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Utilising Field Theory to Examine Mega-Event Led Development

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ABSTRACT

Scholars and practitioners have long been analysing and evaluating the way events, particularly mega-events, serve as a mechanism of change. Powerful descriptions are typically brought to life via event impact and legacy case studies: yet, I argue such work can remain a-theoretical – or – conceptually disorganised. I draw on Bourdieu’s *field theory* and the management study of *Field Configuring Events* to develop a new analytical framework: the ‘*Cognitive and Relational Mapping of Field Configuring Events*’ – offering a set of inter-related concepts to strengthen analysis and conceptual consistency between studies, whilst providing latitude to overlay different disciplinary perspectives. I detail methodological and conceptual advantages afforded alongside six ways the framework could be applied-and-extended across various cases and contexts.

Keywords: field theory; field configuring events; mega-events; event-led field development; cognitive and relational mapping of field configuring events.

Utilising Field Theory to Examine Mega-Event Led Development

Introduction And Research Problem

For decades, various stakeholders including scholars, critics, policy makers, managers have been analysing, evaluating and debating the way events, particularly mega-events, serve as a mechanism of change. Increasingly events have played a critical contributory role to international and industrial development strategy (Oliver & Montgomery, 2008) – helping to restructure not only aspects of society but the economy too – like markets, industries, professions. Serendipitous and strategically planned event portfolios, largely of a cultural or sporting focus, play a key social and economic development role for hosts who stages them at all levels whether that be at a local, regional, national or international policy level (Florek et al, 2008).

Commentators typically look at these development processes and outcomes in a highly descriptive way, typically using rich empirical evidence to illustrate how and why large scale projects of this kind impact on – and across – the host country, city and community level. Single and meta-event evaluation [e.g. the London 2012 Olympic Games Meta-Evaluation by DCMS (2013)] is a good example of this. Whilst offering powerful descriptions of change, whether that be the instalment of new transportation networks – or – increasing house prices and gentrification effects post-Games, a review of extant literature reveals how qualitative event impact and legacy analysis can remain a-theoretical or somewhat conceptually disorganised, resulting in the application of a fairly eclectic set of theoretical ideas and frameworks. On one side, this gives way to novel-interesting multidisciplinary insights – heralded as a key strength. On the other, one may argue it signals a field of research undertheorized and lacking discipline in its analytical approach. Additionally, concerning higher education research more broadly, the

Times Higher Education (2020) signalled how research fields [and researchers themselves] often remain “stuck on their own islands” [online] producing mono-disciplinary perspectives and silo thinking – calling for greater connectivity between research fields and associated concepts seen as vital for tackling 21st century policy challenges. This is especially true for mega event led urban development outcomes and related research. Specific to events and tourism field, Ashworth & Page (2011) share a similar sentiment noting how [by highlighting extant literature in the field of ‘urban studies’ can help broaden understanding of ‘tourism paradoxes’] theoretical understanding and advancement can be constrained by the,

“lack of engagement of many tourism researchers with wider debates” as “such debates transcend the inherently case study nature of much urban tourism research to consider the macro social and economic setting in which most urban tourism activity occurs on the global stage” arguing that “existing conceptual and theoretically informed research does not sufficiently explain the evolving world order of city-based tourism” (2011, p. 2).

Some scholars, like Preuss (2007) have sought to develop heuristics (e.g. the ‘Legacy Cube’) to conceptualise the impacts and legacy of mega-event led development processes and outcomes, including his recent re-iteration entitled the: ‘Legacy Framework’ (Preuss, 2019). Additionally, Jamal & Getz’s highly influential (1995) paper provides a useful framework for examining key stages of planning related to events. However, I argue due to the cognitive, organisational and relational complexity of mega-events – as outlined across this article – a more detailed framework is required to better examine and understand how and why developmental processes and outcomes are directly, indirectly and induced across the lifecycle of such large-scale projects. Indeed, I and many others typically fall in to the former camp, opting for particular case study detail to illustrate local often idiosyncratic challenges hosts face across

planning, staging and legacy periods (e.g., Cade et al, 2019; Carlini et al, 2020; Duignan, 2019). Both are critically important general and particular fields of study warranting on-going investigation, particularly as mega-events continue to be used as a key driver for international, national and regional development. Invariably, degrees of descriptive-ness and conceptuality differ between studies and by no means are they mutually exclusive. However, I suggest there is scope to connect detailed-particular insights with broader social science concepts, management and organisational theory to better understand the processes and mechanisms of change (McInerney, 2008). In other words, a desire to more closely connect data and theory to better explain the empirical phenomena under investigation.

By drawing on Bourdieu's (1993) *field theory*, related concepts and augmenting management concepts aligned with the study of *Field Configuring Events* (FCEs) alongside extant literature on mega-events, the aim and contribution of this paper is to argue and outline how a balance could be achieved by producing a new organising framework, complete with well-defined transferable ideas and concepts that can be applied across event cases and contexts. Lucarelli & Berg (2011) note that agreeing on basic conceptual definitions affords a more stable basis to advance and build on existing theoretical ideas. Therefore, I argue this has the potential to bridge and strengthen conceptual consistency between studies – whilst still affording latitude to overlay different disciplinary perspectives and generate much needed particular-idiosyncratic insights. It is important to note that I do not use this article to solely advocate for either universalist principles or particular insights – but a balance between the two. Nor do I suggest there has been no research that has achieved said balance. However, I do believe an organising framework like the one I suggest may increase the likelihood of achieving a balance, particularly

between mega event insights and broader social and management theory, like a field theory and a FCE perspective.

