Introduction

While there are still some major sports events that can be successfully organised without direct government involvement, the number is almost certainly decreasing as a proportion of mega and major sports events. The highly commercially successful sports such as tennis, golf, American football, soccer, basketball and rugby union are, in some countries, able to organise domestic and international sports events relatively independently of government. However, even these sports have become progressively dependent on government, especially with regard to the hosting of events such as continental or world championships. Not only are governments increasingly expected (and in some cases required) to give international sport federations (IF) or other event organisers such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), financial assurances against losses by the rights holder, they are also expected to provide other forms of significant indirect support including fast-tracking land-use planning proposals, upgrading transport infrastructure and, in more recent years, providing substantial security for venues, participants and spectators. Once one moves beyond the relatively small proportion of financially self-sufficient sports events, the role of government becomes fundamental to the successful delivery of the event. Most major sports events and certainly most summer and winter Olympic sports events require financial subsidy from government and many also require the organisational resources and political legitimacy that are only available from government.

This chapter examines the increasingly central role of government in the successful bidding for and delivery of a range of large- to medium-scale sport events and begins with an outline of the main functions that governments fulfil in relation to major sports events. The chapter continues with a brief discussion of the factors that have led to increased involvement of governments and an examination of the network of relationships within which governments operate in connection with major sports events. Following the outline and discussion of the application
of the multiple streams analytic framework, the motives for government involvement in sports events are explored drawing upon examples from a range of countries, but mainly the United Kingdom, Taiwan and South Korea.

Government and event stakeholders

There are plenty of examples of government fulfilling a wide range of functions associated with the successful delivery of contemporary major sport events with the provision of financial support being the most obvious. The London 2012 Olympic Games received a public subsidy of just under £9 billion, though this was far below the estimated cost to the Chinese government of $30 billion for the staging of the 2008 Olympics. Although most public sector financial support comes from central government, especially for events such as the Olympic Games and the football (FIFA) World Cup, finance from regional and local levels of government is also common for major sports events such as national athletics championships and world championships of individual sports such as swimming and cycling. In the UK, the 1991 Universiade was funded by the city council of Sheffield with no central government finance, whereas the cost of around £21m to support the early stages of the 2014 Tour de France, including the Grand départ, will be shared equally between central government and sub-national governments. With the larger events, governments are also expected to express a willingness (or in the case of the Olympic Games are required to make a commitment) to underwrite the financial risk of the organisers as part of the bidding process.

In addition to helping to meet the direct costs of hosting major events, national and sub-national governments will often make substantial contributions to the provision of the supporting infrastructure. Indeed for major events, promises to improve road, rail and air transport connections are often part of the bid. As will be illustrated below, the policy relationship between infrastructural investment and bidding for a major event is often complex and to assume that investment in infrastructure is a consequence and cost of the event would be unwise. It is often the case that regeneration (involving infrastructural improvement) is the policy priority and the bid for a mega or major sports event is better seen as the means to non-sport policy objectives (see Salisbury 2014). Salisbury argues that in relation to both the 1991 Universiade in Sheffield and the 2002 Commonwealth Games held in Manchester both cities were looking for a major project to act as a catalyst for urban regeneration. That the catalyst in both cases was a sports event was largely incidental.

A third significant function of government is the provision of security for an event. For most events, this largely involves assisting with crowd management outside and occasionally inside venues. However, with the largest events, especially the Olympic Games, the concern with security and its associated cost has escalated significantly since 2000. Houlihan and Giulianotti (2012) argue that since the Centennial Park bombing at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001, the level of concern within the governments of countries hosting the Olympic Games has intensified to a level best described as ‘hyper-insecurity’ defined as ‘a culture of intense risk aversion, and the . . . allocation of resources to provide security on the basis not of probability (that is, the rational or cost–benefit analysis of risk), but of possibility and the intense aversion to risk’ (2012: 705–6). Although accurate figures regarding the increased cost of providing security for the Olympic Games are difficult to determine, one estimate suggests that, between the Games of 2000 and the most recent Games in London, there has been a tenfold increase in the expenditure on security as measured by cost per athlete with the security expenditure for London estimated at just under $2 billion (Boyle and Hegarty 2009, Houlihan and Giulianotti 2012).
A fourth common function of national, but also sub-national, government is the provision of legitimacy, status and authority for a bidding team. This function is particularly important in relation to bids to host international sports events which are in the gift of IFs. IFs are well aware of the weakness of the financial resources of most of their member national federations and also the fragility of bidding coalitions which involve national federations and commercial partners. Even if governments are not formally underwriting the risk associated with the event they are expected, at the very least, to make public expressions of support. However, as mentioned earlier, the larger and more prestigious sports events require some form of direct or indirect public subsidy and the involvement of government in the bidding process provides assurance of the solidity of public sector financial commitments. With regard to the larger sports events, governments fulfil an additional function of massaging the ever-expanding egos of senior decision-makers in the major IFs and the IOC. The lack of clear involvement of a Prime Minister, President or other senior political figure in the bid process is increasingly perceived as a snub to the federation or Committee.

In addition to these four main functions, some governments will fulfil a range of other functions including the provision of anti-doping services and management support for organising committees. Management support might include leadership of organising committees, specific technical support, and the recruitment and training of volunteers. However, governments only tend to be prominent in these management roles in those countries, such as China, where national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) are part of the machinery of government.

