

European Sport Management Quarterly

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/resm20

Investigating top-down and bottom-up strategic alignment of event leveraging outcomes: the case of the 2021 UCI Road World Championships

Georgia Teare, Jordan T. Bakhsh, Kerri L. Bodin, Kobe Helsen, Marijke Taks & Jeroen Scheerder

To cite this article: Georgia Teare, Jordan T. Bakhsh, Kerri L. Bodin, Kobe Helsen, Marijke Taks & Jeroen Scheerder (04 Jan 2024): Investigating top-down and bottom-up strategic alignment of event leveraging outcomes: the case of the 2021 UCI Road World Championships, European Sport Management Quarterly, DOI: 10.1080/16184742.2023.2298431

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2023.2298431

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 04 Jan 2024.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 650

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=resm20

EUROPEAN SPORT MANAGEMENT QUARTERLY
https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2023.2298431

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

Investigating top-down and bottom-up strategic alignment of event leveraging outcomes: the case of the 2021 UCI Road World Championships

Georgia Teare[a], Jordan T. Bakhsh [b], Kerri L. Bodin[c], Kobe Helsen [d], Marijke Taks [c,d] and Jeroen Scheerder[d]

[a]Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation, Northumbria University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK; [b]Faculty of Business and Law, Deakin Business School, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia; [c]School of Human Kinetics, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada; [d]Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group, University of Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

ABSTRACT

Research question: It is generally agreed upon that deliberate planning is needed to achieve pre-determined positive outcomes from sport events (i.e. event leveraging). There is less consensus around the specific strategies that should be used to achieve such outcomes, and ownership of such strategies. A largely conceptual suggestion has been made that both top-down and bottom-up stakeholders should be involved in event leveraging. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the (mis)alignment of top-down and bottom-up stakeholders' event leveraging objectives and how this (mis)alignment relates to objective achievement.

Research methods: In the context of the city of Leuven (Belgium), and the 2021 UCI Road World Championships, a case study methodology was employed with three phases of data collection and analysis of (1) top-down stakeholder documents; (2) semi-structured interviews with bottom-up stakeholders ($n = 8$); and (3) online questionnaires with residents ($n = 3662$).

Results and findings: We found alignment for only one top-down and bottom-up objective (i.e. promote cycling as a means of active transportation), which was found to be achieved through examining residents' use of cycling for groceries. The remaining objectives were not aligned, and therefore were not fully met or sustained as indicated through resident opinion and behaviour.

Implications: The findings provide empirical support for previous conceptual notions that both top-down and bottom-up strategies to event leveraging are needed. Future research can help support leveraging sport events by working with both top-down and bottom-up stakeholders prior to hosting to help facilitate objective alignment, and foster relationships to maximize outcomes.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 22 November 2022
Accepted 15 December 2023

KEYWORDS
Realistic evaluation approach; active transportation; event impact; sport behaviour; mixed methods

CONTACT Georgia Teare georgia.teare@northumbria.ac.uk Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation, Northumbria University

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Many major sport events are one-off events, often supported by local governments and public funds (Agha & Taks, 2015). These events can have considerable financial and social implications for host communities (Gammon, 2012; Taks & Teare, 2022). Many proponents (e.g. local governments, event bid or organizing committees, etc.) of sport events claim that these implications are positive (Annear et al., 2019; Boardley, 2013; Weed et al., 2015), while research suggests that without deliberate planning, sustainable positive event outcomes are often not realized (Chalip, 2006, 2014; Misener, 2015; Taks et al., 2014; Teare & Taks, 2021). Deliberate planning for positive event outcomes is called *event leveraging* (Chalip, 2006; 2014). Aligned with the theoretical underpinnings of a Realistic Evaluation Approach (REA), which considers the social context and specific mechanisms pertinent to achieving an outcome (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), event leveraging involves using the *context* of an event as a *mechanism* to achieve pre-existing goals at a faster rate than would be possible without the presence of an event (Chalip, 2006; 2014; Taks, 2013). Thus, (major) sport events can be leveraged by host communities to achieve accelerated and amplified pre-existing objectives, such as infrastructure development and social goals (Pereira et al., 2020; 2015; Ziakas, 2019).

While it is generally agreed that leveraging strategies must be applied for positive event outcomes to occur, there remains little consensus among scholars as to what specific event leveraging strategies should be undertaken (Potwarka et al., 2020; Schulenkorf et al., 2022). A common issue raised by these scholars is that of leveraging ownership (i.e. who is responsible for leveraging events? e.g. Charlton, 2010). Some scholars suggest that a top-down strategy is needed, where decision-makers (e.g. governments or event organizations), who control leveraging resources and drive the context of the events, are responsible for leveraging events (e.g. Brown & Pappous, 2018). Others, however, suggest that a bottom-up strategy, where community-facing stakeholders, who implement leveraging strategies to achieve event objectives at the community-level, are responsible for leveraging events (e.g. Chen & Henry, 2016). While top-down decision-makers often control the allocation of resources for leveraging strategies, bottom-up stakeholders are often responsible for implementing such strategies. In fact, as detailed in the sections below, misalignment between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders can be associated with a lack of event leveraging objective achievement (Kirby et al., 2018; Taks et al., 2014). Therefore, many scholars suggest that both top-down and bottom-up strategies are needed to effectively leverage events (e.g. Chalip et al., 2017; Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015). It is also cautioned, however, that aligning top-down and bottom-up strategies can be difficult, and theoretical and empirical insight are needed to understand these challenges (Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015).

To date, understanding top-down and bottom-up event leveraging strategy alignment has been largely conceptual, with most sport event evaluations taking one perspective, but not both (Schulenkorf et al., 2022; Teare & Taks, 2021). As detailed in the sections below, the misalignment of top-down and bottom-up objectives often leads to unmet or unsustained outcomes (Teare et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2018). While top-down leveraging strategies have been shown to create positive initial event impacts, if bottom-up stakeholders do not possess the necessary resources to accommodate and nurture these impacts, event objectives will not be sustained (Teare et al., 2022). Although bottom-up stakeholders actively attempt to leverage events, without top-down stakeholders driving the context of events, event-leveraging objectives will not be achieved

(Wood et al., 2018). Given the importance of top-down and bottom-up stakeholders strategic alignment, it is imperative for scholars to empirically investigate both top-down stakeholders' objectives (i.e. social context) and bottom-up stakeholders' objectives (i.e. mechanisms) of event leveraging strategies (Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015; Teare & Taks, 2021). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the (mis)alignment of top-down and bottom-up stakeholders' event objectives and how this (mis)alignment relates to objective achievement. By applying a Realist Evaluation Approach (REA), this study comprehensively considers both the specific contextual factors (i.e. top-down stakeholders) and the mechanisms (i.e. bottom-up stakeholders) needed to achieve desired event outcomes (i.e. objectives). To advance empirical understandings of the objective (mis)alignment and achievement between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders, we answer the following two research questions:

RQ1: How are the top-down and bottom-up objectives of a major sport event (mis)aligned?

RQ2: To what extent are these major sport event objectives met?

Literature review and theory

Investigations evaluating event leveraging strategies have often come to similar overarching conclusions: there is misalignment between event stakeholders. Decision-makers (i.e. top-down stakeholders including elected officials or event organizers) would like events to be leveraged for predetermined outcomes, but community-facing stakeholders (i.e. bottom-up stakeholders including local businesses) who must activate leveraging in a community are often: (1) unaware of these leveraging opportunities (Collins et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2018); or (2) aware of desired outcomes but believe that such outcomes are a 'given' when events take place (Misener et al., 2015; Taks et al., 2014, 2018). Moreover, it is likely that bottom-up stakeholders lack capacity to accommodate leveraging initiatives (Hoskyn et al., 2018; Teare et al., 2022). For example, Misener (2015) found that policies were created to support grassroots parasport participation around the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, however, programmes at the grassroots level were not implemented. From an economic perspective, Collins et al. (2018) found that while there was a desire among organizers to leverage a major sailing event to benefit local businesses economically, community organizations were not given support to do so. There have also been instances of local clubs and organizations not being communicated with about desired strategic outcomes (e.g. Wood et al., 2018).

