

Advancing sport mega-event research - five critical themes

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Abstract

The ascent of mega sporting events can undoubtedly be linked to attempting to seize upon the unprecedented tourism outputs that may arise from the hosting of such events. This can be notable in the short term for the host destination. Getz and Page (2016) exemplify that surges in research tied to mega-events has greatly increased external interest in host countries. Mega-events are known to assert their power and dominance on a destination and on local societal constructs. This can be reflected in the manner that organisations such as the International Olympic Committee and FIFA have been able to direct and increase their power and wealth on a global scale (Horne, 2015). As a consequence control from external sources can generate a takeover of host cities driven by international authorities, with regions being unable to impart their influence on the outcome of the event. Additionally, this can exacerbate imbalances in the host's society and spur the marginalisation of its communities. More recently there have been notable controversies and scandals connected to internationally governing bodies like the IOC. This perception of corrupt behaviours of event-governing bodies such as the IOC might negatively impact the host populations' attitudes towards the governing body and its associated entities (Kulczycki and Koenigstorfer, 2016). This conceptual paper will first undertake an analysis of the current scope of mega-events research, prioritising the Olympic Games as the main focus area. It will indicate five prominent themes in addition to contemplating future trends of

sport mega-event research. These themes provide relevance to policy implementation alignments, such as those encompassed in the International Olympic Committee's key priorities as we head towards 2020 (IOC, 2016). This examination will aim to determine the triggers that could impact the future state of mega-event research. Additionally, it will highlight progress in the field and indicate possibilities for future Olympic Games research. As the Far East is set to take centre stage for the hosting of the next three Games.

To ascertain the future outlook of events it requires a better understanding of globalisation drivers such as technology and economics (Emery, 2010). The IOC's 2020 Olympic Agenda (2016) insists that all aspects of sustainability (and legacy) are to be further positioned as an executive priority for the IOC. Their 2020 Olympic Agenda also recognises key facets such as fostering dialogue and engagement with communities and society (IOC, 2016). To this end, the five themes that will be discussed are as followed; 1) the future of mega sporting events and how dimensions of these events interact with burgeoning global trends, 2) mega-event legacy planning and the importance of leveraging better outcomes – specifically regarding social leveraging linked to host communities, 3) the significance of undervalued and untapped markets such as sports heritage, 4) how mega-event impacts can be examined using scenario-based techniques, and 5) the rise of and adoption of integrative approaches including triple bottom-line (TBL) in mega-event research – which will be largely be initiated to enable concepts such as social sustainability to be examined. For each theme evidence will be provided of where there is insufficient research, as well as devising areas for further analysis, and highlighting future directions for sport mega-event research.

Keywords: Mega-event, mega-events, sport mega-event, legacy, leveraging, host community, mega-event research, sport tourism and event futures.

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