Governance of Post-Olympic Games Legacy Organizations: A Comparative Study

Abstract

This study examines the governance of post-Olympic Games legacy organizations. A cross-case comparative analysis was completed by focusing on post-Games legacy organizations from three Winter Olympics (Salt Lake City 2002, Vancouver 2010, and PyeongChang 2018). Drawing on a governance framework, this research investigates the politics (stakeholder relationships), polity (institutional structures), and policy (the policy content and instruments) dimensions of governance and explores modes of governance that facilitate collective action taken by these organizations. Data for this study included archival materials and semi-structured interviews with key representatives from the relevant organizations. Three different post-Games legacy organization governance modes (public-private, interactive, and self-governance) were identified, and a conceptual model of the governance of post-Games legacy organizations is proposed. The findings have theoretical and practical implications that expand our understanding of the governance of Olympic legacy.

Keywords: sport events, sport governance, mega events legacy, qualitative research

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# Introduction

Hosting the Olympics presents increasing challenges; thus, creating positive, sustainable legacies has become a key area of consideration (Scheu et al., 2019). The Olympic Movement presents the concept of legacy as a way to benefit from hosting (Leopkey & Parent, 2012). Since multiple stakeholders are involved in making decisions about Olympic legacy, planning and sustaining legacy can be considered a governance issue (Girginov, 2011), and scholars (e.g., Leopkey & Parent, 2015) have identified the importance of designing and implementing appropriate legacy governance structures and processes. Because the organizing committee is disbanded in the year following the Games, the lack of a leading organization in the post-Games phase tends to make legacy programs unsustainable (Chalip, 2014). Thus, previous hosts have established post-Games legacy organizations to fill that void. An examination of the governance of these organizations can help understand how legacy is sustained in the post-Games phase.

This research uses a multiple case-study design that focuses on post-Games legacy organizations from three Winter Olympics (Salt Lake City 2002, Vancouver 2010, PyeongChang 2018) by exploring each organization across three dimensions of governance: politics, polity, and policy (Driessen et al., 2012). This approach facilitated an understanding of the broad dimensions of the governance of the legacy organizations. We also explore the specific governance modes displayed by each case to comprehend the forms of collective action taken by the organizations. Lastly, similarities and differences among the cases are discussed. The following research questions are addressed: (1) How are the relationships among stakeholders in the governance of post-Games legacy organizations structured, coordinated, and managed (politics)?; (2) How is the institutional structure of the governance of post-Games legacy organizations constructed (polity)?; (3) What policy content and instruments are employed in the governance of post-Games legacy organizations (policy)?; and (4) What are the modes of governance of post-Games legacy organizations?

This study employs a comprehensive governance framework to understand how legacies are sustained and managed during the post-games phase. Few Olympic legacy studies (e.g., Kaplanidou, 2012) focused on multiple cases, which has limited our understanding of how legacy issues vary across events and socio-political contexts (Thomson et al., 2019). This work identifies key factors that affect Olympic legacy and offers insights that will help legacy practitioners build governance structures appropriate for their context.

# Literature Review

Event legacy may include “planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself” (Preuss, 2007, p. 211). Developing and sustaining Olympic legacy can be difficult. Byers et al. (2019) conceptualized the development of event legacy as a “wicked problem” (p. 172) as it involves multiple stakeholders with different interests in developing and sustaining legacies. Thus, Preuss’s definition which includes multiple forms of legacies that may appear over time was useful in understanding governance dynamics.

Other research (e.g., Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Misener et al., 2020) has employed a leveraging perspective to examine event legacy. This approach highlights opportunities and resources that need to be strategically leveraged to gain positive outcomes from hosting events (Chalip, 2006). Specifically, this literature emphasizes investigating legacy planning and delivery throughout the event phases (i.e., ex-ante), which differs from traditional legacy frameworks that tend to be post-hoc (Chalip, 2014). Factors that can facilitate a successful collaborative approach (e.g., resource pooling and trust) have been identified (Christie & Gibb, 2015). The IOC (2017) published “IOC Legacy Strategic Approach” followed by promoting more strategic approaches to Olympic legacy. Notably, lacking an independent entity responsible for legacy is considered a key issue related to Olympic legacy (Chalip, 2014). Effective governance processes and structures are imperative to help regulate and promote stakeholder collaboration in sustaining legacies (Thomson et al., 2019). Thus, future hosts will be required to “develop appropriate governance structures [...] to oversee the fulfilment of sustainability and legacy” (IOC, 2017, p. 47). This research utilizes a governance perspective to expand our knowledge of strategic legacy planning and delivery. By governance, we specifically refer to “a process of—more or less institutionalized—interaction between public and/or private entities ultimately aiming at the realization of collective goals” (Lange et al., 2013, p. 406). At the same time, since discussions on strategic legacy delivery in the Olympic context have begun relatively recently, we needed to consider that the concept of strategic planning and leverage might not yet be fully utilized by Olympic legacy researchers and practitioners. This is particularly true for the cases examined in this study (the 2002, 2010, and 2018 Games). Therefore, this research was built upon existing Olympic legacy and governance research while adopting the strategic legacy approach, which helped our research findings and discussions to be grounded in a wide range of relevant literature.

Previous studies identified issues related to stakeholder management in the governance of Olympic legacy. Girginov (2011) argued the governance of legacy could be considered a form of politics. He noted tensions between government and local communities regarding the provision of legacy. Postlethwaite et al. (2019) explored the impact of educational programs on stakeholder relations, finding that different interpretations of legacy goals can lead to stakeholder issues and that positive impact depends on those goals being tailored to the local context. Harris and Houlihan (2016) found that implementing community sport legacy policies can be hampered by conflicting beliefs and values among policy agents arising from forced partnerships. Researchers have also argued that better governance structures are needed to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders from the event planning phase. Nichols et al. (2016) highlighted the negative influence of a top-down governance structure on legacy programs, arguing that state-led governance and performance monitoring restricted autonomy of managers in delivering legacy programs at their local level. Leopkey and Parent (2017) examined the governance actors and mechanisms that were involved in the production and sustainability of Olympic legacy from the bid to the post-Games phase whereas Leopkey and Parent (2015) highlighted the changing nature of governance modes throughout event legacy phases.

