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## **The Role of Voluntary Sport Organisations in Leveraging the London 2012 Sport Participation Legacy.**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to understand the perceptions of national Voluntary Sport Organisations (VSOs) managers towards a mega sports event and identify the components they felt enhanced or inhibited their organisations capacity to implement a sport participation legacy. London 2012 was the first Olympic Games to explicitly attempt to deliver this type of legacy, and an exploratory, online mixed method survey examined the perceptions of 105 senior managers from 37 VSOs, post-event. Principal Component Analysis identified four distinct factors: ‘objectives, standards & resources’, ‘event capitalisation & opportunities’, ‘monitoring & evaluation’ and ‘club engagement & implementation’, explaining 51.5% of variance. Also, relevant organisational characteristics such as sport type, funding and sport size were examined to investigate the influence this had on their capacity. From these findings, the main recommendations are that future mega sport event hosts should: 1) Engage and consult with multiple stakeholders to engender sustained sport participation. 2) Set clear and monitorable objectives. 3) Establish funding and support mechanisms relevant to each sport. 4) Engage non-competing sports in the leveraging process. 5) Finally, event organisers should try to ensure personnel consistency.

## **Introduction**

Mega Sports Events (MSEs) have evolved and changed from their form the mid and late twentieth century (Roche, 2017), with a noticeable shift in the way countries perceive MSEs and their value. Nations have been attracted to hosting these international events, even though they habitually run over-budget and the associated legacy outcomes are largely unevidenced (Britain, Bocarro, Byers & Swart, 2018). Consequently, in recent years there has been a decline in the number of cities bidding to host MSEs, with many proposals being retracted, Budapest withdrew their bid for 2024 in 2017, which at the time was the IOC's 10<sup>th</sup> withdrawal in 5 years (Preuss, 2018).

MSEs and their associated legacies have been investigated from multiple perspectives, due to the outcomes they aim to produce; yet the ability for MSEs to achieve such positive, long-term outcomes is often questionable, with growing research interrogating whether legacy is a fact or a fairy tale (Britain et al., 2018). At the heart of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOPG) plans, was a sport participation legacy (DCMS, 2012). To achieve this promise, Voluntary Sport Organisations<sup>2</sup> (VSOs), were placed 'at the heart of the strategy; as it is their network of voluntary sport clubs and other assets that will drive [sport participation] delivery' (Sport England, 2008, p.10). VSO's are often used by governments, as a vehicle to achieve wider social benefits such as improving health and

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<sup>2</sup> National Governing Bodies/ Sport Federations in the context of London 2012

nation-building (Girginov, Peshin & Belousov, 2017). Yet, LOPG was the first Olympic Games to explicitly outline this objective and attempted to deliver a sport participation legacy, for which the evidence to date is ambiguous (Kokolakakis, Lera-López, & Ramchandani, 2018).

Research has examined different sporting events to determine how a participation legacy can be achieved, through the process of leveraging. Leading to valuable insights into club capacity, inter club competition and the importance of partnerships and embedding strategies into an organisation's marketing mix (Taks, Green, Misener & Chalip, 2018; Taks, Chalip, & Green, 2015). Yet, few studies have investigated this within the context of a MSE, either at the national VSO level (Girginov et al., 2017; Hayday, Pappous & Koutrou, 2017) or local club level (Macrae, 2017; Pappous & Hayday, 2016); to identify the specific components that need to be considered by Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs), when working with sports organisations to increase sport participation.

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that VSO managers (across LOPG and non-LOPG sports) noted as influential in their ability to deliver the legacy objectives. Also, if they perceived particular organisational characteristics affected their capacity to leverage such outcomes from a MSE. This empirical study aimed to answer two specific research questions:

**RQ1:** What aspects did senior managers of National VSOs identify as influential in their sports' capacity to leverage a sport participation legacy?

**RQ2:** How did specific National VSOs characteristics differentiate the way senior managers perceived their leveraging capabilities when aiming to deliver a sport participation legacy?

## **Literature Review**

## ***Legacy and Sports Participation***

Britain et al. (2018) notes that due to the substantial costs of hosting MSEs, event organisers and politicians often rely on additional legacy outcomes to justify expenditure. Preuss (2007) highlights that legacy can take multiple forms, whether planned/unplanned, positive/negative, tangible/intangible, importantly it remains beyond the event itself. Legacy has become a central part of MSE academic discourse, with much controversy surrounding the outcomes MSEs are perceived to create, as well as debate on how it is created (Grix, Brannagan, Wood & Wynne, 2017). MSE legacy to varying degrees could be seen as a wicked problem due to its complexity and more research is needed to understand how legacy is delivered and the factors that enhance or constrain it (Byers, Hayday & Pappous, 2019).

