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Network governance of a multi-level, multi-sectoral sport event: Differences in coordinating ties and actors

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ABSTRACT

To understand how partners within a large, multi-sectoral network coordinated amongst one another, this paper empirically determined stakeholders' network capital vis-à-vis centrality by focusing on the relationships within the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. An embedded case study was built using 6382 pages of documents (e.g., meeting minutes, memos, newspaper articles, and annual reports) and 55 interviews, and analyzed using social network analysis. The results revealed actors used eight types of ties in their coordination efforts: collaboration, communication, coordinating bridge, instrumental, legal, regulatory, transactional, internal link, and external link. Also, highly centralized actors were context specific to each level of government, with the organizing committee and federal secretariat emerging as the most critical for coordination efforts. Findings empirically demonstrate the importance of the national/federal government to coordinate multi-sectoral sport event networks. Thus, sport event partners can consider structuring an event's network administrative organization to fit their differing strategic goals.
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1. Introduction

Hosting a major or mega international sport event requires the formation of inter-organizational relationships between a multitude of stakeholder groups, notably: the host governments, international delegations, sport organizations, the media, the community, sponsors, and the organizing committee's own workforce (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013). As such, the event stakeholder network is a multi-sectoral network, with non-profit, for-profit and public organizations involved. How do these stakeholders coordinate amongst themselves in such a network?

The assumed coordination focus for such a multi-sectoral network is the organizing committee (Parent, 2015). Previous research on organizing committees has increased the understanding of their nature (e.g., Parent, 2015), their structure and design (e.g., Theodoraki, 2007) and their human resource management (e.g., Chanavat & Ferrand, 2010; Xing & Chalip, 2009). Bailey (2014, p. 4) highlighted the "challenges facing event organizers and international federations regarding international sports governance [such as] adopting arrangements regarding democratic governance . . . and maintaining universality." However, in larger sports events, the organizing committee is not alone in governing the event network (Naraine, Schenk, &

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Parent, 2016). As stakeholders are heterogeneous in their wants and needs (Parent, 2008; Parent & Deephouse, 2007), understanding the intricacies and dynamics of the sport event stakeholder network remains poor. Sport event management researchers may understand the overall Olympic Movement actor network and governance mechanisms and processes (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008); however, when it comes to the event itself, as a worldwide phenomenon, such understanding is lacking.

Sport governance research (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010, 2015a, 2015b; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003; Hoye & Doherty, 2011; Shilbury, O'Boyle, & Ferkins, 2016) has usually focused on the perspective of the sport organization, its board, structure, strategic management, as well as its perspective of inter-organizational relationships. However, to truly understand the relationship, it is also important to look at the other end of the relationship: the stakeholder's perspective.

Focusing on the Olympic Games context, there is a trend towards host governments' increased involvement in planning an Olympic Games (Parent, 2016; Theodoraki, 2009), due in part to the significance of certain files, such as security, immigration/visas, and health. However, this has yet to be empirically verified in the context of the event network's overall governance. Moreover, in Canada, attempting to have the three levels of government (i.e., federal/national, provincial, and municipal) work together can seem like a Herculean effort. Yet, this is precisely what these three levels of government had to do if the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games (hereafter 2010 Games) and its organizing committee (VANOC) were to be successful.

Thus, the purpose of this paper was to understand how partners within a large, multi-sectoral network coordinated amongst one another. To do so, this paper focused on the Canadian (federal, provincial, and municipal) governments' network governance efforts (within the larger network) for the hosting of the 2010 Games. Specifically, this study examined the relationships and ties within a multi-sectoral network using social network analysis (SNA) to determine stakeholders' network capital vis-à-vis centrality (see Koliba, Meek, & Zia, 2011). In doing so, the findings build upon Naraine et al.'s (2016) initial examination of sport event network governance, add to the debate on the extent and circumstances linking governance network and democratic principles (see Blanco, 2015) through ties between network actors, and facilitate the understanding of how a private, international regime (Cutler, 2003), such as the Olympic Movement, can influence host government processes.

2. Review of literature and theoretical framework

Governance is more than management; it includes economic, social, political, and cultural aspects (Bellina, 2009); it is about the coordination of a social system, with researchers often interested in the role of the state in that process (Koliba et al., 2011). Governance is dynamic, evolutionary, and multidimensional; it refers to "a more or less formal association whose members retain their independence of action while agreeing to work together on common enterprises that produce collective goods" (Ansell, Sondorp, & Stevens, 2012, p. 318). Often, associations, vis-à-vis inter-organizational relationships, partnerships, and collaborative projects, are amassed into a singular network (cf. Hertting & Vedung, 2012). The literature on network governance covers many areas and contexts, notably those in a European setting, where networks are perceived as the solution to complex governance problems when negotiating between multi-sectoral stakeholders (Ansell et al., 2012). This section provides an overview of the governance literature, followed by Olympic-related governance research, and culminates with the network paradigm framework.

2.1. Governance

Governance often appears to be an umbrella notion (Rouillard & Nadeau, 2013) that is territorially and institutionally unbound (Enroth, 2011). It covers many meanings (corporate governance, multi-level governance, shared governance, collaborative governance, etc.) and numerous elements (networks, institutions, communities, process, etc.; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012; Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). The same holds true for democratic governance. Most of the literature defines it along the twin lines of performance and accountability, with a complementary (and varying) emphasis on democratic participation and transparency (e.g., Callahan, 2007; OECD, 2014). In essence, making citizens more active and engaged in policies can in turn increase the transparency and accountability of public organizations. Thus, the rise of interdependent actors in the private sector, civil society, and other governments and legislatures diminishes the state's autonomy and capacity. In this scenario, performance and accountability issues become increasingly complex, but remain crucial for ensuring the democratic nature of politico-administrative regimes (Bevir, 2006; Koliba et al., 2011). While collaboration is often emphasized in research on effective and cohesive governance (e.g., Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015; Shilbury et al., 2016), leading some to talk about collaborative governance regimes (see Emerson et al., 2012), multiple forms of interactive governance can also be studied through networks, as illustrated by the democratic network governance literature (see Sorensen & Torfing, 2008). Koliba et al. (2011) argued the collaborative approach is included within the governance network paradigm, along with classical public administration and new public management; however, they noted the governance network approach goes further by also considering brokering/boundary spanning and a systemic approach to the complex problem at hand (cf. Gittell & Weiss, 2004). Koliba et al. also argued governance networks are anchored in the democratic principles noted above (see also Bogason & Musso, 2006). An approach emphasizing patterns or configurations of stakeholders' governing capacities thus appears tailor-made for the dynamic and complex nature of these multidirectional interactions, as well as the (often neglected) resilient nature of hierarchy (cf. Damgaard, 2006).

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