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Conclusions and Future Directions for Sport Event Management Scholarship

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SECTION IX

Conclusions
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This Handbook set out to critically survey the literature in sports events of various sizes by grouping the research into the various stakeholder groups associated with events. Given the complexity of preparing and hosting sports events, a stakeholder approach was deemed an appropriate way to organise the information to elucidate key learnings, gaps, and future directions for research. The stakeholder approach may not have been a traditional way (i.e., functional approach) of examining the management of sports events, but it has garnered consolidated insights into stakeholders’ behaviours, needs, objectives, and wants, how to manage them, as well as avenues of future research. Different stakeholders might also have different views on the so-called success of an event and thus on its management. We now review some key learnings from each chapter, followed by a synthesis of the gaps and areas of further research.

**Key learnings**

The chapters were broken down according to the various stakeholder groups, namely: the organisers, sport organisations, participants, support, community, funders, media, and other stakeholders.

**The organisers**

The chapter on bidders and promoters (Chapter 2) demonstrates that the ‘intensity and aggressive nature of competitive bidding has now reached unprecedented levels’ (p. 21) which can be explained, in part, by bidding processes introduced in a greater number of sport events, and host regions perceiving ‘a broader range of value being derived from hosting such events’ (p. 21). The two principal players in a bid process are the event owner and the destination bidding for the event. Emery discusses the different types of bidding processes and approaches (e.g., top-down versus bottom-up, geographical spread), the reasons for bidding, and critical success factors.
We see that the bid process has an underlying degree of uncertainty and imperfect knowledge – one can never be exactly sure what the main driver and the actual decision-making processes of the event owner are. Still, more bid submissions has meant higher expectations as well as higher bid quality, and perhaps the creation of events by local event organisations that do not require bidding because they always take place in the same location (i.e., recurring events). Bids now have a normative role (events as catalysts for change, legacy, environmental and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives proposed to be associated with the bid and/or event). However, there are potential conflicts of interest and other ethical issues that arise due to the more competitive nature of event bidding.

In turn, the chapter on the organising committee (Chapter 3) demonstrates that this organisation has a split personality; it is a sport organisation, a business, a project, a cause, an alliance, a lead organisation, a network administration organisation, and a political entity. It is also an outsourcing and (usually) temporary organisation. The chapter presents an overview of the growing research focusing on the organising committee, namely: its lifecycle/evolution and structure, the workforce and human resource management (HRM) process, and the various stakeholder relationships. Parent also takes a normative approach in discussing the role of the organising committee and stakeholders associated with event legacy. We notice that the organising committee is a temporary organisation with a lifecycle of a few years, except for recurring events. This raises peculiar issues for the management of this type of organisation. In terms of human resources, for instance, each employee who works in this organisation knows that his/her employment will not last. In terms of financial resources, the organisational budget starts at zero (no revenues obtained) and finishes at an amount which is not known (except after the event), but should allow for the organisation of the event without deficit if possible. The infrastructural and information resources are likewise subject to a peculiar management. Thus, we cannot assume that management knowledge from other fields and contexts may be directly applied to a one-off sport event context.

Focusing on the volunteers, a key part of the organising committee, Chapter 4 discusses the stakeholders involved in event volunteer management. More precisely, although the event owner and organising committee are the main stakeholders, Games partners (i.e., host governments, broadcasters, and sponsors) should also be considered as potential supporters and helpers of volunteer programs. Ferrand and Skirstad also describe types of volunteers (characteristics and motivations), as well as the types of volunteer programmes. They explore the research on volunteer management. One problem they highlight is that researchers do not necessarily define the concept of the volunteer nor how it is interpreted; another problem is the lack of consensus on the theoretical foundation to use. Thus, they propose a volunteer cube to help in studying volunteers. They also propose four phases for the management of a sports event volunteer programme: 1) conceive the strategy, design the volunteer programme, and determine whether stakeholder goals and strategies are matched; 2) plan, recruit, and assign the volunteers; 3) integrate, train, and schedule the volunteers; and 4) celebrate, assess (evaluation), transfer knowledge, and garner a legacy.