### Explaining government interest in hosting major sports events

The policy analysis literature is replete with competing frameworks which give greater or lesser emphasis to a variety of concepts including structure, agency, ideology, interests, evidence, path dependency and opportunism in an attempt to explain public policy (see John 1998, Houlihan 2005, Sabatier 2007). One framework that has proved particularly useful in analyses of sport policy change is the multiple streams framework developed by John Kingdon (1995). It is argued that insights into the process of policy change (and the maintenance of policy stability) can be obtained by conceptualising the policy process in relation to three relatively distinct streams – political, problem and policy (see Table 15.1).

Policy change is often the result of the convergence of the three streams, a phenomenon termed a policy window, prompted, for example, by serious developments (focusing events, such as a match-fixing scandal or a poor team performance at an international sports event) in the problem stream or in the politics stream (Zahariadis 2007, Birkland 2010). These critical moments provide lobbyists and other policy actors with the opportunity to draw attention to a particular concern (for example, city regeneration) or to promote a particular favoured policy (for example, sports events as a catalyst for regeneration). Often the inter-linking of a policy with a particular problem is facilitated by the actions of a policy entrepreneur. A window that has been opened as a result of a problem prompts a search for suitable solutions in the policy stream where there will be advocates (policy entrepreneurs) of favoured solutions looking for problems to which they can be attached (Kingdon 1995, Howlett 1998).

As will be illustrated in the examples below, there are a number of issues in the problem stream to which sport event hosting is seen as a solution: these issues include economic/urban regeneration, a weak sense of national identity/unity and weak or negative city/country brand image. It will also become clear that the political mood, as indicated by the attitude of politicians, media and the public, is generally positive towards hosting major sports events. Finally, with regard to the policy stream, there is in many countries an influential lobby on behalf of hosting events comprising not only sports organisations, but also the construction industry, media sector and the hospitality industry.
Table 15.1 The multiple streams analytical framework: the three streams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Streams</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Event hosting policy examples</th>
<th>Factors raising the profile of the stream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Problem stream| Issues and situations which some actors define as problems that require attention | 1. Lack of legitimacy of government  
2. Poor international image of a country/city  
3. Urban decay  
4. Limited range of diplomatic resources  
5. Low status in international sport organisations   | 1. Public unrest and protest  
2. The annual Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index  
3. Urban deprivation indices  
4. Lack of presence in key global organisations  
5. Loss of elected positions in IFs and IOC   |
| Policy stream | Ideas promoted by policy actors (individuals or coalitions)                  | 1. Hosting as a catalyst for urban economic regeneration  
2. Mega event hosting as stimulus for youth sport participation  
3. Sport mega events part of the ‘new’ economy | 1. Belief (and some evidence, but often from self-interested consultants) in the value for money of hosting  
2. Belief (more than evidence) in the demonstration effect of elite sport success  
3. Reasonably firm data showing the buoyancy of the sport sector of economy |
| Political stream | Main elements are national mood/public opinion, active interest groups and government | 1. Public/media value placed on elite sporting success  
2. Lobbying capacity of NOC and major NGBs  
3. Willingness of government to subsidise/underwrite hosting costs | 1. Public/media reaction to poor performance at world championship or Olympic Games  
2. Announcement of a desire of NOC or NGB to launch a bid to host event  
3. Election of sympathetic Prime Minister/President    |

The evolution of the government’s role in major sports events

As should be clear from this review of major governmental functions, governments are increasingly crucial to a successful bid to host a major sports event and are consequently also increasingly central to the network of stakeholders whose collective efforts are required for the successful delivery of a major sports event. In terms of international sports events, governments are arguably seen by IFs and the multi-sport event organisers such as the IOC and the Commonwealth Games Federation as the primary domestic partner and of much greater significance than the national federation or national Olympic committee as it is governments, whose willingness to fund the necessary infrastructure and underwrite the risk associated with hosting, that are increasingly...
a necessary requirement for a credible bid by a NOC or national federation. For most major sports events, the organisational and management focus for bidding and delivery is the triangular relationship between the rights holder (for example the IF or IOC), government (national or sub-national) and the domestic organising committee.

There are two sets of factors which have contributed to the centrality of government in relation to major sports events. On the one hand there is a set of ‘push’ factors – changes in the non-governmental environment – which have made it increasingly difficult for government to avoid significant involvement in bidding for and delivery of events; on the other hand there are a series of ‘pull’ factors which have made involvement increasingly attractive to governments. Neither push nor pull factors need be directly related to sport. Distinguishing between factors which create a sense of obligation within government to become involved in major sports events (the push factors) and those which reflect the recognition by governments of an attractive opportunity (the pull factors) is not always easy, and a degree of overlap between the categories is inevitable. However, the distinction is important particularly in moderating assumptions about governments’ capacity for agency in relation to the burgeoning global sports event market. The set of pull factors will be discussed in detail in the next section, with the discussion in this section focusing on the factors which have exerted a degree of pressure on governments to become more involved in sports events even when the culture of the country does not grant sport particularly high status or where the ideology of the government is antipathetic to an extension of the role of the state.

