Olympic Motivation and Participation in Sport

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Motivation

This summer the eyes of the world were on London as it hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This study asks the following questions:

(i) How have UK attitudes (specifically motivation) towards the Olympics changed during the preparation period?

(ii) Is there a relationship between motivation and participation in sport?

Background

Major sporting events (Soccer World Cups, Olympics) are costly (London 2012: £9.3 billion ($15.4 billion); Beijing 2008: $40 billion).

The academic literature has generally been sceptical about economic impact and in the legitimacy of using public subsidies (Downward et al 2009, Baade, 2007).

However it has been claimed that major sporting events provide softer impacts, or intangible effects, such as civic pride, community spirit, and a general “feel good factor” (Dawson, 2012).

Participation in sport and the promotion of active lifestyles has been identified as one of the key legacies associated with major sporting events such as the Olympics.

Data

The Taking Part Survey provides an unique opportunity to investigate attitudes and behaviour about the London 2012 Olympics. Two questions are asked:

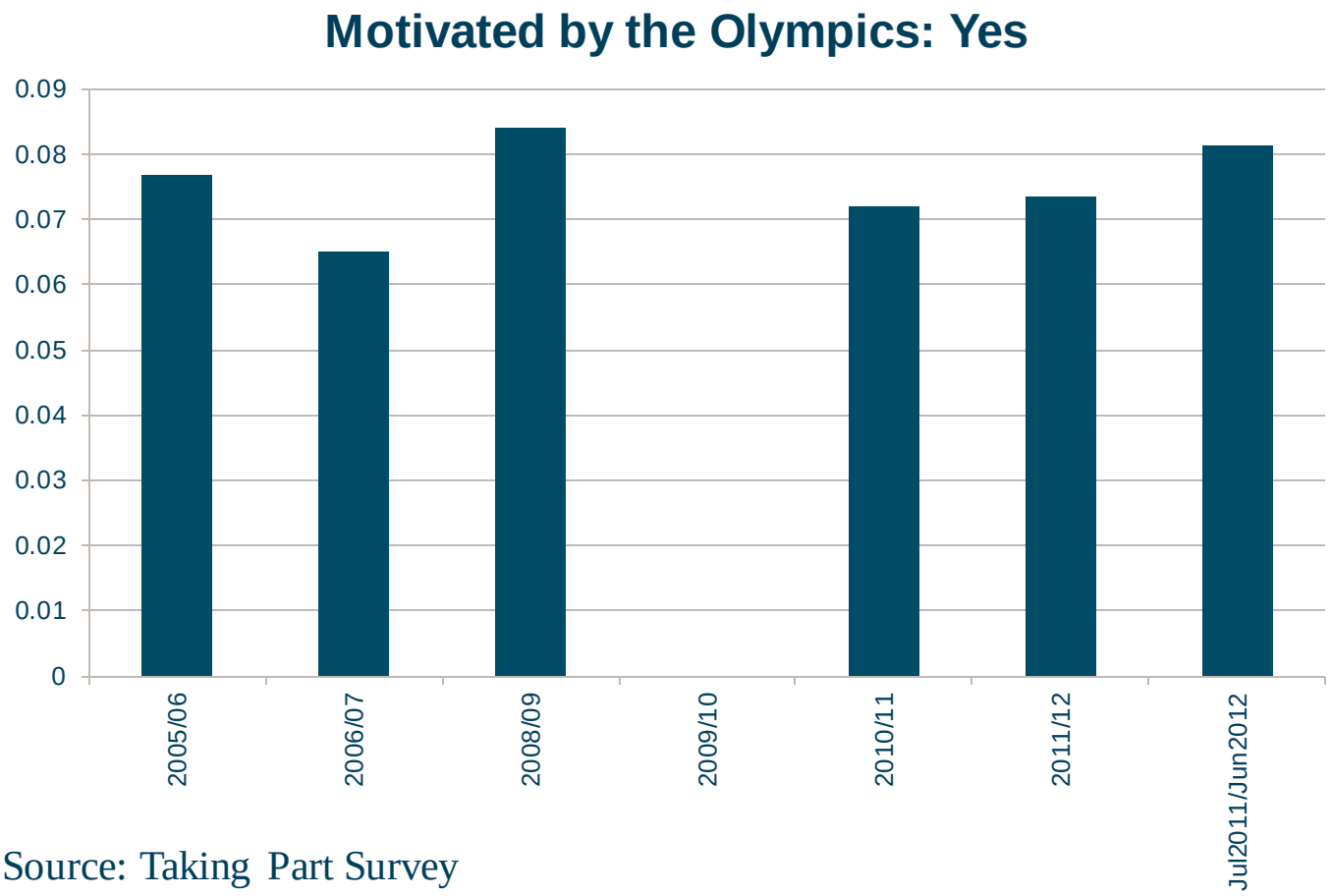
- Feeling towards UK hosting the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London
  - ordinal response (5 options)

