act as redistributors of funds, making it possible to channel much-needed financial support to the developing countries that had little, if any, access to hard currency. There is not enough money to make everyone equal, but the expansion of the number of countries able to produce Olympic medal-winning athletes is a direct result of the funds given to talented athletes who might otherwise never have been able to realize their full potential.

(p. xiv)

Pound (2004) goes on to identify the satisfaction that the effective redistribution of commercial funds brings to the IOC: “It has always been a matter of great satisfaction to know that many of the athletes who reach Olympic finals or semifinals have done so because we have been able to generate support from the private sector” (p. xiv). However, this reinvestment is development of sport, rather than development through sport, which is more closely aligned with Olympism as a philosophy of social reform.

Broadcasting revenues are also redistributed in support of the Olympic values by funding the World Anti Doping Association (WADA), as described by Pound (2004):

The biggest problem WADA has is collecting money. The understanding, from the very beginning, was that the annual budgets would be funded equally by governments and the Olympic movement. The IOC manages the Olympic movement portion, drawing from the television revenues from the Games. (p. 77)

Such funding supports both the fundamental principles of Olympism and the Olympic values. In its simplest form, broadcast revenues allocated to WADA are funding fair play, which
is part of the fourth fundamental principle of Olympism that sport is a human right. In fighting
doping, this funding also contributes to “a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational
value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical
principles” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11), as defined in the first fundamental principle of Olympism. This
funding also supports the value of excellence, defined as “giving one’s best, on the field of play
or in life, without measuring oneself with others, but above all aiming at reaching one’s personal
objectives with determination in the effort” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3) given that the
behavior of doping is competing against others at all costs. Finally, such funding also supports
the value of respect, which is defined as “the ethical principle that should inspire all who
participate in the Olympic programmes” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3), and covers respect for
oneself, one another, rules, and the environment (Olympic Museum, 2013), given that doping is
widely regarded as an unethical practice, carries risks to the athlete, provides an unfair advantage
over competitors, and is forbidden in the rules of all Olympic sports. An alternative justification
for accommodating broadcast partners’ commercial interests is accepting ratings as the quality
indicator, rather than judging the actual content.

Why: Ratings Indicate the Best Possible Way

The practices of allowing broadcasters to influence event schedules and allowing
broadcasters to deliver tape-delayed and nation-pride emphasized coverage can be interpreted as
being in contradiction to equitable access, the Olympic values of excellence and friendship and
the Olympic spirit. Taken from the perspective of Olympism as philosophy of social reform, it
would be concluded that such broadcasts are not being delivered in the best possible way.
However, the perspective of the key IOC broadcasting executive is that because the tape-delayed
and nation-pride emphasized coverage are achieving the best possible ratings, they must be being
told in the best way possible: “The events are being told in the best possible way and it is indeed the best because everybody has achieved the best possible ratings. The audience rating speaks for themselves.” This view reflects an interpretation of Olympism as a commercial brand and is based upon the assumption that if the audience did not think an Olympic broadcast was being made in the best possible way, they would not watch it. However, this assumption is flawed when considering the IOC broadcasting policy of territorial exclusivity of rights. Indeed, the opening quote for this study was “Dear @nbc: the ratings are good because you have monopolized our access to the #olympics. NOT because your coverage is good. #nbcfail” (@SiMichele, 2012). The IOC’s reliance on audience ratings to judge the quality of the Olympic broadcasts indicates that they prioritize audience quantity (i.e., the reach of the Olympic Games broadcast) over the quality of the Olympic Games broadcast (i.e., equitable access and reflection of Olympic values).

To summarize, whereas the previous themes have focused on strategies that support the IOC’s agenda and values, this theme has identified strategies, practices and processes whereby the IOC have to accommodate the commercial interests of broadcast partners at the expense of their own agenda and values. Such accommodation is reflective of a spirit of partnership whereby the IOC recognize that for Olympic broadcasting to be successful, their broadcasting partners need to achieve their commercial objectives. To develop a spirit of partnership the IOC have engaged in practices of long-term partnership agreements, close collaboration, and partnership investment. These practices enhance the Olympic broadcasting product, both as a commercial asset and as a platform from which to promote the Olympic values and their inspirational effects.
Examples of accommodating the commercial interests of broadcast partners are changing the schedule of events so that marquee events coincide with influential broadcasters’ primetime (in conflict with equitable access), allowing broadcast partners to tape-delay marquee events (also in conflict with equitable access), and allowing broadcasters to emphasize nation-pride in their broadcasts (in conflict with the Olympic values of excellence and friendship and the Olympic spirit). Rather than influence broadcasters to uphold the key Olympic broadcasting principle of equitable access, the Olympic values of excellence and friendship and the Olympic spirit, the IOC are prioritizing audience ratings and trusting broadcast partners that they are best positioned to identify the practices that will maximize the reach of the Games and thus its commercial value. This is in the commercial interest of the IOC because the commercial value to advertisers transfers to the broadcasters, which then transfers to the IOC in rights fees. Although this shows Olympism as a commercial brand, if the rights fees are effectively re-invested into sport, then such commercial consideration can contribute to Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, even if at the expense of a broadcast that is not equitably accessible or in close adherence to the Olympic values and spirit of the Olympic Games.

Additional Reflections

Beyond the findings reported above, there are two findings evident from reflections in relation to the research process: (a) what was not evident in the findings, and (b) the consistency of the findings between the different data sources (i.e., across interviews and documents).

In establishing the five themes, the researcher considered how the research questions could be answered on the basis of the evidence available in the data. Although the data were able to answer the research questions, in reflecting upon the findings and the research process, it became apparent that what was not evident in the data also needed to be reported as part of this
study. To answer the research questions, several probing interview questions were asked, such as “What was being prioritized here?” and “Who is this most important to – the IOC or broadcasters?”, both of which sought to address research question three by identifying the rationale behind the processes and practices. These questions were designed to uncover the organizational politics of the IOC and broadcast partners, to establish the debates and tensions that might exist within Olympic broadcasting partnerships, and to identify the processes and practices by which debates occurred and consensuses reached. Although the researcher was cautious to not allow prior understanding to influence the results, based on examples (e.g., #NBCFail) garnered from secondary data, some tension (e.g., the social agenda of the IOC versus the commercial agenda of broadcast partners) between the IOC and broadcast partners was anticipated from the primary data. However, this tension was not clearly evident in the primary data. For example, the senior IOC broadcasting executive’s response to the interview question “How do the IOC’s developmental goals limit or conflict with broadcast partners commercial objectives?” was that there was no conflict.

In regard to the official line of the IOC, and upon reflection of the overall findings, a second finding was the consistency between data sources. Notably, there was close alignment between the data from the official IOC documents (i.e., the Olympic Charter and the Olympic Marketing Fact File) and the responses of the key IOC broadcasting executive. For example, the Olympic Marketing Fact File (IOC, 2014c) identified fundamental objectives “To ensure that the Olympic Games can be experienced by the maximum number of people throughout the world principally via broadcast coverage” and “To enlist the support of Olympic marketing partners in the promotion of the Olympic ideals” (p. 5), which were key strategies identified from interviews with the key IOC broadcasting executive. Furthermore, the Olympic Charter (IOC, 2013b)
established the mission of the IOC to promote Olympism, which they define as “a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind” (p. 11). This established Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, rather than as a commercial brand. The key IOC broadcasting executive defended this prioritization of Olympism, even when pressed on processes and practices that were inherent of conflict. For example, when pressed on how nation-pride emphasized broadcast conflict with the Olympic value of excellence that advocated not “measuring oneself with others” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3), the key IOC broadcasting executive sought to remove any suggestion of conflict or tension by stating that nation-pride broadcasts “are being told in the best possible way […] because everybody has achieved the best possible ratings.” Given the monopoly created by the territory-exclusive broadcasting agreements (as identified in the opening #NBCFail quote), such a conclusion is flawed. Despite criticism from secondary sources (e.g., #NBCFail), the key IOC broadcasting executive offered no criticism of NBC at any level. The only criticism of NBC from a primary data source came from the BBC’s Head of Major Events, who identified NBC’s failure to appropriately pitch their extent of nation-pride emphasized broadcasts (“I think the BBC is quite good in the context of a lot of other broadcasters around the world who are myopic. When you experience the Olympics in America, if the American comes second you are not going to know who won the race or who came third”).
Table 27. Summary of findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>How?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable Olympism</td>
<td>Re-engaging with the World’s Youth</td>
<td>Developing Youth-appealing Sports Content IOC members’ selection of the Olympic program. Factors considered in sport selection process. Implementing changes in the Olympic sport program. Developing Youth Appealing Communication Platforms Facilitating broadcast partners’ use of digital media platforms. In-house youth-appealing digital media platforms.</td>
<td>Inspiring the Next Generation Delivering the Next Generation of Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olympism for All?</td>
<td>Reaching the Widest Possible Audience</td>
<td>Prioritizing Audience Access Broadest Coverage Partner Selection</td>
<td>Maximizing Inspirational Effects A Long-term Strategy of Developing Markets</td>
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<td>Providing Equitable Access</td>
<td>Prioritizing Equitable Access IOC as Digital Broadcaster</td>
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<td>Exploiting New Technologies</td>
<td>Audience and Technology Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Enhancing Inspirational Capabilities Expanding Revenue Opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increasing Olympic Games Coverage</td>
<td>Multiple Screens for Multiple Sports Complimenting not cannibalizing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A Deeper Interactive Olympic Games Experience</td>
<td>Allowing Customization of Olympic Content Facilitating Digital Olympic Communities</td>
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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>How?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transcending Sport</strong></td>
<td>Drawing Fans into the Olympic Games</td>
<td>Digital Olympic Outreach</td>
<td>Raison d’être of Serving Society</td>
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<td>Preserving the Olympic Character</td>
<td>Producing Olympic Stories, Not Sporting Contests</td>
<td>Funded by Commercialism</td>
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<td>Promoting the Olympic Values</td>
<td>A Commercially Clean Platform</td>
<td>A Commercial Broadcasting</td>
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<td>Knowledge Sharing Sessions</td>
<td>Brand that Transcends Sport</td>
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<td>Auditing Olympic Broadcasts</td>
<td>Serving Both Commercial and Social Agendas</td>
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<td>Partnerships with Shared Values and Understanding</td>
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<td>Extending Presence of the Olympic Values</td>
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<td>Contractual Obligation</td>
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<td>Leveraging Olympic Archives</td>
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<td>Continuous Presence on IOC Digital Platforms</td>
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<td>Host Nation Games Build Up</td>
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<td>Supporting Olympic Sports</td>
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<td><strong>Accommodating Commercial Partnerships</strong></td>
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<td>Building Long-term Broadcast Partner Relationships</td>
<td>A Stronger Olympic Broadcasting Product</td>
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<td>Developing a Spirit of Partnership</td>
<td>Close Collaboration</td>
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<td>Investing in the Partnership</td>
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<td>Accommodating Broadcast Partners’ Commercial Interests</td>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>Accommodating Mutual Commercial Interests</td>
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<td>Scheduling Freedom for Tape-delayed Coverage</td>
<td>Reinvestment in Sport</td>
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<td>Editorial Freedom for Nation-Pride Emphasized Broadcasts</td>
<td>Ratings Indicate the Best Possible Way</td>
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CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The previous chapter detailed the strategies, processes, and practices by which the IOC has managed Olympism through their Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age. These strategies were categorized into five distinct themes, with several sub-categories to answer the ‘what, how, and why’ research questions. The findings will now be discussed in direct response to the research questions through the lens of the literature reviewed in Chapter 3. The limitations, implications for both practice and research will be elucidated, before the final conclusions are offered.