Despite the contributions of these studies, little is known about the governance of Olympic legacy in the post-event phase. However, many potential challenges exist in this context including the paucity of funding, and the potential for losing momentum for legacy because of instability in organizational and political personnel (Gammon, 2015). Legacies can be sustained only if opportunities generated through hosting an event are optimized after the Games (Preuss, 2015). This study examines the governance of post-Games legacy organizations across multiple host cities, which enabled the exploration of effective governance structures and processes.

# Conceptual Framework

This study adopts Driessen et al’s (2012) conceptual framework to examine the governance of post-Games legacies. This framework provided a basis for exploring governance for sustainable development across many topics (e.g., environmental issues). Scholars have highlighted the importance of building governance systems to steer sustainable development initiatives since multiple stakeholders are involved in the process (Driessen et al., 2012). However, challenges stem from lack of clarity about the governance process (Zeijl-Rozema et al., 2008). Consequently, scholars in the sustainable development field identified various governance forms that can be referenced in developing a specific governance mode.

It is also important to explore the different types of legacy governance systems that emerge from hosting the Games. Since sustainability is deeply embedded in the concept of Olympic legacy (Leopkey & Parent, 2012), employing this framework was considered appropriate for exploring governance modes in the selected cases. Moreover, Lange et al. (2013) noted the strength of this framework as the ability to focus on the polity, politics, and policy governance dimensions. Thus, Driessen et al’s governance modes were useful to gain a holistic understanding of governance in post-Games legacy organizations.

*Politics* refers to the process of policy formulation, wherein public and private actors interact. In governance, various actors share power and resources, so considering the power relations among political actors is important. *Polity* relates to the structural aspect of governance, that is, the system of institutions and rules influencing the social actors’ behavior (Lange et al., 2013). *Policy* concerns policy content (e.g., goals and targets) and steering instruments (e.g., control, incentive) used to achieve policies. Given the interrelatedness of the three governance dimensions, changes in one may influence the others. For example, changing institutional rules can result in modifications to stakeholder relationships by impacting their power in governance.

Each dimension tends to be characterized by modes of governance or “forms of realizing collective goals by means of collective action” (Lange et al., 2013, p. 407). Rhodes (2007) proposed that governance is “broader than government, covering non-state actors” (p. 1246). That is, governing is a responsibility shared among actors in the public and private sectors. However, there may be differences in the levels of public and private stakeholders’ engagement and power, and forms of governance can vary depending on its goal(s). Recent studies have acknowledged the complexity of real-world governance and have proposed new conceptual frameworks (e.g., Driessen et al, 2012; Provan & Kenis, 2008).

We employed the governance modes proposed by Driessen et al. (2012): (1) centralized, (2) decentralized, (3) public-private, (4) interactive, and (5) self-governance. These modes derive from the roles and relationships of private and public stakeholders. In a centralized governance mode, decision making authority is concentrated on the central government while private stakeholders receive the government’s services. The central government devolves responsibilities to local government in a decentralized governance mode. Public-private and interactive governance modes are characterized by collaboration among public and private stakeholders. A key difference between the two modes is the level of private stakeholders’ roles. Generally, public stakeholders are the primary initiators of a public-private governance mode but also engage private stakeholders. Interactive governance is initiated and managed by both public and private stakeholders, especially engaging stakeholders in civil society. Finally, in a self-governed system, the primary stakeholders can be private or public. In this mode, private stakeholders have more autonomy to initiate and manage new programs. Table 1 describes the three dimensions of governance in terms of the factors influencing modes of governance.

(Table 1 here)

# Methodology

This study adopted a multiple, holistic, case study approach (Yin, 2017) to examine the governance of post-Games legacy organizations across three Olympics. Clarifying a subject (i.e., “something potentially to offer explanation”) and an object (i.e., “something to be explained”) is important to case study research (Thomas, 2011, p. 513). An instrumental approach for theory building helped us offer insights into post-Games legacy governance (object) by examining the chosen legacy organizations (subject) (Thomas, 2011). Since this study embraced a qualitative, case-oriented approach (Ragin, 2014), meaningful comparison arises from the purposeful selection of a small number of cases for intensive investigation that reveals the complexities and nuances in each context (Ebbinghaus, 2005). The research spanned three years from Spring 2019 (after the establishment of the PyeongChang’s legacy organization) to Winter 2021.

## Case Selection

In 2000, the IOC changed the Olympic Charter to highlight the significance of Olympic legacies (Scheu et al., 2019), and the concept of legacy has become institutionalized within the Olympic Movement since the 2000s (Leopkey & Parent, 2012). Therefore, we created a list of Olympic legacy organizations established since 2000: two Summer Games (2000 Sydney and 2012 London) and four Winter Games (2002 Salt Lake City, 2006 Turin, 2010 Vancouver, and 2018 PyeongChang). Since Summer and Winter Games differ significantly, we focused on Winter Games, as their post-Games legacy organizations have similar roles and conditions. This study examined the Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation (UOLF), Whistler Sport Legacies (WSL) and LIFT Philanthropy Partners (LIFT) (2010), and PyeongChang 2018 Legacy Foundation (PLF)0F[[1]](#footnote-2), considering not just their similarities but the differences (e.g., event history and legacy goals) that could explain variations in governance processes and structure. Language accessibility and equivalence was important in gaining data. The first author is proficient in English and Korean; thus, the Turin Games were excluded.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Our data collection and analysis were guided by grounded theory methods. This approach was useful given its well-structured data collection and analysis strategies, which facilitated identifying and categorizing properties in developing theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2012). Osborne (2002) suggested that “*modes* of governance are the outcomes of social processes (…)” (p. 307). Using the grounded theory methods was considered appropriate given its usefulness in identifying the social processes of a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Our research was based on an interpretivist perspective (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Ontologically, interpretivism highlights that a phenomenon cannot be determined objectively since it is socially constructed from multiple perspectives (Levers, 2013). Epistemologically, interpretivist research considers that “knowledge is relative to particular circumstances—historical, temporal, cultural, subjective—and exists in multiple forms” (Benoliel, 1996, p. 407). Byers et al. (2019) proposed that “legacy delivery is inclusive of deep social structures which underpin different stakeholders” (p. 171). Thus, employing interpretivism was useful to examine stakeholder interactions associated with the legacy organizations by allowing us to recognize multiple realities about legacies built by different individuals and groups.

