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RESEARCH NOTE

ACCOMMODATING (GLOBAL–GLOCAL) PARADOXES ACROSS EVENT PLANNING

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The aim of this research note is threefold: 1) to introduce the concept of paradox and its numerous applications to the study and management challenges associated with the planning and delivery of events, with a specific look at large-scale events like the Olympics to provide an extreme case; 2) to present a new paradox entitled the "Global–Glocal Paradox" that interrogates how inherent global and local stakeholder interests and tensions are managed; and 3) to present a series of conceptual and practical ways events can "accommodate" as opposed to "resolve" this paradox to help balance stakeholder interests instead of pitting one against the other.

Key words: Paradox; Events; Global–Glocal Paradox; Formality versus informality; Accommodating versus resolving paradox; Stakeholder interests

Introduction to Event Paradoxes

Although the word "paradox" is often used interchangeably with "contradiction," it is important to clarify the difference: "A contradiction describes two opposing statements that cannot both be true; only one can prevail [and/or logic]. A paradox, by contrast, accommodates two opposing statements; both can prevail [both/and logic]" (Müller, 2017, p. 235). Paradoxes contain conflicting demands and opposing perspectives (Smith et al., 2013); tensions between life and death, good–evil, global–local are useful illustrations.

Müller (2017) argued those who study and manage events, but particularly large-scale events like the Olympics, are confronted with six paradoxes to reconcile. First, the universalism paradox focuses on how "mega-events transcend yet reinforce

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national difference" and can apply to all event stakeholders (Müller, 2017, p. 237). Second, the compliance paradox refers to rules that must be followed yet are also broken and can be applied to any event stakeholder. Third, the winner's paradox refers to those who win the right to host large-scale events often incurring significant costs and losses for the privilege; therefore, this paradox applies more to the host destination. Fourth, the participation paradox, which can apply to all stakeholders, highlights how large-scale events are presented as inclusive yet exclude many at the same time. Fifth, the uniqueness paradox focuses on the once-in-a-lifetime experience of particularly large-scale events yet sees many organizing committees follow a template replicated between editions. Finally, the passion paradox highlights the love/hate nature of large-scale events that can occur in the same individual. These paradoxes are philosophical in nature and take a high-level social science view on the management and outcomes of large-scale events. To interrogate these paradoxes, Müller (2017) suggested three strategies: (1) *exploration* to examine the effects/consequences of paradox ambiguity; (2) *differentiation* to examine the social and spatio-temporal nature of paradoxes; and (3) *reframing* to recast "paradoxes by shifting theoretical perspectives" (Müller, 2017, p. 234).

Although Müller's (2017) initial work on paradox is useful, we believe there is a need for a more specific paradox related to how different stakeholder interests are managed and balanced by an event's organizing committee and host city delivery agents to guide decision making. In this research note, we outline a new paradox: the Global–Glocal Paradox. By doing so, we 1) extend Müller's (2017) framework, 2) reframe the paradox from different conceptual and practical angles to relieve stakeholder tensions, and 3) draw on ideas associated with organizational in/formality to identify how organizers of particularly large-scale events may have the flexibility and latitude to accommodate the paradox, and step outside dominant frames of reference (Walsh et al., 2022). We hope this research note triggers additional research and debate around large-scale event paradoxes on one hand (and paradoxes that may be applicable to smaller- and medium-sized events as well on a case-by-case basis), and organizational in/formality on the other.

The Global–Glocal Paradox

The Global–Glocal Paradox is concerned with how contemporary globalizing societies are shaped by the imperialistic ambitions of nonlocal external stakeholders to "impose themselves on various geographic areas" (Ritzer, 2006, p. 338). In the context of large-scale events like the Olympics, on one side you have the event owner (e.g., International Olympic Committee, IOC) and on the other you have the host community representing local internal stakeholders who appropriate and incorporate global practices to express their own local practices, identities, institutions, and ways of working (Andrews, 2021). The global is highlighted when we hear the IOC argue it has a "moral duty to place sport at the service of humanity" (as cited in Maguire, 2021, p. 89) yet see the IOC's main sponsors coopt Olympism-related themes, like hope, friendship, and fair play, to sell products to local residents, tourists, and fans during an Olympic Games (Maguire, 2021). Whereas the Olympic Movement is global in its philosophy and reach, "the staging and performance of the Games is incontrovertibly glocal, keying on the structural and symbolic materialization, spectacularization, and celebration of the host culture to both internal and external constituencies" (Andrews, 2021, p. 69).