Sport participation is often included in the ‘legacy package’, which is often promoted to encourage support from local communities (Reis et al., 2017). Politicians and MSE hosts refer to the ‘trickle-down effect’, believing that exposure to elite sport will stimulate mass sports participation. Research supporting the trickle-down effect is often anecdotal, with limited investigation into population data (Hindson, Gidlow & Peebles, 1994; Reis et al., 2017). Quantitative examination into sport participation levels often provides little evidence to support a sustained increase (Kokolakakis, Lera-López, & Ramchandani, 2018; Weed et al., 2015), yet some studies have demonstrated a positive participation increase (Potwarka & Leatherdale, 2016; Ramchandani, Coleman & Christy, 2017).

A systematic review undertaken by Thomson et al. (2018) into MSE legacy, highlights the dominant focus placed on legacy planning (in over 50% of the papers reviewed), with emphasis on engaging key stakeholders and integrating legacy strategies into host cities, to maximise MSE outcomes. As with appropriate investment and leveraging strategies, MSEs could mobilise individuals already positively engaged in sport to re-start, switch activity or increase engagement (Weed, 2018). Ferrari and Guala (2017) acknowledge

the importance of stakeholder engagement and planning to leverage legacy outcomes, as when assessing legacy, it is important to evaluate and compare multiple stakeholders' perspectives over longer periods (Bocarro, Byers & Carter, 2018). This attention on legacy planning, demonstrates a shift within the academic discourse away from legacy and MSE outcomes, towards the related concept of leveraging.

### ***Leveraging and London 2012 Legacy Plans***

Leveraging focuses on strategies and tactics which aim to enhance and optimise intended outcomes, proposing that the event should be integrated into the existing host community's services (Chalip, 2018; Taks, Chalip & Green, 2015). For sport participation, there is a complex network of organisations (sport and non-sport) that must collectively commit to shared objectives, to ensure effective leveraging can occur (Chalip, Green, Taks & Misener, 2017). Chalip et al. (2017) also notes the importance contextual and resource considerations to facilitating MSE leveraging, as for example, policy changes, the economic situation and external environment were noted as inhibitors in leveraging the LOPG legacy in North West England (Lovett & Bloyce, 2017). Hayday et al. (2017) noted the constraining effect of VSOs' having limited resources to support their club network, who themselves have insufficient human and physical resources (May, Harris & Collins, 2013; Taks et al., 2018).

Chalip (2018) indicates greater understanding is needed into the parameters required to effectively leverage and generate sport participation. Limited empirical evidence has focused on managerial stakeholders' and their attitudes towards MSEs, with only a few studies examining VSO capacity building and legacy perceptions (Girginov et al., 2017; Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010). The UK Government outlined ambitious plans to transform UK sport and increase participation (Reis et al., 2017). A core policy created pre-Games, outlined a plan to increase participation by two million between 2008-2012, yet this was

abandoned in 2011 (Bretherton, Piggin & Bodet, 2016). Resulting in the adoption of an unspecific policy target in 2012 to ‘increase... the proportion of people regularly playing sport, in particular those between 14- 25 years old’ (DCMS, 2012, p.3).

To leverage this participation objective, eligible VSOs submitted Whole Sport Plans outlining their strategies and 46 VSOs, including both LOPG and non-LOPG sports received funding (Sport England, 2016a). Importantly, non-LOPG sports experienced disengagement and limited involvement in creating and leveraging a sport participation legacy (Hayday et al., 2017). Chalip et al. (2017) notes although MSEs bring prominent media attention, less popular sports may have limited opportunities to attract this, threatening leveraging and event acceptance, this tension is only emphasised for non-LOPG sports (Girginov & Hills, 2008).

### ***Policy Implementation***

VSOs and their network of local clubs were placed at the centre of SE’s strategy (Sport England, 2008) to create and implement legacy plans. Valuable insights and challenges have been noted, when examining the use of community clubs as policy implementers (i.e. May et al., 2012; Skille, 2008). Limited research has focused on the implementation of MSE focused participation policies, or the perceptions of VSO managerial stakeholders involved in this process (Girginov et al., 2017; Hayday, Pappous & Koutrou, 2017).

Policy implementation investigates the processes that lead to a certain outcome (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973) and there are three main theoretical perspectives: top-down, bottom-up and synthesis (See: Winter, 2007). Although a detailed examination of the implementation literature is beyond the scope of this paper, there is a need to discuss the characteristics of these approaches and provide a rationale for the implementation perspective chosen.



Top-down theorists (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1983; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975) follow a centralised, hierarchical perspective of policy creation which follows a linear path to implementation through compliant delivery agencies. Yet, this is often noted as too simplistic, not accounting for the disposition (cultural and behavioural norms) of implementers, who are vital to successful implementation (Ewalt & Jennings 2004; O'Gorman, 2011; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1983).

In contrast, bottom-up theorists (Hjern & Hull, 1982; Lipsky, 1980) stress the importance of 'street level bureaucrats' who play a significant role in how the policy is implemented. The willingness of implementing agents and policy outcomes are influenced by local contexts, as policy objectives could be rejected and lead to contestation, if there is misalignment with their aims and values (O'Gorman, 2011; Skille, 2008). Yet, Matland (1995) notes there is an over emphasis on local autonomy, when these local contextual actions still fall within the borders of the central policy. Thus, it is not possible to separate policy formation from implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2009), highlighting a complexity of a purely bottom up approach.

