Introduction

Multi-sport Games with groups representing regions, provinces, or countries typically have a core leadership group that is responsible for the overall oversight and management of an entire team competing at the Games. This group is known as the mission staff with its leader given the title ‘Chef de Mission’. Examples of Games with mission staff at the international level include the Olympic and Paralympic Games, Commonwealth Games, and Pan American Games. In Canada, teams with mission staffs include the Canada Games and Western Canada Games with that model mimicked in many other nations. I have had the pleasure of being on two such mission staffs; and as president of the Canadian Paralympic Committee and board member for 14 years, I had the opportunity to witness first-hand how a mission staff works at five Paralympic Games and three Para Pan American Games.

The mission staff are an integral part of the Games as they provide the link between the host organizing committee, nations (or provinces, etc.), and their teams. They are the conduit between the host organizing committee, athletes, coaches, national governments, and media, among others. They are problem solvers, symbolic figureheads, and administrators. What is interesting is that while a significant and important part of the Games themselves, they have received little to no interest from the sport management academy. The reality is that hardly any journal articles can be found in the *Journal of Sport Management* or *Sport Management Review* that specifically address the role of mission staff or Chef de Missions. On the SPORTDiscus database, there were many press releases about or articles written by Chef de Missions, but none specific to their role with hosting major sporting events. The only exceptions are presentations and an article related to the cultural orientations of Chef de Missions by Girginov, Papadimitrou, and D’Amico (2007). A second written examination was the inclusion of Chef de Missions in a study addressing leadership by Parent, Olver, and Seguin (2009) where these authors included Chef de Missions in their subject list studying leadership at the 2005 World Aquatic Championships.

Part of the dearth of research on mission staff may be that it is sometimes included among other groups under the general heading of an athlete’s entourage. The IOC defines entourage as ‘all the people associated with the athletes, including without limitation, manager, agents, coaches, physical trainers, medical staff, scientists, sport organizations, sponsors, lawyers, and any person promoting the athletes’ sporting career, including family members’ (International Olympic Committee 2014). Mission staffs do not include all of these roles, but many are found as part of their responsibilities.
The ultimate reason for the dearth of research on mission staffs, however, is unknown; but perhaps it is also because so little is actually known about what mission staffs do. With that in mind, this chapter will try to rectify this situation by focusing on their roles, responsibilities, and challenges. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for future study and in particular identifying theoretical models that should help us understand how missions operate.

What is a mission staff?

The mission staff is comprised of professionals who often volunteer their time and talent to assist a team in the achievement of their performance goals. Depending on the team, paid staff may also make up the mission staff contingent. For instance, at the Canada Games, the Chef and Assistant Chef de Missions from many provinces are paid staff representing the provincial governments. The Canadian Olympic and Paralympic committees (COC and CPC respectively) and Commonwealth Games Canada (CGC), meanwhile, have volunteers act in these roles.

What type of people make up a mission staff?

One way to understand the type of person who joins a mission staff is behavioural while the second is task oriented. To understand what type of person participates in a mission staff it is worthwhile considering how they are chosen. In 2004, for the Summer Paralympic Games in Athens, the Canadian Paralympic Committee assessed volunteers on several criteria with the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Games experience</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational/multi-tasking skills</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual/total combined language score on application</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience working with volunteers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve problems quickly and efficiently</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport technical knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this, we can ascertain that mission staff members must be able to communicate, be resourceful, and address challenges in thoughtful ways.

The second way to understand a mission staff is by listing the specific tasks or roles. There are, depending on the Games, anywhere between 10 and 30 people. The leader is referred to as Chef de Mission and will be profiled here along with other specific roles:

**a) Chef de Mission**

The Chef de Mission is the volunteer leader of the delegation, and forms part of the leadership team. The Chef de Mission is responsible for providing leadership and vision to the team; acting as team spokesperson; ensuring the responsibilities and duties of all team personnel are carried out; and building a team environment amongst the various members. The Chef de Mission is expected to be a proactive leader in directing pre, during, and post-Games activities, and actively engaging in carrying out activities where possible. He/she must have a proven ability to exercise diplomacy and sound judgment at all times, as well as the ability to build and develop relationships with key partners. Typically, the Chef de Mission’s responsibilities extend from the time of appointment until all aspects of the mission have been finalised, which also requires the candidate to attend the final debrief meeting and to submit a final report.
The Chef de Mission for the COC and CPC among other organizations is often chosen on the basis of his/her status as an accomplished and respected leader within the sport system. The CPC as one example has used the following criteria in 2013 for the 2014 Winter Paralympic Games when recruiting just such a person:

- experience and/or involvement with Games and events;
- proven administrative and fiscal expertise, logistical ability, and knowledge and appreciation of the unique physical and mental demands which fall upon elite high performance athletes;
- the ability to represent the team in all policy and procedural discussions and/or matters;
- excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- ability with media interviews and public speaking;
- exceptional leadership skills with proven ability to lead, motivate, and foster team building;
- demonstrated ability to work effectively with athletes, coaches, and team officials;
- strong organizational skills;
- strategic and operational planning experience;
- solution oriented with strong problem-solving and crisis management skills;
- accept the responsibilities of leadership and demonstrate exemplary behaviour;
- team player with the willingness to help with all facets of the team’s operations;
- experience within the relevant sport system and with high performance athletes with a disability.

Depending on the Games, it is often preferable to have a Chef who has the:

- ability to communicate in both official languages;
- ability to communicate in the language where the Games are being held;
- knowledge of the organization’s strategic framework, policies, and issues related to Games;
- current involvement and/or linkage to the organization (e.g. prior volunteer experience).

