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Chen, Shushu; Misener, Laura

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Event Leverage in a Non-Host Region: Challenges and Opportunities

Shushu Chen*, School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom, s.chen.5@bham.ac.uk

Laura Misener, School of Kinesiology, Western University, 1151 Richmond Road, London, ON N3K 5B9, lmisene@uwo.ca

Abstract

Interest in how local communities can positively benefit from the hosting of large-scale events has grown exponentially. Where most research has focused on the host city, non-host regions have the potential to benefit greatly, yet little research has examined how these communities can achieve these benefits. This study examined the leverage process in a non-host area for the London 2012 Olympics to consider the opportunities and challenges of such a task. Theoretically informed by the event leverage model, this case study used document analysis and semi-structured interviews with ten key stakeholders involved in the leveraging process. Findings reveal that effective event leverage in a non-host area requires the establishment of early leadership and strategic alliances, and highlight a significant role the specific leveraging team played. Partners found it difficult to continue with committing to event leverage due to conflicts of interests and goal misalignment. Theoretical contributions are also discussed.

Keywords: Non-host region, event leverage, the London 2012 Olympic Games, local community

Event Leverage in a Non-Host Region: Challenges and Opportunities

When cities and nations bid to host a mega sporting event, it is claimed that staging the event will generate various benefits not only for the host city but for the country as a whole (Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games Bid Committee, 2014; British Olympic Committee, 2005). However, events' benefits and positive outcomes seem to be inadequately distributed within the host nations, which is problematic given that public funds are often used for the hosting of events (Gratton, Shibli, & Coleman, 2005; Mules, 1998; Smith, 2009, 2014). What has emerged is the rhetoric around impacts and legacies of Olympic Games, to offset the negative commentary regarding the lack of positive outcomes for the host region (MacAloon, 2008; Preuss, 2015). However, typically this approach examines only outcomes of an event with no regard for strategic intent to create opportunities that will benefit the region. As a result, there has been an increasing interest in the concept of event leverage (e.g. Chalip, 2004; Chalip, Green, Taks, & Misener, 2017; Misener, McGillivray, McPherson, & Legg, 2015; O'Brien, 2006; Smith, 2009). The core argument underlying this concept is that through strategic planning in advance of an event, desired outcomes could be achieved for local communities. Yet, little is known, empirically, about the actual processes necessary for leveraging planning and delivery for successful outcomes.

Mega events have unique qualities that pose special problems and opportunities which impact not only host communities, but also peripheral communities because of the size and scope of the phenomena (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Liu et al., 2014). This presents distinctive challenges for a host city seeking to benefit from the hosting of an event such as the Olympic Games. Further to this, with the idea that regions outside of the host city will also benefit from the Games, understanding the challenges and opportunities to event leveraging for non-host regions will be beneficial for stakeholders in a broader territory. Scholars in mega sporting events research have examined non-host cities/regions' experiences during the

events in terms of economic effects (Daniels, 2007; Jones, 2005) and of management and social impacts in general (Beesley & Chalip, 2011; Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Chien, Kelly & Gill, 2017; Kellett, Hede, & Chalip, 2008; O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006). More recently, scholars have also suggested that there is a potential for non-host cities to maximise the positive impacts (albeit short-term) of the host country. Chien, Kelly and Gill (2017) have argued that non-host regions might be in a position to take advantage of the event through enhancing destination brand equity, augmenting an existing event portfolio, and strengthening corporate and community-based networks. Fairley and Kelly (2017) demonstrated hosting pre-Games training camps in the non-host region can offer tourism benefits, and educational and sport programming opportunities. What is not yet well understood is how cities/regions outside of the host city develop and deliver these types of opportunities for the benefit of local community. Further, the recent works on non-host cities demonstrate a need to consider which leveraging mechanisms might be most appropriate for a non-host region, and what constraints or opportunities are presented by adopting such leveraging tactics.

In order to address these gaps, we focused on a non-host area of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in order to explore the strategic planning and leveraging processes in the non-host area, Leicestershire (~100 miles north of London). The focus of this research was not placed on identifying the exact kinds of impacts leveraged successfully (or unsuccessfully); rather, we focused on considering the strategic planning and leveraging process in Leicestershire to offer insights for future regions that might seek to capitalize on the opportunity of an event being hosted in a nearby major centre. In addition, we sought to consider how the theoretical model of event leveraging set forth by Chalip et al. (2017) for leveraging sport participation could be adapted and constructed for a non-host region.

Literature Review

Olympic and Paralympic Games research studies considering non-host regions have been rather limited in number, with some notable exceptions that have helped inform the current study. Deccio and Baloglu (2002); Liu, Broom and Wilson (2014); and Ritchie, Shipway and Cleeve (2009) are examples of studies that have focused on non-host legacies. These scholars focused primarily on community residents' perceptions of the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic and Paralympic Games, the 2008 Beijing 2008 Olympic Paralympic Games, and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games respectively. Other scholars have also examined non-host cities' efforts towards offering pre-Olympic training campus services (Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Ali, 2003; Kellett, et al., 2008; O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006).

Focusing on exploring potential legacies of the Olympic Games for non-host regions, Bondonio and Mela (2008) drew attention to broad-based impacts of the Torino Olympic Games and concluded that, as a result of the staging of the Games, there had been an overall improvement in the sociocultural image and an increase in the economic competitiveness – within European and international markets – of the entire north-western Italian region. In a longitudinal study of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Karadakis and Kaplanidou (2012) indicated that residents experienced positive socio-cultural and psychological legacies (e.g. improved cultural, education experience, renewed community spirit) more than positive economic legacies (e.g. increased employment/business opportunities, avoidance of debt/rising property costs). Furthermore, one of the first analyses of Olympic-sport-participation impacts in a non-host region carried out by Chen and Henry (2016) demonstrated that awareness and motivational factors associated with the London 2012 Olympic Games were linked (albeit weakly) to an increase in sport and physical activity participation among the participants taking part in a legacy programme. Although the above

studies have provided some sporadic evidence associated with non-host regions' impacts, few studies have examined in much detail whether – or indeed how and why – non-host regions have strategically engaged with event leveraging activities.

Although the outcomes of Olympic and Paralympic Games vary between different cases, it is only recently that the importance of strategically leveraging the event for broader social outcomes has been recognised through pioneering works by Chalip (2004, 2006) and O'Brien (2006). Essentially, the aim of event leverage is that, in order to generate positive impact from the hosting of an event, strategic management processes and tactics must be formed and implemented (Chalip, 2004; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006; O'Brien, 2006; Smith & Fox, 2007). Studies have linked leveraging effects with infrastructure development (Jones, 2001; Solberg & Preuss, 2007; Terret, 2008), economic growth (Chalip, 2002; Whitson & Horne, 2006), heritage restoration (Smith, 2014), volunteer development (Fairley, Cardillo, & Filo, 2016), enhanced quality of life for local residents (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006), the development of national soft power (Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015; Grix & Houlihan, 2014; Grix & Lee, 2013), and community sport participation (Misener, McGillivray, McPherson, & Legg, 2015; Taks, Misener, Chalip, & Green, 2013). These studies outline how multi-dimensional positive impacts for host communities can be generated by adopting a strategic approach to event planning and management.