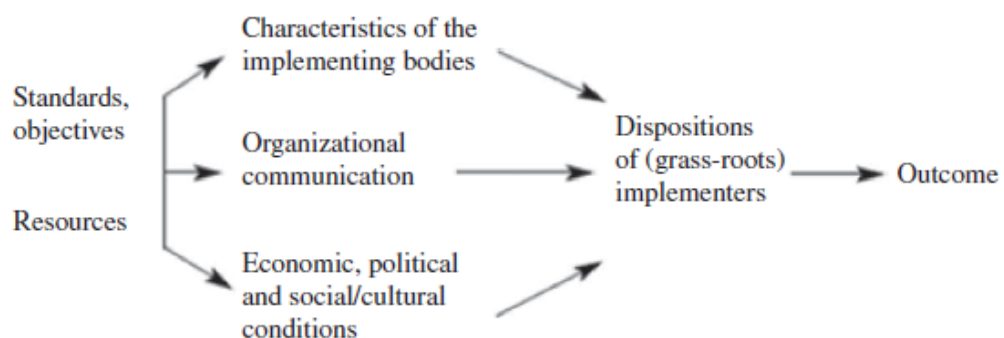
A third generation of implementation research seeks to synthesize elements of both top-down/bottom-up (Elmore, 1979; Goggin et al., 1990, Matland, 1995), yet O'Gorman (2011, p.94) notes most synthesised perspectives are 'little more than a simultaneous combination of top-down/bottom-up approaches' and don't allow for theoretical examination of relationships (Matland, 1995). Network theories have advanced implementation studies beyond the top-down/bottom-up identification, (i.e. Sabatier, 1986; Marsh & Smith, 2001), yet this research has shifted more to investigate policy change, rather than the implementation of a specific policy (O'Gorman, 2011). Matland's (2005) ambiguity-conflict matrix, although a valuable perspective offering a progressive form of implementation analysis, provides explanation of when the bottom-up or top-

down perspective is most appropriate, rather than identifying core elements of the policy implementation process. Given this research's focus on identifying and understanding the aspects involved in creating a sport participation legacy, the applicability of this model is limited.

Thus, due to this research's focus on VSO senior managers' perceptions towards a MSE legacy and the identification of aspects, which hindered or enhanced legacy production, the theoretical framework needed to reflect the research purpose and context. Importantly, Kay (1996) notes sport policy is an example of top-down policy and this perspective echoes the specific community sport strategy (2012-2017) which was in place surrounding the mega event (May, Harris & Collins, 2013).

Authors believe it is critical to utilise a model which reflects the reality of the system under investigation, as well as the top-down perspective through with MSE legacies are often determined through authoritative, senior stakeholders in bid documentation (Reis et al, 2017). Yet, unlike other 'top-down' perspectives, Van Meter & Van Horn, (1975) model considers the characteristics and willingness of grassroots implementers to engage in policy delivery, which is a valuable characteristic to examine and explore with VSO managers.

**Figure 1: The Policy Implementation Process, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) modified and cited by Kjellberg and Reitan (1995, p.143).**



Furthermore, Van Meter & Van Horn, (1975) model was utilised in conjunction with Girginov and Hills (2008) conceptualisation of legacy construction (Table 1). Thus, it was critical to select a model, which allows the investigation and identification of highly relevant variables and their interrelationships, as a core feature (May, Harris & Collins, 2013), as this research looked to identify which aspects VSO managers believed enhanced or inhibited their ability to process a sport participation legacy.

### ***Perceptions of Key Stakeholders***

When hosting MSEs, numerous stakeholders are involved and ‘for a mega event to be successful, the understanding and participation of all stakeholders in the process is crucial’ (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006, p.606). Preuss’ (2015) legacy framework identified the importance of stakeholder perspectives through a ‘WHO’ component, yet as legacy is seen differently by multiple stakeholders, this leads to complexity in legacy measurement. Research into MSE stakeholders has focused on many groups such as residents (Ritchie, Shipway & Cleeve, 2009), politicians (Rocha, 2015), disability sport administrators and participants (Brown & Pappous, 2018), individual VSOs (Girginov & Hills, 2008) and broader managerial stakeholders involved in MSE delivery (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010).

Limited focus has been placed on VSOs managers, who are often responsible for the creation and implementation of sport participation legacies. Chalip (2018) and Reis et al., (2017) note the importance of fully embedding legacy strategies into the marketing mix and existing sports systems, for which these senior stakeholders are responsible. The subsequent sections cover the methodological approach used and results are then presented, alongside a discussion and recommendations for future research.

## **Method**

A mixed method approach was utilised, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights from VSO stakeholders. Data was collected between February- June 2015, nearly three years post LOPG, meaning legacy successes and failures were starting to be revealed, as legacy effects may not be felt until an extended period after the event itself (Preuss, 2014).

