
UK AND RUSSIAN NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES LEVERAGING OF THE LONDON AND SOCHI OLYMPICS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

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Synopsis:

Abstract:

AIM

National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs)' engagement with the Olympic Games represents an under explored topic as the main focus of most analyses has been on the effectiveness of public investments and the legacies of the Games. The overall aim of this study is to enhance our knowledge about NGBs' strategic approach to leveraging the Olympic Games for building their organizational capacity. The paper addresses three interrelated questions: why the host NGBs have engaged with the Olympics?; what leveraging processes were employed for building which capabilities?, and what was the contribution of the Games for NGBs' capacity building?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study brings together two distinct strands of knowledge – of leveraging of mega events (i.e, the Olympics) and that of organizational capacity building. In doing so it creates a new field of inquiry and thus new knowledge. The term 'capacity' is a multi-dimensional concept which comprises both processes and structures as well as quantitative (e.g., presence of formal goals) and qualitative (e.g., staff evaluation regarding the achievements of those goals) dimensions. Capacity is also inseparable from the notion of capacity building as it is not a static property but one which is constantly evolving. Capacity building has received some treatment in sport literature but mainly with regards to community organizations (Doherty, Misener & Cuskelly, 2014). As Frawley, Toohey and Veal (2013, p.70) observed, "we know very little about how the managers of national and state sport federations view the hosting of international sport events... and the extent to which governing bodies seek to

leverage the staging of these events...”.

The present study builds on Zinke’s (2006) framework where capacity is interpreted as an emergent combination of attributes, assets, capabilities and relationships that enables an organization and its members to perform, develop and self-renew and to create developmental value. This framework allows for capturing both the processual and structural dimensions and the three levels of capacity building including individual, organizational and community. The leveraging of the Olympics represents a multidimensional form of capacity building as its ultimate purpose, according to Chalip (2004, p.228), involves “those activities that need to be undertaken around the event itself, which seek to maximize the long-term benefits from events”. Chalip’s (2004) model for host community event leverage allows for specifically establishing what leverageable resources, opportunities, strategic objectives and means were employed by NGBs before, during and after the Games.

METHODOLOGY

This research focuses not only on Olympic sports but on all publically-funded NGBs in UK and Russia in order to establish the appeal of the Games to generate benefits for the national sport systems. A mix method approach was adopted, which utilized both primary and secondary data. Because the leveraging process is unique for each NGB, apart from some benchmark figures on NGBs’ performance and clubs network, most of the data pertinent to the leveraging of the Games has been generated anew. The study drew, however, on secondary sources including NGBs and the Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games reports, organizational documents and scientific data bases.

Two main methods for information gathering were used including a representative online survey with 46 Sport England funded and 126 Russian Ministry of Sport funded organizations of Olympic, Paralympic and non-Olympic sports. The second method involved two in-depth case studies both in UK and Russia with one established (British Cycling) and one emerging (Volleyball England) and Ice Hockey (IH) and Luge (L) respectively. Data were analyzed using Google open data tool and thematic analysis (Robson, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary analysis suggests that only a handful of NGBs took a holistic approach to the leveraging of the Games and integrated it into their strategic plans. The link between the Olympics and NGBs in both countries took time to be established, so the various benefits from the Olympics can really accrue. Data collection and analysis is ongoing and will be presented in full at the conference. Studying NGBs’ leveraging practices in two different contexts, in London 2012 and Sochi 2014, allows for identifying patterns and processes of interactions as well as leveraging models across a number of summer and winter sports, which may not have been possible if a single edition of the Games was to be examined. This will be used for developing a framework for leveraging processes in the different phases of event planning, implementation and closing down. Thus, the study will yield not only new knowledge but policy and practically relevant evidence-based lessons.

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