The literature suggests several key points for event leverage that are prominent in this study. The first relates to the core concept within event leverage – strategically planning to obtain the desired outcomes (Bramwell, 1997; Chalip, 2004, 2006; Ritchie, 2000). Since Chalip's (2006) call for *ex ante* focus on events, the general consensus in the literature is that event social and economic impacts do not happen automatically (Smith, 2009) and that the events themselves are not the intervention (O'Brien, 2006); instead, mega events and the opportunities that they offer are merely the 'seed capital' (O'Brien, 2006, p. 258). These

require that more actions be undertaken in order to fully maximise opportunities stimulated by an event. As Schulenkorf (2010) has put it, we should think about ‘making things happen’ by developing an *ex ante* strategy that considers positive impacts beyond event borders, (p. 120) rather than take it for granted that they will do so automatically. Smith and Fox (2007) have gone further to suggest the adoption of a more event-themed—as opposed to event-led—approach to bottom-up legacy planning, where non-host regions can use the event to augment existing programs and resources.

The second key point for event leverage relates to the formulation of collective community and the building of alliances in event leverage. As emphasised by Chalip et al. (2017), event leverage should start with tightening of the linkages between different agencies that are responsible for various elements of event development (e.g. sport, tourism, and economy). An effective coordination network between an array of public and private organisations such as local agencies, business, communities, and various levels of government is needed to ensure that a positive legacy is leveraged. This suggestion is consistent with findings in other contexts (Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Brown, 2000; Kellett, et al., 2008). O’Brien (2006) added that local stakeholders can get access to multiple networks if some medium can be established. In addition, as suggested by Girginov, Peshin and Belousov (2017, p.2087), leveraging is ‘a system phenomenon and a collective’ activity, which requires the contribution from more than one individual or one organisation. In their study of voluntary sport organisations’ engagement with leveraging the London 2012 and the Sochi 2014 Olympics, Girginov, Peshin and Belousov (2017) identified the existence of three different types of leveraging, i.e., aligning organisational objectives with the Olympic Games’ strategic visions, leveraging nation-wide Olympic programmes, and engaging with strategic partners nationally and internationally.

Furthermore, for event leverage to be effective, there is a need to consider existing local strategies, resources, sociocultural, and political conditions more broadly (Beesley & Chalip, 2011; Kellett, et al., 2008). Chalip (2006) has argued for contextualised event planning, meaning the strategic leveraging of events with reference to destination product and service mix, as opposed to treating events in isolation. In the same vein, Kellett et al. (2008) advocated identifying 'leverageable event assets, and then to formulate the necessary means to capitalise on those assets' (p. 103). In this way, event-related activities should be carefully planned according to existing resources in order to develop community-based outcomes. These notions of developing community-based outcomes and adopting a community-based strategy (Misener & Mason, 2010) are important to non-host regions (Beesley & Chalip, 2011). However, it is not clear how this might be done.

In summary, the aforementioned research has indicated the existence of some positive leveraging opportunities from regions outside of a host city. They highlight the importance of clearly understanding the contextual factors within the community studied in order for local stakeholders to capitalise on opportunities provided by the events. Future studies are advised to explore further in-depth factors that are pertinent to effectively leverage these opportunities through the event (Chalip, et al., 2017; Kellett, et al., 2008; O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006; Sparvero & Chalip, 2007). Thus, by closely examining a non-host area of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this study aims to make a contribution to mega sporting event strategic leveraging literature by examining the processes of a non-host region that endeavoured to maximise the benefits of London hosting the 2012 Games.

Model for Leveraging Sport Events

For leveraging sporting events, we draw upon the conceptual model proposed by Chalip et al. (2017) to unpack the leveraging process in a non-host region. This model (Chalip et al., 2017) was developed from previous work on leveraging events economically (Chalip, 2004) and

socially (Chalip, 2006). The credibility and applicability of this *leveraging* focus view, rather than an *impact* focus view when studying events, have been further testified in other studies (Girginor, Peshin, & Belousov, 2017; Mhanna, Blake, & Jones, 2017; O'Brien, 2007; Pereira et al., 2015). While the values of the event leverage concept have been well-received in the field, some argued that it is still difficult for event stakeholders to identify such strategies and tactics for leveraging opportunities given that sporting mega events are unique in their nature (Mhanna, Blake, & Jones, 2017); the resources element proposed in the model is rather abstract and requires a process of resource development in order to be utilised (Girginor, Peshin, & Belousov, 2017); and there is a need for exploring underlying leveraging assumptions for obtaining long-term impacts (Smith, 2014).

Nevertheless, the model (Chalip, et al., 2017) offers a holistic approach to identify challenges, opportunities, and prospects associated with leveraging sporting events for local communities; the key principles underpinning the model, therefore, helps to frame our discussion on Leicestershire's leveraging planning and delivery, and in turn we propose a revised model for event leverage in non-host regions (see the section 'Revised model for Leveraging Sport Events in Non-Host Regions' for detailed discussion).

Chalip et al.'s (2017) event leverage model incorporates three elements: 1) relevant entities, 2) the nature of the context in question, and 3) the resources needed to enable leverage. These core concepts were interpreted for current study in the context of a non-host sub-region (see Figure 1). Specifically, the relevant *entities* include three interested parties: the macro- and meso-levels' event-related stakeholders (such as the event organiser, LOCOG, the government, and the RDAs, i.e. EMDA), the leveraging team (which was responsible for facilitating London 2012 activities in Leicestershire and for network coordination), and different agencies and partners who sit in the Leicestershire 2012 Legacy Leveraging Steering Group. Each entity possesses certain *resources* (including physical,

human, and knowledge-based ones). While these resources can be mobilised and are central to the implementation of the event-leveraging strategies and tactics, they are also restricted by the developed, accepted, and sustained *systems and structures* of the three entities. Here, another layer of the context refers to stakeholders and key players' own *attitudes and opinions* towards the event and of the geographic location (i.e. being a non-host sub-region in this case). More broadly, we also recognised stakeholders and key players' beliefs and values about sport and sporting events. These perceptions are often shaped by the broader *cultural* values (referring to general features embedded in the community). Together, *culture, attitudes and opinions*, as well as *systems and structures* constitute the contextual factors. It is important to note that these contextual factors and the resources interact: on the one hand, the allocation of resources and goal-setting are influenced by how stakeholders and key players have valued sport and sporting events; on the other hand, having a strong sporting infrastructure in the sub-region may boost local stakeholders' interest in further pursuing the development of sport-related agenda. Essentially, the model outlines the complex array of matters to be addressed for event leverage; it also provides detailed guidelines for formulation and implementation of the necessary strategies and tactics which can be used to explore Leicestershire's leveraging process.



Figure 1. A model for event leverage (Source: Adapted from Chalip et al., 2017).

