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The Youth Olympic Games: The best of the Olympics or a poor copy?

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Abstract

This paper explores the new event in the Olympic Movement, the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in Innsbruck, Austria, in 2012, and examines the similarities and differences between the winter editions of the YOG and the Olympic Games (OG). The qualitative case study utilized a stakeholder approach and revealed four main groupings that differed in relative salience as compared to the OG: the host core stakeholders, international core stakeholders, sponsors and media, and parents and other stakeholders. From an external perspective, the YOG had the general 'look-and-feel' of the OG, despite their smaller size and relatively lesser involvement by sponsors and the media. However, this may have helped showcase Olympic Movement tenets like those presented in the Culture and Education Program. The YOG were thus closer to the Olympic ideals than the OG. We further discuss this and other paradoxes and disconnects requiring further debate and analysis.

Keywords: Youth Olympic Games, sports events, culture, young athletes, stakeholder approach

The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) were hosted for the first time in Singapore in 2010 (summer games) and then in Innsbruck, Austria in 2012 (winter games) after being approved by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at its session in Guatemala in 2007. Perhaps the strongest spokesperson for this global event for the youth was the President of the IOC, Jacques Rogge. He justified his support with a growing concern regarding a decline in physical activity and an increase in obesity among young people (IOC, 2007a). The YOG vision is to inspire young people (in the 14-18 age group) around the world to participate in sport and adopt and live by the Olympic Values (IOC, 2011a). The IOC has eight objectives for the YOG, which are to bring together and celebrate the world's best athletes: use the event as an arena for a unique and powerful introduction to Olympism; educate the youth on the Olympic values; have the youth share and celebrate the different worldwide cultures; reach youth communities throughout the world to promote Olympic values; raise awareness among young people of sport and sport practice; act as a platform for initiatives within the Olympic Movement; and be an event of the highest international sporting standard for young people (IOC, 2011a). To help in meeting these objectives, the youths are supposed to remain in the Olympic Village for the entire 10-day period of the Games. In his opening speech at the first Winter YOG in Innsbruck, Rogge expressed high expectations to the athletes: 'As the next generation of sports men and women, you are now the role models that represent our hopes for the future,' and 'You have a chance to be true champions, not only by winning medals, but by conducting yourself like Olympians' (IOC, 2012, p. 4).

As the concept is new for the IOC, there has been little attention from scholars. However, there are some exceptions. Judge, Petersen, and Lydum (2009) asked prior to the first YOG in 2010 what the actual result of the YOG would be: 'Will the good intentions become a reality?' (p. 175). The authors added that the new concept has not been without criticism because the YOG may foster trends such as overtraining, increased dropout rates,

cheating, and overzealous coaches putting young athletes in danger. Further, Gold and Gold (2011) stated that the YOG are part of the expansion of the IOC's festival calendar that can be seen as another step in consolidating and enhancing the already-premier Olympic brand. Nevertheless, they found reason to suggest that 'they [the YOG] are an important step in helping to return the Olympics to something of their roots' (p. 405). The opportunities and challenges presented by launching the YOG have also been discussed by Wong (2011) who noted that 'by mirroring the adult games at the youth level, the IOC walks a fine line between celebrating what sport should be and succumbing to what has become a sporting model dominated by excessive competition' (p. 1839). Parry (2012) followed the same line of thought by stating that the systematic distribution of elite sport into the child population means carefully monitoring some serious ethical risks and value questions. Digel (2008) also discussed the innovative aspect of the selected disciplines and events chosen; in the case of the YOG, the IOC depends on the cooperation of the different international federations in order to succeed.

Researchers examining the YOG have emphasized the limited data available and have asked for more research. Judge and his colleagues claimed, with reference to the media (Brennan, 2007), that the YOG had received very little attention and stated that it was 'the best kept secret in sports' (Judge et al., 2009, p. 173). After the two first editions, knowledge about the YOG is increasing; hence, this paper aims to fill some gaps in the research literature on the burgeoning phenomenon of elite youth sports festivals/Games. Although there exists literature looking into youth festivals such as the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) and the Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF) (see Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010; Wong, 2011 as examples of studies examining youth festivals), the IOC has chosen to label this new youth event *Games* (and not Festival), thereby raising associations to the Olympic *Games*. Thus, we chose to use the 'real' Olympic Games (OG) as a basis for comparison. The purpose

of this paper was therefore to gain greater insight into the similarities and differences between the Winter YOG and the Olympic Winter Games. In order to answer this exploratory question, we first provide some contextual background. Then we present the stakeholder approach which is used as the basis for this study's conceptual framework as this approach allows additional insights from a variety of different stakeholder perspectives. We continue with a section on methods before the results and discussion. We conclude with some implications and future directions.

Contextual Background

The YOG is the first event introduced by the IOC since the Olympic Winter Games were established in 1924 (the two aforementioned festivals are not produced by the IOC itself). Separate summer and winter Games are hosted every fourth year, with the summer YOG staged in the years of the Olympic Winter Games and vice versa. As for the OG, the host city of the YOG is elected in a secret ballot by the members of the IOC after a bidding process where applicant cities are narrowed down to candidate cities (short list) by an evaluating commission established by the IOC (IOC, 2008a). A candidate city must achieve at least 50 percent of the votes to be designated the winner.

As shown in Table 1, there are some basic organizational similarities but also significant differences between the YOG and OG. The most recent winter OG and YOG are taken as a point of reference. All the international federations (IF) included in the OG were part of the YOG. 69 of the NOCs participated in Innsbruck compared to 82 in Vancouver for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. A larger number of participating NOCs won medals in Innsbruck (29 of 69) than in Vancouver (26 of 82).

Table 1

Statistical overview of the differences between the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and the 2012 Winter Youth Olympic Games

	Vancouver 2010	Innsbruck 2012
Candidates cities (short list)	3	2
Olympic Villages	2	1
Participating NOCs	82	69
Medal winning NOCs	26	29
Int. federations	7	7
Sports	15	15
Durations (days)	17	10
Medal events	86	63
Athletes	2566	1020
Competition venues	10	6
Spectators*	1.5 million ticket holders & 3.5 billion television viewers	110,000
Media/press representatives*	10,000	800
Volunteers*	25,000	1357

*Approximations.

Sources: IYOGOC, 2012b; IOC, 2011c; VANOC, 2010a

While the OG are characterized by gigantism (Preuss, 2004), the IOC stresses that the YOG shall be of moderate size (IOC, 2011a). The numbers of athletes are limited to 1,100 at the winter YOG, less than half the size of the OG. Media representative and volunteer numbers at the YOG are also scaled down. As a consequence, a greater number of smaller cities should be able to become Olympic host cities. Nevertheless, for the first two editions of the winter YOG, the IOC chose previous hosts of the OG. For Innsbruck (1964/1976) and Lillehammer (1994), the YOG are part of their Olympic legacy. Because no new venues

should be built to stage the YOG and the number of cities with facilities for certain sports such as luge, bob and ski jumping are limited, the pool of potential applicant cities will likely remain low.

