

An evaluation of Canadian sport event hosting policies: Barriers and facilitators for hosting events

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Abstract 386**

Globalization, possible benefits associated with sport tourism, the aspiration of cities and countries to establish themselves on the international stage, the potential for ROI (return on investment) and aspects of legacy such as new facilities and infrastructure are some of the many reasons that have led to the increased popularity of events and more specifically sporting events in recent years (Green, Costa & Fitzgerald, 2003; Hall, 1992; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996).

The sport event management literature shows many reasons why cities and countries would be interested in hosting large- and mega- scale sporting events. These include tourism spin-offs, place marketing, international image development and urban regeneration (Getz, 1998; Hall, 1992; McCloy, 2002; Ritchie, 1984). According to Sport Canada, "hosting [...] offers a forum to celebrate athletic, artistic and cultural excellence and provide Canadians with the opportunity to contribute to the expression of Canadian identity" (Sport Canada, 2006). Canada has played host and has learnt from its participation in the preparation and outcomes of several large- and mega-sporting events including the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal and the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, as well as the 1999 Pan-American Games in Winnipeg and the 2001 Jeux de la Francophonie in Ottawa-Gatineau. More recently, Canada has hosted a number of international sport championships including the FINA (Federation Internationale de Natation) championships in 2005 and the U-20 FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) World Cup this past summer and will also be home to the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver/Whistler. Due to the potential spin-offs and stakes (funding, outcomes, reputation, visibility, etc.) the number of communities bidding to host sporting events has been increasing and the bids have become more sophisticated, hence the trend for governments to build a framework for determining their role in supporting these events. Governments then use this framework to decide which and how many events they will support during a given fiscal year, the extent of financial support they will offer, and the control over event outcomes they will demand.

Since the early 1980s, the Canadian federal government has played a key role in the hosting of international sport events (McCloy, 2002). The first Canadian hosting policy came to fruition in 1983 and stated the role of the Canadian Government with regards to international multi-sport games. Since then, Sport Canada has expanded the policy to include all major games (e.g., Olympics, Pan -American), strategic focus events (e.g., North American Indigenous Games) and single sport events (e.g., world championships and world cups) (Sport Canada, 2006). More recently, Canadian provinces (e.g., Ontario, Quebec) and cities (e.g., Vancouver, Prince Rupert) have also jumped on the sport event hosting policy bandwagon. Although there is some research on sport policy development both in Canada (Harvey, 1988; Macintosh & Whitson, 1990; Macintosh, Bedeck, & Franks, 1987) and internationally (Chalip, 1991, 1995, 1996; Houlihan, 1997; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2005; Roche, 1993), to date, there is very little research on sport event hosting policy (McCloy, 2002). Other areas that have been explored include the evaluation of sport policy (Chalip, 1995), sport policy comparisons between countries (Green, 2003; Houlihan, 1997) and cross-sectoral policy development (Weed, 2001). No research has specifically looked at the impacts, barriers and facilitators (positive and negative) of sport event hosting policies on potential host candidates, thus the reasoning for this investigation.

Purpose/Objectives: This paper focuses on three types of sport event hosting policies found in Canadian society: federal, provincial and municipal government level policies. As such, the purpose of this paper is to critically analyze these policies, specifically 1) similarities and differences between federal, provincial and municipal policies, and 2) facilitators and barriers to having these types of restrictions, requirements and available information for potential host candidates. In addition to the Olympic Games examples mentioned above, the Halifax, Nova Scotia Commonwealth Games 2014 bid and FINA 2005 championships hosting incidents are explored further because of their noticeable links to the creation of related hosting policies.

Methodology: In order to meet the objectives of this paper, a comparative case study of Canadian sport event hosting policies was used. The case studies were developed using archival material including newspaper articles, official government (federal, provincial, and municipal) policy documents and web site information from all three levels of government assessed in this study. Coding for content analysis (c.f. Miles & Huberman; Yin 2003) included parameters of the policy, levels of government involvement, types of support/funding provided, conditions of support, etc. Emerging patterns are discussed below.

Discussion and implications: Emerging themes from the archival analysis included limitations to candidate cities and regions, types of support provided and reasons for policy development. Similarities highlighted between the policies were the need for a framework that provided guidance and information for event organizers on how to approach support from the various levels of

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government. Differences featured the amount of information available about the policy itself, the types of events funded, the development of the policy, the amount of money provided by the government and details about the accountability associated with the funding/support of the event. A key issue that surfaced was the impact of jurisdiction. Other barriers that surfaced in the analysis included the accountability and business case preparation required prior to the request for support, the numbers of events funded per fiscal year, timelines associated with applying for government support, maximum amounts of total event funding/maximum percentages of support with regards to total event cost, definitions of events funded, as well as legal and guarantor issues.

In conclusion, it is clear that policy plays an important role in event management within the Canadian sport system. Due to the growing number of applications for the funding/support of sporting events in the country, the development of sport event policy is imperative, as it details the governments' role with regards to sport event hosting and it provides a framework for potential candidature cities. Sport event hosting policy exists in various forms (from detailed to non-existent) in all levels of Canadian government (federal, provincial, municipal). Many differences and similarities exist in the sport policy structure. Not only does sport hosting policy help facilitate tighter ties between event organizing committees and other stakeholders of sporting events, but it also creates a number of barriers to potential sport event hosts. Clearly, the findings from this study show the need for greater integration and communication between the various levels of government studied and other key stakeholders (e.g., National Sport Organizations, sponsors, International Sport Federations). Now that sport event hosting policy has been explored further in the Canadian context, future research should expand to an international arena, which would include a comparative analysis to other countries with international sport hosting policies (e.g., Australia, Switzerland) to examine similarities and differences on a global scale. Since legacy is a concept that is constantly highlighted in the hosting policies, an additional aspect of sport event hosting policy that requires further investigation is policy development and its link to event legacy.