Data consisted of archival materials and interviews collected between January 2020 and November 2021. Grounded theory methods highlight simultaneous data collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Therefore, our data collection and analysis were non-linear, iterative, and intertwined. Purposive and theoretical sampling strategies directed our data collection to fill gaps about each case’s governance activities (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Archival materials (see Supplementary File 1) were analyzed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the legacy organizations. The analysis of archival materials also helped identify potential interviewees with firsthand knowledge about each organization. Questions were developed based on the review of archival materials, existing literature, and the conceptual framework (see Supplementary File 1). After obtaining ethics approval, we first contacted individuals who could provide overviews of each organization (e.g., historical development). Based on our subsequent data analysis and snowball sampling, interviews with participants who could offer insights into more specific aspects of each organization (e.g., management) were conducted. As the research moved forward, interview questions were amended to reveal new aspects of each case (see Supplementary File 2). The semi-structured interviews (n=12) were conducted in-person or via Zoom (see Supplementary File 3). They were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim. All collected data were managed and analyzed using ATLAS.ti v.9 from the beginning of the study.

The lead researcher led the coding process ensuring consistency across cases. This researcher wrote memos to capture insights emerging from the coded data, and the research team met regularly to discuss the findings. Following the Straussian approach to grounded thoery, we utilized inductive and deductive coding and three coding stages (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Analysis began with open coding (primarily inductive) to capture and label emergent concepts, particularly contextual features that appeared frequently. The initial codes were updated throughout the open coding process, whereby patterns regarding the three governance dimensions were explored and integrated. Inductive codes are listed and presented in Supplementary File 4. Next, axial coding was conducted to group codes into categories pertaining to each governance dimension by using codes drived from the conceptual framework (Driessen et al., 2012) (see Table 1). In this stage, inductive and deductive coding approaches were utilized. This led to the creation of higher-order themes regarding politics, polity, and policy. The final step, selective coding, helped elucidate the relationship between the three governance dimensions (Lange et al., 2013) and develop the story line of each case (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Governance modes exhibited by each legacy organization were determined and case reports were written. The reports were subsequently compared and analyzed for similiarities and differences among the cases and were constantly revisited and revised.

Data collection and analysis continued until “theoretical constructs fit with existing data and [...] new data yields no significant new insights” (i.e., theoretical saturation) (Gasson, 2004, p. 86). Constant comparison is crucial in grounded theory research to refine theoretical constructs and determine theoretical saturation (Gasson, 2004). Thus, the incidents and codes were constantly compared and refined throughout our iterative data collection and analysis process. These helped analyze similarities and differences among the cases and facilitated the identification of features specific to each case (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

To enhance trustworthiness, many techniques were utilized (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Data traingulation helped view the cases from different perspectives. The varied data sources were used to corroborate evidence by checking complementary or divergent information. This approach reduced bias by forcing us to reflect on our assumptions and subjectivities (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The lead researcher also completed on site observations at Salt Lake City and PyeongChang, which facilitated a deeper understanding of the contexts. A site observation of the Vancouver case could not be completed due to border restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the research team members who had a good understanding of the context helped clarify data interpretation. As we moved closer to the identification of key findings, peer debriefing was completed through the revalidation and discussion of the findings. Finally, findings were presented with rich and thick description using quotes from multiple sources.

# Findings

Three post-Games legacy organization governance modes were identified (public-private (UOLF and PLF), interactive (WSL), and self-governance (LIFT)). Due to the interconnected nature of the politics, polity, and policy dimensions (Lange et al., 2013), the findings of each case are presented without subheadings.

## The Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation: Public-Private Governance

On June 16, 1995, Salt Lake City in Utah (U.S.) was selected to host the 2002 Winter Olympics. Even before bidding for the Games, discussions about legacy were initiated. Results from a public referendum demonstrated strong support for the bid; as a result, legislation passed in November 1989 ensured a funding plan to construct Olympic venues. The city’s legacy vision included becoming a winter sport capital in North America: “Salt Lake City’s government … is dedicated in accomplishing this goal for the benefit of the city and the advancement of amateur winter sports” (Salt Lake City Bid Committee, 1994, p. 36). Established in 1995, the nonprofit UOLF has played a key role in creating and sustaining the 2002 Games’ legacies (UOLF, n.d.). Their mission aligns closely with the Legislature’s original goals of “creating an Olympic legacy” (Office of the Legislative Auditor General, 2017, p. iii). Our analysis identified its governance mode as public-private, with the government agency initiating the formation of the governance arrangement (Lange et al., 2013).

The Utah legislature established the Utah Athletic Foundation (the legal name of the UOLF), and the foundation’s initial trustees were appointed by the governor (Korologos, 1995). A resolution passed in March 2002 required the foundation to rewrite its bylaws to conform to state legislative oversight, giving the governor and senate authority to conduct audits and to approve board nominees (Spangler & Bernick, 2002). These institutional changes enhanced public and private stakeholder engagement in the UOLF’s governance system. Reflecting on UOLF’s relationship with the state, a UOLF representative described its governance model as quasi-governmental: “We label it quasi-governmental…. We are a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, but we have created articles of incorporation and bylaws that involve the state government because of the financial support that they gave originally.” (UOLF 1). Thus, its governance model is a formalized public-private arrangement based on state resolutions.

UOLF also has been given autonomy as a nonprofit organization tasked with managing the Olympic facilities and legacies. Its legitimacy and autonomy enabled UOLF to collaborate with stakeholders at the state, national, and international levels for sport development: “The Olympic Legacy Foundation should continue to expand its international training programs [and] partner with other non-governmental organizations and governmental organizations to promote “Sport for Life” in Utah’s communities” (Utah Olympic Exploratory Committee, 2012, p. 4). In 2002, the Olympic Park was designated a training site for the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, and in 2009 the US Ski and Snowboard Association established its national educational center (US Ski and Snowboard, n.d.). UOLF also collaborated with county governments and regional organizations to promote local sport and tourism. The Office of the Legislative Auditor General reported that “UOLF has maximized the use of Olympic facilities to promote youth sports development and increase public participation in winter sports” (2017, p. 38). Formal interaction in a public-private governance system involves legislatures or regulatory agencies; informal interaction takes place through casual gatherings or private associations (Ostrom, 1990). UOLF interacted formally with public stakeholders but informally with private stakeholders: “The State of Utah is probably a little bit more of a formal process because a lot of it is done through the legislative process…. But I would say a lot of our meetings [with other stakeholders] are probably more informal, ad hoc style, as needed (UOLF 2).