Research Question One

What are the processes and practices by which the IOC manages Olympism through its broadcasting partnerships in the digital age?

This first research question established ‘what is being done?’ regarding a strategy or approach to broadcasting partnerships. As such, this research question addressed the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age at the highest level. These strategies were categorized within five themes that reflected groups of related strategies.

The first theme explored in research question one was ‘sustainable Olympism’, which relates to the long-term viability of Olympism. The key broadcasting strategy within this theme is to re-engage the world’s youth. This is a well-informed strategy that showed, despite the apparent health of the Olympic Games in terms of audience volume, the audience is aging. The IOC has sought to engage a younger audience for future sustainability of ratings and to potentially inspire early adoption of physical activity (Bailey, et al., 2013). The IOC and their
broadcast partners shared a common interest for this sustainability strategy, although this strategy is seemingly more critical for the IOC given that broadcasters can survive on other (more frequent) content.

The second theme explored in research question one was ‘access for all?’, which was centered on audience access to the Olympic Games. The IOC’s strategy of reaching the widest possible audience was identified as a highly important strategic underpinning. This position represents a more proactive strategy since it has not occurred in response to any pejorative trends. In fact, this strategy actually appears in the Olympic Charter, and prior literature has established the importance of reach over revenue, to generate increased interest for the product (Gaustad, 2000; Mondello, 2006). Closely tied to this strategy was ensuring the fullest coverage by the different media and equitable access to the different media for the Olympic audience. While a salient strategy, this idea has been only marginally considered in the existing literature. Bennett (2008) considered the issue of equitable access and established that the BBC had previously encouraged and supported ‘hard to reach’ audiences to get online. This practice was, however, limited to the United Kingdom and was not an initiative related to the BBC’s broadcasting of the Olympic Games. The ‘digital divide’ is the gap between those who have access to the latest information technologies and those who do not (Compaine, 2001) and can exclude some households from major sports events, such as the Olympic Games (Evens & Lefever, 2011). The literature has supported the legitimacy of this strategy, and the subsequent discussion will identify whether the IOC’s practices support this strategy. The IOC and broadcast partners share an interest in maximizing the Olympic audience, but the IOC’s share of the realized benefits is greater, with broadcasters operating with a much smaller profit margin against increases in commercial value.
The Olympic Games have been considered a launch pad for new technology (Liang, 2013). As such, the IOC has engaged in several strategies related to the third theme explored in research question one of ‘expanding the Olympic window’ (i.e., expanding and leveraging the technologies). Previous research has established how technological innovations have changed how sport organizations communicate with their consumers (Rein et al., 2007; Hutchins et al., 2009). This is particularly the case for the IOC with the Olympic Games used “as an exposition of the newest TV technologies” (Liang, 2013, p. 478). Within this theme, a strategy of increased coverage of the Olympic Games was revealed. Due to the magnitude and reach of the Olympic Games, only a fraction of the events are actually broadcast via television’s limited coverage capacity. A further strategy within this theme was to provide a deeper interactive experience of the Olympic Games, which is facilitated by the multi-directional scope and interactive capabilities of digital media platforms (Crosbie, 2006). According to Crosbie (2006), the emergence of digital media platforms have resulted in: (a) a transition from broadcasters having full control over content with traditional television, to broadcasters and users sharing equal and reciprocal control over content; and (b) the potential for the content being produced to be uniquely individualized. A further strategy evident within this theme was drawing new fans to the Olympic Games, which involved externally broadening the reach of the Games. The IOC and their broadcast partners will mutually benefit from an enhanced delivery of the Olympic Games, but only the IOC will benefit from the expanded rights they are able to sell.

The fourth theme explored in research question one was ‘transcending sport’, which consisted of strategies related to leveraging the unique attributes of the Olympic Games, allowing it to transcend sport. Strategies evident in this theme were preserving the Olympic character within Olympic broadcasts and promoting the Olympic values. These strategies sought
to adapt Olympism to meet the needs of the IOC and its broadcast partners (DaCosta, 2006), notably by treating the Olympic values as brand associations (Maguire et al., 2008). There was increased accountability for the IOC to promote the Olympic values because as originators of these ideals the IOC “was up on a pedestal” and as a result “have got to make sure that [they] are staying true to those ideals.” This finding confirmed Timms’ (2012) labeling of the Olympic Games as a platform for protest due to its distinctive ethos. Just as Timms (2012) found, protests (e.g., ‘#NBCFail’) have been witnessed on social media that have attempted to shun corporate interests in the event. The IOC and broadcast partners both benefit from an association with the Olympic values, but promoting these values outside of Games time was a strategy driven primarily by the IOC.

The fifth and final theme explored in research question one was ‘accommodating commercial partnerships’, which moved beyond the shared interest strategies the IOC and their broadcast partners were pursuing. The IOC assumes an approach of accommodating broadcast partners’ commercial interests, even at the expense of their own agenda, which reflects a strong spirit of partnership. This approach is a result of commercial pressures from their many broadcast partners, which is a trend identified in prior research (Genovese, 2013; Silk, et al., 2013). Specifically, Silk (1999) found the conditions of global capitalism influenced the production of sport events to be more consumer-oriented. However, an approach of accommodating commercial pressures at the expense of the IOC’s social interests stands in contrast to Evens and Lefever (2011), who advocated for balance between the economic, cultural, and social sport interests. Failure to achieve this balance has created problems for the IOC in terms of brand identity, which was defined by Richelieu (2004) as the attributes of the brand or values, and coherence between the values of the sports organization and the perceptions
of fans. The finding that Olympic fans are identifying conflicts between the Olympic broadcast and the Olympic values (e.g., ‘#NBCFail’) presents a significant challenge to the Olympic brand identity. As a result, negative experiences for Olympic fans may have a negative impact on spectator-based brand equity (Ross, 2006).

A strategy that precedes accommodating broadcast partners’ commercial interests is developing a spirit of partnership. Such a strategy may be essential when the interests between parties are not completely aligned. The pursuit of this strategy is reflective of the “mutually and internationally indispensable” (Rowe, 1996, p. 565) relationship between sport and media, whereby sport organizations have benefited from publicity and revenues (Bellamy, 2006), while broadcasters have a “seemingly insatiable appetite for sports content” (Bellamy, 2006, p. 66), prioritizing sport over other coverage (Jhally, 1989).

To summarize, the key strategies by which the IOC manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age can be grouped into five distinct themes. These themes consider the audience (in terms of age and size), the broadcasting of the Olympic Games (in terms of delivery mechanism and nature of broadcast), and the relationships between the IOC and its broadcast partners. The majority of the IOC’s strategies are aligned with the interests of both the IOC and broadcast partners, although the IOC has more at stake as the owners of the Olympic Games. The existing literature from Chapter 3 offered partial support in understanding these strategies, notably in terms of confirming a responsibility for equitable access, understanding the nature of digital media platforms, and the role that commercial pressures can place on sports broadcasting.
Research Question Two

How does the IOC manage these processes and practices?

This second research question established ‘how is it being done?’ This addressed the level at which processes and practices are being executed to achieve a strategy or approach. Hutchins and Rowe (2012) identified that “digital-convergent media are playing an ever-increasing role in the production, presentation, and consumption of media sport” (p. 2). Despite this, the present study established that television remained the primary media platform for the Olympic Games. This observation confirmed the prediction of Hutchins and Rowe (2009) that television is “likely to continue in its preeminent role in the live broadcast of global media events such as the Olympic Games” (p. 367). As such, digital media platforms played a varied role in the IOC’s processes and practices to achieve its strategies identified in research question one.