- Do you think the UK winning the bid to host the 2012 Olympics has motivated you to do more sport or recreational physical activity?
  - binary response (yes/no response)

Data (Selected Variables)

Variable	Motivated: Yes	Motivated: No
Male	0.544	0.476
White	0.691	0.903
Asian	0.158	0.049
Black	0.103	0.029
Age16-19	0.123	0.052
Age20-24	0.129	0.074
Age25-29	0.146	0.103
Age 30-34	0.143	0.117
Age 35-39	0.134	0.136
Age40-44	0.110	0.127
Age45-49	0.083	0.098
Age 50-54	0.045	0.075
Age 55-59	0.035	0.069
Age60-64	0.024	0.060
Age65-74	0.024	0.066
Age 75 and over	0.027	0.080
Employed Full-time	0.679	0.722
Employed Part-time	0.241	0.249
Higher Education Qualification or equivalent	0.296	0.324
Student	0.080	0.034
Retired	0.038	0.117
Income <10,000	0.390	0.295
Good health	0.840	0.824
Happy	7.827 [1.749]	7.800 [1.607]
Total hours played sport in last 4 weeks	17.063 [26.875]	12.241 [20.384]
Watch Live Sport on TV	0.646	0.547
Watch Sport on TV	0.362	0.304

Data (Wave-Level)