***Survey Creation and Data Collection***

To develop this multi-layered study a four-stage, triangulated approach was used, applying complementary qualitative and quantitative methods for the validation and exploration of relevant concepts.

A) Initially, key themes were identified (Table 1) primarily through the work of Girginov and Hills (2008) who identified five conceptual elements of legacy construction and sustainable sports development processes in their study. Hughes (2013) utilised this conceptualisation and further interpreted it, within the context of VSOs and LOPG. The key processes and phases of the (2012–2017) community sport policy strategy (May, Harris & Collins, 2013), were also included, as they reflect the reality of the top-down policy system. These alongside the characteristics outlined in Van Meter and Van Horn’s (1975) implementation model, were identified as contextually relevant themes to examine and identify the aspects that VSO managers noted as influential in their ability to deliver the participation legacy.

**Table 1- Key Themes Relevant to the Creation of a Sport Participation Legacy for London 2012 Games.**

Girginov & Hills (2008)		Hughes (2013)	
Sport participation discourse creation	⇒	VSO involvement in legacy discourse	Conceptual elements of legacy
Process of social learning and knowledge development	⇒	The influence of LOPG on VSO strategy (how to maximise the MSE benefits)	
Engagement with participating members and groups	⇒	How VSO Whole Sport Plans relate to LOPG legacy plans (resources, especially funding)	

Organisational structures and management models	⇒ What sporting and human capital VSOs have invested (capacity building, club empowerment)	construction and sustainable sports development
Developing capacity to create, test and maintain opportunities for participation.	⇒ How do VSOs consider LOPG would help them realise their strategy post Games	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National agencies (DCMS and Sport England) agree policy objective</li> <li>2. National VSOs plan delivery of objectives and resources required; Sport England reviews VSO's plan and awards funding</li> <li>3. VSOs work with other partners (County Sports Partnerships and clubs) to deliver plan</li> <li>4. Sport England evaluates progress against agreed targets and takes remedial action as necessary</li> </ol>		<p>Top-down (2012–2017) community sport strategy</p> <p>(May, Harris &amp; Collins, 2013).</p>

B) Subsequently, four exploratory focus groups (County Sport Partnership (CSP),  $n=1$  and VSOs,  $n=3$ ) were undertaken with a total of 14 individuals who are involved in planning and delivering the community sport strategy. The CSP had strong engagement and shared staff with three VSOs to support the community sport strategy. Furthermore, the three VSOs were selected to ensure VSO diversity and representation (ensuring variation in terms of size, sport type, and funding received). This qualitative element provided construct validity to the themes identified in the literature, as participants discussed their relevance and refined these themes which led to the finalised item and question generation.

C) To further explore the above themes that emerged through the focus groups, an exploratory survey was designed. A survey was the most effective method to ensure a large sample could be achieved from senior VSO stakeholders. The first draft of the survey was reviewed for content validity by a total of six sports sector (VSO) and academic professionals prior to distribution.

D) Finally, the survey in its online format was piloted by two academics and a sport development professional to replicate data collection conditions (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

This process resulted in the development of the final mixed method survey, which comprised of 26 items, measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree, the middle point (4) held a neutral value. Alongside these, 19 qualitative questions provided an opportunity for rich insights to be gained from VSO managers. A personalised email was sent to all possible participants (CEOs, senior and regional managers), across the 46 funded VSOs. Overall, 105 responses were received from 37 out of the 46 Sport England funded VSOs, resulting in an 83% response rate.

### ***Rationale for Analysis***

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) allowed related variables associated to stakeholder's perceptions surrounding MSEs to be summarised, transformed into a smaller set of linear combinations and explains total variance (Pallant, 2016). PCA reduces potential problems with factor indeterminacy and is 'psychometrically sound' (Stevens, 1996, p.363). MANOVA's were undertaken to further examine the four factors discovered through PCA (dependent variables), to determine whether there were any differences between these components and specific VSO characteristics (independent variables) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Independent variables related to aspects that may impact a VSOs capacity to deliver legacy objectives, such as the employee's proximity to club network (characteristic of implementing agency: Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), size of sport (examination of less popular sports: Chalip et al., 2017), challenges felt by non-LOPG sports (Girginov & Hills, 2008; Hayday et al., 2017) and funding received (Deloitte & Touche, 2003). The level of funding achieved directly impacts the capacity and resources available to VSO and their clubs, as VSOs are often underfunded (Girginov et al., 2017). Furthermore, Henry and

Theodoraki (2000) note that VSO ability to respond is influenced by the organisation's health (economic position, resource dependency and size of membership base). Thus, the selected independent variables were type of sport (LOPG, non-LOPG), funding level (increased or decreased<sup>3</sup>), sport size (participation based: small, medium or large<sup>4</sup>) and employment type (CEO, senior or regional manager).

