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The Political Economy of Mass Sport Participation Legacies from Large-Scale Sport Events:
A Conceptual Paper

Abstract

Sport event studies have demonstrated that relevant stakeholders must share objectives and coordinate efforts to leverage a large-scale sport event to secure positive legacies. However, the challenging and complex task of collaboration between networks of diverse organizational stakeholders to secure legacies has received little scholarly attention. In this conceptual paper, we explore, through a political economy lens, differences between the political economies of sports and sport events pertaining to mass sport participation legacies. We focus at the meso-level and consider how divergences in political economy elements—structure and context, stakeholders and ideas/incentives, and bargaining processes—influence the likelihood of mass sport participation legacies from large-scale sport events. We suggest a need for event legacy stakeholders to engage more meaningfully with the complexities surrounding securing mass sport participation legacies. In addition, we provide pragmatic, actionable implications for policy and practice to assist stakeholders in addressing the challenges they face to maximize legacy outcomes.

***Keywords:* mass sport, political economy, sport participation legacy, trickle-down effect**

Introduction

The promise of a *mass sport participation legacy* as an outcome of hosting a large-scale sport event is commonly featured in bid documents and the political rhetoric surrounding large-scale sport events (Reis, Frawley, Hodgetts, Thomson, & Hughes, 2017; Toohey, 2008). In this paper, we consider mass sport participation legacies as sustained increases in organized sport participation by people of any age and ability who are prompted by an event or event legacy program to participate, or increase their participation. Due to the socially constructed nature of legacy and the various event and host contexts involved when defining legacy (cf. Girginov & Hills, 2009; Veal, Toohey, & Frawley, 2012; Thomson, Schlenker, & Schulenkorf, 2013), we distinguish mass sport participation from less formal notions of physical activity legacies (cf. Bretherton, Piggin, & Bodet, 2016). We explore the implications of conceptual definitions as we progress through the paper.

Governments often promote mass sport participation legacies to justify their investments in infrastructure and facility developments to support the large-scale sport events (Grix, Brannagan, Wood, & Wynne, 2017; Weed et al., 2015). Yet, academic research has established that these events do not automatically “trickle-down” to sustained increases in mass sport participation, or physical activity, by host populations (Veal et al., 2012, 2019). We have not seen evidence that this finding has inspired improvements in practices from one event to the next (Roche, 2017).

A key reason why mass sport participation legacies fail to be realized is the lack of supply-side capacity by sport organisations and government funding (i.e., readiness to cater to increased demand for sport with facilities, coaches, volunteers, and other resources pre- and post-event) to encourage increases in mass sport participation (Coalter, 2004; Weed et al., 2015). Researchers have sought to identify if and how sport organizations leverage large-scale sport events to secure mass sport participation legacies (Chalip, Green, Taks, &

Misener, 2017; Macrae, 2017). Studies have identified strategies for leveraging an event and securing desired legacies, highlighting the antecedent of a shared vision among relevant stakeholders (Chalip et al., 2017; Girginov & Hills, 2009). The notion of establishing a shared vision is consistent with organizational literature that has investigated effective interorganizational network arrangements (Benson, 1975; Hudson, 2004). Research from the sport and leisure management perspective has highlighted the challenge and complexity in uniting diverse, and sometimes disparate, stakeholders around a large-scale sport event to leverage the event and secure legacies (Girginov & Hills, 2009; McGillivray, McPherson, & Carnicelli, 2015).

Concomitantly, the realms of sport and sport events (which are typically aligned with tourism) have traditionally developed independently, and, therefore, have failed to realize mutually beneficial outcomes (Weed, 2001, 2003; Weed & Bull, 1997). The event management scholarship has acknowledged the highly politicized nature of bidding and staging large-scale sport events (McGillivray & Turner, 2017; Byers, Hayday & Pappous, 2019; Ziakas, 2019), which can see economic outcomes prioritized at the cost of other types of legacies, such as sport development. Academic scholarship investigating the complexities of collaboration between diverse sport and event stakeholder networks is lacking with relatively recent developments occurring (Hambrick, Svensson, & Kang, 2018; Parent, Rouillard, & Naraine, 2017; Wäsche, 2015). Inquiry into processes and influences can advance our understanding of event legacy and inform improvements (Chalip et al., 2017; Rojek, 2014; Thomson et al., 2019).

To address this knowledge gap, we apply Whaites' (2017) political economy framework, which includes aspects of network structures, stakeholders, and processes, to explore the inherent distinctions between the political economies of sport and sport events.

Political economy is a paradigm through which resource production and distribution

processes are understood, acknowledging the influences of socioeconomic forces, historical contexts, and power relations (Benson, 1975; Bianchi, 2018; Gilpin, 2001). Gilpin (2001, p. 25) explained interest in political economies has increased across a range of disciplines because “the worlds of politics and economics, once thought to be separate (at least as fields of academic inquiry), do in fact importantly affect one another.” A political economy lens, therefore, has the potential to facilitate understandings of the complex interactions in sport and sport event stakeholder networks and the processes at play, which can influence outcomes in collaborative settings (Benson, 1975; Gilpin, 2001).

Our aim is to understand how differences in these aspects across the political economies of sport and events impact on stakeholder efforts (or lack thereof) to achieve mass sport participation legacies. An understanding of these political economy dynamics helps in highlighting opportunities and interactions to enable more positive and sustainable outcomes for host communities. Our conceptual article draws on extant literature and our discussions focus predominantly on Western democratic contexts. Informed by our discussions of the political economy elements of sport and sport events, we demonstrate how a political economy framework helps to understand the complex stakeholder interactions that influences sport participation legacies. We also provide pragmatic suggestions for sport and events/tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners to navigate the complex political economies of sport and sport event networks to maximize the benefits of large-scale events for host communities, including mass sport participation legacies.