Closely aligned with the structure and content noted above, this article is guided by the following Research Objectives:

- 1) Identify how development processes and outcomes of mega-events can be better understood and explained through a FCE perspective.
- 2) Develop a new conceptual framework that helps examine the sequential, multidimensional and complex process of how and why hosts use events as a key way to (re)configure and develop organisational fields.
- 3) Briefly on historical case studies to illustrate and evidence, practically, how hosts have sought to achieve Field Development.
- 4) Identify ways scholars and practitioners may apply and extend the CRM-FCE Framework in the future in a variety of event settings.

Understanding Bourdieu's Field Theory and Related Field Configuring Events Perspective

The first thing I wish to do is to explain what a field is, how it relates to events, and why it is necessary to think in these terms. Simply put, the study of FCEs refers to the way short-term interventions (i.e. an 'event'), impacts and changes targeted geographical spaces, communities and/or industries (i.e. 'fields'), across different time periods ('configurations') (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). They are mechanisms of institutional change that – by-and-large – lack temporal continuity according to Glynn (2008). Although FCEs usually have well-defined start and end dates, related effects occur long before the event takes place (i.e. infrastructural developments to stage the event) – and – way after the event finishes (i.e. investment may continue as a result of hosting) (Jamal & Getz, 1995). FCEs often exist in tractable spatial settings too – usually within

well-defined geographical proximities like a community, city, regional or national context (Parent et al, 2018). One can usually identify, whether over a particular time period and/or context: what, when, where, how and by whom development processes and outcomes take place as a result of hosting (McGillivray et al, 2019). Mega-event, particularly *Olympic* governance networks, involve a mix of existing institutions and new institutions created to oversee particular aspects across ‘real’ and ‘managed’ time (Thiel & Grabher, 2015). In an events setting ‘real-time’ refers to the live staging periods, whilst ‘managed time’ refers to the significant periods of time before and after hosting, as “*large-scale projects that are related to events like Olympic Games epitomize the key features in terms of how temporally bounded processes may influence field evolution and field change*” (2015, p. 233). This sits contrary to the idea that FCEs primarily lead to field development during the actual event (e.g. stakeholders coming together at a conference) (e.g. McInerney, 2008). Although live staging intensely impacts the host city and/or country in numerous ways, most field development before and after. There are a thousand-and-one ways large scale events produce field development. However, one clear example is a study I published early 2021 illustrating how, despite the COVID-19 pandemic pushing the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games back from 2020 to 2021 [and at the time of writing this article, there are still doubts as to whether the event will go ahead in the Summer], Japan previously embarked on a half-decade long campaign to reconfigure the country’s tourism infrastructure and destination image to increase competitiveness in the global tourism industry. Specifically, in the years leading up to Tokyo 2020, the Japanese government and state-run tourism authorities (e.g. Japanese National Tourism Organisation) deployed a series of place branding campaigns to showcase the country as a safe destination to visit after the Fukushima

disaster, and, whilst doing so, reimagining the country and host city Tokyo as a culturally distinctive tourist destination.

The very idea of a ‘field’ originally attributes to Bourdieu’s earlier work on ‘field theory’ – principally how ‘social fields’ are constructed, how people behave in them and subsequently affected by them (Bourdieu, 1993). Social fields are recognised as spaces where agents aim at “either conserving or transforming the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 4). They are environments where competition between individuals and groups take place, historical, non-homogenous socio-spatial arenas where power-plays, manoeuvres and struggles take place in pursuit of desirable resources and species of capital (Grenfell & Hardy, 2007). Capital in this sense typically refers to economic, social and cultural capital – collectively referred to as ‘symbolic capital’. One may examine such behaviour at different geographical and thematic levels of analysis, whether that be society-at-large, global or national economies, right through to a market, industry, discipline, genre, workspace and one-off large scale events (Marquis & Tilcsik, 2016). ‘Power’ is a primary moderating variable and those taking a field theory perspective typically look at the power relations between people and between fields that structure behaviour (Bourdieu, 1996).

Fields can be autonomous or interrelated. For example, a country’s tourism industry is highly related to other economic fields like the national economy, the destination’s reputation right through to the supply or related labour and skills. Well-developed economies are typically more complex and possess more fields and relations between fields. However, not all fields possess equal power in and of themselves. For example, macro-level political and economic fields, let’s say national economy hosting a large scale mega-event, possess what Bourdieu (1990) refers to as meta-capital, that is, the power to affect different forms of capital within a

field and across fields. Therefore, they can influence the relative value of fields within society and places some fields subordinate to other larger fields who yield power and influence – like that of a national government hosting a large-scale mega-event up on related tourism industries and visitor economies.

As temporary social and economic interventions, events, whether a cultural or sporting festival, play a pivotal role in developing *organisational fields* over-time (Oliver & Montgomery, 2008). Indeed, different rates of change and geographical levels are largely dependent on the size and scope of the event itself (McInerney, 2008). For example, a mega-event will play a greater role in facilitating change over, let's say, a local food market. FCEs are highly flexible and malleable to the hosts' agenda, and have been referred to by Rustin (2009) as having a 'chameleon' -like character. As they take place across a whole range of different social and economic contexts it is pertinent to note that FCEs serve to (re)configure and develop a range of different organisational fields that are at various stages of respective lifecycles and development. As I will illustrate later, FCEs offer a way to kick-start and create 'new' organisational fields, and are thus instrumental in new *field formation*, or, they might serve as a catalyst for 'emerging' and/or as a way to invigorate 'mature' organisational fields. Whether new or old, this process is referred to as *field development*.