This is significant as large-scale events attract substantial international, national, regional, and local interest across a wide constellation of external (e.g., global sponsors) and internal stakeholders (e.g., local residents, businesses). Inevitably this leads to a bewildering number of cross-cutting, competing demands, and vested interests jostling to benefit (House of Lords, 2013), but not all can or do, resulting in a stark juxtaposition between policy rhetoric and reality of who actually benefits (Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016). In this research note, we focus on two key stakeholders (local residents and small business communities in the host destination) to provide specific examples of tensions, and later on, ways to relieve these tensions. Müller (2017) recognized the importance of choosing specific stakeholder groups as a focal point for paradox analyses, as explicitly noted earlier in his participation paradox.

Critical commentators, from academics to media outlets, have repeatedly exposed how local

stakeholders, particularly those targeted for event-led urban development schemes, face significant disruptions and displacement (e.g., Goh et al., 2022; Schnitzer et al., 2021) despite urban regimes' repeated emphasis on the benefits accrued (e.g., infrastructure-wise or economically) to their local community following large-scale sport events (e.g., We Are Gold Coast, 2022). For example, displaced urban communities like Vila Autodromo made way for Rio 2016's Olympic Park, car parks, new tourist spaces, and cultural quarters (Talbot & Carter, 2017), while business communities adjacent to London 2012 venues were excluded (Duignan et al., 2019) with local residents and small businesses seemingly powerless to resist the event planning and event tourism exclusion (Vox, 2016). Local communities are often promised that the fallout of disruption and displacement will produce positive returns after the event (Carlini et al., 2020); but this is rarely so, as empirical evidence points to post-Games indirect displacement and the subsequent erosion of existing residential districts due to touristification and gentrification catalyzed by hosting (Davies et al., 2017). Local stakeholders are often sidelined by virtue of the event being "mega": national governments and organizers typically act with indifference toward the "micro." Instead, as Gotham described, large-scale events are forces of creative destruction: they "destroy neighborhoods, communities, old infrastructure, but they create at the same time new stadia, new communities, new images" (Müller, 2017, p. 235). They do this to compete with other elite cities and global tourist destinations, irrespective of what the collateral damage will be. It is the very persistence of these contradictions—event after event, city after city—that points to a paradox (cf. Smith et al., 2013). The problems associated with this Global–Glocal Paradox are exacerbated when considering the IOC's adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), many of which emphasize the importance of improving local circumstances and conditions. For example, Goal 1 is about ending poverty and its forms. Goal 3 is about ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. Goal 11 is about making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, and Goal 13 is about taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. In theory, hosting large-scale events can help address some of these goals but the evidence to date suggests the way they are governed and managed does little to eradicate poverty or improve health and well-being in the host city. Moreover, in their event focus, they have often skewed urban development as opposed to making cities more inclusive and sustainable. Finally, the gigantism that has defined the Olympics in recent decades has done little to address the climate emergency.

Resolving and Accommodating the Paradox From a Manager's Perspective

Smith and Tuschman (2005) suggested managers, when faced with a paradox, look at each side in a bipolar way—logical abstractions and separate entities—to simplify complex realities because confronting paradox can trigger conflicting feelings and produce states of cognitive dissonance, where the most comfortable solution is to reduce complex social problems to a logical polemic that *must* be resolved (Andrioupolos & Lewis, 2013). Either/or dualistic thinking forces managers to pit global and local interests against each other, competing in a zero-sum game.

