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Leveraging parasport events for sustainable community participation: The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games

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Drawing on a case study of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, this article examines the extent to which the hosting of an integrated parasport event where able-bodied athletes and athletes with a disability compete alongside one another is being leveraged to create opportunities for community participation, and influence community attitudes towards disability. The assumption about hosting parasport events is that the mere visibility of events will impact attitudes and perceptions towards persons with disabilities in a positive manner; however, little evidence beyond anecdotes supports this assumption. Recent research on leveraging events also suggests the need to strategically utilize the opportunity of the event and related resources if seeking to attain sustainable positive impacts for the host community [Chalip, L. 2006. "Towards Social Leverage of Sport Events." *Journal of Sport & Tourism* 11 (2): 109–127. doi:10.1080/14775080601155126]. Empirically, this article draws on extensive data collection undertaken before, during and after the 2014 Commonwealth Games, specifically an analysis of policy and legacy planning documents and strategic interviews conducted pre-Games examining the tactics, strategies and programmes used by stakeholders to enhance community participation opportunities. The results suggest that whilst at the strategic level there was evidence of an integrated policy approach to leveraging the event for broader accessibility outcomes, this was not always accompanied by clear programmes or projects that are likely to lead to demonstrable impacts beyond the normal temporality of large-scale sporting events. We conclude by suggesting that the absence of clear, resourced and measurable aspirations for the parasport element of the Games may lead to unfulfilled leveraging possibilities as levels of interest and resources diminish.

Keywords: Commonwealth Games; leveraging; parasport; disability sport; critical disability theory

Introduction

Cities around the world have long sought to host sporting events as drivers of economic, tourism and capital development. The attempts by politicians to use leisure related events to remake, rebrand and reimage cities with mega-events, cultural industries and the related tourist attractions (Misener and Mason 2008; Bramham and Spink 2009; Grix 2012) have become a widely studied phenomenon in leisure studies. In fact, beyond just simply researching the outcomes of such events, leisure scholars

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have embraced the sociological turn to examine events from the perspective of social change (Foley, McGillivray, and McPherson 2011). In other words, rather than merely critically examining the positive and negative impacts associated with events, research attention has moved to consider the ways in which events, alongside other development-related tools of marketing and city promotion, can be used to facilitate opportunities to participate more fully in civic life. It is from this perspective that we approach this research article. We focus on an under-studied area of event research, disability sport events, to examine the ways in which these events are being utilized to influence broader community and society-level social change. In particular, our interest lies in understanding if and how large-scale sporting events can be and are being used to develop more accessible infrastructure and positively influence attitudes towards persons with disability in order to understand the value of disability sport events for social change. This paper draws upon empirical data gathered as part of a comparative study of the social legacy of large-scale sporting events examining differences between integrated (all sport events occur in the same time and space) and non-integrated (disability events are separated by time and space) parasport events. This research, which is ongoing until 2016, addresses three principal areas: (i) Programmes, tactics, and strategies used by the host organizations to create more opportunities for persons with a disability to participate in cultural and leisure activities; (ii) Differences in leveraging tactics for integrated and non-integrated events; and (iii) The influence of the event(s) on spectators/attendees, volunteer, and community members' attitudes towards persons with a disability. For this paper, we focus on the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, an integrated event where parasports are part of the main sporting programme, to critically examine the programmes, strategies and tactics implemented to leverage the event to influence community participation.

Legacy to leverage: strategic integration

Extensive research has been conducted exploring the immediate impacts of hosting large-scale sporting events on host cities and regions (e.g. Hall 1987; Ritchie 2004; Preuss 2005); however, more recently researchers have begun to focus on the long-term impacts of these events (e.g. Smith and Fox 2007; Solberg and Preuss 2007; Dickson, Benson, and Blackman 2011; Foley, McGillivray, and McPherson 2011). This has become commonly referred to as event legacies. Much of this so-called legacy research has focussed primarily on large-scale sporting events such as the Olympic Games, with a strong emphasis on economic impacts. Yet, many critical scholars have suggested that the practices surrounding the use of large-scale sporting events for civic and economic development hold little value for local communities and local development activities (Horne and Manzenreiter 2006; Hiller and Wanner 2011). As a result, there is a growing demand from governments, citizens and sport organizations to show how these events can also positively impact broader social outcomes such as empowering disadvantaged groups, enhancing local community infrastructure, and increasing community and sport participation (Jones 2001; Cashman 2006; Gratton and Preuss 2008; Misener and Mason 2008; Carey, Mason, and Misener 2011; Misener 2012; Taks et al. 2013). Hence, the emphasis of legacy programmes has shifted to sustainable social legacies of events that emphasize broader community benefits.

Over recent years, the moniker *leverage* has entered the large-scale sporting event body of knowledge, associated most strongly with the work of Chalip (2004, 2006) and

O'Brien (2006). Chalip (2006) calls for a more complex and nuanced approach to event planning where 'strategies and tactics are implemented prior to and during an event to lever desired outcomes' (112), rather than relying on ex-post perspectives evaluating events according to the direct impacts that they supposedly generate. Grix's (2014) recent edited collection on event leverage emphasizes the shift in the ways in which existing resources can be tied into event-related activities to develop strategic, community-based outcomes. In essence, similar to the idea of activation in a marketing context, where beyond just presenting the idea and hoping that consumers will buy into the concept, it is about ensuring a tactical connection that instils an emotive response from consumers (Grix 2012; Taks et al. 2014). In a similar vein, Schulenkorf (2010) has suggested that the emergence of leveraging is concerned with 'a focus on growing positive impacts beyond event borders, and "making things happen", rather than leaving them to chance' (120). This focus on making things happen addresses some of the criticism of legacy discourses, where the event itself is the centrepiece and outcomes beyond the sporting competition are rarely resourced or evaluated. For an event to be leveraged effectively, there needs to be evidence of pre-planning around desired outcomes, resourcing of specific programmes or projects and less reliance on the event itself as central to the achievement of these outcomes. As O'Brien (2006, 258) has put it, the events are just the 'seed capital' but hosts need to engage in other forms of positive action to make that capital work for them if they are to realize longer term legacies.