Using events as a tool for urban, place, tourism development and regeneration policy has become *de rigueur* – and a *de facto* response – for supranational institutions like the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), host governments, regional authorities right through to local councils and community groups (UNWTO, 2017; World Economic Forum, 2016; World Travel Market, 2014). This is unsurprising as scholars and practitioners have critiqued and praised FCEs as a way to achieve – and as key turning points in the – social and

economic transformations, civic and business relations concurrently at the international, national, regional and local level (Glynn, 2008). Yet, the power of events as a catalyst for largely positive development outcomes, in Bourdieu's words be termed 'doxic' – something presumed to be true. Bourdieu's (1990) term 'doxa' is particularly applicable here, referring to the underlying and unquestioned opinions, assumptions and practices in a field that people/institutions unreflectively hold yet hold true. Bourdieu (2005) defines this as the "universe of tacit presuppositions that organise action within the field" (Bourdieu, 2005, p37) – in other words: the unwritten rules of the Game. Indeed, the naturalised assumption that mega-event led processes and development are a force of good dominates a discourse that serves to legitimise them as a productive policy tool. Yet the overly positive policy spin only serves to obfuscate and support the uneven power relations, imbalance and subsequent unequal developmental effects that have been empirically validated over the decades (Kirby et al, 2018; Raco & Tunner, 2010) – both within fields and across affected fields (Bourdieu, 1996).

Relatedly, Bourdieu's idea of a field's underlying 'nomos' plays a critical role here, chiefly the fundamental principles of 'Vision and Division' (Bourdieu, 1990). Simply put, a vision proposes a particular idea of the world as 'legitimate' and that this requires division is so far as that it requires a splitting up of people, practices, actions etc into different categories – all possessing different hierarchical relations (Bourdieu, 1996). As detailed later, mega-events produce visions that require significant restructuring of new, emergent and existing fields. Indeed, Olympism-as-a-philosophy offers an appealing and ready-made ideology, for example 'a set of interconnected beliefs and their associated attitudes, shared and used by members of a group or population' (Fine & Sandstrom, 1993, p. 24) – a powerful driver to orientate and connect stakeholders together. Yet, these visions have changed over the years, most recently

influenced by the IOC's Olympic 2020 Agenda and other international movements like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) mandating host cities to consider sustainable and inclusive outcomes for existing populations (United Nations, 2019).

Such movements have shifted the nomos of the field, creating new norms and related practices. Indeed, those who do not evolve to consider the new nomos are deemed rebellious or incompliant and negatively perceived. Agents subscribe to a particular field not by way of explicit contract, but by their practical acknowledgement of the stakes, implicit in the very playing of the game so to speak (Marquis et al, 2016). This acknowledgement of the stakes of the field and the acquiring of interests and investments prescribed by the field is termed *social illusion*, or as Bourdieu calls it: 'illusio' (Bourdieu, 1990). Yet, despite shifts toward inclusive, fairier and sustainable cities and communities (e.g. UNSDG Goal 12) – mega-events continue to operate with a 007 status, contravening many of these global principles.

Yet, whilst this may be the case, events are rarely used as a unit of analysis and organisational construct by management and organisation scholars to explore, explain and evaluate such phenomena and associated challenges. Conversely, events and festival scholars may wish to use Bourdieusian ideas, management and organisational theory as a way of better theorising the kinds of *dynamic field processes* I discuss here and across this article. Bridging shared management interests by using events and festivals as a highly complex, unique and interesting phenomena is a hoped-for outcome of this article too. Lampel & Meyer (2008) share a similar sentiment, arguing that unlike examining change in let's say a single firm-level bounded organisation, FCEs represent, "*an important but understudied mechanism shaping the emergence and development trajectories of technologies, markets, industries and professions*" (2008: 1025). Beyond the specific level of analysis afforded by case study analysis, the study of

FCE offers a more generalist view bringing in broader contexts to better understand the configurative and developmental power of for example mega-events. FCEs are settings that go beyond the particular by bringing together,

“...people from diverse organisations and with diverse purposes assemble periodically, or on a one-time basis to announce new products, develop industry standards, construct social networks, recognize accomplishments, share and interpret information, and transact business. FCEs are arenas in which networks are constructed, business cards are exchanged, reputations are advanced, deals are struck, news is shared, accomplishments are recognized, standards are set, and dominant designs are selected. FCEs can enhance, reorient, or even undermine existing technologies, industries, or markets; or alternately, they can become crucibles from which new technologies, industries, and markets emerge.” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008: 2026).

Positioning FCEs as an overarching mechanism of change in and of itself, as well as a contributor to other mechanisms of change across host environments is central to my argument. Mechanisms are defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a ‘*system of parts*’ (...) and a ‘*natural or established process by which something takes place or is brought about*’. Anand & Jones (2008); Glynn (2008); and McInerney (2008) suggest taking a mechanisms-based approach to understanding field configuring dynamics, particularly with regard to potentially disruptive events offers deeper understanding of the power of events to fuel field development. Glynn (2008) suggests a mechanism-based approach is useful for thinking about the power of FCEs for bringing together disparate field members and uniting them toward a particular cause. With this in mind, Levi Martin (2003) argues that by specifying how identifying underlying *mechanisms* of change – as opposed to simply *describing* change – theories, ideas, propositions

and hypotheses gain credibility. Yet, identifying how, why when, where mechanisms of change work and by whom is difficult without an organising framework (Chiles et al, 2004). I now detail the paper's proposed CRM-FCE Framework as one way we may better understand large-scale events as mechanisms of change.

Framing Mega-Events as a Field Configuring Event: Introducing and Developing the CRM-FCE Framework

First, the notion of a FCE and the realities of delivering mega-events reveals a close conceptual and practical alignment between both terms. Lampel & Meyer's (2008) key characteristics of FCEs are used to compare and contrast what we empirically understand to be characteristics of mega-events – see Table 1 below. This simple analysis reveals a somewhat axiomatic link between FCEs and mega-events: clearly there is a close conceptual and empirical alignment between the two, but this is a link worth clarifying for the purpose of this paper. Yet, as detailed in Table 1, I illustrate and argue that mega-events, due to their sheer size, scale and scope, represent the most significant of all FCEs and even go beyond the current basic characteristics of FCEs. Specifically, mega-events break the typical temporal and spatial mould as they take place across varying temporal frames, require the involvement of complex and conflicting stakeholder networks, across different geographical strata (e.g. global, country, city and community level) (Muller, 2017). In other words, the conceptual idea of a FCE needs to be reconsidered when using a mega-event like the Olympics as an extreme case in point.