Framework for political economy analysis

Political economy analyses require frameworks best suited to the focal issue and associated context (Gilpin, 2001; Collinson, 2003). The concept of political economy has been referred to in areas of sport management (e.g., Forster & Pope, 2004; Stewart, 2007;

Dart, 2014) and event management (e.g., Nauright, 2004; Hall, 2012). However, there has been a dearth of conceptualization of political economy, or development of analytical frameworks, to guide analyses in these fields of scholarship, and that could be translated and applied to our focus on mass sport participation legacies. Applications of the political economy concept vary across disciplines and philosophies (cf. Gilpin, 2001), with scholars “eclectic in their choice of subject matter and methods (economic, historical, sociological, political, etc.)” (Gilpin, 2001, p. 31). Consequently, traditions in political economy analysis generally are largely lacking. Collinson (2003) has argued that given the variances of political economies across different contexts, flexible and interchangeable frameworks are needed to investigate aspects of local, or wider, political economies. In line with Collinson’s (2003) argument, we set out below the assumptions informing political economy as we conceptualize it within the context of large-scale sport events and our focus on mass sport participation legacies. Following on, we describe the framework for analysis applied in this conceptual paper.

Our understanding of political economy is based on a neoliberal ideology. Since the mid-1980s, scholars have rejected the Marxist/neo-Marxist approaches that political economy analysis once relied on, influenced by events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the liberalizing of Soviet bloc economies, and the Chinese economy’s expansion to broader market practices (Bianchi, 2018). These events coincided with the abatement of government intervention and the opening of economies worldwide (Gilpin, 2001). Neoliberal ideology highlights the free market and favors small government structures that facilitate free market activity, such as entrepreneurial governments (Gleeson & Low, 2000; Hall, 2006; Ryan, 2015). Neoliberal ideologies align with our focus, with contemporary Western government approaches to hosting events influenced by neoliberal ideology (Hall, 2006; Evans, 2006). For instance, hosting an event to secure broader social policy objectives (i.e., securing mass

sport participation legacies) has been aligned with neoliberal ideology (Clarke & Kearns, 2015).

The neoliberal mode of government is characterized by cross-sector partnerships and network interdependencies. We know that in such scenarios decision-making by network stakeholders is rarely rational (Benson, 1975; Bianchi, 2018); instead, it is influenced by stakeholders' sociopolitical environments and conflicts and inequalities that arise through their interactions, compromise, and trade-offs (Bianchi, 2018; Rojek, 2014). This characteristic is important to an exploration of mass sport participation legacies, because many studies recommend that stakeholder organizations take rational and logical approaches to legacy planning and event leveraging, such as developing a shared vision for sport participation legacy and working collaboratively to secure legacies (Chalip et al., 2017; Girginov & Hills, 2009; Hindson, Gidlow, & Peebles, 1994). While the literature acknowledges complexities that impact whether organizations will implement these strategies (Chalip et al., 2017; Macrae, 2017), minimal research has investigated how political economy elements influence organizations' willingness and ability to implement leveraging or legacy planning strategies. Therefore, decision-making and stakeholder interactions must be explored to understand the lack of organizational action to realize mass sport participation legacies (Weed et al., 2015) and to understand why event management experiences fail to inform improvements in subsequent editions (Roche, 2017).

Our focus on mass sport participation legacies and stakeholders' efforts to collaborate to realize these legacies calls for a political economy examination at mostly a meso-level, where organizations interact and policy is implemented (Majoribanks & Farquharson, 2012). Mass sport participation behaviors subject to macro- and micro-level factors (e.g., familial influences or global marketing trends) are beyond the scope of this research but are identified for future research.

Without any definitive frameworks for analysis in related areas of sport or event management, we opted to apply Whaites' (2017) political economy framework which has been used in international development settings to understand why desired outcomes were not realized through collaboration. Whaites (2017) explained that political economy analyses encourage an in-depth understanding of the nature and context of problems and how people resolve those problems. Political economy analyses go "beyond blaming a lack of political will, and instead seek to identify 'why the drive for change [is] missing (or where it might actually exist)' based on an understanding of the interests of those in positions of power to make change happen" (Whaites, 2017, p. 4). Whaites' (2017) framework aligned with our intent to get beyond arguments of legacies as wicked problems, and instead try to understand the inhibitors and facilitators for realizing mass sport participation legacies. Whaites' (2017) framework includes the following elements: a) structural and contextual; b) bargaining processes; c) stakeholders; and d) incentives and ideas. Each is explained in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

In this paper, we address Whaites' (2017) framework by first outlining the structural and contextual factors pertinent to securing mass sport participation legacies from a large-scale sport event. We then identify key stakeholders within the inter-organizational networks of sport and sport events and discuss their incentives/ideas. Last, we consider stakeholders' bargaining processes and their likely influence on securing mass sport participation legacies. Under each political economy element, we draw out the characteristics of the political economies of sport and sport events to demonstrate the differences between the two, and to highlight how, when the two come together around a large-scale event, a complex and challenging nexus is created with implications for securing mass sport participation legacies.

Structural and contextual factors

Sport participation is accepted as inherently good, supporting healthy and productive communities (Wankel & Berger, 1990). Based on the economic arguments of market failure, public good, and positive externalities, many countries have invested in programs to encourage sport participation to realize its social benefits (Veal, 2011). However, over the last three decades, various forces have influenced the way we live, as participation rates in sports have declined, while at the same time increases in obesity (WHO, 2018a), declines in well-being, and increased social isolation (WHO, 2018b) have been observed.

