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To cite this article: Geoffery Z. Kohe , Ai Aramaki , Masami Sekine , Naofumi Masumoto & Leo (Li-Hong) Hsu (2021): Conceptualising *L'Space Olympique*: Tokyo 2020 Olympic education in thought, production and action, Educational Review, DOI: [10.1080/00131911.2021.1874308](https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1874308)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1874308>



Published online: 05 Feb 2021.



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Conceptualising *L'Space Olympique*: Tokyo 2020 Olympic education in thought, production and action

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ABSTRACT

Perennial iterations of Olympic Games, and the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) contractual obligations upon host cities, have prompted development of wide-ranging educational initiatives. Such initiatives draw on the moral idealism of Olympism underpinning the IOC and focus on sport and Physical Education (and other subject areas) as sites in which to teach personal responsibility, social values and civil responsibility. Pedagogical virtues notwithstanding, Olympic education development also serves to illustrate domestic and State acquiescence to the IOC's political imperative to be a leading educational protagonist. Delivery of Olympic education, however, is complex and requires considerable ideological and practical synergies between institutions at international, national and local levels. Yet, institutional coalescence, mutually beneficial partnerships and meaningful experiences for end-users cannot be guaranteed. Accordingly, and furthering scholarly criticism, greater interrogation of Olympic education stakeholder relations is warranted. In this article, we employ a spatial theoretical perspective utilising the work of Henri Lefebvre to provide a means to understand educational stakeholders' connections and activities related to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Drawing primarily on key stakeholders' network activity, and examinations of *Yoi, Don!* (Tokyo2020's flagship project), we present a case study of Olympic education spatial arrangements. In doing so, we conceptualise *L'Space Olympique*; a dynamic site in which Olympic thought attracts distinct stakeholder alliances, produces specific educational modes, and dictates certain forms of participatory action. While aspects of the educational output may be considered merit worthy, critique of Tokyo2020 space reveals ideological incongruities, stakeholder tensions, privileged production forms, and unquestioned consumption and compliance.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 14 April 2020
Accepted 7 January 2021

KEYWORDS

Olympic education; Tokyo 2020; Japan; Lefebvre; space

Introduction

Continued iterations of the Olympic Games, and extensive efforts by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to promote the Olympic movement, have sustained global development of educational initiatives. The IOC, alongside National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and National Olympic Academies (NOAs) invest in supporting and galvanising both the international proliferation of Olympic education programmes and the political power of the organisation as a sport/physical education force. In this task the IOC have been aided by stakeholder alliances with international agencies, transnational organisations, corporate partners, national and local governments, philanthropists and charities. Such collaborations have yielded innovative ventures providing individuals, groups and communities with new access to creative educational enterprises (Chatziefstathiou, 2012b; Naul et al., 2017). Concomitantly, these relationships afford the organisation political and economic leverage to extend their pedagogical push into new terrain. In addition, this work has fortified the IOC's moral legitimacy and educational colonisation, normalised Olympic education as sport ethics pedagogy *par excellence*, privileged sports' roles in facilitating social change, homogenised complex value systems, sanitised social and cultural realities, marginalised alternate ways of being and knowing in sport, and obfuscated accountability, transparency and evaluation (Bullough, 2012; Kohe & Collison, 2019; Lenskyj, 2012).

While scholars have raised concerns with the pedagogical, political and corporate underpinnings of Olympic education, such critiques have not halted the IOC's dominance as a sport/physical education protagonist. Nor, relatedly, has enough attention been drawn to ways in which Olympic education remains largely divorced from prevailing critical pedagogy debates and discourse, both in mainstream education and Physical Education. Merit-worthy aspects of learning and doing through sport aside, clear deficiencies of the IOC's pedagogical projects have been highlighted. Calls have been made for educationalists to adopt more cautious engagement with Olympic education and to pursue approaches that are socially just, democratic, sensitive, contextually nuanced and critical. Scholars have conceptualised criticality in terms of: questioning the status quo; resisting the IOC's institutional power and moral axioms about sport; acknowledging and respecting cultural relativism and localised forms of meaning-making; and better responding to the realities of (specifically, young) peoples' lives (Armour & Dagkas, 2012; Chatziefstathiou, 2012a, 2012b; Hsu & Kohe, 2014; Kohe, 2010).

Drawing on the construction and enactment of Olympic education in Japan, this paper advances scholars' calls to rigorously interrogate the conceptualisation, content and consequences of Olympic education. In the lead up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, organisations in Japan have been collaborating to develop educational resources that both engage people with Olympic principles and attempt to facilitate individuals' dialogue with the larger movement, sport, and wider social issues and concerns. To articulate the complexities of these practices and context, we utilise a theoretical spatial framework drawing on the work of Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991a, 1991b, 1996, 2003; Lefebvre & Régulier, 1986/2004; Shields, 1999) and Yi Fu Tuan (1977) to interrogate the multi-layered interactions between Olympic thought, production, and action. This approach is of value in connecting the metaphysical ideological dimensions (e.g. values, beliefs, moral/altruism imperatives) of the Olympic movement that draw parties together, the structural ways these vested interests manifest (e.g. in Olympic education activities), and how individuals/groups consume/engage with these productions *in situ*.

Adopting a qualitative case study approach, we explore three questions: 1) In what ways have stakeholders coalesced around Olympic ideals? 2) How have stakeholder alliances contributed to forms of educational production? And, 3) what opportunities exist within Olympic productions for participants to exhibit critical agency and action? The paper makes an original contribution to Olympic studies and education intervention debates in two ways. First, the research moves us beyond the prevailing focus on the relationships between Olympic education and Asian and East Asian philosophy (Hsu, 2011; Hsu & Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016; Niehaus, 2011), towards better understanding specific ideological and structural forces and relations informing Olympic education productions. Second, the work offers a useful and unique conceptual framework for interrogating educational spaces as complex settings in which external stakeholders' involvements and private-public partnerships provide promising pedagogical ventures, but also raise concern for the sector's futures. Given that critical pedagogies of Olympic education, particularly in East Asia, remain limited, ultimately, our research also provides a valuable link between sustaining a critical gaze on the Olympic movement and establishing educational landscapes that provoke cogitation, change, and empowerment.

Olympic education: construction and critique

Over the past two decades, some countries have strategically invested in utilising the Olympic Games and Olympism as a pedagogical context and catalyst to promote various forms of learning, skill development and moral instruction. Although definitions vary, teaching and learning activities that educate people (frequently and most often young people) about the Olympic Games, Olympism and Olympic movement may be conceptualised as Olympic education (Armour & Dagkas, 2012; Barker et al., 2012; Chatziefstathiou, 2012a). Often, the development of Olympic education is precipitated by an applicant or host city's intentions to bid for a forthcoming iteration of the Summer, Winter or Youth Olympic Games. Educational production in this regard is not necessarily borne out of genuine need, interest or desire from State, domestic or local educational providers, but rather has genesis in the IOC's contractual imperatives that mandate host cities deliver an education and cultural programme that promotes sport and Olympism. Notwithstanding nascent initiatives developed in the late 20th century, the onset of the 21st century saw a substantial increase in the quantity, quality and scope of Olympic educational material, and emergence of key global leaders, trends and modes (Culpan & Wigmore, 2010; Teetzel, 2012).