Digitally Enhanced Processes and Practices

Digital media platforms allow the IOC to engage in new processes and practices that allow the organization to better achieve their strategies. The IOC’s leveraging of various digital media platforms has positively contributed to the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth. Such platforms were found to be regarded as youth appealing, and worked in co-dependence with an Olympic program that was adjusted to include more youth appealing sports to “start the conversation” with the “iPod, iPhone generation”. To adopt a youth appealing Olympic program, the IOC worked through a solitary process with decisions being made at the highest levels. However, the IOC is reliant upon broadcasters to reach the youth via youth appealing platforms in markets where the IOC has sold their digital rights. The IOC encouraged (i.e., via knowledge sharing sessions) broadcasters to fully leverage their digital media rights, but such
encouragement was found to be un-necessary given the shared interest of the IOC and broadcasters to reach this future audience.

The strategy of increasing coverage of the Olympic Games was enhanced by digital media platforms through the practice of broadcasting the Olympic Games through multiple screens. For example, the BBC offered 24 simultaneous high-definition streams on their website to support their promise of “every session of every sport, everyday […] to never miss a moment.” In addition to multiple screens from a single media platform, the Olympic audience was able to simultaneously consume the Olympic Games from multiple platforms (i.e., the second screen experience), such as accessing Olympic content via a tablet while watching the Olympic Games television broadcast. Partners in key broadcast markets (e.g., the United States and the United Kingdom) purchased both television and digital media rights. This enabled the IOC to act as a single gatekeeper that allowed a broadcaster to maintain control of access to the Olympic Games. Such consolidation of ownership was previously identified by Real (2006).

Additional literature identified that, although digital media platforms have made the broadcasting market more competitive (Noll, 2006), established broadcasters continue to dominate and provide significant barriers to access. This is in spite of having to pay more due to increased competition (Evens et al., 2011) as the number of broadcasters have multiplied due to the accessibility and affordability of digital media platforms, creating ‘digital plentitude’ (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009). The ‘second screen experience’ was facilitated by a practice of digital media platform content appearing complementary to the television broadcast. This finding supported the position of Hutchins and Rowe (2009), who opined that television and digital media platforms will need to “coexist and interact with complementary and competing content” (p. 367). The IOC and their broadcast partners identified that this practice removed any potential
cannibalizing effect (i.e., a reduction in market share of one product is the result of the introduction of a new product by the same producer). This finding is, however, contrary to predictions of digital media platforms having a negative effect on television (Burton, 1999; Jordan, 2000). Instead, this finding supported the research of Tang and Cooper (2011; 2012) who showed that Olympic fans who consumed the 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Games via digital media platforms consumed the Games on television in greater quantity than fans who did not consume the Games via digital media platforms.

The IOC’s strategy of providing a deeper experience of the Olympic Games was enhanced by digital media platforms. Allowing the customization of Olympic content (e.g., the BBC’s interactive video player at London 2012) and facilitating digital Olympic communities achieved this strategy. The IOC’s social media platform accounts (e.g., Olympic Games Facebook page) are managed by the IOC Communications department and bring Olympic athletes into the conversation. Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) identified such a practice by citing the ‘Voices of the Summer Games’ promotion, which featured over 100 athletes blogging about their personal Games experience at Beijing 2008. These practices were challenging, according to Hutchins and Rowe (2009), because there is (a) uncertainty over the appropriate rights of sport fans to edit and distribute content, especially when the content includes controlled symbols and images such as the Olympic rings, and (b) uncertainty of appropriate levels of policing of athletes use of digital media platforms, as was evident in the IOC guidelines for athletes use of social media.

The strategy of drawing new fans into the Olympic Games was enhanced by digital media platforms. This strategy was achieved by a practice of digital outreach, which was an activity of providing Olympic content to populations on external digital media platforms that
might not otherwise have access. This practice represented a shift from “controlling rights to leveraging assets”, which involved interacting directly with Olympic fans without the filter of traditional media (Rein et al., 2007). However, such a practice is challenging, as there is uncertainty over the appropriate level of control to be exercised by content owners (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009). According to Hutchins and Mikosza (2010), these developments possess “a Janus-faced character” (p. 281) in providing additional avenues to promote the Olympic brand, but created a challenge for maintaining control over Olympic-related media. Despite potential challenges, Hutchins and Mikosza (2010) found that the Beijing 2008 Games “experienced limited problems related to ambush marketing, broadcast media rights infringement, or unauthorized online communication by athletes or third parties” (p. 291).

To implement the strategy of extending the presence of the Olympic values, the IOC engaged in a practice of contractually obligating their broadcast partners to promote the Olympic values “throughout the full period of their rights”, which they achieved through access to the Olympic archives. Despite the contractual obligations of broadcast partners, the IOC achieved the strategy of extending the presence of the Olympic values primarily themselves. An exception was extensive support from the BBC in the build-up to London 2012. The IOC engaged in a practice of providing continuous Olympic Games presence on their own digital media platforms (e.g., Twitter accounts) and via partnerships with digital media platforms (e.g., IOC YouTube Channel). Such presence beyond television reflected the commentaries of digital media platforms altering the ‘mediascape’ of sport (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009), which softened the rigid division of roles in the sports-media model (Rein et al, 2007) as operating agreements between sports organizations and digital media platforms came into existence (McChesney, 2004).
Some broadcasters, notably United States broadcaster NBC, show tape-delayed coverage of marquee events during their primetime coverage, rather than live. Permitting such coverage goes against the key broadcasting principle of equitable access because not all markets are able to access marquee events live. However, permitting tape-delayed coverage of marquee events maximizes advertising revenues by maximizing primetime viewers. Such maximizing of viewers also allows NBC to promote their own prime-time programming (Billings et al., 1998; Eastman & Billings, 2004). Despite criticisms (e.g., ‘#NBCFail’), the IOC continues to permit such scheduling. However, digital media platforms have somewhat alleviated this conflict because broadcasters are now realizing that marquee events can be shown live on digital media platforms and not damage their Olympic primetime television ratings.

Digitally Challenged Processes and Practices

Although the emergence of digital media platforms has made some new processes and practices possible, digital media platforms have also created challenges for the IOC. In order to reach the widest possible audience, the IOC engaged in a practice of only working with partners able to guarantee the broadest coverage, rather than partnering with the highest bidder for their rights. This practice is contrary to the trend of the commodification of other sports, whereby sport is “expropriated by corporate capital” (Rowe, 1996, p. 565). Rowe (1996) identified that the commodification of TV sport has developed to the point where “it must be paid for directly” (p. 565). However, such a position stands in contrast to the findings of this study, which found that the IOC rebuked this trend in working with broadcast partners who can reach at the least 95% of their territory’s population.

The emergence of digital media platforms has created a challenge for the IOC in achieving the strategy of reaching the widest possible audience on digital media platforms (i.e.,
equitable access). The practice by which the IOC has ensured equitable access to the Olympic Games has become increasingly complicated because of a ‘digital divide’, which is the gap between those who have access to the latest information technologies and those who do not (Compaine, 2001). In territories where the IOC has not sold digital media rights, they act as the digital broadcasters via their YouTube channel. Whereas some professional sport leagues have used digital media platforms to their advantage in promoting their brands and extending into new markets (Mahan III & McDaniel, 2006), such as the NFL and NBA in China (Lai, 2004), the IOC’s brand is already established in all markets. As such, the need to provide equitable access to digital media platforms in less developed markets is a challenge, rather than an opportunity.

**Processes and Practices Unaltered by Digital Media Platforms**

Although digital media platforms have impacted several processes and practices for how the IOC manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships, some have been unaltered following the emergence of digital platforms. In order to preserve the special character of the Olympic Games, the IOC and its broadcast partners have engaged in a practice of producing Olympic stories, rather than sporting contests. They cover personal interest stories of non-competitive athletes such as ‘Eric the Eel’ “where it’s not just all about the winner, but a lot of other stories” and Olympic broadcasts are produced to emphasize “the struggle, determination and endeavor – that are the hallmarks of Olympians.” This manner of broadcasting emphasizes brand associations reflective of the Olympic values and also reflects nostalgia, as defined within Gladden and Funk’s (2002) Team Association Model.

To promote the Olympic values that help the Olympic Games transcend sport, the IOC has engaged in a practice of contractually obligating broadcast partners to broadcast the Olympic Games in a manner void of advertising during the actual coverage. Also, the IOC has engaged in
practices of hosting knowledge sharing sessions with broadcast partners that emphasize the Olympic values “again and again”, and audit their broadcasts post-Games time to ensure adherence to the Olympic values. Despite this, close adherence to the Olympic values was not evident from all broadcast partners (e.g., ‘#NBCFail’). Greater support in promoting Olympic values has occurred only when the IOC has engaged in a practice of partnering with broadcasters who share and understand the same values (e.g., the BBC).

In order to develop a spirit of partnership that encourages accommodating interests, the IOC has engaged in a practice of building long-term broadcast partner relationships. This entails granting exclusive rights to broadcasters within their territory. However, long-term and exclusive agreements do not necessarily benefit the consumer. The IOC is collectively selling the rights to the Olympic sports, which when combined with exclusivity, is problematic for the consumer (Cave & Crandall, 2001). Such agreements restrict choice and increase cost of access (Noll, 2007) or even foreclose new markets altogether (Evens & Lefever, 2011). The IOC and United States broadcaster NBC’s continuous longstanding relationship has been in place since the Albertville 1992 Winter Games and is secured until 2032. NBC and other Olympic broadcasters have sacrificed ownership of other sports rights to be an Olympic broadcast partner, which is reflective of the big-event theory (Sullivan, 2006), whereby broadcasters focus on marquee sport events. The practice of working together over a long time period provides the opportunity for a spirit of partnership to develop. For that opportunity to be converted into a strong spirit of partnership has required practices of the IOC and broadcast partners closely collaborating and investing in their partnership. For example, NBC’s parent company General Electric has been a corporate partner of the IOC since 2005 and is committed to remain so until 2020. Although this practice of investment develops a spirit of partnership, according to Evens and Lefever (2011), it
can also lead to an oligopolistic market structure reflective of cartelization that decreases rivalry for sports broadcasting rights.