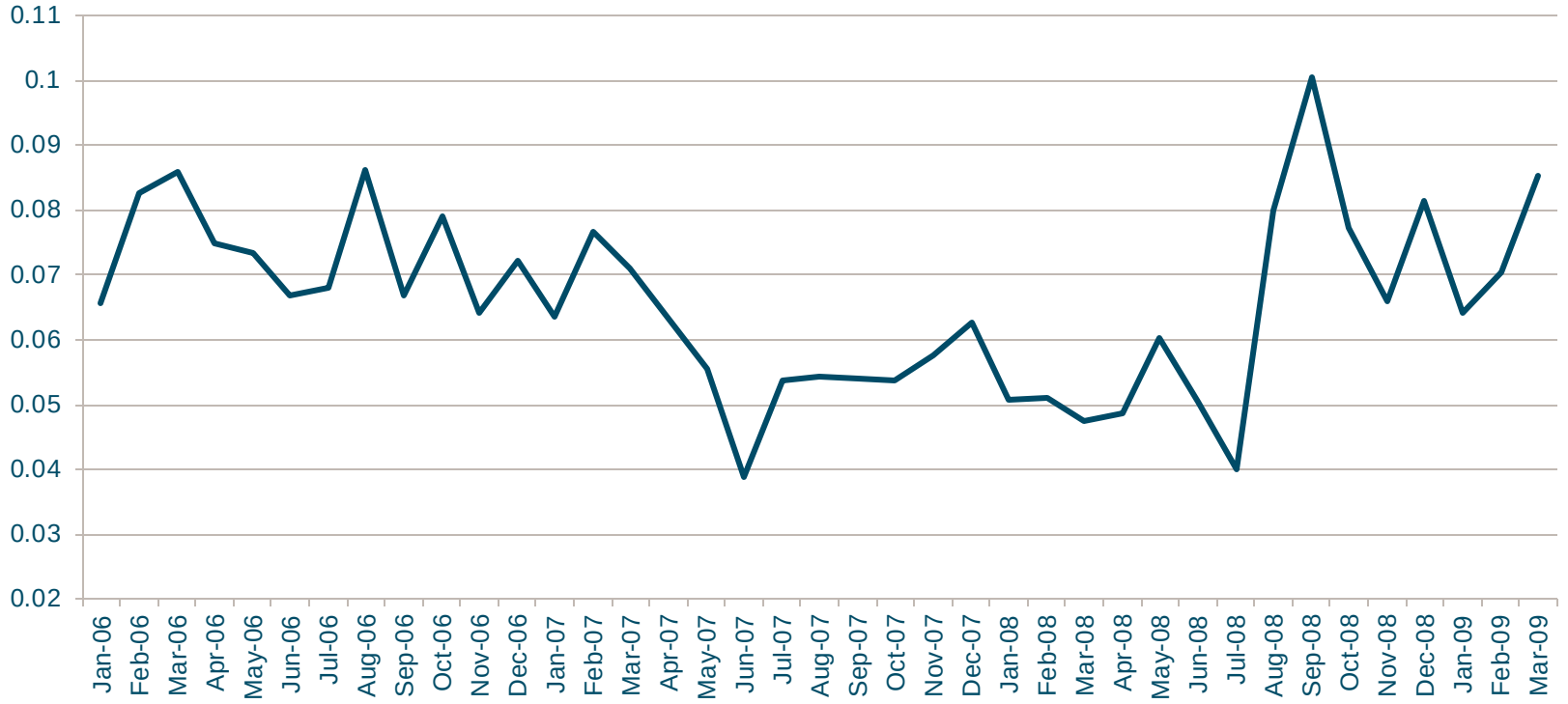
Source: Taking Part Survey

Data

Importantly there are sufficient observations to consider month-by-month variations in public attitudes, rather than simply including wave-specific (year) effects.

Data (Month-by-Month)

Motivated by the Olympics: Yes



Data

The results reveal some evidence to support the view that attitudes towards the Olympics have been affected by Olympics-related news.

However it is the case that the proportion of respondents feeling motivated by the Olympics is relatively small (on average 6.6% of respondents indicating the Olympics had motivated them to do more sport and recreational physical activity.

Empirical Analysis: Demographic Factors, Selected Variables (Marginal Effects)

Variable		Variable	
Male	0.0064** [2.12]	Employed Full-time	0.0050[1.42]
Asian	0.070*** [15.83]	Higher Education Qualification or equivalent	-0.00607[-0.23]
Black	0.068*** [12.40]	Student	-0.0056[-0.90]
Age16-19	0.085** [5.19]	Retired	-0.022**[-2.41]
Age20-24	0.073*** [4.55]	Income £45,000 - £49,999	-0.027*** [-2.76]
Age25-29	0.066*** [4.16]	Income £50,000+	-0.022** [-3.19]
Age 30-34	0.060*** [3.74]	Good health	-0.0004[-0.12]
Age 35-39	0.049*** [3.10]	Happy	0.002** [2.52]
Age40-44	0.043*** [2.70]	**Total hours played sport in last 4 weeks**	**0.00026** [4.90]**
Age45-49	0.043*** [2.68]	Watch Live Sport on TV	0.025*** [8.06]
Age 50-54	0.025 [1.55]	Watch Sport on TV	0.0054* [1.74]
Age 55-59	0.022 [1.35]		
Age60-64	0.015 [0.94]		
Age65-74	0.0012 [0.81]		
Pseudo R^2	0.089		
LR-test	1,503.01***		
N	35,070		

Empirical Analysis: Month-by-Month (Marginal Effects)