The first ‘push’ factor concerns the well-recognised series of indicators of statehood or state sovereignty. Countries signal their sovereignty symbolically through, for example, the design of military uniforms, currency and flags, the composition of a national anthem and the announcement of public holidays to commemorate independence. Sovereignty is also signalled in more substantial ways through the membership of international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth and the IOC. However, governments also seek to differentiate themselves from other states and thus seek symbols and more tangible indicators of their position in the status hierarchy of nations. Major powers have their status confirmed and reinforced by their membership of bodies such as the UN Security Council and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and by their hosting of major international events which might include conferences, EXPOs and sports events. Hosting the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup or the Commonwealth Games is thus simply one of a set of status symbols that major powers are expected to acquire. The hosting of the forthcoming Summer Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup in Brazil, the hosting by India of the 2010 Commonwealth Games and the hosting of the 2014 Winter Olympics by Russia are all examples of emerging economic powers seeking symbolic confirmation of their new status. The same logic applies in relation to other levels in the hierarchy of states. For example, small- to middle-ranked countries (such as Singapore and Columbia) are able to utilise events such as the Summer Youth Olympic Games to acquire and employ symbols appropriate to their status.

A second push factor is the actions of other countries and the resultant changes in the competitive environment for sport. The UK provides a good illustration of the nature of this factor. Throughout much of the 1950s and 1960s, successive UK governments resisted pressure to become more directly involved in elite sport. However, as Jefferys (2012: 34) notes ‘This stance was to come under increasing pressure as time passed, in part because of a growing recognition that the detachment of the British government was becoming a minority practice among those who sent teams to the Olympics’. Using terminology from the multiple streams framework just at the time when the mood in the political stream was becoming increasingly receptive to state involvement, the issue of perceived poor international sporting performance was becoming a
more prominent issue in the problem stream. Domestic lobbying combined with the demonstration effect of other comparable countries (as a form of value isomorphism) combined to produce a proactive policy with regard to elite athlete development and, arguably at least, made it more likely that the government would follow other countries in seeing hosting as a complementary element to elite athlete development in the emerging public policy for sport.

A third push factor is a concern to avoid embarrassment for the country at an event. The criticism of transport arrangements and other aspects of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics (Whitelegg 2000) contributed to a more prominent role for the US government in subsequent bids. The serious issue of crowd violence at football matches in England in the 1970s and in other parts of Europe more recently pushed many governments to adopt a much more interventionist position in relation to crowd management. The concern to avoid bad publicity for a city or country is arguably as important a factor as the desire to exploit sports events in order to project a positive city or national image.

**Explaining the attraction of major sports events to governments**

*Hosting as a diplomatic resource*

While the previous discussion highlighted factors which put pressure on governments to become involved in the bidding and delivery of major sports events, of greater significance are 'pull' factors which have led to hosting being perceived as a positive resource and as a viable solution within the policy stream to the problem of under-performance. Bidding and hosting has the potential to act as a low cost, low risk and high visibility diplomatic tool for indicating support for or opposition to the policies of other countries. In addition, the hosting of major sports events is attractive in relation to some international relations problems because of their utility as soft power diplomatic resources. In the nuclear age, Nye argued that the risk attached to deploying traditional military forms of power has led to 'intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions' becoming more important in inter-state relations (Nye 1990: 167). For Nye (2004: 2) soft power is the ability to 'attract and co-opt [others] to want what you want'.

**Taiwan**

Taiwan provides a good illustration of the diplomatic use of a hosting strategy. Following the end of the civil war in China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) controlled the mainland and the defeated nationalists, represented by the Koumintang [Nationalist Party of China] (KMT), retreated to Taiwan and established the Republic of China (ROC). Both the CCP and the KMT claimed to be the legitimate government for the whole of China. The desire to achieve recognition of their rival claims to sovereignty led eventually to the expulsion of the ROC from membership in the UN and their place taken by the People’s Republic of China which was also given a seat on the UN Security Council. The loss of UN membership led to further diplomatic isolation with a number of countries severing diplomatic relations with Taiwan. One response by the Taiwanese government to this situation was to attempt to utilise elite sport as a means not only of maintaining a presence on the international stage and overcoming its diplomatic isolation, but also of expressing its anti-communism. For example, in 1980, the International Association of Amateur Baseball awarded the World Baseball Classic to Taiwan, but the award was later rescinded due to Taiwan’s refusal to grant visas to athletes from Cuba and other communist countries (Yu and Fu 2009).
The national government's perspective