The IOC has also engaged in a practice of allowing their broadcasters editorial freedom for nation-pride emphasized broadcasts so to accommodate broadcast partners’ commercial interests, with broadcasters concluding that their audience has a preference for such broadcasts. This practice occurs despite it conflicting with the Olympic value of excellence, which advocates not “measuring oneself with others” (Olympic Museum, 2013, p. 3). If nation-pride is overly emphasized, broadcasts can also be in conflict with the Olympic value of friendship and the Olympic spirit, which refer to solidarity, team spirit, and mutual understanding. The IOC, via OBS, provides a neutral feed to broadcast partners, but then allow broadcasters to “tailor their broadcast and commentary according to the taste of the audience”, with the only contractual requirement being that “broadcasts are done on the basis of their national interest, as well as making the Games seen more.” In line with the competitive nature of sport, with the freedom afforded to them by the IOC, broadcasters engage in a practice of ranking countries according to medals won and focusing on home nation athletes in their broadcasts. This practice can be justified when considering Hall’s (1973) ‘encoding/decoding’ model of communication, which proposed that the meaning garnered by the audience changes based on social and cultural context. This process is evident in research conducted within the context of the Olympic Games. Spa et al.’s (1995) study of the Barcelona 1992 Games found global producers ‘encoded’ culture, politics, and Olympism differently, and global audiences ‘decoded’ Olympic opening ceremonies differently.

The resulting nation-pride emphasized broadcasts have previously been discussed by Silk (2001), who observed that the New Zealand broadcast of the 1998 Kuala Lumpur
Commonwealth Games localized content by highlighting the successes and downplaying the failures of New Zealand athletes. Such broadcasts have also been found in research specific to the context of the Olympic Games. On a global level, nation pride emphasized broadcasts were found to have occurred during London 2012 by Tang (2013), which was also evident in this study. Other research has identified nation pride broadcasts in American Olympic broadcasts. Billings and Eastman (2002) found that half of all mentioned athletes in NBC’s broadcast of the Sydney 2000 Summer Games were American. In NBC’s Salt Lake 2002 broadcast, American athletes were characterized as more composed and courageous and their success attributed to experience (Billings & Eastman, 2003). Nationalistic broadcasts have also been evident in South Korean broadcasts (Lee & Maguire, 2011). Pujik (2000) identified a focus on a home nation’s most popular sports at the Lillehammer 1994 Winter Games, in conflict with “a ‘global’, shared meaning” (p. 327). Similarly, Angelini and Billings (2010) found NBC’s coverage of Beijing 2008 was ‘Americanized’ by focusing on five sports popular with the American audience.

Although the IOC requires “consistency in terms of how the story is being told”, there was still some suggestion at London 2012 that NBC was creating fake suspense in their editing of the women’s team gymnastics competition (Patten, 2012). Such fake suspense goes against “the unpredictable and inherently conflict-oriented nature of sports contests”, which provides “television with immediate, unscripted dramatic events” (Sullivan, 2006, p. 139). This practice confirms Gruneau et al.’s (1988) conclusion that meanings present in sports telecasts are not natural, but are mediated representations. Such inaccurate portrayals via sporting events have been previously identified at the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games (Silk, 2001).

The IOC has engaged in a practice of altering the competition schedule to accommodate the commercial interests of their most influential broadcasters (e.g., the swimming schedule at
Beijing 2008). This practice stands in conflict with equitable access to the Olympic Games. Such scheduling can have a negative impact on other markets, but maximizes the value of advertising slots and revenues generated in the most valuable markets. This finding confirms the account by Min (1987), who found that due to the financial dependence of the Seoul 1988 Organizing Committee on the revenues paid by NBC, they were able to influence the scheduling of marquee events to maximize the fees paid by advertisers.

To summarize, the practices and processes by which the IOC has strategically managed Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age have been impacted by the emergence of digital media platforms. The processes and practices by which the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth is achieved make great use of digital media platforms, as do the processes and practices by which the ‘expanding the Olympic window’ strategies are achieved. The literature confirmed the important role and positive impact of digital media platforms, despite some uncertainties and challenges. Digital media platforms partially support the processes and practices to achieve the strategies within the ‘transcending sport’ theme in terms of increasing the presence of the Olympic values on the IOC’s own digital media platforms. Finally, digital media platforms help alleviate a challenge within the ‘accommodating commercial partnerships’ theme whereby the practice of tape-delayed coverage on television for commercial gains at the expense of equitable access is less conflicted by making marquee events available live on digital media platforms, but still tape-delayed on television to maximize commercial value.

The enhancing role of digital media platforms on Olympic broadcasting outweighs the challenges created by digital media platforms. The theme of ‘access for all?’ included the strategies of reaching the widest possible audience and providing equitable access to the Olympic Games. Digital media platforms are a new way by which the Olympic audience can
access the Olympic Games, and thus a new responsibility for the IOC, which is seen as a challenge given that the IOC are only able to develop digital markets (i.e., consumption), rather than remove the ‘digital divide’ (i.e., access).

Although the preceding summary established that digital media platforms are playing an increasingly important role in the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships, there remain several processes and practices unaltered by the emergence of digital media platforms. Although delivery of the Olympic broadcast has changed, the nature of the broadcast with personal interest stories remains the same, as do the IOC’s attempts to influence broadcast partners to promote and uphold the Olympic values for the duration of their rights. The IOC’s practice of long-term and exclusive agreements with broadcast partnerships is unaltered, with the literature identifying the negative impact of such agreements on consumers. The IOC’s practice of allowing editorial freedom for nation-pride emphasized broadcasts continues, with the literature confirming this as an established practice and justifying this approach on the basis of cultural differences. The practice of altering the Olympic competition schedule for influential broadcast partners is uninfluenced by digital media platforms and was established as far back as Seoul 1988 in the literature.

**Research Question Three**

*Why does the IOC manage these processes and practices in this way?*

This third research question established ‘why is it being done?’ This discussion is couched in the rationale and drivers behind a strategy or approach. There were two distinct conceptualizations of Olympism established in Chapter 1: (a) Olympism as a philosophy of social reform; and (b) Olympism as a commercial brand. In answering research question three, these competing conceptualizations have become evident as the rationale or driver for the
strategies, processes, and practices by which the IOC strategically manage Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age.

**Olympism as a Philosophy of Social Reform**

The IOC’s strategy to re-engage the world’s youth can be interpreted from the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. Specifically, former IOC President Jacques Rogges cited the social problem of physical inactivity and argued the IOC were attempting to tackle this social problem through the “capacity of the Games to ignite a dream in youth” (IOC, 2009, p. 17). Athletes are presented as “examples to follow in sport and in life”, who have “inspired generation after generation”, according to IOC member Frankie Fredericks (IOC, 2009, p. 24). If the Olympic Games are able to inspire physical activity, this can lead to benefits to society beyond well-established health benefits (Bailey et al., 2013). Bailey et al.’s (2013) findings that physical activity is related to multiple demands of lifelong functioning and development (physical growth, biological maturation, behavioral development, psychological and social well-being, cognitive and academic performance, and future career attainment) support the IOC’s claims of social (physically active) reform. However, there is limited evidence for the inspirational and trickle-down effects of mega sport events (Hindson et al., 1994; Veal, 2003).

There is also limited evidence of increased participation following the hosting of an Olympic Games, with any increases being short-term or across only a limited number of sports (Cashman, 2003; Coalter, 2007b; Murphy & Bauman, 2007; Veal, 2003). Such lack of evidence undermines the IOC’s claims that their strategies, practices, and processes are actually serving society. This lack of evidence can be understood from Coalter’s (2007a) analysis of the power of sport to achieve social change. According to Coalter (2007a), in order for sport to achieve social
change, there must be clear conditions for success that entail the processes that cause the outcomes, recognizing that sport alone is not a sufficient condition to obtain benefits. As such, so to achieve change, the presence of the Olympic Games alone may not be sufficient and a process with more deliberate action, beyond providing role models, may be required.

This idea of the Olympic Games having an inspirational effect has been extended as a rationale for the IOC’s strategy of reaching the widest possible audience: “The IOC’s priority is to ensure that as many people as possible get to experience the magic of the Olympic Games and the inspirational sporting achievements of the Olympic athletes” (IOC, 2008b, para. 6). The social rationale for this strategy is supported when recognizing the high social and cultural value of publicly funded broadcasting (Johnson, 2013). Previous research (Rowe, 1996; New & Le Grand, 1999; Hoehn & Lancefield, 2003; Scherer & Wilson, 2009; Evens & Lefever, 2011) has identified that if sporting rights are associated with ‘cultural citizenship’ they are a matter of national interest and should be protected by government intervention. This study partly established that the IOC are intervening themselves by sacrificing higher revenues from subscription broadcasters and keeping the Games accessible to the widest possible audience. Similarly, the strategy of equitable access is presented as the IOC’s “responsibility” with emerging markets having “the right to share the rich experiences of sport and the Olympic Movement” (IOC, 2009, p. 202) that are enhanced by digital media platforms. The observation that the IOC has sacrificed future revenues by rejecting immediate revenues from higher bidders adds credibility to this position. Similarly, there is no evidence of a direct revenue source from the IOC’s YouTube Channel. That the IOC is forgoing the revenue generation capability of digital media platforms (Cameron, 1997; Holt, 2004) brings further credibility to the claims of pursuing a social agenda.
The claims of the inspirational capabilities of the Olympic Games can also be extended to the strategies within the ‘expanding the Olympic window’ theme. Although evidence of this rationale is limited, it can be inferred from previous claims that any enhancement to Olympic broadcasting can be interpreted as an enhancement of Olympic broadcasting’s inspirational capabilities. Notably, digital media platforms capability to expand the coverage of the Olympic Games and to provide a deeper interactive experience of the Olympic Games opens up more opportunities to be inspired and a stronger connection with the IOC and its mission of upholding Olympism. Such enhancement of the Olympic Games broadcast can be interpreted as an enhancement of Olympism when accepting Girginov’s (2010) assertion that the Olympic Games are the highest practical manifestation of Olympism.