The Chef de Mission must exercise tact and diplomacy, understanding the points of view and requirements of each individual team, as well as the needs and desires of each team member and multiple stakeholders, in order to ensure that each is treated fairly. In summary, the Chef de Mission is the overall volunteer leader of the team, responsible for ensuring that all duties are carried out as delegated. What has not been fully appreciated or understood is which type or approach of leadership is best suited for this role. It is likely that a combination and ability to merge a variety of approaches, whether they be transactional, transformational, charismatic, authentic, or goal-oriented, is appropriate. Each Chef will also be impacted by the context of the team and host nation, so again identifying one specific leadership style is likely inappropriate.

b) Attaché

A relatively new addition to mission staffs is the attaché position. This person is appointed to facilitate cooperation between the team and various local groups/individuals assisting with team operations. The volunteer team Attaché position is typically open to residents of the host city who have the background and ability to represent the team in matters dealing with the local community and the Organizing Committee. They do this primarily through their network of contacts.

c) Ombudsperson

A second relatively recent addition to many mission staffs is the athlete Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson provides guidance and counsel for athletes to quickly and effectively resolve
disputes and issues. If necessary, with the athlete’s consent, the Ombudsperson may arrange representation for the athlete at any hearing, dispute resolution, or appeal process in order to ensure the athlete’s interests are served. Examples of where this might be important include doping infractions or conflict with a coach.

d) Communications

In most cases, a mission staff will have one or two (at least) people dedicated to communications. They are responsible for managing all communications and key messaging for every platform including television, radio, print, web, social media, handbooks, media guides, newsletters (internal and external), media releases, photography, graphic banners, signs, the team look, interviews, press conferences, media training for staff and athletes, and issue management. These individuals also must try to coordinate the communications of the specific athletes themselves or at times those from professional experts representing individual athletes. Changes in technology have also had a significant impact on this role and in particular the challenge in enabling, influencing, or as some refer to it, controlling the message. Individual’s autonomy, right, pressure to develop a profile, and ability to communicate directly with external stakeholders creates unique challenges that perhaps mission staffs in the past did not foresee.

e) Sport technical

Mission staffs also have dedicated persons responsible for the sport technical aspects often of each sport. Responsibilities here include ensuring coaching certification eligibility, overseeing medical services information, co-coordinating anti-doping education, facilitating athlete training camps, being the primary contact for the individual sport technical leaders, monitoring the team’s development programs, and enforcing the commercialization policies with each team.

f) The Village

One of the most important roles for a mission staff is ensuring that athletes and coaches are appropriately taken care of in the Athletes’ Village with the goal being to minimize distractions that might impact athlete performance – while at the same time enhancing the Games’ Village experience. Typically mission staff are responsible for what may seem like the little things such as ensuring rooms have appropriate towels and linens, individuals have the right keys, laundry services are functioning, transportation to venues is on time, and perhaps most importantly that food services are appropriate. Other considerations are curfew, security, medical services, accreditation, and entertainment. To some the most important role may be as keeper of the pins (or other ‘swag’) with trading of Games pins sometimes viewed as a sport all on its own.

g) Other mission staff

There is usually a small number of mission staff who are responsible for the day-to-day operations. There are many tasks that arise between when the staff are named and the Games itself which will fall on the shoulders of these individuals. In some Games where there are multiple Villages and a large out-of-Village presence, all mission staff need to be familiar with all areas. For example, the CPC in preparation for the 2014 Winter Paralympic Games in Sochi developed this list of responsibilities, although it is far from all encompassing (see Table 11.1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11.1 List of responsibilities for the 2014 Sochi Winter Paralympic Games</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrivals and Departures</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Managing travel section of ZEUS (an example of a computer database program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Input confirmed and booked flights into ZEUS, ensuring all flights are current and correct for each athlete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Coordinating arrivals and departures procedures for athletes and team members, both at the Village as well as out-of-Village locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Assist in planning and presentation of various special events (Pep Rally, Closing Party, Medallist Receptions, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Set-up and tear-down on-site for special events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lounges/Village Spaces</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Determine set-up of various Village spaces (Athlete’s Lounge, Coaches’ Lounge, ‘Chill Space’, outdoor patio area, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Recommend equipment for rental/purchase to fill space appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operations Office Space</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Coordinate set-up of office space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Arrange all equipment and processes in a logistical manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clothing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Coordinate exchange process, inventory tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Coordinate tailoring on-site at Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Pack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forms Creation/Management</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Create and update various forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Optimise process for managing forms on-site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cargo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Familiarization with cargo process and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Assistance with cargo departure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. On-site assistance in return cargo labelling and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gifting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Coordinate collection and packaging of gifting once on-site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Assist in delivery of gifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Choose athlete’s medallist gift, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-Village Accommodation and Services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Coordinate set-up/tear down of out-of-Village space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Includes office space, working lounge, and relaxation lounge on dedicated floors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satellite Villages/teams</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Assist in provision of services to satellite Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Coordinate delivery of gifting, clothing packages, other requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Coordinate special events (if possible) for satellite Villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family and Friends</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Assist in communication with family and friends in lead-up to the Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Assist with Family and Friends Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ticketing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Coordinate athlete ticket orders in Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Establish process for delivery of local organization committee friends and family ticketing program tickets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Village Accommodation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Become part of Village allotment process for sports in team space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Assist in entry of accommodation information into ZEUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. When necessary, assist in transferable accreditations and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results Management/Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Assist in results recording in real-time during Games via ZEUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Communicate via mass text to team members with the good news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Produce necessary reports on team results, updated next-day schedules for distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rate Card, Village Check-in/Check-out</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Gain an understanding of rental equipment for the team at the Games (Rate Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Assist in recording of location of all rented equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Represent the team as part of move-in process, signing off on room checks and state of all equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Confirm return of all equipment and room checks as part of move-out process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does a mission staff do?