Research Context

Following the success of the bid to host the 2012 Games, the UK government and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) embarked upon the formulation of legacy action plan (DCMS, 2008) and an evaluation framework (DCMS, 2009) for the systematic and scientific pursuit of successful events. To ensure that the whole country was involved in and benefited from the Games, the Nations and Regions Group (NRG) was set up to work closely with LOCOG and with local government stakeholders. Activities at the regional level were organised and led largely by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), which were responsible for developing their own plans based on local needs and priorities.

In the region of the East Midlands, the Regional Management Board was established following the successful London 2012 bid, including representatives from the Government Office for the East Midlands, East Midlands Tourism, Culture East Midlands, and the Learning and Skills Council. The board also included a local authority representative (i.e., the Chief Executive of Leicestershire County Council) and a representative from Loughborough University. The East Midlands regional strategy of the London 2012 Olympics emerged

during 2006/07, after the appointments of a Regional Coordinator (with the post being jointly funded by the East Midlands Development Agency [EMDA] and Sport England and based at the RDA) and of a Creative Programmer (recruited by and hosted at Culture East Midlands) to work predominantly with the Cultural Olympiad. The areas focused on by the region included economic, sporting, and social legacies. The EMDA acted as the hosting and funding organisation for NRG coordinators and gave a small grant to each County Sports Partnership^[1] (CSP) within the region to assist with their 2012 activities. Two sub-regions, Leicestershire and Derbyshire, realised that in order to fully maximise the opportunity they needed to dedicate resources to the agenda.

For Leicestershire, the 2012 Olympics hosted in London were seen as a unique opportunity for using the power and spirit of the Games to inspire local people and to create lasting benefits for the communities. Since early 2009, a group of Leicester and Leicestershire local authorities and stakeholders actively formulated a leveraging delivery strategy and recruited staff to the coordinating agency and partners. Subsequently, a Leicestershire Steering Group for the London 2012 Games, consisting of multiple agencies, was formed to provide the strategic leveraging direction and coordinated action for Leicestershire on matters relating to 2012 Games-inspired activity. Different to previous non-host event leverage cases, where the leveraging focus often lies in one or two impact areas, e.g., sport and economic impacts (Gardiner & Chalip, 2006), socio-cultural and psychological impacts (Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012), Leicestershire's leveraging ambition was much bigger including seven visions encompassed the foci of interest-related activities: *Business*, *Sport and Physical Activity*, *Health and Wellbeing*, *Children and Young People*, *Culture*, *Volunteering*, and *Visitors Economy* (see Table 1). The seven local agencies responsible for leading each leveraging vision were also presented in Table 1. One senior member of staff

from each of those seven agencies was selected to act as a theme-lead, sitting on the Leicestershire London 2012 Legacy Steering Group.

Method

As we sought to explore the strategic planning and leveraging process of the London 2012 Games in a non-host area, Leicestershire, we examined the formulation and implementation of a leveraging plan. The key was to consider the actors of the sub-region and the factors that fostered and/or inhibited the leveraging process. To explore this non-host area's event leveraging process, an exploratory case study approach to data collection was used. This was important because little is known about how mega sporting events' leveraging was conducted in non-host regions. Both document analysis and semi-structured interviews were adopted for the study. Specifically, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten key stakeholders between November 2010 and December 2012 (see Table 3 for details of interviewees' profiles). To complement semi-structured interviews, the document analysis was used to review information (see Table 2 for example) retrieved from the official London 2012 website; from key strategic documents at national, regional, and sub-regional levels; from marketing and promotion materials; and from relevant reports published at both national and local levels; as well as from group leaders' monthly updates. The selection of materials was refined by relevance to the context of the research. It was also imperative to access documents, published by the groups who were responsible for each legacy theme, revealing indications of strategic planning and leverage management. This range of documents enabled the researchers to familiarise themselves with the context of the research (Yin, 2014) and to review the salience of the London-2012-related documents at national, regional, and sub-regional levels. The documents were also used to assist with the development of an interview guide. It was thus ensured that key points which emerged from document analysis associated with event leverage were discussed during the interviews.

Table 2. Examples of documentation and physical artefacts.

Type of evidence	Author(s)/Organisation	Document example
Websites	London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games	www.london2012.com
	Inspire Leicestershire	www.inspireleics.org.uk/
Policy and strategic documents	Department for Digital, Cultural, Media & Sport (2008)	Before, during and after: Making the most of the London 2012 Games
	Department for Digital, Cultural, Media & Sport (2010)	Plans for the legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
	Inspire Leicestershire (2009)	Inspire Leicestershire: Leicestershire strategy for the 2012 Games
Promotions materials	Inspire Leicestershire (2010-2012)	Quarterly newsletters
Event reports	Department for Digital, Cultural, Media & Sport (2011-2012)	London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games quarterly reports (May/July/December 2011, February/June/October 2012)
	London 2012 Nations and Regions Group – East Midlands (2012)	End of Games report
	Inspire Leicestershire (2012)	The legacy journey for Leicester & Leicestershire

Procedures

Multiple strategies were employed to gather data for this project including document analysis, direct observations, and strategic interviews. Documents produced by DCMS, London 2012 and the local authority provided the context for the interviews. Direct observations were undertaken in the form of attending public meetings and events put on by the local leveraging groups. A purposive sampling approach was adopted for the selection of ten interviewees. This approach was based on their direct involvement in and knowledge of the Leicestershire London 2012 leveraging process and/or in maintenance of the leveraging partnerships. Specifically, the pool of interviewees included all seven London 2012-theme leads mentioned above, one regional senior executive for the London 2012 Games, one sub-regional senior executive for the London 2012 Games, and the Director of Inspire Leicestershire (see Table 3). A series of consultations were conducted – before, during, and

after the London 2012 Games – with the Director of Inspire Leicestershire, who played a key role in coordinating Leicestershire’s London 2012 legacy leverage process.

Table 3. Overview of Interviewees profiles.

Number	Roles/Positions	Interview dates
1	East Midlands Co-ordinator for the 2012 Games	15 May 2012
2	Vice Chair for the Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group	07 Sep 2012
3	Visitor Economy Theme Lead	12 Aug 2012
4	Business Theme Lead	20 April 2011
5	Voluntary Theme Lead	10 Sep 2012
6	Sport & PA Theme Lead	17 Aug 2012
7	Cultural Theme Lead/East Midlands Creative Programmer for the 2012 Games	31 May 2012
8	Director of Inspire Leicestershire	A series of consultation between 2010 – 2012 December
9	Health & Wellbeing Theme Lead	25 September 2012
10	Children and Young People Theme Lead	13 March 2012

An interview guide with semi-structured questions was prepared and was peer-reviewed by two experienced qualitative researchers to ensure clarity and connection to the research topic. The interview guide included the following topics: (a) roles and responsibilities, (b) leveraging activities and implementation strategies (c) challenges and opportunities of leveraging, and (d) lessons for non-host regions. The lead researcher conducted all interviews face-to-face, except in the case of one telephone interview requested by the respondent. The interviews lasted from 50 to 90 minutes. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. In accordance with the ethical approval obtained for this research, extra care has been taken to protect the anonymity of the respondents for the duration of the project and in any subsequent publications.