Although not associated with a prospective host city application, noteworthy in the first instance were the series of Olympic education initiatives developed in New Zealand during the early 2000s. As joint ventures between the Ministry of Education, curriculum writers, New Zealand Olympic Committee and New Zealand Olympic Academy, the resources were the first mandated into the national curriculum and used state-wide as part of Physical Education and Health, and later Social Studies provision (Kohe, 2010). Further pedagogical innovation was evidenced prior to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in the United Kingdom. Here, as part of the campaign to "Inspire a Generation", the London Olympic Games Organising Committee (LOCOG) created an ambitious and pioneering educational programme to encourage enthusiasm for the event, provide a diverse resource for a variety of stakeholders across the educational spectrum, and demonstrate a commitment to wider

issues related to legacy, youth investment and national sport/physical activity policy (Bloyce & Lovett, 2012; Bullough, 2012; Devine, 2013). Entitled “Get Set” (<http://www.getset.co.uk/>), and forged in collaboration with the British Olympic Association (BOA), British Paralympic Association (BPA), Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Ministry of Education and commercial partners, the website not only fulfilled LOCOG’s educational obligations, but also established a framework, central resource, and network portal for use beyond the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Bullough, 2012; Postlethwaite et al., 2018). *Get Set* was revised for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games and has now provided the model for subsequent Olympic Games host cities. For example, Sochi’s 2014 *Olympic Lessons Project*, Rio de Janeiro’s 2016 *Transforma* campaign, Pyeong Chang’s 2018 *New Horizons*, and Tokyo 2020’s *Yoi, Don!* initiative (the focus of this article). These latest programmes continue development of Olympic-related resources, make formal and informal curricula connections, and encourage individual and collective promotion of the Olympic Games and movement’s values. Taken in totality these educational productions represent a substantive resource and consolidate the IOC and National Olympic entities as key protagonists within the global sport, physical and moral education landscape.

As Olympic Games continue, educational critique has been sustained. Scholars have taken umbrage with the overt and implicit ways Olympic education has been aligned and incorporated within schools’ Physical Education provision (Kohe, 2015; Naul, 2008; Petrie, 2017). Strong concerns have also been expressed with regards to the overarching stakeholder hierarchies that enable Olympic organisers to capitalise on school spaces, the use of Olympic education as a proxy that legitimises corporate stakeholders’ educational presence, the privileging of an immutable Western-values model, and the inherent bias towards pro-sport and pro-Olympic perspectives (Chatziefstathiou & Henry, 2012; Devine, 2013; Lenskyj, 2012). Drawing on the context of New Zealand, Petrie (2017) notes the current overemphasis on Olympic education to drive moral education and practical instruction within Physical Education has done the sub-discipline and its practitioners few favours. Rather than raise the quality and relevance of Physical Education in schools, Olympic education has merely added confusion and further obligations to those that already exists.

Debates notwithstanding, the prevailing academic discourse is that the normalised presence of Olympic education has placed practitioners, willingly or otherwise, as Olympic movement advocates and positioned young people as avid consumers of Olympic rhetoric. Such a framing of Olympic education can be located within prevailing Education and Physical Education discourses over mediating neoliberal influence and corporate interventionism, sustaining critical pedagogies and practices, and encouraging ethical turns towards an ethics of social justice and empowerment (Ball, 2012; Giroux, 2009, 2011, 2016; Kincheloe, 2008; Kohe & Collison, 2019; Powell, 2020).

Within the broader discipline of Education, for example, scholars have noted the substantial shifts towards a model of sector management and practice evermore closely contoured by an amalgam of “free”/competitive market principles that blur lines between State/Public provision and private sector intervention and control (Ball, 2016; Golden, 2018; Kincheloe, 2008; Tett & Hamilton, 2019). Irrespective of differences in the driving forces, consequences and contexts, the encroachment of neoliberalism in education has been evidenced across the globe. While the mechanics of neoliberalism are complex, and outcomes take many forms, there is general agreement that the current state of play has

been brought about by capitalist political economies that have precipitated the gradual erosion of Public sectors and their resources, the concomitant growth and strengthening of corporate/commercial industry, and a resulting normalisation and legitimisation of Public-Private-Partnerships to fill sector needs and deficiencies (Ball, 2010, 2016; Ball & Youdell, 2009; Giroux, 2016; Kincheloe, 2008; Tett & Hamilton, 2019).

The work of Ball and Youdell (2009), and Ball (2010, 2016), has further noted that the enactment of neoliberalism in Public education has played out in two distinct, yet interrelated, ways. One is via *Endogenous* privatisation (in essence, the deployment of commercialisation/corporate techniques, management frameworks and performance related efficiencies). The consequences of which are outlined best in Ritzer et al.'s (2018) ongoing work on the “*McDonaldization*” of education and Giroux's (2009, 2011, 2016) articulation of conspicuous corporate consumption and commodification of contemporary school spaces. The other means is *Exogenous* privatisation (which equates, generally, to the formation and proliferation of Public-Private-Partnership, outsourcing services to the private realm, and private intervention in policy development, implementation, and evaluation).

Notwithstanding overlaps between the two privatisation modes, in conjunction both have reshaped the education sector in notable ways. These include, variously: the (re) creation of education spaces and work undertaken therein as commodities and commodifiable; the prioritisation and subordination of certain educational and pedagogical practices; altering teachers' understanding of their work, roles and value; influencing policy implementation and curriculum design; and, most importantly, altering the underlying ethical and moral principles that shape young peoples' educational experiences (Ball, 2016; Ball & Youdell, 2009). An understanding of exogenous privatisation, in this paper, is particularly useful to interrogating the Public-Private interplay entertained between State education actors in Japan and Tokyo, the Tokyo 2020 Local Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (TOCOG) and corporate partners in the formation of *Yoi, Don!*, and situating Olympic Education within a more disconcerting neoliberal education landscape. Moreover, the work draws our attention towards the need for continued advocacy to confront neoliberal encroachment and to the responsibilities we have, as scholars and pedagogues, to remain critically and politically engaged in education as, first and foremost, an ethical and moral enterprise. This ethos harmonises with our advocacy for Olympic education reform and transformation.

Debates and concerns over neoliberalism have been paralleled within the sub-discipline of Physical Education (and the related domains of school sport and physical activity policy) (Adams & Robinson, 2019; Evans, 2014; Evans & Davies, 2015; Dagkas, 2019; Gard, 2015; Kohe, 2010; Kohe & Collison, 2019; Lenskyj, 2012; Piggin, 2019; Powell, 2015). Here, there has been related emphasis on articulating Physical Education and school sport as a fertile ground for corporate colonisation through the perpetuation (and, in the case of Olympic education, celebration) of Public-Private alliances. Scholars have identified that Physical Education and school sport (which in many countries and contexts occupies a liminal and precarious space in the curriculum), has been particularly susceptible to neoliberalism and its consequences. While attention has been given to the endogenous aspects (for example, the realignment of Physical Education and sport policy, curriculum design and performance outcomes with neo-liberal market imperatives (Evans, 2014; Evans & Davies, 2015; Kohe, 2010; Pope, 2014), focus has also been on the exogenous privatisation “creep” that has enabled an array of corporate and

philanthropic stakeholders (often under the guise of civic altruism, community development and/or social responsibility) to establish footholds in school spaces. This includes, for example: outsourcing specific forms of sport and physical activity to external providers; enabling corporate or philanthropic organisations to sponsor equipment, programmes or initiatives; forging alliance with quasi-educational economic and political entities; and participating in corporate-orientated programmes as part of daily subject provision (Adams & Robinson, 2019; Gard, 2015; Piggan, 2019; Teetzel, 2012). Such is the extent of exogeny that many partnerships have become entrenched as “invaluable” resources to schools and teachers and, in times of Public sector austerity, vital for sustaining the subject and the enrichment and meaningfulness of students’ experiences therein.

As we interrogate with *Yoi, Don!* in this paper, Olympic education provides one case to exemplify some of the characteristics of neoliberal education in the contemporary moment and the increasing ubiquity with which corporate partnerships can be and are readily absorbed within education settings. In doing so, this paper also adds to the existing tranche of critics who have stressed the need to reconfigure Olympic education *anew*. In essence, countering the status quo requires acknowledging merits of Olympic-related learning, but also encouraging more honest, reflexive, inclusive and rigorous dialogues of the Olympics, sport, physical activity and roles associated values play in young people’s lives (Chatziefstathiou, 2012b; Kohe & Chatziefstathiou, 2017). Through these encouragements, and the suggestion to consider ideological alignments, stakeholder connections, and alternative ways of meaning making, we take forth in this paper and the theoretical framework we adopt to analyse Tokyo 2020’s Olympic education approach.

