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# Setting the Olympic Stage for Cultural Programming: An Examination of Exercises in Soft Power and Instances of Institutional Entrepreneurship during London 2012

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## ABSTRACT

This article argues the cultural programming of the Olympics is an exercise in soft power and it illuminates instances of institutional entrepreneurship using London 2012 as a case. Specifically, it reviews and critiques Joseph Nye's concept using explicit Olympic examples. The article highlights new organizational formats using work by Steve Maguire, Cynthia Hardy and Thomas Lawrence to examine the structure of the London Olympic Organizing Committee, creation of the opening ceremony, and the World Shakespeare Festival. Using case study methodology, it explores how the International Olympic Committee and local organizing committee engaged with institutional entrepreneurship during the London 2012 Olympics to create new structures for the organizing committee and implement the cultural programming to exercise soft power. Ultimately, the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games' new, hybrid public-private structure functioned as a resource for the production and implementation of the Games because it impacted autonomy and accountability, which influenced the committee's ability to exercise soft power. This work emphasizes how institutional entrepreneurship activities occurs within large organizations like the International Olympic Committee highlights how institutions consistently change to reflect the needs of stakeholders, but the goals of the Olympic Games remain the same.

## KEY WORDS

Soft power, institutional entrepreneurship, Olympics, London 2012, Arts Festival

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**Tiffany Bourgeois** returns to the Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy as an Assistant Professor of Arts Management. Bourgeois earned both her PhD in Arts Administration, Education and Policy and master's degree in Arts Policy and Administration at Ohio State University. Her scholarly work is grounded in cultural policy, cultural diplomacy, soft power, and large cultural events. Specifically, she examines the relationship between the cultural programming of sports mega-events, cultural organizations, cultural legacy and changes in perception.

Bourgeois' most recent publications can be found in *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, *Visual Inquiry: Learning and Teaching*, and *American Journal of Arts Management*.

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