The political nature of the UOLF’s governance also affected how legacy policies were developed and implemented. After the Games, the state mandated the Salt Lake Organizing Committee to provide UOLF with an endowed Legacy Fund (valued at $76 million) to maintain the venues and to develop elite and mass sport in Utah and more nationally (Office of the Legislative Auditor General, 2017). Recently, UOLF has secured grants (valued at $11.6 million in fiscal year 2022) from the state government to renovate the aging venues, a key challenge faced by the organization (Utah State Legislature, n.d.). Thus, the key instruments for venue operation and management are incentive-based. In implementing its legacy programs, UOLF sought out knowledge from experts in various fields. For example, it turned to Goldman Sachs to help ensure the successful investment of the Legacy Fund (Roche, 2002). Internally, UOLF has included Olympians and Paralympians on the board of directors for sport development programs. For instance, 2002 Olympic Medalist Derek Perra was recruited as Outreach Director for Youth Sports Programs in 2010: “Perra has assisted in the development of the organizations’ Olympic legacy efforts and goals…. he contributed his knowledge as an athlete and a coach” (“Olympic medalist joins”, 2010).

## Whistler Sport Legacies: Interactive Governance

At the beginning of Vancouver’s 2002 bidding process, key stakeholders signed a multi-party agreement (MPA) to specify the role of each partner in organizing the Games (Vancouver Organizing Committee, 2010). The stakeholders’ awareness of the importance of positive legacies motivated them to develop legacy plans during the pre-Games phase. In 2003, after winning the bid, the 2010 Games Operating Trust (GOT) was endowed with $110 million to secure and supply funding to support the operation and maintenance of Olympic venues and to increase elite and community sport development at the provincial and national levels (Office of the Premier, 2007). In 2007, the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) established the Whistler 2010 Sport Legacies Society (WSL) to manage Whistler Olympic Park, the Whistler Sliding Centre, and the Whistler Athletes’ Centre. Our analysis identified WSL’s governance mode as interactive, another form of public–private interaction (Lange et al., 2013). Its formation was initiated by multiple public and private signatories to the MPA and funded with 40% of the monies in the GOT: “[To] ensure a lasting sport legacy …. [some signatories] will establish the 2010 Games Operating Trust and facilitate the establishment of the Whistler Legacies Society” (Multiparty Agreement for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, 2002, p. 4).

Since its origin, WSL’s board of directors comprises representatives from Canada’s Olympic and Paralympic Committees, the provincial government, the Resort Municipality of Whistler, and the Lil’wat and Squamish Nations (WSL, n.d.-b). The WSL has a high level of autonomy: “Whistler Sports Legacies is a stand-alone organization that has no affiliation with any other government body” (WSL 1). WSL has used its autonomy to build broad participatory public-private governing arrangements with its stakeholders via a number of joint ventures and memoranda of understanding, enabling WSL to achieve its goals of continued venue use and development of elite and mass sport: “They [partners] help us in our mission to Grow Sport, and [...] towards our goals of creating a centre for sports excellence, facilitating competitions, [and] contributing to the community and region” (WSL, n.d.-a). At the local level, key stakeholders include government agencies, schools, and recreational organizations (WSL, 2016). Given Whistler’s small size, WSL’s collaborations have been crucial: “I’d say our most important partner is the municipal government…. Whistler is a very small community, 12,000 people…. We’re very much part of the community” (WSL 1). National sport federations have also been key partners: “I’d start with the national federations because their mandate is to really drive the growth and maintenance of their sport, both at the grassroots level and the high-performance level” (WSL 2). Through maintaining the venues and hosting international sport events, WSL has enhanced its international reputation, as well: “This has been an exciting year for WSL as all three venues continue to show progress in delivering on our sport mandate while being recognized as world-class facilities” (WSL, 2016, p. 1).

The stakeholder relationships in WSL’s governance system were not legislated, and its political nature influenced rules of interaction. Interaction between WSL and its stakeholders tends to be informal and voluntary: “I suppose it’s a loose collaboration, as a freestanding organization. The way I look at our relationship is that it has to be conducive for both parties…. We operate side by side and when paths cross, we collaborate” (WSL 1). However, WSL tries to ensure some formality through agreements with stakeholders: “We formalize an arrangement where we have a user group agreement or usage agreement where we try and flesh out key topics, key understandings, and then we’re aligned together” (WSL 3).

Building on the political and institutional conditions for its governance, WSL developed and implemented legacy policies through collaboration with stakeholders. WSL developed and implemented tailored and targets integrated goals. The multi-party agreements exemplify this approach: “To ensure our national team athletes have optimal access to high‐quality training and competition environments, WSL maintains three multi‐party National Training Centre agreements with Ski Jumping Canada & Nordic Combined Canada, Canadian Luge Association and Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton” (WSL, 2018, p. 5). The agreements show a clear policy target (national team athletes) with an integrated goal among stakeholders (optimal access to venues).

Collaboration with diverse partners has provided WSL with the knowledge necessary to support the development of legacy programs and promote tourism in Whistler and nearby municipalities: “Whistler is a global brand…. So, there is a strong, robust tourism entity. We work with them…. Another community, …., called Squamish, which is, their tagline is ‘the outdoor recreation capital of Canada’…. So, we work with them” (WSL 1). This is particularly important because the venues age over time and securing funding for venue management was identified as an important issue. Like UOLF, WSL’s key policy instruments for venue management are incentive-based. In addition to the GOT Legacy Endowment fund, WSL received a $2.7 million transition grant from the provincial government between 2012 and 2015 (Taylor, 2013). WSL has also received several property tax exemptions: “Management believes that it is reasonable to provide a two year tax exemption for this [WSL’s] property” (Resort Municipality of Whistler, 2020, p. 1).