Data Analysis

Documents and interview transcripts were subjected to repeated readings and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic content analysis has commonly been used as a

method for analysis to identify, report on, and analyse data for the meanings produced in and by people and events (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2002). Here a theme refers to a “patterned response or meaning within the dataset” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). As suggested by Patton (2002), the significance of a theme is determined not by its frequency but by its substantive consequence—meaning the consistency of themes across and within study participants (p. 467). One of the most noticeable strengths of thematic content analysis is its flexibility for the analysis of data and the ability to represent large data sets in a succinct way.

Drawing on Braun and Clarke (2006), the following five phases for theory-driven data coding were carried out: (1) The first phase of immersion involved the first author reading repeatedly in order to ensure familiarity with the data. (2) An initial list of ideas about what was in the data and what was interesting about them were generated and gathered. (3) Different codes were searched for and identified according to possible themes (the focus of the third phase was on the analysis at the broader level of the themes, rather than on codes) (4) The respective themes were reviewed by cross-checking them with the coded extracts and with the entire data set. (5) In the phase of defining and naming themes, the essence of each theme was captured and labelled accordingly.

This process led to the construction of four main themes and twelve sub-themes in total. Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original dataset to ensure that they are internally coherent, consistent and distinctive (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). We acknowledge the potential for reliability concerns associated with thematic content analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011) but have tried to ensure trustworthiness of our data representation by using a criteriological approach (Tracy, 2010). Hence, the development process of themes was not only closely in accordance with the research questions and with the event leverage model (Chalip, et al., 2017) but was also followed by a return to the

literature on event leverage and Olympic studies to ensure that the nuances and contradictions in the data were not 'ironed out' (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 126).

Findings and Discussion

The four central areas of focus of the event-leverage model (Chalip, et al., 2017) frame the presentation of our findings and discussion. We highlight the findings from the analysis of interviews and documents around the four themes: (a) local culture and features, (b) resources mobilisation, (c) structure and system, and (d) attitudes and opinions which map onto the Chalip et al. (2017) model of event leverage as they proved central to the process of event leveraging in this non-host community. Furthermore, the heuristic value of the Chalip et al. (2017) model for work (beyond the context for which it was developed) is reflected in the next section for this non-host leverage case. It is important to note that while we focus leverage, the discourse of legacy is so pervasive in the event space that host regions are often conflating the terminology (Chalip, 2017). Thus, we use the term interchangeably in the findings as needed based on the host community, but ultimately our focus is on leveraging.

Local Culture and Features

The starting point was to consider why Leicestershire actively engaged with London 2012 event leverage. Although obvious answers usually concentrate on local authorities' and key stakeholders' opportunism concerning leverage (Kellest, et al., 2008; Schulenkorf, 2010), our interviewees' feedback suggests that cultural beliefs about sport and sporting events were particularly striking, despite the dramatic funding cuts to public sectors across England in 2010/11 (Taylor-Gooby, 2012). There existed a climate of proactivity and an attitude of 'can do' towards sports-related activities, reflected both in communications with agencies outside of the Leicestershire London 2012 Steering Group and its internal dealings. A plan to have a key-stakeholder group for maximising the benefits for Leicestershire of the London 2012

Games was forged right after the bid announcement in 2005, demonstrating a clear strategic connection from the local supporters.

As a key stakeholder who worked in the local government community commented, the linkage between sport and people's lives in Leicestershire was valued in general by most local authorities (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group). Particularly, the value of sport and sporting events was long appreciated within Leicestershire's local government and community. London's hosting of the Olympic Games was '*too big an opportunity for us [Leicestershire] not to want to capture it*' (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group). As explained by several key stakeholders in Leicestershire, the event provided a unique '*strategic opportunity*' for Leicestershire to raise its profile and to drive further economic, sporting, and social development. This view of considering the staging of the Olympics as an opportunity to create awareness for non-host regions is consistent with Gardiner and Chalip's (2006) findings. This situation in turn provided '*a fantastic platform*' to get '*buy-in from leaders across the East Midlands*' for the London 2012 leverage agenda, which was especially helpful during a time of austerity:

Sport and culture is a discretionary service, it isn't the top priority for most, particularly we're in times of austerity you know, it becomes probably one of the lower priorities. So the opportunity to ensure the profile both among the politicians and the key Chief Execs and leaders of these organisations is raised and also how it connects with delivering other agendas, for instance on the economy, on safety and on health and well-being, that was, that was really probably some of the underlying principles of why, you know, we felt the opportunity has got to be taken. (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group)

Subsequently, various actions to increase local interest in London 2012 were undertaken:

Lobbying local authorities for funding support, motivating potential partners and then actively bringing these partners together.

Another key contextual feature, which adds some cultural explanations to the leveraging of the case of Leicestershire at a more nuanced level, is the fact that a top-ranking sporting institution (QS World University Rankings, 2018), Loughborough University, is located within the Leicestershire region. Loughborough University's sporting reputation as well as its active engagement with the London 2012 Games became increasingly prominent in understanding the cultural and contextual background of the region (Gluck, 1981; Pettigrew, Ferlie, & McKee, 1992). Being one of the main Leicestershire organisations which provided facilities to and facilitated university-student-volunteers' participation in several local London 2012 Inspire Programmes (such as Flames-Lighting the Way, Musubi and Medal Maker programmes), Loughborough University helped to draw media attention and made the Games seem less removed from Leicestershire's residents (East Midlands London 2012 Co-ordinator, Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group, and Director of Inspire Leicestershire). The hosting of the pre-Games training camps for Team GB and the Japanese Olympic team at Loughborough University further stimulated local excitement for London 2012. Strategically, Local council members viewed pre-Games training opportunities as a key means to realise regional and sub-regional benefits, in terms of raising profile (East Midlands London 2012 Co-ordinator), and as further elaborated by the director of Inspire Leicestershire:

We're very lucky that we've got Loughborough in our area and, through Loughborough, the Team GB headquarters and the Japanese team.... So that's an obvious draw and an obvious advantage that we've got over other parts of the country. So yeah....it [pre-

Games training campus] is a big, a big draw to the area and it also raises our profile incredibly whereas other parts of the region have struggled to raise their profile.

This idea of a sporting culture being pervasive and training camps being a means to leverage Games architecture has been seen elsewhere (Kellett, et al., 2008; Fairley & Kelly, 2017).

The culture appears to play a critical role herein.

Resource Mobilisation

Finance resources. The area of Leicestershire was in a fortunate position to have resource capacity to enable the development of a leveraging strategy. In the lead up to London 2012, the EMDA made a financial commitment to support the delivery of a broader legacy leveraging plan. In early 2010, a total of £416,000 in funding from the EMDA and local authorities was gathered to support a specific Leicestershire London 2012 leveraging programme called *Inspire Leicestershire*, which was to operate over three years. Two members of full-time staff were contracted for three years to act as the face of the programme. These individuals were to act as a conduit for supporting and encouraging all partners to communicate, share information, and deliver related activities.