Each position, as just described, has its own roles and responsibilities. For instance, a typical timeline/work pattern for a Chef de Mission would be very different than an Ombudsperson. To provide an example, the Chef position for a Canadian Paralympic team will be profiled:

**Pre-event**

- attends official functions and meetings as the representative of the delegation;
- works with the Core Leadership Team in developing the team’s operational plan for the Games;
- works with the Core Leadership Team in developing the Games budget;
- works with the Core Leadership Team in reviewing, revising, and developing team policy, position statements, and procedures;
- acts as the team’s representative on the High Performance Committee;
- leads team site visitations including the Chef de Mission Seminar;
- acts as team spokesperson, in order to build awareness of the team in advance of the Games;
- assists in the recruitment and selection of volunteer mission staff personnel;
- attends and chairs all mission meetings and seminars;
- establishes contact with potential athletes, coaches, and team managers through attendance at national training camps, selection trials, and national championships;
- develops an effective working relationship with all members of the mission staff and works with each to identify and address individual needs and concerns;
- becomes a voting member of the Team Selection Committee;
- acts as the host of the Team Canada Orientation Seminar; and
- actively engages in social media platforms and communicates with the general public.

**During the event**

- actively leads the team mission at the event site;
- acts as lead spokesperson for all matters;
- represents the delegation at official functions and meetings;
- ensures all members of the team carry out their duties;
- ensures all board directives are satisfied;
- provides daily opportunities for briefings;
- ensures that all staff are properly informed;
- oversees the behaviour of the delegation;
- responsible for team discipline and team discipline matters;
- responsible for all team members and their activities during the Games;
- maintains ongoing contact with athletes, coaches, and team managers through daily attendance at events and training sessions;
- liaises with all members of the mission staff (including team managers and medical staff) to identify and resolve individual needs and concerns;
- participates in mission staff evaluations as required;
- hosts a post-Games meeting with the mission staff and team prior to the return flight home;
- actively engages in social media platforms and communicates with the general public;
- host daily core leadership/mission staff meetings.
The mission staff perspective

Post-event

- addresses disciplinary matters resulting from the Games;
- in conjunction with the Core Leadership Team, prepares a final report on pre-, during, and post-Games activities and provides recommendations for future missions;
- remains as a member of the Team Selection Committee until the following Winter Paralympic Chef de Mission is selected;
- ensures all staff members submit their final reports in writing and attends and leads the post-Games debrief session.

Other mission staff members are not as involved in the pre- or post-Games but instead are focused on the two to three weeks during a Games.

Being a mission staff while at the Canada Games is an exercise in stamina. While it is fun and very rewarding, the days are long and the tasks are many. Depending on your schedule, a day at the Games can go from 6:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. (or later) the next morning. The following is a brief outline of the main responsibilities of a mission staff. It was provided to mission staff members by Team Ontario prior to the 2013 Canada Summer Games.

Team meetings

Each morning at 8:00 a.m. there is a mandatory Team Ontario mission staff meeting. At this meeting, the Chef de Mission and the Assistant Chef can relay any information they received at their 7:00 a.m. meeting with the Host Society and Canada Games Council. Core mission staff also give brief updates regarding their portfolios.

These are important meetings where information is shared, issues addressed, and the ongoing performance of Team Ontario can be reviewed. Mission staff are excused from this meeting only if it conflicts with their team’s competition. Should this be the case, mission staff should inform the Chef de Mission or Assistant Chef of the need to miss the meeting. They should also arrange for another mission staff to call them as soon as practical with an update from the meeting.

Any receipts for reimbursement from petty cash can be submitted to the Athlete and Mission Core at these meetings. Communications staff will also be looking for interesting stories for the media.

Day-to-day responsibilities

As mission staff, your primary responsibility is to assist your sport team so coaches can coach, managers can manage, and athletes can compete without worrying about any number of details. First and foremost, mission staff must attend all competitions in which their assigned team is involved and as many practices as possible. It will likely be at training or competition where your services are needed or where your team will communicate their needs to you. It is also likely where a protest (if there is one) involving your team may arise.
In addition to attending the athlete competitions and where possible their training, are a number of other responsibilities:

**Box lunches**

If your team will be away from the Athlete Village over a meal time, it is your responsibility to arrange for box lunches so they can eat. The procedures for getting box lunches for your team are communicated by the Core Team Leader for Athlete and Mission Services. It should be noted that box lunches must be ordered in advance to ensure their delivery (specific directions are shared closer to the Games). You must check your team’s schedule early enough to be able to order box lunches for the next day if necessary.

**Transportation**

Unless your team is competing or training near the Athletes’ Village, it is likely they will need transportation. Make sure transportation has been arranged for your team and your team is aware of the arrangements. Transportation may already be arranged by the Host Society, and all that will be required of you is to make sure your team knows what the arrangements are. Sometimes, transportation has not been set up, or what has been scheduled needs to change for various reasons (e.g. venue or schedule changes). In those cases, you should arrange for transportation and make your team aware of the arrangements. Mission staff are not to transport athletes, coaches, or managers in their assigned vehicle.

**Medical appointments**

The Host Society will have established a medical treatment centre where participants can receive acute care as well as ongoing care such as taping, physical therapy, massage therapy, and chiropractic. These services tend to be very popular and depending on the demand, participants may be able to pre-book appointments or may have to wait on a first-come, first-served basis. Should any of your team members require treatment, contact medical services and try to pre-book an appointment for them. If you are told treatments are on a first-come, first-served basis, let your team member know so they can plan accordingly. Mission staff should inform the Chef de Mission as soon as possible of any serious injuries.

**Equipment storage**

Each province/territory will have an assigned and secure storage area. The residential area of the Athlete Village will not allow most equipment in residence. In general, small items will be allowed into the Athlete Village, but larger equipment must be stored in an assigned area (e.g. golf shoes are permissible, golf clubs are not). Mission staff should review this with their team members so they know what will and will not be allowed into their rooms. Make sure your team knows where the
The mission staff perspective

storage area is either in the Athlete Village or at their sport venue, who keeps the key, and that they have access to it when they need.