<<<Table 1 about here>>>

Second, I now draw on the study of FCEs and build on existing conceptual ideas to develop the CRM-FCE Framework (Figure 1). I developed this work this by taking established FCE ideas, illustrating how these occur in the context of mega-events, whilst simultaneously

using the conceptual and practical aspects of mega-events to develop new FCE terms. This is particularly important I note above: mega-events represent an extreme case of a FCE. The sections after the model serve to help explain each part and concept in turn and the relationship between them.

<<< **Figure 1 about here** >>>

Legitimation: Field States, Reconfiguring Organisational Fields, and Field Development

Starting at the top, mega-events are usually bid for against a historical and current social and economic host country, city and community backdrop – what I refer to as the **(1) ‘FIELD STATE’**. Here, they are presented as a key driver and mechanism for change, a unique often once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for tackling social and economic challenges (Cade et al, 2019). For example, London 2012 projected dystopic images of East London to illustrate socio-economic deprivation and poor international visitor appeal to this penurious urban district (DCMS, 2008). Juxtaposing dystopic images with a utopian futurity typically foregrounds any ‘good’ Olympic Applicant and Candidature – a juxtaposition for even the most hardened sceptic to resist. Central to the production of what I will later refer to as *symbolic systems*, constructing irresistible grand narratives and platitudes play a normative and instrumental role in fuelling the existence of the Olympic project at both a international and host country, city and community level (Zimbalist, 2015).

Whether it’s regeneration, the development of new transportation networks or the revitalisation of destination image, hosts who bid and plan to stage mega-events engage in **(2) ‘RECONFIGURING ORGANISATIONAL FIELDS’**. DiMaggio & Powell (1983) defines organisational fields as, “...sets of organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life; key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies,

and other organizations that produce similar services or products” (1983: 148). This definition is a useful starting point for thinking about who, how and why particular stakeholders play a key role in any event-led field process. FCEs (re)configure organisational fields to catalyse and achieve broader organisational processes of **(10) ‘FIELD DEVELOPMENT’** – a key desired outcome (often referred to under the umbrella terms: impacts and legacies) of mega-events. FCEs are used to stimulate new fields (field formation), emerging and/or mature organisational fields. For example, London 2012 represented an opportunity to repackage what the UK had to offer to international and domestic visitors to reinvigorate Britain’s destination image across both mature and emerging international visitor markets (VisitBritain, 2012). However, with a weaker international image and ill-prepared supporting infrastructure, Tokyo sought to leverage the 2020 Olympic Games as a way of breaking the global tourist market – as noted earlier (Duignan, 2021). Here, conceptually, FCEs can be understood as both the ‘product’ – *and* – ‘driver’ of field development acting as **(9) ‘STRUCTURING MECHANISMS’**. In other words, they “*shape the field’s cognitive, normative and/or social structures*” (Lampel & Meyer, 2008, p. 3).

In the case of mature organisational fields, FCEs usually inform field replication (i.e. expanding, refining, and solidifying beliefs and practices, as well as tracking and reinforcing field position relative to other fields and institutions). Thiel & Grabher (2015) note that more attention is paid to the creation of field-specific social capital, to activities that protect and reinforce field identity and boundaries, and to ceremonies that legitimate dominant norms and logics. This is in part illustrated by the above London 2012 example – the desire to refine the country’s tourist offer, reinforcing its position as a key global tourist destination relative to a field of increasing international competition as illustrated by Tokyo’s objective to compete with well-renowned tourist cities like London, New York, and Sydney. Conversely, for new field

formation and/or the early development of ‘emerging’ organisational fields, FCEs provide an ideal impetus and platform for bringing together individuals, institutions and collectives into a community network that co-develop common meaning systems (Hardy & McGuire, 2010). Usually, these stakeholder networks discuss normative issues (i.e., setting standards, defining practices, codifying key vocabularies, as well as positioning the field relative to other fields and institutions). Indeed this is what I am attempting to do by writing this article – to bring together different fields of knowledge to develop new fields of understanding, conceptual and empirical analysis.

A **(4) FIELD MANDATE** is typically required to legitimise the existence of the FCE, empower those responsible for executing it, and release required resources to fuel and sustain it (Glynn, 2008). I argue that a field mandate – or a series of field mandates – can be acquired in a number of ways, be it geographically, hierarchically and temporally across the lifecycle of the FCE. Furthermore, field mandates may be strengthened by drawing on – or from – various sources of power. I refer to these sources as **(3) ‘MANDATE DIRECTORS’**. Mandate directors empower field mandates and those responsible for planning and delivery with formal and informal authority to enact the will of the project. Geographically, mandate directors can derive from legitimising agents and narratives at the international, country, city and/or community level. For example, owners of the two largest mega-events: the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) have recognised and sought to illustrate and promote the opportunities associated with such economic and social interventions. Overarching ambitions are usually-clearly laid out on the owners’ websites, whether in the form of vision and missions, like FIFA’s pledges to use football invest in new infrastructure supporting the growth of the game whilst simultaneously focusing on a set of

social programmes aimed at inclusion, sustainability and “building a better future” (FIFA, 2019 [online]). Or in the form of declarations and agendas like the ‘Olympic 2020 Agenda’ (IOC, 2019) – a more comprehensive package of social, economic and environmental reform and reconfiguration of different fields. At the local host city level, a similar set of rhetoric, development policies and language are construed and constructed for the purpose of localising such agendas making mega-events as a FCE an alluring and powerful tool for field development (Poynter et al, 2016).

