Motivation and Research Objective

Canada recently hosted the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games as well as the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games. This provides scholars an opportunity for a side-by-side comparison of the governance structures and policy instruments involved in the planning of sport mega-events (SMEs). In tune with the International Olympic Committee’s sustainability rhetoric and Canada’s Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events (Government of Canada, 2008), these Games accentuated legacy – the lasting impacts that remain after the event concludes – as the focus of their planning (Cashman, 2006). Both games utilized organizations that were external to their Organizing Committees (OCs), to help deliver legacy and/or leveraging strategies.

Prior sport management research provides insight into the governance structures of OCs and the conceptualization of their legacy planning regarding SMEs (Leopkey & Parent, 2016). However, less is known about what strategies and mechanisms are utilized in implementing these plans. There is also limited research determining the significant roles that collaborating organizations play. Treib et al. (2007) highlight this void by calling for further research that identifies “meaningful cross-linkages between institutional structures, actor constellations and resulting policy instruments” (p.15). To address this neglect, this project sought to understand how SME legacy objectives are pursued and delivered by collaborating organizations within a multi-layered policy structure. Using a comparative qualitative case study approach, this research examined the SME cases of the Vancouver and Toronto games and focused on exploring where the different responsibilities of legacy lie within strategic collaborations.

Theoretical Foundation

While the term legacy was heavily promulgated in the bidding literature, the strategies designed included not only legacy but also leveraging approaches. Chalip (2017) described legacy as event-centered, while leveraging is centered around a strategic goal and driven by an alliance. The alliances that emerged from the conceptualized legacy strategies are identified by organizational and public policy theories, and reflect hybrid public-private partnerships (Bradford, 2007; Svensson, 2017). Hybridization allows for the management and combining of different (at times, competing) logics and policies between collaborating parties (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Svensson, 2017). Thus, hybridization is appropriate for exploring how organizational forms are created and utilized in the face of dueling priorities within SME organizational environments.

Findings and Implications

Empirical evidence was generated from analyses of interviews, documents, and literature from the cases of under-analyzed games (particularly the PanAms). This evidence was used to build a conceptual model that provides recommendations and defines responsibilities at the intersections of overlapping policy sectors and legacy delivery organizations. During the Pre-Games and Games-Time period: an overlap between the OC and an External Leveraging Organization (ELO) is recommended to enhance access to legitimacy and resources; an overlap between ELO and Legacy Organization (LO) is recommended for embedding long-term outcomes; interactions between the OC and LO are recommended for augmenting legitimacy and access to policy; and lastly the intersection of all organizations is necessary for providing crucial overlap for sustainable legacies. During the Post-Games era: the organizations external to the OC are needed to perform legacy management that leverages off of the games.