For example, this reductionist thinking in the organization of large-scale events is primarily the product of formal obligations imposed by awarding bodies (here the IOC) legitimized and empowered by *formalizing agents* (e.g., legal, contractual, and operational mandates; Walsh et al., 2022). However, *organizational formality* produces stakeholder tensions that often result in quick-fix and simple resolutions (which resolves one side in favor of the other) and do not provide enough flexibility to identify creative ways both sides can be accommodated to relieve tension—examples of which are presented in the left-hand column in Table 1. These formalities are often justified to mitigate risk and successfully deliver what is a globally focused economic project. Inviting local stakeholders into planning and delivery presents a threat to be mitigated, favoring global stakeholders that have the experience, track record, and available capital to minimize risk, from construction projects to the delivery of event tourist experiences. For instance, the IOC has taken an increasingly direct hand in the

Table 1
Solutions to Olympic Organizational Formality Problems (Developed by the Authors)

Olympic Organizational Formality and Problem Examples	Olympic Organizational Informality and Solution Examples
Stringent advertising regulations restrict local affiliation and protect global sponsor exclusivity.	Relax advertising regulations to enable local businesses to leverage Olympic affiliation, logos, symbols.
Highly securitized host event zones shuttle event visitors to and from venues.	Enable greater flows of event visitors into local communities by relaxing barrier and wayfinding posts and actively encourage local exploration, engagement, and consumption.
Limited spaces of interaction exist between event visitors and local communities.	Duignan et al. (2020) identified how the creation of "liminal" dwelling spaces enroute to event venues, inside local communities, plays a key role in fostering greater connectivity between hosts and guests, and encourages cultural interaction and consumption. Identifying what liminal spaces can be produced and how these can be afforded could be valuable.
Local businesses fail to access Olympic supply chains: Either they do not have the capital to compete, or subcontracts do not trickle down.	Develop local consortia of businesses to pool resources to help provide more access and support to Olympic supply chains.
Stringent trading regulations force existing businesses out of existing venues hosting sports events or prevent local traders from existing inside event zones.	Relax trading regulations and allow local street food vendors inside event zones and existing businesses situated inside event venues to continue operating.
Global cultural producers, from famous artists to cultural programmers dominate cultural scheduling in and around the Games.	Invite more local creative and cultural actors into the procurement of cultural programming before, during and after staging.
Promotional emphasis fixates on the global event, spaces, and sponsors, with little actively promoting local neighborhoods as part of visitor experience.	Localize all event promotion: Actively showcase popular and niche local cultural attractors throughout the spectator journey from applying for tickets to working with local hotel chains.
Formalizing agents, like contractual and operational mandates, provide little flexibility to respond in real time to local problems of exclusion.	Create conditions for temporal improvisation (e.g., flexibility and latitude for local organized to adjust "rules" to respond to local problems). Identifying by-laws and ways to circumvent or play blind eye to officialdom is required.
Therefore, formalizing agents provide little autonomy for enforcement officers to take discretionary actions to respond in real time also.	Walsh et al. (2021) noted during London 2012 "highly formalized enforcement practices that apparently left little room for enforcement officers to offer discretion to an infringing business—while, in practice, informal, discretionary enforcement practices were encouraged by management" (p. 26). Empowering those responsible for enforcing organizational formalities with autonomy and latitude to take discretionary action to solve local problems in real time.

planning of the (Winter) Youth Olympic Games, though each locale has adapted certain requirements (e.g., Innsbruck 2012's shared bus service for Games clients vs. Lausanne 2020's public transportation approach; the free-to-the-public Buenos Aires 2018 opening ceremonies on the main boulevard with 215,000 people attending vs. the paid Lausanne 2020 opening ceremonies for 8,000 people); likewise, the IOC has now, under the guise of cost reduction for the host organizing committee, done so for multiple aspects at the Olympic Games level (e.g., ticketing, broadcasting) with its core group of international stakeholders, namely the international sport federations and TOP sponsors (cf. Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). Using the Olympics as an extreme case in point of a large-scale event, Table 1 outlines examples of how the Global–Glocal Paradox favors the global, alongside aforementioned pre- and post-Games disruption, direct-and-indirect displacement outcomes. The economic logic is obvious but serves to undermine local sustainability and inclusivity objectives that justify hosting in the first place.