At the macro-country and micro-city level, national and local politicians identify and position the Games as a way of condensing decades of development in to the space of half-a-decade, whether that be to locally reinvigorate international and domestic tourist demand or regenerate penurious post-industrial districts (Raco & Tunney, 2010). I suggest mandate directors are positioned at different levels of society. For example, they may be granted by both supranational organisations like the IOC, right through to country, city and community level organisations like the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), governments, local authorities, business support organisations like the Chamber for British Industry (CBI) and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) as found in the UK context (Trading Standards, 2018). Colloquially, one may refer to these pro-Olympic stakeholders as ‘happy clappers’ who seek to support and strengthen the FCE’s field mandate. The promises of field development legitimised through a complex amalgam of mandate directors may lead to a strong field mandate, which, in turn may serve to increase the event’s appeal to vast swathes of the host population and increase the likelihood they will accept it. However, as uneven developmental outcomes of field development is questioned, prospective and current host populations have started to veto the idea of hosting –

or – engaged in modes of ‘communal resistance’ to protest and/or combat the negative planning and development effects of mega-events across all time periods (Duignan et al, 2019).

One may argue that the stronger the field mandate the more ambitious and complex proposed field development may be. Conversely, the weaker the field mandate, the smaller and perhaps locally-rooted the FCE will be – unlikely to foment field development in and of itself but may well be part of a wider portfolio of activity (Glynn, 2008). Here, Lampel & Meyer (2008) note that a weak field mandate will typically, “influence field evolution indirectly, serving primarily as social networking hubs” (2008, p. 7). However, it is important to note that mega-events do not necessarily start with a strong field mandate – Applicant and Candidature bids take years in the making and significant resource and energy is required by key stakeholders to bring the FCE on to the political agenda and into the public gaze. As we speak, those at the upper, meso and lower levels of sport governance and policy meet in a low-key chamber to set the wheels in motion for another London-based UK bid for the 2036 Summer Olympics.

Implementing Dynamic Field Processes: Voluntary and Involuntary Field Members, Geographical Levels, and Temporal Frames

As I note earlier, FCEs contain and stimulate dynamic field processes required for – and associated with – field development. Individual, institutional and collective change agents bring about different types of change across different temporal frames. Broadly speaking, Preuss (2007) notes in his ‘Legacy Cube’ these can be direct vs. indirect, intended (planned) vs. unintended (unplanned), positive vs. negative, short vs. long-term (re)configurations and developments. His conceptual cube is a useful starting point for illustrating the complexity of dynamic field processes. Invariably, these can occur at different geographical levels (e.g. international, country, city and community level) and different **(11) ‘TEMPORAL FRAMES’**

whether that be in the *'Planning'*, *'Lead-up'*, *'Live-staging'*, *'Embryonic legacy'* or *'Established legacy'* phase as illustrated across the base of the CRM-FCE Framework. Geographical and temporal features of FCEs are of methodological significance as dynamic field processes take place in tractable settings, bound by time and space, affording researchers the opportunity to observe processes and outcomes at play (Glynn, 2008). Here, the implementation of FCEs provide a useful context complete with a complex 'social microcosm' (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) to investigate how shared, disparate, contradictory and somewhat paradoxical visions, missions and interests converge and diverge in the formation and development of fields (Muller, 2017) – distilled and crystallised in to what I refer to as the **(7) INSTITUTIONAL PROMISES AND OBJECTIVES**.

Taking a broad view of stakeholders (Freeman, 1989), I collectively and generally refer to all those voluntarily and involuntarily involved in the processes and outcomes of FCE and mega-event led field development as **FIELD MEMBERS**. As noted earlier, Bourdieu (1990) refers to field members in this case as agents. He notes two specific types of dominant agents in any given field: i) 'incumbents' who are invested in maintaining the status quo and field in its current form as any changes may risk destabilizing their dominant position (Cattani et al, 2014), and ii) 'insurgents' who modify the field so they can successfully compete with incumbents (Fligstein, 2001). All agents tend not to agree on the rules of the game, thus some attempt to conserve and others transform (Duignan et al., 2019). As those who try to change the rules to benefit personal interest, struggles may ensue. In the struggle, agents make use of their power to impose the rules that favour them the most. Dramatic change in previously stable fields can come from either successful incumbents or intrusion from other fields, or from government-imposed

rule change (Bourdieu, 1996). Mega-events exemplify this destabilization, defined by rapid change and creative disruption.

Around the table, mega-events are spearheaded and legitimised by a set of well-qualified technocratic, senior politicians and elite agents. I refer to the individuals, institutions and collectives that seek out and wilfully enact FCEs as **(6a) VOLUNTARY FIELD MEMBERS**. Typically, voluntary field members have a ‘vested interest’ in the smooth running and success of the project (Flyvbjerg, 2017) – devising policy and/or directly responsible for organising and executing the event. Usually, vested interests include those of the upper echelons of government and public sector and private interests in the form of investors, official sponsors and the like. Sponsors in particular have played an increasingly central role in the planning and execution of large-scale sporting events like the Olympics and FIFA too. It is important to note that different stakeholders all possess divergent and convergent interests, taking different identities and specific actions in the melee of bidding, project planning, development and execution that determine field development in some way (Fligstein, 2001).

Typically, the presence of institutional entrepreneurs and intervention by external agents increased the likelihood and significance of field development occurring. Greenwood & Suddaby (2006) define institutional entrepreneurs as ‘organized agents who envision new institutions as a means of advancing interests they value highly yet that are suppressed by extant logics’ (2006, p. 29). FCEs are often championed and organized by institutional entrepreneurs with an overt field-building agenda, but also with a view towards private gains. London 2012 followed a similar line of institutional logic: a national campaign to stimulate positive social and economic developmental benefit for geographical areas of East London yet evidence, as with other host

cities, reveal a legacy of uneven development typically generated as a result of gentrification and displacement (Davies, 2012).