Importantly, one of the most visible differences between the OG and YOG is the additional learning element introduced through the mandatory Cultural and Education Program, or CEP, which is based around five themes: Olympism, skills development, well-being and healthy life style, social responsibility, and expression.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on a stakeholder approach. Stakeholder theory allows for descriptive, instrumental, and normative analyses of the stakeholders, that is, the various individuals, groups and organizations that affect or are impacted by the actions of a focal organization (see Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984; Freeman, 1994; Parent, 2008; Phillips, Freeman, & Wicks, 2003). It allows the researcher to obtain various perspectives for a complex situation like the OG and YOG. Stakeholder theory has been used by various sport event researchers in the past to describe and analyse the event, the organizing committee and its stakeholders (e.g., Parent, 2008; Toohey, 2008).

The stakeholders involved in an OG include the organizing committee staff and volunteers, host governments, the media, the sponsors, international delegations (i.e., athletes, entourage and mission staff), the community, sport organizations (e.g., sport federations, other sports events and organizing committees) and other stakeholders such as regulatory bodies (e.g., World Anti-Doping Agency or WADA) and the United Nations (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008). Their relationships have been well defined for the OG (cf. Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008) and their position in relation to the IOC and the organizing committee has been noted (often by the IOC itself) using a variety of approaches from the hub-and-spoke or starburst model, to the constellation model, to the concentric circles model, and to

the inverted pyramid model (see Chappelet, 2012 for a description of these various stakeholder mapping approaches). What is important to remember is that the stakeholder map or environment of the focal organization and relationship characterization between the focal organization and its stakeholders are not static, they evolve over time, according to the issue at hand and the manager's perspective or cognitive understanding of their environment (Friedman, Parent, & Mason, 2004; Parent, 2008; Parent & Deephouse, 2007). Thus, changing one aspect, for example adding a goal such as one associated with culture or education, or changing the nature of a stakeholder, for example focusing on youth athletes, changes the stakeholder map. Although the OG stakeholder map is relatively well understood, one cannot assume such understanding of the YOG, which brings in new elements to the stakeholder map.

The stakeholder groups each have relationships with the organizing committee; however, they also interact amongst themselves in an Olympic network, also known as 'the Olympic Family' (The Olympic Museum, 2007), which allows for resource exchange and knowledge transfer/learning (cf. Ibarra, 1993; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Kogut, 2000; Vandekerckhove & Dentchev, 2005). According to the IOC President Jacques Rogge (2008), each member of the Olympic Family plays an important role for both the OG and YOG.

Although Rogge defined all stakeholders in the 'Family' as important, stakeholders can be analysed for their saliency or importance, which includes their contribution to the survival of the focal organization as primary or secondary stakeholder (Clarkson, 1995). Clarkson described stakeholder groups as being composed of stakeholders having 'similar interests, claims, or rights [...] A primary stakeholder group is one without whose continuing participation the corporation cannot survive' (1995, p. 106). The organization will be critically damaged if a primary stakeholder group becomes dissatisfied, or the organization may not survive if a primary stakeholder group breaks the partnership. Thus, the organization

and its primary stakeholders are interdependent. For example, athletes are a primary stakeholder group for the IOC. Secondary stakeholders are those entities that influence, affect, are influenced, or are affected by the organization but are not engaged in transactions with the focal organization and are not vital to the focal organization's survival (Clarkson, 1995). For example, activists could be considered a secondary stakeholder for the IOC as they are not absolutely necessary for the IOC's activities.

However, when Clarkson (1994) introduced the notion of shared risk between the focal organization and its stakeholders, stakeholders were categorized as voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary stakeholders were those stakeholders such as shareholders, who are capable of withdrawing their resources, which could put the focal organization at risk. One example is the bribery scandal in Salt Lake City in 1998 in which The Olympic Partners (TOP) sponsors threatened to withdraw their financial support to the IOC (Payne, 2005). The focal organization has a moral obligation towards these stakeholders to reasonably satisfy their needs/expectations. In turn, involuntary stakeholders are those stakeholders, such as communities, that are unknowingly exposed to risk because of the focal organization's actions (Vidaver-Cohen, 1999).

We therefore use the stakeholder approach to obtain a variety of perspectives on the YOG, thereby guiding our methodological choices, and used the concepts of primary/secondary and voluntary/involuntary stakeholders, to help describe and analyse our findings.

Method

We used a qualitative approach in this exploratory study of the first Winter YOG in Innsbruck, Austria (January 13-22, 2012), as we wanted to explore the event's organizing committee and the participants' experience at the YOG from the various stakeholders' perspectives. Observations and interviews were gathered. Accordingly, we have data that

cover two layers of knowledge about youth events as a novel research field. Further, an examination through content analysis was deemed preferable, as content analysis is a process for systematically analysing all types of messages, and a technique which lies at the crossroads of qualitative and quantitative method (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). The coding of raw passages is done according to a classification scheme, and it can be used to unobtrusively explore large amounts of textual information in order to ascertain the trends and patterns of the words used, their relationships and the structures and discourses of communication (Grbich, 2007). Each data source is described below, followed by the data analysis techniques.

Observations

The first author observed IOC meetings prior to the competition (e.g., the IOC Session in Guatemala 2007). The same author has been present at eight OG from 1994 to 2010. The second author also worked at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, which afforded a point of comparison for the YOG observation. In Innsbruck, our collective role as observers was limited to areas we could access with our accreditation level (competition sites, ceremonies and the Congress centre) which gave us access to the general, spectator areas for these venues. Together, we visited three of the five competition sites (Seefeld, Exhibition Centre and Olympia World), due to logistical reasons and commitments of the researchers (e.g., interviews, meetings, focus groups). We also observed medals ceremonies, the opening ceremony, visited the congress centre every day, shared buses with athletes and other members of the Olympic Family, observed the food areas, and ‘enjoyed the Olympic spirit present in Innsbruck. In addition, two of the authors observed the official city-to-city debrief between the first and second host of the Winter YOG, Innsbruck and Lillehammer, 20th of June 2012.

We used several ways of recording our observations. Most important was the field notes, where personal impressions were written down alongside reflective notes. Long reports were not written; rather, it was a process whereby seemingly different or important aspects of the YOG (e.g., as compared to the OG and the authors' own varied elite sport event backgrounds) that stood out would be noted and then discussed between the members of the research group every day. These notes were later important for contextualizing interviewee responses during the analysis as well as modifying the interview guide for the post-Games interviews with athletes whom we had observed in competition.