Smith (2014) has recently added to the theoretical discussion on the value of event leveraging to question whether it represents a marked change in direction or simply reflects a public relations tool to deflect criticism from the failures of those responsible for legacy. Building on his work on event-led or event-themed approaches (Smith and Fox 2007), he proposes that event-*themed* leverage offers a more effective strategy for hosts going forward because there is less reliance on the requirements of the event (event-*led* approach) which are often determined by others, including the Organising Committee (OC) 'that do not have a long-term stake in the host city' (Smith 2014, 18). Smith argues that event-led approaches tend to be top-down, driven initially by sanctioning bodies and event organizers and, as a result, their ability to optimize event outcomes is already compromised by being framed by agencies external to the host city. The value of event-themed approaches is that they should enable a model based on local ownership and empowerment to be embedded alongside the event project itself. Of course, to be effective, themes must be built into planning from the bid stage onwards and be sustained (and resourced) across a significant temporal period, which can often be compromised by changes in political leadership in the host city and within the organizing team. Nevertheless, by starting with this intention in mind, leveraging could 'become the "model" for the strategic use of the event, rather than merely supplementing a traditional top-down/impact-led/trickle down approach' (Smith 2014, 20). Most commentators on event leverage agree that to be effective, wider host city ambitions need to be evident in strategic planning, not just in terms of the spectacle of the event (though that remains important for place promotion) but also in the alignment of outcomes with existing and future policy initiatives.

Schulenkorf and Adair (2013), drawing on the Sport for Development (S4D) literature, provide some useful advice on how to strike the balance between leveraging outcomes outside of the event and exploiting the event to garner attention from funders, the media and other stakeholders without suffering from the 'temporal limits and hangover effects' (Smith 2014, 23) often associated with leveraging

initiatives. Smith argues for the importance of the 'S4D pulse', where highlight events (large-scale sporting 'extravaganzas') integrate with everyday programmes to create a balance of heightened excitement and appeal (the spectacle) alongside ongoing systematic and resourced delivery. The focus here is on the relationship between the one-off event and ongoing programmes, whether sport, health or education-focused.

Recently, there has been some discussion about leveraging parasport events to create durable outcomes for the local disabled population (Dickson, Benson, and Blackman 2011; Misener et al. 2013; Misener 2015). This research suggests that hosting sporting events may offer an opportunity to access scarce resources to create more accessible facilities and transportation networks, increase accessible programming, and gain access to specialized equipment needed to address inequalities (e.g. Preuss 2007; Cashman and Darcy 2008; Dickson et al. 2011). However, little is still known about the strategies employed by host committees in order to utilize the opportunity of events for the local disabled population. It is at this intersection that we are specifically interested in exploring the extent to which a large-scale parasport event can be utilized in leveraging social outcomes for persons with disabilities.

Sport events and critical disability theory

To frame this study of the social legacy of large-scale sporting events and in particular examining differences between integrated versus non-integrated event outcomes, a conceptual framework based on critical disability theory (CDT) has been developed. The disability community is one of the largest minority groups vulnerable to social exclusion and marginalization, too often forced into poverty, unemployment and social isolation through dependence on the state (Chadwick 1996). This is often the result of systemic discrimination based on ableist assumptions, institutions and structures that disadvantage persons with a disability (Clear 1999). The predominant understanding of disability as an objective scientific construct presupposes that the disability or impairment is purely within the individual and can objectively be measured or cured through medical intervention. However, a more nuanced understanding is that disability is socially constructed in relation to broader societal structures. In other words, social and environmental barriers, such as inaccessible buildings and transport, discriminatory attitudes, and negative cultural stereotypes, are 'disabling' people with impairments (Barnes 2003; Barnes and Mercer 2005). Persons with disabilities may experience functional limitations that non-disabled persons do not experience, but the biggest challenge comes from mainstream society's unwillingness to adapt, transform, and even abandon its 'normal' way of doing things. This so-called 'normal' way of functioning emphasizes an ableist understanding of social structures (Clear 1999). Critical disability theorists argue that this social model of disability, which frames disability as a complex political and social creation based on barriers, prejudice and exclusion created by society (purposely or inadvertently) are the ultimate factors defining disability (e.g. Chadwick 1996; Barnes and Mercer 2005; Devlin and Pothier 2006). Through the removal of these barriers, people with a disability may gain more complete access to community life. This is the most challenging change that needs to take place – both within political and policy circles and in people's attitudes.