As a rationale for the strategies within the ‘transcending sport’ theme, the IOC has identified the Olympic values as a priority. Although the Olympic values can be a priority in terms of differentiating the Olympic Games for commercial gain, when viewed from the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, the Olympic values are prioritized as a means to achieve social reform. This is evident in the official narrative of the IOC, which states that serving society remains their “raison d’être”. In support of this rationale, Girginov (2010) defined Olympism as “a philosophy of social reform that uses sport for the betterment of the world” and as “a philosophical anthropology advocating an idealized vision of human being and a just society” (p. 1). The case for this narrative can be established from reviewing the emergence of commercialism and the lack of alternative funding sources, whereby the IOC had little option other than to engage in commercial activities as the costs of the Olympic Games escalated. Despite being critics of the IOC’s commercial engagement, Maguire et al., (2008) recognized that “the IOC, whilst claiming to promote the ideals of Olympism, has
accommodated commercial pressures to ensure the success of the games” (p.65). The findings of this study confirmed the IOC’s response to commercial pressures to ensure the sustainability of the Olympic Games. This included the securing of broadcast revenues, which “now constitutes the major source of financial support for professional sports” (Euchner, 1993, p. 29).

In addition to engaging in commercialism for the sustainability of the Olympic Games, the findings in this study indicated that pursuing a commercial agenda was not necessarily at the expense of a social agenda, but “a dynamic balance where the identity of the Olympics, as the embodiment of a special set of values, engages in a delicate dance with commercial entities” (Payne, 2006, p. 17). Furthermore, findings indicated that commercial activities could be “separate from the main philosophical elements of the Olympic movement” (Pound, 2004, p. 15). Such a separation of agendas has previously been found in research of the BBC, where Johnson (2013) identified that the BBC’s commercial activities and public service broadcasting were not inherently contradictory and such work can be conducted and achieved separately.

This result stands in contrast to Maguire et al. (2008) who appear to suggest that agendas can only be pursued on an exclusive basis. They stated the IOC’s actions are “to enhance the brand rather than promote the values of Olympism per se” (p. 65) and “to ensure that the IOC and TOP sponsors could more effectively compete as global brands and not to promote humanitarian values per se” (p. 66). Maguire et al. (2008) identified that their research was conducted from a realist-critical perspective. However, their criticism of the IOC’s engagement of commercialism can be challenged by Pound’s (2004) examination of alternatives, ruling out governments and athletes as sources of revenue to fund the Games, and reaching an arguably more realistic conclusion that commercial partners are the only viable revenue source to fund the Olympic Games. Maguire et al. (2008) referred to “the realities of the modern Olympics in
practice” (p. 74), but failed to consider alternatives to commercial engagement, limiting the reality and practicality of their perspective.

The rationale for the IOC’s strategies within the ‘accommodating commercial partnerships’ can also be interpreted from a realistic perspective that does not necessarily exclude the IOC’s social agenda at the expense of their commercial agenda. It is important to the IOC that broadcast partners achieve their commercial interests because failure to do so “is not good for Olympic business”. As identified by Cameron (1997), there is a three-party relationship in sports broadcasting (e.g., the IOC, Olympic fans, and Olympic broadcasters). Therefore, agendas other than the IOC’s must be considered when adopting the fixed up-front fees model (Foster et al., 2006). Tape-delayed coverage is appealing to advertisers and nation pride emphasized broadcasts are appealing to the Olympic audience. Although meeting these needs is contradictory to the IOC’s values, they serve to maximize the commercial value of the Games, which, in turn, can provide revenues for the IOC to pursue their social agenda. The IOC take broadcasting revenues and “act as redistributors of funds, making it possible to channel much-needed financial support to the developing countries that had little, if any, access to hard currency.” However, this represents development of sport rather than development through sport, with only the latter defined as a social movement (Kidd, 2008). That said, Kidd (2008) included the IOC’s Olympic Solidarity program that assisted development of sport in developing countries as an example of a sports for development program. This signifies an overlap between development of sport and development through sport, whereby development of sport initiatives that are located within developing countries may also serve as a catalyst for wider development. Furthermore, the rechanneling of television revenues into the World Anti Doping Association (WADA) and the fight against doping directly supports the Olympic values. That said, the
rationale for the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices in managing Olympic broadcasting partnerships can more clearly be interpreted from the perspective of Olympism as a commercial brand.

**Olympism as a Commercial Brand**

The strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth, as well as being interpreted from the perspective of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform, can also be interpreted from the perspective of Olympism as a commercial brand. Re-engaging the world’s youth serves the IOC and its broadcast partners by expanding their customer base (i.e., the “audience of the future”), which was described by both the IOC and broadcast partners. This represents a clear link between the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth and commercial success in that if the IOC “do not appeal to the younger audience, they will lose that audience. Broadcasters will reduce their fees and the Movement will be at risk” (IOC, 2009, p. 190).

Just as the strategy of re-engaging the world’s youth has clear commercial ramifications, so does the strategy of reaching the widest possible audience, with global appeal making “the Games a uniquely attractive proposition to advertisers” (Payne, 2006, p. 29). A larger audience will provide larger revenues, and even where the IOC have sacrificed some revenues for exposure, this can be interpreted as a commercially savvy long-term strategy to achieve greater revenues in the future as markets become more established. Gaustad (2000) confirmed such a strategy, advocating to always sell rights as long as the contract price exceeds the distribution costs of the transaction. Similarly, Mondello (2006) advocated generating interest, even if sometimes this meant leaving money on the table (i.e., opportunity costs).

Although the strategy of providing equitable access is grounded in the Olympic values, the practice by which it is achieved can also be interpreted as a commercially savvy in the long
term. Rather than addressing the ‘digital divide’ by improving access to technology in emerging markets, the IOC are providing content where technology already exists, but where the markets are not sufficiently developed to allow them to sell their digital rights. As such, the IOC is seeking to tackle underdeveloped markets rather than the ‘digital divide’. This seemingly covert intention confirms the assertion of Maguire et al. (2008) that, although the IOC may promote their work as a selfless act (i.e., the reinforcing of the Olympic values via ‘Celebrate Humanity’), upon further inspection (i.e., that the Marketing department conceived the campaign), their work is for commercial gain (i.e., commercially leveraging the Olympic values). Maguire et al.’s (2008) conclusion that the IOC “is concerned less with the values underpinning Olympism per se […] and more with how such values can help build markets” (pp. 74-75) is confirmed by this finding. This finding also confirmed Couvelaire and Richelieu’s (2005) finding that strategic brand management is profitable for sport organizations. The rationale for the ‘expanding the Olympic window’ strategies can be largely understood as pursuing a commercial agenda. Increased coverage across multiple platforms inevitably creates increased broadcast rights and potentially revenues for the IOC. Although revenue was described as the “cherry on the cake” in terms of digital media platforms’ contribution to strategic objectives and competitive advantage, it is very difficult to separate revenues from a competitive advantage.

The IOC’s strategies that contribute to the Olympic Games ‘transcending sport’ can be readily interpreted as seeking to promote Olympism as a commercial brand. The unique aspects, notably the Olympic Games attachment to the Olympic values, make the Olympic Games a unique broadcasting resource (i.e., distinctive from other sports broadcasting resources). The Olympic values, according to the IOC were “what we were selling, what the sponsors and broadcasters wanted, and what the public demanded.” They contribute to the Olympic
broadcasting “brand”, which is determined by the content in the Olympic broadcasts. The leveraging of the Olympic values for commercial gain in sponsorships, as evident in the Celebrate Humanity campaign, can be as readily extended to broadcasting. This finding is the clearest evidence of Olympism being interpreted as a commercial brand. Whereas the previous findings demonstrate commercial awareness, this finding demonstrates that Olympism is being leveraged as a brand and the Olympic values as brand associations. This is in line with Aaker’s (1991) conceptualization of brand equity that recognized the role of brand associations in providing value to a brand. This also confirmed DaCosta’s (2006) claim that Olympism has been adapted to preserve “the modern Olympic Games and their claims of universality” (pp. 169-170). Furthermore, it confirmed Maguire et al.’s (2008) analysis of “Olympism as a brand sold to sponsors and the wider public” (p. 65). The strategies of the IOC were found to be an exercise in enhancing brand equity, just as Maguire et al. (2008) found in analyzing the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign. This finding also confirmed Barney et al.’s (2004) contention that the Olympic Movement capitalized on 100 years of history and tradition to generate revenues. The IOC is attempting to position Olympism as a brand to capitalize on the emotional bond they have with Olympic fans, a process previously established by Couvelaire and Richelieu (2005).