Interviews

We conducted a convenience and purposeful sampling procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), as we wanted a variety of stakeholders' (i.e., rights holders (IOC, organizing committee), media, delegations, etc.) perspectives and information, but had to balance Games-time access opportunities and abilities (i.e., what our accreditation and the IOC/organizing committee, as well as ethics certificates, allowed us to sample). In addition we had a tape-recorded conversation with IOC President Jacques Rogge on the 19th of June 2012 about the YOG. Table 2 provides an overview of the interviewees (stakeholder group and nationality) and interview methods.

Table 2
Stakeholder interviews and interview method

Stakeholder	Interview method	Numbers	Nationality
Athletes	1 Focus group interview (on site)	n=4	Norwegian
	Individual phone interviews conducted post-game	n=5 6 sports represented	Norwegian
Parents	5 Focus group interviews (on site)	n=25	Norwegian/Canadian
	Email interviews (post-Games)	n=5 5 sports represented	Canadian
Coaches	2 Focus group interviews (on site)	n=4	Norwegian/Canadian
	Individual interview (on site)	n=1 3 sports represented	Canadian
National Sport Federation (NSF)	Individual interview (post-Games)	n=1	Norwegian
Chef de Mission	Individual interview (post-Games)	n=1	[Confidential]
IOC staff members	Individual interview (on site)	n=1	[Confidential]
IOC member	Individual phone interview (post-Games)	n=1	Norwegian
Innsbruck Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee (IYOGOC)	Individual interviews (on site)	n=4	Different nationalities
Volunteers	Individual interviews (on site)	n=19	Different nationalities
Media	Individual phone interview (post-Games)	n=1	Norwegian

The face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted during the event at different locations (e.g., venues, cafés, restaurants) in Innsbruck, wherever was convenient for the participant. The interviews were conducted both in English and/or Norwegian, due to the nationality of the interviewees being Norwegian and Canadian (and what language they felt comfortable speaking). Both Canada and Norway are major winter sport nations to which we were able to gain access. They were therefore chosen, which also allowed for comparisons to occur. Furthermore, due to practical reasons we conducted both individual and focus group interviews. Parents preferred group interviews, and we also conducted one focus group interview with coaches in order to compare experiences between countries. In total, we conducted nine focus group interviews, 31 individual interviews in addition to five email-based interviews (interviewees' preference due to time constraints during the Games). The athletes were interviewed after they had finished their last competition; hence, some were interviewed in Innsbruck while others were interviewed by phone post event. The remaining interviewees were also queried post-Games.

Interviews lasted between 20 and 75 minutes. The 72 interviews were developed and conducted according to ethical guidelines and criteria stated by Patton (2002). We tailored the interview guide to the different stakeholders. Most included a general introduction about expectations towards the YOG and how they perceived being there; questions on organizational aspects; queries about the CEP and the YOG's learning aspect; perceptions of each other's' (stakeholder) roles; and what they thought about the YOG as a youth competition and learning arena. The interviews ended with the open process-feedback question: 'do you have anything else to add?' Probes and follow-up questions were also used in order to further explore responses. The interviews were transcribed verbatim in their original language by one of the fully bilingual authors, which resulted in 292 pages single-spaced raw text. Translation of quotes occurred only at the time of writing up the findings to

preserve the integrity of the data. Several measures were taken to protect the confidentiality of interviewees following our institutional ethics certificates; this concern constrained us in presenting more personal data. When using interviewee quotes, nationality, sport and gender are not included in order to protect their anonymity; only their stakeholder grouping is mentioned.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed through content analysis and pattern matching (cf. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). The process was done manually by the research group, and key aspects were compared and contrasted using a table approach (e.g., Table 3; see Miles & Huberman, 1994). The basic unit of analysis was the stakeholder. As data were discussed and analysed, it became clear that there were four main stakeholder groups; this then framed subsequent analysis (see the results and discussion section). Stakeholder classification by Clarkson (1994, 1995) was used to analyse each stakeholder group. By comparing the YOG data to the authors' OG experience (e.g., contrasting the interview data on a given stakeholder with our observations comparing this group with the OG), we were able to discern emerging trends associated with the YOG, such as important aspects for the IOC like the CEP and the innovative events. We also compared information between stakeholders to examine stakeholder similarities and differences in needs, perceptions, and experiences (e.g., security perceptions, sport vs. CEP scheduling). Emerging findings were compared again with the data to verify understanding, and discussed in a university research workshop (i.e., a group of scholars independent of the research). This process together with the use of multiple sources of evidence increased the trustworthiness of the findings (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The emerging findings constitute our higher-order themes, that is, our results, which are presented below.

Results and Discussion

The similarities and differences in needs and perceptions of the various stakeholder groups resulted in the finding of four key stakeholder groupings: the host core stakeholders, the international core stakeholders, the sponsors and media, and finally, parents and other stakeholders. Our findings indicate that there are host and international core stakeholders, who are the primary/voluntary stakeholders of the event. These stakeholders are surrounded by parents and other stakeholders. Some primary/voluntary stakeholders for the OGs (media and sponsors) find themselves being less salient for the YOG, as compared to the OGs, by becoming secondary/involuntary YOG stakeholders. We also note significant differences between the YOG and OG regarding various Olympic activities and practices. Although our analysis below would lead us to conclude that the YOG could be seen as the ‘best of the Olympics’, we cannot discount some of the underlying processes and rationales at play (e.g., size, venue needs, teen market, young athletes’ perceived importance placed on winning) that will pose challenges to the YOG’s success and survival. Each of the four stakeholder groups is now described below.

The Host Core Stakeholders

This grouping consists of the host governments, community, and organizing committee. Table 3 provides an overview of the similarities and differences for these stakeholders, comparing the OG and the YOG. These stakeholders are considered core stakeholders as they are primary and voluntary stakeholders. They must be part of the event for the event to exist in that particular location; thus, the event’s survival is dependent on them. They also present a significant degree of risk for the event. They willingly choose to bid for/support/host the event; if they pull out of the event, their resources (e.g., financial for governments, human for community and organizing committee) disappear and the event may not exist.

