THE PROCESS OF AGENDA SETTING OF SPORT EVENTS HOSTING POLICIES: THE CASES OF LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND) AND QUEBEC CITY (CANADA)

Author:
Olivier Mutter

email:
omutter@gmail.com

Co-authors:
Mutter, Olivier McConnell Allard, Coralie

University:
Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration, Lausanne, Switzerland

Abstract

Research question
Over the past few decades, sport events have become a very popular instrument to enhance economic development, tourism, urban regeneration and increased awareness of destination for cities and countries. Specific public policies have been developed and implemented by regions and countries that wish to attract and organize sport events as a tool for reaching public goals (Chappelet 2006; Leopkey, Mutter and Parent 2010). This paper focuses on describing and analysing the process of the agenda-setting phase of these public policies at a local level, analysing the cases of Lausanne (Switzerland) and Quebec City (Canada), with the objective of understanding the process of policy change involved.

Theoretical background
Numerous theoretical frameworks have been developed to analyse the process of policy change including: the stage model, institutional analysis, the multiple streams framework, the advocacy coalition framework and the policy networks (Knoepfel, Larrue, Varone, Hill, 2007; King 2009). Houlihan (2005) has tested most of these frameworks to assess whether they fit the sport policy context. He concluded that the advocacy coalition framework is the most suited to analyse the process of policy change in sports, and has therefore adapted this framework to make it more relevant to the analysis of sport policy. His model combines various independent variables to explain the process of policy change as the role of administrative arrangements, resources and interactions between interests groups, as well as the importance of values and norms, and finally the specific social and historical context. We consider that this model is particularly relevant for analysing the process of agenda setting of sport events hosting public policies.

Methodology
The methodological framework used for this paper is a case study approach. The research method includes document analysis, interviews with political leaders and senior civil servants at local, regional and national levels, and sport events organizers. The research has been conducted on site in Switzerland and Canada in 2009 and 2010.

Results and discussion
The final results of the study are still to be analysed. However, preliminary results highlight the importance of interest groups (policy entrepreneurs and policy networks), resources (funding, political legitimacy), administrative arrangements (governmental organisation, institutional rules) and policy paradigm (city branding and economic development through sport) as explaining variables for the process of agenda-setting of sport events hosting policies. At this stage of the research analysis, it appears that the role of policy entrepreneurs (IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch (1980-2000) in Lausanne; Mayor Regis Labeaume (1998-) in Quebec City) and of policy networks (IOC, State of Vaud, City of Lausanne, Lausanne Tourism in Lausanne; City of Quebec, Province of Quebec, Private Organizers in Quebec) is critical to explain the process of policy change in both cases..

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