Failed Sporting Event Bids: A Scope of the Literature

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The hosting of sporting events has continued to grow in importance for both sport management academics and practitioners in recent years. This interest has emerged in part due to the continued interest of cities, regions, and countries in submitting bids for the opportunity to host a wide variety of sporting events with the hope of producing a positive hosting legacy. In more recent years, many issues including the cost to bid for these events has escalated exponentially, making the venture even more risky. For example, it has been reported that it can cost upwards of $40 million dollars to even prepare for and submit a candidature file for the Olympic Games (Ha, 2014). Despite the large investment of resources to become a candidate, however, only one city is selected to host each edition. As such, a failed submission can be crippling for the majority of the 'losers' within the bidding process for variety of reasons (Lauermann, 2015). As interest in pursuing the hosting of sporting events remains, while risks associated with doing so are continuing to rise, it is important to capture the extent of the existing literature base surrounding failed bids to help develop a future research agenda for the area.

The purpose of this project therefore is to develop an understanding of the range and extent of research surrounding failed sport event bidding. Specifically, this scoping review aims to: identify what is known about failed sport event bids; to map out the failed bids literature; and to develop a research agenda with potential future directions for failed sport event bids research.

In order to accomplish this Arskey and O’Malley’s (2005) scoping review protocol was adopted. More specifically, the following steps were undertaken: identification of the research question(s), determination of relevant studies, study selection, charting the data, and collating, summarizing and reporting the results. In contrast to other types of reviews (e.g., systematic reviews), scoping reviews do not attempt to be exhaustive or make an assumption regarding the research quality but rather, this approach helps to facilitate the synthesis of the nature and breadth of a particular field of scholarship. As such, the technique allowed the researchers to quickly review the available knowledge in the field of failed sport event bids. Although popular in other academic realms, the use of this method in sport and event management is uncommon (for exception see Inoue, Berg, Chelladurai, 2015). Following the identification of the research purpose (as noted above) and in order to ensure comprehensive coverage of the failed bid literature and consistent with Arskey and O’Malley’s (2005) approach, studies were identified through three sources: three electronic databases (e.g., Olympic World Library, Web of Science, SCOPUS), a manual review of leading sport event management related journals identified in a preliminary screening (e.g., Event Management, Journal of Sport Management, European Sport Management Quarterly) and a manual review of references lists from these articles. Search criteria were established and initial searches took place in Summer 2017 using a variety of search terms including for example “Failed” or “Unsuccessful” or “Lost” and “Olympic” and “Bid”.

The initial search process yielded 1579 related contributions. Identified articles are now in the process of being screened for duplicates and to ensure their relevance/appropriateness the topic. Only peer-reviewed journal articles available in the English language were considered for the initial inclusion in this review. Once a final list of articles is available (we project less than 30 that meet our criteria) a frequency and thematic review of the data will be performed. Since this is a work in progress more detailed findings will be presented at the conference. In addition, a map of literature illustrating the connections between the existing research will be provided. This will help us draw general observations that will inform our discussion on future directions and emergent areas of research in the failed bid literature. In the preliminary analysis it was possible to note that research on failed sport event bids is popular in
fields beyond sport and event management with especially high interest in urban development. Additionally, several preliminary themes have emerged from the initial data analysis including: bid evaluation, bidder-rights holder relationships, bid leveraging, and social issues (e.g., corruption).

In conclusion, it is evident that while cities and regions continue to bid for and host sport events for a number of reasons there remains large gaps in our knowledge regarding the bidding process. More specifically, while a discussion on failed bids is emerging empirical research on the topic remains scant.