Accommodating the paradox refers to the interrogation of paradox from new conceptual and practical angles (Andrioupolos & Lewis, 2013). Müller (2017) referred to this practice as "reframing," to consider how competing demands and inherent tensions may not just coexist over time but can be mutually reinforcing, emphasizing the need for synergistic thinking. The IOC's focus on the UNSDGs could provide an opportunity for awarding bodies and their host partners to accommodate and resolve

Table 2
Synergistic Techniques and Application to Olympic Organizing (Developed by the Authors)

Synergistic Technique	Application to Olympic Organizing
New "linguistic hooks" to perceive paradoxical elements as interdependencies rather than competitors (Jay, 2013)	Clarifying how protecting local interests and balancing these with global interests is critical to sustainability and inclusivity goals, and the future continuation of the Olympic project.
Carefully crafting "mixed messaging" by communicating dual visions (Andrioupolos & Lewis, 2013)	Producing crystal clear vision and benefit statements for global and local stakeholders separately, as opposed to unspecific rhetoric stated in bid and policy documents.
Approach tensions by splitting elements temporally, spatially, or structurally (Smith & Tuschman, 2005)	Transparently communicate whose interests may be prioritized at a particular time and place to manage expectations.

paradoxes more effectively. For example, sourcing local produce and working closely with local traders could help organizers contribute to healthy lives (Goals 3) while also providing decent work and helping minimize waste and environmental damage (Goal 13).

Table 2 offers three general ways to do so based on the organizational paradox literature and applies or reframes these to Olympic organizing.

Finally, in response to the challenges associated with organizational formality, we argue that Misztal's (2000) notion of organizational informality, defined as "a style of interaction among partners enjoying relative freedom in interpreting their formal roles' requirements" (p. 11), helps reframe the Global–Glocal Paradox by providing flexibility and latitude to accommodate both sides. Table 1 offers informality-based solutions for the previously noted Olympic Global–Glocal Paradox issues.

Concluding Thoughts and Future Research

This research note contributes by 1) identifying and interrogating a new paradox, the Global–Glocal Paradox, to extend Müller's (2017) framework; 2) reframing the paradox from different conceptual and practical angles to relieve stakeholder tensions; 3) drawing on ideas associated with organizational in/formality to identify how organizers of large-scale events may have the flexibility and latitude to accommodate the paradox and step outside dominant frames of reference. Interrogating the paradox in this way creates new avenues to better understand, evaluate, and negotiate pressing management challenges, as opposed to simply avoiding, isolating, or depoliticizing them (Smith et al., 2013). This is significant, for example, for those responsible for organizing the Olympics considering the IOC's recent commitments to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and its Declaration on Human Rights outlined in the Olympic 2020+5 Agenda (IOC, 2021), mandating both the inclusion of local people and local development agendas as central components of successful future bids. Both the IOC and UNSDGs provide a northern star for other large- but also small- and medium-sized events, whether of the "mega-" event variety through to hallmark events, to put inclusive and socially sustainable development at the heart of event plans.

Proactively finding ways to accommodate paradoxes from a manager's perspective is critical, as Jay (2013) argued paradoxes cannot be ignored nor do they resolve themselves; they constantly reemerge and morph depending on the time and place in question. Therefore, we call on researchers to apply this framework to critically investigate paradoxes in different settings and identify context-specific and broader ways to manage paradoxes that exist across events of all shapes and sizes. Specific to the Global–Glocal Paradox, paradoxes greatly differ depending on which global and local stakeholder interests are pitted against one another; for example, in this note we focused on businesses residing in the host destination. But new solutions are constantly required as managers are forced to navigate the temporal and situational complexities of a global macroenvironment—like the global recession for London 2012 and COVID-19 for Tokyo 2020—and the peculiarities of changing local event contexts, including

the diverse economic, political, and cultural differences between, for example in terms of the Olympics: London, Rio, Tokyo, and, next up, Paris 2024 (Duignan et al., 2020). We suggest that identifying, interrogating, and reframing the who, what, where, when, and how of stakeholder tensions represents a valuable future research agenda, aligned to sustainable and inclusive development priorities. Likewise, we recommend identifying other potential paradoxes that are managerial in nature, as well as strategies to address these paradoxes, to assist event managers in their tasks.

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