In terms of interrogating the social structures that present barriers to full inclusion in community life, there are four areas of emphasis for critical disability theory:

(1) *Attitudes*, reflecting on the notion that a more positive attitude towards traits or behaviours, or not underestimating the potential quality of life of those with impairments enhances opportunity; (2) *Social support*, which is about ensuring the resources, aids or positive discrimination, is used to enable access; (3) *Information in terms of* using suitable formats (e.g. braille) or levels (e.g. simplicity of language) or coverage (e.g. explaining issues others may take for granted); and (4) *Physical structures which emphasize* Universal Design principles, ensuring broad levels of accessibility in physical spaces. The particular areas of emphasis provide a powerful mechanism for addressing inequality and the broader social processes that enhance quality of life (Devlin and Pothier 2006). A critical disability theory lens which focuses on removal of barriers to social inclusion offers a conceptually coherent means of exploring exclusionary social structures and examining the ways in which large-scale sport events are being used to devolve those structures to allow for greater levels of community participation of persons with a disability. It also allows for increased theorization on critical disability theory as being advanced by numerous scholars in the field of sport and disability (e.g. DePauw 2000; DePauw and Gavron 2005; Le Clair 2011; Purdue and Howe 2012).

Research context

Since the hosting of the first Stoke Mandeville Games in 1952, the Olympic and Paralympic Games have evolved along parallel tracks (Legg and Gilbert 2011). Starting in Rome, the Paralympic Games have always taken place after the Olympic Games; and only since 1988 in Seoul have they have been held in the same host city. Starting in 1989, the newly founded International Paralympic Committee (IPC) began to lobby for the full inclusion of athletes with a disability by using a directed, formalized and strategic approach organized through the work of a newly created Commission for the Inclusion of Athletes with Disabilities (CIAD) (Legg and Gilbert 2011). During the 1990s, CIAD played a central and successful strategic role in lobbying the 1994 Commonwealth Games held in Victoria, Canada to grant events for athletes with a disability with full medal status. The Commonwealth Games Federation and the IPC have now established a list of core sports for Elite Athletes with a Disability (EAD). In the Commonwealth Games, cities must include EAD events across four core sports. They can then include events from up to an additional three listed optional sports but not exceeding 15 events, which must be fully integrated into the overall sports programme (Commonwealth Games Federation 2014). Medals won at events in the Commonwealth Games (unlike in the Olympics) are included in the national tally and athletes with a disability are recognized as full team members. The practice of inclusion for athletes with a disability has been enshrined since 2002 in Manchester and continued in Melbourne (2006) and Delhi (2010). The 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow included five sports for athletes with a disability (parasports) and the most ever medal events for athletes with a disability (n = 22). However, although it is now accepted that equal recognition as team members is enshrined at the elite level within the Commonwealth Games, that represents only one step towards the inclusion of persons with a disability at all levels of sport, education and other aspects of community life.

While Article 30 of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability states that persons with disabilities should have the right to participate on an equal basis in community life including recreational, leisure and sporting activities

(UN 2006), there remain significant barriers, including the need for assistance, inaccessible facilities and transportation, the need for specialized equipment, and community attitudinal misperceptions about disability (HRSDC 2010; WHO 2011). It has been argued that effective leveraging of large-scale sporting events can offer an opportunity to access scarce resources to create more accessible infrastructure (e.g. sport and recreation facilities, transportation), increase supportive services (i.e. coaching, volunteers, programmes), gain access to specialized equipment, and potentially change attitudes about disability (Misener and Darcy 2014). However, a research synthesis completed by Misener et al. (2013) assessing previous research on Paralympic Games found that, whilst there is some limited non-empirical Paralympic legacy-based research focused on sport development, infrastructure, social capital and attitude change, event leverage considerations were completely absent within the Paralympic Games context. This dearth of research in the Paralympic context is mirrored in the Commonwealth Games and it is this gap that our research seeks to address.

Method

Given the theoretical underpinning of critical disability theory for the study on which this paper is based, our perspective is primarily inductive and multi-relational. We are centrally interested in the ways in which the Commonwealth Games, an integrated event, is being leveraged to influence community participation. We critically reflect on the leveraging strategies and tactics through the lens of critical disability theory. Given that this study is part of a larger project on leveraging of parasport events, we employed a multiple case replication design (Yin 2008) based on an interpretive exploratory case-study approach that allows for the evolution and refocusing of questions and objectives as the project evolves. For this article, of the six sources of evidence suggested for case studies (Yin 2008), we draw upon three main sources of data – documentation and physical artefacts, strategic interviews and direct observations pertaining to the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

Documentation and physical artefacts including websites, brochures, planning documents, print media, and event reports, were collected, collated and content analysed to identify programmes, tactics, and strategies for leveraging the event, and to examine intentional and unintentional attempts to use the events for broader social and accessibility interests (see Table 1 for examples). In addition, the analysis of official, publicly available documentation informed the selection process for subsequent strategic interviews held with Games stakeholders.

Fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with strategic personnel involved in the planning, organizing and staging of the 2014 Commonwealth Games and related legacy programmes. Interviews were carried out using descriptive, structural, and taxonomic questions based on the aforementioned critical disability studies' conceptual framework (Spradley 1979). This format allowed for flexibility in question design and probes, which helped to elicit greater detail about known legacy programmes and tactics, the effect of these tactics and the potential opportunities to leverage future events. Probes were used to explore (i) tactics or reasons for (not) implementing any leveraging activities; (ii) if tactics were applied, how and why particular strategies were chosen, and; (iii) why those tactics do or do not seem to be effective. All interviewees consented to the use of their names and official positions; however, we have made their positions more generic for the purpose of the

Table 1. Examples of documentation and physical artefacts.