## LIFT Philanthropy Partners: Evolution from Interactive Governance to Self-Governance

In the bidding phase of the 2010 Olympics, the Vancouver-Whistler Bid Committee and the provincial government committed up to $5 million for the launch of the Legacies Now initiative in 2000, which became the Legacies Now Society in 2001 (Weiler & Mohan, 2009). While the WSL was established to manage the Olympic venues, Legacies Now was intended to develop and implement social legacy programs. Later, the society changed its name to the 2010 Legacies Now Society (2010LN) and reorganized after the Games as LIFT. As the organization changed, its governance mode evolved from an interactive system to a self-governance system.

**Pre-Games Phase: Interactive Governance**

During the pre-Games phase, 2010LN was initiated and managed by both public (e.g., the provincial government) and private (e.g., VANOC) stakeholders: “In partnership with non-government organizations, private companies and government, 2010 Legacies Now works with communities to discover social and economic opportunities for all British Columbians.” (2010 Legacies Now, 2007, p. 1). Despite receiving $5 million in government funds, 2010LN had autonomy in building and regulating its governance system, and its board members and directors are not government appointees (Weiler & Mohan, 2009).

An important difference between 2010LN and the other legacy organizations is its higher-level community engagement for the purpose of creating social legacies. Its development of legacy policy highlights the importance of engaging community working groups: “Through our Legacies Initiatives team, we are working in partnership with over 90 Spirit of BC Community Committees around the province to assist communities identify, define and leverage the 2010 Winter Games and other local opportunities” (2010 Legacies Now, 2005, p. 2). Although 2010LN was not an official partner of VANOC, its close relationships with communities in British Columbia gave 2010LN the legitimacy needed to create social legacies: “VANOC realized that 2010LN was an essential link into the communities of the Province, and for the same reasons as 2010LN was separated from the Bid Corporation, it was better equipped to create sustainable social legacies in the province” (Weiler & Mohan, 2009, p. 14). During the pre-Games phase, 2010LN focused on creating partnerships at the provincial level: “The majority of our work definitely for the games was in British Columbia” (LIFT 1). Eventually, 2010LN would form partnerships with over 4,000 public and private organizations.

2010LN’s broad scope of legacy programs led to a more diverse set of stakeholders than UOLF and WSL, which indicates how the types of legacy goals pursued by a legacy organization may influence the political structures of its governance. The provincial government invested $32.5 million in 2010LN to support the expansion of its goals to include arts, literacy, volunteers, communities, inclusion, and accessibility (Weiler & Mohan, 2009). One result was the *Action Schools! BC program,* a collaborative effort by stakeholders from education, tourism, nutrition and health (Ministry of Health Services, 2004).

Within these partnerships, stakeholders consulted with each other to take advantage of each other’s expertise. For instance, for the development of the *Arts Now* program, 2010LN organized consultation with the arts community, which resulted in a social learning process: “These consultations also revealed that in many municipalities there was a poor understanding of cultural development planning which was an obstacle to receiving arts funding for local community arts groups” (Weiler & Mohan, 2009, p. 9). The bottom-up approach to facilitating interaction among stakeholders at multiple levels enabled goals and targets to be tailored for and integrated with the community. For example, 2010LN’s *Literacy Now* program eschewed a top-down approach, “with the province and 2010LN telling communities what their programs should be. Instead of standardized solutions, programs were customized to each community, depending on their needs” (Weiler & Mohan, 2009, p. 10). 2010LN’s interactive governance system allowed stakeholders from multiple areas to share knowledge about how to create social legacy programs.

**Post-Games Phase: Self-Governance System**

After the Games, questions about how to sustain the organization without losing the pre-Games’ collaborative momentum emerged. “Fuelled by the experience and knowledge gained from working with organizations and communities” during the pre-Games phase (Dewar, 2020, para 9), 2010LN evolved into a self-governing system and, after the Games, rebranded itself as LIFT. LIFT built its self-governing system using a venture philanthropy model to “provide the charities and social enterprises with finance and support” (Buckland et al., p. 33). With its transformation, LIFT expanded its policy goals from the provincial to the national level (LIFT, n.d.-a, p. 3), which resulted in changes to stakeholder relationships and its rules of interaction:

We were going to create programs that would build on what BC had but become national…. if you understood who your audience was, you had to find a board and create a governance structure that would respond to and appeal to that audience (LIFT 3).

Drawing on the expertise and large network of public and private stakeholders it gained from developing Olympic legacy programs, LIFT collaborates the private and not-for-profit sectors (i.e., Social Purpose Organizations (SPOs)) to facilitate partnerships that benefit both. Private stakeholders provide leadership, expertise, and strategic support to social purpose organizations (LIFT, n.d.-b) that “demonstrate a track record of success in creating tangible social benefits” (Weiler, 2011, p. 5), as an interviewee discussed: “They have volunteered their time. Some of their analysts will do work for us on some of the SPOs or some, or their financial expertise will come and help us do budgeting with some of our organizations” (LIFT 1).

## PyeongChang 2018 Legacy Foundation: Public-Private Governance

Unlike the other legacy organizations, the PyeongChang 2018 Legacy Foundation (PLF) was established after the conclusion of the 2018 Olympics. Its creation was driven by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST), a central government agency, but multiple public and private stakeholders were involved in the task force that established the organization. Thus, we categorized PLF’s governance mode as public-private. Its board of directors includes “representatives of local governments, the central government, and sport organizations… The foundation itself was created as a governance system” (PLF 2). An important issue around how to sustain the Game’s momentum through the quick stabilization of the post-Games legacy governance system emerged. From its founding, the PLF held legitimacy as an official legacy organization and made agreements with key stakeholders. In 2019, the PyeongChang Organizing Committee for the 2018 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games (POCOG) agreed, “based on the Olympic spirit” to “comprehensively transfer” public works for the development of winter sport to the PLF (Agreement on Business Succession and Contribution, 2019). POCOG provided the PLF with 60% of its surplus monies from the 2018 Games, and the IOC provided 20% of its surplus (Gangwon Province, 2020).