Table 3

The Host Core Stakeholders: Similarities and Differences between the OG and the YOG

Stakeholder	Similarities YOG-OG	Differences YOG-OG
Host governments	Support and guarantees needed from all levels; Presence of representatives on organizing committee board of directors	Greater percentage of YOG organizing committee operational funding paid for by the host governments; OG seen as a seven-year project compared to YOG which are seen as 4-5 year projects
Community	Residents used as volunteers; Tourists used volunteers; School programs created	Closer access to athletes for schools and some residents for YOG (e.g., CEP program access)
Organizing committee	Mix of paid staff, secondees, volunteers and contractors	Encourage the recruitment of young leaders and young volunteers for YOG; Volunteers in YOG mainly locales; while many non-locals in OG

In contrast to the most recent editions of the OG (an exception perhaps being Beijing 2008), the host governments provided most of the financial support for the YOG's operational budget, with little coming from broadcasting or sponsorship rights. The post-bid budget for the 2012 YOG was 23.7 million Euros, where 20 million came from the Federal Austrian Government, the state of Tirol, the City of Innsbruck, and the IOC. In comparison, the VANOC final operating budget was 1.884 billion CDN, i.e., 1.45 billion Euros (up from 1.5 billion CDN as projected in the bid; VANOC, 2003), where the federal and provincial governments contributed only 10% of the revenues VANOC, 2010b). The differences between the two 'Olympics' may also be measured by the number of sponsors: The 2012 YOG had 15 national corporate sponsors/suppliers as compared to the 57 sponsors for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games (VANOC, 2010b; IYOGOC, 2012a). Because of the lack of applicants for the second winter YOG, the IOC has had to increase their financial support to

36% of the estimated budget (U\$68.8 million). In addition, the IOC will cover the travel costs for all the teams (as for the two first editions of the YOG) (IOC, 2008b). The municipalities and counties (4%) and the government (46%) will cover half of the costs while local sponsorship will contribute only 10% and official suppliers and tickets will amount to 4% of the revenues (NIF, 2011).

Regarding the community, despite the fact that the Olympic rings are one of the most widely recognized logo in the world, and nearly 80% of residents of 16 countries worldwide consider themselves Olympic fans (IOC, 2009), few (if any) of the local residents knew about the YOG before the Games, as we were told several times in shops/restaurants. However, during the YOG, it was impossible not to notice the Games occurring in Innsbruck; and once residents learned about the YOG, they took part in the Games with stickers in store windows and the enthusiastic cheering of athletes. As one local volunteer in Innsbruck expressed:

Like I read all this stuff about the culture and education program, but I did not have this big picture of what it is and why they are doing it. But I think it is a good idea, especially for the local youth, the school classes who can be so close to athletes and are so motivated to do all this.

Finally, regarding the organizing committee staff and volunteers, their composition for the YOG seemed to be in line with the focus on the youth. Young volunteers were prevalent (66% of the volunteers at the 2012 YOG were students at the University of Innsbruck) (IYOGOG, 2012b), attracted to the event to build their sport event management skills but also to attract them to sports events and keep them in the Olympic loop. Volunteers were generally young (80% aged 18 to 29) and international (59 countries represented) (IYOGOC, 2012b), but Innsbruck also capitalized quite originally on its past Olympic hosting by involving approximately 150 individuals (age 61 or older) who had been volunteers in the 1964 and

1976 Olympic Winter Games to be volunteers for the YOGs; they were even named the Grey Eagles (Pinelli, 2012).

Moreover, while the basic components or processes of bidding and hosting the YOG were similar to the OG, the extent of detail and service levels were significantly lower for the YOG. Table 4 provides an overview of key Olympic components and processes. Examining Table 4, we find that the YOG could be seen as a 'poor' copy of the Olympics, as components and processes are similar though at generally lower levels (e.g., lower levels of security, a single shuttle transportation system for all Olympic Family members instead of distinct levels and separate routes such as are found at the OG). However, a counter argument could be made that the larger OGs have been adapted to the smaller scale of the YOG as an event, and considerations have been made to tailor the processes to the young athletes who need to learn how to be/act as international elite athletes and learn what to expect at high-level international sports events (e.g., presence and level of security, transportation, athletes' village accommodations).

Table 4

Overview of Key Olympic Components and Processes

Component	Similarities YOG-OG	Differences YOG-OG
Bidding process	Formal bidding process	No on-site evaluation by the IOC of potential YOG candidate cities; Smaller bid book for the YOG than OG.
Reasons for bidding	To be part of the Olympic Family	YOG reasons: host because city too small to host Olympic Games, to show IOC that the city is ready to host Olympic Games, part of legacy (e.g., re-use of venues) of having hosted past Olympic Games Olympic Games reasons: urban re-generation, show the world
Venues	Are approved/sanctioned by IFs	Sport production (e.g., video replays, entertainment) at lower level if even existent at YOG; In theory, the IOC does not want new venues to be built for YOG
Security	Presence of bag and person checking when entering venues; Accreditation checks; Olympic Village a priority	Significantly lower level of service for YOG (e.g., few metal detectors); YOG not seen as potential terrorist target
Transportation	Public and Games transportation system	No dedicated Olympic lanes for YOG vehicles; One single shuttle bus used to transport all accredited guests at YOG
Food services	General dining area for athletes	Less options for YOG athletes (one restaurant and one menu)
Accreditation system	Limited number of accreditations/access; Security clearance needed	Less restrictive accreditation zones
Seating & tickets	Dedicated seating areas for spectators vs. Olympic Family and media	General seating for most spectators, and one general section together for dignitaries, athletes and media for YOG

The International Core Stakeholders

This stakeholder grouping is comprised of the sport organizations and the delegations (including athletes, coaches, and other mission staff). It is as important as the previous group. As the rights owner, the IOC is a critical stakeholder of the YOG. The Olympic Charter (IOC,

2011b) provides the rules and guidelines for the organization of the OG and YOG, as well as for bidding cities (cf. IOC, 2007b; IOC, 2008a). These aspects mean that these stakeholders essentially define the structure of the Games. Moreover, the delegations include a key resource for the Games, the athletes. Without the sport organizations or delegations, the event could not be held, hence they are primary stakeholders. In addition, should any one of these stakeholders pull their support away from the Games, as the holding of the event is dependent on their willing participation, the event risks being significantly modified, if it can even be held, thus demonstrating the voluntary characterization of this grouping. The 205 NOCs and the 33 IFs are invited by the IOC to take part in the Games. The main difference for the YOG is that the IOC had to push the NOC delegations and other sport organizations to participate in the YOG (see Table 5); however, most did still participate. Some chose not to participate, such as Speed Skating Canada and Skate Canada, while others, such as Hockey Canada, did not send their best athletes in the given age group. This impacted the nature of the YOG events, in this case the skating and ice hockey events.