The hosting of international sports events, particularly the Universiade, provides a set of clear examples of the diplomatic motive behind many hosting bids set within the context of the intense political rivalry between the ROC and the PRC. On a number of occasions, the PRC had used its diplomatic influence with governments and within international sports organisations to block bids by Taiwan to host major international sports events. Although Taiwan had been successful in hosting the World Games in 2009 and the Summer Deaflympics also in 2009, neither of these events attracted the level of international media attention that was being sought by the government. After the failure to secure the right to host the Asian Games and the East Asian Games (Yeh and Liang 2010) partly due to PRC opposition, sport policy-makers identified the Universiade as a high-profile alternative event. Tsai (1997), an administrator with the Chinese Taipei University Sports Federation, proposed the idea of bidding for Universiade after Taiwan’s failure in bids for the Asian Games in 1990 and 1995, and argued that the holding of the Universiade could possibly be a turning point for Taiwan’s events strategy due to its high profile and global character. Tsai (1997) argued that the election of the International University Sport Federation (FISU) executive committee was comparatively democratic and would thus make it more difficult for the PRC to exercise a veto. Momentum was added to Taiwan’s plans because of their recent success in being awarded the 2000 World University Taekwondo Championship. The next step was to have a Taiwanese representative elected to FISU which was achieved after considerable lobbying by the Sports Affairs Council of the Ministry of Education and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The outcome of this concerted political activity was that Taiwan’s fifth bid for the Universiade was successful with the country being awarded the Games for 2017 (Chen 2007, Chen 2009, Sports Center 2011). While Taiwan’s bidding strategy contributed to the success of the bid, it has been argued by Rui Chou, the ex-chairman of the international affairs section in the Sports Affairs Council, that the easing of tension between the PRC and Taiwan was also a significant factor (Chen 2012). Furthermore, according to Rui Chou, who was centrally involved in the bidding process, the Chinese representative in FISU indicated that because China trusted the KMT, the then governing party, more than it did the opposition party, the DPP, China was willing to support or at least not actively oppose Taiwan’s bid.

The interconnection between international and domestic politics in decisions to host major sports events is also evident in relation to Taiwan’s National Games. The first National Games of China date from 1946, before the civil war and the retreat of the KMT to Taiwan. At these early Games, Taiwan competed as a province of China. Following the move of the KMT government to Taiwan, the Games were held on the island under the title of the Taiwan Province Sports Games (Chueh 2002); and from 1974 as the Taiwan District Games (Chen and Zhao 2008), both titles reinforcing the claim of the KMT government in Taiwan that it was the legitimate government of all China. However, by 1999, the idea of an independent Taiwan was gathering pace and the title Taiwan District Games was dropped in favour of the title National Games which was seen as reflecting Taiwan’s aspiration for recognition as an independent country. The new National Games were held in different cities across the country thus fulfilling the dual purpose of sending a diplomatic message to the PRC and consolidating, or at least promoting, support for the idea of independence within the country.

South Korea

The hosting strategy of the South Korean government is also driven in part at least by diplomatic motives, especially the management of its relationship with North Korea. At various times since the Korean War of 1950 to 1953, the South Korean government has sought to use the hosting of major sports events as a means of demonstrating to the North the stability and strength of the
South Korean economy. However, this rivalry has to be put in the context of regular discussions of the possibility of a joint North–South Korean football team or Olympic squad. The most recent discussion was of sending a joint team to the Beijing Olympics in 2008, but final agreement could not be reached.

Apart from its difficult relationship with North Korea, the South also has a problematic relationship with Japan – its former imperial power. Given anti-Japan sentiments rooted in Japanese colonial rule of the Korean peninsula, the co-hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup was a significant diplomatic as well as organisational challenge. The scale of the organisational challenge in co-hosting the World Cup was illustrated in an article by Lee Yun-Taek, the co-chairman of the Korean World Cup Organizing Committee for 2002 FIFA, who argued that:

Add to the complication of different committees the fact that two separate nations must coordinate together, and this already intricate event becomes increasingly complex. A plethora of responsibilities have to be divided between the nations: arrangements have to be made in both host countries to ensure easy access to all venues, and systems need to be coordinated to ensure that operations conducted in one country are not duplicated or adversely affected by arrangements in the others.

(Lee Y. T. 2002, pp. 67–68)

Despite these organisational problems and the fraught history between the two countries, Lee (2002: 68) concluded that ‘the World Cup has brought the two regional rivals closer together and served to build sound relationships that helped transcend the painful memories of the past’. However, Heere et al. (2012: 140) argue that ‘The power of sport events to ignite social change is dependent on the performance of the team within the tournament’. The perception within Korea of the positive diplomatic impact of co-hosting is, according to Heere et al., significantly mediated by the success of the South Korean football team, which reached the semi-finals. The positive diplomatic impact of co-hosting notwithstanding, it can be argued that the successful organisation of the 2002 World Cup helped establish co-hosting as a viable model for future major sports events.

**Nation and city branding**

A second significant attraction to governments of hosting mega and major sports events is the perceived impact that successful hosting can have on a nation’s and a city’s brand image. Needless to say, there is a risk involved in this strategy for brand enhancement. The 2004 Athens Olympic Games did little to create a positive image of Athens or Greece due to doping scandals involving Greek athletes and the problems in finishing the construction of venues on time and to the required standard. Similarly, the hosting by India of the 2010 Commonwealth Games projected an image of corruption, bad management and a lack of concern for the country’s poor; the hosting by Sochi of the 2014 Winter Olympics projected an image of financial profligacy and business corruption rather than of a modern industrial power; and Qatar’s attempts to use hosting the 2022 Football World Cup to strengthen its brand has drawn attention to the exploitation of migrant workers in the construction industry rather than to the quality of the facilities being planned.