Lampel & Meyer (2008) note that FCEs can often achieve a ‘quasi-monopolistic legitimacy position’ – a particular feature of mega-events attracting the attention of high-profile public figures (e.g., Lord Seb Coe, a previous Olympic athlete leading London 2012, and Boris Johnson, then Mayor of London). Sometimes these can be well-qualified individuals, institutions and collectives – sometimes not. Either way, quasi-governmental entities, like the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and Olympic Board (OB), alongside other locally-specific institutions like the British Olympic Association (BOA) and Greater London Authority (GLA) include seconded public servants and senior ministers tasked with executing a successful event (Parent et al, 2018). See Institute for Government (2013, p18) for London 2012’s organogram of key organisations involved and the relationship between these organisations. Conversely, those who are either opposed to the use of FCEs for mega event-led field development and/or unwilfully (often negatively) impacted directly or indirectly by the processes and outcomes of FCEs are referred to as **(6b) INVOLUNTARY FIELD MEMBERS**. Typically, they will have an ‘unvested interest’ in the project and may reap little to no benefit by its occurrence. Critical event scholars who study particular stakeholders groups who find themselves the target of event-related collateral damage as a result of planning and delivering large scale events will be familiar with this sentiment (e.g., Talbot & Carter, 2018).

It is important to note that individual or institutional choice to support and/or enact agency in the project is determined by a number of factors. First and foremost, agency is relative and varies between individual to individual, institution to institution, context to context. Second, as noted earlier, hosts must adhere to a set of highly formalised legal and regulatory controls and

requirements demanded in – and by the signing of – the Host City Contract (HCC) (McGillivray et al, 2019). This is but one of many different types of mandate directors that legitimise the project and empower agents to enact the will of the project. At the point of securing the rights to host, mega-events typically possess strong field mandates allowing for swifter, less democratic decision-making processes and modes of governance (Cornelisson, 2011). Third, as a result, the HCC serves to empower organisations detailed in the Institute for Government (2013) report noted earlier, and not necessarily meso and micro-level institutions and organisations like local authorities and regional governments who usually have to abide by rigid planning processes and strict delivery protocols enforced (McGillivray et al, 2019). This is and has been a significant concern with respect to the ability (or not) for meso and micro-level voluntary field members and involuntary field members to have any meaningful say – or at least – contextualise delivery to account for nuances and idiosyncratic dimensions at the local level (Carlini et al, 2020; Pappalepore & Duignan, 2016).

Yet, despite the dominance and somewhat autocratic character of mega-events, the legitimacy of the project always has the propensity to be threatened involuntary field members. As noted earlier, these are stakeholders who did not choose – and wish – to be impacted by the FCE yet are done so as a by-product. In other words, many development processes discussed across the CRM-FCE Framework are imposed on unsuspecting and unsuspecting stakeholders. Examples of involuntary field members may well be residents, businesses, consumers, policy makers across the country, city or community who are opposed to the FCE and/or negatively impacted by field development (i.e., Rio’s favela community who suffered significant forced eviction and social cleansing effects) (Steinbrink, 2013). Undoubtedly, involuntary field members have emerged a potential threat to the existence of the Olympic project, questioning its

legitimacy and unequal developmental outcomes that have marred the hosting of late 20th – early 21st century mega-events (Zimbalist, 2015).

Institutional promises and objectives serve as a key milestone for making the project ‘real’. Or, in other words, strengthening **(8) FIELD PERMENANCE**. Voluntary field members strengthen field mandates and field permanence by producing what I refer to as two **(5) SYSTEMS OF THOUGHT**. First, **(5a) SYMBOLIC SYSTEMS** – a set of ideological visions and mission statements that typify the sense-making and sense-giving processes spearheaded by voluntary field members. They will usually establish the vision and focus for new field formation, emerging and/or mature field development. Second, **(5b) RELATIONAL SYSTEMS** – the tangible and intangible resources used to achieve institutional promises and objectives. Central to the systems of thought – a basic assumption that symbolic and relational systems have a symbiotic relationship that fuel one another (Glynn, 2008). The greater the symbolic system, the increased likelihood to generate greater relational systems – and vice versa.

Symbolic systems are used to legitimise access and release of resources, whilst relational systems determine scope of ideological visions and mission statements. For example, without financial resources hosts can’t promise to embark on multimillion-pound field development projects. Yet without a strong vision and field mandate, hosts would not be able to convince the tax payer and/or policy makers to release the necessary financial resource to catalyse field development. To do this, typically voluntary field members increase frequency of interaction in the lead-up to the bidding and live staging of FCEs, reaching what Meyer et al. (2005) refers to as a ‘critical threshold’ at both a ‘structural’ and ‘cognitive’ level. As Lampel & Meyer (2008) note, “*agglomerations of individuals, groups, and organizations that meet sporadically at first, and then come into contact with increasing frequency*” (2008, p. 1027).