Table 5

The International Core Stakeholders: Similarities and Differences between the OG and the YOG

Stakeholder	Similarities YOG-OG	Differences YOG-OG
IOC	IOC holds the rights to the Games; Olympic Charter, bid books; High percentage of IOC members present; Coordinating committees for each Games	General Assembly Session before the OG; IOC pushes stakeholders' participation in the YOG
IFs	Approval (sanctioning) of sport program; Technical delegate presence	Greater reluctance to participate in YOG and embrace innovations in the sport program and tailoring to youth athletes
NOCs	All (summer) or majority (winter) of NOCs present	Smaller delegation size at YOG; Use of YOG as a learning arena for leaders and coaches
Athletes	Competing and winning is the priority for athletes	The best athletes in the world for OG; Two-year age range for YOG athletes with varying qualifications based on NSFs and IFs despite the IOC wanting the world's "best young athletes"; YOG athletes have to stay in city for the whole duration of the event
Delegation support personnel/ Team staff	Same basic structure (Chef de Mission as lead, press attaché, etc.)	Encouraged to have young Chefs de Mission or Assistant Chefs de Mission for YOG; Coaches' roles filled by team leaders who are also team managers in YOG; Half the delegations allowed to have young ambassadors as role models and peer support for YOG athletes

While the OGs are attractive, and all IFs want to be part of the Games because they receive money, publicity and legitimacy, the IOC has met with challenges regarding the YOG. This seemingly hesitant attitude of the IFs has been present since the first meetings of the IOC where the YOG were discussed. According to Gerhard Heiberg, Chairman of the Marketing Commission and member of the Executive Commission when the YOG were approved in 2007 ‘many of the NOCs and particularly the IFs did not think anything about it at all.’ Topics addressed at the IOC Session in Guatemala in July 2007 included: financial aspects; if IOC should have any responsibility on health issues such as obesity; the calendar for IFs; and the overall work load for the IOC administration. The biggest resistance seemed to be the idea to organize the first YOG in 2010 (three years away only). Jacques Rogge summarized the situation at the time during his interview:

There were question marks, there were pessimists, but no one said that ‘we don’t want to.’ But people said ‘it will not work’ and “the kids will not mind this culture and education.” NOCs embraced it, but IFs were more sceptical to the new event. IFs were put in charge of the competitive program and the technical aspects of their sport, which also included innovation aspects such as mixed gender, sport and NOC competitions (see IYOGOC, n.d. for an overview of the sport program, including the innovative events). One IOC representative admitted that the IFs had done this work and incorporated the ideas with the YOG as a competition, with more or less enthusiasm and creativity. He noted curling with its mixed doubles (one female athlete and one male athlete constituted a team even though they represented two different nations) as an example of an IF who managed to ‘integrate the CEP ideas, and understood that it is a concept and philosophy.’ The athletes embraced these new competitions, and the ones without any new sport innovations complained and envied the sports that did. As one athlete noted ‘I actually asked our NSF

President why we did not have any team relay or mixed event. He just said there was no room for it in the program’.

IFs were also responsible for the definition of the age categories and the qualification criteria (IOC, 2011a). In regards to the age groups, the coaches had many comments. For the smaller countries, it was hard to find enough athletes for some of the team events. It was an ongoing debate, and solutions like opening the competition up for the entire age group from 14-18 were suggested. Some NSF looked upon this as a great opportunity to recruit, for example, while others seemed to be taken by surprise and maybe took participation more lightly compared with other major events like the Junior World Championships. As one NSF Secretary General noted: ‘it is four years to the next YOG; we will prioritize the event and already now start working with the children’.

IFs and their respective NSFs were responsible for the qualification criteria, which varied from one sport to another and from one country to another. As one Chef de Mission explained:

I think several of the sports have realized that they need to be more aware when the qualification criteria are decided during their respective IF meetings [...] But I think, in the end, that we found good solutions as some national NSFs simply nominated the best athletes from last year’s ranking.

There were also inconsistencies in selecting the ‘world’s best young athletes’ to take part in the YOG (IOC, 2011a), as compared to the OGs. Not all the NOCs and IFs had the YOG at the top of their priority list, and the 2012 YOG revealed that larger, more independent NSFs (e.g., Skate Canada and Speed Skating Canada) did not send any skaters or did not send their best athletes (e.g., Hockey Canada) as they and their athletes deemed, in part, their own national championships or other sports events to be more important.

Still, the athletes who were given the opportunity to take part in the YOG expressed in interviews that they appreciated the opportunity, noting that it was an ‘incredible experience’ and that they were so proud of being ‘an Olympian’. The athletes we encountered expressed their joy in being immersed in the Olympic spirit and the Olympic values. They did note, however, that the opening and closing ceremonies seemed smaller in scale than the OGs and one medal-winning athlete enjoyed the big medals ceremonies outdoor every evening saying: ‘it was over so quickly’, which might suggest the value these young athletes place in winning medals.

Yet, according to the IOC, the YOG are supposed to be more than just another competition where the aim is to win for the athletes; equally (if not more) important is the YOG as a learning arena for education on the Olympic values. This introduction was made through the athlete-focused mandatory CEP. The athletes were to enjoy the CEP after or in between their sport competitions, whenever they could spend time at the Congress Centre (where the CEP was located), and a 10-minute shuttle ride away from the Olympic Village. Athletes had 10 days to take part in all the CEP activities as they had to stay for the entire period of the Games. In many ways, the CEP was optimal for the athletes who only had one or two days of competitions. To be immersed in the Olympic atmosphere in the same way was harder for the athletes whose sports had several competitions and organized practices every day such as curling or ice-hockey (Kristiansen, 2013). The Innsbruck schedule resulted in many athletes dropping out of the activities as the planning was perceived as an extra stressor. As one of the athletes explained: ‘it was more important for us to rest the little time we had off.’ Hence, the athletes also suggested that perhaps the ‘opening hours’ for the CEP should be adapted to the competitive schedule, and that the most hectic sports should get a more balanced program in order to allow all athletes to take part in it.

Sponsors and Media

This grouping is characterized by stakeholders who are primary for the OG but relatively absent from the YOG scene, that is, the sponsors and the media (see Table 6 for an overview of similarities and differences). These stakeholders are considered secondary YOG stakeholders. The event still occurred (re: survival) as these stakeholders did not form the most important part of the YOG budget.

Table 6

Sponsors and Media: Similarities and Differences between the OG and the YOG

Stakeholder	Similarities YOG-OG	Differences YOG-OG
TOP sponsors	Allowed access and use of logo/name	Little activation by most TOP sponsors at YOG; TOP sponsors given “free” sponsorship for YOG
Media	Infrastructure (Main Media Centre, tribunes, mixed zones, press conferences, etc.)	Size of accredited media (over 10,000 for OG versus less than 1,000 for winter YOG – and even fewer showing up at the YOG) and size of media teams (teams for OGs versus individuals for YOG); IOC giving pictures and news free of charge for media use for YOG; Presence of accredited media for the whole OG instead of just a few days, if present at all, for YOG; Little coverage of YOG in foreign media’s home countries; No live TV coverage except the Opening ceremonies (in Innsbruck)

The TOP sponsors were not very noticeable in Innsbruck. We did observe some signage by Samsung, Coca-Cola (handing out mini-cans of coca cola), Omega and Visa, presented together with several domestic sponsors, but nothing to the degree found at the OGs. Interestingly, one of the IOC’s objectives is to use the YOG for combating obesity; yet

two of the TOP sponsors, Coca-Cola and McDonald's, are not immediately associated with this goal. The Head of the Marketing Commission noted this paradox:

We feel we have a dialogue around these questions. McDonald's has brand new products with respect to the issue of obesity [...] At the same time, we see that Coca-Cola has new products like Zero and Light. These corporations are obliged to follow the developments in the world, and I feel that both the Olympics and the YOG can be arenas that can help.