The sport organisations

Possibly the most important sport organisation associated with a sport event is the event owner, that is, the person or (more often) the organisation that owns the intellectual property rights over the event in particular for its broadcasting and/or sponsoring. In our Internet age, the rights to event data can also be owned (and sold). Chapter 5 describes what an event owner is and the various types of event owners. As there is little research that does exist on event owners, and what does exist usually speaks about a topic associated with the event owner (e.g., corruption in the Fédération Internationale de Football Association or FIFA), Getz and colleagues use case studies
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of two smaller events to demonstrate the types of relationships the event owner can have with its stakeholders and to provide a theoretical framework that can be used to further study event owners. This framework notably includes the development of a network of event partners and supporters, trust and legitimacy building, working through consensus building, and demonstrating the value and potential shared benefit.

Regarding the other sports organisations, Chapter 6 focuses particularly on the national sport governing bodies (NGBs). NGBs can find themselves in different roles regarding the hosting of sports events: the owner/organiser, an owner delegating a part or all of the planning/hosting, an organiser (but not owner), or a sender of athletes to an event owned and organised by others. As well, the type of events (regular official competitions, large special regular events, one off official competitions, and mass sport events) organised can have an influence on the sport organisation’s sport, economic/financial, organisational, internal, media, and social performance. However, there remain issues related to the strategic management of the event portfolio by the organisation, the structuration of event organisation, CSR associated with events, and measuring and evaluating event outcomes/legacies.

The participants

The athlete is supposed to be the main producer as well as beneficiary of a sport event. In Chapter 7, MacIntosh and Dill take a deliberative democracy approach in arguing for the role that athletes need to play within sport organisations, generally, and sports events, specifically. They discuss the athlete representative’s (AR) role within the Olympic Movement (International Olympic Committee, Canadian Olympic Committee), Paralympic Games (International Paralympic Committee) and Commonwealth Games (Commonwealth Games Federation), as well as the athletes’ role in relation to social media, diversity, and inclusion – which puts in question the athletes’ democratic rights, freedom of speech, and whereabouts – and athlete experience during Games-time. The authors also present research done on youth elite athletes, an increasingly popular type of sport event (i.e., youth Games) to demonstrate some contrasting information to that of the elite athletes.

While Chapter 7 focuses on youth and elite athletes, Chapter 8 presents an emerging segment of the athlete population, that of Masters athletes, that is, senior athletes who do not compete anymore in top elite competitions. In this chapter, Young and colleagues use a psycho-social approach to examine what attracts individuals to Masters sport, various opportunities for involvement – including describing different organisations that are involved in Masters sport, and the effects/legacies of Masters sport (e.g., return on investment, sport participation promotion, rethinking aging stereotypes). They use a marketing approach to determine implications for managers and marketers of these events. They review the growth of the three big Masters events, the World Masters Games, the FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation) World Masters Championships, and the World Masters Athletics Championship. Based on their findings, they discuss the promotion and branding of involvement in Masters sport and Masters sport events.

In Chapter 9, Bodet argues that spectators may be seen from an economic perspective (as ticket buyers if tickets are sold) for a sport event, they are also co-creators for the lived experience that is the event. The author discusses various frameworks that help to categorise and explain spectators and their behaviours. For example, Hunt et al. (1999) present a spectrum of spectators ranging from temporary, to local, to devoted, to fanatical, and finally to dysfunctional. In turn, Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001) argue for the supporter, aesthete, interactive, and opportunist spectator types. So Bodet argues that combining existing frameworks and segments may be the best approach. Managers must consider spectators’ awareness of the event (when and how), their
attraction for the event, their actual event experience, their attachment, and finally their loyalty to the event.

The support

Athletes cannot go at it alone to be successful. Chapter 10 focuses on the athlete’s support system, which can include coaches, team doctors, nutritionists, physical therapists and massage therapists (i.e., medical staff), sport psychologists, agents and publicity/media coordinators, sport-specific technical staff (e.g., waxing specialist for skis), etc. To examine the entourage, Kristiansen and colleagues draw on work within the psychology literature. They note, for example, that the entourage provides emotional, informational, and tangible support. Parents are also a critical member of the entourage for younger athletes. There is also a trend in families of taking a sportcation, a vacation based around a sport event in which one of the family members participates. The authors discuss the role of various entourage members but pay particular attention to coaches, as they take on many roles including: team leaders, parents, psychologists, travel agents, and/or trainers.

