

DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTER-ORGANISATIONAL NETWORK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SPORT DEVELOPMENT LEGACIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE SYDNEY 2009 WORLD MASTERS GAMES

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Aim

This presentation will discuss the development of an inter-organisational network and the implications for sport development legacies from a large-scale sport event, the Sydney 2009 World Masters Games (SWMGs).

Literature review & theoretical background

Governments promise enhanced sporting opportunities and increased levels of sport to garner support for hosting large-scale sport events. However, there is limited evidence to confirm such a relationship exists between hosting these events and securing sport development legacies. Weed et. al. (2009) concluded that sport development legacies should not be left to chance; instead, large-scale sport events must be leveraged to secure these legacies.

Event leverage processes may be applicable to sport development legacies (Weed et al., 2009; Taks et al., 2009). The empirical event leverage literature has found that a certain level of coordination and cooperation between stakeholders is a critical precursor that can impact on the extent to which event stakeholders engage with event leverage processes. As these precursors have not yet been conceptualised within models for event leverage (see Chalip, 2004 and O'Brien & Chalip, 2008), Benson's (1975) Interorganisational Network (ION) Theory complements the notion of event leverage and may help to understand influences on organisational engagement with event leverage to secure sport development legacies.

Benson (1975) purports that an effective ION is characterised by three main factors, including: 1) Normative Consensus: the extent to which organisations agree on the scope of, responsibility for, and method to address the task at hand; 2) Mutual Respect: the extent to which organisations value contributions by other organisations in the network to the task at hand; and 3) Coordinated and Cooperative Interactions: the extent to which organisations coordinate their efforts and cooperate with one another to address the task at hand, for instance, securing sport development legacies. As sport events are typically characterised by the establishment of new and temporary IONs, it is important to understand how the development and structure of such an ION impacts on the creation of an effective ION as defined by Benson (1975).

Research design

A case study of the SWMGs was undertaken based on criterion sampling, that is, promises of legacies to Masters sport that were present in the bid document. To identify the part of the broader event ION that was influential to securing sport development legacies from the SWMGs, the researcher consulted with representatives from the event organising committee to identify: the event organising committee (Sydney World Masters Games Organising Committee – SWMGOC); the event governing body (the International Masters Games Association – IMGA); relevant government departments; and the sport organisations contracted to deliver the sport components of the event. Document analysis and in-depth interviews were undertaken with representatives from each of these organisations to gain an understanding of each of the organisations in terms of their relevance to sport development legacies as well as the interactions between the organisations regarding sport development legacies. Observation was also carried out during the event to complement information gathered through documents and interviews.

While Benson's ION Theory provided a loose framework for the data analysis, additional themes also emerged from the data. Overall, four main themes emerged including Network Development; Legacy 'Consensus'; Enablers & Inhibitors; and Interactions. The findings included under Network Development will be the focus of this presentation.

Results, discussion & implications

The theme Network Development demonstrated how the development of an ION can impact the potential for the organisations to establish an effective ION (Benson, 1975). First, the organisations considered in the ION were motivated to advance their own organisational agendas, and these motivations impacted on the willingness and ability of the organisations in the ION to work together to secure sport development legacies. The political motivations revealed by the government agency responsible for the event bid, and SWMGOC's focus on delivering a successful event (defined in terms of participation satisfaction and economic impact), provided only a limited foundation to secure legacies for Masters sport.

Second, the connections developed across the ION by SWMGOC were narrowly focused on how organisations would contribute to delivering the successful event, rather than how they might contribute to securing legacies for Masters sport. Organisations in the ION responsible for sport development and delivery were not encouraged to consider how they might utilise the event to meet their own sport-related objectives. The limited strategic initiatives that were developed or

implemented around the SWMGs suggest that a broader focus should be emphasised through event organising committee's connections with sport agencies and organisations to create impetus to secure sport development legacies.

Last, SWMGOC was centrally positioned within the ION of organisations considered to be influential to securing sport development legacies and did not take the opportunity to establish connections across the network. This meant that the opportunity for the IMGA, responsible for advocating for Masters sport, to communicate messages to key organisations during the event was not used strategically. The lack of connections across the ION also limited the potential of ongoing exchanges between the IMGA and relevant sport organisations once SWMGOC was dissolved.

These findings highlight the need to understand that the development and structure of an ION around a sport event can have important implications in terms of: establishing a foundation to secure sport development legacies; encouraging organisations to see sport development opportunities presented by hosting an event; and building relationships that can continue to influence sport development once the event is over. With this foundation of Network Development in place, future research will investigate if and how the notions of Normative Consensus, Mutual Respect and Coordination and Cooperation were achieved in the case of the SWMGs and contribute to quality of life for Masters-age sport participants by enhancing opportunities and increasing participation in sport.

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