When many bottom-up stakeholders were aware of objectives, active leveraging initiatives were often not undertaken because such stakeholders believed that the event simply taking place would automatically lead to positive outcomes. For example, when seeking sport development outcomes from hosting the Pan-American Junior Athletics Championships, no initiatives to stimulate community participation in athletics were undertaken because stakeholders thought such outcomes were implicit (Misener et al., 2015; Taks et al., 2014). There was a slight increase in athletics participation by those who were already involved in the sport prior to the event, but no empirical evidence of new participation (Taks et al., 2014). Moreover, from a business-development perspective, Kirby et al.'s (2018) review found that small

businesses' interests were not often prioritized when staging sport events, and the authors advocated for the inclusion of these stakeholders' perspectives when planning event leveraging strategies.

Indeed, some investigations have found that when bottom-up stakeholders do engage in leveraging, there can be some success in recruiting new participants to a particular community sport club, or to try a new sport (Bakhsh & Potwarka, 2020; Girginov et al., 2017). However, to do so, both Macrae (2017) and Teare et al. (2022) found that local clubs must be equipped with appropriate resources to accommodate new participants. Otherwise, new membership stimulated through leveraging strategies would eventually fail (Teare et al., 2022).

The fundamental challenge understood through this collection of leveraging research is the importance of top-down and bottom-up stakeholder collaboration in the planning stages (Chalip et al., 2017; Hayday et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2018). When alignment between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders is present, conceptually, scholars believe that a streamlined allocation of resources to support bottom-up leveraging strategies will occur and successful leveraging outcomes will be achieved (Chalip et al., 2017; Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015). While Chalip (2014) advocates that event organizers cannot take on the role of leveraging, they also suggest that rather than a one-off event, a portfolio of events should be undertaken to meet broader community objectives. Such an approach has been supported by Pereira et al. (2015; 2020) who found that an event portfolio to brand the region of Algarve (Portugal) as a tourist destination for nautical activities and events was effective when a network of organizations worked collaboratively. The Algarve case involved a portfolio of events, however, the present context involves just one major event, with the host destination developing a strategy around sport events (i.e. the city of Leuven was awarded the title of *European City of Sport* in 2021; City of Leuven, 2019). Ultimately, these previous investigations have provided a basis for the present investigation into the (mis)alignment of top-down and bottom-up objectives. The findings discussed above indicated that engaging in a bottom-up strategy is necessary as these organizations are the ones to generate outcomes (e.g. accommodating new participation, promoting and developing tourism opportunities, etc.). However, the resources for such bottom-up strategies must be provided by top-down decision-makers to support organizations in reaching the desired objectives (e.g. participation increase, tourism development, etc.).

Residents' perspectives

As demonstrated in the preceding section, a common way of determining objective achievement is through resident perspectives, experiences, and behaviours. To evaluate residents' event perspectives, experiences, and behaviours, scholars often apply post-event surveys to measure residents' perceived benefits and costs from hosting (Johnston et al., 2021), event support (Duan et al., 2021), or post-event behaviours (Bakhsh et al., 2023). For example, examining residents' post-event sport participation behaviours has become a popular focus for event scholars (Weed et al., 2015). Studies have shed light on how hosting sport events can stimulate positive sport participation and physical activity behaviours for host residents and event attendees in traditional sport spaces (Bakhsh et al., 2023). For example, Potwarka et al. (2018) found that watching an elite

cycling event inspired adult spectators to try the sport themselves. Similarly, Bakhsh et al. (2023) found that some youth tried a new sporting opportunity after attending an elite track cycling event.

These studies offer antecedents which explain residents' evaluations. Largely, antecedents can be placed into three categories: (1) resident characteristics; (2) event consumption; and (3) event impacts. Residents' characteristics include sociodemographic factors like geographic location (Liu et al., 2014), residents' event involvement or role (Chen et al., 2018), and past and/or current sport participation (Ribeiro et al., 2022). For example, Karadakis and Kaplanidou (2012) found that host residents and non-host residents evaluated economic legacies differently for the 2010 Vancouver Games, with the non-host residents (i.e. Ottawa) perceiving the legacies more positively than host residents (i.e. Vancouver).

Finally, event scholars have outlined the impacts that can affect residents' event evaluations, with particular focus on social impacts (e.g. social capital and psychic income; see Balduck et al., 2011; Oshimi et al., 2023). For instance, in their study on the 2007 Tour de France, Balduck and colleagues (2011) found that residents' perceptions of impacts can change over time. To determine such a transferable change, desired impacts must be measured over a period that spans from pre- to post-event, while considering residents' characteristics, and event consumption. By applying pre-, post-, and even during event data collection points, scholars can effectively reveal the change in residents' behaviours caused by the event itself (Bakhsh et al., 2020).

Theoretical underpinnings

The present study is underpinned by the Realistic Evaluation Approach (REA; Pawson & Tilley, 1997). The REA considers the social context and specific mechanisms in generating an outcome (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). This approach is pertinent when considering leveraging outcomes as the outcome itself is dependent on hosting an event (i.e. the context) and leveraging said event (i.e. mechanisms). By taking a REA, we can consider both the contextual factors of the event such as outcomes sought from the top-down stakeholders and the specific mechanisms in terms of initiatives undertaken by bottom-up stakeholders on residents' perspectives, experiences, and behaviours.

Given the applicability of a REA for event leveraging investigations, scholars have previously taken such an approach (Bell & Daniels, 2018; Chen & Henry, 2016; Potwarka & Wicker, 2021). Bell and Daniels (2018) case study on a major BMX event used a REA to consider the impact of smaller youth events (i.e. context) with a focus on skills and fun (i.e. mechanisms) on positive benefits for the participant (i.e. outcome). In the context of the 2012 London Olympic Games (i.e. context), Chen and Henry (2016) used a REA to consider the implementation of a workplace physical activity initiative (i.e. mechanism) on non-host-region residents physical activity levels (i.e. outcome). In the present study, the 2021 UCI Road World Championships are considered as the context, including overall event objectives, and the event leveraging initiatives undertaken by bottom-up stakeholders are considered as the mechanisms by which the objectives might be achieved. The outcomes are the extent to which there is evidence of objective achievement among the host resident population.

Study context

The 2021 UCI Road World Championships were held in Flanders, Belgium, in September 2021. Together with Antwerp, Bruges and Knokke-Heist, the city of Leuven was one of the host cities organizing five road race events, among which were races for both elite women and men. Leuven is the capital of Flemish Brabant, one of the ten provinces in Belgium (City of Leuven, 2019). Leuven was named the *European Capital of Innovation* in 2020, and was awarded the title of *European City of Sport* in 2021 (City of Leuven, 2019). The five road race events for which Leuven was the finish location, all took place from 24 to 26 September 2021. The overall event was organized by one local organizing committee, Flanders 2021, that was responsible for the organization in all four host cities across Flanders, including Leuven (i.e. social context; top-down stakeholder). Two additional official events were held in Leuven: a Family Day on 19 September, and a Cyclo Event for recreational participants on 23 September. On both occasions almost all public roads were closed to vehicles (UCI, 2021). Building off the Family Day event, the plan was to continue to close roads on select Saturdays in Leuven for Traffic Free Saturdays (City of Leuven, 2021).