As for the athletes, the mission staff, the topic of Chapter 11, is an under-examined stakeholder. The mission staff include: the chef de mission, the attaché, the ombudsperson, communications staff, sport technical staff, and those whose roles are to deal with the athletes’ village and non-village accommodations, arrivals/departures, special events, lounge access, operations, clothing, forms, cargo, gifting, ticketing, family and friends, results, and rate card management. The mission staff is the link between the host society and the athletes (the teams). They act as conduits between the athletes and other groups (organising committee, media, governments . . . ), problem solvers, figureheads, and managers/administrators. The mission staff faces a number of challenges, including proper planning (e.g., critical path) pre-mission, social media, cultural differences, lack of/decreasing motivation, and dealing with multiple stakeholders (e.g., media, sponsors, governments, organising committee). As there is a dearth of research on the mission staff, Legg presents different theories (e.g., contingency theory, resource dependence theory, and institutional theory) that can be used to study mission staff further.

The community

Organisers are increasingly pursuing community-based social legacies (e.g., social inclusion as a legacy of hosting events) in a strategic manner. Events are seen as a means to build a sense of community. Chapter 12 examines the community stakeholder group, focusing on social inclusion/exclusion in the context of the Olympic Movement, critiquing the inclusiveness commitments by Vancouver 2010 – social inclusion had an economic/job perspective, which meant that local business people became policymakers, instead of addressing the root causes of social exclusion (e.g., housing, drug abuse). Vancouver was not alone; London 2012 also focused on the workforce and the population at large (cf. the slogan ‘Inspire a generation’). One issue is that social inclusion is a long-term project. The Homeless World Cup is an example of a sport event where social inclusion is at the centre of the event itself. By working with different stakeholders, before, during and after the event, the Homeless World Cup can affect change. By comparing the Homeless World Cup and Olympic cases, Derom and colleagues highlight that consensus among stakeholders is critical for success in terms of community and social inclusion.

City governments and tourism agencies increasingly consider hosting sport events as ways to boost their image and brand at the local or wider level. Many cities (e.g., Lausanne, Switzerland), regions (e.g., The State of Victoria, Australia), and even countries (e.g., Denmark and Qatar) have
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now developed strategies or public policies to host sport events on a regular basis be they one-off or recurring events. The issue, as Chalip points out in Chapter 13, is that hosting a sport event does not necessarily mean the host region will garner tourism or economic benefits. Chalip highlights diversion and aversion effects that must be considered and countered if the host region is to garner benefits (also known as ‘crowding out’ effect). Moreover, event and tourism organisations should do well to remember that there is a difference between primary and secondary event visitors. As such, they require different marketing initiatives and strategies, such as effective marketing research, understanding the sport’s subculture, effective local business leveraging, and bundling. Chalip also suggests that branding the event and the destination jointly is important, warning, however, that ‘The key is not whether the event and its destination enjoy any ex ante match; the key is to formulate marketing communications for the event and the destination in a manner that creates and anchors desired associations between each’ (pp. 258–259, emphasis in original) before but also after the event. An important approach for host regions is to develop an event portfolio, with sport and other types of events in each season that allow for cross-promotion and destination exposure to a wider range of segments than would be available to a single sport event. Throughout the chapter, Chalip brings a critical eye to the existing literature on the topic, which leads him to develop a list of future research directions. He ends the chapter by cautioning readers about the legacy discourse surrounding sports events. Although he believes ‘[i]t would be wrong to argue against seeking positive outcomes from sport events, including tourism to the host destination’ (p. 261), he argues for a deflection of legacy responsibility from the event organisers to ‘those who are best positioned to leverage positive outcomes for the host destination, such as local businesses, local government, local trade associations, and local NGOs [non-governmental organisations]’ (p. 261). This supports the arguments made by Parent in Chapter 3.