Since launching as a non-profit in March of 2019, the PLF has focused on building its internal structures and procedures. Public stakeholders (i.e., the MCST and the provincial Government) played important roles in building and managing this governance system: “We do a lot of [legacy] projects with central and provincial governments’ funds” (PLF 2). The PLF formed a close relationship with the provincial government, and a central government official holds a seat on the board of directors. In September 2020, the Gangwon government enacted an ordinance that provides provincial funds and delegates provincial officials to the PLF: “If necessary, in order to achieve the purpose of establishment of the foundation, the Governor may concurrently appoint or delegate public officials to the foundation ….” (Ordinance on the Establishment and Operation of the PyeongChang 2018 Legacy Foundation, Gangwon-do Incorporated Foundation, 2020). Within the PLF, provincial officials played key roles: “We [provincial officials] have worked for developing the foundation” (PLF 1).

Using its political and institutional conditions, the PLF facilitated stakeholder collaboration at the local, national, and international levels. The municipal governments of the three Olympic host communities (i.e., PyeongChang, Gangneung, and Jeonseon) each have representatives on the board of directors. Because the PLF seeks to develop winter sport in Asia (IOC, 2014), national and international sport organizations have been crucial partners: “Our goal is not to develop winter sport only in Korea. Our goal is to support winter sport development in other Asian countries, like Southeast Asia” (PLF 1). Interactions between the PLF and its stakeholders are both formal and informal. Its work with government agencies is done through formal agreements and legislation, but its partnerships with other stakeholders are relatively “flexible” (PLF 3). However, MOUs were created for collaborations with, for example, national sport federations and Gangwon University (PLF, 2020): “They [PLF and Gangwon University] also plan to share and utilize human, non-human resources, and infrastructure for cooperation, while sharing creative ideas and information related to Olympic legacy projects” (Lee, 2019).

The focus of PLF’s policy has been developing both elite and mass sport in Korea specifically and in Asia generally, as well as the promotion of the Olympic Movement. For example, it is working with the MCST and Gangwon Province to target athletes in Southeast Asia: “Part of the legacy left by the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, the program aims to foster bobsled and skeleton athletes from nations targeted by Seoul’s New Southern Policy to field in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics” (Korea.net, 2021). The PLF is relatively more dependent on public funds than other legacy organizations because the interest earned on its comparatively small legacy fund (approximately $30 million as of April 2021) is not enough to cover its management costs and implement legacy programs. Thus, the PLF tried to be a Local Government Investing-Funding Affiliate in 2021 to gain additional funding from Gangwon Province.

# Discussion and Implications

The ultimate goal of grounded theory research is to provide a conceptual model that can explain a social phenomena (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). A model of the governance of post-Games legacy organizations is provided (see Figure 1). The model illustrates the polity, politics, and policy dimensions of governance and the modes of post-Games legacy governance that are determined through interplay among the dimensions. The modes of governance also influence or are influenced by the interdependent governance dimensions (Lange et al., 2012). It is crucial to understand how all governance dimensions are interrelated in order to manage the post-Games legacy governance modes that may change over time.

(Figure 1 here)

## Politics: Balancing Public and Private Stakeholder Participation

Post-Games legacy governance systems were managed by multiple public and private stakeholders. Their role and influence varied across the cases, with public stakeholders tending to contribute to the stability of the legacy governance by providing key resources (e.g., funding and legitimacy), whilst private stakeholders played important roles in adding diversity in the governance system by offering multiple perspectives regarding legacy delivery. One of the important benefits of public-private governance is to secure financial support from government agencies to sustain private stakeholders’ work (Kooiman, 2003). The UOLF and PLF both used a public-private governance mode, and central and local governments played an important role in developing and supporting the governance systems. The high level of government involvement in the UOLF and the PLF arose from the organizations’ need for financial resources. UOLF needed state funding to repair its aging venues, while the PLF requested government funding to support its strained legacy fund. This finding indicates that ensuring governments’ continuous involvement within the governance system may be important for dealing with insufficient financial resources for post-Games legacy organizations.

Also, as the cases examined in this study imply, adapting collaborative governance forms (e.g., public-private and interactive governance) can effectively increase legitimacy (Kooiman, 2003). A high level of legitimacy provides the governance system a better chance of achieving its objectives (DuBow et al., 2018). Leopkey and Parent (2017) emphasized the importance of a smooth transfer of responsibilities and power from host organizations to post-Games legacy organizations. Legitimacy is conferred by the way a legacy organization is established; a well-considered plan for post-Games legacy governance systems will help ensure a smooth transfer of power. In this regard, the LIFT founded its business on strong partnerships with public stakeholders (e.g., BC Government) by using an interactive governance mode during the pre-Games phase. This helped with the development of the post-Games self-governance mode. Thus, although legacy organizations aim to sustain social legacies through a bottom-up approach with private stakeholder engagement, they may need to maintain connections with public stakeholders who can help legacy organizations enhance their governance’ legitimacy in their formative years.

However, regardless of the different governance modes, the legacy organizations we examined were given autonomy. Assigning sufficient power to private stakeholders is critical to ensure that diverse voices contribute to legacy planning and implementation (Nichols et al., 2016). Future hosts should carefully consider how to create a good balance of power between public and private stakeholders in their legacy governance systems.

## Polity: Combining Formality and Informality

All legacy organizations interacted with their stakeholders in both formal and informal ways. Interestingly, even the most informal organizations formalized some interactions with their stakeholders through the creation of agreements and rules. This is particularly true for the interactive governance approach adopted by WSL and LIFT. This governance mode was useful for creating economic and social legacies by facilitating consultation and knowledge sharing between private stakeholders (Edelenbos, 2005). This finding supports the notion that flexible and bottom-up structures aid the success of legacy programs’ development and implementation (Nichols et al., 2016). However, researchers (e.g., Edelenbos, 2005) also noted that formal institutional structures need to be established to guide the interactive process among stakeholders to actual decision making. That is, institutional structures may define “the actors and levels involved in governance processes” and “the division of power resources” (polity-politics interlinkage) (Lange, 2013, p. 409). Similarly, without any rules of interaction, stakeholders’ responsibilities may not be clear, which can decrease the legacy programs’ effectiveness (Misener et al., 2020). Consequently, the findings suggest utilizing both formal and informal rules of interaction is crucial when employing interactive or more informalized governance forms to create legacies. That is, ensuring some formality based on rules and agreements will be critical in managing interactive processes among legacy stakeholders.