Study method

A case study methodology was adopted to explore the objective alignment between top-down (context) and bottom-up (mechanisms) stakeholders on objective achievement (outcomes) among host residents (Helsen et al., 2022a; 2022b; Scheerder & Helsen, 2022). Research question one: 'How are the top-down and bottom-up objectives of a major sport event (mis)aligned?' was addressed through the first two phases of qualitative data collection (i.e. document analysis and semi-structured interviews). Research question two: 'To what extent are these major sport event objectives met?' was addressed through the third phase of data collection: quantitative online questionnaires.

Phases one and two. In the first phase, documents were analysed from the City of Leuven website as well as the bid book for hosting the 2021 UCI Road World Championships (i.e. Flanders 2021 bid book) to understand the top-down objectives (i.e. social context). The content of these documents was analysed deductively (Patton, 2002) to determine the event objectives of the event bid committee and the city, and the extent of the alignment of strategies.

In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with bottom-up stakeholders in Leuven prior to the event in July and August 2021 to understand if community organizations sought to leverage (i.e. mechanisms) the 2021 UCI Road World Championships, and if so, for what objectives. Organization type, representative title, and participant codes are presented in Table 1. A total of 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted, with only eight of the interviewees' organizations engaging in event-leveraging tactics. While outside of the scope of the present investigation, many of the organizations did not engage in leveraging tactics due to COVID-19 pandemic-related constraints. As the purpose of this paper is to explore the strategic context around objective achievement, only the eight organizations who engaged in event leveraging are included in the table and subsequent analysis.

Table 1. Profile of the semi-structured interview participants.

Participant code	Organization Sector
Participant 01	City services – Culture
Participant 02	City services – Neighbourhood sport
Participant 03	City services – Neighbourhood work
Participant 04	City services – Chair of sports administration
Participant 05	City services – Education
Participant 06	Community sport organization
Participant 07	Sociocultural organization
Participant 08	Community sport organization

Following Braun and Clarke's six steps (2006), the transcripts were analysed thematically using a deductive approach. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Dutch and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were translated into English, and then re-translated to Dutch to check for accuracy (step 1). Next, the transcripts were coded deductively, looking for (1) event leveraging tactics and initiatives, and (2) reasons for engaging in event leveraging (step 2). These codes were grouped together to form initial themes based on the objectives of the tactics (step 3). These initial themes were further refined to form the overarching objectives of bottom-up stakeholders (step 4). Themes were then named, and are described in the following section (steps 5 and 6). The objectives identified in phases one and two were compared to determine (mis)alignment of objectives (i.e. alignment of social context and mechanisms for objective achievement).

Phase three. Questionnaires were administered at four time-points: pre-event in March and April 2021 ($n = 960$); pre-event in June 2021 ($n = 632$); during-event from 23 to 26 September 2021 ($n = 1015$); and post-event in November and December 2021 ($n = 1055$). Online questionnaires were distributed via the monthly city magazine, local (sport) clubs, communication channels of the local city services, community networks, and social media. All questionnaires were conducted in Dutch. To be eligible to participate in questionnaires, participants had to be 18 years of age or older and a resident of Leuven.

The items drawn from the questionnaire for this study align with the top-down and bottom-up objectives identified in phases one and two. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using a Tukey post-hoc test to investigate if there is evidence that the bottom-up event leveraging initiatives associated with top-down objectives produced a change in residents' behaviours over time. Therefore, following previous sport management scholarship (Potwarka & Leatherdale, 2016; Teare et al., 2021) we used a time-series approach to analyse if residents' perceptions, experiences, and behaviours (i.e. outcomes) were statistically different from the previous event period (e.g. during event compared to pre-event period two).

Informed by the findings from phases one and two, the following five outcome variables were selected: (1) cycling for active transportation, (2) general physical activity, (3) cycling for leisure, (4) opportunities to showcase the city to the world, and (5) feelings of excitement. Out of the various 'cycling for active transportation' modes such as travel to school/university, work, and/or leisure activities, which are common practices in Belgian cities (Helsen et al., 2021; Scheerder & Thibaut, 2021; Thibaut et al., 2022), we opted for the less common and more unique practice of 'biking for grocery shopping'. Enhancing

bicycle use for this specific purpose has more opportunity for growth, thereby offering a greater chance to contribute in making a city more accessible, traffic-safe, and fostering sustainable mobility. This item was measured by asking: 'Do you use the bike to go grocery shopping?' on a 3-category scale ranging from '(1), never' to '(2), sometimes', to '(3), (almost) always'. For the sport and physical activity promotion objectives we assessed both general physical activity and cycling-specific physical activity. The general physical activity objective was measured based on Scheerder, Vos, et al. (2011) through the item 'In the past twelve months I (still) did sports/active forms of physical exercise during my free time' on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from '(1), never' to '(6), five times per week or more'. The cycling for physical activity objective was based on Scheerder, Lagae, et al. (2011) and measured through the item 'In the past twelve months I have cycled during my free time (e.g. recreational cycling, cycling, bicycle touring, mountain biking, etc.) (transportation by bike to, for example, a bakery, your work or education, does not count)' on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from '1, never' to '6, five times per week or more'. Next, the perceptions that the event provided opportunities to show Leuven to the world item was measured based on Balduck et al. (2011) by asking residents the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: 'The 2021 UCI Road World Championships have provided opportunities to show Leuven to the world' on a 7-point Likert scale from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'. Finally, adapted from Shank and Beasley's (1998) validated involvement scale, the feelings of excitement were measured by asking residents to 'Rate your personal feelings about the 2021 UCI Road World Championships as truthfully as possible' from (1) 'boring' to (7) 'exciting'. Single-item self-assessments are consistent with previous literature on event impacts and host residents (Kaplanidou et al., 2013; Teare et al., 2021).

Findings and results

Phases one and two: document analysis and semi-structured interviews

Prior to the event, Leuven launched its 2020–2025 Strategic Plan (City of Leuven, 2020) with ten associated strategic objectives. Objectives included, but were not limited to, (1) accessible and traffic-safe city, where sustainable mobility is fostered; (2) sustainable, climate-proof and circular city, with the aim of being carbon neutral; (3) entrepreneurship as the engine of an active city, where socially responsible entrepreneurs are attracted; (4) sport and physical activity, where Leuven is known as a sport city; (5) trade and catering, where shops, restaurants and trading are stimulated; and (6) attractive city, where residents like to live, work, and recreate (City of Leuven, 2020).

The bid document for the 2021 UCI Road World Championships contained four objectives (LOC Flanders, 2021, n.d.): (1) further promotion of cycling in the region as a recreational physical activity and safe form of transport; (2) sustainable development and promotion of Flanders and Brussels as a top tourist destination for sport cycling; (3) contribution of the 2021 UCI Road World Championships to the further development of a Flemish major event policy and cooperation between the regional and local government bodies, sport federations, sport agencies and other stakeholders; and (4) stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship by creating opportunities for local companies and start-ups.

Each of these objectives is strongly linked with at least one of the city objectives highlighted above. We identified three distinct themes of alignment between the city's strategic plan and the event's overall top-down objectives which are described below: (1) cycling for transportation; (2) sport promotion; and (3) business development (LOC Flanders, 2021, n.d.).

Three themes related to event objectives were identified from the semi-structured interview data (bottom-up perspective): (1) promoting cycling as a means of transportation; (2) getting more residents physically active; and (3) community engagement. There is strong bottom-up and top-down alignment for cycling for transportation. There are some associations between top-down and bottom-up approaches for the sport promotion: top-down is high-performance and tourist focused, while bottom-up is community oriented. Finally, there is misalignment between the final objectives: the top-down objective sought to develop businesses in the area, while the bottom-up objective sought to develop general excitement among residents.