**Media requests**

Members of your team (usually athletes) may be asked by various media to participate in an interview. This may mean the media coming to them or more likely, the athlete going to the media. The Communications Core Team Leader is the contact that the media will reach to arrange an interview. The Core Team Leader will then contact you as mission staff and request your assistance to make the arrangements to put the media and the athlete together. This may mean tracking down the athlete if you are not with them and transporting them to the arranged location if necessary. Remember that any questions from the media to mission staff about Team Ontario or the Host Society must be referred to the Communications Core Team Leader. The 2013 Canada Summer Games are being held in Quebec so many of the media requests may be for French-speaking athletes; make sure you know in advance which of your team athletes are willing to do a French interview.

**Mission office**

The Mission Office is the place where the administrative business of Team Ontario is conducted. The Mission Office is the team headquarters and central location where Team Ontario can be reached while at the Canada Games. The office will be equipped with phone lines, desktop computers, fax machines, photocopier, and normal office supplies. The office will also have mail slots for team managers as well as for each mission staff.

Each province/territory at the Canada Games will have a Mission Office. In some cases, provinces and territories may share office space. Mission Offices are centrally located for easy access by mission staff, coaches, and managers as well as the Host Society. The Host Society, Canada Games Council, and travel agent offices are also located in the same building. The exact location will be communicated once known.

The Mission Office will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 a.m. each day. Staff will be assigned to three hour shifts in the Mission Office at various times throughout the Games. Your Mission Office duty will not conflict with your team’s competition schedule but you may be required to do your shift at the same time as receptions, mission nights, or other special events. The duty schedule for Mission Office will be posted just prior to the Canada Games. While on duty, mission staff members are responsible for the operation of the office, and they represent Team Ontario to any visitors, incoming calls, and faxes. While on duty, the following serves as a checklist of responsibilities to be completed as required:

- Answer phone calls
- Distribute mail
- Photocopy
- Record results
• Answer questions
• Word process
• Direct inquiries
• Troubleshoot
• Receive faxes
• Assist as needed
• Be an ambassador
• Clean up

If you are unavoidably delayed for a shift, call the Mission Office and let them know why you are going to be late (athlete at hospital, game going into overtime) and your estimated time of arrival. Another mission staff will change their plans in order to cover for you. Once medal rounds have been determined for your sport, if there is a conflict with your mission office duty, you will need to switch with available mission staff. Admission to the Mission Office is controlled and visitors must show accreditation in order to gain entry. The Mission Office is accessible to mission staff, coaches, and managers. Athletes can visit only if accompanied by mission staff.

The Mission Office is a great place to go and see how Team Ontario is doing and check on the events of the day or to work on a computer if you need to. However, the Mission Office should not be used as a place to socialise; it is disruptive to those who need to be there to get work done. As well, the Mission Office is not a place for coaches and managers to work on their computers, conduct meetings, etc. Meetings rooms can be booked if needed.

Team receptions

Team Ontario will be hosting a number of receptions throughout the Games. Check your schedule to see if you should be attending a function with your coaches and manager, team parents, or other mission staff. If attending an official Team Ontario reception, mission staff are expected to wear Team Ontario clothing and act as hosts to the invited guests.

Bed checks

Each night, rooms are to be checked to ensure your athletes, coaches, and managers are in before curfew. This is our commitment to the families of the participants who are in our care and are relying upon Team Ontario to make certain of their safety. Complete your room checks after you know your team has retired for the evening. Some teams with early training or competition the next day may be going to bed early and do not want to be checked so as not to disturb their sleep. Otherwise, a good time for room checks is after quiet time (usually 11:00 p.m.) and before curfew (usually 12:00 midnight). Do not complete room checks on your own. Room checks should be completed with another mission staff or while accompanied by the team manager. If you don’t have access to a residence because of your gender, arrange for another mission staff to complete those room
checks for you. Room checks can usually be done from the hallway without actually entering the room and intruding on their space. Check for excessive noise and any obvious signs of Team Ontario members being out of their assigned rooms. If all rooms occupied by members of Team Ontario are quiet and everything seems to be in order, you’re done for the night. If there is excessive noise, knock on the door and remind occupants of the curfew and quiet time rules. Any problems should be communicated to the team manager and the Chef de Mission. Depending upon the timing and circumstances, it may be appropriate to wait for the arrival of missing Team Ontario members or to initiate a search. Athletes, coaches, and managers who have not returned to their rooms by midnight will have their accreditation removed by security and the Chef de Mission will be called. This is now a code of conduct infraction.

Protests and appeals
The sport team to which a mission staff is assigned may be the subject to an appeal based on a perceived violation of the technical package. Should you be the mission staff for such a team, be prepared to assist in fact finding that will support the position of Team Ontario. Your first responsibility in this situation is to alert the Chef de Mission if he or she has not already been notified. The Chef de Mission will direct you from that point. Do not alarm the athlete or coach especially if the protest is made just prior to or during competition. Allow them to concentrate on competing. Inform the team manager of the protest and the nature of the complaint. Collect as much information as you can with respect to the protest and the facts that will be presented.

Being a team player
When all else is completed, your last responsibility is to be a team player for Team Ontario. No, this doesn’t mean competing or filling in for an injured athlete! But it does mean doing your share to contribute to Team Ontario’s success. Do what you can to make your coaches and managers lives as pleasant as possible. While your duties are done, another mission staff may need assistance with their duties. For example, whoever is on mission duty during bed checks may need someone to cover their bed checks for them, a mission staff may need a ride or an automobile to use, a team in competition could use your support, or the Mission Office could use some help. These are just a few examples, but it gives you a sense of the need to try to help each other.