London’s hosting of the 2012 Olympic Games illustrates the risks and costs involved in using hosting to develop and reinforce a positive national image. Prior to the Games, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office reported that ‘the UK was seen as fair, innovative, diverse, confident and stylish [but also] arrogant, stuffy, old-fashioned and cold’ (House of Commons 2005–06 FCO
written evidence, paragraph 20). However, Anholt commented that being perceived as ‘A little bit arrogant. A little bit overbearing. A little bit cold,’ was not necessarily ‘terribly bad . . . because it is difficult to admire someone and find them cuddly at the same time’ (House of Commons 2011: 13). Despite this reassurance, the London Games were seen as an opportunity to project the preferred image of the country as ‘modern . . . open (welcoming, diverse, tolerant), connected (through our involvement in the UN and G20, politically, geographically, in terms of trade and travel), creative and dynamic’ (House of Commons 2005–06, FCO written evidence, paragraph 20). The government argued that ‘London 2012 will have a profound impact on the UK’s international reputation’ (House of Commons 2011: Ev19). However, it was acknowledged that London might benefit more than the rest of the UK. A government commissioned report noted that:

the experience of previous host cities suggests that the Olympics have the potential to create a lasting legacy for physical infrastructure, economic outcomes, social outcomes, sustainability and/or the international reputation of the host city [. . .] the Olympics represents a significant opportunity to reinforce London’s strengths as a ‘global knowledge capital’.

(The Work Foundation 2010: 4 and 67)

Grix and Houlihan (2014) found, in their study of the impact of the Games on the UK’s image, that the Games had contributed positively to the government’s objectives.

The international media response was strongly positive in its assessment of the primary showcase for British culture – the opening ceremony. The international media were also generally very positive about the organisation and delivery of the Games thus reinforcing/strengthening the perception of the country as having the skills to deliver complex projects.

Although operating within a very different domestic and diplomatic context the use of hosting as a tool for nation branding has also been recognised in Taiwan. The end of martial law in 1987 and the continuing liberalisation of domestic politics resulted in a growing awareness within government of the need to improve the image of the country especially in relation to its rival the PRC. As a result, since the late 1990s, the government has shown a strong commitment to hosting international sports events as a way of demonstrating that Taiwan is a modern and rapidly developing industrial country. Hosting events, such as the Universiade, the Baseball World Cup and the biennial National Games, was seen as both a catalyst for modernisation and also as an opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of modernisation.

The external perception of South Korea has also been an important motivation for government support of bids. In the 1970s, as the South Korean economy began an export-led revival, the external perception of the country was recognised as problematic. Not only was there a perception of the country as part of a divided nation still emerging from the devastation of the civil war in the 1950s and involved in a tense stalemate with the hostile North, but there was also a negative image projected by a succession of authoritarian military-led governments. The effect of hosting events, especially the 1988 Olympic Games, was to successfully project an image of South Korea as a modern, efficient, international and business-oriented country. Recognition of the impact of successful event hosting was confirmed in the February 2011 policy document published by the Sports Bureau (located within Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism) which stated the government’s goal as being to enhance Korea’s national brand value and to improve social integration by hosting international sporting events (MCST 2011: 5). The following year,
the government passed the ‘International Sporting Events Support Law’ which allows regional
governments to mount bids for sports events. Further evidence of the government’s appreciation
of the potential benefits of event hosting is provided in the recent government strategy report,
‘Complex International Games Knowledge Management’ (CIGKM), which was published in
2012 by the Korea Institute of Sport Science. The CIGKM was the result of the Ministry of
Culture, Sport and Tourism’s desire to develop an effective and holistic process for the manage-
ment of knowledge regarding the hosting of international sports events in order to better ensure
their efficient management (MCST 2012).

**Political party rivalry**

Bidding as part of a strategy of city promotion often reflects more than a simple economic
motive and can be prompted by rivalry between domestic political interests. The bid by Montreal
to host the 1976 Olympic Games and that by Barcelona to host the 1992 Games were, in part at
least, products of the separatist movements in Canada and Spain. In Taiwan, the intense rivalry
between the two main political parties, the KMT and the DPP, affects the bidding strategy of
cities. In each of the five bids that Taiwan made to host the Universiade, the city selected had the
same political party in control as at national government level. For example, Kaohsiung City bid
in 1998, a time when the Kaohsiung City mayor and the Taiwan President, Lee Den-Hui, were
both KMT members. When Chen Shui-Bian was President from 2000 to 2008, the leaders of
the two cities that bid in 2003 and 2007 were also members of the same political party the DPP.
In the successful bid for the 2017 Universiade, President Ma of the KMT party offered his strong
support for the bidding city, Taipei, which was also controlled by the KMT.

The extent to which domestic political rivalry can affect a government’s bidding strategy is
further illustrated by Taiwan’s attempts to revive its baseball league following a series of match-
fixing scandals in the late 1990s. In 1998, an entrepreneur named Peng Cheng-Hao was elected
as the President of the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL) with the ambition to revive
the sport. Peng Cheng-Hao suggested that bidding for international games and obtaining mem-
bership of the international baseball organizations were two important steps in overcoming the
sport’s domestic problems (Lin et al. 2010). Bidding for international sports events had strong
government support as a way of maintaining Taiwan’s international diplomatic profile (Yeh and
World Cup and received a strong expression of interest from Kaohsiung County, which was
governed by the DPP. However, despite Kaohsiung County making a formal application to the
Chinese Taipei Baseball Association and the government’s Sports Affairs Council, their bid was
ignored. A significant part of the explanation was Peng Cheng-Hao’s close relationship with the
KMT (Tsui 2012) and the fact that the KMT was in power at central level. Consequently, it was
the KMT-controlled Taipei that was selected to make the ultimately successful bid for the 2001
Baseball World Cup (Liu 2006).