Cycling for transportation (top-down and bottom-up alignment). Under the theme of cycling for transportation, it was clear that the bid document is supporting the city's overall objective of moving toward an accessible and traffic-safe city. In this objective, the city was investing in infrastructure and programmes to make it easier for residents to choose cycling as their preferred mode of transportation. Some examples of this included developing more bicycle paths and streets, creating more bicycle parking, and implementing bicycle sharing programmes. From the bid document, it seems as though the event would be used as a promotional tool for communicating these efforts with residents.

Organizations in Leuven also sought to promote cycling as a means of transportation among residents. Clearly aligned with the city's broader plan for Leuven to become 'more bicycle-friendly in order to encounter as few bottlenecks as possible' [Participant 04], many organizations used the event to help promote cycling for transportation. One of the main initiatives related to helping residents shift to bikes for their transportation was the Family Day, which is the Sunday before the World Championships itself. 'That is our car-free Sunday, and that is actually organized a bit in the context of families and sustainable displacements. And that is also put in the picture and some attention is paid to it' [Participant 04].

In addition to promoting cycling for transportation, many initiatives and programmes were centred around simply getting more residents on bikes. Many initiatives were aimed at allowing residents to use the event infrastructure. For example, 'cycle tours cover some parts of the course of the World Championships' [Participant 08] and 'the Memoride [virtual cycling platform] for the five different community centers […] people can then cycle certain courses on that home trainer' [Participant 06]. Schoolchildren could also 'at the end of their school day […] cycle the last kilometer' [Participant 05]. There was also a more general cycling initiative linked to the 2021 UCI Road World Championships which involved a bike share programme through 'promoting the bicycle sharing systems in Leuven, for people with children' [Participant 07] (i.e. families can share bikes).

Some organizations wanted to use the event to help residents think about a cycling policy and how 'a city can be designed differently' [Participant 07] in relation to cycling. For example, the same participant described how there was an 'exhibition […] about how you can design a city towards regarding cycling infrastructure' [Participant 07]. These

organizations highlighted the importance of residents realizing the role of cycling policy and infrastructure in Leuven because 'sometimes [it is] not clear to people: hey, why can't you drive [by car] through the city?' [Participant 08]. For example, one participant explained how 'from a sustainability perspective, it is important to make people look differently at how do I move, mobility issues, to city infrastructure' [Participant 07].

Sport promotion for tourists (i.e. cycling tourism; top-down) vs Physical activity for residents (bottom-up). The city's sport and physical activity objective was reflected in two event objectives: sustainable development and promotion of Flanders and Brussels as a top tourist destination for sport cycling, and contribution of the 2021 UCI Road World Championships to the further development of a Flemish major event policy. The city's sport and physical activity objective involved investing in sport infrastructure and hosting sport events. While none of the planned facilities were explicitly cycling-related, the intent to host sport events can support both sport and cycling-related objectives. Compared to the clear objective alignment of the cycling for transportation theme, there seems to be less obvious alignment between the city's objectives and event goals for this theme.

The top-down stakeholders have a clear focus on tourism and major events, while the bottom-up stakeholders are much more focused on helping residents of Leuven become more physically active. Some organizations sought to use the event to help promote overall physical activity participation 'to get as many people as possible to exercise, and then very specifically on low-threshold sports' [Participant 06]. Many of the organizations with this goal sought to engage inactive/low active residents such as 'people with a physical disability' [Participant 06], 'seniors' [Participant 02], and 'low threshold sports for people who [physically] do almost nothing' [Participant 02]. For example, new stationary bikes were purchased 'for the five different community centers. Each community center has received two home trainers and a license (that is a sensor for that home trainer)' that were specifically targeted to elderly residents and low-active residents [Participant 02].

Business development (top-down) vs Community engagement and excitement (bottom-up). The final objectives of top-down and bottom-up stakeholders were not aligned. The event objective of stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship by creating opportunities for local companies and start-ups is a reflection of two city objectives, namely: trade and catering, and entrepreneurship as the engine of an active city. The trade and catering objective is centred around developing hospitality and event policies that stimulate patronage at local businesses, while the entrepreneurship objectives aimed to make space for new and international businesses to grow in Leuven. There is a clear link between the event objective and the two city objectives, however, few details were provided for how local organizations might be able to leverage the event to contribute to objective achievement.

Some local organizations saw the event as an opportunity to generate awareness of the event and build excitement among residents. For instance, many schools were engaging their students in initiatives related to the event such as 'lesson packages' [Participant 05], and 'a mosaic with all kinds of objects that the children bring with them in a certain color (the World Championships colours)' [Participant 05]. In the broader community, an organization planned 'the occasion of the World Championships, but that also has to do with the end of the corona, we are going to organize a big thank you party' [Participant 08].

Phase three: resident questionnaires

The one-way ANOVA displayed significant effects for Cycling for Groceries, $F(3, 2197) = 6.132$, $p < .001$; Cycling Activity, $F(3, 3318) = 5.010$, $p = .002$; Leuven World, $F(3, 3485) = 21.529$, $p < .001$; and Exciting-Boring, $F(3, 3003) = 48.771$, $p < .001$. Significant effects were not found for Physical Activity, $F(3, 3318) = 1.734$, $p = .158$. Mean scores, standard deviations, and mean differences between resident groups from the Tukey's Honestly Significant Differences post-hoc analysis are presented in Table 2. For instance, when examining the column labelled 'Groceries', Table 2 demonstrates that on average, residents reported sometimes cycling for groceries (M = 2.05) six months pre-event. There are significant differences from six-months pre-event to post-event reports (M = 2.12 post-event). These results indicate that residents started to cycle more for groceries. Thus, the results presented in Table 2 indicate that the leveraging initiatives of cycling for transportation, promoting Leuven, and community engagement and excitement created significant positive changes from 6-months pre-event to 3-months post-event, while leveraging initiatives for getting more residents physically active did not. Also seen in the 'Groceries' column, the difference between during event reports and post-event reports is much stronger than the difference between the six-months pre-event reports and the post-event reports, as indicated by significance levels.

Table 2. Leuven resident behaviour and perceptions 6-months pre-event, 3-months pre-event, during-event, and 3-months post-event related to the 2021 UCI Road World Championships (ANOVA and descriptive statistics).

	Groceries	Physical Activity	Cycling Activity	Leuven to World	Excitement
Pre-Event 1	**2.05 (.73)**	**3.11 (1.52)**	**3.95 (1.55)**	**5.27 (1.71)**	**4.37 (2.25)**
Pre-Event 2	-.065	.086	.069	-.176	-.197
During Event	.018	.019	-.214*	105	.309*
Post-Event	-.113**	.273	-.030	-.447***	-.888***
Pre-Event 2	**2.07 (.73)**	**3.02 (1.46)**	**3.88 (1.51)**	**5.45 (1.53)**	**4.57 (2.15)**
Pre-Event 1	.065	-.086	.069	.176	.197
During Event	.082	-.066	-.282**	.281**	.506***
Post-Event	-.048	.187	-.099	-.271**	-.692***
During Event	**1.99 (.75)**	**3.09 (3.73)**	**4.17 (1.55)**	**5.17 (1.80)**	**4.06 (2.20)**
Pre-Event 1	-.018	-.019	.214*	-.105	-.309*
Pre-Event 2	-.082	.066	.282**	-.281**	-.506***
Post-Event	-.131***	.253	.184*	-.552***	−1.198***
Post-Event	**2.12 (.69)**	**2.83 (3.54)**	**3.98 (1.47)**	**5.41 (1.65)**	**5.26 (1.90)**
Pre-Event 1	.113*	-.273	.030	.447***	.888***
Pre-Event 2	.048	-.187	.099	.271**	.692***
During Event	.131***	-.253	-.184*	.552***	1.198***

Notes: Each column first presents the time point's mean and standard deviation for the leveraging initiative followed by the mean difference for the additional time points.

