

## The role of major stakeholders in institutionalizing environment into the Olympic games

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Anthropogenic climate change is an issue of much concern in today's society. As we attempt to tackle current environmental challenges, we give more attention to slowing and reversing certain negative environmental trends. The sport industry ought to engage in clean environmental practices in order to prevent further harm to nature. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), one of the most prominent sport organizations globally, is beginning to prioritize environmental performance in an attempt to meet corporate social responsibility goals. Beginning in the 1980s, environmental performance of the Games earned increasing levels of attention from the Olympic Movement and as a result the IOC passed various policies that required organizing committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) to address environmental issues in their bids (Chappelet, 2008). Yet, environmental initiatives remain largely up to the OCOGs and their stakeholders as they must decide which issues are the most pressing to their communities (Stuart & Scassa, 2011). The presence of the environmental movement in the Olympic Games is largely the result of the IOC and OCOGs working with various stakeholders to achieve meaningful change. Stakeholders are the entities that are affected by a firm's attempts to achieve its goals (Freeman, 1984). In this case, environmental stakeholders are those affected by the IOC and OCOG's attempts to host the Games. DiMaggio and Powell (1983), suggest that institutions are formal structures that achieve resiliency. It could be argued that adoption of environmental practices by a variety of Games stakeholders has achieved a certain resiliency within the Olympic context. As a result of several forces, environment has become institutionalized within the Olympic Movement. No research exists, however, that identifies the major stakeholders involved in the Olympic environmental movement. There also is a lack of research that defines the roles of those stakeholders. This study attempts to fill both of those gaps. As a result of this study, future Olympic Games organizers and Olympic researchers will have an understanding of the necessary stakeholders to engage for issues of environment and sustainability.

A qualitative study that using content analysis was designed. This study employs a combination of institutional theory and stakeholder theory as theoretical perspectives, as well as other sport event management literature. Stakeholder theory was used to identify who and what matters (Freeman, 1984). Institutional theory was used to examine which stakeholders helped to institutionalize environment into the Olympic Movement. A case study of a mega sport event with a particular focus on the Olympic environmental movement was necessary as it permits the study of a particular event and how it fits in the context of larger social phenomenon (Yin, 2013). The Olympic Games are a mega sport event that differ from other traditional sport events. As well, a case study is useful in analyzing decision-making processes (Yin, 2013). The result of the case study was transferable learning to other mega sport events. Case data included bids submitted to the IOC since the

inception of the environmental movement in the 1980s and any other official documents from the IOC or OCOGs that addressed relationships with environmental stakeholders. The data was coded in qualitative data analysis software (i.e., Atlas.ti) in order to highlight emergent themes in regard to the environmental stakeholders and their roles in environmental practices.

Findings suggest that there are several distinct types of stakeholders who play important roles in institutionalizing environment into the Games. There are central stakeholders (e.g., IOC and OCOG), governing authorities (e.g., UN and local governments), NGOs (e.g., Greenpeace, WWF, and WHO), standardization programs (e.g., LEED and ISO), as well as sponsors. Their roles in the institutional process ranged from holding the event (e.g., central stakeholders), enforcing laws (e.g., governing authorities), providing expertise (e.g., NGOs), provision of metrics for evaluation (e.g., standardization programs like LEED and ISO), and supplying the resources (e.g., sponsors providing money, supplies, and labor necessary to host the event). It appears that coercive power and stakeholder reciprocity played significant roles in forcing collaboration amongst these stakeholders who ultimately benefitted from working together. It is important to note that the stakeholders have different levels of involvement depending on the edition of the Olympic Games and the city that is the host. Further analysis of these stakeholders as well as their roles will be presented. Ultimately, this research helps to grow the body of knowledge on mega sport event management and Olympic event management as it identifies the major stakeholders an organizing committee would need to engage in order to hold an environmentally responsible and sustainable Olympic Games.

### References

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