Theorising *L’Space Olympique*

Scholars have respectively examined the moral, pedagogical, institutional, policy, cultural and corporate dimensions of Olympic education (Chatziefstathiou, 2011, 2012a, 2012b; Culpán & Wigmore, 2010; Lenskyj, 2012; Monin, 2012; Naul, 2008). These varied perspectives have interrogated philosophical merits of Olympic education, explored congruencies between parallel ethical models of physical culture, situated the IOC’s educational investments within its broader corporate imperatives, evaluated content quality, and connected Olympic education practices to wider domestic and global agendas. Often adopting different macro, meso and micro foci, this work has underscored an educational landscape rich in ideals, ideologues and initiatives, but ethically and politically moribund in terms of pedagogical substance, shared knowledge construction and ownership, and transformative vision. Accordingly, a spatial analysis is warranted that might expose these tensions and reveal sites for new pedagogical possibilities. Such analysis aligns with wider work by critical pedagogues on the importance of creating meaningful educational spaces that facilitate transformative learning, knowing and doing (Alhadeff-Jones, 2016; Bajaj, 2015).

Notwithstanding varied uses of the term, space has become an instrumental concept in the examination of human lives, communities and social systems. Here, the work of cultural theorists and sociologists, among others, has established the value of interrogating space from interdisciplinary and intersectional dimensions, and exploring the ideological, structural and agential conditions that produce what spaces are, and how they are respectively engaged with, navigated, negotiated and/or resisted. Not only have scholars identified space as a dynamic, fluid and nuanced construct, there is recognised consensus

about ways specific spaces (e.g. in communities, education, sport, religion, health, and other areas of social life) are inherently political and politicised. With regards to sport and Physical Education, research has illustrated the construction of a complex educational commons comprised of multifarious stakeholders and agendas aligned around shared resources and ambitions, and that is contoured by competing and conflicting interests (Adams & Robinson, 2019; Powell, 2019). Beyond this, scholars have advanced philosophical and holistic appreciations (Gleseking et al., 2014; Sheilds, 1999; Studdert & Walkerdine, 2016). Conceptualised philosophically, space can be understood as a metaphysical project; an entity that comes into being in the ether of human thought systems that may then be temporally and spatially anchored. Commencing with a philosophical rendering of space it is possible to consider the Olympic movement/Olympic education as a locale conceived out of and of certain sport and educational ideals (we return to this thread shortly).

The spatial analysis we utilise is adopted from the work of Henri Lefebvre and peers (Lefebvre, 1991a, 1991b, 1996, 2003; Lefebvre & Régulier, 1986/2004; Sheilds, 1999). Although not divorced from existential realism, as a cultural geographer, philosopher and social critic, Lefebvre advocated moving beyond conventional renderings of space (specifically, *L'espace*) framed exclusively on the physical and temporal dimensions. For Lefebvre, space could initially be understood metaphysically (Lefebvre, 1991a, 1996; Lefebvre & Régulier, 1986/2004). Here, also we acknowledge the earlier precedents regarding transcendental notions of space set in the influential work of Yi Fu Tuan (1977). Spatial coalescences, Tuan noted, had ideological/thought genesis and sprang forth from intellectual discourse, knowledge exchange and imagination. Like Tuan, Lefebvre appreciated the difficulties of metaphysical conceptions alone and advanced the need for complex interpretations. Such interpretations would account also for: 1) socio-cultural and historical forces and concepts (with regard to Olympic education, shared constructs around sport values); 2) structural concepts (e.g. sport-based global community formation and moral altruism); 3) power relations and institutional connections (e.g. IOC and United Nations, sport-for-development and peace stakeholder alliances); and, 4) processes of reproduction and consumption (for example, the proliferation of Olympic projects such as the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP – discussed later)) (Lefebvre, 1996; Lefebvre & Régulier, 1986/2004; Sheilds, 1999). Acknowledgement of the metaphysical and philosophical value of collective thought, and the processes by which it morphs into tangible realities, is thus of use for examining Olympism as an ideology, the (re)production of that ideology in education, and the enabling/disabling of spaces to regenerate Olympic thought. The notion of *L'Espace Olympique* we establish in this paper provides means to articulate these connections between thinking, producing and actioning Olympic education as a pedagogical project.

Recognising the non-linear interplay of ideas, practices and acts within space, Lefebvre considered thought foundational to *L'Espace*. Our interest, therefore, focuses on key ideas and discourses that constitute Olympism and Olympic education as a philosophical enterprise. At the basic level, this comprises concepts such as fair play, trust, sportsmanship, ethical integrity, cultural understanding/camaraderie, peace and unity. Beyond, this also includes the articulation and promotion of holistic values and imperatives (e.g. “the joy found in effort”, mottos such as “citius, altius, fortius”, and placing sport at the service of humanity *ad nauseum*) (Naul et al., 2017). Although intangible ideas may, Lefebvre appreciated, be difficult to evidence, they

manifest (and could be effectively sensed) in discernible ways; namely, in processes of social transmission through and across institutions (e.g. in social/media networks, online spaces, organisational material) and in what ideas people and groups endorsed and/or inhibited. For example, what IOC, NOCs, National Olympic Academies (NOA), sponsors and educational entities say and/or do not say about Olympism and the Olympic games, and their associated (re)presentational praxis (for instance, the routine maintenance and preservation of Olympism over time).

That Olympic education represents a distinct thought project is well established and its political underpinnings have been noted and critiqued (Chatziefstathiou, 2012a, 2012b). Of value here is that *L'Space Olympique* does not exist in isolation or in perpetuity. Rather, its survival relies on continuous contemporary production (and with that, framing of Olympic education as pedagogical craft) by willing stakeholders and conspicuous consumption by compliant Olympic learners. Production space entails a melange of institutions, structures and systems that individually and collectively come together around Olympic thought and contribute to the sustainability of that same space. Contributors here include, primarily, the IOC, NOCs, NOAs, IFS, Olympic Games organising committees, Olympic ambassadors, United Nations organisations, corporate sponsors, charitable organisations, non-governmental sport organisations, formal and informal education providers, museums and cultural organisations, athletes, coaches, managers and administrators. All of which, to varying degrees, contribute to contouring *L'Space Olympique*. This said, the megalithic, amorphic and dynamic structure of the Olympic movement entails ever-changing spatial flux. We respect that at any one point it is only possible to articulate a snapshot of the roles and relationships between sets of stakeholders in the production space, their respective and collective interpretation of thought, and ways they frame forms of action (in this case, how Olympic education is “done”, “by whom” and “to whom”). Although production within *L'Space Olympique* necessitates acts of consumption, educational colonisation is not *a fait accompli*, and possibilities do exist for political intervention, reaction and inaction that may augment and/or disrupt the existing spatial terrain. We return to these thoughts later in the paper.

With regards to action, the emphasis is in examining how ideals and production modes are represented in individuals, groups and communities' experiences *in situ*. More specifically, within education contexts, spatial pedagogues note, attention to action usefully highlights issues of empowerment, knowledge ownership, criticality and social justice/citizenship (Ford, 2016; Zane, 2015). For *L'Space Olympique*, action comprises two key components. First, efforts made by Olympic educators to craft spaces for young people to explore sport, and interactions participants have with Olympic education material. Second, opportunities that exist for individuals to critically appraise and transform existing regimes of truth and knowledge schemas (in this case, what is and can be known about sport and the Olympic movement). Congruent with Lefebvre's conceptualisation of the “third space” in which action sites were intended to be transformative and drive aspirations towards social activism and change, our examination focuses on ways existing Olympic education practices in Japan challenge knowledge and ways of thinking about Olympic beliefs, values and practices.