While Leicestershire had clear financial input which resulted in some human resource support at the beginning of the event leverage process, increased resources do not necessarily lead to more effective leveraging. The source of central government financial support (facilitated by the EMDA) for local authorities was, in fact, made available to each sub-region within the East Midlands to assist with their 2012 leveraging activities; however, only two sub-regions within the region realised the importance of dedicated human capacity to commit to delivering 2012-related activities (East Midlands London 2012 Co-ordinator). Leicestershire was one, appointing a full-time Legacy Director and a full-time Legacy Coordinator, while Derbyshire managed to recruit only a part-time Coordinator. Yet, the

small grant provided by the EMDA was not enough to cover two full-time Leicestershire staff salaries dedicated to the leverage process. The Leicestershire key-stakeholder group actively led the bid for *'getting the county council to match up with the city council and getting the districts to put their money on the table and all of that money being matched up against what was the then EMDA funding pot'* (Sport & Physical Activity Theme Lead) to enable the appointment of two staff members for Leicestershire. This suggests that while the availability of necessary resources might be important, how the financial resources were perceived and managed was even more critical for enabling non-host sub-regions' key stakeholders to creatively use resources in mobilising and orchestrating more local input.

Human resources. The acquisition of human capital to support the leveraging efforts was critical to the process. With such a human capacity, several 'home-grown' 2012 programmes and campaigns (e.g., My Games My Legacy) were then developed and this range of Leicestershire's own London 2012 programmes provided added value to legacy outcomes. The director of Inspire Leicestershire reflected upon that:

The whole point of Inspire Leicestershire was making sure we added value through the Games really. So, adding value to what is essentially normal mainstream activity, because we can't really forget that there was never any extra capacity and there was never any extra funding, so whatever we did we had to do based on existing work streams and the existing work capacity. (Director of Inspire Leicestershire)

Furthermore, to identify the uniqueness of Leicestershire in comparison with other regions in England, as far as the leveraging of London 2012, a review of each region's end-of-Games report revealed that the East Midlands was one of only two regions (the other being the Yorkshire & Humberside Region) that did not have any London 2012 Olympic or Paralympic venues. In particular, the Inspire Leicestershire programme was distinctive in its

own right, in terms of the development of operational structure that included dedicated human and financial resources to support the leveraging efforts. Although some other areas had planned and delivered London 2012 activities (e.g. South West, East of England, West Midlands, and North West) to various extents, this proved to be either a single manager's role or a team's capacity in support of running the Olympic events. This is reflected by the founding members of the Leicestershire London 2012 Steering Group:

So we took that early decision to put together a dedicated resource and one to help us develop this strategy and then to deliver it and so that was really important and I think without that, we wouldn't have... we wouldn't have delivered half the initiatives locally that we have done and with the kind of profile that we've done as well for Leicestershire. (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group)

As argued by Misener et al. (2015), it is necessary to have a specific group responsible for developing plans and ensuring that leveraging is embedded in a local community. The group in Leicestershire demonstrated considerable astuteness in accessing and enabling available resources to support the leveraging efforts. Only after the appointment of the event leverage team dedicated to London 2012 was progress noted; this included bidding to host the torch relay, hosting landmark showcase events, and providing public relations management. Inspire Leicestershire also had the explicit role of cultivating a relationship with partners, identifying the connectivity between London 2012-related activities and other partners' programmes in order to create, lead, and deliver integrated physical, economic, and social event-related activities in the sub-region. More than that, the overall shape of the operational strategy and its ultimate preparation remained largely the responsibility of Inspire Leicestershire. As appraised by the Regional London 2012 Coordinator, who has overseen all the delivery of London 2012 related activities in the East Midlands region,

I don't think there can be anybody in Leicestershire who hasn't had a chance to hear about the Games on Radio Leicester, read about it in The Mercury... I think it's that... I think the more you put into something the more you get out and to have people who is full-time job, two people whose full-time job is to work on delivering a legacy for a county area is really very powerful. (East Midlands London 2012 Co-ordinator)

Intangible resources. Apart from financial and human resources, the development and exchanging of intangible resources (e.g., knowledge and experience) were also evidenced. One form of intangible resources development resided with those individuals who were involved in the strategic leveraging and managing process. Their experience, knowledge, and skills learned from Leicestershire's leveraging process, in relation to for example communication and partnership working, can be regarded as a kind of leveraging impact. It was intended that the London 2012 leveraging process would be used to promote Leicestershire's and to demonstrate Leicestershire's potential for hosting major sporting events in the future. As commented by Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group:

Our experience [of leveraging the London 2012 Games] can be seen a strength, not only for this Olympics but for future major sporting events... The fact that we're able to demonstrate that we can coordinate and host major, major showcase events, i.e., like the torch relay... you can probably transpose those skills into hosting other big, big events. I know there's talk about [potentially Leicestershire to host] the British cycling championship and stuff like that, so that'll be good. (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group)

In addition, knowledge-sharing routines (Dyer & Singh, 1998) were developed to enable free-flow of and sharing of London 2012-related information between legacy leveraging partners, particularly so for the promotion of those local Inspire Programmes^[2]. Specifically, the following three mechanisms were put into place to permit transfer,

recombination, exchange of knowledge: 1) the development of partnership working principles for the Leicestershire 2012 leveraging programme; 2) the implementation of quarterly steering group meetings during the three-year period of the programme; and 3) the adoption of an open-plan working environment to accommodate three legacy leveraging groups: Inspire Leicestershire team, the Children & Young People Legacy theme lead, and the Sport & Physical Activity Legacy theme group. These methods enabled regular interactions (face-to-face interactions in many occasions) to be established among individuals. The information sharing network was mainly facilitated by Inspire Leicestershire which worked across various sectors (Gardiner & Chalip, 2006) and also coordinated decision-making among partners (Smith & Fox, 2007). Inspire Leicestershire was viewed as critical for creating some kinds of '*joining up*' and a sense of '*cohesion*' (Sport & Physical Activity Theme Lead) across the seven legacy themes:

... I always described it [the Inspire Leicestershire programme] as... between those seven... seven bar stools of leadership - business, culture, sport, physical activity, health, etc., etc., because what we wanted to do was the stuff that could be falling between the stools, or working across the stools, that was the work that we should be doing and concentrating on, linking things together. (Sport & Physical Activity Theme Lead)

Systems and Structures

The need for alliances and partnership coordination has been demonstrated for event leverage in host communities (Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Chalip, 2006; O'Brien, 2006); it also appeared to be necessary for a non-host area (Gardiner & Chalip, 2006), as well as for this case. The operational structure at the local level was based on each partner's buy-in to the Leicestershire leveraging initiative at the early stage, with minimal additional resources

provided (in particular no resources for some strands, e.g., the Health theme). The establishment of the Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group, therefore, marked the beginning of the event leverage process for Leicestershire, with their own leveraging medium – *Inspire Leicestershire* – supporting the strategic planning and delivery of all London-2012-related activities.

