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► To cite this version:

Christopher Hautbois, Milena M. Parent, Benoît Séguin. How to win a bid for major sporting events? A stakeholder analysis of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games French bid. *Sport Management Review*, 2012, 10.1016/j.smr.2012.01.002 . hal-03550776

HAL Id: hal-03550776

<https://hal.science/hal-03550776>

Submitted on 16 Feb 2022

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How to win a bid for major sporting events? A stakeholder analysis of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games French bid

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Received 29 June 2011. Revised 2 January 2012. Accepted 3 January 2012. Available online 15 March 2012.

ABSTRACT

While understanding the planning and hosting of major sporting events is a popular research area, less is known about the bid process despite the potential economic and political spinoffs. Some studies offer criteria for successful bids and even consider the stakeholder network as a key factor. Considering the importance of the stakeholder network, we delve deeper into this area. Using the power, legitimacy and urgency framework by Mitchell et al. (1997), we examine the 2018 Olympic Winter Games' French national bid competition (four candidacies) to analyse the stakeholder relationships, identify their salience and then determine stakeholder-based bid key success factors. Archival material and 28 interviews were analysed. We notably found that to increase the probability of winning, no actor alone should have a definitive status, the sport stakeholder group should have at least the expectant status, and no strategic stakeholder should have the latent status. We also find that a three-level analysis of the stakeholder network allows for a greater understanding of the bid governance and process dynamics at play, which help to elucidate a successful bid. We contribute to the literature by 1) showing how stakeholder salience analysis can assist in understanding the bid network governance structure; 2) demonstrating that stakeholder salience depends on the level which is analyzed (local, between bids, and with the event owner), the stage (deciding to bid, national bid competition, national bid win/international competition), and the case/context; and 3) determining stakeholder-based key bid success factors such as who should and should not be more salient in the bid process.

How to win a bid for major sporting events? A stakeholder analysis of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games French bid

Over the last 30 years, researches on major sporting events represent an important field of study within the sport management literature. Many studies have examined the effects (e.g., benefits) of such sporting events on host regions. Popular topics found in the literature include the economic, social, and event-driven tourism benefits generated from major sporting events. More recently, research on legacy (infrastructure, environment, etc.), destination image effects, and nation building have contributed to our understanding of major sporting events impacts (Chalip, Green and Hill, 2003; Cornelissen, 2004). Aside from the question of benefits, little is known about the ‘bidding process’ that takes place to award major sporting events.

Given the limited supply and the high demand for these types of events, understanding key-success factors in winning bids is an important matter. However, despite the importance of the bid process in awarding these events to cities (Crockett, 1994), only a handful of studies have examined the subject. Through a number of in-depth interviews with six bid organizers, Ingerson and Westerbeek (1999) suggested a classification of key success factors into primary (political, economic, media, infrastructure and technical) and secondary (socio-cultural impact, competitive and business support) criteria. These were expanded upon following an extensive study of 135 major sporting event organisers which identified eight key factors: accountability, political support, relationship marketing, ability to organize an event (administration, timing systems, audio-visual facilities), infrastructure factor, bid team composition, communication and exposure and existing facilities (Westerbeek, Turner & Ingerson, 2002). Based on quantified factors (distance to the Olympic Village, local temperatures, unemployment rates, etc.) of 43 bids for the Summer Olympic Games between 1992 and 2012, Feddersen, Maenning and Zimmermann (2007) provided a predictive model

with the aim of correctly predicting the success (60% of correct prediction) or failure of the bids (97% of correct predictions).

These analyses are helpful to both scholars and practitioners involved in bidding for major sporting events. Yet, we suggest that studying these bids through a stakeholder approach would add to our understanding of the key success factors of bids. While the strategic place of stakeholders in organizing major sporting events has been demonstrated in previous studies (cf. Parent, 2008), its importance in the bid process has received little academic attention. Turner and Westerbeek (2004) touch upon this idea in their bid stakeholder network relationship analysis. This approach is relevant in identifying stakeholder salience and network governance factors that can impact the success of a bid. Here, a stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p.46). In the bid phase for major sporting events, stakeholders mostly refer to political officials, athletes, media, local population, economic actors or sponsors, facilities managers (cf. Ingerson & Westerbeek, 1999 ; Turner & Westerbeek, 2004)

The purpose of our study is therefore to analyse the stakeholder relationships, identify their salience and then determine stakeholder-based key bid success factors. We do so by using the Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) stakeholder salience framework through a case study of the 2018 Winter Olympics French bid which includes four candidate cities: Annecy¹, Grenoble, Nice, Pelvoux-Les-Ecrins².