### ***Data Analysis***

PCA was employed using oblique rotation (direct oblimin) (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy (0.734) and Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance ( $p < 0.00$ ), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Literature guidelines on factor extraction were adhered to, and a minimum loading value of 0.512 was accepted (Stevens, 1996). Loadings, the (%) of total variance and scree plots were examined, five items were removed, and a four-factor solution was deemed most appropriate (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

Preliminary assumption testing was undertaken for MANOVA and all assumptions were met, except when considering normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov value for two of the dependent variables ('Event Capitalisation and Opportunities' and 'Club Engagement and Implementation') was 0.00, thus violating normality. Therefore, bootstrapping was used to ensure that robust estimates were derived regardless of the small sample size (Efron & Tibeshirami, 1993). Qualitative results were analysed and coded using Open and Axial coding (Bryman, 2012), once initial codes were assigned, these were verified by each author individually, and then were collectively discussed to achieve face validity and consensus among the three coders.

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<sup>3</sup> The third category, in which funding 'stayed the same' was removed due to a small sample  $n=4$ .

<sup>4</sup> Three categories were formed, to segment the NGBs relating to annual participant size: small [under 49,999 participants], medium [50,000-299,999 participants] or large [300,000+ participants], through the participation rates documented on APS8 (Oct 2013 – Oct 2014).

## Results

105 responses provided 83% representation across the 46 funded sports (67% LOPG sports, 33% non-LOPG sports). Participants employment was explored, due to known high staff turnover within the industry (Corfe, 2014), to understand their level and length of involvement with leveraging strategies. Staff turnover was evident, with 61% being in post for 0-3 years, whilst 37% were in post for 4+ years, (2%- not disclosed). Employment type was split into CEO (13.3%), national (52.4%) and regional managers (28.6%), (5.7%) not disclosed.

The employee's length of service should be noted, as 61% were not in post pre LOPG, meaning some insights into the legacy planning may not be captured. Yet, as the focus of the research was on VSOs implementation process and their capacity to deliver, valuable insights can still be drawn from this participant group. Furthermore, 36% of respondents held a junior position within the organisation, highlighting their potential awareness of sport participation strategies.

PCA results are presented in Table 2. Overall, the four extracted factors accounted for 51.5% of the variance across the data set. Internal consistency was measured through Cronbach Reliability Alphas ( $\alpha$ ) and all exceed the minimum accepted value of 0.70 (Pallant, 2016).

**Table 2: Summary of PCA-VSO managers perceptions towards their sports capacity to deliver the LOPG Sport Participation Legacy ( $n=105$ ).**

Item	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Objectives, Standards &amp; Resources</b>				
I was pleased with the financial support provided by SE in the build-up	.811			



to the Games				
I felt satisfied with the level of guidance provided by SE in the build-up to the Games	.725			
I was pleased with the financial support provided by SE after the Games	.717			
I felt satisfied with the level of guidance provided by SE after the Games	.681			
We were happy to share our successes with other VSOs, despite the competitive nature of funding within English sports	.612			
I felt satisfied with the funding opportunities that hosting the Games brought to our sport	.583			
I understood the SE requirements placed on us in our responsibility to increase grass-root participation	.548			
<b>2. Event Capitalisation &amp; Opportunities</b>				
The Games provided us with a unique opportunity to show-case our sport		.874		
The nation's expectations surrounding the Olympic objective of increasing participation, provided an opportunity for us to inspire people to take up the sport		.803		
Our organisation implemented specific participation programmes/strategies to make the most of the Games		.584		
We created and planned participation strategies and programmes to ensure we could capitalise on the Games		.573		
<b>3. Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>				
SE monitoring has made our organisation more efficient		.906		
The APS monitoring and evidence needed by SE has improved our research and insight into our participation programmes and client demographics		.817		
I am satisfied with the APS (or your alternative) as an evaluative method from which our funding is decided		.765		
<b>4. Club Engagement &amp; Implementation</b>				
The communication between our VSO and clubs requires no improvements		.696		
VSCs had the necessary financial resources to successfully implement our programmes and meet participation objectives		.693		
Implementation of our participation programmes was consistent across our club network		.645		
Clubs had the necessary guidance to successfully implement our programmes and meet participation objectives		.622		
The clubs were fully aware and understood our participation strategies and programmes		.614		
Knowledge transfer from the VSO to the clubs regarding the successes and failures of our participation programmes occurred		.605		
We fully engaged clubs with the programmes that were created to increase participation levels		.595		
<hr/>				
Eigenvalue	6.54	2.75	2.27	1.83
Variance Explained (%)	25.2	10.6	8.7	7.0
Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	0.84	0.79	0.81	0.79
<hr/>				
Mean	4.83	5.36	3.97	3.95
SD	1.03	1.23	1.47	0.93
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***Factor Interpretation***

The first factor consisted of seven variables, which related to requirements, resources and both financial support and guidance provided by Sport England, pre and post the MSE. Thus, due to the nature of these loaded items, Factor one was labelled ‘Objectives, Standards and Resources’. Factor two included four items, reflecting the unique opportunities the LOPG provided VSOs to showcase their sport, inspire participation, as well as the creation and implementation of participation initiatives to utilise the MSEs profile effectively. Hence, the second factor was labelled ‘Event Capitalisation and Opportunities’.