The funders

As Carey and colleagues note in Chapter 14, in Western countries, ‘When pursuing leisure and tourism development projects, local governments must be sensitive to the needs and wishes of the local citizens in order for these projects to be sustainable and offer the community a return on their investment’ (p. 270). Key areas of interest in the literature associated with the local/regional government stakeholder group include economic benefits and consequences, place/tourism promotion, and socio-cultural impacts. The authors highlight some key relationships including those with the national government and with the community (residents as well as local businesses and tourism agencies). They note that two key roles for the local/regional governments in the hosting of events, apart from funding, include managing resident concerns and developing/implementing legacy plans.

In turn, national governments (Chapter 15) play an increasingly important role in bidding for and delivering medium to large/mega sports events. National governments provide direct and indirect public subsidies (e.g., underwriting infrastructure projects, providing direct funding to organising committees), offer assurances/legitimacy during bid processes, financial commitments, and diplomatic security services provision. Houlihan and colleagues use Kingdon’s multiple streams framework to analyse event hosting policies. Examining three countries – the UK, Taiwan, and South Korea – Houlihan et al. focus on hosting as a soft power resource; nation/city branding; political party rivalry; economic redevelopment/regeneration and modernisation; and political legitimacy, national identity, and social integration. Two key points of the chapter are that national governments are critical stakeholders in successfully bidding for and hosting major sports events and the decision to bid for such events is the result of policy issues that may not be related to sport.
Chapter 16 deals with the sponsors, a group that grows in importance as the size of the event increases. Séguin and Bodet focus on the concepts associated with sponsors and their management in relation to sports events. They discuss organisations’ motives for sponsoring an event, which can range from altruistic and philanthropic to personal to purely commercial. Each sponsor is unique and therefore we find a diversity of sponsorship objectives, needs, and wants. Today, the focus seems to be on brand building/brand equity and co-creation of value between all stakeholders involved in the event, and ROI (Return on Investment), especially for sponsors, even if the event is not-for-profit. The trend in sponsorship seems to be to follow what the major sports events (e.g., Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, Wimbledon, and Tour de France) are doing, which establish the ‘industry standard’ that must be followed by other events. As well, smaller events are usually seen in more of a CSR lens. Still, there are potentially negative effects of associating with potentially negative brands as well as of sponsor rights protection strategies (e.g., anti-ambush marketing legislation) on other stakeholders, which must be considered.

**The media**

Although we treat this stakeholder as a separate group, in many larger sports events, the media represent a significant source of funding for organisers through rights holder broadcasting fees. Still, the media form a group with particular requirements, needs, and wants. A balance must be established between media right holders (typically broadcasters) and non–right holders (typically the journalists including photographers) who do not (want to) pay for the facilities put at their disposal at the press centre. It is possible that in the future, press centres disappear (because of Wi-Fi) but not the broadcast centres or buses which are still required by media right holders.

In Chapter 17, Silk and Morgan argue for a critical approach to examining sport event broadcasters (SEBs) in research and for how SEBs perceive their own practices. The authors discuss the importance of the context and its influence on sport event broadcasting practices. Using different examples, they raise important questions about the structure, organisation and content of SEBs and together highlight the complexities of the relationships between various differential interest groups who coalesce around the sporting event and who shape the meanings inherent within – and make intelligible – sport event broadcasts.

(p. 330)

Chapter 18 presents the print and online media, how this stakeholder’s job has changed with the advent of new/social media, its relationships with other stakeholders (e.g., broadcasters), its needs and wants in regards to sports events, its responsibilities, and how to manage this stakeholder. Sports journalists today are multi–platform journalists and photographers/videographers. They play an important role in ‘telling the stories’ of the event. Some theories used to study the media include aspects of media affects as well as agenda setting and framing. Boyle notes that the relationship between sports events and print and online journalists is affected by issues of access, information, facilities, and changing needs and services.

