

## **Major Sport – Events: Risk and Security Challenges**

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### **Aim**

International sport events implies negotiation and decision making between actors located in different national contexts and between actors at the level the arrangement is taking place. The aim of this paper is to examine negotiation and decision making between stakeholders due to event-specific risks and security strategies in arranging major sport-events. How are these processes influenced by power structures? Stakeholders includes both private and public organizations. In this study the main focus is how new practices around security issues are established and, further, obtain knowledge about what the different actors consider as a sufficient level of security within this specific context.

### **Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

Security has become a central issue in planning and implementation of sport events. The 9/11 attacks in the US and several attacks in Europe by driving different types of motor vehicles into crowds has had a significant influence on security budgets and new methods of surveillance.

The study is based on the following main theoretical perspectives: institutional theory and theories on negotiation, decision making and power (Butler, 2015; Rye, 2015; Scott, 2008). Investigating the processes in the implementation of major sport-events is complex. Local, regional, national, and international stakeholders, laws, requirements specifications and political institutions, as well as companies within and outside the arranging committee, are all part of this equation. In order to understand processes of negotiation and decision-making within this complex context, the relation between stakeholders and their differences in bargaining power needs to be considered. Like Butler (2015) we argue that transactions in general are not comprehensible. Transactions between two or more actors are complex, and the process of landing a deal between two or more parties introduces power into the relation. In general power might be characterized as multi-dimensional and constantly in flux (Butler 2015). Further, the complexity is extended by the challenge of the interaction between actors representing structure and agency (Giddens, 1984).

Further, the velocity argument is highly relevant (Parent 2010) when the object of study is a specific sporting event held on a one-off basis and during a strongly defined timeline. The level of velocity will vary during different phases, and the possibility to inform and even negotiate with other stakeholders will change from periods of planning to implementation. During the implementation mode of events, the decisions need to be made immediately in reaction to an environment that is constantly changing. In this environment decisions are made that might have large consequences for other stakeholders – financially, occupational, or in other senses.

### **Research Design and Data Analysis**

The study is based on data from the UCI Road World Championships in Bergen in 2017. This is a particular case study where 50 in-depth interviews have been conducted. Based on relevant selection criteria a total of 5 interviews are selected for this study. The selection criteria is that these respondents represents the five most important institutions on risk and security issues.

They possess relevant knowledge on the main issues discussed. The average interview length is 90 minutes, and 8 of 10 interviews are completed face to face. The remaining interviews were completed by using Skype. The material also consists of written documents (reports from meetings and other internal documents from stakeholders) which further emphasize the complexity in the processes of security planning and management.

The data analysis builds on content analysis. Content analysis is the process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data. The preliminary analysis is a combination between theory- and data-driven.

The data processing is done by the use of NVivo 11 Pro for Windows.

## **Results and Discussion**

The analysis is still in progress, but one data-driven dimension discovered so far is the negotiation and positioning around “sufficient level of security”. As one of the security experts stated:

“I have been writing about major events and emergency planning, and I know well of the conflicts related to such processes, but... And the world championship is a great example, and just in that period, exactly in that process a positioning is going on”.

Another security expert gives the following description of the situation:

“... and asked to get the documentation on plans for security and emergency plans in general for the community and discovered that this probably was significantly downsized”.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

The main contribution of this study is to bring forth more knowledge about the local-stakeholder challenges due to event-specific risks and security issues in hosting and arranging major sport-events. To what extent and how might future hosts cities learn from previous organizers? Is there a legacy for coming organizers?

## **References**

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