Contemporary governments recognize the importance of sports in responding to these social challenges. In many Western democratic contexts, national sport policy from the 1970s on has primarily aimed to establish organizational structures to support the development and administration of sport, from mass participation through elite performances (Shilbury & Kellett, 2011). However, since the 1990s, in pursuit of achieving greater outcomes using fewer resources, governments have taken neoliberal approaches to sport participation, which has become “framed in the context and language of elite sport performance” (Green, 2007, p. 927). Green and Collins (2008, p.242) argued that this framing has led governments and policymakers to redefine sport development as “the means by which elite athletes might flourish,” rather than prioritizing efforts to increase the recreational participation of underrepresented targeted groups (e.g., by gender, ability, ethnicity).

Such trends have brought about a dichotomy between elite and mass participation sports (Green, 2007). Rather than complementing one another, elite and mass sport proponents often compete for the same scarce resources (Cashman & Darcy, 2008; Green, 2007; Toohey, 2010). Proponents of prioritizing elite sport argue the benefits of investing in elite sport will trickle down to the masses, inspiring them to participate in sport activities (Veal et al., 2019).

Evidence suggests that host governments have typically prioritized winning medals over encouraging mass sport participation and physical activity pre- and post-event (Toohey, 2010). The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games illustrated this phenomenon. Academics hoped for a post-event opportunity to reorient Australia's sport policy by establishing more balance between elite and mass sport participation (Green & Collins, 2008; Toohey, 2010). Instead, the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games were used to expand elite programs at the expense of mass sport participation (Toohey, 2008). Funding for Paralympic sports increased significantly after 2000, representing gains from a social inclusion perspective, but at the cost of funding for other disability sport programs, which was problematic due to the underrepresentation of people with disabilities in all areas of the sport system (Cashman & Darcy, 2008; Darcy, 2018).

Considering sport events, the political economy has been influenced by governments increasingly using sport events to address challenges brought about by global deindustrialization (Roche, 2017; Rojek, 2014). The altruistic ideals of amateur sport competition have been replaced by economic and political potentialities (Hall, 2006; Veal et al., 2019). Market failure has justified government involvement in sport events, but this has been operationalized in different ways to that of sport more generally. In part, the requirements of event governing bodies (EGBs) for financial guarantees to host their events, has impacted on the ways that government approach sport events. Such guarantees range from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) requiring host governments to underwrite the costs of hosting to other major event EGBs requiring that liabilities be underwritten and/or that significant contributions be made (Parent, 2015; Rojek, 2014). Event proponents argue government intervention is justified by the scale and expense of large sport events and by the public infrastructure requirement, which makes hosting unattractive for the private sector alone and, thus, unlikely if left to the free market (Gratton, Liu, Ramchandani, &

Wilson, 2012; Veal, 2011). Accordingly, Western democratic governments establish relevant administrative, policy, and legislative structures to support event hosting (Rojek, 2014).

However, based on their economic development potential, often large-scale sport events are positioned in government tourism and economic development portfolios, rather than in sport portfolios (Stokes, 2006; Thomson, 2015).

An examination of the structural and contextual environments concerning the systems of sport and sport events highlight that these two systems operate discretely and present challenges to cooperative stakeholder interactions. For instance, the political economies of sport are characterized by permanency and relative stability. That is, they remain in place before and after the staging of large-scale sport events (Sotiriadou, Shilbury, & Quick, 2008). In contrast, although the international governance arrangements for large-scale sport events remain in place for EGBs (e.g., IOC), the structures surrounding specific editions are far more dynamic (Leopkey & Parent, 2019). Event networks are prompted by the temporary and short-term nature of organizing committees (OCs) with sunset clauses occurring after the close of the event. Scholars acknowledge that, while this makes it unrealistic for OCs to take lead responsibility (Chalip et al., 2017), they do have a role to play in enabling legacy outcomes (Parent, 2015). However, the lack of clarification on lead responsibility for these outcomes will likely impact their realization. These arguments of structure and context align with Rojek's (2014) criticisms of the potential to achieve social change through large-scale sport events. He argued investment in large-scale sport events to effect social change (e.g., mass sport participation) effectively distracts both policymakers and the public from understanding what is needed to bring about social change at a local level (i.e., allocating resources to targeted initiatives). When the political economies of structure and context combine around event hosting, the outcome is a complex and contested environment, which does little to support inter-organizational collaboration toward achieving mass sport

participation legacies. These structural and contextual factors of the political economies of sport and events are presented in Table 2 to highlight the key tensions evident when the two are brought together around an event.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Implications for policy and practice

The structural and contextual factors pertaining to mass sport participation legacies help to explain why promises to secure sport participation legacies through the staging of large-scale sport events are not straightforward and why tensions influence the extent of stakeholders' collective action toward securing these legacies. Relevant stakeholders should engage with and understand the sociopolitical contexts and ideological influences at play for bid candidates and host cities, particularly the tensions and juxtapositions. For instance, governments invest in initiatives for various outcomes (e.g., sport for social outcomes and events for economic outcomes), and tensions often exist within the sport system (e.g., elite performance versus mass sport development). Hosting a large-scale sport event does not overcome these tensions, but instead underpins whether commitments are made for mass sport participation legacies and how they are framed, prioritized, and implemented.

An in-depth understanding of the potential asset that a large-scale sport event may represent for mass sport participation in relevant settings, as well as how the sport event and the sport system operate, will better position bid candidates and host cities to maximize outcomes and to recognize how an event might impact existing sport systems and interrelationships. Such a process is likely to assist in identifying key stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in collaborative efforts, as well as initiatives local sport systems need to harness the opportunities presented by the event.

EGBs can prompt bid candidates to adequately conceptualize and commit to securing mass sport participation legacies. Requiring artifacts such as stakeholder mapping and engagement plans in candidature submissions may encourage bid cities to initiate resource

development strategies to secure mass sport participation legacies. EGBs can also provide evidence of best and worst practices from previous host cities in terms of structures, contexts, and initiatives.