## Policy: Aligning Legacy Policy Goals and Instruments

The primary focus of this study was on the analysis of governance dimensions and modes, rather than identifying the specific types of legacies created in each case. However, the findings can be used to discuss how the governance of post-Games legacy organizations enabled them to sustain positive legacies by achieving their policy goals. To be clear, we discuss legacies that can be observed in the Utah and Vancouver cases where their legacy organizations have existed more than 10 years, providing us with sufficient timeframe for event legacies to develop. Policy scholars (e.g., Zehavi, 2012) have emphasized the importance of using a combination of soft (e.g., voluntary agreements and negotiation) and hard (e.g., government regulation and support) instruments to achieve policy goals. In our study, both types were used by the legacy organizations. The finding highlights the significance of using policy instruments in accordance with the targeted legacy goals. Specifically, legacy programs were developed and implemented by partnerships among stakeholders (soft). Almost all of the governance modes used by the organizations examined in this study were a mixed-economy (a combination of public-private entities). This mode encourages knowledge sharing among multiple stakeholders across fields, which facilitates the development and implementation of legacy programs. This finding highlights the significance of understanding how the politics dimension may influence the policy dimension in the legacy governance process (politics-policy interlinkage).

Additionally, legacy organizations were created and sustained by government grants, subsidies, and tax benefits (hard), and those policy instruments were critical for UOLF and WSL to manage post-Games venue legacies. Given that those hard policy instruments were developed and implemented through institutions and rules (e.g., legacy and tax related legislations), the findings indicate the importance of managing the institutional dimensions of legacy governance to achieve the policy goal of post-Games venue legacy management (polity-policy interlinkage). At the time of writing, Utah and Vancouver were in the bidding process for the 2030/2034 Winter Olympics. In doing so, they promoted their ability to use existing venues. The public-private and interactive governance modes led by UOLF and WSL successfully sustained the venue legacies using various hard policy instruments, which led to a subsequent Olympic bid. Given these findings, there are many avenues of future research. It would be important to examine how policy instruments employed by different governance modes resulted in actual legacy outcomes in each case. Specifically, evaluating legacy outcomes focusing on the Utah and Vancouver will be important to explore how their governance systems contributed to the creation of legacies. Additionally, future research may examine how the governance of the legacy organizations will adapt to the new environment if the right to host the Olympics is awarded to either city.

## Governance Mode: Managing Governance Shifts for Adapting to Post-Games Environment

The Olympic hosts examined in this research aligned the governance of legacy organizations with their legacy plans. For instance, the Vancouver Games had two legacy organizations with differing goals (i.e., WSL for sport legacy and LIFT for social legacy), which required different governance modes (i.e., interactive and self-governance system). Compared to legacy organizations whose primary goal is sport development, LIFT especially had to reflect local communities’ values and interests to implement social legacies. Consequently, bottom-up governance structures and processes (e.g., consultation) were more common during the pre- and post-Games phases. The case supports the findings of event legacy leveraging studies (e.g., Christie & Gibb, 2015; Misener et al., 2020) emphasizing the success factors for the governance of legacy, such as community involvement, mutual learning, trust, and accountability. Although this study did not aim to determine which mode of governance is more or less effective, it is vital to recognize that modes of governance should align with the organizations’ goals and context.

This study also found that legacy organizations went through multiple governance stages as they face and address issues throughout the different phases, especially post-Games. This finding indicates that legacy practitioners need to understand and manage potential governance shifts for successful adaptation to the post-Games context. The UOLF and WSL experienced the issue of aging venues. To handle this issue, the UOLF requested additional financial resources from the state of Utah, which strengthened the public-private governance system. The UOLF case illustrates how potential changes may occur in the stakeholder relationships in a legacy governance system over time. The venues of the Vancouver Olympics managed by WSL are also aging and may require government funding for renovation. Future research could make the WSL a focal point of a study examining shifts in post-Games legacy governance modes. As our findings indicate, changes in one dimension of governance may also lead to modifications to the other two dimensions (Lange et al., 2013). It would be crucial to consider the connections between the governance dimensions to understand potential legacy governance mode shift. This study identified three modes of post-Games legacy governance (i.e., public-private, interactive, and self-governance) adopted by the investigated legacy organizations. Exploring cases in broader contexts (e.g., the Summer Olympics) may reveal additional governance modes (e.g., centralized, decentralized) for sustainable post-Games legacy.

On the one hand, the capacity of 2010LN’s interactive governance system developed during the pre-Games phase allowed it to evolve into the more autonomous self-governance system of LIFT. Its pre-Games experience facilitated quickly overcoming challenges associated with decreasing momentum post-Games (Lu & Misener, 2022). As there is commonly less funding and support for legacy projects after the Games (Gammon, 2015), the LIFT case suggests that pre-Games capacity affects a legacy organization’s ability to sustain post-Games legacy. Furthermore, the LIFT case is an example of *governance learning*, that is, applying insights to improve existing governance structures and processes (Schout, 2009). Future hosts should consider how to adapt legacy organizations’ governance mode in the face of changing sociocultural conditions and use experience and knowledge to help the governance shift process.

# Conclusion

Although a strategic approach for sustainable event legacies has been increasingly important (Misener et at, 2020), there is a dearth of research on a strategic Olympic legacy planning and management. Especially, there has been limited attention paid to understanding specific forms of legacy governance after the Games. Although some studies (e.g., Kaplanidou, 2012) explored legacy outcomes via comparative studies, few examined the structures and processes of post-Games legacy governance to create such outcomes. This is problematic since creating and sustaining legacy is very difficult without a shared understanding and goal of what governance form should be built to facilitate stakeholder collaboration. To fill this gap, this study investigated the governance of post-Olympic Games legacy organizations from three Olympics (Salt Lake City 2002, Vancouver 2010, and PyeongChang 2018), analyzing the similarities and differences in the dimensions of politics, polity, and policy. Several modes of governance (i.e., public-private, interactive, self-governance) were identified. The findings illustrate the changing nature of legacy governance modes, providing future hosts with potential models for building and managing legacy organizations.