Pre-Event 1 was measured 6-months pre-event; Pre-Event 2 was measured 3-months pre-event; Post-Event was measured 3-months post-event.

Groceries was measured on a 3-point Likert scale (1, never; 3, always); Physical and Cycling Activity were measured on 6-point Likert scales (1, never; 6, 5 times per week or more); Leuven to World was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1, strongly disagree; 7 strongly agree); and Excitement was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1, boring; 7, exciting).

*p-value < .05; **p-value < .01; ***p-value < .001

Discussion

We sought to explore the objective alignment and achievement from event leveraging strategies between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders by answering two research questions: (1) How are the top-down and bottom-up objectives of a major sport event (mis)aligned?; and (2) To what extent are these major sport event's objectives met? Addressing these questions was underpinned by a REA (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) which considers the social context of the event (i.e. top-down stakeholders' objectives) and the mechanisms of the leveraging tactics (i.e. bottom-up stakeholder's objectives) in outcome (i.e. objective) achievement. We discuss the results that answer these questions in the sections below, summarized in Table 3, and then offer implications for practice and future research.

Cycling for transportation

There seemed to be strong alignment between the city and the event organizing committee (i.e. top-down) in terms of sought outcomes from the event. It is clear that the mechanism of outcome achievement is informed by the social context. The bottom-up stakeholders were aware of larger policy goals, and could therefore align their own goals to support top-down objectives. There was a bottom-up awareness of the top-down investments in cycling infrastructure, and the bottom-up initiatives shared information about city policy and programmes and tied to this broader objective. As suggested conceptually (Chalip et al., 2017), event objectives can be achieved when goals and resources are streamlined between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders. As issues of bottom-up stakeholders not being aware of top-down objectives have been a cause of failed leveraging tactics in the past (Teare et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2018), the bottom-up stakeholders' specific references to city objectives provide support for the importance of clear and direct communication from top-down to bottom-up stakeholders. This conceptual notion is empirically supported by the findings of the present study as well. Residents reported cycling for groceries significantly more post-event (time 4) than before (time 1) and during (time 3) the event. While some of this change could be attributed to the event itself hindering residents' ability to cycle for groceries, some of the change post-event could also be attributed to the leveraging tactics used. As previously suggested, collaboration between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders (Chalip et al., 2017), and streamlined allocation of resources to support bottom-up leveraging tactics (Chalip, 2014) led to objective achievement in the current context. This highlights the importance of not only having strategic objective alignment among stakeholders, but also having specific objectives that can somehow be tied to the event. In the present study, the common objective was quite clear: increase the use of cycling for transportation to reduce traffic. Although it was not necessarily sport participation, using a bike was clearly thematically tied to the event (i.e. cycling). These findings support that alignment between the social context of the event (i.e. top-down objectives) and the mechanisms (i.e. bottom-up objectives) create a strategic condition under which desired outcomes *can* be achieved. Moreover, the desired outcome must be thematically linked to the social context for the mechanisms to be effective.

Table 3. Summary of findings and results.

Context	Mechanisms		Outcomes
Top-down objectives	Bottom-up objectives		Objective achievement
Cycling for transportation	Aligned — Cycling for transportation	Achieved	Cycling for Groceries
	Leveraged by, for example: • Promotion of the city's bicycle sharing programme (pre-event) • Exhibition about how to design cycling infrastructure (pre-event) • Family day/ car-free Sunday the Sunday before the World Championships		Residents started to cycle more for groceries after the event
Sport promotion	Partially Aligned — Getting more residents physically active	Not sustained	Cycling Activity
	Leveraged by, for example: • Memoride programme: stationary bikes purchased for community centres with screen to virtually cycle the event course (pre-event) • School children visited the podium site and watched the riders' course exploration (during-event)		Increased from pre-event to during the event, decreased pot-event
Sport promotion	Partially Aligned — Getting more residents physically active	Not achieved	Physical Activity
	Leveraged by, for example: • Dance-related performances (pre-event) • Hoping residents who participate in the Memoride try other activities in the community centres		No Significant effects
Business development	Not Aligned — Community engagement	Not sustained	Leuven to World
	No leveraging initiatives		Increase leading up to the event, return to pre-event levels post-event
Business development	Not Aligned — Community engagement	Achieved	Excitement
	Leveraged by, for example: • Countdown clock to the event (pre-event) • Information performance to help residents understand the event (pre-event) • Schools engaged in a variety of art-based activities tied to the event (pre-event)		From indifference pre-event to excited post-event

Cycling and sport participation

In terms of promoting sport participation, there was some alignment, and some misalignment between the bottom-up and top-down objectives. The top-down objective sought to promote the city as a cycling tourist destination and develop the major event-hosting policy. The mechanisms within this social context, however, were centred around promoting opportunities to cycle more, in general among residents. The bottom-up objectives (i.e. mechanisms) have a direct community connection, while top-down objectives (i.e. context) are focused on bringing tourists to the city. As suggested previously, if specific objectives are not aligned, bottom-up leveraging strategies often do not come to fruition due to a lack of resources dedicated by top-down stakeholders (Chalip, 2014; Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015). While the bottom-up stakeholders were aware that leveraging for desired outcomes could take place, perhaps they were unaware of the specific cycling outcomes sought by the city (Collins et al., 2018; Lovett & Bloyce, 2017).

Residents' cycling participation increased from pre-event to during the event, perhaps tied to the several initiatives taking place leading up to and during the event where residents hand opportunities to cycle, described by the bottom-up stakeholders. However, this increase was not sustained. In fact, cycling participation decreased among residents after the event. Moreover, there were no significant changes in residents' general physical activity, although this lack of change could be due to the wide timeframe of the question itself (i.e. self-reported physical activity in the last 12 months). Nevertheless, in terms of physical activity-related outcomes, these findings are not surprising. Previous studies have found that general sport and physical activity impacts of sport events often do not occur (Weed et al., 2015) and increases in specific sports around an event are often not sustained (Macrae, 2017; Teare & Taks, 2021). The results of the present study support that when there was a loose alignment between the social context of the top-down objectives and the mechanisms implemented by the bottom-up objectives, there might be some outcome achievement, but without the strategic support from both levels, any achievement is not sustained. The lack of strategic support for this objective could be attributed to the underlying goals of each stakeholder. While both top-down and bottom-up stakeholders could receive some benefits from more residents cycling for transportation, the benefits of sport tourism or an enhanced event hosting portfolio might not be of direct benefit to the bottom-up stakeholders. This could suggest that as the bottom-up stakeholders are implementing the mechanisms by which outcomes are achieved, the outcomes themselves should be of direct benefit to the bottom-up stakeholders. Thus top-down stakeholders might consider engaging with and targeting a variety of bottom-up stakeholders pre-event based on desired outcomes.

Misaligned objectives

The third objectives for both the top-down and bottom-up stakeholders (i.e. business development and community engagement respectively) were misaligned. Similar to the sport and physical activity based objectives, without strategic alignment between top-down and bottom-up objectives, resources in a community cannot be used strategically, and therefore objectives will likely not be met (Chalip et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2018).

Moreover, a complementing explanation for unmet objectives could be the misalignment of the stakeholders themselves. As alluded to above, the bottom-up stakeholders who indicated that they leveraged the event, would likely not prioritize development of innovation and entrepreneurship outside of the event. Thus, leveraging for such objectives would not be relevant. Local businesses that would have benefitted from business development event objectives were recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and might not have had the resources available to engage in additional leveraging initiatives around the event. Therefore, these findings support the need for stakeholder alignment in achieving each specific event objective. In other words, while the social context and mechanisms themselves are important to consider in understanding outcome achievement, it is also important to consider the specific stakeholders who drive the social context and the mechanisms of outcome achievement.