Looking after yourself
Lastly, but perhaps most important, is the need for mission staff to take care of themselves! Staff will be working long days, getting up early and getting to bed late and will frequently encounter stress with limited or unusual eating and sleeping patterns. Try to get a good night’s sleep whenever you can. Don’t let yourself get too sleep deprived. While it will not be possible to get eight hours’ sleep a night, mission staff should not be trying to function on only a few hours each night for the duration of the Games! Meals will often be grabbed on the run, but mission staff should try to
David Legg

As just outlined, the day-to-day responsibilities for mission staff are intense, always in different locales and filled with challenges. The following is not an exhaustive list but instead a review of challenges that have been observed both personally and shared from colleagues who have held mission staff responsibilities.

No critical paths

The first challenge is the absence of a critical path or detailed descriptions of key activities for each member. I have been told that the lack of a critical path is because Games are held in different venues in different contexts and so they can’t be compared from one Games to another. Others such as Patrick Jarvis, Chef de Mission for the 1998 Canadian Paralympic team in Nagano, disagree and suggest that the vast majority of activities and responsibilities are the same from one Games to the next. Of all the various teams I approached or participated in, only one had an example of a critical path and even then it was a skeleton copy at best with nothing inputted in the dates. Table 11.2 provides an overview of this critical path.

The importance of and process by which critical paths evolve have been reviewed in Parent (2008, 2010) with the focus primarily on the host organizing committee and in particular using the 1999 Pan American Games held in Winnipeg as a case study. Parent’s 2008 article examined how the decision-making process changed as the organizing committee evolved. Parent and Smith-Swan (2013) in their text focusing on project management also reviewed the importance of critical paths.

Social media

Social media is now of great interest and concern for a team as referred to earlier when discussing the role of communications staff. Athletes and coaches have Twitter accounts (among any number of social media platforms), and different sports have different rules for how they can be used. Athletes and mission staff will be blogging, tweeting, etc. while communication staff are trying to ensure consistency of message. It is not an easy task. Consider for instance that at the Canada Games over a two-week period, more than 4,000 athletes, coaches, managers, and mission staff will participate. Emery (2010) notes the importance of this from a practitioner’s perspective, suggesting that success of hosting major sporting events is based upon effective and efficient management of the games but also equally as important the media and the increasing role of social media.

Cultural differences

Cultural differences can create challenges particularly in international competitions. How it is done in Canada may not be the way it is done in other countries and as guests, mission staff walk a fine line between being respectful, staying true to national values, and trying to limit distractions to athletes and coach performances. Travelling to Beijing for the 2008 Paralympic
**Table 11.2** Skeleton of a mission staff critical path – eight-month plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Project Milestone</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Mission Staff Responsible</th>
<th>Start Date/Event Date (MM/DD/YY)</th>
<th>End Date/Deadline (MM/DD/YY)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission and PSO Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Core Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Coach</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport Technical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Certification Deadline</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Coach</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport Technical</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Certification Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Website Launch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Training Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sport Technical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration Deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Roster Deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Launch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Closure</td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Photos/Headshots for Registration</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chef and Assistant Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chef and Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodations for Mission Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chef and Assistant Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chef and Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rooms for Mission Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finalise Presentations for Mission Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Uniform Sizes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Athlete Services and Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline from Sports Uniforms</td>
<td></td>
<td>Athlete Services and Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm Minister’s Attendance at Training Camp</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirm Minister’s Attendance at Games</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm VIPs at Games</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Chef de Mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm Travel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Athlete Services and Mission</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Games was a perfect example. Accessibility in tourist locations for persons with a disability, while significantly better than before the Games, was still not the same as Canadian standards. Issues in Sochi certainly also brought this to the forefront with concerns pertaining to free speech, sexual orientation, and military aggression often being front-page headlines. The challenge was for mission staff to ensure that the athletes and coaches were prepared for competition while also balancing personal beliefs regarding values and the importance of sharing these in perhaps hostile or contradictory environments. How the national culture is both impacted by and impacts the hosting of major events is a separate issue but certainly effects and is effected by mission staff. As an example for further reading see Tomlinson and Young’s (2004) *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*. As well, much of the work by Veerle de Bosscher (2008) and colleagues focusing on Sport Policies Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) recognized the impact of national culture on sporting success.

**Mission staff motivation**

Another challenge is the role of mission staff itself. Coaches and athletes have developed relationships that go back in some cases many years. There are parents, friends, and significant others who have intimate relationships with the athletes. The mission staff, however, typically only know the athletes on a surface level and may be meeting them for the first time at a Games. Mission staff can thus sometimes wonder if they have any role, at all, in the athlete’s performance. The Chef de Mission for the 2014 Sochi Canadian Paralympic team, Ozzie Sawicki, recognized this and with his group created the motto ‘Perform in the Moment, Take Pride in the Journey’. He and his colleagues recognized that even the smallest efforts can have significant implications but these may not be obvious. Here of course are opportunities for further research looking at what motivates a volunteer and how a team leader can meet these needs. Theories of motivation as guides are plentiful with examples found in any organizational behaviour textbook.

**Varying stakeholders**

Dealing with multiple stakeholders is likely the greatest challenge for a mission staff. By their nature, every coach and athlete thinks they are the most important person – and it is often this attitude that got them to this position in the first place. Balancing demands from multiple and perhaps competing demands can be trying. Added is the need to entertain sponsors, board members, media, dignitaries, and government officials, which at multi-sport Games can be significant in size and scope. The challenge of course is balancing the desire of a government bureaucrat or elected official to meet an athlete or team prior to or after an event when a coach does not think this is optimal.