The strategy of developing a spirit of partnership can be understood from the perspective of Olympism as a commercial brand. Long-term partnerships deliver more experienced partners and an established destination for Olympic fans, which may enhance the commercial value of the Olympic Games as a broadcasting resource. The practices by which the IOC accommodates broadcast partners’ commercial interests are in conflict with equitable access and the Olympic values of excellence and friendship and the Olympic spirit. This confirmed the Girginov’s (2010) observation of “tensions existing between the ideal and its practical realization” (p. 2). Such
tension was previously established by Roche (2010), who questioned the Olympic Movement’s claims of global citizenship, citing problems in operationalizing its interests in universal citizenship in spite of its universalistic ideology. The rationale for the strategy of accommodating broadcast partners’ commercial interests provide further evidence of the IOC not effectively operationalizing what they promote as their key broadcasting principles and values.

Despite this obvious tension, the IOC do not appear to judge the quality of the Olympic broadcasts against the Olympic values, but instead against ratings concluding that “events are being told in the best possible way […] because everybody has achieved the best possible ratings.” Such a quantity over quality interpretation of what makes a desirable Olympic broadcast confirmed Girginov’s (2010) assertion that “there will always be competing interpretations of what constitutes the Olympic ideal and how it is to be achieved” (p. 2) and also a lack of accountability, as Roche (2010) had previously criticized the Olympic Movement for. These accommodations are being made by the IOC’s Television and Marketing Services department, which is in line with Berry’s (2000) conceptualization of brand equity, where service performance is of paramount importance.

To summarize, it is not possible to isolate the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices as being in pursuit of exclusively a social or commercial agenda. Narratives and practices of the IOC and its broadcast partners can be analyzed to identify intentions of supporting both agendas. As such, the two competing interpretations of Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and Olympism as a commercial brand remain intact, which supports the proposed conceptualization of Olympism as commercially leveraged and viable philosophy of social reform offered in Chapter 1. This conceptualization is located in the middle ground of the two competing
interpretations of Olympism. However, to avoid such a middle ground position being construed as ‘sitting on the fence’ (i.e., not committing to a position), it is necessary to delve deeper.

It is difficult to accurately conclude what the true rationale for the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices in their management of Olympic broadcasting are, especially when considering the abstract nature of intentions and rationales. While narrative analyses offer insight into rationales and intentions, it is only possible to question what the IOC promotes as their rationale. For example, Maguire et al. (2008) inferred from the fact that the ‘Celebrate Humanity’ campaign originated in the IOC’s marketing department that their intention was to leverage the Olympic values for commercial gain. To move beyond inferences, the rationales can be viewed through the lens of the literature in Chapter 3. This allows analysis of the different inferences of rationale in terms of credibility.

Although the literature has established that significant social benefits can be achieved from a physically active Olympic audience, claims that the Olympic Games can inspire lack evidence. Therefore, credibility for the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices as being in pursuit of a social agenda are reliant upon the Games association with ‘cultural citizenship’, whereby the IOC are providing a right of access, even if there is no evidence of this access providing social benefits. In contrast, analyzing the commercial rationales through the lens of the literature in Chapter 3 does add credibility. Previous analysis of the IOC’s strategies has established that, even when presented as being in pursuit of a social agenda, the IOC are focused on their commercial agenda. Through the lens of the brand equity literature, the IOC’s promotion of the Olympic values can be interpreted as the leveraging of brand associations with a view to enhancing the brand equity of the Olympic Games, thereby confirming interpretations within the literature of Olympism as a brand.
Although the commercial rationale appears more credible than the social rationale when analyzing the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices through the literature, the existing literature establishes that the IOC’s engagement in commercial practices was a necessity and that commercial and social agendas can be pursued and achieved separately. An example of this in the literature is the labeling of the Olympic Solidarity program as a sport for development program, whereby the IOC are using broadcasting revenues for a social agenda.

The additional reflections of what was not evident in the findings (e.g., the lack of evidence of tension between social and commercial agendas) and the consistency between the data sources (e.g., the key IOC broadcasting executive’s account aligning with the official narrative found in the IOC documents) indicated the IOC was not willing to engage in a level of discussion that strayed from their official line (e.g., commercial partnerships that support Olympism as a philosophy of social reform). This lack of willingness manifested in the control that the IOC exerted over external messages regarding their commercial activities. This was evident in an example provided in the introduction whereby former IOC President Jacques Rogges had indicated a potential tension between the IOC and corporate partners (“For those companies, we’ve said to them, ‘Listen, there is an issue in terms of the growing trend on obesity — what are you going to do about that?’”), before backtracking to remove any suggestion of tension between the IOC and corporate partners (“I would like to clarify comments attributed to me in several media reports regarding Coca-Cola’s and McDonald’s Olympic sponsorship. […] Through the years we have personally witnessed the positive impact that they make as TOP sponsors”). Such backtracking demonstrated message management regarding the IOC’s relationships with commercial partners.
The IOC’s control over messages regarding their commercial partnerships indicated how the IOC like to project the image of the Olympic Movement as a monolithic organization, whereby there is no tension with its partners. This is an accurate representation of the relationship with the BBC, whereby shared values were evident in this study. However, the BBC’s criticism of NBC (that NBC are excessive in their nation-pride emphasized broadcasts) suggested the BBC do not view NBC as being on board with the collective imaginings of the IOC. Regardless, the IOC were not willing to engage in a level of discussion that indicated any tension.

The key IOC broadcasting executive’s close alignment to the official narrative found in IOC documents indicated a process of organizational inculcation, whereby the IOC are able to influence their stakeholders to accept an idea (e.g., Olympism as a philosophy of social reform). That the key IOC broadcasting executive’s defense of nation-pride emphasized broadcasts was based upon flawed logic (i.e., viewing figures are an indicator of broadcast quality where a broadcaster has exclusivity for a territory) demonstrates that executives may also be willing to go beyond an idea they have accepted to represent a position (i.e., Olympism as a philosophy of social reform) even in the face of evidence that contrasts this position.

Whereas the strategies by which the IOC manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age are at a business level, so to gain a competitive edge (Porter, 1980), the IOC’s control of messages regarding its commercial partnerships appears to be a corporate-level strategy followed by the organization as a whole (Slack & Parent, 2006). Such a corporate level of strategy may be necessary because the IOC operates across several industries (e.g., sponsorship, broadcasting, and sport development). So to protect their interests across all of these
industries it would seem that the IOC view it necessary to engage in such a defensive strategy (Hodge & Anthony, 1991).

**Study Limitations**

**Limitations in Sampling**

A major challenge faced in this study was that the population of IOC executives (i.e., with the seniority that carries responsibilities for the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting) was small and largely inaccessible. This resulted in limited sampling of participants from the IOC and broadcast partners. Access was gained to only one current IOC executive and one current BBC executive. A third interviewee in the form of a former IOC executive offered an additional perspective from the IOC. However, this participant left the IOC following the Athens 2004 Summer Games, so his internal perspective on IOC strategies, practices, and processes is dated. Additional participants were sought using a snowball sampling technique (Atkinson & Flint, 2001), but it was not possible to identify further accessible senior executives with responsibility for the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting.

Although a wealth of data were collected from the limited number of individuals, it is difficult to generalize the findings beyond the IOC and the BBC. From the broadcasters’ perspective, only a single source was utilized (i.e., two in-depth interviews with the BBC’s Head of Major Events). This is problematic for the study because the BBC’s approach to broadcasting the Olympic Games is very different to other broadcasters, such as the United States’ NBC, as identified by the key IOC broadcasting executive. Although the strategies, practices, and processes of NBC were included in the findings of this study, these were captured from either secondary sources (e.g., newspaper articles) or indirect sources (e.g., the BBC comparing their home-nation emphasis to that of NBC). The researcher had hoped to interview NBC executives.
However, despite several e-mails and phone calls, no access to NBC executives was secured. Therefore, despite being a very important stakeholder in the study and the subject of much discussion, NBC executives had no primary voice in this study, leaving access to the role of NBC via secondary data only. Despite only having three participants in the study, interviews were extensive and in-depth yielding 20 hours of data. When combined with the secondary data of three key IOC documents related to the topic and two books by former senior IOC executives with responsibility for the strategic management of Olympic broadcasting and observations, it was concluded that the objective of establishing an information rich and illuminative case (Patton, 2002) had been achieved. The reaching of data saturation confirmed this.

**Limitations in Data Collection**

Due to the intense media scrutiny of the IOC, the organization remains guarded. Although rare access to the IOC was secured through the Olympic Studies Center on the basis of PhD research, the openness of the IOC remained an issue during data collection. For example, despite efforts to neutralize questions on sensitive subjects (e.g., To what extend does the IOC seek to accommodate or neutralize broadcasters’ attempt to emphasize nation-pride within their telecasts to home nations?), the official narrative of the IOC dominated discussions. Additionally, despite referring to obvious tensions between the IOC’s social agenda and broadcast partner’s commercial agenda, the current IOC executive would not be drawn on any issues of conflict, leaving such issues to be inferred on the basis of practices or accounts of other study participants.
Study Implications

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study yielded several interesting tensions: (a) Commercial vs. social agendas; (b) promoting vs. upholding the Olympic values; and (c) development of vs. through sport. Analysis of these tensions has established that they are not necessarily conflicting and that there is the potential for the IOC to strike a balance in their strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age.