While there were significant changes in residents' perceptions of the event showing the city to the world, descriptively the ratings increase leading up to the event, but return to pre-event levels post-event. When compared to the general sport and physical activity objective discussed previously, these findings suggest that when there is no strategic alignment between top-down and bottom-up objectives, the resources available to top-down stakeholders might be enough for a small during-event increase in resident behaviour or opinion, but for the bottom-up level, not enough resources are present to be able to achieve such a shift. Top-down stakeholders might be able to achieve marginal gains on their objectives around the event, while bottom-up stakeholders are more reliant on receiving external resources (Derom et al., 2015). This point emphasizes again the need for top-down stakeholders to collaborate with a variety of bottom-up stakeholders to achieve common goals (i.e. the relationship between the social context and the mechanisms are also important in understanding outcome achievement).

Residents' feelings of excitement towards the event went from indifference pre-event to excited post-event. This might be due to the timing of the event in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 UCI Road World Championships was one of the first spectator sport events to take place in the community since the COVID-19-associated lockdowns. Although the bottom-up stakeholders made specific efforts to help citizens get excited leading up to the event, perhaps the end of the event was symbolic because of the end to health restrictions.

Theoretical contributions

When examining the residents' opinions and behaviours more carefully, Cycling for Groceries, Promoting Leuven to the World, and Excitement are rated lowest by residents during the event, with event lead-up and post-event ratings being much higher in alignment with previous scholars' findings that resident excitement can be highest in the preparation period leading up to the event (Bason & Grix 2018; Weed et al., 2015). The cross-sectional nature of the data could be an explanation for the variation (e.g. those interested in the event could have participated pre/post and a sample more representative of the population could have participated during; see Taks & Teare, 2022). However, this could also suggest that these non-sport outcomes might be stimulated better by initiatives leading up to the event, and might be better sustained post-event, compared to the sport-based objectives that peaked during the event. Event

leveraging has generally been discussed as an approach for any desired outcome in similar terms; the findings from the present study suggest that sport-based and non-sport-based outcomes should be leveraged differently (see Chalip, 2006, 2014). Thus, the mechanisms by which objectives are met might depend on the objectives themselves (i.e. context). In addition, our study indicates that it is not just about the alignment between context, mechanisms, and objectives, as REA suggest, but that the relationships between the top-down and bottom-up stakeholders are equally important to generate meaningful and sustainable outcomes. Therefore, while this paper provides support for the ability to achieve event objectives, it is not automatically guaranteed when there is strategic alignment. Objective achievement seems to require consistent collaboration among stakeholders, which has been proven to be difficult to achieve (Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015; Ziakas, 2019).

Further, the present study provides empirical support for the importance of alignment between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Specifically, emphasis on (1) stakeholders collaborating to plan/develop the leveraging initiative (i.e. planning collaboration); (2) alignment of implementation strategy; and (3) sufficient mutually beneficial resource allocation that allows for the stakeholders to nurture the stimulated behaviour from the event, can produce a 'positive legacy/event impact' over time. Findings show that without this top-down and bottom-up alignment, there are challenges that occur in this 'three phase process'. A lack of top-down support may limit available resources for local organizations to achieve their intended objectives, while no bottom-up buy-in for high-level objectives limits the implementation potential and sustainability of initiatives. Ultimately, meaningful relationships between the top-down and bottom-up stakeholders will enhance collaboration, leveraging planning, implementation, and support of long-term outcomes, and increase the potential to attain some pre-determined outcomes. Moreover, the present study extends notions of objective alignment between stakeholders, and also for strategic stakeholder alignment for each specific event objective.

Practical implications

The results indicate that if there is strategic alignment between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders, events can be used to achieve broader policy objectives. Moreover, the bottom-up objectives were community-centred, while the top-down objectives varied from community-based to tourism-based. Perhaps more can be done from the top-down stakeholders to help the bottom-up stakeholders integrate beyond-community-outcomes into their objectives to help facilitate objective alignment. For instance, in the present study, the only achieved objective was around cycling for transportation, where bottom-up stakeholders demonstrated a clear awareness of and alignment with the top-down stakeholders. This suggests that perhaps stronger communication from top-down stakeholders about the desire to promote cycling-based tourism and any potential benefits for bottom-up stakeholders could have led to stronger objective alignment and subsequent objective achievement. The bottom-up stakeholders could have also communicated their desire to promote local cycling for leisure and general physical activity to work with top-down stakeholders to find compromising initiatives toward a common goal that streamlined the use of resources. For

example, rather than just targeting Leuven residents, the bottom-up stakeholders could have expanded their initiatives to also include residents from surrounding municipalities, which could contribute to the top-down tourism goal. Finally, the top-down stakeholders could have begun with within-country cycling tourism development to help bottom-up stakeholders effectively use resources. Finally, we caution both top-down and bottom-up stakeholders to consider if hosing an event is in fact needed to achieve their objectives, or whether their objectives can be realized through other means (Smith, 2014).

Limitations and future research

Though a longitudinal approach would allow for causal relationships to be identified, the issues of drop-out associated with longitudinal studies is why we have chosen to proceed with a cross-sectional design. Future research can consider longitudinal designs to allow for the identification of causal relationships which may help better understand the potential ebbs and flows of not only the leveraging outcomes, but the antecedents which help stimulate them. Moreover, the present investigation is a case study of one single event in one city. Future research would benefit from considering other events that vary in size and scope, with different objectives sought, and different geographic and social contexts.

Many organizations that leveraged the sport event were sport-related or community-related, while local businesses were not well-represented. This could be a product of the timing with the COVID-19 pandemic and additional strains on local businesses, and thus less time to participate in research, and also perhaps less resources to be able to engage in event leveraging. Finally, we suggest conducting participatory or collaborative research projects alongside top-down and bottom-up stakeholders from cities considering bidding events. In doing so, researchers may help establish evidence-informed and meaningful strategic alignment for event objectives, and evaluation strategies for the implemented leveraging initiatives. It is imperative that this is done in a meaningful way with stakeholders who have mutual values, timelines, and resources to offer the leveraging initiative. Ultimately, knowing that top-down and bottom-up alignment, and alignment of stakeholders, is integral to setting leveraging initiatives up for success, all future leveraging research should consider both approaches, as this will provide important insight into why objectives may or may not be achieved.

Conclusion

In exploring the objective alignment between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders on objective achievement for the 2021 UCI Road World Championships, we found that the one objective that was closely aligned between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders was achieved among resident behaviours. The remaining objectives, however, were not well aligned, and therefore were not met as indicated through resident opinion and behaviour. These findings provide empirical support for previously conceptual notions that aligned top-down and bottom-up strategies to event leveraging are an important step when striving for desired outcomes (Chalip et al., 2017; Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015). We advocate for future collaborative research with cities that are considering bidding for these one-off events to help facilitate strategic alignment between top-down and bottom-up stakeholders, and fostering relationships.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Jordan T. Bakhsh http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7658-4020
Kobe Helsen http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1114-4451
Marijke Taks http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5186-8537

References

Agha, N., & Taks, M. (2015). A theoretical comparison of the economic impact of large and small events. *International Journal of Sport Finance*, *10*(3), 199–216.