So we launched that [Leicestershire Steering Group] about, I'd say, just four years ago. It was certainly around the time of the announcement of the success of London being the venue for London and the Paralympics, and so we set about then agreeing the government structure for the steering group and to identify the key work themes and also the membership to ensuring that it, it was representative of those sectors that we wanted to, to develop. And one of the, the early things that we committed to was to ensure we could get two things in place: a resource to help us progress this work to gain the best from the Olympic Games, both for Leicestershire both in terms of the lead up of the Olympic Games but also kind of the legacy of the Olympic Games. And secondly was to ensure that we had a strategy in place to guide and provide a framework for that work we did. (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group)

The event leverage structure reflected a close interdependency between partners in the community. Individual partners facilitated event leverage through their ability to stimulate local interests and provided a catalyst for London 2012 engagement. Under such a partnership work setting, it was a real challenge for senior staff members in the Steering Group to oversee the leverage process and to take a leadership position '*without having line management responsibility over the individuals as such*' (Vice Chair for the Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group). The actual management focus was therefore placed on '*building relationships and managing those relationships and those partnerships so that people [did] deliver on your behalf and deliver effectively*' (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering

Group). Assuming a model of collaborative leadership, as different to traditional forms of leadership (Alexander et al., 2001), building trust and strengthening the partners' relationships have been identified as being critical to partnership working elsewhere (e.g. Parent & Harvey, 2009); this has been reflected here. Particularly, partnership maintenance became more salient during the mid- and later- leveraging stages, which was critical for the delivery of initiatives over the duration of the partnership.

Table 1 summarises how this partnership worked in the case of Leicestershire, regarding what the overall leveraging visions were, who leveraged, what legacy activities were led or carried out by each leveraging team, and what and how resources were used and managed. Particularly in understanding of leverageable resources, as suggested by Girginov, Peshin and Belousov (2017), most resources cannot be utilised in their original forms but require some kinds of development. This is important in viewing the complexity of leverage here. Based on the analysis of document and interviews data, we specified the core leverage forms of resources for each theme, i.e., whether resources were utilised with a minimum adaption, or any significant resource development has happened (regarding proactively attracting and absorbing non-allocated resources).

Table 1. Leicestershire’s vision, actions, responsible groups, and resources mobilisation for leveraging the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacies.

Leicestershire’s visions for leveraging the London 2012 legacy	Leveraged by	Leicestershire’s leveraging actions for achieving each legacy goal	Resources	Primary type of resources mobilisation
<p>1. Sport & Physical activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspire increased participation in sport and physical activity and commitment to supporting excellence in sport. - Inspire more options and choice for local people to think about physical activity, improving their fitness. 	Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver national-wide Olympic programmes. - Develop a programme of quality sporting events and programmes in Leicestershire that promote the 2012 Games and its legacy. - Use the 2012 Games, Team GB base at Loughborough University and Inspire Leicestershire branding to support the development of local clubs, qualified coaches, officials; as well as to support bids for increased capital investment in sport and leisure facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National London 2012 programme sources -Existing budgets -Existing partnership contribution 	Resource development
<p>2. Children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspire children and young people to engage in sport, arts and culture, learning and volunteering. 	Children & Young People Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of schools registered on the Get Set Programme and those that are active members of the Get Set Network. - Engage local schools in London 2012 legacy related events/programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Free resources through LOCOG -National London 2012 programme sources -Inspire Leicestershire funding -EMDA funding 	Resource utilisation
<p>3. Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspire individuals and communities to play an active role in the Cultural Olympiad, celebrating their cultural identity, cohesiveness, creativity and heritage. 	Leicester and Leicestershire Culture Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a programme of 2012 related activities and events. - Support the Cultural Olympiad programme and The Torch Relay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National London 2012 programme sources -Inspire Leicestershire funding -Existing budgets 	Resource utilisation
<p>4. Volunteering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inspire more local people to become volunteers creating a strong legacy that will result in lasting benefits to local communities. 	Voluntary Action Leicestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase volunteering opportunities to build capacity within the voluntary sector. - Identify and promote all 2012 related volunteering opportunities. - Sponsor Leicestershire Games Makers for volunteering at London 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National London 2012 programme sources -Inspire Leicestershire funding -Existing budgets -Existing partnership 	Resource development

		- Increase the number volunteering projects that are given the Inspire Mark. - Deliver national-wide volunteering related Olympic programmes.	contribution	
5. Business: - Inspire local businesses to compete for and win contracts and sub-contracts to supply goods and services to the 2012 Games.	Business & Enterprise Group	- Increase the number of businesses that are registered and published on CompeteFor. - Disseminate and promote London 2012 related business opportunities. - Raise profile and maximise local benefits from Leicestershire hosting pre-games training camps.	-National London 2012 programme sources -Inspire Leicestershire funding -Existing budgets	Resource utilisation
6. Visitor Economy: - Inspire teams and visitors from across the world to come to Leicestershire.	Leicester-Shire Promotions	- Develop and undertake awareness campaign. - Organise a programme of workshop and conference events to publicise Leicestershire's successes in relation to the 2012 Games and encourage business tourism. - Support the attraction of overseas teams to use pre-training camp facilities within Leicestershire and seek to maximise the benefits for the wider community.	-Exiting resources -Inspire Leicestershire human capacity	Resource utilisation
7. Health: - Inspire more options and choice for local people to think about diet and nutrition, improving their health and reducing health inequalities.	Health and Wellbeing Partnership	- Support national-wide London 2012 related health activities. - Develop marketing campaign. - Partnership working on promoting Sport & Physical activity related programmes.	-Existing budgets	Resource utilisation

Source: (Inspire Leicestershire, 2009; Inspire Leicestershire 2012 Legacy Action Plans, internal documents)

Challenges in the systems and structures. Working within a partnership-based structure has its own challenges, particularly so when each partner approaches the relationship with different motives and is resource constrained (Babiak, 2007). Thus, it is critical to achieve some agreement on the goals of the partnership (Babiak, 2009; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006). In the case of Leicestershire, the leveraging goals were loosely defined at the beginning. According to one of the Sport and PA leaders,

The priority was to work out how we can create a legacy from 2012 locally. It was as simple and as broad as that, to my recollection. How do we bring London 2012 to Leicestershire? How do we feel its impact? How do we take it to the communities [in Leicestershire] and to the doorsteps of the Leicestershire community?

It was then proposed to identify specific strategic themes for Leicestershire, eventually resulting in the publication of Leicestershire's London 2012 strategy document and notably including the seven visions presented in Table 1. Hence, there was some evidence of 'bottom-up' approach for event-leverage-strategic planning (Smith & Fox, 2007), whereby this Inspiring Leicestershire programme was planned and implemented at the local level, matching with the needs and characteristics of the population of Leicestershire.

However, feedback from some stakeholders on the strategic document suggested that it was ambiguous and irrelevant to some stakeholders' interests. Some leveraging partners also shared their frustration about not being consulted as the key operational leaders for identifying the key linkages between the nature of the event and their own agencies' policy priorities. Several theme-leads noted that they were not fully engaged with event leverage planning from an early stage and pointed out that much of the content in the strategy book was not operational. They even felt confused in terms of 'leveraging for whom' and failed to envision potential benefits for doing 'extra' work on leveraging. This issue matches those observed in earlier event leverage studies (Chalip, 2004; O'Brien, 2006; Gardiner & Chalip,

2006) which call for careful and early identification and integration of individual parties' own benefits within event leverage plans.