Striking a practical balance. This study established that due to the Olympic values, the Olympic Games has been ‘put on a pedestal’, which demands greater responsibilities from the IOC to uphold the Olympic values and provide equitable access to the Olympic Games. The idea that the IOC has greater responsibility than other sport organizations, such as FIFA, cannot be denied. That said, to ensure the responsibilities of the IOC are practical requires an understanding of all the IOC’s responsibilities beyond those attached to Olympism as a philosophy of social reform. A responsibility of the IOC is “to ensure the regular celebration of the Olympic Games” (IOC, 2013, p. 16). Putting the social responsibilities of the IOC to one side for a moment, the IOC’s staging of the Olympic Games, as of the most recent Summer Games, is enjoyed by 3.6 billion people globally (IOC, 2012). Had the IOC remained pure in terms of rejecting commercialism, the Olympic Games would have ceased to exist following the Moscow 1980 Games. In considering that such a large audience enjoys the Olympic Games, when it could have ended over thirty years ago, speaks well to the idea of embraced commercialism, especially when considering the lack of alternatives (Pound, 2004). There is little doubt that the revenues the IOC gains from broadcasting are necessary for the sustainability of the Olympic Games.
Previous evaluations (see, Maguire et al., 2008) of the IOC’s strategies have ignored the practicalities of staging the Olympic Games, suggesting that the IOC’s pursuit of its commercial agenda is at the expense of its social agenda. This study advocates that the practicalities of the sustainable staging of the Olympic Games should not be ignored. The IOC should establish clear and accountable objectives that account for both their commercial and social agendas. The strategies, processes, and practices that achieve such objectives should, in turn, strike a balance between being commercially savvy and fitting with the Olympic values.

The cost of upholding the Olympic values. The findings identified several strategies (e.g., re-engaging the World’s youth, reaching the widest possible audience, enhancing the Olympic broadcasting window) that support the mutual interests of the IOC and broadcast partners. Such strategies are effective because they have the potential to achieve the above recommendation of striking a balance between achieving both commercial and social agendas. However, findings identified that the IOC also engaged in some processes and practices that are in direct conflict with the Olympic values, but which maximized the commercial value of the Olympic Games: (a) Changing the Olympic program to suit influential broadcasters at the expense of other markets; (b) allowing tape-delayed broadcasts of marquee events at the expense of Olympic fans; and (c) allowing nation-pride emphasized broadcasts at the expense of the Olympic values maximize commercial value for the IOC. The balancing act for the IOC is to minimize conflict with the Olympic values while maximizing commercial revenue. To achieve this balance requires understanding of the cost to commercial value of the Olympic Games (i.e., rights fees) if the IOC was to enforce strict adherence to the Olympic values and equitable access.
To establish this cost, the IOC could potentially have contracts with conditions that require stricter adherence to their key broadcasting principles and the Olympic values. Agreements with broadcast partners could establish conditions of: (a) An Olympic competition schedule with primary consideration to host market, followed by equal consideration to all other markets; (b) that all marquee events be broadcast live on television; (c) that overly nationalistic broadcasts are not permitted, although increased interest in home nation athletes are permitted; and (d) that creation of fake suspense in the editing of events is not permitted. The IOC should go into negotiations with two potential agreements: (a) The current agreement; and (b) the current agreement with the proposed additions, from which they could negotiate two prices based upon these two options. This would accurately establish the cost of an Olympic broadcast that better upholds (rather than only promotes) the Olympic values. If the value of an agreement with strict adherence to upholding the Olympic values is half that of the current agreement without such condition, then the IOC may be right to make the allowances that they do. However, if the strict adherence results in a marginal cut to broadcast revenues, it then becomes difficult to justify the allowances that the IOC is making. It should also be considered that there are more broadcasting models than the fixed up-front fees model currently adopted (Foster et al., 2006). If broadcasters show resistance to the strict adherence of the Olympic values, the IOC, much like the NFL has done for some of their matches, could become their own media company, communicating directly with Olympic fans (Rein et al., 2007).

In addition to considering the monetary reaction of broadcast partners to agreements that better reflect the Olympic values, IOC commissioned research could also consider the response of Olympic fans to broadcasts reflecting the four conditions proposed above. As this study established, the IOC already engages in research that establishes the Olympic fans evaluation of
Olympic broadcasts. The IOC could expand this research to determine the Olympic audiences’ evaluation of a broadcast reflecting the proposed conditions. For example, such a study could establish preferences of Olympic viewers in terms of home-nation emphasis. Would viewers disengage with a more neutral broadcast? If not, then this should also be enforced, so to better reflect the Olympic values.

**A practice of social reform.** Research question three addressed the rationale and intentions behind strategies, processes, and practices. This study established that the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices could be interpreted from different perspectives. Within this study, the official narrative of the IOC was that strategies, processes, and practices were in pursuit of a social agenda (e.g., re-engaging the World’s youth so to inspire them via role models), but could also be interpreted as being in pursuit of a commercial agenda (e.g., protecting the future revenues of the future audience). However, what is more important than the rationale and intention of strategies, processes, and practices are the results of the strategies, processes, and practices.

**Maximizing the inspirational effects.** Although the literature in Chapter 3 failed to provide evidence for the inspirational capability of the Olympic Games, this does not mean the Olympic Games cannot have an inspirational effect. To have the social impact that the IOC desire, the Olympic Games must in itself become a development *through* sport initiative. According to Coalter (2007a), for a development through sport initiative to achieve its desired developmental goals, there must be clear conditions for success (i.e., processes that cause the outcomes, recognizing that sport alone is not a sufficient condition to obtain the supposed benefits). The process that might cause success is clear communication of the Olympic values and how the Olympic audience can engage in these values so to achieve “a balanced whole the
qualities of body, will and mind” (IOC, 2013b, p. 11). However, when questioned as to how the IOC extend the presence of the Olympic values, the response from the key IOC broadcasting executive assumed that any presence of the Olympic Games represented presence of the Olympic values. This is similar to a common problematic assumption in development through sport that sport alone is a sufficient condition to obtain the supposed benefits (Coalter, 2007a). Although the Olympic values manifest in the production style of storytelling, this does not constitute the deliberate action necessary to achieve the desired social benefits.

Re-distribute to development through sport. Although such a process might enhance the inspirational capabilities of the Olympic Games, this process remains un-tested as to whether the desired effects would occur. Therefore, to remove the over-reliance on the potential inspirational effects of the Olympic Games, the IOC should invest some of the broadcasting revenues into official Olympic development through sport programs. This study established that the IOC’s engagement in commercialism might be justified on the basis that it re-invests revenues back into sport, serving as a “re-distributor of funds”. However, at present, the IOC re-invests their broadcasting revenues into only the development of sport. Given that the Olympic values that the IOC and broadcast partners leverage to maximize broadcasting revenues are developmental ideals, it is fitting that the IOC invest in development through sport as well as development of sport. Many sports organizations have their own foundations (e.g., NBA Cares) that undertake charitable and developmental initiatives. At present, based upon a review of the IOC’s ‘Olympism in Action’ website (IOC, n.d.c), there is limited evidence of the IOC directly engaging in action that achieves social reform. Rather, the news stories populating this website are details of the work of others (e.g., the Magic Bus charity), endorsing initiatives (e.g., Olympic Movement endorses World Refugee Day), or visits by the IOC President (e.g.,
President Back visits Kip Keino High School in Kenya). In a story titled “IOC brings hope to Haiti with opening of new sport centre”, the IOC is presented as one of the two key stakeholders in a development project, stating: “The Centre, built at a cost of USD 18 million, was a joint initiative between the IOC and its key stakeholders and the Haitian Government” (IOC, 2014b, para. 3). However, on closer inspection it becomes apparent that IOC President Thomas Bach has only ceremonially opened the sports center. The use of the word “opening” in the title of this story is (arguably deliberately) misleading. Beyond ceremonially opening the center, it is unclear as to what the role of the IOC was in this initiative, with funding identified as coming from the Inter-American Development Bank (IOC, 2014b). Also, in listing their responsibilities on their website, the IOC define their role as “encouraging” development, rather than implementing it (e.g., “To encourage and support the promotion of ethics in sport as well as education of youth through sport and to dedicate its efforts to ensuring that, in sport, the spirit of fair play prevails and violence is banned” (IOC, 2013b, p. 16)). This is reflective of Olympism being a philosophy (i.e., an idea or theory) of social reform, rather than a practice of social reform. By re-distributing broadcasting revenues into their own foundation who funds, manages, and delivers development through sport programs designed to achieve outcomes in line with the Olympic values, the IOC could re-establish Olympism as a practice (i.e., action) of social reform, moving beyond a philosophy of social reform.

Implementing these recommendations would bring greater credibility to the work of the IOC and their professed prioritization of upholding the Olympic values. This is necessary because sport fans are becoming increasingly cynical about the charitable work of sports organizations, requiring evidence of the desired benefits to society (Walker, Heere, & Kim, 2013). The IOC’s ‘Olympism in Action’ website currently promotes an image of the IOC being
engaged in social reform, but this on the back of the work of others, and does not provide evidence of the IOC delivering benefits to society. Greater engagement and credibility would increase the commercial value of the Olympic Games (for both broadcasting and sponsorship) to make up for the investment in development through sport or the cost of an Olympic broadcast with stricter adherence to the Olympic values. Increasingly cynical consumers would stop looking at Olympism as a commercial brand and trust it as a practice of social reform. This would result in a stronger broadcasting product that is genuinely different from other broadcasting products and so would have greater value to viewers, advertisers, and broadcasters.

**Implications for Research**

Within the implications for practice it was recommended that the IOC undertake research to establish the response of Olympic fans to a broadcast that more strictly adheres to the Olympic values. Such practical research could also be undertaken as academic research. Taking a quantitative approach, a quasi-experimental research design could present differing degrees of nation-pride emphasis and gage the preference of audiences in different markets and also measure consumer intentions (recognizing the limitations of such data in relation to actual behaviors). This study could be framed within Hall’s (1973) encoding and decoding model, whereby the independent variable being manipulated would be the differently encoded levels of nation-pride emphasized broadcast and the dependent variable being measured would be the decoding of these broadcasts and the resultant satisfaction and engagement.