Type of evidence	Document example	Author(s)/ organization
Websites	http://www.glasgow2014.com/ http://www.legacy2014.scot/	Glasgow 2014 Scottish Government
Planning documents	Glasgow City Council Legacy Framework Doing Sports Differently Key Principles for the Scottish Government's Legacy Tickets for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games	Glasgow City Council Disability Rights UK Glasgow 2014
Print media	Commonwealth Games pinnacle of inclusion but legacy under threat Glasgow 2014: Commonwealth Games legacy must be secured	Vitalise BBC News
Event reports	Commonwealth Games Official Post-Games Report An Evaluation of the Commonwealth Game Legacy: Pre-Games Report	Glasgow 2014 Scottish Government

paper, although many could still be readily identified by those in the field. Interviews were undertaken prior to the event, from January to June 2014.

The final method of data collection was naturalistic observation, which enabled the researchers to gain insights into the spectator and visitor experience as it related to disability and disability sport, and more specifically, those integrated into the Games themselves. The authors secured access to all five Games venues where parasport events were taking place and to the three Live Zones hosted by the city to accommodate residents and visitors without tickets to official venues. Each researcher used a template drawn from the critical disability theoretical framework to guide observations. The first series of observations focused on the general level of physical accessibility features in and around venues and transport networks. A second strand of observations focused on competition and spectator information available in venues. Consideration was given to whether the classification system used for parasport was explained and the extent to which spectators were interested in the parasport events, particularly at integrated event venues where both events for able bodied and disabled occurred.

All documents, interviews, and observation notes were critically analysed using an approach similar to Altheide's (1996) ethnographic content analysis. This analysis involved being systematic but not rigid, oriented towards constant discovery and comparison among emergent categories and themes. Initially, two members of the research team independently coded the documents resulting in 198 different codes. Another member of the research team, who had been intimately involved in the interviews and policy analysis, then scrutinized the codes to develop 11 meta-themes that guided the further document and policy analysis. This approach was utilized due to the volume of data collected for the overall project and efficiency to ensure a well-rounded coding process. With the help of Nvivo 10, searches were then performed with all documents and policies using the meta-themes and sub-categories to further explore the critical disability theoretical framing of legacy.

Findings

The results demonstrate that organizers of the 2014 Commonwealth Games were certainly attentive to the agenda of accessibility and inclusion. The approach taken to the Games meant that integration of all elements, including the leveraging strategies, was critical for the central approach. In terms of the four central areas of focus for critical disability theory – attitudes, social support, information and physical space – strategies were directed at each of these areas, although in limited capacity. Table 2 summarizes the findings of the study in relation to each of the four areas of CDT. Herein, we highlight these findings around the themes of 'Games Promise', 'Games Governance and Delivery' and 'Presumptions and Missed Opportunities'.

The games promise

The organizers of the 2014 Commonwealth Games were forthright in expressing the view that the Games provided a model for future hosts to follow with respect to legacy. The integrated and inclusive planning models were a way to focus on positive perspectives of people with disabilities and potentially positively influence attitudes. From the host city perspective, the local authority, Glasgow City Council, established a discrete Legacy Framework, as did the Scottish Government, the main funder of the Games. The local OC, Glasgow 2014 Ltd (G2014 Ltd), also appointed a Head of Engagement and Legacy, one of the first OCs to embed such a role in its organizing committee structure. This role incorporated political engagement, aligning the work of the OC with the aspirations of the Scottish Parliament and Glasgow City Council, stakeholder management working with a large range of organizations to ensure that opportunities from the Games were maximized and, finally, the OC's alignment with the local and national legacy frameworks. Theoretically, and operationally, the 2014 Commonwealth Games organizers and their main stakeholders appeared well attuned to the main tenets of leverage. As the CEO of G2014 Ltd suggested 'legacy does not happen to you, it happens by you':

Table 2. Results in relation to critical disability theory

Critical disability focus	Glasgow2014 strategy
Attitudes	Media representation of parasports and athletes
	Integrated marketing initiatives
	Integrated and inclusive planning models
	Onsite information about parasport classification
	Integrated competitions
Social support	Volunteer training
	Accessibility team
	Educational programming (Host City Volunteer Program; Physical Education Teaching Training)
Information	Signage
	LEXI Classification
Physical space	High levels of accessibility
	1.5x IPC standards of accessible sporting areas
	Sustained refurbishment of accessible spaces

> The legacy frameworks that were established were very firm and established and owned which is not always the case. There was clear ownership on a local level and clear ownership on a national level of these frameworks, which is pretty courageous. (CEO, G2014 Ltd)

The strategic imperative to optimize local and national outcomes and maximize local ownership (event-themed approach) meant that the OC had a greater responsibility for legacy built into its *modus operandi* than had been common in previous similar large-scale sporting events. As the Head of Engagement and Legacy suggested, 'what we tried to do … is within the framework find opportunities for all the agencies to align their particular interests and ways in which we can work cooperatively to maximise the potential for outcomes from the Games' (Head of Engagement and Legacy, G2014 Ltd). In a wide range of economic, social and cultural spheres (e.g. employability and skills, education, business, cultural activity), stakeholders worked alongside the OC to ensure that its activities were aligned with the overlapping longer term objectives enshrined in the Legacy Frameworks. Glasgow City Council had three underpinning principles (health, inclusion, sustainability) and six legacy themes (Prosperous, Active, International, Greener, Accessible, and Inclusive) whilst the Scottish Government had four main legacy themes (Flourishing, Active, Connecting and Sustainable). The Scottish Government also made use of the language of leverage in its pre-Games report, suggesting that:

> The legacy programmes include both the scaling up and/or expansion of existing policies and programmes, alongside some new programmes specifically developed and launched for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Some policy areas in Scotland have used the Games as a 'catalyst', or 'mobiliser' for policy aims that were being pursued. (Scottish Government 2014, 10)