Annear, M. J., Shimizu, Y., & Kidokoro, T. (2019). Sports mega-event legacies and adult physical activity: A systematic literature review and research agenda. *European Journal of Sport Science*, *19*(5), 671–685. https://doi.org/10.1080/17461391.2018.1554002

Bakhsh, J. T., & Potwarka, L. R. (2020). Leveraging long-term sport participation from major events: The case of track cycling after the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, *25*(6), 457–472. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1727767

Bakhsh, J. T., Potwarka, L. R., Naraine, M. L., & Wear, H. (2023). Reconceptualizing a model of demonstration effects: Integrating rational, affective, and behavioral constructs. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *23*(3), 745–766. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2021.1927132

Bakhsh, J. T., Potwarka, L. R., & Snelgrove, R. (2020). Are "youth days" effective at motivating new sport participation? Evidence from a pre-post event research design. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *11*(1), 89–104. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-03-2019-0019

Balduck, A.-L., Maes, M., & Buelens, M. (2011). The social impact of the Tour de France: Comparisons of residents' pre- and post-event perceptions. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *11*(2), 91–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2011.559134

Bason, T., & Grix, J. (2018). Planning to fail? leveraging the Olympic bid. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, *36*, 138–151.

Bell, B., & Daniels, J. (2018). Sport development in challenging times: Leverage of sport events for legacy in disadvantaged communities. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, *23*(4–6), 369–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2018.1563497

Boardley, I. D. (2013). Can viewing London 2012 influence sport participation? – a viewpoint based on relevant theory. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, *5*(2), 245–256. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2012.671185

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brown, C., & Pappous, A. (Sakis) (2018). "The legacy element … . It Just Felt More Woolly": Exploring the reasons for the decline in people with disabilities' sport participation in England 5 years after the London 2012 Paralympic Games. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *42*(5), 343–368.

Chalip, L. (2006). Towards social leverage of sport events. *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, *11*(2), 109–127. https://doi.org/10.1080/14775080601155126

Chalip, L. (2014). From legacies to leverage. In J. Grix (Ed.), *Leveraging legacies from sports mega-events: Concepts and cases* (pp. 2–12). Palgrave Pivot.

Chalip, L., Green, B. C., Taks, M., & Misener, L. (2017). Creating sport participation from sport events: Making it happen. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, *9*(2), 257–276. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2016.1257496

Charlton, T. (2010). 'Grow and Sustain': The role of community sports provision in promoting a participation legacy for the 2012 Olympic Games. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, *2*(3), 347–366. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2010.519340

Chen, K.-C., Gursoy, D., & Lau, K. L. K. (2018). Longitudinal impacts of a recurring sport event on local residents with different level of event involvement. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *28*, 228–238. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2018.09.005

Chen, S., & Henry, I. (2016). Evaluating the London 2012 Games' impact on sport participation in a non-hosting region: A practical application of realist evaluation. *Leisure Studies*, *35*(5), 685–707. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2015.1040827

City of Leuven. (2019). *Over Leuven. Over de stad* [About Leuven. About the city]. https://www.leuven.be/over-leuven;webpage accessed on September 9 2019

City of Leuven. (2020). *Beleid* [Policy]. https://www.leuven.be/beleid;webpage accessed on January 24 2020

City of Leuven. (2021). *Bondgenotenlaan verkeersvrij op zaterdag* [Bondgenotenlaan traffic free on Saturday]. https://www.leuven.be/bondgenotenlaan-verkeersvrij;webpage accessed on May 6 2021

Collins, P., Mulligan, E., & Cawley, M. (2018). Business impacts of event hosting: Evidence from the Volvo ocean race finale in Galway 2012. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *9*(3), 297–315. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-07-2017-0042

Derom, I., & VanWynsberghe, R. (2015a). Extending the benefits of leveraging cycling events: Evidence from the Tour of Flanders. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *15*(1), 111–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.997772

Derom, I., VanWynsberghe, R., & Scheerder, J. (2015b). Maintaining physical activity post-event? Case of the tour of Flanders Cyclo in Belgium. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *18*(1), 25–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2014.932699

Duan, Y., Mastromartino, B., Nauright, J., Zhang, J. J., & Liu, B. (2021). How do perceptions of non-mega sport events impact quality of life and support for the event among local residents? *Sport in Society*, *24*(10), 1742–1762. https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2021.1916247

Gammon, S. (2012). Sports events: Typologies, people and place. In S. J. Page & J. Connell (Eds.), *In The Routledge handbook of events* (2nd ed., pp. 102–134). Routledge.

Girginov, V., Peshin, N., & Belousov, L. (2017). Leveraging mega events for capacity building in voluntary sport organisations. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, *28*(5), 2081–2102. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9825-x

Hayday, E. J., Pappous, A. (Sakis), & Koutrou, N. (2019). The role of voluntary sport organisations in leveraging the London 2012 sport participation legacy. *Leisure Studies*, *38*(6), 746–761. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2019.1662829

Helsen, K., & Scheerder, J. (2022b). *Onderzoek naar lokale effecten van Leuven Europese Sportstad en WK wielrennen. Resultaten van de gesprekken bij organisaties (deel 5) [Research into the local effects of Leuven European Sport City and the World Cycling Championships. Results of the interviews with organizations (part 5)]*. (Sport policy & management studies 117). KU Leuven/Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group. https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000737/research/policy-in-sports-physical-activity-research-group/bms-studies/studies/bms117-2.pdf

Helsen, K., Scheerder, J., & with cooperation of Taks, M. (2022a). *Onderzoek naar lokale effecten van Leuven Europese Sportstad en WK wielrennen. Resultaten van het online onderzoek bij inwoners (deel 2) [Research into the local effects of Leuven European Sport City and the World Cycling Championships. Results of the online survey among residents (part 2)]*. (Sport policy & management studies 114). KU Leuven/Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group. https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000737/research/policy-in-sports-physical-activity-research-group/bms-studies/studies/bms114.pdf

Helsen, K., Scheerder, J., & with cooperation of Thibaut, E. (2021). *De sportieve fietser in kaart gebracht. Leuvense Fietssport Studie 2.0 (LFS2.0): een typologie van fietssporters in Vlaanderen [Mapping the sporty cyclist. Leuven Cycling Study 2.0 (LFS2.0): A typology of cyclists in Flanders]*. (Policy & management in sport studies 109). KU Leuven/Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group. https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000737/research/policy-in-sports-physical-activity-research-group/bms-studies/studies/bms109-2.pdf

Hoskyn, K., Dickson, G., & Sotiriadou, P. (2018). Leveraging medium-sized sport events to attract club participants. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, *36*(2), 199–212. https://gbiomed.kuleuven.