Structurally, complex constellations of newly formed and (re)configured existing national institutions make up Olympic organograms mobilised to plan and execute field mandates (as shown in the Institute for Government (2013) report (p.8). Those involved foster competitive and collaborative interactions, and, depending on the specific local circumstances and individual strategies, they can trigger field development (Powell et al, 2005). This aspect of FCEs closely mimics Jamal & Getz's (1995) process concerning three core stages of planning in an events context. As official Olympic and Olympic-inspired masterplans are drawn up, technical details are softened through official branding and brightly coloured logo and straplines that, once again, serve to institutionalise and reinforce field permanence. This is particularly so when FCEs intensify physical presence across the host country, city and community in the lead up to the live staging periods. Indeed, during the live staging they take full physical form and dominating presence – as anyone who has been to one can attest. *Cognitively*, under the (new) umbrella of a new structural and aesthetic form, voluntary field members and involuntary field members become increasingly aware of field permanence – typically opting to support or reject it. As the FCE moves across its project lifecycle, field members develop an idea of what the FCE is and their role in this entity (Garud & Karnøe, 2004). They invest energy and resources to field development with a view to future returns – be it individual or institutionally motivated – by doing so, they increase the fields institutional legitimacy that simultaneously helps to support field permanence. Lampel & Meyer (2008) detail that this is achieved through a set of emergent and cyclical processes,

'...field members meet, converse, negotiate, explore joint actions, and develop projects. They do not exercise influence as a collective body, but as a set of overlapping circles, cliques, and groups' (2008, p. 2073).

Moving across different temporal frames, symbolic systems and relational systems strengthen as institutional promises and objectives evolve and compound as official Olympic, national governments and regional authorities publish policies, plans and guidance for the project's execution and updates on field developments (e.g., DCMS, 2008). As the project moves toward the live staging period, rhetoric intensifies as extra-resources are required to fuel and sustain a hungry behemoth-like project like the Olympics. Undoubtedly, as momentum gathers, the juggernaut can't be stopped – anyone or thing in its path is quickly obliterated through squashing dissent, resistance and rendering particular involuntary field members *persona non grata* (Raco & Tunney, 2010, p. 1078). As a result dynamic field processes combined with the strategic deployment of structuring mechanisms serve to foment field development across a host of organisational fields – rendering some included, others excluded (Steinbrink, 2013).

As change occurs, those examining and evaluating outcomes can compare and juxtapose institutional promises and objectives with the emerging and established realities of the FCE. I refer to this ever changing and evolving Olympic discourse as the **(12) GAMES NARRATIVE**. This includes the **(12a) RHETORIC** projected in the early stages of the FCE, through to the embryonic, emerging and established legacy outcomes of **(12b) REALITY**. I also include the idea of a **(12c) 'POST-GAMES TRUTH'** – the idea that voluntary field members may select positive facts whilst omitting negative ones so as to reconstitute the truth, and the success of the Games, as an all-around success (Horne, 2007). Undoubtedly, post-mega-event evaluation reports and public policy documents often fail to include and claim responsibility for ethical dilemmas posed by hosting and executing FCEs that may prove to be a stain on the pristine image of the Games, and more broadly, the virtuous position heralded across the Olympic Movement, Olympic Charter and Olympic 2020 Agenda. Not-achieving intended, nor stated

outcomes has become part-and-parcel of hosting a mega-event, aspects that have in recent years eclipsed the perceived power of FCEs to do good. It is the intended vs. unintended consequences of FCEs that provide an interesting avenue for research, noted by Lampel & Meyer (2008) that,

“FCEs that were designed to shape field evolution may (or may not) have the intended effects, depending on contingencies lying beyond the control of the organizers. On the other hand, FCEs that were never intended to influence field evolution may trigger emergent processes that redirect the field’s developmental trajectory” (2008, p. 1026).

Lampel & Meyer (2008) note that little attention is placed on the discontinuous and localised processes of field development. They note, almost exclusively that current theory and research focuses on the grander, global and continuous processes that drive field development aptly coinciding with Duignan’s (2019) argument that mega-event impact and legacy evaluation typically waivers after the FCE has dissipated and disappeared from the public consciousness. Generally speaking, Marquis et al (2007) argues that integrating local geographical country, city and community perspectives is a latent but much needed perspective required for applying – and influencing the development of – organisational theory. This is particularly important as in the context of FCEs, particularly mega-events, locals tend to be greatly impacted by the occurrence of such exogenous shocks – and – in-depth local perspectives often fail to rise to the surface of event impact and legacy evaluation (Kirby et al, 2018). I argue that this very real managerial challenge further supports the need to develop a holistic analytical framework to capture host country, city and community level transformation as a result of event-led development across different temporal frames – as argued across this article.

Conclusions

The aim of this article focused on how and why the developmental processes and outcomes of mega-events could be better examined and understood by taking a field theory and FCE perspective. Whereas some scholars have developed broader theoretical frameworks and approach to look at such phenomena, I argue more work is needed to develop a rigorous analytical approach and set of agreed concepts to fully understand the complex developmental processes and outcomes of mega-events.

This article attempts to contribute to this gap in understanding by developing a new conceptual framework (CRM-FCE Framework), to examine and chart the sequential, multidimensional and complex process of how hosts use events as a way to (re)configure and develop new, emergent and mature organisational fields. Throughout I briefly drew on evidence to practically illustrate how hosts have sought to achieve field development, particularly related to tourism and urban development. Developing an organising framework with a set of transferable ideas and concepts that can be applied across event cases and contexts provides an opportunity to bridge and strengthen conceptual consistency between studies. Heuristically, the framework provides a useful road map for researchers to grapple with the management, organisational and developmental complexities of mega-events.

I argue this is particular importance as a significant amount of general and events-specific literature takes a 'snapshot' approach to case study work that has in turn been used to develop management theory – as argued by (Schad et al, 2018). With this in mind Langley (1999) argues that recognising the importance of temporality in analysis is crucial too. Therefore, tracking development across different time frames with various elements in mind is encouraged – as detailed across the CRM-FCE Framework. Below, I close by proposing an extension to the

broader definition of FCEs as empirically driven by historical examination of mega-events. This is followed by six ways the framework could be applied and extended across various event cases and contexts – and – how scholars coming from a specific disciplinary and theoretical focus may wish to overlay a new perspective on top of the CRM-FCE Framework.