There were some examples of legacy projects that linked the highlight event opportunity with the promotion of wider inclusion agendas, at least in the policy discourses. In Glasgow, the Host City Volunteer programme supported volunteers from parts of the community least likely to take up volunteer opportunities as part of a 3-year project. One hundred and twenty persons with a disability joined the programme and were in receipt of ongoing training and support to help them continue their volunteering activity beyond the Games. Sport policy legacy projects included an investment of £735,000 from the Scottish Government, through Education Scotland, to Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) to deliver a Physical Education Disability Inclusion Training programme giving up to 1000 teachers in Scottish schools the knowledge, skills and experience to fully include disabled young people in quality PE and sports provision by 2014. This development provided SDS with the opportunity to embed its Sport Inclusion Model into the education system at an earlier stage than was previously possible. The Scottish Government provided a further £250,000 funding for the recruitment of eight Regional Managers for SDS across Scotland to develop enhanced pathways, support local clubs and secure better monitoring and evaluation data upon which to assess progress over the course of the next few years. SDS is the Scottish governing and coordinating body of all sports for people with a physical, sensory or learning disability. Post-Games, the national sports agency, SportScotland, announced a £6 million investment in a dedicated parasport facility at Inverclyde, the national sport centre.

Despite these concrete initiatives, when reviewing legacy plans at the local and national level, there was a dearth of specific, high-level objectives and targets related to community participation for persons with a disability. The principles and themes relating to 'active', 'accessible', 'inclusive' and 'sustainable' could have been used as a vehicle for leveraging the Games for sustainable community participation, but without clearly identifiable programmes, projects and resources, the level of priority afforded to this agenda is likely to be low. Moreover, there were almost no mentions in the Pre-Games Report of the impact of hosting a parasport event for raising awareness or securing additional investment for persons with a disability. Across more than 50 identified national legacy programmes and close to 80 Glasgow Legacy projects, few give mention to disability or the relationship between the parasport event and the achievement of inclusive sport and community provision.

Games governance and delivery

Although evidence of specific, resourced plans to sustain the positive mood generated by the Commonwealth Games is relatively scarce, Games' organizers were clear in their promotion of good practice for persons with a disability. The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games had five parasport events with 22 medals, more than any previous host. The emphasis on both the quantity and quality of parasport events built on the success of the London 2012 Paralympic Games. In Glasgow, parasport competitions were integrated into the Games programme and in-venue information for a spectator was generally of a high quality utilizing Channel 4's Lexi classification system (Long 2014) to relay information about events, although variations were evident between sports. From our observations, we noted clearly that the Games-time experience of integrated events proved a great success, built on sensitive programming, detailed explanation of classifications, and knowledgeable audiences. However, spectators noted an interest in further information about the events, the classifications and the overall field of play.

Within the OC, there was also evidence of what the CEO of G2014 Ltd termed 'evangelic' leadership in the sphere of parasport and wider advocacy for disability issues. The OC's commitment to an inclusive and accessible agenda can be partly explained by the CEO having previously worked for the IPC and the Head of Sport Competition being a long-time supporter of integrated events in the Commonwealth Games. The OC also created designated policies, plans and training programmes (including for volunteers) that foregrounded accessibility, inclusion and equality, 'it's just the right thing to do' (CEO, G2014 Ltd). The appointment of an Engagement and Legacy Officer, an Accessibility and Inclusion Manager (venues, transport, urban realm) and the involvement of an Accessibility Reference Group all demonstrated commitment to a more holistic model of accessibility beyond the infrastructural and transport improvements that accompany every large-scale sporting event. That said, we also observed that the physical infrastructural improvements were significant. Games venue accessibility was exemplary, exceeding international standards in many cases, 'the physical accessibility of the venues … may encourage people to come along and go to these places again' (Accessibility and Inclusion Manager, G2014 Ltd). Permanent improvements to some Games venues will lead to enhanced spectator experiences post-Games. For example, Scotland's national football stadium now has significantly more accessible seating that will greatly enhance the viewing experience for persons with a physical disability using that venue. Though

the safety and security arrangements at Games time made travel and transport around venues challenging for all, physical improvement to Glasgow's rail stations, subway and accessible travel routes will enhance the everyday experience of the city for persons with a disability. Provision for those with visual and auditory impairments was also enhanced, although progress on permanent improvements to signage around the main transport nodes in the city was less pronounced. However, there were problems with Games time signage in terms of visibility, suggesting that perhaps event organizers had some limited understanding of accessibility and the need for multiple forms of information. Organizers also sought to extend their inclusive and accessible Games message through a clear media strategy and approach to ticketing, focusing less on the specific needs of a designated client group and more on the:

> … openness, inclusiveness and accessibility of the Games … that can be in the language you use and the images you use which I hope if you review what we've done on websites and publications you'll see a range of people reflecting the diversity of the Scottish population. (Head of Engagement and Legacy, G2014)

In terms of media strategy, the Glasgow 2014 Games organizers built on the positivity emerging from the London 2012 Olympic Games in the development of their own messaging. This led to the decision to seek integration across all media campaigns, 'it's something that we were really mindful of I think in terms of any campaign that there is a para element to it … that it's part of the same message and that's I think really important for us' (Head of Media, G2014 Ltd). The inclusive message extended to supporting persons with a disability to apply to be part of the volunteer corps. This support included help with the completion of application forms, asking those applying for tickets to identify their support needs (e.g. requirements for accompanying friends or relatives) and ensuring that all Games-related materials were available in alternative formats, 'if you have a support needs requirement that you need an assistant, the price of your ticket will include the price. So we've put provisions in place. We have the most accessible ticketing programme that you'll have ever seen' (CEO, G2014 Ltd).