**Economic development, regeneration and modernisation**

One of the most significant contemporary governmental motives for hosting major sport events
is the belief that they can accelerate urban regeneration and contribute to economic development
and modernisation. It is rare to find a bid for one of the larger events such as the Summer Olym-
pics, the FIFA World Cup or the Rugby World Cup which does not foreground the presumed
economic or regeneration benefits of hosting. Heying et al.’s (2007: 106) comment that ‘In Amer-
ican Olympic bids since [the Atlanta Games] the politics of regeneration have remained the focal
The national government's perspective

point for local bid committees’ is applicable across a wide range of countries and events. Indeed as Gold and Gold (2010) note, a regeneration legacy has become ‘the touchstone’ by which local and national politicians assess the opportunity cost of bidding. The decision in 2003 that London would bid for the 2012 Olympic Games was largely justified on the basis that it would revitalise East London. The bid document referred to the potential of the Games to contribute to the ‘regeneration of an entire community’ (Candidate File 2012, 2004: 19) which Coaffee (2013: 305) saw as being the ‘decisive selling point of the London 2012 bid’.

Economic development has also been a prominent motive of successive South Korean governments. Although South Korea’s record of intensive bidding to host international sports events is, as with all countries and as will be discussed more fully below, the product of a broad mix of motives economic development has been one of the most consistent. In addition to the intangible diplomatic and domestic political benefits of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the investment in the Olympic venues and infrastructure was still producing economic benefits over twenty years later. Indeed, according to Global Times (1 August 2012), Seoul Olympic Parks, Seoul Olympic Parktel and Jamsil Sports Complex including the 100,000-capacity Olympic main stadium, a baseball stadium, two swimming centres, and an indoor sports facility, have remained successful businesses with profits derived not only from hosting sports events, but also concerts, cultural shows and tourism. Along with the development of the Olympic Park, the construction of the Olympic Way along the Han riverside and the environmental improvements which followed the Han River clean-up project in preparation for the 1988 Seoul Olympics have provided the citizens of Seoul with an attractive and popular leisure environment. The success of the 1988 legacies have provided considerable justification for subsequent bids by the central and provincial governments to host major sporting events, most notably the co-hosting with Japan of the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

That the successful hosting of the 1988 Olympic Games led to a sustained hosting strategy by both the central government and by sub-national governments is evidenced by the recent series of bid successes including the 1997 Muju Jeonju Winter Universiade, the 2002 Football World Cup (co-hosted with Japan), the 2002 Busan Asian Games, the 2011 Daegu World Championships in Athletics and Incheon’s successful bid for the 2014 Asian Games, as well as Busan’s aspiration to host an Olympic Games in the near future. On 6 July 2011, the IOC announced that the 23rd Winter Olympic Games was awarded to the city of ‘Pyeongchang’, choosing this Korean city over European competitors Munich and Annecy (Merkel and Kim 2011). The fact that Pyeongchang’s successful bid came after two previous failed attempts is evidence of the country’s commitment to its strategy and the perceived benefits of hosting major sports events.

Political legitimacy, national identity and social integration

Although economic development and the projection of a positive national image are two common motives for governmental investment in hosting, there are many countries where hosting has been used to strengthen or manufacture a sense of national identity and to reinforce the legitimacy of the government. At a time when British identity and the unity of the United Kingdom was under pressure, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games provided a timely and increasingly rare opportunity to project a tangible manifestation of Britishness through the medium of ‘Team GB’. Seventeen years earlier, the hosting by South Africa of the Rugby World Cup proved to be fortuitous as it gave the new post-apartheid government of Nelson Mandela the opportunity to use the event to begin the process of healing the deep social fissures created over the previous decades (Van der Merwe 2007). In contrast to these examples, a sub-national government may use the hosting of a major sport event to reinforce its separatist ambitions. The
hosting of the 1976 Olympic Games by Montreal was seen within Quebec as an opportunity to reinforce the province’s distinctiveness in relation to the rest of Canada. Similarly, the hosting of the 1992 Olympic Games by Barcelona was used to demonstrate Catalonia’s opposition to rule from Madrid and Glasgow’s hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games comes in the same year as a referendum in Scotland on withdrawal from the United Kingdom.

As well as contributing to strategies to strengthen national identity and social integration, the hosting of events has also been used to reinforce the legitimacy of particular governments, both democratic and authoritarian. The hosting of the Rugby World Cup in South Africa not only served to foster unity between different ethnic groups, but it was also an opportunity for Mandela to use a central symbol of Afrikaans identity – rugby union – to reassure powerful white business interests that his government did not intend to sweep aside white dominated institutions. A contrasting example comes from Argentina during its period of military dictatorship between 1976 and 1983. The awarding of the 1978 Football World Cup to Argentina gave the brutal military regime an opportunity to enhance its legitimacy in a country where football is passionately supported. The government of General Videla was reported as having spent ten per cent of its annual budget to host the event.