Factor three included three items, relating to evaluation and assessment processes, including the Active People Survey (APS), Sport England’s evaluation and monitoring tool. Loaded items highlighted that the evaluation processes strengthened the efficiency of VSOs research and insight teams. Therefore, the third factor was labelled ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’. Factor four, consisted of four items and focused on the relationship between the VSO and clubs, implementation and support. The highest loading variable communication is fundamental to effective implementation and club engagement, thus factor four was named ‘Club Engagement and Implementation’.

### ***MANOVAs***

Four separate one-way MANOVAs examined the variation between the four factors (dependent variables) and independent variables (outlined above p.11). Significant differences were identified across two characteristics, sport and funding type.

A one-way MANOVA (Table 3) investigated if sport type differentiated the way senior managers perceived the delivery of a sport participation legacy. Only the homogeneity of variance assumption was not met, as the Box’s M Sig. value was 0.000 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variance indicated the breach in assumption, for one dependent variables (‘Opportunities for Capitalisation’ 0.00), hence a

more conservative alpha value of ( $p < .01$ ) was set. Interestingly, a statistically significant difference was identified between LOPG and non-LOPG sports across two dependent variables, ‘Opportunities for Capitalisation’,  $F(1, 101) = 52.44, p < .01$  and ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’,  $F(1, 101) = 5.13, p < .05$ .

**Table 3: Descriptive (M, SD) and Significance Values of Leveraging Factors by Sport type (LOPG and non-LOPG sports)**

Factors	LOPG (N=69)	Non-LOPG (N=34)	Sig (between subjects)
1- Objectives, Standards & Resources	4.81 (1.08)	4.89 (0.96)	0.726
2- Event Capitalisation & Opportunities	5.86 (0.77)	4.33 (1.37)	0.000*
3- Monitoring & Evaluation	3.73 (1.42)	4.42 (1.51)	0.026**
4- Club Engagement & Implementation	3.83 (1.02)	4.19 (0.70)	0.068

\* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .05$

An additional one-way MANOVA (Table 4) investigated if funding level differentiated the way senior managers perceived the delivery of a sport participation legacy. All assumptions were met, and a statistically significant difference was identified between funding type and the dependent variable ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’,  $F(1, 97) = 6.99, p < .05$ .

**Table 4: Descriptive (M, SD) and Significance Values of Leveraging Factors by Funding Level (Increased or Decreased).**

Factors	Increased (N=66)	Decreased (N=33)	Sig (between subjects)
1-Objectives, Standards & Resources	4.84 (1.10)	4.73 (0.95)	0.602
2- Event Capitalisation & Opportunities	5.20 (1.39)	5.70 (0.79)	0.057
3- Monitoring & Evaluation	4.16 (1.39)	3.36 (1.44)	0.010*
4- Club Engagement & Implementation	3.93 (0.99)	3.90 (0.841)	0.863

\* $p < .05$

## Discussion

PCA aided the identification of four factors, alongside qualitative insights which will now be discussed. These findings indicate the complexity of delivering a sport participation legacy and highlight the need for clear objectives, consultation with multiple stakeholders especially at the community level, recognition of different sports and bespoke funding and support mechanisms.

### ***Objectives, Standards and Resources***

When national policies and objectives are set, it is fundamental for stakeholders to understand what is expected of them, yet participants lacked clarity on specific leveraging initiatives. As:

*The real problem was that no one really got inside what was meant by participation - it was one of those glib statements from the politicians... Few [VSOs] gripped the real meaning of participation and focused purely on more participation to secure...funding (VSO National Manager).*

A lack of stakeholder consensus was identified with differing interpretations (Girginov & Hills, 2008) and understanding of specific sport participation legacy discourse and strategies, as there was ‘conflicting guidance from Sport England’ (VSO Interviewee-position undisclosed). Others didn’t believe any clear leveraging had occurred, ‘there was no strategy to increase participation in clubs. It was just a hope that people would see the tv, get excited and sign up’ (VSO Regional Manager), impeding the creation and implementation of a participation legacy.

Factor one consisted of items related to objectives, guidance, capacity and resources, many indicated legacy strategies were neither integrated nor long term in their design, as ‘NGB strategies should be long term, at least 8 years and we shouldn’t get significantly deflected by other factors that are beyond our control or influence’ (VSO Regional Manager). Many scholars have noted the importance of long term planning and embedding legacy

initiatives into existing systems and strategies to ensure their effectiveness (Reis, et al., 2017; Taks et al., 2015; Thomson et al., 2018); however this ‘seemed as if it was a stand-alone effort’ (VSO Regional Manager).

Additionally, four out of the seven loaded variables related to resources and VSO capacity, and ‘across the industry...people did not have enough time, and ...additional capacity to have a 'joined-up' and planned approach to creating the legacy’ (VSO Regional Manager). Many stressed limited capacity, ‘we are only able to support a limited number of clubs ... the majority of clubs are not supported in a meaningful way’ (VSO National Manager), meaning a lack of human resources and limited collaborative actions at the community level hindered leveraging efforts (Taks, Misener, Chalip & Green, 2013).