**Other stakeholders**

Chapter 19 examines the various types of security agencies and the context in which they operate today. In this post 9–11 era, governments, organisers, the media, the general public, and any other decision-makers are concerned with security and risk management. Of course,
the security risks differ depending on the size, type, context of the event, and its country/city location. Still, security management is influenced on a global scale by commercialisation/commodification, mediatisation, technologisation, and globalisation. For example, we can see a standardisation of security procedures occurring in sports events around the world. In examining the literature and issues surrounding security agencies, Taylor and Toohey discuss issues of legislation, urban planning/development, technology, partnerships and privatisation, brand/reputation protection, media, operational risk/safety management, venues and facilities, and security legacies.

Finally, Hayhurst and colleagues bring a critical focus to their discussion of (international) NGOs (or (I)NGOs, Chapter 20) and agencies within the United Nations (UN) system and how they use sports events for development (sport for development) and peace – that is, sports events as catalysts for political change. To do so, they consider the political economy of the situation. They argue that (I)NGOs are political actors and suggest a postcolonial approach to stakeholder theory as a means to examine (I)NGOs. Research presented in the chapter demonstrates the opportunity created by sports events to be platforms for sport for development and peace policy advocacy strategy launching, lobbying (of the UN and governments), and network building by (I)NGOs. While policy making and programming are found, the authors question the extent of the benefits obtained by (I)NGOs compared to those of the sport event organisers. The authors suggest that

> If communities are to be meaningfully included in the process of leveraging the development benefits of local sports events, this likely requires examining, recognising, discussing and even confronting and challenging the structures of power, both historical and contemporary, that tend to stimulate conflict and/or preclude agency and self-determination at a community level.

\( (p. \, 410) \)

**Food for thought**

Examining the various chapters, we find a strong emphasis on mega sports events (Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup), certain stakeholders (e.g., organising committee, spectators/tourists, and sponsors), and certain topics (e.g., sponsorship, volunteer management, economic impact, and legacy). At a macro-level, what is particularly thought-provoking and refreshing is that, although this Handbook is about the management of sports events, each chapter takes a different approach to understanding the stakeholder of interest in order to draw out managerial implications and suggestions for future research.

One sees that a given sport event can be successful from one event stakeholder’s perspective and unsuccessful from another. Hoteliers might be very happy from an event held in their city but local taxpayers might prefer the event to have gone to another city. Some tourists may decide to come to the host region because of the event, while others will change their plans to avoid the region during that time (see Chapter 13 of this Handbook for a discussion about this, as well as Preuss 2005). This is why cost-benefit analyses of sport events are more interesting for decision makers than economic impact analyses (see also Taks et al. 2011). Unfortunately, the former are much less common than the latter. In terms of management, there is a trend to copy the mega sports events because these bigger events are perceived as being better. A more creative and sustainable approach should be applied to smaller sports events as the stakes are generally lower, and the mega sports events could also benefit from a decrease of their size and thus of their managerial complexity (and cost).
Gaps and future trends

There are many stakeholders (e.g., delegations, athletes, and mission staff) and areas (e.g., degrees of interaction within and between stakeholder groups, organisational behaviour and human resource management, leveraging, and corporate social responsibility) suggested as gaps in the various chapters. Here, we provide an overview of commonly identified gaps in the hopes of pushing the boundaries and limits of research associated with sports events of all kinds.

First, most of the research associated with the various stakeholder groups has been undertaken with large and mega sports events. Interestingly, cities and regions are more likely to host small- and medium-sized sports events, as well as recurring sports events. These events are arguably also more likely to provide greater benefits and larger ROI due to smaller costs of hosting (e.g., less likely to have to build new infrastructure) and to more local services (e.g., public transportation, taxis, restaurants, hotels, shops) being used by the participants and their families as few services are offered ‘free of charge’ by the organisers. Youth and Masters sports events are particularly interesting as the participants will most likely have their families with them, effectively making it a sportcation. Some of these events (e.g., World Masters Games, World Gymnaestrada) have over 20,000 participants, a number which does not include their family members who attend. Thus, although large and mega events may be flashy as a research context, it may be as (if not more) worthwhile for researchers to examine smaller sports events. As the number and type of stakeholders will differ between mega events and smaller events (e.g., fewer sponsors, fewer media, and potentially no broadcast media), it is important to understand the stakeholder network for these smaller events, the overall governance, as well as to understand the various areas of interest currently examined for larger events (e.g., economic impact, CSR, sponsorship, spectator services, government responsibilities). As the sport audience evolves towards younger, older, and less organised publics, sports events should be more integrative of the different age groups and abilities, as these groups are becoming the consumers/fans and participants of sports events.