South Korea has also faced significant challenges in legitimising its post–Civil War government which, until 1987, was authoritarian and reliant on military support. The nation’s aspiration to host major sports events began with the successful hosting of the 42nd World Shooting Championships in 1978, which was the first international sporting event held in the nation’s capital of Seoul and which served as decisive impetus for the country to consider hosting an Olympic Games (Korean Times, 14 July 2010).

Along with the successful hosting of the Championships, in 1979, Park Jong-Kyu, as the president of Korean Shooting Federation who played a key role in hosting, organizing and staging the Championships, proposed to former President Park Chung-Hee to host the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. He justified making the bid on the grounds that: (i) hosting the Olympics would be a watershed event in the promotion of Korean economic growth and the nation’s international profile and credibility; (ii) it would lay the foundation for holding a competitive edge against North Korea in the ideological confrontation on the Korean peninsula sustained since the Korean War (1950–1953); and (iii) it would be a golden opportunity for boosting the image and self-esteem of South Korea (cited in The Politics of the Seoul Olympic Games Part I: Ups & Downs and Success Story, Rocky Yoon’s Sport World, http://rockyoon.tistory.com/939).

An additional justification which was more apparent to the government was the opportunity that hosting the Olympics might provide to reinforce the fragile legitimacy of the government of President Park and his successor President Chun. The early 1980s was a turbulent period for South Korea with public protest supporting democratisation being met with repression and martial law (Park 2011, 2012).

Although the military–based regime’s ambitious hosting plans were seriously weakened following the assassination of President Park in 1979 the plans were revived following the military coup in 1980 which brought President Chun to power. However, the government faced a substantial challenge in persuading IOC members that the new government was sufficiently stable to host the Games. What was clearly seen as a window of opportunity by the government to address its problem of legitimacy by hosting the Olympics was seen far less positively by the members of the Olympic Movement. In eventually securing the support of the IOC, the government relied heavily on Horst Dassler, the chairman of the Adidas sports goods company, who, in the role of a policy entrepreneur, fulfilled an important behind-the-scenes function in the Seoul bidding process. A member of the Seoul bid committee, Park Jong-Kyu, arranged a secret meeting with Dassler, who was a very influential person in the international sport arena.
The scale of his influence was illustrated by Spiegel Titel, which stated ‘Dassler will alles kontrollieren’ (Dassler will control all) (Der Spiegel, 2 June 1986). In a situation where many IOC committee members had doubts over the stability of the political and economic situation of South Korea, few expected that Seoul’s bid would be supported (Ha 1998: 11). Exemplifying the interconnection between business self-interest and political expediency, Dassler agreed to support the Seoul bid in return for business contracts. The inside story of the Seoul bid process was revealed by Choi Man-Lip, vice-chairman of Korean Olympic Committee (KOC), in an interview for a documentary programme which was aired by the Korean Broadcasting System in which he stated that:

At the secretive meeting Dassler asked ‘Could you pass exclusive broadcasting and marketing (business) rights to Adidas if I were in support of the Seoul bid and if the Seoul bid was accepted?’ Chung Ju-yung’s simple response was ‘OK, we’ll hand it over’.  

(cited in KBS 2013)

Following the agreement, Dassler played a crucial role in persuading IOC members to support the Seoul bid, which it duly won by 52 votes to 27 against Nagoya, Japan. The importance to the government of hosting the 1988 Olympics is amply illustrated by the comments of former Prime Minister Nam Deok-Woo (1980–1982) in the same Korean Broadcasting System documentary:

Because hosting the 1988 Olympic Games had the potential to boost public morale and enhance the national image and profile both within the nation itself and on the international stage, the decision to bid for the 1988 Olympic Games was the result of presidential approval rather than deep discussion and a feasibility study on the hosting of the Games.

(KBS 2013)

What is particularly striking in relation to South Korea is the close interconnection between government and business stakeholders – a relationship which has continued to characterise South Korean hosting bids. However, rather than South Korea relying on the policy entrepreneurial skills of foreign business people, more recent bids have involved business leaders from domestic companies, especially those from the Chaebol group of major conglomerates such as Hyundai and Samsung. In the bid for the 2002 FIFA World Cup, Chung Mong-Joon, senior director in the Hyundai Heavy Industrial Company and chairman of the Korean Football Association, played a key role in the nation’s bid by lobbying FIFA’s executive committee members. The leader of the Samsung Group was similarly instrumental in Daegu’s successful bid for the 2011 World Championships in athletics (Park 2011).

Conclusion

There are two primary conclusions to be drawn from the foregoing review. The first is the extent to which governments are central to the successful bidding and hosting of a major sports event and the second is the degree to which a decision to bid to host a major sports event is the product of policy problems unrelated to sport. Certainly in relation to the two largest international sports events – the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup – it is routinely the case that it is governments, sometimes in conjunction with powerful construction and real estate business interests (McCormack 1991, Shaw 2008), rather than national sports organisations that initiate
bids. The interest that governments have in hosting major sports events rarely has much to do with a love of sport: governments generally have a strongly instrumental attitude towards sports event hosting and view it as a malleable and easily exploitable resource.