Stakeholders and incentives/ideas

A central consideration in securing sport participation legacies from a large-scale sport event is the range of stakeholders; their varied stakes, roles, and responsibilities; and the complexity of their interactions (Gold & Gold, 2009). Gold and Gold (2009) documented sport and event stakeholders from the London 2012 Olympic Games sport participation legacies, which included a) organizations that provided sport opportunities, b) government or quasi-government agencies that provided funding and other support to sport organizations, c) local authorities connected to the event that provided sport infrastructure in their communities, d) regional and national sport and relevant governing bodies that provided frameworks and funding for sport development, and e) government-established statutory authorities to plan and deliver event-led development in the host location. This broad network of stakeholders illustrates the potential for complexity and conflict in determining who is responsible for what when coordinating efforts for collaborative action.

Chalip et al. (2017, p. 260) proposed a simpler typology of stakeholders, including sport organizations, event organizers, and non-sport organizations (e.g., governments, schools, private sector businesses, and sponsors). Chalip et al. (2017) suggested that to successfully leverage an event and secure participation legacies, stakeholders must self-identify, align their participation goals, and work together. They further asserted that collective action to leverage events for sport participation legacies is often inhibited by a lack of goal setting, a lack of ownership and accountability for outcomes, and a lack of existing structures to enable leverage.

While the sentiments of Chalip et al. (2017) are valid, Byers et al. (2019) argued the need to engage with deeper structures, interests, and incentives that underlie and inform individual stakeholder action on collective legacy processes. The inability of sport systems and events/tourism to integrate and achieve mutual outcomes is well established (cf. Wäsche, 2015; Weed, 2001, 2003; Weed & Bull, 1997). Here the political economy lens helps to highlight systemic issues that discourage organizations from pursuing such collaborative efforts.

We focus on a non-exhaustive set of stakeholders that includes host nation sport organizations, host nation and other relevant government departments/agencies, EGBs, and associated OCs. While a broader range of stakeholders exists in a sport event network (Leopkey & Parent, 2019), encompassing that full range is beyond the scope of this study. The purpose here is not to examine the network in detail, which has been done (see Hautbois, Parent, & Seguin, 2012; Parent et al., 2017), but to illustrate how the combination of stakeholders can impact securing sport participation legacies.

For sport stakeholders, we include national, state/provincial, and regional/community sport organizations within the host nation that administer elite to mass participation sport opportunities. National sport systems in countries like Australia, the UK, and Canada are characterized by hierarchical structures, with national governing bodies on top and regional/community organizations at the bottom level (Sheerder et al., 2017; Sotiriadou et al., 2008). The hierarchical model helps to explain the different organizational levels and their roles and responsibilities (see Table 3). However, these organizations typically operate independently; thus, the organized hierarchy fails to address the complexity inherent in inter-organizational relationships (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007).

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Importantly, relationships between these organizations rarely exhibit only top-down exercises of power. Organizations at the bottom, whether from a federated or unitary model,

are not always compliant with directives from higher levels (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). Organizations at each level have their own interests and stakeholders to which they are accountable (Willem & Scheerder, 2017). Concomitantly, an organization may engage with government programs and, therefore, need to meet their requirements as well (Gowthorp, Toohey & Skinner, 2017; Willem & Scheerder, 2017). Hence, sport organizations are responsive to internal and external interests and operate within political economies at their individual levels. Moreover, according to Willem and Scheerder (2017), sport governing bodies generally receive limited support for developing capacities to work effectively in such challenging environments. Thus, contradictions and conflict often occur between levels of sport organizations instead of consensus and collaboration towards collective aspirations (Byers et al., 2019; Shilbury & Kellett, 2011).

Alongside the sport organisations, many national governments in Western democratic societies have had greater involvement in sport since the post-World War II period, when welfare states became more pronounced in these societies (Scheerder, Claes, & Willem, 2017). This *governmentalization* of sport has led to more governments getting involved in sport and related policy making, subsidizing sport for both sport and non-sport outcomes, delivering sport programs, and hosting sport events (Scheerder et al., 2017).

Scheerder et al. (2017, p. 10) argued for “a deeper and broader awareness of the nature of the relationships between sport governing bodies and sport (con)federations (i.e., government departments or agencies responsible for sport).” They demonstrated that countries’ cultural contexts and values determine how governments engage with sporting systems: within different systems, different objectives will be advanced in and through sport. Such government involvement has influenced the autonomy of many sport organizations. Consequently, when sport governing bodies engage with government, they become reliant on and reactive to government agendas (Scheerder et al., 2017).

Stakeholders' sport participation legacies are also affected by which organizations are included in bargaining processes for event involvement and resource allocation (Thomson, 2015). Given the hierarchical structure of sport, the national governing bodies are often linked into the governance structures for events. This makes sense from the scope of elite sport and pathways they provide for athletes and officials to participate in events, but not when considering mass sport participation legacies because increases in sport participation are more likely at the community sport organization (CSO) level (Doherty et al., 2014). Despite this critical role in securing legacies, CSOs are often excluded from bargaining processes (Macrae, 2017; May, Harris, & Collins, 2013). This is a critical omission in much legacy planning, as May et al. (2013) found in their London 2012 Olympics study that CSOs are more motivated to service their existing members than to secure mass sport participation legacies. They may be more motivated to secure legacies if they were brought into the bargaining process to gain incentives for involvement.

In terms of event stakeholders, scholars have documented that the complexity of these networks results from the range of organizations and interests (Naraine, Schenk, & Parent, 2016; Parent et al., 2017). Bidding on, planning, and delivering large-scale sport events requires coordinated interactions between a range of stakeholders at various levels, including international (e.g., EGBs and international sport federations), national (e.g., host nation governments), and local (e.g. local government and organizing committees) levels (Leopkey & Parent, 2019). Each organization has its own interests and motivations, but due to the collaborative nature of large-scale sport events, they are also dependent on each other to realize their objectives. However, the range of interests often leads to a lack of understanding by the different stakeholders in terms of the interests at play and potential for realizing overarching collaborative goals (Grix et al., 2017), such as sport participation legacies.