The paper is structured as follows. First, an overview of the theoretical framework is offered. Second, a description of the methods (settings, data collection and data analysis) is provided. Then, the results are presented and discussed. Concluding remarks end the article.

Theoretical Framework

¹ Annecy was chosen by the French Olympic Committee March 18th 2009.

² Pelvoux-Les-Ecrins replaced Gap as a candidate-city which gave up the competition in October 2008

Freeman and Reed (1983) and Freeman (1984) provided the principles for stakeholder theory by identifying a typology of stakeholders of the firm (see also Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Freeman (1984) considered the stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (p. 46). Clarkson (1995) noted that “primary stakeholders are those who are needed for organizational survival, whereas secondary stakeholders are those who are not directly engaged in transactions with the organization and are not essential for its survival”. In order to characterize stakeholders more specifically, Mitchell et al. (1997) highlighted their three main attributes: “i) power to influence the firm, ii) legitimacy of the stakeholder’s relationship with the firm, iii) urgency of the stakeholder’s claim on the firm” (p.854). Those three variables correspond to a relevant prism to study stakeholders. Power is defined by Pfeffer (1981) as a “relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done” (p. 3). For Etzioni (1964), the power bases are related to the type of resource used to exercise power: coercive power (force, violence, restraint), utilitarian power (material or financial resources) and, normative power (symbolic resources). The second characteristic, legitimacy, refers to socially accepted and expected structures or behaviours. Mitchell et al. (1997) suggest urgency to be the third dimension for characterizing stakeholders. For these authors, urgency “helps move the model from static to dynamic” (p. 867). This last attribute exists “when a relationship or claim is of a time-sensitive nature and when that relationship or claim is important or critical to the stakeholder” (p. 867).

All of these attributes can be considered individual variables. At the same time, the different combinations of these variables (the possession of one, two or all three attributes) lead to what the literature calls classes of stakeholders. Conceptually, seven types of classes could exist (three possessing only one variable, three possessing two variables, one possessing

three variables). Mitchell et al. (1997) combine these classes into a stakeholder typology (see table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

The increasing use of stakeholder theory to study major sporting events has provided new insights in the organization and management of such events. For example, Parent and Foreman (2007) used stakeholder theory to explore the process of image and identity construction within organizing committees of major sporting events. They studied how managers of those organizations promoted these images and identity and how stakeholders perceived them. Parent and Deephouse (2007) tested the perceived stakeholder identification and prioritization by managers using the power, legitimacy and urgency framework (as described above) of Mitchell et al. (1997). Through the 2001 *Jeux de la Francophonie* and the 1999 Pan American Games, Parent and Deephouse (2007) supported the positive relationship between the numbers of stakeholder attributes and perceived stakeholder salience. According to the authors, managers' hierarchical level and role have direct and moderating effects on stakeholder identification and perceived salience. Parent (2008) went deeper into this question in relation to the 1999 Pan American Games by examining how local officials managed different partners to succeed in hosting and organizing major sporting events. Parent and Seguin (2007) explored whether organizing committee-stakeholders relationships can explain the fact that the international governing body for swimming (FINA) pulled the 2005 World Aquatics Championships from Montreal, Canada. Using the 2006 Winter Games and the 2008 UEFA Championship in Geneva, Ferrand and Chanavat (2006) focused on the ability of relationship marketing applied for major sporting events to optimize interplay between various stakeholder groups, focusing especially on the tourism issue. Leopkey et al. (2010) included stakeholders of sporting events in their analysis of advantages and threats related to