Second, heritage sports events are also worth further examination (cf. Ramshaw and Gammon 2005), as well as events organised in existing facilities (which do not have to be built beforehand). These types of sports events are characterised as an event showcasing (usually a single) sport organised by a local organisation (usually a non-profit or collective) in one region, occurring in a recurring manner (usually annually) in the same location (Chappelet 2014). A bid process usually does not occur for such an event. As well, over the years, the event and location can become nearly synonymous. As such, time is required; however, this ‘builds’ tradition, history, and (place) identity. These characteristics are akin to events termed hallmark and signature by past researchers (Hall 1992; Jones 2008 as cited in Chappelet 2014). Also, one of the oldest heritage events, dating back to 1656, is Siena’s Palio, a horse race run around the town’s main square (the ‘Piazza del Campo’) on 2 July and 16 August every summer. Other notable heritage events include Wimbledon (tennis event in England since 1877), the Boston Marathon (running race in the United States since 1897), the Sydney–Hobart (yacht race in Australia since 1945), and the Holy Saturday Cross Country Cycle Classic (cycling event in Belize). Some heritage events (e.g., Wimbledon) are internationally recognised and covered, whereas others (e.g., the Holy Saturday Cross Country Cycle Classic) are not. Thus, media attention and international recognition is not a pre-requisite of this type of event. However, what this type of event does is provide a stable source of resident and media attention for the local organisers – thus, territorial marketing – as well as be able to better manage their subsequent performance by learning from past editions (Chappelet 2014). Such events allow cities/regions to buck the globalisation and standardisation trend of mega events by innovating, by being unique (Bessy 2014). In Chapter 13 of this Handbook, Chalip discusses event and destination branding. When talking about destination
branding through hosting sports events, Chalip also brings in the idea of event portfolios, which can help target a wider range of target markets (see also Ziakas 2013a, 2013b; Ziakas and Costa 2011a, 2011b for information on event portfolios). For a longer discussion on heritage events, see Chappelet (2014). Nevertheless, such events present interesting avenues of future research in terms of return on investment, economic impact, tourism, leveraging/legacy, CSR, stakeholder network development, inclusion, organising committee structuring, volunteer management and retention, to name a few.

Third, despite the exponential growth in sport event research over the past decade, there still seems to be some forgotten stakeholder groups such as dignitaries, but also under-examined ones like athletes, their entourage, and the mission staff. The dignitaries are the event owner presidents, sport federations heads (presidents, secretaries general), heads of state and heads of government, as well as key sponsors (often called partners). These accredited VIPs play an important role in the reputation of the event. Although sponsors are a popular research topic, exploring sponsors and these other dignitaries in terms of long-term partnership development has yet to be fully explored. It is critical that partnerships with these dignitaries are developed with a long-term perspective for events of all sizes, as these dignitaries are crucial sources of resources (financial, human, material, information, etc.). It is this network of dignitaries that is also involved in the creation and maintenance of event portfolios for the sport federations and host regions. Understanding the development and management of such partnerships can assist in legacy, leveraging, and sustainability, as well as the long-term strategic development of the sport(s) in question and the host region.