In engaging with Lefebvre based on his geographic spatial analysis and its utility for interrogating Olympic-framed space, we also acknowledge his parallel contribution to rethinking in education and pedagogy. Middleton (2017), for example, establishes Lefebvre as a progressive educationalist whose writings and politics brought about new ways of thinking vis-à-vis pedagogical reform, critical agency and transformative learning environments.

Lefebvre's spatial consideration provides, Middleton (2017) and others (e.g. Alhadeff-Jones, 2016; Brown, 2017; Gulson & Symes, 2007) suggest, a way of understanding forces acting upon education sites, and also how ideas, structures and practices (e.g. "technocratic rationality", organisational power and hegemonic knowledge formations) may be disrupted, challenged and replaced. Similarly, Brown (2017) adds that Lefebvre's "spatial triad" (composed of representations of space, spatial representations and spatial practice) offers a means to create alternative educational spaces that are meaningful and empowering to constituent individuals and groups. We have embodied this intersectional geographic-educational thinking in our spatial framework.

Our approach

Adopting an interpretivist approach informed by critical pedagogy (Breunig, 2005; Culpan & Wigmore, 2010; Freire, 2001; Giroux, 2016, 2017), sport and social justice (Jansson & Koch, 2017; Kohe & Collison, 2019) and stakeholder theory scholarship (Miles, 2017), the focus was to examine conceptualisation, implementation and engagements related to a specific set of education resources developed for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games for use in Japan. Specifically, our starting point has been to understand some of the ideological forces, social and cultural realities, political relationships, and specificities of context that comprise the Tokyo 2020 Olympic education programme. Our interest has not only been revealing some of the features of the Olympic education landscape, but to be encouraged by critical scholars who have advocated for academics (and practitioners) to challenge existing practices and hegemonies (for example, the IOC's ability to shape national Physical Education and sport spaces) and to protect the moral and ethical core education and young peoples' experience. In our critical advocacy we also acknowledge the ongoing work that has similarly underscored sport as a valued space in which to interrogate social meanings, forms of belonging, political participation, and in/equality.

Through critical pedagogical and social justice perspectives it is possible to appreciate Olympic education not as a benign entity, but as a more complex project precipitated and sustained by certain sets of forces, actors and relations that have normalised and legitimised its presence in sport and education contexts. As such, our approach is also informed by stakeholder research that has, variously, highlighted the inherent power relations and bias that exist within organisational collaborations (here, between the IOC, Tokyo 2020 Local Organising Committee, and educational providers), the mutual and individual benefits and risks of stakeholder partnerships, and the challenges for sustaining organisational relationships over time.

Reflecting the intersectional and contextual dynamics of our research focus, a qualitative case study approach (Merriam, 1988, 2009; Yinn, 2014) was used to articulate some of the key ideologies, production features and relationships that comprise the Tokyo 2020 Olympic education schema. Our approach followed the particularistic, descriptive and heuristic characteristics of qualitative case study design. First, the design was particularistic in concentrating on the lead up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympiad (the four years proceeding an Olympic and Paralympic Games) and the Tokyo 2020 Games as the temporal and spatial research context. The Tokyo Olympiad, to note, was initially scheduled from April 1 2020 to March 31 2024. However, the commencement, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, were postponed by

1 year due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The descriptive criteria of the case study are fulfilled by providing and enriching discussion of the phenomena of Olympic education collaboration and resource production. Moreover, we add to debate vis-à-vis questioning construction of spaces of Olympic knowledge, prevailing ways of conceiving moral pedagogy in and through sport and Physical Education, and conditions that enable or inhibit young peoples' education potential and freedoms. To do so, we have drawn on close engagements with stakeholders within this context, critical appraisal of Olympic resources and scholarly scepticism towards the promises of Olympic education to its constituents. Adding to this, we address the heuristic dimensions by offering a description synthesised with the earlier mentioned theoretical framework. We produce a three-fold critique that reveals and illustrates specific intersections and complexities with regards to the coalescence of pedagogical ideas, establishment of educational partnership, modes of production and possibilities for knowledge transformation.

The primary material for the research comprised physical and online teaching and learning resources developed by key Tokyo 2020 Olympic education stakeholders (namely, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Institutions and TOCOG) in the lead up to and during the Olympiad. Physical material was sourced from the papers' authors utilising gatekeepers, formal and informal networks and publicly available and accessible documents. Documents included curriculum guidelines, subject-specific classroom and teacher resource kits and guidance notes, activity sheets, event plans, media reports related to the rollout of the Olympic programme, and general Olympic education material (sourced via the IOC and previous Olympic host city educational websites). Documents were obtained that were published in English and Japanese. Where immediate translations of documents in English were not available, translation and back-translation took place within the research team to authenticate and validate resource descriptions, meanings and intentions. Online material was gathered primarily from the official website for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic education programme (<https://education.tokyo2020.org/en/>, accessed 10 December 2019) hosted by TOCOG.

While most resources were specific to the formal TOCOG programme, additional resources related to nascent Tokyo 2020 education projects were also reviewed. Auxiliary websites of the Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Japanese Olympic Committee were consulted to triangulate information and augment research data. In line with the interpretivist nature of the research, and spatial conceptualisation, the documents were analysed independently and collectively by the research team with emphasis placed on articulating seminal contextual and structural features and characteristics germane to the case study focus. The subsequent examination is presented below utilising the general theoretical schema of thought, production and action.

Discussion: deconstructing *L'Space Olympique*

We examine three key aspects of the creation and implementation of a set of Tokyo 2020 Olympic education initiatives. First, within the thought space we interrogate the coalescences of stakeholders forged around the ideological Olympic project. Second, we examine the emergent forms and content of Olympic production. We then critique the action possibilities therein.

L'Space Olympique thought

The ideological underpinnings of Olympic education derive, as the IOC assert, in the philosophy of Olympism; essentially, a loose conceptual schema framed by the notion of shared universal values related to sport, education, culture and global citizenship. Notwithstanding critique, promotion of Olympism provides the IOC, NOCs, Organising Committees and Olympic Games host nations a moral imperative and socially acceptable/appealing means to advance a variety of Olympic causes. As Kretchmar (1994) notes, values are socially desirable moral “goods” that encompass a diverse, and fluid, spectrum of personality traits and collective human motives (e.g. honesty, affection, conscientiousness, courage, justice). Within Olympism, the IOC have decided core values include the following: excellence, friendship, respect, fair play, tolerance, solidarity, equality, taking part, non-discrimination, and character development (IOC, 2017). To these are also added a set of Paralympic values: courage, determination, inspiration and equality. Underpinning these core values are related sentiments that sport is innately “good”, all benefit from sport democratically, and that these values are best realised through investment in sport practice (specifically Olympic consumption).

In considering the state of Olympic education promotion in Japan, we acknowledge contemporary debates in recent decades that have interrogated the congruence, disjuncture and possibilities between Olympic and Asian and East Asian philosophic traditions (Hsu, 2000, 2011; Hsu & Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016; Hsu & Kohe, 2014; Niehaus, 2011; Niehaus & Tagsold, 2013). Writing from varied Asian contexts, researchers have recognised the progression of the Olympic movement and its philosophy across the region as an exemplar of the spread of dominant, colonial and colonising, Western knowledge, logics, ethics and cultural practices. Beyond transmitting the practice and development of modern sport (MacAloon, 2013; Mangan, 2011), scholars contend the Olympic movement and its underlying virtues-based framework of “universal” humanistic values have brought an ideological model to sport that has been super-imposed over (and largely supplanted) existing philosophic and ethic traditions (Hsu, 2000; Hsu & Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016; Niehaus, 2011).