The media were not very noticeable either. Journalists wishing to obtain accreditation for the YOG received it without difficulty – as opposed to the OG where a limited number of accreditations are provided to each NOC for distribution to their national media organizations. While there were approximately 800 accredited media representatives for the 2012 YOG, the number of media representatives present at the YOG was modest (see Table 1), with the majority of journalists being from the host city region. They also stayed for just a few days instead of the whole event. One Norwegian journalist with significant OG experience expressed the distinctness of the OG and YOG:

After visiting Innsbruck for four days, I will say the only similarity between YOG and OG is the name 'Olympic'. For a journalist like me, it is impossible to compare the two events. Saying that, I was impressed by the media programme in Innsbruck.

Everything worked fine and the level of service was high.

When this journalist stated that the two events are 'impossible to compare,' he referred to the lack of interest among his colleagues, and to the fact that the gigantism of OGs is absent from the YOG (cf. Preuss, 2004). For him, the YOG may better be compared to a national championship. For a journalist, it is difficult to create interest for unknown athletes in an 'unknown' competition. In planning for the YOG, one IOC representative admitted that in order to obtain the best possible media coverage, they developed and packaged everything for

the media so that they did not need to be present during the YOG but still be able to provide coverage of the event:

They [the media] have access to all the information on the YOGOC official website, they can just go there and take editorial content and pictures rights free. They have the competitions results so they can cover [the event] without being here. Some of them [the major television networks and written press] have the information, we make sure of that... When one of their residents or athletes obtains good results [...] they don't have to look [for the information], we just give it to them.

Even though information was made readily available to the journalists and the IOC counted 18,000 press articles during the 2012 YOG (IYOGOC, 2012b), 2010 Vancouver had in comparison coverage available on 235 television stations and 100 websites around the world (IOC, 2011c).

Furthermore, our observations of media coverage in Scandinavia and North America suggest that the media coverage in national newspapers of the two first editions of the YOG was almost absent. Some parents essentially acted on behalf of the local newspapers, talking to journalists back home and sending pictures. The IOC was in an unusual position of having to produce broadcast packages and images and give them to the media to showcase without rights fees being paid. According to the final report from the local organizing committee, there were 20 entitled broadcasters (IYOGOC, n.d.), but there was no live coverage except the Opening Ceremony. The IOC as well as the NOCs and parents commented on this lack of interest; and the volunteers found this media absence peculiar. One volunteer from Holland even called their local media to ask why they were not interested as noted in the following quotation:

According to the media, it [the YOG] is undervalued. So I also contacted the Dutch national broadcasting corporation and said that there was some news, like the first

Olympic ski jump event for women ever. Or there was an Olympic medal for an alpine skier, for the Netherlands – that has also never happened before. But they said that it is not top-level sport so they were not interested.

Finally, there is a close link between the media and sponsors. The lack of media coverage becomes a challenge for the IOC when selling the YOG to sponsors. The TOP sponsors do not have to pay extra to be included in the YOG, and an event like this can be used to showcase products and host guests. However, no TOP sponsor did so for more than a minimum of what they usually do at the Olympics. IOC member and the Chairman of the Marketing Commission, Gerhard Heiberg, was not surprised:

Several were curious, but not willing to go. I would probably say that we met with some scepticism. In Singapore, it was a caution, but it appears that they are waking up now. TOP sponsors see that they may have something to gain from this age group, and the signals are that they will invest more in the next YOG in Nanjing and Lillehammer.

Hence, it may simply take time to sell the YOG as a product and make it as popular as the OG among the media and TOP sponsors. However, it also demonstrates that the YOG can be hosted with little media and sponsor involvement, offering perhaps a greater focus on the athletes and less commercialized sports events. Could this be a demonstration of doing sports for the love of the sport instead of the commercialism potential following Olympic ideals?

Finally, while the traditional media group was perceived as not being a primary stakeholder, many interactions between the athletes, as well as with other stakeholders (e.g., parents, IOC) took place through digital media (i.e., new media, social media). Part of the CEP included a social/new media component, and athletes also had a YOGGER, a sort of USB stick which allowed athletes to exchange contact information and increase the number of ‘friends’ they had in their Facebook-like profile. Some athletes/teams even created or used

existing Facebook pages to interact with their new international friends. Thus, alternative forms of media were used to foster interactions between stakeholders and arguably to promote learning of other cultures, which perhaps did not help traditional media's salience.

Parents and Other Stakeholders

This final stakeholder grouping consists of two rather different types of stakeholders which are typically secondary to the survival of the OG: parents and other organizations contributing to the environment that creates the Olympic spirit and educates the athletes about the Olympic Movement (see Table 7 for an overview and examples). For the YOG, however, their visibility and importance increases. For the parents, they become primary stakeholders by virtue of the legal rights they still hold over their under-18 children; they are also legally required to carry/care for certain pieces of equipment (e.g., rifles for biathlon) as their underage children cannot legally do so outside the actual field-of-play. Thus, were parents not supportive of the event, they would pose significant risk to the survival of the event as it would have a direct impact on the athletes' participation. In contrast, the other organizations gain visibility at the YOG through their involvement notably with the CEP activities. Thus, these organizations may not be critical to the survival of the event but they do significantly impact them, more so arguably than the OG, because of the CEP.