At the international level, stakeholders such as EGBs, including the IOC, the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA), and Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), have sought to engage with sustainability and legacy since the early 2000s (Gratton et al., 2012). EGBs have pursued collaboration with international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations, and developed their own strategies for legacies for their events. This increased interest in sport as a vehicle for development, the agendas of the EGBs, IGOs, non-government organisations (such as Amnesty International), and the efficacy of such partnerships have received increased academic scrutiny (Burnett, 2017; Darnell, 2012; Giampiccoli & Nauright, 2019). The United Nation's recognition of the role of sport in realizing its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2018) indicates continued intentions to secure non-sport outcomes through sport.

EGBs have been criticized for pursuing legacies to promote the benefits of hosting and maintain the interest of potential host cities, thus upholding their event's commercial viability (Clarke & Kearns, 2015; Cornelissen, 2007). The label *legacy talk* has been used to refer to discourse that treats legacy as a vague and simplistic concept, pitched as a desirable outcome for host cities (MacAloon, 2008; Veal et al., 2012). The IOC, recognized as a legacy development leader, introduced sport development-related questions in its Candidate Questionnaire in the early 2000s. However, as the IOC did not define sport development in the questionnaire, by not following through with candidate cities' obligations to specifically reference legacies (Veal et al., 2012), the cities could focus on elite sport development and still meet the IOC's criteria. The appraisal by Veal et al. (2012) of the sport legacy questions resonates with MacAloon's (2008) critique of the IOC's notion of legacy, with doubts about how meaningful the IOC's engagement with legacy was and about its commitment to securing legacies for host cities. Veal et al. (2012, p. 176) acknowledged that while the IOC's legacy developments were not perfect, they did demonstrate an evolution from "rhetorical

commitment[s],” to sport for all, to a “formal requirement imposed on bidding cities to commit and plan for a sport participation legacy.”

More recently, the IOC and CGF revised their approaches to event bidding and staging to minimize hosting costs and maximize hosting benefits and legacies. A major review of the Olympic Games’ organization commenced in 2014, resulting in a streamlined candidature process (IOC, 2017a), a strategic approach to legacy (IOC, 2017b), and a revised approach to organizing and delivering the Games (Executive Steering Committee for Olympic Games Delivery, 2018). *IOC Legacy Strategic Approach: Moving Forward* (IOC, 2017b) presents an open-ended concept of legacy, with the IOC’s goal to develop joint visions with host cities that are contextually relevant.

There is merit in contextualized approaches to defining legacy (Thomson et al., 2013), which respond to the need for stakeholder networks to develop shared visions. However, the socially constructed nature of legacy (Girginov & Hills, 2009) means that without specific parameters to guide the process, such an approach remains susceptible to concerns presented by Veal et al. (2012) that legacy can be influenced to favor more powerful sporting interests over others. The peripheral positioning of mass sport participation stakeholders in the political economy of sport presents limited opportunities for a democratic process to define collective visions of sport legacies. While the IOC appears to have changed the way Olympic events are coordinated, whether these changes prompt broader changes in the host nation sport systems remains to be seen.

The political economy of sport events is also characterized by host nation government departments having divergent interests and providing a source of confusion for stakeholders. Often, tourism and economic development government departments engage in event bidding and hosting, rather than sport development government interests. The interests and operations of these departments have received academic criticism since the 1990s. The concept of

hallmark decision-making, for example, associated with large-scale sport events (Roche, 1994; Veal, 2011), refers to politicians proceeding with a project before it has received a robust feasibility assessment, and then finding ways to justify the project to the public afterwards (Roche, 1994; Veal, 2011). Hallmark decision-making is problematic because business and political elites, who see potential gain for their businesses or political interests, greatly influence decisions to bid (Roche, 1994; Veal, 2011).

Stakeholders can also be affected by the interests of business and political elites, which have traditionally been considered privileged in the decision-making process, affecting subsequent policy priorities and initiatives and, thus, influencing the efforts of stakeholders to secure legacies (Chalip, 2004; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). Business and political elites' agendas often remain hidden behind public relations campaigns promoting the potential opportunities of hosting sport events to garner the support of taxpayers (Chalip, 2004; Veal, 2011; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). The opportunity to secure sport participation legacies typically becomes part of the bid narrative, driven by event proponents and often lacking engagement with key stakeholders at this critical stage.

The event organizing committee (OC) also impact the political economy of sport events, typically positioned as central actors in coordinating the stakeholder network to deliver the sport event (Leopkey & Parent, 2019). OCs can take on different structures, which impact how they are governed and operate and how they interact within the stakeholder network (Parent, 2015). For instance, in Australia, the tradition has been for host governments to establish OCs as temporary statutory authorities with delegated state powers and sunset clauses (Searle & Bounds, 1999; Stokes, 2006). In other contexts, including Europe and North America, OCs are more likely to be private or not-for-profit organizations (Parent, 2015). Across these scenarios, OCs will have some accountability to the host governments, particularly if they depend on government funding.

OCs cannot be responsible for securing legacies, due to their event delivery focus and temporary status; instead, they are key to enabling other stakeholders to secure legacies (Chalip et al., 2017; Smith & Fox, 2007). It is critically important that the OC and stakeholders are aware of this arrangement; otherwise, disconnects occur between what was promised in bids, the political rhetoric and the design of frameworks for event delivery and legacy (Leopkey & Parent, 2017; Nicholson & Ralston, 2015). When the connectivity between an event bid, planning and delivery and the broader legacy is not acknowledged, an OC will prioritize short-term event needs over securing long-term outcomes, particularly because they are unlikely to have long-term involvement (Gold & Gold, 2009). We present a summary of these stakeholders and ideas/incentives pertinent the political economies of sport and sport events in Table 4 to highlight the divergent objectives and motivations present across the two political economies as described.