Utilising the multiple streams framework, hosting major sports events is promoted by sports stakeholders as a solution to many issues in the problem stream of countries. Conveniently, policy entrepreneurs who are seeking solutions to the problems they are concerned to address, such as economic growth, urban regeneration and city/country image, consider sports events to be plausible policy solutions. The assumption of plausibility arises in part at least from the positive image of sports events within the political stream (i.e. as reflected in the attitude of the general public, the media and politicians) which in turn can be seen as the product of the persistence of myths regarding the ‘power of sport’ to deliver a wide range of political, social and economic benefits (Coalter 2011). The evidence relating specifically to the impact of hosting major events is inconsistent and weak as a basis for the investment of substantial and increasing sums of public money. More sceptical voices include Heere et al. (2013) in relation to the positive impact of hosting on social integration and national identity and Baade and Matheson (2002) in relation to the economic legacy of hosting major events.

The application of the multiple streams framework also highlights an interesting paradox in relation to hosting which is the way in which the problem of low community participation in sport is coupled with hosting. While it is rare that the hosting of major sports events is identified as the primary policy response to low participation in sport it is frequently used as a secondary justification for supporting a bid. In the promotional material ahead of the London bid for the 2012 Olympic Games, the claim was made that ‘grassroots participation would be boosted [by a successful bid]. An already sports-mad nation would get fitter and healthier’ (quoted in Coalter 2004: 2). In their review of the potential for the delivery of a sporting legacy after the London Games, Girginov and Hills (2008: 2111) conclude that ‘The concept of sustainable sports development legacy is a controversial and contested one’. Despite the paucity of evidence the claims of a positive association between hosting a major sport event and changes in levels of community participation persist among the advocates of bidding. Apart from bemoaning the lack of a healthy scepticism towards these claims on the part of decision-makers, the primary motives for making the claims is to attempt to persuade governments and their public that the cost of hosting will not generate benefits for a relatively narrow section of society that enjoys Formula 1, golf or football, but that the event will generate general benefits for a wide cross section of society.

Apart from the spurious claims about the stimulation of sport participation, the most significant sporting legacy from many major events, particularly the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup is empty, unused and often unusable stadiums and other venues. Athens, Sydney and Beijing all have monuments to the hubris of politicians and sports administrators. In South Korea after the 2002 World Cup the country was left with ‘ten brand new stadiums in its ten cities at a cost of some 2 billion US dollars’ as the event’s legacy (Lee 2002: 67). Park (2011: 276) noted the ‘financial failures of the municipal World Cup stadiums [which] have become a burden on local governments since the event’. The only exception is the Seoul World Cup Stadium which is used for the home of FC Seoul (Korean professional football club), major football competitions and other cultural events.

The importance of government to a successful hosting bid and the willingness of governments to support bids in the absence of even moderately robust evidence of a tangible positive legacy is a testament to the seductiveness of major event hosting. However, the willingness of governments to support bids with substantial subsidy from public finances is also an indication of the perceived symbolic value of hosting the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup. In a
media age where image counts for more than substance, the attractiveness of sport event hosting will continue for the foreseeable future.

The increasing interest among governments in hosting international sports events offers rich areas for future research. First, there is a lack of theoretically informed empirical research on the identification and measurement of the social, economic and sporting costs and benefits of hosting international sports events. Second, the value of event hosting as a soft power diplomatic resource and as an instrument for nation or city brand enhancement would benefit from further research especially in relation to medium-sized events. Third, the interaction between the host government, the event rights holder (for example the IF or IOC) and the local organising body and the power relations and decision processes associated with event delivery are significantly under-researched. Fourth, the governance of local organising committees would benefit from investigation. Finally, there is relatively little research into the processes within government by which the decision to bid to host an international sports event or a series of events is made.

Suggested readings

Notes
1 There is much debate about how to distinguish between sports events of different scale. Many authors (see for example Roche 1994, Walters 2008) distinguish between mega-events and major events with the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup identified as typical of the former category and F1 grand prix, athletics, rugby and cricket world cups, and the Euro football championships typifying major events. Roche (1994, 1) provides one of the most often quoted definitions of mega-events as ‘large scale cultural . . . events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance [which are] typically organised by a variable combination of national governmental and international non-governmental organisation’. In this chapter unless specified to the contrary we will use the term ‘major’ to include mega-events. More importantly, while acknowledging the value of an attempt to provide objective definition of a major event we will define sports events in relation to the context in which they are set. Consequently, there may be some sports events from a global perspective would not be classed as mega events or even major (such as the Deaflympics and the Universiade but have a considerable cultural, political or economic significance for the host country/city and the participating countries.
2 The World Games are organised by the International World Games Association and are held every four years. The Games provide an opportunity for international competition in sports not included in the Olympic Games.

References
Barrie Houlihan et al.


Der Spiegel (2 June 1986). Dassler will alles kontrollieren.


Global Times (1 August 2012). South Korea’s 1988 Olympic Venues Still Produce Economic Benefits.


Korean Times (14 July 2010) ‘Seoul Olympics gave powerful impetus to great changes in South Korea’.


Tsui, T.D. (2012, December 22). Revealed by DPP Legislator, Peng Cheng-Hao was Accused of Receiving Kickbacks. Yahoo! News. Retrieved from: http://tw.news.yahoo.com/%E6%8E%A7%E5%BD%AD%E8%AA%A0%E6%B5%A9%E7%B4%A2%E5%9B%9E%E6%89%A3-%E7%B6%A0%E5%A7%94%E5%85%AC%E5%B8%83%E9%8C%84%E9%9F%B3–213000531.html