be/english/research/50000737/research/policy-in-sports-physical-activity-research-group/ops-studies/ops-fs2-scheerderthibaut-sportparticipatie-sgm.pdf.
Johnston, M., Naylor, M., Dickson, G., Hedlund, D., & Kellison, T. (2021). Determinants of support and participation in a major sport event referendum. *Sport Management Review*, *24* (1), 134–155. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2020.08.001
Kaplanidou, K. (Kiki), Karadakis, K., Gibson, H., Thapa, B., Walker, M., Geldenhuys, S., & Coetzee, W. (2013). Quality of life, event impacts, and mega-event support among South African residents before and after the 2010 FIFA world Cup. *Journal of Travel Research*, *52* (5), 631–645. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513478501
Karadakis, K., & Kaplanidou, K. (2012). Legacy perceptions among host and non-host Olympic Games residents: A longitudinal study of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *12*(3), 243–264. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2012.680067
Kirby, S. I., Duignan, M. B., & McGillivray, D. (2018). Mega-Sport events, micro and small business leveraging: Introducing the "MSE–MSB leverage model". *Event Management*, *22*(6), 917–931. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599518X15346132863184
Liu, D., Broom, D., & Wilson, R. (2014). Legacy of the Beijing Olympic Games: A non-host city perspective. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *14*(5), 485–502. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.947301
LOC Flanders 2021. (n.d.). *Bid book: Flanders 2021*. 2021/Event Flanders.
Lovett, E., & Bloyce, D. (2017). What happened to the legacy from London 2012? A sociological analysis of the processes involved in preparing for a grassroots sporting legacy from London 2012 outside of the host city. *Sport in Society*, *20*(11), 1625–1643. https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2017.1284813
Macrae, E. H. R. (2017). Delivering sports participation legacies at the grassroots level: The voluntary sports clubs of Glasgow 2014. *Journal of Sport Management*, *31*(1), 15–26. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2016-0089
Misener, L. (2015). Leveraging parasport events for community participation: Development of a theoretical framework. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *15*(1), 132–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.997773
Misener, L., Taks, M., Chalip, L., & Green, B. C. (2015). The elusive "trickle-down effect" of sport events: Assumptions and missed opportunities. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, *20*(2), 135–156. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2015.1010278
Oshimi, D., Taks, M., & Agha, N. (2023). Social impact of events: Advancing insights on social impact scales. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *23*(0), 1843–1862. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2022.2076891
Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. John Wiley.
Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic evaluation*. SAGE.
Pereira, E., Mascarenhas, M., Flores, A., Chalip, L., & Pires, G. (2020). Strategic leveraging: Evidences of small-scale sport events. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *11*(1), 69–88. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-07-2018-0046
Pereira, E. C. S., Mascarenhas, M. V. M., Flores, A. J. G., & Pires, G. M. V. S. (2015). Nautical small-scale sports events portfolio: A strategic leveraging approach. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *15*(1), 27–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2015.1007883
Potwarka, L. R., Drewery, D., Snelgrove, R., Havitz, M. E., & Mair, H. (2018). Modeling a demonstration effect: The case of spectators' experiences at 2015 Pan Am Games' track cycling competitions. *Leisure Sciences*, *40*(6), 578–600. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2017.1325796.
Potwarka, L. R., & Leatherdale, S. T. (2016). The Vancouver 2010 Olympics and leisure-time physical activity rates among youth in Canada: Any evidence of a trickle-down effect? *Leisure Studies*, *35*(2), 241–257. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2015.1040826
Potwarka, L. R., Snelgrove, R., Drewery, D., Bakhsh, J., & Wood, L. (2020). From intention to participation: Exploring the moderating role of a voucher-based event leveraging initiative. *Sport Management Review*, *23*(2), 302–314. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2019.03.002

Potwarka, L. R., & Wicker, P. (2021). Conditions under which trickle-down effects occur: A realist synthesis approach. *Sustainability*, *13*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010069

Ribeiro, T., Calapez, A., & Cunha de Almeida, V. M. (2022). Does the Olympic legacy and sport participation influence resident support for future events? *Leisure Studies*, *41*(4), 471–486. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2021.2011951

Scheerder, J., & Helsen, K. (2022). *Onderzoek naar lokale effecten van Leuven Europese Sportstad en WK wielrennen. Kader en opzet van het onderzoek (deel 1)* [Research into the local effects of Leuven European Sports City and World Cycling Championships. Framework and design of the study (part 1)]. (Sport policy & management studies 113). KU Leuven/ Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group. https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000737/research/policy-in-sports-physical-activity-research-group/bms-studies/studies/bms113.pdf

Scheerder, J., Lagae, W., & Boen, F. (Eds). (2011). *Vlaanderen fietst! Sociaalwetenschappelijk onderzoek naar de fietssportmarkt* [Cycling in Flanders. Social research on the cycling industry]. (Social Scientific Research Into Physical Activity & Sport Series 3) Academia Press.

Scheerder, J., & Thibaut, E. (2021). *Studie over de Bewegingsactiviteiten in Vlaanderen (SBV) 1969-2019. Een halve eeuw sportparticipatie in cijfers* [Study on physical activity in Flanders (SBV) 1969-2019. Half a century of sports participation in figures]. (Policy & Management in Sport Studies 100). KU Leuven/Policy in Sports & Physical Activity Research Group. https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000737/research/policy-in-sports-physical-activity-research-group/bms-studies/studies/bms100-finaal.pdf

Scheerder, J., Vos, S., Pabian, S., De Martelaer, K., Lefevre, J., & Philippaerts, R. (2011). Actieve vrijetijdssport in Vlaanderen. Trends, profielen en settings [Active leisure-time sports participation in Flanders. Trends, profiles and organizational settings]. In J. Lievens & H. Waege (Eds.), *Participatie in Vlaanderen 2. Eerste analyses van de Participatie survey 2009* [Participation behaviour in Flanders 2. First analyses based on the Participation Survey 2009] (pp. 43–82). Acco Academic.

Schulenkorf, N., Welty Peachey, J., Chen, G., & Hergesell, A. (2022). Event leverage: A systematic literature review and new research agenda. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2022.2160477.

Shank, M. D., & Beasley, F. M. (1998). Fan or fanatic: Refining a measure of sports involvement. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, *21*(4), 435–435.

Smith, A. (2014). Leveraging sport mega-events: New model or convenient justification? *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, *6*(1), 15–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2013.823976

Taks, M. (2013). Social sustainability of non-mega sport events in a global world 1. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, *10*(2), 121–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2013.11687915

Taks, M., Green, B. C., Misener, L., & Chalip, L. (2014). Evaluating sport development outcomes: The case of a medium-sized international sport event. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *14*(3), 213–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.882370

Taks, M., Green, B. C., Misener, L., & Chalip, L. (2018). Sport participation from sport events: Why it doesn't happen? *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, *36*(2), 185–198. https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-05-2017-0091

Taks, M., & Teare, G. (2022). Linking sport events with sport participation and development. In R. Baker (Ed.), *Sport for development and peace* (pp. 141–157). Rowman Littlefield. https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/43378/1/2022_Taks%20and%20Teare_Linking%20Sport%20Events%20with%20Sport%20Participation%20and%20Development.pdf

Teare, G., Potwarka, L. R., Bakhsh, J. T., Barrick, S. J., & Kaczynski, A. T. (2021). Hosting the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games and wellbeing among Canadian youth. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *21*(5), 636–657. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2021.1942124

Teare, G., Potwarka, L. R., Wigfield, D., & Chard, C. (2022). Here today, gone tomorrow: Experiences of youth who responded to an event leveraging initiative. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, *0*(0), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2022.2092538

Teare, G., & Taks, M. (2021). Sport events for sport participation: A scoping review. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, *3*, 107. https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2021.655579

Thibaut, E. & Scheerder, J., with cooperation of Derom, I. & Willem, A. (2022). *Sportparticipatie in Vlaanderen gemeten. Analyses op basis van de Stads- & Gemeentemonitor (SGM)* [Sports participation in Flanders measured. Analyses based on the City & Municipal Monitor data] (OPS Factsheet 2). Leuven/Brussels/Ghent: Interuniversity Policy Research Centre on Sports.

UCI. (2021). *Events*. Flanders 2021. https://www.flanders2021.com/en/EVENTS

Weed, M., Coren, E., Fiore, J., Wellard, I., Chatziefstathiou, D., Mansfield, L., & Dowse, S. (2015). The Olympic Games and raising sport participation: A systematic review of evidence and an interrogation of policy for a demonstration effect. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *15* (2), 195–226. https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.998695

Wood, L., Snelgrove, R., Legg, J., Taks, M., & Potwarka, L. R. (2018). Perspectives of event leveraging by restaurants and city officials. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, *9* (1), 34–50. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-01-2017-0003

Ziakas, V. (2019). Issues, patterns and strategies in the development of event portfolios: Configuring models, design and policy. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, *11*(1), 121–158. https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2018.1471481