Sport England’s strategy targeted 14-25-year olds and although a planned strategy resistance was evident as ‘increasing [participation] in 14-25 does not meet the interest or needs of all our clubs (VSO National Manager) and doesn’t ‘reflect the reality on the ground’ (VSO ex-CEO<sup>5</sup>). Some suggested the need for a more embedded, localised and collaborative approach, VSOs should ‘develop strategies and work with their own communities, which will ultimately create more long-term legacy for the sport’ (VSO National Manager), research has illustrated the potential of localized sport development legacy strategies rather than the traditional top down approaches (Girginov, 2011; Reis et al., 2017). This reinforces the need for consultation between key stakeholders such as policy makers, VSOs and clubs to allow the creation of suitable and sustainable leveraging strategies, ensuring a more integrated fit into the existing services mix (Chalip, 2018). As ‘it was not a question of variation but a combination of flexibility and targeting specific segments...different segments and geographies play our sport in different ways, if the offer is too rigid it will fail’ (VSO

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<sup>5</sup> This participant was the CEO of a VSO for 25 years and despite having recently retired during data collection, their views were included due to the valuable insights gained and limited knowledge of the interim CEO.

National Manager), indicating the complexity and wickedness of legacy delivery (Byers, Hayday & Pappous, 2019).

### ***Club Engagement and Implementation***

Leveraging strategies aimed to utilise the community sport network and a diversity of attitudes and individuals involved within the club network were noted by participants as impacting leveraging efforts:

*‘some of the clubs were not interested in what the [VSO] wanted to implement...they had their own motivations and plans, you need to spin it to make clubs think there is something in it for them-then you may have a chance’* (VSO Regional Manager).

Challenges have been noted when engaging sports clubs in policy implementation (May et al., 2013), as many ‘clubs are insular, they think about just their club and getting by’ (VSO CEO). Barriers associated to broader policy were identified, as ‘[sports clubs] do not exist to satisfy the whims of SE. As a result, there is an invisible wall between clubs and [VSOs], which are tasked with carrying out SE strategies’ (VSO Regional Manager). This disengagement is influenced by a lack of open, two-way communication, as there were ‘poor communication processes’ (VSO National Manager) impacting the acceptance and understanding of leveraging strategies. Previous studies have indicated capacity and communication challenges between VSOs and clubs, highlighting the need to strengthen inter-organisational communication, to ensure clubs feel supported and engaged (Macrae, 2017; Pappous & Hayday, 2016).

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Challenges and issues have been evidenced with the monitoring and evaluation processes required by Sport England (House of Lords, 2013). Some felt this process enhanced their VSOs’ research and insight teams and its efficiency, by providing ‘set goals to

work towards and helped concentrate some time, resources and funding to the general/casual participant sector' (VSO National Manager). Predominately, there was an air of negativity with the evaluation mechanisms, as the 'APS [didn't] really work well for smaller sport or for those sports that have a larger transient participation base' (VSO CEO).

A statistically significant difference (Table 3) was noted between funding type and the factor 'Monitoring and Evaluation'. Although this funding is not directly related to the MSE, it has significant relevance to the VSOs ability to respond and deliver sports participation initiatives, due to this dependency on government funding and achievement of governmental objectives (Goodwin & Grix, 2011; Henry & Theodoraki, 2000). Strong views were voiced, 'I'm sorry but anyone with half a brain could devise a better way of assessing numbers, this process alone has done more to damage SE credibility than any other action over the last ten years' (VSO National Manager). Interestingly, in light of these finding there has been a new strategy and collaborative method to outcome creation and measurement through a new survey 'Active Lives' which has been adopted (Sport England, 2016b), highlighting the importance of tailored sport specific support and measurement mechanisms.

### ***Event Capitalisation and Opportunities***

The LOPG was identified as a capitalisation tool to inspire participation, with many noting the unique opportunity, 'the publicity of the Games definitely increased awareness and enthusiasm of the minor disciplines' (VSO Regional Manager). Yet, it was acknowledged that the event alone is not enough, 'remember that the Olympics is not necessarily going to make people jump off their sofa and do sport!' (VSO Regional Manager). Reinforcing the importance of legacy planning and appropriate leveraging to elicit participation of certain group (Thomson et al., 2018; Weed, 2018).

VSOs are responsible for the management of each sport nationally, however concerns have been raised about their capacity to deliver wider policy objectives (such as sport

participation leveraging strategies), as they are often under resourced, with concerns around volunteer delivery capacity and facility availability (Girginov et al., 2017). This was especially evident in smaller VSOs (or non-LOPG sports), where the opportunity to showcase their sport may be limited (Chalip et al., 2017). One VSO National Manager states ‘it is almost impossible for the smaller [VSOs] ...The resources we have at the [VSO] are too diluted to reach down effectively to grassroots’. These capacity issues filtered through to the club level as ‘our clubs were not ready, and there were not enough to cope with the demand’ (VSO National Manager).