The issue, generally, is not that Western sporting ethics (buoyed by notions of “fair play”, “trust”, “respect” and “non-discrimination” etc.) are incompatible with Eastern and/or Asian ethical perspectives. Rather, that non-Western philosophies of sport and physical culture do not, necessarily, assume these ideals as a starting point. Moreover, that while there may be a compatibility of some concepts vis-à-vis aspiring for greater social unity and harmony, valuing the mind and body, and developing peaceful societies, in Eastern and Asian contexts these have emerged in varying ways (e.g. through Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shinto and Christian traditions), have been taught differently, and are understood, internalised and expressed in many varying forms (Dong et al., 2018; Hsu, 2011; Mangan et al., 2018). Furthermore, due to varying local/national histories, state/imperial governance, socio-cultural practices (e.g. family life, kinship, social relations and physical activity tendencies), the ways sport may be seen as a vehicle for moral and ethical instruction may take forms that jar with Western practices and thinking.

Nonetheless, there exists shared acknowledgement that Asian philosophical frameworks can align with and work in conjunction with a modernised interpretation of Olympism. Subsequently, scholars within the region have called for transformative engagements with

Olympic philosophy that move beyond immutable Western-orientated values and adopt reflexive, critical and locally contextualised approaches that present the Olympic model as *one* framework that sits in dialogue with existing knowledge regimes (Hsu & Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016; Niehaus, 2011; Ren, 2004).

Critique of the Western orientation of Olympic education and its roles within the global colonising project (in which a “universal” values system has been disseminated, infiltrated and readily accepted within an array of educational landscapes) (Chatziefstathiou & Henry, 2012; Hoberman, 1995; MacAloon, 2013; Naul et al., 2017), can also be situated within wider concerns about Western and hegemonic cultural logics within Japanese education traditions and structures (Anderson et al., 2020; Hammine, 2019; Oba, 2010; Saito, 2020; Zhen et al., 2020). Scholars here have highlighted both the notable, though slow, advancements Japan’s education systems have undergone towards adopting international outlooks, and the challenges the sector still faces with regards to implementing policy and structural reforms (Yamamoto, 2018). The paradox, also, is that while the educational sector has embraced internationalisation in teaching training, school settings, curriculum development, and student experiences (Saito, 2020; Zhen et al., 2020), there remain tensions over meaningful postcolonial/imperial shifts that might disrupt conventional regimes, and empower teachers and students in new ways. For example, acknowledgement of indigenous narratives and related alternative knowledge paradigms, or appreciations for critical historical revisionism regarding the country’s 20th and 21st century developments and transnational relations (Anderson et al., 2020; Hammine, 2019).

As explored below, such juxtapositions and issues are evident in the ways *Yoi, Don!* navigates global citizenship and respect for mono-cultural national traditions and values. Japan’s education trajectory can also be contextualised within the encroachment of neoliberal shifts in the education sector seen elsewhere that have endorsed free-market enterprise and wider stakeholder engagements in pedagogical practice, provision and outcomes (Oba, 2010). In emphasising a version of post-colonial, altruistic, cosmopolitan citizenry – that simultaneously aligns with ideals about a progressive outward-looking hospitable Japan – the incorporation of Olympic education projects is in synergy with both wider educational directions and the intertwining of the sector with Japan’s underlying political and cultural economy.

While debatable constructs, the point here is that the philosophical ideals form the metaphysical and intellectual (thought) space of Olympic education. For Olympic stakeholders in Japan they provide a common language and vocabulary of civic literacy and global citizenship around which entities can orientate shared interests, investments, resources and power. For Tokyo 2020 stakeholders, ideological investment was also congruent with stated individual organisational missions and imperatives to support and promote engagement in the Olympic movement (<https://tokyo2020.org/en/>, accessed 24 March 2020). Nonetheless, having a shared set of ideals to work with did not automatically lead to consensus on how stakeholders might best engage with OVEP, adopt cultural relevant applications of Olympism, or address some of the established concerns about the global relevance of Olympic education.

In the first instance, and accelerated after Tokyo won the Olympic bid, stakeholders in Japan have coalesced around the OVEP. Similar to the domestic efforts made with *GetSet* (the online educational resource developed for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games), OVEP includes free and accessible resources created by the IOC’s educational team to explore

values-based learning using sport, educate young people on the Olympic values, and ultimately celebrate all that is believed to be good about the Olympic movement (<https://www.olympic.org/olympic-values-and-education-program>, accessed 12 February 2020). In promoting OVEP, and in collaboration with international bodies such as the United Nations, Red Cross, World Health Organisation and corporate partners, the IOC have also strategically aligned ideals to contemporary social discourses around healthy lifestyles and communities, social justice, human rights, sustainability, environmental protection, safety and welfare, equality and inclusion. Tokyo 2020 stakeholders' adherence to OVEP doctrine echoes the considerable global popularity the programme has gained in a variety of education settings as a moral pedagogy and physical praxis resource (Naul et al., 2017). Irrespective of OVEP's philosophical mission, the ideological scope has been advantageous in drawing broad investors in Japan to the Olympic cause. Most significant of the collaborative efforts has been production of a bespoke Japanese-language version of OVEP.

As has been identified previously (e.g. Adams & Robinson, 2019; Kohe & Collison, 2019; Piggin, 2019), the philosophical underpinnings of sport fuel organisational investment and intensification of stakeholder relations. In the lead up to Tokyo 2020, for example, and concomitant with host city obligations, OVEP provided a catalyst for stakeholder coalescence and interaction in pursuit of developing Japan/Tokyo specific Olympic education initiatives. Subsequent to the IOC releasing a renewed version (OVEP 2.0) in 2016, there was further discussion among Tokyo Olympic stakeholders regarding the need for a domestically appropriate programme version. The initial priority of this was to translate OVEP into Japanese settings and modify the content to ensure wide appeal and uptake with domestic audiences. The task brought together the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), Japan Olympic Academy (JOA), the Center for Olympic Research and Education (CORE) at the University of Tsukuba, and the Culture and Education Committee of the Tokyo 2020 OCOG. Additional key stakeholders include the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Japan Sport Agency. Ultimately, the Japanese OVEP production project led by the JOC, and supported by CORE and the JOA, was significantly governed by TOCOG's authorisation of specific Olympic and Paralympic education programmes and the pre-existing nationwide Olympic and Paralympic movement project initiated by the Japan Sport Agency in 2015.

In addition to the time and resources needed for programme development, in the conceptual phase, three key concerns about the philosophical basis of the collective project were identified. First, ambiguities existed around comparable/interchangeable terminologies such as "Olympic games education", "Olympic education", "Olympism education", "Olympic movement education" and "Olympic values education". Semantic complexities are not surprising, particularly in multi-organisational collaborations, and difficulties of working with "shared" concepts and assumptions in sport have been already well noted (see Hughes et al., 2019). Yet, definitional clarity and consensus mattered in ensuring stakeholders could form a shared understanding and vocabulary that could be consistently applied through the Tokyo 2020 Olympic education program. The issue was further exacerbated by the need to translate concepts into Japanese. For example, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Education programme is referred to simply as オリンピック・パラリンピック教育. A variation that omits the "and", but in so doing collapses distinctions between the two movements' respective values systems.

Second, concerns were shared with regards to the cultural translation of the global program into the domestic setting, and the country's relatively ethnically homogenous youth population. Which movement activities, for example, might best promote key ideals and resonate with Japanese young people yet, paradoxically, also develop individuals'/communities' global awareness and cultural sensitivities? Such questions became, and have remained, paramount as collaborative ventures are undertaken. Third, mutual investment in Olympic ideology promotion has prompted consideration of the utility and relevance of using elite professional athletes and sport mega events to teach young people morality. Such concerns have been exacerbated by sustained criticism of the sport industry, sports' impact on young people, and resources leveraged by the Olympic movement to push its civic imperatives.