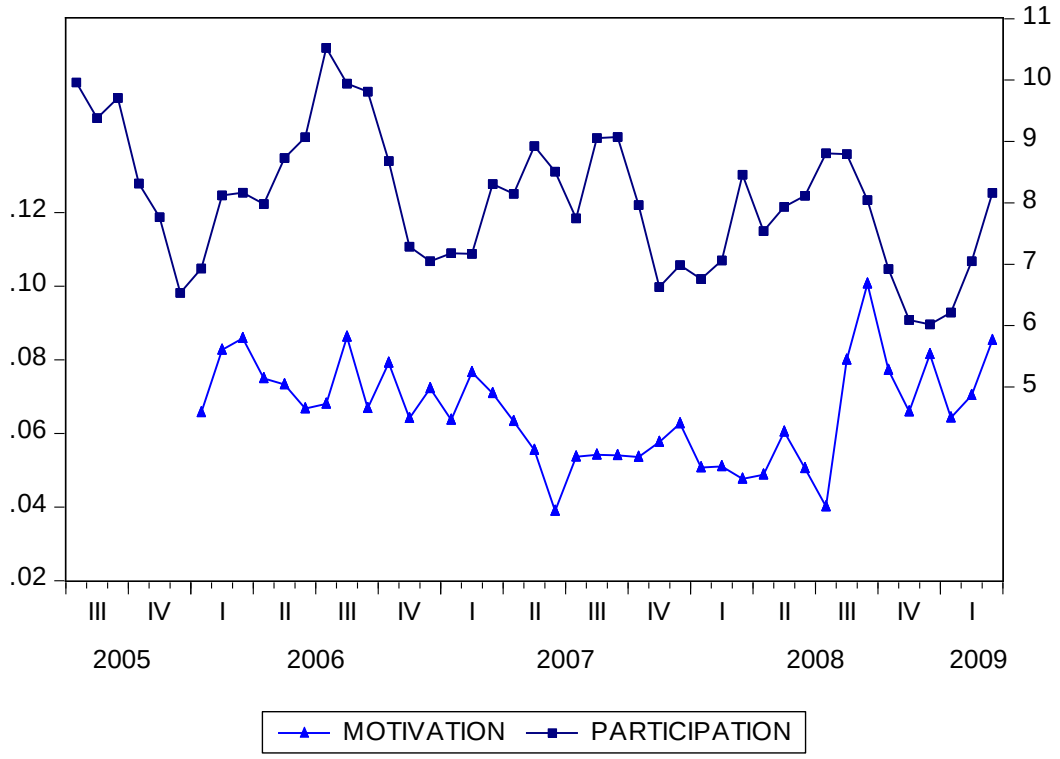
	Motivated: Yes			Motivated: Yes	
Month	ME	Z	Month	ME	Z
March 2006	0.0172**	2.36	July 2007	-0.0083	-0.79
April 2006	0.0110	1.29	August 2007	-0.0147*	-1.82
May 2006	-0.0011	-0.13	September 2007	-0.0095	-1.27
June 2006	-0.0056	-0.76	October 2007	-0.0195**	-2.43
July 2006	-0.0090	-1.25	March 2008	-0.0168*	-1.94
August 2006	0.0068	1.07	April 2008	-0.0174**	-2.29
September 2006	-0.0114	-1.52	May 2008	-0.0137*	-1.94
October 2006	0.0112	1.6	June 2008	-0.0231***	-3.09
March 2007	**0.0111**	**1.58**	July 2008	-0.0329***	-3.41
April 2007	-0.0075	-0.83	**August 2008**	**0.0148***	**1.84**
May 2007	-0.0118	-1.33	**September 2008**	**0.0385*** **	**4.97**
June 2007	-0.0476***	-3.74	October 2008	0.0082	0.7

Empirical Analysis: Relationship between Participation and Motivation

One of the key findings is that there is a positive relationship between participation in sport and recreational physical activity. However these results say little about the causal relationship.

Empirical Analysis: Relationship between Participation and Motivation

Average Hours of Participation in Sport and Recreational Physical Activity (July 2005 – April 2009)



Empirical Analysis: Relationship between Participation and Motivation

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	Test Statistic	p-value
Motivation does not cause participation	0.5469	0.7607
Participation does not cause motivation	10.578	0.0050

Note: lag length = 2.

Panel (a): Assuming Stationary Series

	Test Statistic	p-value
Motivation does not cause participation	1.341	0.5114
Participation does not cause motivation	0.4906	0.7825

Notes: Test for Granger (non-) causality based on the Toda and Yamamoto modified Wald test. Lag length =2 (using Schwartz Bayesian Criteria) and examination of residuals.

Panel (b): Assuming One or Both Series Non-Stationary

Empirical Analysis: Relationship between Participation and Motivation

If we assume both series are stationary the results indicate a uni-directional relationship – from participation to motivation.

If, on the other hand, we assume either or both series are non-stationary, and apply the Toda and Yamamoto (1995) procedure we find there is no evidence in either direction.

Thus it appears that (at best) it is those that are already participating in sport and physical activity who are likely to be motivated by the Olympics.

Concluding Remarks

Our results confirm that British success in the Beijing 2008 Olympics had a positive effect on peoples' motivation to do more sport and recreational physical activity.

This perhaps provides us with some clues about the likely impact of the London 2012 Olympics.

The success of the London 2012 Olympics is likely to further enhance levels of motivation but judging by the results presented here are unlikely to lead to the kind of (sustained) mass participation that LOCOG had hoped for.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!