[Insert Table 4 about here]

Implications for policy and practice

Understanding the range of stakeholders, and their perspectives, can help explain why and how stakeholders interact and collaborate, which can inform interventions to encourage the kind of inter-organizational collaboration required to secure mass sport participation legacies. Elaborating on the implications set out previously, candidate cities should include relevant stakeholders (e.g., CSOs) in stakeholder mapping and engagement exercises. Encouraging buy-in from stakeholders ensures local sport systems can and will stimulate and respond to increased interest in mass sport participation. Technology is important to broad scale engagement at the community level. Social media campaigns can promote events and legacy messaging and encourage local participation in the visioning of mass sport participation legacies and shared ownership of goals. Polls and surveys can encourage community input and identify factors that impact the leveraging of opportunities presented by large-scale sport events. Webinars can inform local volunteers on upskilling. Through these

strategies host governments can gather input to inform interventions and resources needed to improve CSOs' efforts to secure mass sport participation legacies, such as grant programs, education programs, and mass media marketing campaigns.

We also suggest host governments make OCs more accountable for identifying event opportunities that can be leveraged by relevant sport stakeholders by, for example, encouraging appropriate stakeholders to participate in event activations and media opportunities or to provide content for event publicity (e.g., e-newsletters, social media, etc.). Host governments should consider requiring periodic reports from OCs documenting specific efforts made to secure mass sport participation legacies and initiatives to enable sport stakeholders to access and leverage relevant event opportunities. To support sport stakeholders' participation in such activities, host governments should be mindful that local sport organizations will require support for additional capacity to fulfill such opportunities, as these would represent activities over and above their typical operations (Frawley & Cush, 2011).

Bargaining processes

Within the political economy of sport, many national sport organizations (NSOs) and state sport organizations (SSOs) rely on government funding to deliver their operations. Government funding operates on cycles, providing sports organizations with an opportunity approximately every 3 or 4 years to present their cases for funding, effectively competing with their counterparts from other sports for a share of a finite pool of funding (Gowthorp et al., 2017). Due to the competitive nature of the funding processes and government desires to achieve non-sport outcomes through investment in sport, sport organizations often respond to government objectives rather than setting their own independent strategic agendas for development (Gowthorp et al., 2017); otherwise, they may not receive their share of the limited existing resources.

Bargaining positions are also impacted by other factors. For example, elite sport proponents tend to be more organized and experienced in bargaining processes (i.e., lobbying for funding). As such, elite sport typically receives more resources through bargaining than mass participation initiatives (Cashman & Darcy, 2008; Stewart et al., 2004; Toohey, 2010). Green (2007) proposed that when mass participation initiatives are evident at the NSO or SSO levels, they are typically underpinned by the goal of attracting specific individuals with the potential to develop into elite athletes. Consequently, mass participation strategies have typically focused on increasing the pool of potential elite athletes, so limited resources have been invested in encouraging the general community to participate in organized sports (Cashman & Darcy, 2008; Sotiriadou et al., 2008). Not surprisingly, elite sport typically benefits from this scenario, despite scholars calling for a more balanced approach to investment and development of both elite and mass sport (Cashman and Darcy, 2008; Stewart et al, 2004; Toohey, 2010). This shows that sport systems may actually operate in contrast to mass sport participation event legacies.

In addition to these processes occurring at the NSO and SSO levels of sport, processes at the CSO level also play a role. As noted previously, CSOs are often left out of consultation or bargaining processes, despite being key stakeholders in delivering on legacy promises. The typical operations of CSOs present further blockages to the realization of mass sport participation legacies. For instance, Macrae's (2017) study of CSOs' efforts around the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games found that the CSOs' willingness and ability to identify a large-scale sport event as an opportunity for their organization and to execute a plan of action was variable and influenced the extent of legacy realized. Macrae (2017, p. 9) highlighted, "if the club itself did not want to develop – for instance – a junior section, then there was little that could be done in terms of government marketing or encouragement to change this, fundamentally, they were a voluntary club and it was their choice." Hence, the

political economy of sport presents collective action problems for realizing increases in mass sport participation even before the added complexities of the political economy of sport events is brought into play.

Indeed, the political economies of sport events add more complexity to the bargaining processes related to mass sport participation legacies. For example, EGBs, which are typically global sport organizations, have exclusive ownership of their sport events. These events attract global media coverage, hence placing these EGBs in positions of power – both politically and economically (Gratton et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that this power position, commercial interests, and the promulgation of legacy talk, when combined, often see EGBs act in opposition to mass sport participation legacies (Cornelissen, 2007). This has been the case with venue development programs, which often overlook local and long-term facility needs in favor of the sport event experience (Darcy & Taylor, 2013). Cornelissen (2007) provided the example of the FIFA 2010 World Cup event, when FIFA's preference for new stadiums to be built in urban hot spots came at the expense of building sport facilities in under-resourced locations. Similarly, Gold and Gold's (2009) case study of the London 2012 Olympic Games found that "the local communities... will not necessarily be able to use the sports venues unless funds are forthcoming to convert facilities adequately for use by local communities" (Gold & Gold, 2009, p. 193).

From the host government perspective, the bargaining process typically involves the tourism and economic development arms of government (Stokes, 2006; Thomson, 2015). Many contemporary cities, even within the same nation, perceive themselves as competing for event bids and, consequently, keep their bids and processes secret until they are publicly announced (Hall, 2006). Cities often enact formal mechanisms by establishing legislation to support commercial interests. This means that events are likely to progress from concept to

bid to delivery with a strong focus on tourism and economic development, with superficial consideration given to promises of mass sport participation legacies (Thomson, 2015).