The challenges related to capacity and sport type were captured well by one VSO National Manager:

*‘Be ready for the Games...don't [let] technological issues such as website capacity or human capacity prevent you from capitalising on this opportunity. See this is an opportunity to celebrate all sport, and not just the traditional sports of the Olympics’.*

There is a need for heightened involvement of all (including non-LOPG) VSO organisations to encourage strategic involvement and an embedded approach to the leveraging process (Chalip, 2017), which are tailored to the needs and characteristics of differing sports.

### ***Influence of Sport Type***

Significance was noted between LOPG and non-LOPG sports, for two of the dependent variables ‘Event Capitalisation and Opportunities’ and ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’ (Table 3). This suggests that depending on whether the sport is part of this MSE or not, has a significant impact on the way VSOs stakeholders perceive monitoring and evaluation procedures and capitalisation opportunities. Firstly, challenges and disengagement of non-LOPG sports have been noted (Hayday et al., 2017). Detachment and frustration was evident ‘as a non-Olympic sport we were not included in discussions’ (VSO national



manager) and ‘we did not really have an opportunity/need to discuss specifically the success and failures related to the Olympics’ (VSO national manager).

This accentuates the need to segment VSOs and use targeted strategies, guidance and possibly differing monitoring processes depending on sport type, due to the divergent perceptions and objectives held by these different stakeholders (Preuss, 2014). As ‘each sport is different, and an appropriate strategy needs to be designed for each sport’ (VSO CEO), supporting the views of Girginov and Hills (2008) who noted the legacy will remain elusive until the rights and needs of different sports are recognised. As similar requirement has been suggested for the club level (May et al., 2013). This indicates an important finding, as if all stakeholders are expected to contribute and engage in the MSE strategy and encourage sport participation, they need to have a voice and feel part of the legacy planning.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This research was one of the few, to target senior VSO managers, whose organisations were the primary mechanism chosen to leverage a sport participation legacy. A limitation of this study was the small sample size of VSOs managers used ( $n=105$ ), however this is illustrative of the target population (representation from 83% funded VSOs). 61% of the participants were in post for 0-3 years, which as noted above, could be a limiting factor in terms of their awareness of all leveraging strategies implemented by their VSOs. Yet, since this study focused on the implementation post-event and the APS was used as the main monitoring tool until December 2016 (4 years post event), VSOs managers’ insights towards that process is still valuable and applicable for long-term legacy sustainability, even if they joined their VSO after LOPG.

Future MSE research would benefit from investigating other valuable stakeholder groups to understand the ‘WHO’ (Preuss, 2015) relevant to that MSEs context, such as sports

clubs, charities, health agencies and local authorities. Further research into other relevant characteristics that may influence VSO capacity to deliver national sport policies in relation to MSEs would be beneficial, such as networks, collaboration and partnerships with other organisations (Sport England, 2016a).

It is crucial to acknowledge that the opinions of these key stakeholders may not be directly transferable to other MSE host countries, as cultural and social differences need to be considered in each context, in particular for MSE that do not plan for a participation legacy. Yet, this study identifies relevant characteristics that should be considered by future MSE hosts who are looking to create a sport participation legacy, as well as international sport systems that rely on hierarchical, top-down policy implementation, utilising VSOs as their main delivery agent.

### **Practical Implications**

This study has provided novel insights and identified the relevance of ‘Objectives, Standards & Resources’, ‘Event Capitalisation & Opportunities’, ‘Monitoring & Evaluation’ and ‘Club Engagement & Implementation’, which were influential when aiming to leverage a sport participation legacy from LOPG. Lessons can also be learned for future MSEs on what could have been done, to more effectively to leverage a sport participation legacy post-Games. Collectively, the implications of these findings suggest that OCOGs cannot deliver legacies alone due to their focus on Games-delivery and temporal nature. Thus, OCOGs must engage with key local and national stakeholders to effectively plan for and engender sport participation for host cities. As the LOPG had the specific legacy objective of increasing sports participation, the factors identified in this study provide a basis for future studies to consider when investigating sport participation and leveraging within other event contexts.

The main recommendations generated from the study's findings are: 1) future OCOGs that have a focus on sport participation legacy should consult and develop targeted engagement strategies with multiple stakeholders (i.e. national VSOs, regional organisations, sport clubs) to engender sustained sport participation, rather than employing top-down approaches to legacy delivery. 2) Ensure clear leveraging objectives are set for legacy outcomes that can be monitored and understood by all. 3) Create support structures, provide resources and funding mechanisms that are relevant to each sport, to deliver a sustainable sport participation legacy. 4) Develop tailored strategies, to enhance engagement and inclusion of both Olympic and non-Olympic sports regardless of their size, popularity, capacity and capitalisation opportunities. 5) Finally, although hard to control given the general short-time span of careers in sport organisations, future event organisers should try to ensure consistency of personnel, which is important when planning and implementing leveraging initiatives. These insights can inform future Games' stakeholders, responsible to ensure the development and implementation of suitable and valuable sport participation leveraging strategies, which can maximise the legacy benefits for a host nation.

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