Unsurprisingly, this lack of consultation and follow-up support with theme leaders led to stagnant development and fragmented responses (Gardiner & Chalip, 2006) in some areas. Tensions between partners and the Steering Group grew throughout the process. Some, particularly partners who agreed to lend support to the core values and who had additional resources, felt that they managed to implement extra London 2012-programmes and initiatives despite the partnership tensions. For example, the Sport and Physical Activity strand was quite strong (resource-wise) and had been committed to the whole leveraging plan from the very beginning, which stands as an example that the agenda of London 2012 was effectively integrated with the organisational agenda of their own. Many of the other areas were modified in scale, scope, or timing in order to cater for London 2012. For instance, the Workplace Challenge programme was built on existing activity in terms of funding (Chen & Henry, 2016), producing more output in relation to the number of programme participants as partners worked together (e.g., Inspire Leicestershire promoted the programme among their business networks). This proved to be a more effective strategy for this strand to use an event-themed approach (Smith & Fox, 2007). Yet others felt that difficult internal dynamics within their own sector and different methods of operation meant that they could not agree on some of the strategic goals or necessarily go the extra mile to 'cooperate'. As warned by Gardiner and Chalip (2006), asymmetry indeed was inherent in stakeholders, who came from different backgrounds, and had their own personal interests and objectives (Hardin, 1982), when acting collectively for event leverage. With existing capacity and funding resources, it also proved difficult to align the work undertaken on a daily basis with the new London 2012 initiatives. Due to the resource-demanding nature of event leverage, scholars (e.g. Misener, et al., 2015) have already emphasised the importance of strategically embedding event

leverage activities within existing programmes. Our findings suggest that some partners struggled to do this. The Health and Wellbeing theme was a notable example:

I think they... the strategy had been written, hoping that we would be able to achieve a much wider health improvement legacy. Our local priorities were around reducing levels of obesity, increasing levels of physical activity. So, I think the ambition from Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland point of view was how we could use the inspiration and the legacy to help behaviour change around lifestyle behaviour change. That caused... whilst on one level you wouldn't dispute that and who could, who would disagree with that, on a very practical level this wasn't my top priority within my remit or within the department for that matter We hadn't got the capacity within the team to look at the much broader health improvement, the objectives.

(Health & Wellbeing Theme Lead)

It became difficult to leverage collectively when some stakeholders did not share a similar understanding regarding key priorities and objectives from the beginning. Partners from different sectors highlighted the dynamic environment within their own organisations with issues such as lack of capacity and funding, or challenges of restructuring and reviews; these inevitably inhibited their engagement with event leverage.

In addition, the '*change of [political and operational] landscape*' at the regional level (East Midlands London 2012 Co-ordinator) posed further challenges. The life cycle of Inspire Leicestershire took place across a particularly turbulent period in economic, political, and social terms (recession, change of central government, London riots). The RDAs– as the regional hosting and funding organisations for NRG coordinators– were abolished several months before the Games as part of the then Government's plan to 'give local governments the power on economic development' (House of Commons, 2013, p.3). This resulted in reduced levels of funding support and fewer London-2012-related activities being delivered;

it also affected NRG activities (Grant Thornton, Ecorys, & Centre for Olympic Studies and Research Loughborough University, 2011). Such a change in the political, economic and socio-cultural environment is likely to impact on the success of partnership (Parent & Harvey, 2009). The Steering Group thus adjusted strategic priorities to reflect a changing context and the aforementioned tensions, with the seven original leverage themes being reduced to five (Sport and PA and Health, with Business and Visitor Economy also being merged) several months before the London 2012 Olympic Games. Such an evolutionary decision was necessary (Vice Chair for the Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group) so that more attention could be placed on areas/themes with sufficient resources and led by committed partners who demonstrated more buy-in to the plan (East Midlands London 2012 Co-ordinator and Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group).

Attitudes and Opinion

Being a non-host sub-region was perceived as a negative factor that constrained Leicestershire's event leveraging capacity. As shared by some key event leverage partners, local authorities did not have the legitimacy to maximise the leveraging strategy because (1) there was no sports venue for the Olympic or Paralympic Games in the region, and (2) there was a general feeling towards the 2012 Games among Leicestershire citizens that the event was associated only with London, as opposed to with the UK or with the regions of Leicestershire. The non-host nature of the geographic location in question thus posed some challenges. This was reflected on by the vice chair of the Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group:

So, for me some of the big challenges at the start, going into this, was a, you know, geographically we're dislocated from the main Olympic venues, the Olympics and Paralympics, so that was always going to be a challenge for us in terms of how do we... how do we connect with it (Vice Chair for Leicestershire 2012 Steering Group).

Hence, in terms of communicating London-2012-related messages to local citizens, focus was placed on ‘*making the community aware of what was happening*’ and ‘*making the community aware that actually London isn't that far away and that [London 2012] – that's a benefit [to us]*’ (Sport & Physical Activity Theme Lead) as well as on ‘*finding a hook*’ (Director of Inspire Leicestershire) for Leicestershire to link with the event. Subsequently, efforts were made to host major showcase events (e.g., Torch Relay Celebration event, 100 Days to Go) as well as introducing tailored cultural programmes (e.g., Patchwork Pledge) to engage local residents. These cultural programmes were made as simple and accessible as possible, with London 2012-related messages embedded to allow people to easily take part and to create a general mood of excitement around the Games. This stimulated a carnival atmosphere which, as highlighted by Chalip (1992) and Chalip et al. (2017), is vital for event leverage. This is the case in using an event to shape local citizens’ attitudes and opinions in ways that can establish favourable conditions from which to leverage the event for intended outcomes (e.g. tourism development, Chien, et al., 2017).

Further, it is worth noting that policy planning and decision-making could be positively or negatively influenced by the nature and development of the event. The success of the London 2012 Games, in terms of Team GB’s excellent performance, had positively stimulated the country and increased people’s enthusiasm about the event. This provided a potential boost for engagement with London-2012-related programmes/initiatives across the sub-region (reference name deleted to maintain the integrity of the review process). Thus, with the same quantities and inputs, the overall impact and leverage effect of London 2012 in Leicestershire (relating in particular to intangible effects) might have exceeded original targets.

Revised Model for Leveraging Sport Events in Non-Host Regions

While the event leverage model put forth by Chalip et al. (2017) offered a valuable holistic approach for synthesising our understanding of the leverage process as well as for identifying the key factors, we acknowledged that the model pivots on leveraging sport event for the context of host community (with a focus on developing sport participation benefits), and therefore prompted our further reflection on the value of the model for considering the non-host perspective of event leverage.

Hence, with particular reference to a non-host community, Leicestershire, several important insights have emerged. First, local *culture* and *resource* challenges are not necessarily reflected differently in a non-host region but are certainly overlaid with a different policy imperative and present difference contextual factors that need to be carefully considered from a strategic management perspective for the non-host. However, the capacity of the current model to indicate the unique features of a non-host region was limited. For example, one of the key players in the event leverage model (Chalip et al., 2017) – *event organisers* – had minimum interaction, if any, with the leveraging team in the non-host area. As such, their experiences of, for example, facilitating the event or cross-leveraging were not identified and were less relevant in the context of a non-host region.