Another potential challenge is dealing with marketing. An important part of a Host Society’s ability to stage a set of Games is the support it receives from the private sector in the form of corporate sponsorship. This support may be either cash to assist with covering costs or in-kind donations to help offset or eliminate expenses. Whatever the form of support, the host agency such as Canada Games Council in the case of the Canada Games or International Paralympic Committee must protect the integrity of the Games while recognizing the legitimate concerns of a corporate sponsor and the inherent business interests the sponsor may have. As a sponsor, corporations should expect that in return for their support, their corporation will be recognized. It is also an expectation that while the sponsor is being recognized and benefits from the exposure
it receives, those that are not sponsors should not receive the same benefit of exposure. That is, if Company A is a sponsor, it can reasonably expect to gain positive exposure as such. The sponsor can also expect that Company B, who is not a sponsor, will not receive the same exposure. For example, if Pepsi pays to be a corporate sponsor it can expect to be recognized as such. Pepsi can also expect that Coca-Cola would not be recognized. Therefore, Pepsi, the Host Society, and the Canada Games Council do not want to see the Coca-Cola logo where people watching (in person or on TV) would expect to see corporate sponsors recognized, such as on signs, equipment, or uniforms. Accordingly, the commercialization/sponsorship policy is in place to clarify what is permissible and what is not. This becomes further complicated with the variety of athlete and team sponsorships – which the mission staff member must then monitor. Examples of what is now referred to as ambush marketing abound with recognition that host organizing committees, along with national teams, must do all they can to protect their sponsors’ rights (Legg et al. 2012, MacIntosh et al. 2012).

**Miscellaneous**

Finally, there are sometimes specific issues that arise that may seem small but create challenges when the goal is to provide the optimal competitive environment for athletes and coaches. One example is clothing management. It is extremely difficult to outfit an entire team with wide-ranging body types but it can create great angst when sizing is off, colours run, or when jackets are not water resistant when stated to be. Team selections are sometimes only months or weeks before the actual Games, thus making the creation of media guides and clothing, among other items, very difficult to pre-plan. Simple things like Internet connectivity not being optimal can be the small gesture that sets an athlete off their game. Small ‘p’ politics can also occasionally enter discussions such as choosing the opening and closing ceremony flag bearer. This is not unlike sport teams choosing team captains, with a number of issues impacting the decision as noted by Kent and Todd (2004) or even more macro issues such as the politics of sports development as discussed by Houlihan and Whites (2002).

The reality is that mission staffs are going to have to face crisis situations that, in some cases, can be anticipated and in others cannot. Most Missions thus create Crisis Communication Guidelines. Team Alberta’s for the 2013 Canada Summer Games is one example. Here, they identified key spokespersons, and processes whereby internal stakeholders including government were alerted prior to the media. Key messages were outlined for all situations with instructions to not speculate, be cautious, and anticipate where lines of questioning may be leading and to NEVER speak off the record. Also referred to as crisis management this is often included within the risk management program created by teams. Leopkey and Parent (2009) referred to this from a stakeholder perspective using two major Canadian sporting events as case studies (the International Skating Union 2006 World Figure Skating Championships and the U-20 Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup Canada 2007). Here, risk management was defined as a proactive process that involves assessing all possible risks to the events and its stakeholders by strategically anticipating, preventing, minimizing, and planning responses to mitigate those identified risks.

To illustrate the process better, the crisis communication flowchart used by Team Alberta can be seen in Figure 11.1.

To help prepare for crisis, mission staffs are often given and practice case scenarios. This is also referred to as decision making experiences or table top experiences as described by Parent and Smith-Swan (2013). Team Alberta used the following scenarios (taken from the 2013 Canada Summer Games “Black Book” for Team Alberta) in their training prior to the 2013
At the completion of the qualification round, three teams (including yours) are tied for second place in the qualifying pool. The top two teams in the pool advance to the medal rounds. After deliberations, the Sport Chair announces which one of the three teams advances to the medal round. Your team is not one of them and does not advance. Based on the tie breaking procedures in the technical package you and the coach have determined that your team should advance.

There are certainly many other scenarios that can be presented for mission staff training. For instance, how would a mission staff member respond if, after a long shift, they and a fellow team member went to a local bar and came across another team member, such as a coach, who appeared to have had too much to drink. Other serious circumstances can include an athlete being accused of sexual misconduct, receiving a positive drug test, or any other number of charges. Certainly many of the responses by the team as a whole would be based on codes of conduct signed by the coaches and athletes prior to the Games and/or local laws. That being said, it is the process of applying the appropriate response and consequence that requires training. Last, the training process would also focus on how to avoid these situations in advance.

These are but a few examples of the types of scenarios encountered in a Games context. Suffice it to say the number of times these situations have occurred in my experience is relatively low, and for the most part, the Games experience is exhilarating, intense and supremely satisfying. What is needed now is further research into the mission staff experience. What follows is a chapter summary and suggestions for potential theoretical perspectives to enable this process further.
The mission staff perspective

Summary and future research

This chapter has provided an overview of the mission staff roles and responsibilities, day-to-day expectations, and challenges. The chapter concludes with a review of theoretical perspectives that allow us to better understand how mission staffs operated focusing on the influence of the environment.

Key points or takeaways for the reader from this chapter are as follows:

- Research is limited in the area of mission staffs, the role they play, and how they interact with other stakeholders of mega events.
- Mission staffs operate in complicated and challenging environments.

As noted earlier there is an absence of research pertaining to mission staff. To address this in the future, one way in which researchers can better understand mission staffs and how they operate is to focus on how decisions are made. Are they emergent because of context (deterministic) or inspired by the leaders chosen (voluntaristic)? The option where a leader can have a critical role is dealt with in many other chapters; so instead, I will present an alternative focus for understanding how decisions get made in mission staffs; that being the situational context or environment.