Another aspect of the formal bargaining processes in the political economy of sport events is the OC's structure, power, and responsibility. As noted, OCs tend to be independent organizations, which impacts how they interact with the sport event stakeholder network. These entities are capable of fast-tracking decision-making processes and delivering events on time and on budget, and in doing so, often circumvent community and stakeholder consultation (Lenskyj, 2002; Searle & Bounds, 1999; Stokes, 2006). Such practice is often detrimental to developing and implementing events in a way that provides short and long-term benefits for the local host communities (Hall, 2006; Lenskyj, 2002; Smith & Fox, 2007). The short-term needs of staging the event become prioritized, while consideration of design aspects to meet longer-term and community-focused legacies are often side-lined (Parent, 2015; Leopkey & Parent, 2017; Nichols & Ralston, 2015).

In summary, the two political economies of sport and sport events individually demonstrate challenges to the bargaining processes, particularly formal processes, which contribute to collective action problems pertaining to realizing mass sport participation legacies. These challenges in bargaining processes are further exacerbated when the two economies are brought together around the staging of a large-scale sport event: sport stakeholders are oriented to maintain their longer-term survival in the political economy of sport, rather than being distracted by trying to achieve consensus with other organizations around a one-off sport event to secure sport participation legacies, while sport event stakeholders are oriented to deliver a successful event on time and on budget, rather than trying to challenge the status quo of the existing structures of sport.

In addition to supplying qualified athletes for event competition, NSOs or SSOs are likely to engage in service delivery (i.e., supplying venues, officials, or sport-specific

volunteers), typically through a fee-for-use transaction. Beyond Frawley and Cush's (2011) work, which documented the Australian Rugby Union's financial legacy from hosting the 2003 Rugby World Cup, scant empirical research verifies anecdotes that involvement in large-scale sport events provides financial legacies for sport organizations. There is also limited understanding of potential financial gains for the key sites for increasing mass participation sport, i.e., CSOs, which are often under-resourced.

Overwhelmingly, the transactional nature of NSO and SSO involvement in large-scale sport events means the sport development benefits of hosting large-scale sport events are limited to discrete outcomes, such as increased knowledge and professionalism (Halbwirth & Toohy, 2013; Parent, 2008; Werner, Dickson, & Hyde, 2015) and development of officials and volunteers (Dickson, Darcy, Edwards, & Terweil, 2015; Doherty, 2009). Such scenarios fall short of the academic literature's call for consensus on visions for legacy and plans and relevant resource levels of the sport system to build capacity to enable legacies (Gold & Gold, 2009; Macrae, 2017; May et al., 2013), such as mass sport participation legacies. These bargaining processes pertinent the political economies of sport and sport events are summarized in Table 5 to highlight the different ways organization operate and interact across the two political economies.

[Insert Table 5 about here]

Implications for policy and practice

The following suggestions for improving legacy planning and delivery in the future are based on the preceding examination of bargaining processes pertaining to mass sport participation legacies. Understanding the bargaining processes, both formal and informal, helps to explain whether certain ideas are prioritized and implemented.

These proposals build on the suggestions made thus far. There is an ongoing need to promote opportunities to sport stakeholders to leverage large-scale sport events.

Opportunities need to be promoted in a timely fashion, remembering that strategic planning cycles for sport stakeholders do not always align with timeframes for event planning, staging, and wrap up. Promoting opportunities also needs to include messaging and programming that raises sport stakeholders' awareness as to what various opportunities might mean and look like in their individual settings. Providing tailored information to help sport stakeholders translate initiatives into their individual contexts supports the uptake of initiatives typically constrained by limited resources. In addition, host governments might engage early adopters to develop case studies to assist in these promotion activities, by including key outcomes experienced by organizations and important lessons learned.

EGBs can provide a repository for such initiatives and case studies to assist future candidates and host cities. A repository should be accessible and user friendly, capturing the relevant contextual information so policymakers and practitioners can make informed decisions on the appropriateness and transferability of initiatives into their own settings. Such an initiative would encourage greater knowledge sharing and application and help to reduce the loss of momentum in understanding of legacy and securing of outcomes that tends to occur between the staging of sport events.

Conclusion

In this conceptual paper, we translated Whaites' (2017) political economy framework to the setting of large-scale sport events. This is the first paper to have explored the political economies relevant to securing mass sport participation legacies in detail, and in doing so demonstrated the theoretical and applied value in using such frameworks to highlight the differences between the political economies of sport and sport events, and how the nexus of the two environments can create a complex and contested situation for mass sport participation legacies. These differences in political economies demonstrate the need for

academics and practitioners to understand that rational leveraging and legacy planning models are not directly transferable to the setting of mass sport participation legacies.

While the concept of political economy has been used in sport and event settings, there is potential for further engagement by sport and event scholars to acknowledge the political dimensions across stakeholder networks in interactions, decision-making and resourcing of collective efforts. In the setting of mass sport participation legacies, Whaites' (2017) political economy framework has helped us to shine a light on political elements, divergences and potential areas for greater alignment. Importantly, we have demonstrated sport stakeholders do not necessarily perceive incentives of participating in event leveraging or legacy planning in the same way more corporate-focused firms do because many sport stakeholders typically operate in different political economies characterized by government intervention, market failure, the public good and resource competition and dependencies.

Too often these tensions are unacknowledged and/or not given adequate consideration in academic scholarship, policy, and practice. Therefore, we argue the lack of mass sport participation legacies, as documented in the literature, is not surprising. These political economy tensions are unlikely to change in the short-term. Hence, we sought to deliver through this article pragmatic and actionable suggestions for policies and practices that provide a starting point for developing strategies for sport stakeholders to navigate the political economy tensions that impact securing mass sport participation legacies at the meso level. It is possible for host governments, OCs, and EGBs to work with sport stakeholders to increase the likelihood that the broader set of stakeholders will identify their role and potential contribution to securing mass sport participation legacies. Accordingly, we included practical implications for stakeholders to consider in future legacy planning and delivery. Our suggestions focus on stakeholder engagement, identification of facilitators and inhibitors,

promotion of opportunities, and provision of support to encourage individual stakeholders to leverage an event and contribute to securing mass sport participation legacies.