Table 7

Parents and Other Stakeholders: Similarities and Differences between the OG and the YOG

Stakeholder	Similarities YOG-OG	Differences YOG-OG
Parents	Present in the stands to watch their child compete	A major source of support and sometimes even essential for YOG athletes; Parents typically constituted the largest percentage of spectators in minor sports at YOG venues
Other stakeholders	Consultant/consultant organizations used	International non-governmental bodies (e.g., United Nations, WADA) have a hand in teaching YOG participants about Olympic values and the Olympic Movement

An IOC representative admitted that certain stakeholders' part of the athletes' entourage should be considered more highly, notably the parents/family members. Most of the YOG athletes arriving in Innsbruck competed in the presence of family in the venues, which could include parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, and even neighbours. Athletes at this age need their parents in order to achieve the results, and 'Parents are important, and they make choices on athletes' behalf' (IOC Representative), more so than for the OG. Unlike for an OG, parents are *the* major tourism source during the event for the host region; and for some sports like curling, we observed that they constituted the majority of the spectators in the stands. As a result, information in several languages, notably about the competition, venues and transportation important should be made available. Some parents complained to us that 'all the information is in German' in Innsbruck, which may indicate that the information that the parents deemed important was not necessarily translated or was not made readily available/distributed effectively/efficiently to them. The information they were looking for seemed more tourist-based than specifics about the event, and they would have liked to have

received an information package when their 'kids' qualified for the YOG. As one parent expressed on behalf of a group of parents travelling together:

I think as a group, we did have difficulties in having clarity of what was going to be available for us in various ways, the type of venue, the type of seating, and access to tickets was certainly something that we did spend a lot of time and energy on, searching out accommodations, what type of transportation options were going to be there. So those are things that in the future would be wonderful to have, a link or a liaison for the families of the athletes, so the managers and the coaches of the teams would not have to do as much of those types of things because they don't have those answers we need. We should simply have a package for the parents.

This stakeholder group relied on the information they received from their respective NOCs. The parents were mindful of their importance for their sons'/daughters' careers; for years, they have been driving, carrying the equipment (e.g., rifle for biathlon), waxing the skies, coaching, and cooking in order to give their sons/daughters an opportunity like this. The YOG put them on the sideline for the first time. In general, the parents accepted their role at the YOG as being one of emotional support (Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010), and did not intervene in their children's preparations. The Canadian Olympic Committee even invited all the parents to a reception as one way of recognizing their importance. However, NOCs and coaches mentioned during their interviews that they usually tried to keep the parents at a distance from their children once at the Games. The NOCs considered the parents as a possible 'issue', and some teams even made rules for parents not to contact their sons/daughters unless contacted first by them. The athletes, on the other hand, felt that it was right to have their parents there, as several of them uttered that it was thanks to them that they were able to continue doing sport at this level, and a few who were regularly coached by their parents 'could not understand why they could not enter the accredited area' as one athlete

noted. Thus, at 14-18 years of age, some athletes still depended on the support and security from having their parents nearby when competing. The security was rather lax compared to the OG, even though certain athletes considered the security extensive. Thus, parents could access their sons/daughters rather easily, especially at the venues.

Other stakeholders, like the United Nations or WADA, were also present both at the Congress Center to provide information to athletes, and also at the venues (e.g., anti-doping testing). The interviewed athletes found this ‘new’ anti-doping drill interesting, and generally had no problems with it. As one athlete explained: ‘The NOC had a pre-camp where they drilled us in the testing procedures, so it was OK.’ Both security and doping testing were a stress the athletes admitted was a new experience, but a stress that they also realized they had to get used to ‘in order to become a real Olympian’ as one athlete noted. The YOG were therefore perceived as a learning arena by the athletes. Nevertheless, the importance of these other organizations in the CEP meant that they became more visible stakeholders to all athletes, not just those being tested for drugs. The IOC relied in part on these stakeholders for the planning and implementation of the CEP.

Overall Analysis and Implications

We find that the general list of OG stakeholders is the same as for the YOG: host governments, community, organizing committee, delegations, sport organizations, sponsors, media, and other stakeholders. However, salience levels were found to differ. For example, main drivers of the OG – sponsors and the media – were not found to be as critical for the YOG. This did not seem to affect the current survival of the event but it is not to say that the future survival of the event is not at stake without these stakeholders’ resources. Our analysis presents a number of implications for theory and practice.

First, it underscores that a stakeholder salience analysis of the Olympic Movement’s stakeholders should be undertaken separately for each of the Movement’s activities (e.g., OG,

YOG, corporate social responsibility initiatives) as salience levels seem to vary. Although there may be a general Olympic Movement stakeholder map (cf. Chappelet, 2012), Games maps and salience analyses seem to differ. Thus, stakeholder salience is not only time, issue and manager specific (cf. Friedman, et al., 2004; Parent, 2008; Parent & Deephouse, 2007) but Games specific, even when considering the same parent organization, here, the IOC.

Second, the innovative competition formats created by the IFs, and the mandatory attendance at the CEP helped the perception of focusing on the Olympic values (IOC, 2011a). This was assisted by 33 youth ambassadors: half the delegations were offered the opportunity to have an elite athlete, named a youth ambassador, who would be trained in the CEP to mentor the delegation's young athletes, encourage them to participate in the CEP, and generally engage in the Games. This, as well as the refusal to tabulate total medal (or gold medal) counts, arguably helped the IOC realize its goal of making the event more than just a sport competition. Parents and NOCs also supported the athletes' notion of participation as learning and education. But being an 'Olympian' was also part of the athletes learning experience as *athletes*, and their inexperience was a major difference compared to the real Olympics, where winning is the focus. For example, the young athletes seemed at times overwhelmed by the 'enormous' security level as they perceived it, a security level which was noted among other stakeholder groups, as well as observed by the authors, with experience from both YOG and OG, as being rather minimal. For delegation officials, this perhaps means additional pre-Games information/training for their athletes is required on international multi-sport event logistics and processes.

Third, the logistics of the CEP activities (or learning activities more generally) organized by the host organization, together with the IOC and other organizations, are also a factor to consider in the sport event management of youth festivals. The athletes participated if their competitive schedule allowed them to do so; hence, a hectic competitive schedule

prevented CEP participation for certain athletes. While the host organization and IOC were core stakeholders involved in the activities, other core stakeholders such as the IFs and delegations (NOCs in this case) may have also impacted the degree of success of the CEP, letting these latter stakeholders remain focused on the sport component of the event. Furthermore, the CEP forum increased the salience of certain stakeholders (e.g., the United Nations) as compared to the OG. The dedication of resources to the YOG by these stakeholders now means that they have a greater stake in the event, placing the YOG at risk if such resources are withdrawn without another potential source presenting itself. Who these alternative sources would be remains a question for future study. As well, this learning component (both at the CEP and at the YOG in general) means that the knowledge and learning literatures come into play. This CEP/learning component is a factor that increases the complexity of hosting as well as studying major sports events. For researchers, this opens up new research avenues (e.g., youth festivals, knowledge/learning of youth instead of between organizing committees). For practitioners, it means greater communication between sport, culture and other functional areas (e.g., transportation, volunteers) to ensure the best possible schedule for athletes but also effective and efficient use of limited resources.