An interest in the relationship between situational context and organizational strategy began in the 1970s, when researchers questioned whether organizations were as self-directed as leadership theorists wanted to believe (Leavy, 1996). While leadership was traditionally the factor most often associated with influencing an organization’s strategy, other researchers (e.g. Burns and Stalker, 1961, Thompson 1967, Perrow 1982, MacMillan 1983, Montanari and Bracker 1986, Pettigrew 1987b, Gellat, 1992) recognized the impact of the situational context.

The term situational context was deliberately chosen because it suggested more immediacy than the broader concept of the environment (Leavy 1989). It was defined by Duncan (1972) as the relevant physical and social factors outside the boundary of an organization that were taken into consideration during an organization’s decision-making process. In one sense, everything outside the organization being studied was part of this context; but such a broad definition had little practical or theoretical use. In response to this concern, researchers narrowed their focus by sub-dividing the environment into two main types: general and task (Leifer and Huber 1977).

The first or closest layer of the environment to the organization was labelled task, and this sector was seen as having a direct impact on organizational strategy. The second, or outer layer, labelled general, referred to the sectors that affected the organization indirectly (Daft 1992, Elenkov 1997). In contrast to the general, task-specific factors were more evident to management because they contained those constituents that could more obviously impact the success of the organization.

Bryman (1986) divided the external environment into three main general factors: trends, clients, and competitors/collaborators. Trends were then subdivided into four categories or task environment sectors: politics, economics, society, and technology. Porter (1980) focused on the task environment by suggesting that the most important elements affecting organizational strategy were the relative power of customers and suppliers, the threat of substitute products and new entrants, and the amount of activity among the players in the industry. Berrett and Slack (1999) reflected upon Porter’s (1980) five forces model of industry analysis and suggested that it could highlight the actions of existing competitors to reveal what types of generic strategies should be considered.

Using Porter’s (1980) model, Berrett and Slack (1999) proposed that in order to comprehend the rationale for strategic initiatives, it was necessary to assess their impact on rival actions. Conversely,
the operations of competitors impacted the determination of strategic choices a firm could make in order for them to maintain a sustainable competitive position (Berrett and Slack 1999). Based on the work by Miller and Friesen (1983), Berrett and Slack (1999) further suggested that the task environment should include environmental dynamism, hostility, and homogeneity. Thibault, Slack and Hinings (1994) pursued a different approach to addressing the task environment by identifying several factors that influenced the strategies formed by Canadian non-profit sport organizations. From the perspective of a non-profit organization, of which mission staff typically are, Nanus and Dobbs (1999) identified eight factors outside of the organization’s control: demographic changes, technological developments, economic forces, social values, political change, philanthropic sectors, the private sector, and community developments.

To help identify how these situational context factors impact how a mission staff acts, a number of theories can be considered. Those most pertinent to this chapter include contingency, resource-dependency, institutional, population ecology, and chaos theories.

**Contingency theory**

Contingency theory suggests that what a mission staff does is matched to imperatives or contextual demands. This was illustrated in sport organizations by Slack (1997) who noted that changes in organizational structure would result from contextual demands such as size and technology. Thibault, Slack and Hinings (1993) also utilized a contingency approach in their study assessing a number of Canadian national governing bodies (NGB). They concluded that each NGB did not have one ideal strategy that would be appropriate for every situation. Thus, the contingency approach helped to explain the diverse influences on strategy by recognizing and advocating a goodness of fit between the environment and strategies undertaken by the organization (Thibault et al. 1993). More recently Horsch and Schutte (2009) used Contingency Theory to assess the pressure and obstacles to the employment of paid managers in voluntary sports clubs and federations in Germany which Mallen and Adams (2013) used in their assessment of event management. Researchers could thus use this lens to better assess and appreciate why and how mission staff are impacted in their decision making.

**Resource-dependency theory**

A second approach to understanding the influence of context was resource-dependency theory. Resource dependency theorists (e.g. Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) recognized that most organizations confronted numerous and frequently incompatible demands from a variety of external factors. Examples of these for mission staff were detailed earlier including sponsors and government officials. Resource dependency theory suggests that the power and further control of context on organizational strategy is contingent upon the organization’s perception of its dependence on those elements (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Within this exchange were four factors identified as being critical in determining the level of dependence: importance of the resource, extent to which the organization required it for continual operation and survival, discretion over the resource allocation and use, and number of alternative sources (Inglis 1997). The example of trying to meet what could at times be competing demands of sponsors, government officials, and athletes or coaches would be appropriately addressed using this framework. The criticism of this theory, meanwhile, was that researchers could over-estimate the importance that the context played and leaders could therefore be unfairly viewed as reactive to external factors.
The mission staff perspective

Chaos theory

The third theoretical approach to studying the impact of the situational context on what a mission staff does is chaos theory. Originating from the physical sciences, chaos theory represents the study of non-linear dynamic systems (Wheatley 1995). Articulated in Greek mythology, chaos meant the unorganized state or void from which all things arose. Chaos also referred to ‘disorderly, unpredictable happenings, that gave an observer no sense of regularity’ (Skarda and Freeman 1987: 173). As a result of these definitions, the term chaos appeared to have ‘a cataclysmic ring to it, [where] labelling a field in chaos was an admission to defeat from the outset’ (Devaney and Keen 1988: 17).

The application of chaos theory to how organizations act emerged when researchers recognized that a chaotic environment might be unavoidable with managers adapting to it and in some cases actually thriving within it (Peters 1987, Brown and Eisenhardt 1998, Conner 1998, Haeckel 1999). One analogy used by Wheatley (1995) that clarified the chaotic relationship was a mountain stream. The stream had an impressive ability to adapt, to shift its configuration, and to let the power balance create new strategies. An organization’s strategies emerged, therefore, but often as temporary solutions that facilitated, rather than interfered with the stream’s continuous flow. ‘Streams have more than one response to rocks; otherwise there would be no Grand Canyons – or else Grand Canyons everywhere. The Colorado River realised that there were ways to get ahead other than by staying broad and expansive’ (Wheatley 1995: 74). Similarly, how a mission staff’s actions could be seen to adapt to environmental changes all the while making their way forward.