Although not explicitly included in the research questions, this study revealed some interesting organizational politics within Olympic broadcasting, including where interests were shared or in conflict, and where power was such that broadcasters could influence the IOC or vice versa. A future study could delve into these initial findings in more detail, specifically
looking to establish the relationships between the IOC’s and broadcast partners objectives and
the power relationships between the IOC and broadcast partners. This study could be conducted
through an organizational behavior lens (Whyte, 1969) looking at the IOC and broadcast partners
from more of a micro-level of analysis than the current study to uncover individual and group
dynamics. Such a study would require a qualitative approach, but rather than rely upon
interviews again, an ethnographic study would likely yield the most informative data.

The comparison between development of sport and development through sport was
interesting and could also be researched in more depth. Research could look into exactly how the
IOC spends its revenues in relation to its various agendas, in particular looking at the ‘Olympism
in Action’ stories in more detail to determine exactly what the role and actions of the IOC are, so
to establish to what extent the IOC go beyond a philosophy of social reform and the encouraging
and promoting of the Olympic values to a practice of social reform and the upholding of the
Olympic values. As such, this research could again be conducted within the brand equity and
development through sport theoretical frameworks. In looking at the practices of the IOC, this
proposed study would adopt a qualitative approach, but could be conducted based upon analysis
of primarily secondary data, conducting content analysis on the press releases on the IOC’s
‘Olympism in Action’ section on their website, and press releases on other stakeholders’
websites, so to determine exactly what the role of the IOC was in their professed Olympism
actions. Follow up interviews could be conducted where needed and where possible.

Chapter 2 of this study traced evolution of digital media platforms within the Olympic
Games, focusing on trends in the uptake of digital media platforms by broadcasters (e.g., hours
of coverage on digital media platforms) and the consumption of digital media platforms by the
Olympic audience (e.g., unique visitors to official Olympic websites). Although consideration
was given to the broadcasters’ use of technology, this chapter did not explore in depth the technological evolution of digital media platforms. A key finding from this study was the increased voice of the athlete and the fan in the Olympic experience as control of Olympic content became mutual between stakeholders (Crosbie, 2006). Hutchins and Rowe (2009) identified the issue of control of content as a challenge for the IOC, but the perspective of the executives and IOC members in this study was that the enhancing of community outweighed the risks of giving up control. Future research could address this issue within a brand community theoretical framework from two perspectives. First, a study could qualitatively trace the increasing voice of the athlete and the fan to determine how technology has allowed for an increase in voice and how the IOC and broadcast partners are strategically managing this evolution. Second, a study could quantitatively measure changes in the relationship between the IOC, athletes, and fans in terms of identification, adapting the multi-dimensional team identity scale (Heere & James, 2007).

The Olympic Games was established as an ideal context for researching sports broadcasting by Spa et al. (1995). Nearly twenty years later, this continues to be the case. However, limited research has looked at Olympic broadcasting and there remain several opportunities for important research in Olympic broadcasting and associated areas of Olympic management. This study had an exploratory nature and identified several interesting findings warranting further research, as described above. Different topics can best be explored within different theoretical frameworks. The proposed studies consider perspectives from the IOC, broadcast partners, and fans. This study demonstrated the effectiveness of taking a qualitative approach based upon constructivist assumptions to study Olympic broadcasting from the
perspective of organizations, but proposes a quantitative approach based upon post-positivist assumptions to study the perspective of the Olympic audience.

The access that was secured to the IOC was through the official channel of the Olympic Studies Center. As a result, the IOC was able to act as a gatekeeper to IOC executives. The data from the IOC executive who access was provided to was very much reflective of the official narrative of the IOC. Future research could seek to establish a counter point to the official narrative by taking an unofficial line of enquiry to access IOC executives who might be more open to discussing the IOC’s strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in a manner which adheres less to the official narrative of the IOC and more to the reality of constraints and tensions. For example, the IOC executive was not willing to discuss any tensions between the IOC and broadcast partners, but other executives may be more willing to do so, which could result in some findings not established in this study.

Conclusion

The IOC operates according to several key strategies in its management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships, considering how to best reach and engage their audience, how to best deliver the Olympic Games broadcast, and how to best work in partnership with Olympic broadcasters. The most effective strategies are those that lie at the intersection of mutual interest for both the IOC and their broadcast partners. The processes and practices by which these strategies are achieved make extensive use of digital media platforms, such as increasing coverage through the multiple screens provided by digital media platforms. However, digital media platforms can create challenges for the IOC, such as requiring practices and processes to ensure equitable access of digital media platforms, which the IOC has not yet effectively
implemented. Other processes and practices, such as allowance of nation-pride emphasized broadcasts, remain unchanged following the emergence of digital media platforms.

The rationale behind the IOC’s strategies, processes, and practices, according to the official narrative of the IOC (which was closely adhered to by the IOC study participant), is to serve society, which relies primarily upon the inspirational effects of the Olympic Games. However, there is also clear evidence that the IOC’s strategies, processes and practices are commercially driven. As such, it is possible to conclude that the IOC are pursuing both a social and a commercial agenda in their strategic management of Olympic broadcasting partnerships in the digital age, managing Olympism as both a philosophy of social reform and as a commercial brand, which supports the study’s conceptualization of Olympism offered in Chapter 1. However, it is not clearly apparent which agenda they are prioritizing. When analyzing these competing agendas, the socially driven rationale loses credibility on the basis of limited evidence of the inspirational effects that the IOC overly relies upon. Alternatively, the IOC’s practices fit well into the brand equity frameworks, bringing credibility to the commercially driven rationale. However, the findings of this study also establish a need for the IOC to be commercially savvy to ensure the commercial viability and sustainability of the Games. As such, one agenda cannot be pursued to the detriment of the other. Indeed, there is a co-dependent cycle between the Olympic values, the Olympic Games, and commercialism. Pierre de Coubertin developed Olympism as a philosophy of social reform and the Olympic values. The Olympic Games was established as the practical manifestation of Olympism and the Olympic values. The continued financial viability and sustainability of the Olympic Games is dependent upon commercialism. Commercial success depends on the leveraging of the Olympic Games, and so the cycle continues.
To continue this cycle, it is recommended that the IOC should strike a practical balance between their commercial and social agendas, which they can do by establishing social and commercial objectives that are clear, accountable, and practical. If it is financially viable to do so, they should alter their agreements with broadcast partners to remove aspects of the Olympic broadcast that are in conflict with the Olympic values and equitable access. They should also alter the Olympic broadcast to more clearly communicate the Olympic values and how the Olympic audience can achieve these, so to maximize the inspirational capabilities of the Olympic Games. Societal benefits can be more directly achieved through re-distributing some of the broadcasting revenues into an IOC foundation that fund, manages, and delivers development through sport, rather than only funding development of sport. These recommendations facilitate a practical balance between social and commercial agendas, positive shifts from promoting to upholding the Olympic values, from development of sport to development through sport, and from Olympism as a commercially leveraged philosophy of social reform to Olympism as a commercially viable practice of social reform.
APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

The Florida State University
Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 6/23/2014

To: Stephen Hills

Address: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Dept.: SPORT MANAGEMENT

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research

Managing Digital Olympism: The International Olympic Committee's Strategic Management of Olympic Broadcasting Partnerships in the Digital Age

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 6/22/2015 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.
You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing, any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: James Sampson, Advisor  
HSC No. 2014.XXXXX
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

FSU Behavioral Consent Form

Managing Digital Olympism: The International Olympic Committee’s Strategic Management of Olympic Broadcasting Partnerships in the Digital Age

You are invited to be in a research study of Olympic broadcasting and digital media. You were selected as a possible participant because you served as XXXXXXXXXX. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Stephen Hills, PhD Candidate, Department of Sport Management, Florida State University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is: To understand how the IOC strategically manages Olympic broadcasting partnerships following the emergence of digital media platforms.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
Be available for interview(s) either in person or via phone (Skype)
Be aware that your interview will be audio recorded and fully transcribed

Risks:

The study has no known risks.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Only I will have access to the audio recordings and they will be erased on completion of the research project.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.
**Contacts and Questions:**

The researchers conducting this study are Stephen Hills (PhD student) and Dr James Sampson (Major Professor). You may ask any question you have now. If you have a question later, you are encouraged to contact Stephen Hills at XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXX XXXX XXXXXX, XXXX@XXXXXXX or Dr. James Sampson at XXXXXXXXXXXX, XXX XXXX XXXXXX, XXXX@XXXXXXX.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the FSU IRB at 2010 Levy Street, Research Building B, Suite 276, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2742, or 850-644-8633, or by email at humansubjects@fsu.edu

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have asked any questions I have, and if any asked, I have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

__________________________________________  __________________________
Signature                                          Date

__________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Investigator                    Date
REFERENCES


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Stephen James Hills is from Sheffield, the United Kingdom. He graduated from Aston Comprehensive School in 1997 before attending Sheffield Hallam University. He completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in 2000. He returned to Sheffield Hallam University for postgraduate study, where he represented the university football team the Sheffield Hallam Warriors, and was awarded a Master of Science degree in Sport Science in 2004. He has worked as the Director of Marketing for the World Golf Village and as a consultant to the PGA Tour, the World Golf Foundation, Fulham Football Club, Barclays Bank, and Magic Bus. He is currently employed as a Senior Lecturer of Sport Management in the London Guildhall Faculty of Business and Law at London Metropolitan University in London, the United Kingdom.