Second, the dynamic nature of policy and politics during the leveraging process was not recognised explicitly in the model. We argue that the leveraging partnership in this non-host region has been influenced by the general *political and economic environment*. As discussed earlier, influenced by the change of national and regional political landscape and the significant public funding cut, key partners' engagement with event leverage was confined; from the Leicestershire Steering Group's point of view, the very nature of the Leicestershire partnership's strategic focus was inevitably changed, and the number of strategic priorities were scaled-down. Thus, being aware of the change of *political and economic environment*

remains critical for future non-host regions in strategically adapting leveraging objectives and skilfully mobilising existing resources.

Third, although the importance of the establishment of *strategic alliances* and a *specific committee* responsible for effective leveraging has been mentioned (rather than being made explicit in the model) in Chalip et al.'s (2017) discussion for host cities leverage, our study has revealed that they were indispensable in the non-host region's leveraging process. Leveraging together with strategic partners is reinforced by several authors (Bell & Gallimore, 2015; Girginov et al., 2017; Kellett, et al., 2008). Particularly, we argue that the centrality of the Leicestershire London 2012 leveraging *partnerships* is significant in the process of leverage planning, in terms of defining a strategic vision, formulating objectives and lobbying for local support. The value of having a specific committee to leverage in a non-host region cannot be understated. Inspire Leicestershire played a significant role in shaping the operational strategy and partnership maintenance. Such a dedicated event-legacy-leverage team deserves a distinctive position in the leverage model.

Subsequently, a modified Model of Event Leverage for the Non-Host Region is proposed here to reflect these nuanced factors (see Figure 2): specifically, a *policy, political and economic environment* factor has been incorporated at a broad level; the factor of a *specific committee* is inserted, replacing *event organiser*; the factor of *strategic partnership* is also highlighted in this adapted model. By doing so, we argue that such understanding of the operation of event leverage in a non-host area can be useful for informing partnership thinking for local authorities regarding the leveraging of other major events for the region.

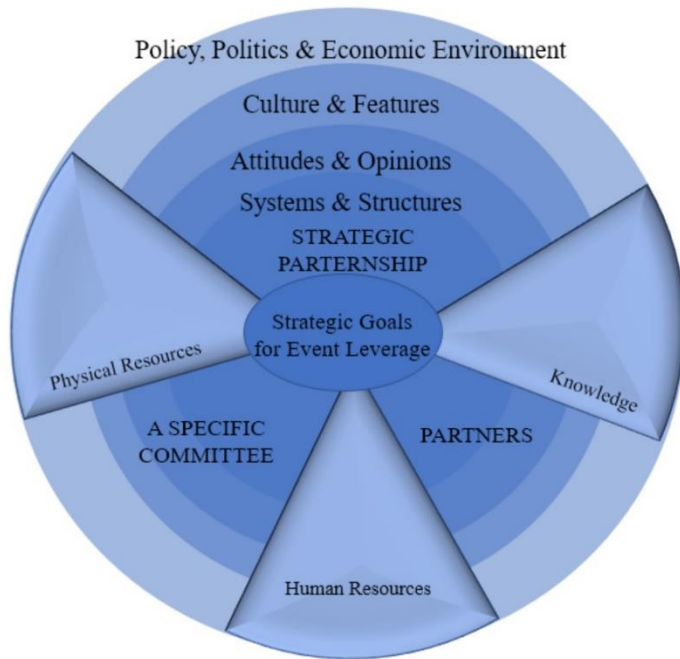


Figure 2. A revised model for event leverage in the context of non-host regions

Conclusion

Although the concept of event leverage is not new, detailed empirical investigation of the leverage process, particularly so in a non-host region, is still lacking. Our study sought to provide rich insights into how a non-host community made efforts to maximise the opportunity of mega event in proximity. The study tracked the evolution of the event leveraging strategy, throughout three years, from the formulation of the vision through to the development of strategies and priorities in the later stage of the event leveraging process demonstrating some valuable opportunities and key challenges. The region was strategic in capitalizing on a policy agenda to impact by attracting financial and human resources to support the leveraging efforts based around a strong sporting culture. However, with different sectors involved, there were challenges in working with the Steering Group due to conflicts of interests. This was underscored by a changing political climate that left the region with much uncertainty.

Of key importance is that this leveraging effort was supported by a broader culture in Leicestershire, where sport and sports events have a high profile. A core of key actors with shared values and enthusiasm for sports and with strong links to local councils constituted part of Leicestershire's event-leverage character. There was an important history, reaching back to immediately after the bid for the Olympic Games was won in 2005; the key stakeholders in Leicestershire played an important role in securing sufficient investment for hiring the dedicated event-legacy-leverage team and in many of the key decisions regarding strategic planning and partnership building that were developed locally rather than regionally or nationally. All of these have made Leicestershire stand as one of few examples where, as a non-host region, a much more sophisticated and detailed leveraging strategic plan for achieving event impacts across seven sectors took place years in advance of the event, in contrast to previous cases where, e.g., there was a lack of careful leveraging planning in general (Chien, P. M., Kelly, S. J., & Gill, C. 2017), or opportunities to leverage or obtain beneficial outcomes were only derived from the mean of hosting pre-Games training campus (Fairley, & Kelly, 2017; Gardiner & Chalip, 2006).

The impact of a small event team dedicated to event leverage in Leicestershire was perceived by the Steering Group as being significant in terms of how the quantity and quality of London-2012-related activities delivered in the sub-region compared to other sub-regions. The message is that any financial or resource environments can be skilfully managed to create a team dedicated to event leverage, and lack of available resources does not simply mean that event leverage for non-host regions is impossible. Geographically, the impact of being dislocated from London seemed to also be mitigated by the offering of a tailor-made, home-grown London 2012 programme.

There are a number of implications for future non-host regions. Firstly, as echoed by Gardiner and Chalip's study (2006), a partnership-based event-leverage plan, a shared

understanding of the possible potential benefits and actions between the department and delivery partners at the early inception stage is required. In addition, a dedicated leverage group is recommended for operational planning and alliance coordination. It is also important to take a more proactive stakeholder management approach (Ackermann & Eden, 2011) to set up detailed plans on partnership working for future projects and to capitalise upon the experience and skills gained from one-off event leverage. The present study offers transferable lessons a mega-event, capturing the leveraging actions from a non-host area in the UK to inform relevant stakeholder/organisational committees' strategic thinking regarding the planning and organization of event leverage for a broader region. It also seeks to enable us to explore the impact of event leverage in specific non-host contexts. The study calls for more research on advancing the practice of event leverage in non-host regions.

Notes:

[1]. In the East Midlands, these were formed in five of the region's six counties: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire – with the exception being Rutland, which was incorporated in a joint CSP, i.e. Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport (LRS) with Leicestershire.

[2]. Inspire Programme was a national-wide licensing programme to promote non-commercial projects developed at the community levels. A total of 44 project across Leicestershire were awarded the London 2012 Inspire Mark, e.g., the Patchwork Pledge and Personal Choices programmes.

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