For Tokyo 2020 Olympic education stakeholders *L'Space Olympique* is an ideologically enriched landscape of values, beliefs and concepts to work with and collaborate around. The common organisational and philosophical language crafted by the IOC and its affiliates has, in this task, been instrumental in crafting a metaphysical educational and social enterprise that stakeholders believe worthy of investment and resource. Yet, while stakeholders may share common interests in the space and unite around common projects, the space is dynamic and organisational priorities and partnerships can and do change. In addition, as organisational scholars remind (Miles, 2017), the specific motives of stakeholders within collaborative ventures are not always transparent or consistent and are politically-laden as parties work to also advance their own agendas. Within this study, ongoing questions remain about value promotion strategies, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, communication and leadership, and accountability within the production processes. As explored in the next section, such concerns need to be, and are being, worked through in *L'Space Olympique* production.

L'Space Olympique production

Although individual organisational and educational protagonists have served as Olympism advocates, Japan has not been at the forefront of national Olympic education development (as has occurred with New Zealand, Greece and the United Kingdom). Prior to the awarding of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic games in 2013, Japan's Olympic education efforts could be considered minimal, fragmented and piecemeal both in quality, quantity and content. Foundational and substantive educational efforts were made in response to Tokyo hosting the country's first Summer Olympic Games in 1964 (Masumoto, 2012), and first Winter Olympic Games in Sapporo in 1972. In both instances, and under the auspices of promoting internationalisation and the English language, the Ministry of Education established specialist education teams to develop resources to disseminate Olympism within respective metropolitan regions. Similar efforts were replicated in 1998 when Nagano hosted the country's second Winter Olympic Games. Notwithstanding these projects, there remained limited continuous or systematic promotion of educational activities via the JOC and JOA (largely due to lack of financial resources, strategic investment, collaborative vision and perceived need) and marginal interest within schools and Physical Education curricula. Moreover, there were even fewer efforts made developing Paralympic education. Yet, the onset of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic

and Paralympic Games, and the existence of OVEP, have provided the momentum for Tokyo/Japan specific Olympic education material.

While *L'Espace Olympique* has involved many contributors, the organisational arrangements and production hierarchies are predicated on established legal and political frameworks. Specifically, to ensure IOC control over the protection of the Olympic brand and to maintain the legitimacy and validity of work being carried out in the Olympic name, the Tokyo Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (TOCOG) has supreme authority; particularly in regards to the authentication of projects. This authority extends to setting the overarching agendas of educational production. Here, in January 2014 TOCOG established the three key concepts framing the delivery of the Olympic and Paralympic Games: 1) "Achieving Personal Best"; 2) "Unity in Diversity"; and 3) 'Connecting to Tomorrow' (<https://www.paralympic.org/tokyo-2020>, accessed 19 January 2020). While promoting all concepts remains important, Tokyo Olympic education stakeholders have embraced "Unity in Diversity" as the central pillar. As TOCOG notes of the theme:

Accepting and respecting differences in race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, level of ability or other status allows peace to be maintained and society to continue to develop and flourish. The Tokyo 2020 Games will foster a welcoming environment and raise awareness of unity in diversity among citizens of the world. (<https://tokyo2020.org/en/games/games-vision/>, accessed 19 January 2020)

Subsequently, and echoing the design, focus and content of London 2012's *Get Set* and Rio de Janeiro 2016's *Transforma* programmes, TOCOG created *Yoi, Don!* ("Get Set, Ready, Go"). With the help of corporate sponsors, *Yoi, Don!* serves as an umbrella entity for a raft of different local, metropolitan, regional and national Olympic education initiatives and collaborations. Ultimately, the overarching intentions of *Yoi, Don!* are to foster young peoples' social and moral development as they experience and learn the values of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and the power of sports. The aim is met with threefold objectives focusing on: 1) Confidence and courage; 2) Appreciation for diversity; and, 3) proactive participation in society.

Yoi, Don! delivery is supported by a key partnership between the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Japan Sports Association, with indirect support from three local Universities (Tsukuba, Waseda and Nippon Sports University). While there are not direct relationships between the *Yoi, Don!* programme and the three university projects commissioned by the Japan Sports Agency, each of the schools supported by the three universities in the Japan Sports Agency's project has been accredited as a *Yoi, Don!* school. The partnership has led to development of an extensive online resource for schools, teachers and young people, as well as a range of curricula-specific booklets aligning Olympic education with State qualifications frameworks, key skill sets and achievement objectives. The project follows closely efforts elsewhere to give legitimacy and profile to Olympic thought and normalise its presence and use as a model of moral instruction. Although the content and utility of the Tokyo 2020 resources has not yet been duly scrutinised, national uptake has been notable. Through the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education (<https://www.olympic.org/news/tokyo-2020-goes-nationwide-with-ambitious-education-programme>, accessed

15 January 2020), the programme has been rolled out in all public schools in Tokyo, and some private institutions.

Yoi, Don! comprises four key projects: the “Smile project”; “Dream and future project”; “Global friendship project”; and, “The Youth Volunteers project”. Although each of the educational programmes have different objectives, they all come under the auspices of TOCOG and its unified Olympic and Paralympic Education programme. Distinct from previous Olympic education programmes, as a character building and self-awareness initiative, the Smile project has been specifically designed to improve young people’s appreciation of individuals with disabilities and disability sport. The project encourages disability and Paralympic sport participation and spectatorship, engaging in school activities related to Special Needs Education, supporting school Paralympic games events, and hosting para-sport themed conferences and exchanges. Premised on the idea of experiential education, and congruent with advocacy of progressive disability-focused education and sport pedagogies (Bines & Lei, 2011; McKay et al., 2015; Siedentop et al., 2019; Winnick & Porretta, 2016), the project sets a new benchmark in Japan for integrated disability pedagogies within mainstream education.

The “Dream and future” centres on the “Yokoso” (trans. Welcome) initiative. Similar to Olympic ambassadorial programmes elsewhere, the project networks Japanese Olympians and Paralympians to schools to interact with students and promote Olympic ideals and sport participation. Ambitiously, the project aims to help participants “realise the remarkableness of sports and to help them strive toward their dreams and hopes” (<https://www.olympic.org/news/tokyo-2020-goes-nationwide-with-ambitious-education-programme>, accessed 15 January 2020). Schools who sign on to the project not only get an Olympic/Paralympic visit (of an unspecified duration or tangible curriculum association), but possibilities for lectures, photo opportunities, practical instruction, experiential learning and social interaction. The project has a parallel variation in the “Welcome” programme, which includes the above remit but uses willing and able foreign athletes “to promote international understanding through interaction with foreigners and to increase interest in sports by introducing foreign cultures/customs and by interacting through sports” (<https://education.tokyo2020.org/en/>, accessed 22 January 2020). The programme is premised on the conventional assumption within Olympic education of “see an Olympian/Paralympian, become an Olympian/Paralympian”, or at the very least, the unquestioned benefits that derive from engaging in more sport and watching the forthcoming Olympics and Paralympic Games. The “Yokoso” and “Welcome” programme are further augmented by the “Challenge yourself” programme, in which Japanese Paralympians or prominent instructors are dispatched to give lectures related to disability and adapted sport, and the Paralympics. While laudable, the Yokoso concept is not particularly new. Variations of welcome programmes have been regular features of Japan’s longstanding hospitality, tourism and corporate environments and increased efforts being made by organisations with regards improving cultures of initiation, loyalty and moral servitude to the general public (Billore, 2018; Henderson, 2017). As with the Smile project, these sorts of productions are being consumed gratefully by schools looking for new, dynamic and exciting ways to augment existing curricula, encourage sport and physical activity mandates, and fulfil national desires for inspiring interest in Tokyo 2020 (Mitazaki, 2019).