Chaos theory also allowed researchers to better understand limitations or the inability of managers and leaders to account for every possible variable (e.g. Gleick 1987, Stuna 1991). Creating perfect order was construed as practically impossible (Gleitman 1986) and thus, chaos theory was used to map out a region between order and disorder that was rich in meaningful detail (Stuna 1991). This certainly seems apt for a mission staff in a Games environment. Based on this recognition, it is possible ‘to reconcile the complexity of a physical world displaying haphazard and capricious behaviour with the order and simplicity of underlying laws of nature’ (Davies 1990: 51). A more recent use of chaos theory was found in Complexity and Control in Team Sports: Dialectics in Contesting Human Systems by Lebed and Bar-Eli (2013). A criticism of chaos theory, however, was that it might encourage researchers to over-extend cause–effect relationships and ignore more direct influences from various stakeholders and leaders.

Population ecology theory

The fourth theoretical approach that addressed the impact of the environment on how and what a mission staff might do in a Games environment is population ecology theory. Population ecology theorists (e.g. Hannan and Freeman 1977, Aldrich 1979) saw the individual firm as facing strong constraints with its ability to adapt to environmental change. Population ecology theory suggested that most organizations or groups would try to adapt to environmental constraints and that some would do so successfully. Hannan and Freeman (1977) and Aldrich (1979) articulated this point by suggesting that there was a process of natural selection, whereby the environment determined who would survive, with top managers simply being passive agents with minimal impact on corporate development. This view was consistent with economic theories in which decision-outputs, rather than internal decisions were perceived as being relevant for the explanation of a firm’s behaviour in a
competitive environment. Other examples of Population ecology theory being used in sport management research include Smith (2004) and Cunningham and Ashley (2001). One criticism of this approach was that it tended to focus on a singularly important environmental characteristic.

**Institutional theory**

The fifth approach used to explain the impact of context on a Games’ mission staff is institutional theory. This perspective draws attention to cultural pressures versus market forces and resource scarcity, and how myths, meanings, and values, rather than efficiency, autonomy, and exchange drove and determined organizational behaviour (Oliver 1991). Institutional theory suggests that the self-serving advantages of compliance with institutional norms include increased prestige, stability, legitimacy, social support, internal and external commitment, access to resources, acceptance in professions, and invulnerability to questioning (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, Meyer and Rowan 1991). Here social influences encouraging conformity tend to be strongest when individuals or organizations are facing uncertainty.

Lawrence (1999) suggested that institutional theory could be divided into both new and old approaches. The old institutionalism emphasized issues of conflicting interests and values, while the new approach was associated with a focus on routines, scripts, and schemas oriented towards habit and pressures for conformity. The new approach helped explain the impact of contextual factors by showing how organizations were predicated to conform to institutionalized beliefs or practices. This influence occurred when the beliefs or practices of organizations were so externally validated and accepted by the organization that they became invisible to the leaders which they influenced (DiMaggio and Powell 1983).

The new institutional approach was utilized by a number of researchers (e.g. Deephouse 1996, Henderson and Mitchell, 1997) who suggested that a firm’s strategy could be best understood according to its adherence or deviance from the central tendencies of its general industry; otherwise known as strategic conformity (Finkelstien and Hambrick, 1990). Berrett and Slack (1999) suggested that this influence would be particularly strong when there were few competitors and where barriers to becoming an organization within the particular sector were relatively high.

While studying Canadian amateur sport, Kikulis, Slack and Hinings (1995) utilized an institutional approach to examine the influence of contextual factors. They examined the different strategic responses to institutional pressures by looking specifically at the direction and extent of changes in different structural elements. They suggested that much of the scholarly debate on the Canadian amateur sport delivery system focussed on the responses of national sport organizations to deferred government policy initiatives and financial contributions (e.g. Macintosh et al. 1987, Harvey and Proulx, 1988, Kidd 1988, Thibault et al. 1991, Kikulis et al. 1992, Slack and Hinings 1992, Thibault et al. 1993, Macintosh and Whitson 1994). The conclusions from Kikulis, Slack, and Hinings (1995) suggested that NGBs complied with the parameters and pressures set forth by Sport Canada, being presented as passive receptacles. Berrett and Slack (1999) also examined the institutional pressures on 28 Canadian companies who sponsored amateur sport organizations. They suggested that sponsorship activities of rival companies were influential in a company’s sponsorship choices and they noted that pressures were particularly evident from companies within the same geographic area through social networks and the occupational training of the decision-makers. More recent attempts to utilize institutional theory within the sport management realm include Washington and Patterson (2011) and Southall, Nagel, Amis and
Southall (2008). Criticisms of institutional theory included its ‘broad disagreement over the theoretical definition and empirical measurement of core concepts such as organizational fields and institutions’ (Hoffman 1999: 364). A second criticism was ‘its failure to adequately address the issue of change’ (Hoffman 1999: 364).

All five theoretical approaches could assist in better understanding how mission staffs evolve and change over time, how decisions are made, and what role leaders can have in shaping their changes. Future research thus can focus on how mission staffs have evolved, what pressures have forced them to change, and if changes can provide a competitive advantage leading to sporting success.

Suggested readings

With research related to mission staffs being in such a nascent stage it is challenging to recommend specific articles for further elaboration. Instead, what is suggested now is to review organizational theory articles using theories already noted and perhaps those overlooked that focus on teams and recognize the implications and potential research potential within this previously unexamined segment of major Games.


References


The mission staff perspective