Fourth, the world has evolved considerably since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, as have sports events, especially in the last few years with the advent of new technologies (e.g., Internet and Wi-Fi, social media, event and project management software, green building practices, ticketing, security). It is essential that we, as researchers, review our traditional perspectives and approaches to reflect the new dynamics. For example, it would be worth examining the evolving needs of stakeholders in this knowledge economy and information technology era. To wit, what are the needs of print and online media today as opposed to how it used to be? Should events re-examine their media portfolios? What is the benefit of traditional media (print, broadcast) to events today for the various sizes and types of events? In addition, we mentioned earlier the noteworthy research avenue of understanding long-term stakeholder partnerships development and management. In line with this, it would be worth understanding the lifecycle and patterns of engagement for the different stakeholders (e.g., volunteers, media, sponsors, governments, spectators) and between the network of stakeholders (e.g., between organisers, today’s media, sponsors, and spectators/fans) to more fully comprehend a variety of issues such as value co-creation (see Chapter 16) and conflicts/tensions between stakeholders and how these can be managed (e.g., between (I)NGOs and event organisers, see Chapter 20). Moreover, what is the impact of technology on the management of the event itself by the organisers and other stakeholders?

Fifth, at a macro level, there are numerous calls by the various chapters’ authors for pushing the boundaries of sport event theory/literature and methodology. Many authors (e.g., Chapters 16 on broadcasters, and Chapter 20 on NGOs) call for a critical approach to examining event stakeholders, their role, impact, and management. Critical approaches (e.g., critical theory, postcolonial approaches) are needed not just for economic impact analyses, which are fraught with methodological issues, but also for the hosting of events (cf. Clark et al. 2003; Lee and Taylor 2005; Schulenkorf 2013; McGillivray 2013; Rojek 2013, 2014), which can bring out issues associated with bidding and hosting corruption, risk management, power and social order, and sport event broadcasters (studying them but also in how they are trained or do their job). In addition, although this Handbook is about the management of sports events, a variety of theoretical lenses (e.g., policy, agenda setting, postcolonial stakeholder theory, psycho-social, psychological, sociological, and marketing)
were taken by the authors to expose their stakeholder group. Still, many authors (e.g., Chapters 3, 4, and 10) suggest more researchers use multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches so as to provide a more holistic picture of the wide world of sports events. These varied theoretical approaches can also help push the boundaries on methodologies. Longitudinal studies, different methods for data collection beyond document analysis and one-time interviews (e.g., netnography, mixed methods, action research, experimental designs), (international, Global North versus Global South countries) comparative case studies, moving beyond description (needing to theorise and use different theories like a postcolonial approach to stakeholder theory) are all possible methods that can provide new insights to enrich our understanding of the management of sports events. We echo the words of Andrew Van de Ven (2007) regarding the call for more engaged scholarship by management scholars in general, and in our case, sport event management scholars. As Van de Ven noted,

*Engaged scholarship* is defined as a participative form of research for obtaining the different perspectives of key stakeholders . . . in studying complex problems. By involving others and leveraging their different kinds of knowledge, engaged scholarship can produce knowledge that is more penetrating and insightful than when scholars or practitioners work on the problem alone.

(2007: 9, emphasis in original)

This is not to say that sport event management research needs to be more practical. In fact, that can be a criticism of the literature surrounding sponsors for instance – more precisely, that it is too prescriptive for sponsors and sponsees, not theoretical enough. Sport event management theorising absolutely needs to be undertaken to grow and solidify the body of knowledge on the topic and help push the field towards professionalisation. As such, engaged scholars need to include knowledgeable others (be they other scholars or practitioners) in four key activities, all equally important:

- **Problem formulation** – situate, ground, diagnose, and infer the research problem by determining who, what, where, when, why, and who the problem exists up close and from afar.
- **Theory building** – create, elaborate, and justify a theory by abductive, deductive, and inductive reasoning.
- **Research design** – develop a variance or process model for empirically examining the alternative theories.
- **Problem solving** – communicate, interpret, and apply the empirical findings on which alternative models better answer the research questions about the problem (Van de Ven 2007: 10–11, emphasis in original).

It is an exciting time for sport event management researchers (and practitioners). It is important that multiple perspectives and approaches are used to understand the complex network of stakeholders that make up the wide world of sports events. By understanding the intricacies, informal processes, and changes associated with these stakeholders, sport event management scholars will be better placed to build a strong, theoretically-grounded body of knowledge that can better inform and be of use to sport event practitioners.

**References**

Conclusions and future directions