Extending the hospitality ethos, the “Global friendship project” encourages schools to further promote internationalisation, transnational awareness and cross-cultural partnerships. Coupled alongside Smile, Yoko and Welcome activities, and in keeping with the IOC and partners’ coalescences of thought around international friendship, peace and cultural understanding, the project focuses on creating investigative learning opportunities (e.g. learn about another country, its peoples, languages and cultures), interacting with foreign embassies, letter exchanges with foreign schools, athletes and organisations, development of friendship schools networks (aided by already existing “Sister-City” partnerships), and promotion of school activities that celebrate global diversity. Though not particularly innovative, the programme sits comfortably with existing efforts within the country to improve multicultural awareness and internationalisation of curricula (Sugimura, 2015; Vickers, 2018).

Whereas the Global Friendship Project is outward looking, the Youth Volunteers project adopts a domestic focus encouraging young people to make meaningful social contributions and develop life-long volunteer behaviours. Harmonising with entrenched volunteering proclivities within Japanese culture and educational spaces (Hein, 2011; Taniguchi, 2010; Yashima, 2010), the project involves age appropriate activities that include community clean ups, flower planting, assisting at sports events, visiting and interacting at local welfare facilities, guiding foreigners during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and a local greeting campaign for city visitors. All of which are intended to raise individuals’ self-esteem and sense of collective duty. While each initiative comprises distinct local community foci and objectives, they are bound to wider priorities of *Yoi, Don!* that emphasise the volunteer spirit, aspiration for sports, self-awareness and national citizenry, internationalisation and disability education. Although not appearing to be directly informed by wider volunteering critiques and evaluations in and beyond sport, the initiatives echo shifting trends towards youth volunteer investment, improving provision and educational opportunities for young people to volunteer within communities, and utilising the popular appeal of sport and/or sport mega-events as a catalyst for generating sustainable volunteerism (Cheung et al., 2015; Jardim & Marques da Silva, 2018; Koutrou & Pappous, 2016; Stukas et al., 2016).

In analysing current productions, several issues have emerged that prompt contemplation of what *L’Olympique Space* looks like, who it is for and how it might be sustained (we acknowledge here that not all stakeholders involved may desire sustaining Olympic investment). One key concern has been differences in the interpretation and delivery of Olympic and Olympism-related projects among stakeholders. For the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, emphasis has been placed on aligning Olympic projects with entrenched educational policy directives to promote Japanese citizenship and moral obligation. For example, encouraging respect for tradition and culture, love and respect of country and one’s hometown, and a more empathetic global outlook (TMBE, 2006). In contradistinction, the Japanese Sport Agency’s aims have been to produce initiatives that arouse Japanese nationalism and encourage interest in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, promote the wider socio-cultural and moral values of sport, and strongly (over) emphasise the role of sport in delivering world peace and internationalisation (Miyazaki, 2019; Tomozoe, Fukami, Yoshinaga, Okada, Nemoto et al., 2020; Tomozoe, Fukami, Yoshinaga, Okada, Tohkairin et al., 2019).

In comparison, while the project has been managed by the Japan Sport Agency, the respective University partners have also adopted their own approaches to delivering *Yoi, Don!* and OVEP with their own respective Tokyo metropolitan school partners. Notably, Tsukuba University has overseen programme delivery with 312 schools, Nippon Sport Science University has taken responsibility for 206 schools, and Waseda University has covered 247 schools ranging from Kindergarten to Senior High School level. While each University has spearheaded the production and delivery of OVEP projects based on mutually agreed Olympic principles, each partner and the respective schools they work with in the region adopt and work with OVEP in their own ways. Yet, at the school level these overarching stakeholder arrangements and network complexities are obtuse and largely irrelevant.

A short historical recourse here is helpful. There have been 3 summer and winter Olympic Games held in Japan in the past in 1964, 1972, and 1998, and various methods have been incorporated for promotion of the Olympic movement ahead of the games, in particular, the *Olympic learning* programme held for the 1964 Summer Games in Tokyo and the 1972 Winter Games in Sapporo. In addition, there was also the *One School-One Country* programme for the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano. This latter initiative, which primarily focused on generic promotion of Olympic values and Olympic Games engagement, had particular success in establishing a new benchmark for Olympic education programs in elementary schools and middle schools (Fukuda, 2019; Miyazaki, 2019; Sanada, 2014; Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education, 2016). Nonetheless, prior Olympic education exposure has not necessarily precipitated amiable attitudes to the current *Yoi, Don!* programme among the country's and city's schools or with teachers charged with implementing project initiatives.

As evidenced in dialogue with practitioners, a considerable number of educators have held sceptical opinions about the intent, effectiveness and value of Olympic and Paralympic education ahead of Tokyo 2020. Most of these opinions relate to an inability to perceive the necessity and purpose of *Yoi, Don!* and/or confusion with the underlying Olympic values upon which the programme is based. For example, Olympic and Paralympic Education in Tokyo by the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education aims to nurture the five qualities of the volunteering spirit, understanding for the people with impairments, an aspiration for sports, self-awareness and pride as a Japanese citizen, and rich international senses. However, educators have already illustrated the fact that these themes are already being taught through different methods in current curricula and, thus, may be considered superfluous and additional burdens to teachers' workloads. Such concerns also reflected the larger issue TOCOG and its partners have faced in relation to legitimising the *Yoi, Don!* programme (and the broader positioning of Olympic and Paralympic education) in schools as part of the official national curriculum (Miyazaki, 2019). In response, the Metropolitan Board of Education have continued to demonstrate a stance of proactively introducing practical examples that teachers could deploy within the range of the existing curriculum. Currently, most of the projects (for example, those led by the Japan Sports Agency) tend to involve lectures, sport classes, and trial sessions conducted by inviting athletes to classrooms.

Notwithstanding the potential of these activities to educate and inspire, and the postponement of the Olympic Games enabling more time for familiarisation and training with *Yoi, Don!* content, OVEP initiatives are delivered ultimately in ways congruent with the school

demographic, resourcing, geographic location, teacher expertise, class size and individual practitioner whims. As such, the current consistency, quality and coherency of programmes across the space varies. Moreover, while some indicative evidence and evaluations have been made with regards the reach and uptake of these programmes (see, Tomozoe, Fukami, Yoshinaga, Okada, Nemoto et al., 2020), concerns remain over the immediate meanings young people take from these ventures, the sustainability of education resources during and beyond the course of the Olympiad, the longer-term meaningfulness and memory of Olympic education projects.

L'Space Olympique action

Compounding local implementation issues, Tokyo 2020 Olympic education production is in overdrive. As illustrated above, there are an overwhelming array of educational choices and initiatives that schools, teachers and young people can get involved in, and a wide variety of content. Such is the extent of resources on offer that it now seems as if anything and everything can count and be counted towards the Olympic mission. Such issues, we note, are not necessarily unique to Tokyo 2020, and are evidenced in previous critique of Olympic education (e.g. Chatziefstathiou, 2012a, 2012b; Kohe, 2010; Teetzel, 2012). The production of a multitude of resources has invariably enriched the education landscape and contributed to new examples, case studies and learning opportunities that teachers and young people may benefit from. Yet, alternatively read, initiative saturation raises questions about how schools and teachers may select and prioritise choices, how engagement may be led/directed by (silent) external stakeholders (e.g. Universities and corporate sponsors), what opportunities schools have not to engage, who manages and takes accountability for the delivery and evaluations of programmes, and what (if any) future proofing takes place to ensure schools might benefit beyond the Games.

Even before issues of saturation and choice, educators in Japan face entrenched cultural and political challenges in advancing critical educational agendas (at least in the transformative ways many ardent critical pedagogues may desire). As scholars have identified elsewhere in East Asia (Hsu & Kohe, 2014; Nozaki et al., 2012; Toh, 2015), and efforts by Japan's State government towards teacher development notwithstanding, perceptions remain among educationalists that students' (and teachers') creativity and freedoms are currently inhibited due to social and cultural mores. While the country has undergone considerable reforms shaped by Westernisation and globalisation over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries (Anderson et al., 2020; Kitamura et al., 2019; Tsujimoto & Yamasaki, 2017; Zhen et al., 2020), restrictive structures and pressures persist in formal education (particularly related to hierarchical school governance and associated deferential cultures towards superiors, internal and external social scrutiny, prescriptive performance and metric-driven curricula, and vocalising critical consciousness). Although such features may be evidenced elsewhere, in Japan they present challenges to radically altering existing curricula and pedagogical approaches, reconfiguring educational structures and, at the grassroots level, advancing imagination and creativity within learning methods. As this research found, some Olympic educators in Japan appear, however, to be confronting this challenge.