Moving forward, we suggest areas for future research. First, future research should consider a broader set of sport development prerequisites that may be needed to grow stakeholder willingness and ability to actualize mass sport participation legacies. Such an investigation may take an in-depth look at those micro- and macro-level factors from a political economy viewpoint and build on the meso-level understanding of political economy we consider in this paper. Second, research should also consider the types of network-wide interactions most likely to help build capabilities in the sport system. Such research might be better positioned to examine the more in-depth role of private sector stakeholders in securing mass sport participation legacies, not addressed in this paper. As an overlay to these two research topics, the academic community could enrich applications of theoretical frameworks, such as political economy, that encourage researchers to ask hard questions about why things are not working as we would hope or expect, and why host communities are not accessing the potential benefits of hosting large-scale sport events. In addition, such research needs to be designed in ways that provide insights into different geopolitical and culturally specific facilitators of sport organizations, government infrastructure providers, and other contributing organizations of each event and host city towards securing mass sport participation legacies.

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Table 1:

Political economy elements – explanations

Element	Explanation
Structural and contextual	The background and contextual issues that shape political and institutional environments, including economic issues, demographic factors, and regional factors. These elements evolve over time but are difficult to influence. As such, these factors must be planned for and adapted to.
Bargaining processes	The ways activities progress in a system, including formal and informal (or unwritten) procedures, concerning how deals get done or undone. This element concerns influences on bargaining and those who bargain, at all interaction levels, and the balance of power between actors. It also highlights the potential for “collective action problems,” which can occur when the extent of multi-stakeholder agreement and effort required to realize an outcome cannot be achieved.
Stakeholders	The institutions that can affect, or be affected by, the bargaining process. Stakeholders are included or excluded from the bargaining process and may be connected through networks. Stakeholders do not necessarily act rationally and can be driven by various motives. Different levels of influence may not be commensurate with formal roles or hierarchies.
Incentives and ideas	Stakeholder motives, which can be simple or complex, highly destructive or entirely neutral. There are often inherent tensions in incentives/disincentives that shape aspirations, processes, and relationships.

Table 2:

Summary of structural and contextual factors

Political economies of sport	Political economies of sport events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments invest in sport for socio-economic benefits • While in theory mass and elite sport are argued to be complementary interdependent within the overall sphere of sport development, the emergence of an elite versus mass dichotomy, in most Western democratic nations, sees elite sport prioritized in policy processes, and assumptions are that mass sport participation will benefit via a trickle-down effect • Due to the federated structures and regularity of organized sport occurrence, sport networks are characterized by permanency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments invest in sport for socio-economic benefits • While sport events are a part of the overall competition structures of organized sport, bids for large-scale sport events are typically pursued by tourism or economic portfolios within governments, this often leads to a disconnect between the people who have prepared a bid and made promises for mass sport participation legacies, and those who might be responsible for realizing these specific legacies once a bid has been won. • Due to the one-off nature of event hosting, sport event networks are characterized as dynamic and are largely temporary in structure

Table 3:

Roles of sport organizations in traditional federated structures

Level of Sport Organization	Roles
National Governing Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affiliate/liaise with International Federation • Organize national championships • Select and develop talented athletes; provide a pathway for athletes into international events • Liaise with relevant levels of government and implement relevant programs (from elite to mass participation) • Provide affiliate support to provincial/state governing bodies • Provide provincial/state governing bodies support for sport development (administrative functions, as well as pathways for athletes, coaches, officials) • Provide support to community sport organizations to attract new participants
Provincial/State Governing Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affiliate/liaise with national governing body • Attract and retain members and participants • Identify and develop talented athletes for elite pathways • Deliver programs developed and funded by NGO • Liaise with relevant levels of government and implement relevant programs (ranging from elite to mass participation) • Provide affiliate support to community sport organizations
Community Sport Organizations (CSO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affiliate/liaise with provincial/state governing body • Implement programs developed and funded by national and state/provincial governing bodies • Provide members with affordable, accessible opportunities to participate in organized sport

(Sources: Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014; Shilbury & Kellett, 2011; Sotiriadou, 2009)

Table 4:

Summary of stakeholders and incentives/ideas in the sport and sport event contexts

Political economies of sport	Political economies of sport events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport stakeholders typically represented as an organized hierarchy, which is not always accurate • Each organization is motivated to pursue its own interests • Often the stakeholders positioned to deliver mass sport participation legacies (i.e., CSOs) are not included in event processes • CSOs are motivated to service existing members, not to deliver legacies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport event stakeholders reflect a complex network of interactions • Stakeholder are motivated to achieve their own ends, but also reliant on each other to realize collaborative projects of bidding for and staging an event • There is a lack of understanding of the potential roles and responsibilities to realize mass sport participation legacies. e.g., EGBs' legacy motivations questioned, host governments exhibit hallmark decision-making, OCs are temporary and focused on delivering a successful event

Table 5:

Summary of bargaining processes

Political economies of sport	Political economies of sport events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport stakeholders are motivated to maintain their longer-term position in the sport political economy, so they lack motivation to pursue interests related to one-off events; NSOs and SSOs are responsive to government agendas • Elite sport better equipped than mass in bargaining processes, attracts more resourcing and influences participation initiatives • CSOs typically lack willingness and ability to deliver on mass sport participation legacy promises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive cities pursue event concepts and bids with secrecy and lack of consultation, prioritizing economic objectives over others • Formal processes, such as delegation of planning power, reduces impetus on OCs to engage with host communities to enable longer-term outcomes, such as mass participation legacies • OCs motivated to deliver successful events on time and on budget, so lack motivation to challenge status quo of sport systems