Regarding event leveraging, Chalip and Fairely (2019) highlighted that “A core challenge for leveraging is to build the necessary partnerships and alliances” (p. 156). Thus, there has been increasing attention to examining stakeholder relationships for event legacy leveraging (e.g., Misener et al., 2020). This research expands our knowledge of how to facilitate stakeholder collaboration for sustainable post-Games legacy from a governance perspective. Notably, few legacy studies have used theories or theoretical frameworks (Thomson et al., 2019). This study addresses this research gap by employing Driessen et al’s (2012) governance framework—including politics, polity, and policy dimensions—to examine several modes of Olympic legacy governance. Based on the identified findings and implications, a basic model of the governance of post-Games legacy organizations (Figure 1) was developed, conceptualizing the three governance dimensions and modes. Consequently, we provided a theoretical basis for empirical analysis of the governance modes of Olympic legacy across different contexts.

The findings also offer practical insights. Because this research focused on the legacy organizations where key stakeholders interact, the findings could be useful for stakeholders (e.g., the IOC, organizing committees, and host cities) in the Olympic Movement. The identified governance forms can be good references for legacy practitioners in building appropriate governance systems to sustain legacy. Moreover, the findings illustrate three governance dimensions of the legacy organizations with details about their specific governance processes and structures that need to be considered for effective management of post-Games legacy governance. Notably, an examination of multiple cases helped highlight similarities and differences among the cases, providing transferable implications for future hosts in a variety of contexts (e.g., Western and Eastern countries). As a result of recent effort of the IOC’s strategic legacy approach, the upcoming hosts (e.g., Paris 2024, LA 2028) will be required to develop legacy governance structures in their planning phase (IOC, 2017). Using this study’s findings, researchers are highly encouraged to investigate the legacy leveraging strategies of future hosts.

Avenues for future research include the examination of legacy organizations from Winter Olympics not investigated in this study due to time constraints and language barriers and/or legacy organizations from Summer Olympics. This study’s focus on the Olympics may limit the transferability of the findings to other event contexts. Since event size and type may influence the dimensions and modes of legacy governance, researchers are encouraged to examine post-event legacy organizations in diverse contexts. Particularly, the governance modes presented in this study should not be considered a one size fits all solution, and governance modes in real world situations may be more complex. Researchers are encouraged to explore various forms of legacy governance by employing diverse governance theories and methods. For instance, employing social network analysis (cf. Naraine et al., 2016) may be useful to delineate the structural arrangement of stakeholders (e.g., centrality, density) in post-Games legacy governance.

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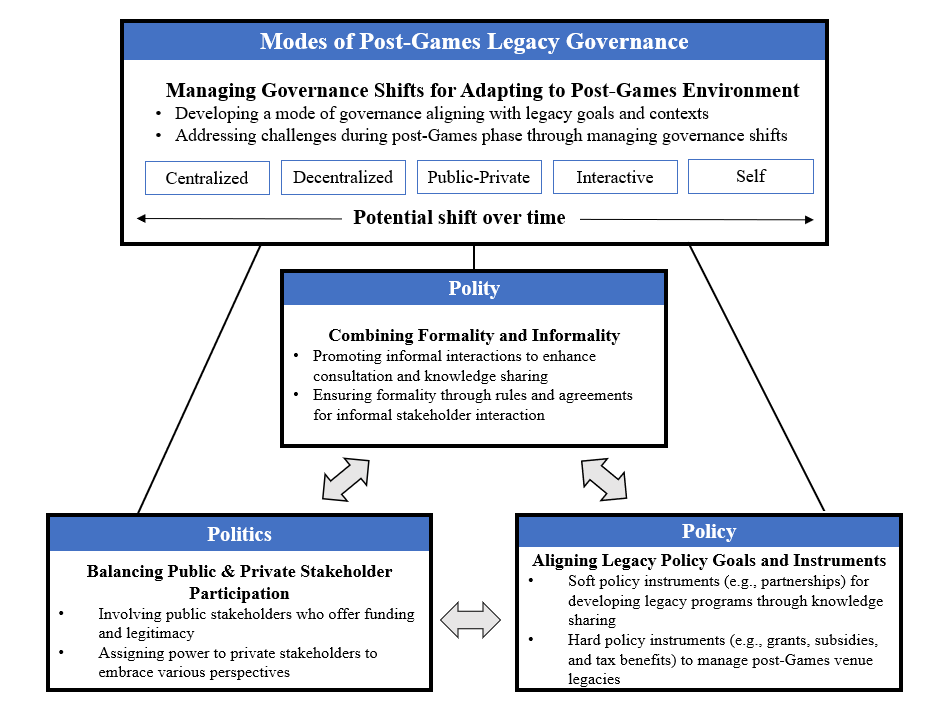
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Table 1. Features of Governance Dimensions that Influence Governance Modes (adapted from Driessen et al., 2012)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Governance Dimensions | Features | Description of Features |
| Politics (Actors) | Key actors initiating action | Any information indicating actors’ involvement in the process of establishment of the legacy organizations and governance systems |
| Stakeholder position (e.g., the level of actors’ autonomy, involvement, and roles) | Any information indicating the relationship, power, and roles of actors |
| Main policy levels at which key actors operate (e.g., national, local, and multiple) | Any information indicating the levels at which key actors operate their legacy programs and policies |
| Key actors’ formal/informal power base (e.g., coercive, legitimacy, trust, etc) | Any information indicating the power of key actors and the sources of their power |
| Polity  (Institutional conditions) | Model of representation (e.g., partnership) | Any information indicating governance forms and models |
| Rules of interaction (i.e., formal or informal) | Any information indicating the actors’ formal/informal interaction |
| Mechanisms of social interaction (e.g., top-down, bottom-up) | Any information indicating how the actors interact within the governance |
| Policy  (Policy content and means of implementation) | Types of pursed goals/targets (e.g., uniform, tailor-made, or integrated goals) | Any information indicating the types and uniformity of legacy goals and targets |
| Instruments used for policy implementation (e.g., legislation, negotiated agreements, contracts) | Any infomration indicating how legacy programs and policies are implemented |
| Policy-science interface (i.e., types of knowledge used for policy preparation, such as expert knowledge or citizens’ knowledge) | Any information indicating the types, sources, and sharing of knowledge used in order to prepare and implement legacy policies and programs |

Figure 1. A Basic Model of the Governance of Post-Games Legacy Organizations



1. Vancouver’s two legacy organizations were selected due to their key role in managing that city’s post-Games legacy (Leopkey and Parent, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)