From an external perspective, the 2012 YOG had the general ‘look-and-feel’ of the OG, with the major difference being the size of the event and the relatively smaller involvement sponsors and the media. These primary stakeholders of the OG and the Olympic Movement were less salient at the YOG. However, this did not affect – in fact, it may have helped – central Olympic Movement tenets like culture and education, instead of trying to make the YOG a copy of their commercialized big brother, the OG. Consequently, we found the YOG to be closer to the Olympic ideals and thoughts about sport than the OG. Nevertheless, the OG ‘look-and-feel’ was quite notable in the OG-like medals ceremonies. This similarity was one among several paradoxes perceived at this YOG. If the YOG are not

to focus on medals and winning, why agree to have an OG-like medals ceremony and why wish to have the ‘best young athletes’ of the world? From a theoretical and methodological standpoint, the implications are clear: for the YOG, both official discourse and actual perceptions/experiences/observations should be examined when studying such an event. The YOG, in principle may have been created to address a disconnect between the OGs (i.e., what they are vs. what they should be) and the Olympic Movement (i.e., its values). But a disconnect between YOG discourse and practice also exists, which may be due to the identity brand of the YOG still being created. The YOG’s stakeholders are currently establishing their roles, responsibilities, desired levels of engagement, and interrelationships; these negotiations will have an impact not only on the YOG but on the overall Olympic Movement and perhaps on the OGs. Thus, researchers cannot assume a static stakeholder map or network of relationships. As the YOG evolve, further reflections about the OG and Olympic Movement will be required. It will also be important to determine the impact of the YOG on existing youth festivals.

The perceived lack of commercial emphasis in favour of learning (in sport/sport event processes, culture and education) may lead one to believe that the YOG are the ‘best of the Olympics.’ However, the event still requires significant financial (here mainly from the host governments), human, and physical (e.g., venue) resources. Moreover, while the IOC emphasizes learning, the athletes seem to emphasize winning. This disconnect could pose challenges to the YOG’s future success and survival.

The YOG also have implications for policy makers: the increasing prevalence of these youth events may be a way to get on the event bandwagon in order to leverage their benefits (e.g., increased tourism) without (in theory) spending millions on venue construction and other infrastructure needs. A greater number of cities can become known as Olympic cities, thereby garnering perceived benefits from this moniker – a point which in fact requires further

study. However, this also paradoxically increases the power and salience of the IOC and the Olympic Movement, and risks pushing the YOG toward a similar situation as the OG regarding size and commercialism. This may make the YOG simply a poor copy of the OG.

Certainly, the international sports event map is changing. Our findings and the YOG more broadly have implications, for example, for sport marketing researchers and marketers given the prevalent use of social and new media, as well as the focus on the teen market. For example, sponsors have a potential new way to interact with this new target market that are the youth, instead of spending huge sums of money to activate their sponsorship through the more traditional, visible forms of promotions seen at the OG, which are targeted largely to the spectators.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Given that a multitude of stakeholders are required to host such events (Parent, 2008), using a stakeholder approach helped to organize and analyse the data, provide an overview of the YOG “world”, and thereby assist in developing an understanding of the YOG. While the basic list of stakeholders may be the same between the YOG and OG, the relative salience levels changed. OGs usually present the media and sponsors as primary, critical stakeholders; for the YOG, however, these two stakeholders were lower in salience, in favour of the parents who gained salience in part because of their legal responsibilities for their under-aged children and because they formed a significant portion of the tourists/spectators. Our analysis also underscores some paradoxes or disconnects (e.g., learning versus winning). Although the above analysis would lead us to conclude that the YOG could be seen as the ‘best of the Olympics’ thanks to the fact that the YOG seem closer to the Olympic values than the OG, we cannot discount some of the underlying processes and rationales at play that put this conclusion in question. For example, although the YOG are to be intentionally kept ‘small’ so that a greater variety of cities may bid for the Games, this only helps the IOC increase its

worldwide influence by increasing the number of cities which can be called Olympic cities. Moreover, at least for the winter editions of the YOG, few cities currently have the necessary venues (e.g., sliding track, ski jumping venue), thereby limiting the number of potentially “new” Olympic cities. In addition, the targeting of the teen market cannot be discounted from a business rationale for the IOC and sponsors. These issues should be examined by both sport researchers and practitioners. Certainly, further analyses are needed on the YOG stakeholders identified in this paper, especially the relative differences between the YOG and OG regarding the parents, media and sponsors. This has direct implications for sport event management researchers in their ability to generalize findings associated with the OG and the Olympic Movement. In the past, studying the OG and providing implications associated with these studies meant an assumption of implications for the Olympic Movement, and vice versa. With the introduction of the YOG, research implications will have to be specified for the event, or also examined with the other event and the Olympic Movement to determine the extent of the implication.

This paper’s findings raise perhaps more questions than they provide answers. In one way, this demonstrates the potential impact of the YOG and other youth festivals on the sport event management literature. We cannot assume that what will work for the traditional sports events and their elite athletes will work for youth festivals. While we have discussed some similarities and differences between YOG and OG, several questions remain to be answered beyond those noted above. One is the discordance between the IOC discourse on the YOG and their implementation in regards to bidding/YOG host city choices. Another research area worth pursuing is to monitor the interest of TOP sponsors and the media for the next YOGs. Sport marketing researchers should be particularly interested in this evolution, as well as exploring issues of image and branding of the YOG and their impact on the IOC/OG brand. This is a major difference between the YOG and OG; hence, a change here would be vital for

YOG development and survival, yet it may hinder the spirit of the YOG as being 'truer' to the Olympic values. Recruitment and training of leaders, staff and volunteers is another direction because the YOG are said to be an arena for educating young people in all these positions. Parents as stakeholders are also worthy of more exploration. Which of the other stakeholder groups should take charge of providing support for the parents and for greater training of athletes' pre-Games to decrease these perceived stressors (e.g., security levels and doping testing)? Moreover, as noted above, further analysis of the YOG stakeholder map and the various stakeholder relationships is warranted. One way to do so would be to use network theory (see for example Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008; Rowley, 1998). In addition, reflection on more appropriate or accurate ways of depicting both the OG and YOG stakeholder maps is required.

Finally, the perception that the best young athletes in the world do not classify as top-level sport, a position most clearly uttered by the media, is interesting and may in part explain why certain athletes and NSFs chose not to attend. On the other hand, the participating athletes, although young, consider themselves elite athletes and are there to win, thereby putting winning ahead of the Olympic values and the YOG education/learning aspect. This is an issue that the IOC and future YOG organizing committees will have to consider in order to make the learning aspect an option to all athletes. The rather lukewarm embrace of the YOG by many stakeholders (e.g., sponsors, media, major NOCs) also requires further analysis. Thus, the YOG are both the 'best of' and 'a poor copy of' the OG that require deeper analyses from philosophy/history, sociology, marketing and management researchers.

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