Overall, the picture of Games governance and delivery was of the adoption of a broader definition of accessibility, whereby improvements made to venues, the urban realm and transport will benefit all, rather than just service the needs of a discrete client group. Moreover, the OC also demonstrated leadership in being informed by best practice in its promotion of an inclusive and accessible Games, translated into operations through ticketing policies, high-quality in-venue information on event classifications, fully integrated programming and explicit training and policies within the OC for staff and volunteers.

Presumptions and missed opportunities?

Elsewhere, we have argued that for large-scale sporting events to be leveraged effectively. the relationship between the event project, national and local stakeholders must be clear and the respective responsibilities of each agreed at the outset (planning stage) (Foley, McGillivray, and McPherson 2009). Though Glasgow's OC was unique in its recruitment of a legacy and disability-oriented senior officer sitting within the Games delivery body, the limitations of this arrangement were well recognized: 'we

liquidate and wrap up the company in just a year's time. We do enable it [legacy], we do support it, we do feed the beast … so it's important that decisions we make have a direct impact on the success' (CEO, G2014).

Temporal limitations affect all OCs and without specific, identifiable, and resourced strategies, tactics and programmes beyond the Games, securing social legacies will be compromised. The problem relates to who has been designated with the responsibility to take forward legacy, whether these plans are resourced (long term), and the relationship between these plans and the overall event project itself. In the case of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, senior personnel expressed the view that the Games could be used as a springboard, or catalyst, to bring about changes in attitudes towards persons with a disability, which is a central focus of critical disability theory:

> I think our legacy aspiration is to take the balance from the Paralympics and put it in the context of a genuinely integrated programme and to harvest the benefits of that integrated approach in terms of building on positive attitudes of people with disabilities. (Head of Engagement and Legacy, G2014 Ltd)

However, as the leveraging literature (e.g. O'Brien 2006; Grix 2012; Smith 2014) makes clear, the demonstration effect from a large-scale sporting event is unlikely to be sustained unless a clear (resourced) plan is in place for how the 'baton' is handed over to national and local agencies post-Games. Worryingly, from a leveraging perspective, interviews with strategic stakeholders involved in and responsible for legacy generated few specific examples of programmes or projects that were designed to sustain the excitement, animation, enthusiasm and vibrancy that highlight the opportunity that events can provide. There are a number of structural reasons that work against locally owned, bottom-up approaches to leverage becoming embedded in the overall planning processes for such a large-scale sporting event. One of these is the requirement that knowledge is transferred between current and future host cities, but not necessarily within the host environment itself, thus mitigating the leverageable opportunities. So, Glasgow will expend significant financial and human resources to ensure that the Gold Coast, Australia will benefit from learning generated at the 2014 Games as per the Commonwealth Games knowledge transfer agreements, but there is no such requirement for a transfer of knowledge locally to ensure that the positive experience of the Games is translated into best practice for the benefit of the local population, including persons with a disability. A number of staff from governing bodies of sport and Scottish local authorities were seconded into the OC for the duration of Games planning and delivery and these people could play an important role in disseminating knowledge to their employers' post-Games, but often, no formal arrangements are in place to enable this to happen.

A second challenge to the successful leveraging of the Games relates to sports policy and the extent to which external bodies shape the development of programmes and funding decisions focused around the event. Although the 2014 Commonwealth Games provided both positive role models and extensive media coverage for elite parasport athletes, the choice of parasports included in the Games competition does not map easily onto host country sport participation or development pathways. As an integrated Games, organizers were restricted to a maximum of five parasport events, four of which were core sports and only one that could be chosen by the host country. Due to the popularity of powerlifting in the southern hemisphere, it was one of the core

sports, but there was no participation base or development pathways for this sport in Scotland pre-Games. To ensure that Scotland could enter competitors in each event, investment was made into the development of a powerlifting programme by the Scottish Institute of Sport pre-Games and this resulted in one Scottish Powerlifter competing in the Commonwealth Games. The participation base in Scotland remains low and because there are many other calls upon limited funding from the national sport agency, SportScotland, it is possible that the powerlifting programme will cease to be funded post-Games. Externally determined Games requirements can shape local and national sports policy, excluding sports (and classifications within sports) where the host could excel in favour of those where there may be less chance of a sustainable legacy beyond the Games itself. As the Chair of SDS stressed, although the increased number of events and athletes is to be welcomed, there is a 'bit of a difficulty finding some of the athletes in the specific events that they're looking for at this particular time and that just proved to be quite difficult for us' (Manager Glasgow Life and SDS). He also expressed reservations about the selection process, giving the example of athletics where the OC:

> Only picked 3 events. How did they [OC] decide that it was long jump? How did they decide it was 1500 metres? And that concerns me because from a home country point of view we might not have had a talented athlete in that particular event (Manager Glasgow Life and Scottish Disability Sport)

The issues associated with sustaining sport programmes and optimizing outcomes from the highlight events are brought further to the fore when tight financial agreements at national and local government levels accompany the post-Games hangover. Increased awareness, positive news stories and investments in elite sport infrastructure can be neutralized by difficult decisions on continuing funding of grassroots provision, changes to pricing strategies in Games venues to recoup investment in world-class facilities and spatial inequities in the availability of opportunities for those persons with a disability located furthest from the Games epicentre. Given the lack of strategic leveraging tactics supporting sustained parasport participation, following Glasgow 2014, there are already concerns being expressed about how to ensure that the momentum of the Games is not lost:

> We've got to find new blood, we've got to find new coaches, and it's all voluntary. So that's the next stage for us. People understanding how much time and effort it takes. It's not just from the athlete but from the supporting coaches, from the governing bodies and how much money that costs, and time and effort (Manager Glasgow Life and Scottish Disability Sport)

Politically, investment in sporting success and grassroots development is increasingly associated with demonstrable outcomes and return on investment. However, in Scotland, no robust baseline for participation in sport for persons with a disability was secured before the Games nor were there any explicit targets set to judge, over time, the success of the high-profile event in leveraging wider social benefits. This is surprising and, to an extent, disappointing, as much of the literature (e.g. Chalip 2006; O'Brien 2007; Smith 2014; Misener 2015) over the last decade has stressed the importance of strategic and cooperative ex ante planning ensuring meaningful involvement from the proposed community beneficiaries, including expected outcomes in the long term. One of the few explicit plans relating to parasport that has

come to fruition and will provide an opportunity to continue the conversation with stakeholders about how to maximize event-themed leveraging opportunities is Glasgow's position as the host for the 2015 IPC Swimming World Championships. The CEO of G2014 Ltd viewed this as another step in the right direction in terms of messaging, stressing that, 'the power of these events is the power for those conversations to be held and to be provocative and to really push it as far as it can so that others get it and own it' (CEO, G2014 Ltd). However, empirical evidence to support this position is still lacking.

Discussion

As Smith (2014) has argued, to leverage large-scale sporting events successfully, it is important not to be overly led by the requirements of the event, as 'these are often determined by outside interests that do not have a long term interest in the host city' (18). There is little doubt that the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games provided an excellent platform for the promotion of elite level sport for persons with a disability on an international stage, predominantly through the integrated parasport competition, and did address some of the focus of a critical disability perspective. The integrated and inclusive approaches taken by the OC to media representation, ticketing, venue accessibility and transport networks provided strong foundations for deeper, more sustainable engagement with the societal issues impacting on persons with a disability. However, our findings suggest that the lack of clear, precise programmes or projects to take advantage of the opportunity brought about by the integrated nature of the Commonwealth Games threatens the successful leveraging of the event from a critical disability perspective. In reflecting on why this might be the case, it is necessary to focus on the balance between existing and embedded sport development programmes and the 'highlight' (or special) event boost (Schulenkorf and Adair 2013). As discussed earlier, highlight events need to work alongside existing programmes to create a balance of heightened excitement and appeal alongside ongoing systematic and resourced delivery. From the empirical enquiries conducted before, during, and after the 2014 Commonwealth Games, it is clear that the five parasport events secured heightened exposure, excitement, and appeal, but this was not accompanied by clarity on how the symbolic and emotive elements were to be harnessed into 'ongoing systematised and resourced delivery' (Schulenkorf and Adair 2013, 101). Whilst there are some relatively isolated examples of funded event-themed initiatives, they do not appear to have been part of a systematic plan to optimize the parasport event outcomes, nor are they accompanied by the guaranteed resources necessary for sustainability. Furthermore, in the attempt to promote specific parasports associated with the Games (e.g. powerlifting), resources are likely to have been diverted away from existing programmes in sports that might have been well placed to promote greater sustainability, in terms of participation and performance. This is an example of a more event-led leveraging approach, which was disconnected from the embedded culture of sport in the communities, and the needs of parasport athletes, more broadly. Investment in new parasport pathways is unproblematic in and of itself, but with tight fiscal agreements facing local government and governing bodies of sport, event project effects can distract policy-makers from their strategic goals. If a leveraged event-themed approach was being followed, then we would expect to see existing programmes for persons with a disability being bolstered before and after the event project and not relying on the trickle-down effect post-Games.

From a critical disability theory perspective, the lack of attentiveness to broader issues of exclusionary social and physical structures also demonstrates a lack of understanding of the ways in which events might be leveraged to help devolve those structures more effectively. The host OC was so focused on a broader understanding of accessibility, and relying on the mere fact that exposure to parasport would result in increased opportunities, that they may have failed to harness the power of the opportunity to influence broader social outcomes (Chalip 2004; Schulenkorf and Edwards 2012; Misener et al. 2013). It appears that the embedded approach to integration led to an emphasis on physical space, such as inaccessible buildings and transport, but focused little on discriminatory attitudes, and negative cultural stereotypes that act as 'disabling' factors for people with impairments (Barnes 2003; Barnes and Mercer 2005). In order to truly address these broader social issues, leveraging strategies could have been developed in existing programmes and policies that tackle the broad issues of social inclusion/exclusion rather than relying solely on the mere exposure of the event to facilitate this level of social inclusion. The OC should not, however, be held solely responsible for this apparent failing. Glasgow's chosen model appeared to foreground legacy in the activities of the OC, but ultimately, the responsibility for progressing social outcomes associated with persons with a disability lies at the door of national and local governments, and governing bodies of sport (Misener 2015). Yet, each of these agencies has finite financial resources and calls for action will only be heard if commitments are enshrined in policy and/or plans where agencies are held publicly accountable for agreed outcomes. The problem with leveraging parasport events for community participation around the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games was that goodwill and an openness to inclusive agendas was not accompanied with ring-fenced resources or concrete outcomes relating to what 'success' would look like.