In one instance, the Olympic Values Education Programme has been modified by the JSA to be more appropriate to domestic specificities (e.g. recontextualising examples

using Japanese cultural, sporting and contextual reference points). Not only does this satisfy JSA's commitment as a TOCOG and IOC stakeholder to Olympic promotion imperatives, but also aligns with encouraging greater uptake among practitioners and enabling users to make potentially more relevant connections to educational material. Beyond this, and concomitant with MEXT's educational governance, *Yoi, Don!* was remodelled to fit with the legally binding aspects of the national curriculum. While allowing some scope, the oversight compels teachers to deliver core aspects in particular ways. At present, while there are spaces for teachers to encourage young people to offer opinions on the Olympic Games and engage in publicly and morally virtuous activities (e.g. cleaning streets, planting trees, volunteering), there exists little space for disruption and knowledge ownership. No materials we examined, for example, currently allow young people to explicitly raise critical questions about sport and the Olympic movement, engage with contemporaneous contextual debate (as seen in the case of some New Zealand and UK Olympic education resources), or depart from the prevailing altruistic, positive and celebratory Olympic narrative.

The difficulties, or invariably reluctance or indifference, schools and teachers in Japan exhibit towards expressing actions that deviate from the status quo may, perhaps, be forgiven. As far as current representations online, media excerpts and preliminary academic reports attest, there appears to be universal enthusiasm, positive engagement and positive experiences in evidence across the education sector and general public. As we write in Spring 2020, and COVID-19 virus trepidation notwithstanding, public enthusiasm and Tokyo schools' commitments to the Olympic Games remains high and has been exacerbated further by the onset of the Olympic torch relay (which arrived in the country March 26th and, until recently, was scheduled to include many schools and young people among the approx. 10,000 runners). Similar to countries elsewhere, Japan's general response to the virus, and in relation to the sport and education sectors, has been varied and evolving. However, the country has been noted for its early declaration of a State of Emergency, and its progressive and relatively successful response, overall pandemic management, and eventual resumption of public services (see, for example, Oku et al., 2020; Sato, 2020).

In the first instance, the government moved early to cancel face-to-face teaching in schools and move teaching activities primarily to online/virtual initiatives. Restrictions were lifted on May 25th and by early Summer schools had reopened (although many maintain online variations and/or forms of social distancing). In addition to the direct effects of the pandemic leading to eventual postponement of the Olympic and Paralympic Games by one year, the national restrictions and changes to school practices have affected TOCOG and the Japan Sport Agency's promotion of the Olympic movement and the *Yoi, Don!* programme. One impact was the closure of the flagship Japan Olympic Museum (a key public/community interface for Olympic education) until June 23rd, 2020. More substantial, however, was the movement of guest lectures and workshop sessions run by Olympic athletes (initially planned to be undertaken across the country's school network) to online lectures and trial classes. In conjunction with fellow Olympians, national Pole Vaulter Yamamoto Seito, for example, led live athlete work-out sessions that were live streamed to schools signed up to the Olympic programme and posted on the popular @Olympics Instagram. In addition, the government changed the date of the

country's national "Health-Sports Day" in 2021 to be held on Friday July 23rd to coincide with the revised Olympic Games opening ceremony.

Although young people's, teachers', schools' and stakeholders' affectations for the impending Olympics may be genuine, such broad acceptance of the programmes should be treated with caution and scepticism. Moreover, there is very little evidence yet of a critical action space emerging. At present, there are no reports of schools and teachers experiencing any adverse issues in the delivery of Olympic projects. It appears, from available anecdotes and case studies documented online (<https://www.olympic.org/news/tokyo-2020-goes-nationwide-with-ambitious-education-programme>, accessed 15 January 2020), initiatives are being delivered perfectly by knowledgeable and dutiful teachers to willing, capable (and coerced) cohorts of students ready to engender the benefits of Olympism without reservation. Such issues point, we argue, to the need for more rigorous dialogue with schools and teachers at the outset of programme design and delivery, better transparency and accountability of stakeholders throughout the process, and clearer monitoring and evaluation (and with this more methodological rigour). Closer accountability in the action space should also be afforded to the roles of corporate partners who, at present, remain largely silent.

Conclusion

Part organisational obligation and strategic opportunism, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games have created spaces around which a variety of educational stakeholders can unite. This unification has taken place initially at the ideological level where organisations have been motivated to invest in the Olympic values, and in so doing demonstrate a general commitment to wider principles related to sport and physical activity promotion, young peoples' educational and moral development, and improving civil society. The current partnerships between TOCOG, Tokyo Metropolitan Board, JOC, JOA, JSP, Higher Education providers and corporate sponsors have, invariably, created a spectrum of education spaces in which collective learning, social interaction and individual development may take place. Moreover, there appears discernible creativity and progressive enterprise in some aspects of production that illustrate the sorts of commitment to critical pedagogy (and its inherent emphasis on social justice and ethical responsibility) that some educationalists desire for sport and Physical Education practice. Tokyo 2020 stakeholders appear to show some degree of moral concern within initiative design and implementation. In addition, and notwithstanding the metropolitan saturation of Olympic education in the city, within the action space there remains some scope for schools, teachers and young people to mediate when, how and why they engage with Olympic education and Tokyo 2020's ideological promotions.

This interrogation of Tokyo 2020 Olympic education and *Yoi, Don!* is a useful exercise to articulate and examine ways Olympic stakeholders come together, how ideological harmonies and organisational relations inform modes of production, and what opportunities exist for localised engagement and action. Yet, as scholars have evidenced and forewarned of sport stakeholder partnerships elsewhere (Adams & Robinson, 2019; Coburn & McCafferty, 2016; Kohe & Collison, 2019; Lenskyj, 2012; Powell, 2020), Tokyo 2020's Olympic education network formations, and the ideological imperatives that are driving partnership activity, also give reason to expose arrangements and practices to

critical questions regarding ownership, transparency, accountability and sustainability. Whether there remains merit in Olympic education, or whether it should and can have a place in contemporary Physical Education, remain debatable. The focus here has not been to present an anti- or pro-Olympic position. Rather, to use the case of Tokyo 2020 to encourage further critique of Olympic education writ large. Currently, educational revisionism and redirection remain limited; particularly given the organisational, legal and political controls the IOC and local organising committees maintain over the rights, use and protections associated with Olympic-related programmes and spaces. As in London 2012, the IOC and Olympic and Paralympic stakeholders have closely policed the production space, carefully stage-managed sites, and representations, of action, to the extent where acquiescence to the Olympic ideals appears total(itarian) and dissent absent.

Accordingly, a radical rethink and challenge to this arrangement and existing ideas, power structures and the Olympic institution is needed. “Olympic” values do not, for example, belong to the IOC (or affiliated entities). Rather, they are foremost part of extant and dynamic human value and ethics systems that have been manufactured, commodified and fed organisational legitimacy. As human values, however, they can be shared, (re) appropriated, challenged and changed. In this task, schools, teachers and young people can take charge. Rather than willingly embrace local organising committees’ patronage, schools, teachers and young people need to approach Olympic education cautiously and encourage critical dialogue about the Olympic movement (and sport and physical activity more generally). We advocate for a new Olympic education landscape that wrestles ownership, applications and meanings away from the IOC/Olympic movement and brings new voices and interpretations that challenge current Olympic meaning making.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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