The framework is flexible and can be applied and extended in a number of ways, specifically but not exclusive to the following:

- 1) *Holistically* – one may apply all analytical points to provide a holistic analysis (i.e. follow all points 1 – 12 to provide breadth of analysis for a specific event case study or context).
- 2) *Taking a modular approach* – one may examine one or more of the points to provide a more detailed cross-sectional analysis (for example, one may look at the way voluntary field members (6a) drive new symbolic systems (5a) and how these are translated in to institutional promises and objectives (7)).
- 3) *Temporally* – one may look holistically or taking a modular perspective over a specific time phase, whether that be in the i) Planning, ii) Lead-up, iii) Live staging, iv) Embryonic legacy, and/or v) Established legacy phase (for example, one may look at how symbolic systems are shaped and re-shaped across the planning and lead-up phases).
- 4) *Geographically* – one may look at any or all of the above occurring in a tractable geographical setting (i.e. host country, city and/or community level).
- 5) *Stakeholder specific* – one may look at any or all of the above from a single or multiple stakeholder perspective across different voluntary and involuntary field members (i.e. manager, organiser, governmental, non-governmental perspectives. Additionally, one may look at the lived experience of a particular social group, like residents, businesses

and/or choose to examine specific sub-groups like socio-economically deprived urban neighbourhoods, or a type of business like accommodation or retail).

- 6) *Organisational field specific* – one may look at any or all of the above with respect to a single or range of different organisational fields to be (re)configured and developed as a result of hosting (for example, the tourism or hospitality industry).

Due to its modular design, the CRM-FCE Framework provides the basis for practical and conceptual extension. For example, subsequent empirically driven case study and contextual analysis may reveal new practical insights (managerial and/or policy related) that can be ‘bolted’ on and in to the framework where one sees fit. Furthermore, scholars coming from a specific disciplinary and theoretical focus may wish to overlay a new perspective. One may take a critical perspective, depicting mega-event led development processes and outcomes as a battleground of interests that largely preclude access to marginalised citizens. Others may overlay this and/or opt use framework alongside another complimentary yet specific focus on i.e. political economy, geography, anthropology or feminist theory. Here, the CRM-FCE Framework represents just one possible way to develop some baseline concepts scholars and practitioners could draw on to strengthen analytical approaches, connect descriptive studies together and help unite works together to better examine and understand mega-event led developmental processes and outcomes. I believe this could be of use not only to those already studying in this area, but particularly those who may be just starting out in their research, from undergraduates to PhD students, looking for a structured way to think about and analyse these complex ideas.

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EVENT MANAGEMENT

Table 1

Aligning the characteristics of mega-events and FCEs (developed by the author).

Characteristics of FCEs (Lampel & Meyer, 2008)	Characteristics of mega-events (Various authors)
<i>1. FCEs assemble, in one location, agents from diverse professional, organizational, and geographical backgrounds.</i>	<p>Mega-events occur either in one ‘host city’ and/or assemble in a number of regions, cities and towns to host peripherally located events. Particularly, since the 21st century, they have extended physically through the creation of official Live Sites and/or public viewing areas that house live screening of sporting events, cultural and commercial activity (McGillivray et al, 2019).</p> <p>Both the Olympics and FIFA assemble diverse and complex sets of individual, collective and institutional stakeholders with divergent and convergent interests that directly or indirectly influence – or are influenced by – the occurrence of mega-events across different organisational fields (Parent et al, 2018).</p>

<p>2. <i>FCEs' duration is limited, normally running from a few hours to a few days.</i></p>	<p>Mega-events break the typical FCE temporal mould. They are complex, large-scale undertakings that require significant effort and will across different time phases. Undoubtedly, this is what makes mega-events an ideal mechanism of change, particularly if one takes a broad view and includes the considerable time, energy and resources that precede Applicant and Candidature bids, intense live staging periods and the infinite beam of time post-Games, often referred to as the 'Olympic legacy' (Preuss, 2018).</p>
<p>3. <i>FCEs provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interaction.</i></p>	<p>Mega-events include a significant platform for both structured and unstructured social interactions between residents, visitors, businesses and consumers across i) official event venues, ii) live sites with viewing screens and other cultural and commercial activity, iii) business to business networking platforms and build international relationships and collaborations (O'Brien, 2006).</p>
<p>4. <i>FCEs include ceremonial and dramaturgical activities.</i></p>	<p>Mega-events can be understood as one large-scale ceremony, complete with a series of individual ceremonies (e.g. medal ceremonies). Live staging of events are sandwiched between Opening and Closing Ceremonies –</p>

<p>5. <i>FCEs are occasions for information exchange and collective sense-making.</i></p>	<p>possessing broad symbolic movements and a series of small, micro gestures and dramaturgical activities (Poynter et al, 2016). They usually represent historical, current and future representations of host culture and everyday life, social and economic struggle, and, signal in both overt and esoteric ways the ambition of the country, city and incumbent communities.</p> <p>Mega-events, throughout their project lifecycle act as a platform to (re)orientate nations toward a global society, foster peace and interaction between stakeholders, be it athletes, residents, visitors and businesses (Horne, 2007). Specifically, particularly in the live staging period, they create social spaces for sports fans to engage, collectively make sense of personal experiences whilst generating a sense of belonging (Walseth, 2006).</p>
<p>6. <i>FCEs generate social and reputational resources that can be deployed elsewhere and for other purposes.</i></p>	<p>Central to the legitimisation of mega-events is the social, economic and environmental transformations planned and unplanned by hosting (Raco & Tunney, 2010). They are often a beacon and signal to the international community that a city is wishing to compete on the global stage,</p>

	reconfiguring and develop the destination as a welcoming place to stay, work and engage in leisure pursuits (DCMS, 2008).
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EVENT MANAGEMENT

Figure 1

Cognitive and Relational Mapping of Field Configuring Events (developed by the author).