From our research enquiries, it remains unclear to what extent strategic stakeholders outside of the OC had considered exactly how they were going to use the Games (and its parasport component) to go beyond existing networks in the disability sport field to achieve wider involvement, including developing awareness and attitudinal change (Misener et al. 2013). As those interested in leverage (e.g. O'Brien 2007; Grix 2012; Smith 2014; Misener 2015) have said for some time, the outcomes from large-scale sporting events can only be optimized if it is clear from the outset what the ambition is, what resources will be available to support that ambition and how success will be appraised. Not unlike many other large-scale sporting events, there was a 'hope and/or aspiration' that the 2014 Commonwealth Games could be used to lever a widening of participation in sport and recreational activities for persons with a disability, but few specific measures were put in place to ensure that this could be sustained over time.

More problematic still is the absence of a programme of monitoring or evaluation that would be able to provide an assessment of how effective the Games were in leveraging sustainable community participation. This takes us back to the event-led/themed debate that Smith and Fox (2007) and Smith (2014) have addressed at some length. The high-profile nature of the Commonwealth Games allowed parasports to be showcased to wider constituencies in an attempt to capitalize on the momentum stemming from the 2012 London Paralympic Games. New people were also brought into the 'parasport community' through exposure to the parasport element of the Games from volunteering, media, and spectating. Similarly, the opportunity for members of the disability sport community to interact more closely with people in positions

of influence within formal institutions, like government, international sporting federations, and the like should have enabled them to draw in additional resources, ideas and information to push the agenda forward. However, from our study, there is little evidence that opportunities for effective leverage from a disability perspective can be optimized because there are so few examples of well-resourced ongoing programmes in Glasgow or nationally.

As O'Brien (2006) has argued that the event is just the seed capital required to initiate activity, but it is how that capital is used effectively that will determine the legacies realized in the longer term. The 2014 Commonwealth Games brought significant seed capital to Glasgow in the form of an international-standard parasport event, investment in travel, transport and venues and the opportunity to ensure that 15,000 volunteers were exposed to disability inclusion training. Yet, despite all the inspirational narratives that this capital produced, there remains a sense of missed opportunity, in that the much sought-after synthesis of events and policy initiatives (Smith 2014) is as yet unfulfilled. In our view, leverage for persons with a disability was too detached from the organization and management of the event itself, lacking any focus on key issues for persons with disability in Glasgow. So, whilst during Games time, venues were accessible and the Games labour force (including volunteers) were disability-aware, there are no plans to roll out staff training to all host city venues and the proposal to produce an accessible online environment of sport and recreational facilities in Scotland also fell by the wayside. Furthermore, there are no explicit proposals in Glasgow to look at approaches to pricing, programming, transport or training for persons with disabilities post-Games. Internationally, the narrative of the 2014 Commonwealth Games is one of success, providing a template for future hosts to follow. Yet, if a commitment to leveraging is to be more than just rhetoric, then the issues of ownership, responsibility, resourcing and political will need to be addressed. Furthermore, ownership has emerged as a critical issue, given the complexities of stakeholder relationships in the context of Glasgow 2014. For example, in terms of funding, the Scottish Government committed 80% of the resources required to plan and deliver the Games; yet, the event host was Glasgow and each stakeholder had its own legacy plans and themes. This multi-layered policy environment makes assessment of legacy problematic and 'ownership' so difficult to locate. In the case of the parasport legacies, the absence of clear strategies and associated indicators of success meant that there was an absence of leadership beyond the Games-times experience. G2014 Ltd were exemplary in their leadership of the parasport sport competition, but that will not, by itself, lead to sustained improvements in the post-Games period. This issue remains critical for future host cities in strategically locating ownership of any leverage opportunities.

Conclusions

The focus of this paper has been on the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, an integrated event where parasports are part of the main sporting programme, to critically examine the programmes, strategies and tactics implemented to leverage the event to influence community participation. While we remain optimistic that large-scale sporting events can be a source of opportunity to realize greater levels of accessibility and opportunities for participation in community for persons with a disability, our research herein demonstrates the constraints in realizing these impacts. From a critical disability theory perspective, there were some strategies implemented that

could be considered to lever the event for positive outcomes as related to the four areas of focus for social change; however, these were relatively minimal. In an attempt to focus on a broader understanding of accessibility and inclusion of the host OC, it seems that they might have missed the opportunity to produce measurable strategies that demonstrate an attentiveness to the issues of a critical disability perspective. Perhaps exploring exclusionary social structures that serve as the primary disabling factors for persons with impairments would have been a more effective way to leverage events, although this approach still warrants further research attention. Interestingly, the fact that the event was integrated might have served to discredit the powerful opportunity to leverage for broader issues of accessibility and inclusion. When responsibility for inclusion and accessibility is shared by all, there is a danger that it is owned by no one, as we have seen with this case. Misener (2015) has suggested that in order for legacy of parasport events to be successful, there needs to be a separate group responsible for developing plans, securing resources, and ensuring that the leveraging is embedded in local community needs/policy. In Glasgow, the involvement of the organizing committee in planning for legacy was unique, but again, this led to the event project itself becoming the focal point rather than the wider local or national outcomes that could have been pursued in tandem with it. In effect, the fact that the 2014 Commonwealth Games was an integrated event appeared to make little difference to the sorts of programmes and projects that were initiated before or afterwards. As international standards improve, hosting any large-scale sporting event will produce more accessible infrastructure and better transport links, but Glasgow had a unique opportunity to mobilize those with a stake in improving the lives of persons with a disability and yet our research suggests that this opportunity may remain unfulfilled.

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