the creation of a sport event hosting policy in both Canada and Switzerland. Xing et al. (2008) considered the host city/country as units of analysis in sporting events bids. Using the Olympic Games as their case, the authors studied how stakeholders can manage the local dynamics to build favourable perceptions of the bid and positive images both domestically and internationally. Solberg, Hanstad and Steen-Johnsen (2009) provided a comparative-analysis between biathlon and cross-country skiing by focusing on the way stakeholder interrelationships could create opportunities for the production of popular TV sports contests. Based on the 2006 World Figure Skating Championship and the U-20 FIFA World Cup in Canada 2007, Leopkey and Parent (2009a, 2009b) provided a comparative case study identifying the risk management issues and strategies. Fifteen issues and 7 strategies were mentioned by the authors. Zagnoli and Radicchi (2010) studied a football fan community as a salient stakeholder. Through a multi-case analysis, this community was perceived as playing a key role in the value co-creation process. Mason et al. (2006) used a stakeholder approach to analyse the corruption issue in sport organizations. The authors analysed the management and control of the decision making process within the IOC. Moreover, for other studies using stakeholder theory in the sport setting, readers can refer to Friedman, Parent and Mason (2004), Friedman and Mason (2004) about public subsidises for professional sport facilities, Kaplanidou and Karadakis (2010) on the legacies of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, and Tookey (2008) on those of the Sydney Olympics, or Stevens and Watkins-Mathys (2006) about strategic alliances in developing five-a-side football.

Next, we find an important body of literature on the planning and implementation phases of an event (cf. Cuskelly, Boag & McIntyrte, 1999; Dolles & Söderman, 2008; Emery, 2002; Maenning & Porsche, 2008; Parent, 2008; 2010) as well as on stakeholder analyses of organizing committees (see above). However, little is known regarding bid stakeholders. One notable exception is Turner and Westerbeek (2004) who illustrate that event bidders have

dyadic relationships with governments, the city, facilities, consumers/community, national sport organizations, sponsors, media, participants, and the event owner. Yet, while this study provides depictions of the primary (event owner-event bidder) and secondary (other dyads) relationships, it only offers a description of the stakeholders without going into further stakeholder salience analysis. Consequently, there is a lack of understanding regarding the relative role and salience of the different bid phase stakeholders. This article addresses this gap in the literature.

Methods

This study uses a case-study approach by analysing the French national bid for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. It is a standard position to consider that case studies are appropriate when questions are asked about events over which the researchers have little or no control (Yin, 2003). This approach is also appropriate when researchers attempt to develop new theoretical models or focus on under-examined issues (Eisenhardt, 1989). Moreover, because the concept of population is quite unusual in this kind of research, the choice of the sample is not based on its “statistical” significance, but on theoretical significance (i.e., because of its ability to demonstrate and compare the stakeholders’ interactions and effect on the four bid projects), hence the reason for the purposeful sampling (e.g., Miles & Huberman, 1994) of the French national bid. Considering the research question, the analysis of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games may be more relevant to a broader range of municipalities than bidding for the summer edition of the Olympic Games. Given the size of the Summer Games, only large cities can reasonably compete for the right to organize this event. In contrast, small and/or medium-sized cities are more likely to compete and win a bid to host the Olympic Winter Games (cf. Albertville 1992; Lillehammer 1994). The following provides an overview of the setting, data collection, and data analysis.

Settings

All four cities involved in the national bid were studied, providing an exhaustive analysis of the overall case. Another important aspect of this study is the opportunity to analyse four different bid projects within a given country, bids who have a common timing (the deadlines for preparing and presenting the candidacy was the same for the four competitors³) and a common goal (to win the national bid and compete internationally for the right to host the 2018 Olympic Winter Games). From a methodological point of view, this approach allowed us to control three important variables (country, calendar and goal) and then provide a heuristic comparison of the four bid projects.

Data collection

For the four cities involved, data were collected from two main sources: archival material and semi-structured interviews. For each city, data from archival material were useful for our understanding of the organizing committee structure and to get a preliminary list of issues. This first stage was also important to draw the specific network of stakeholders (official and unofficial) related to each of the four cities. Using Parent (2008) as a reference, we can assume that the likely stakeholder groups would be government-based, community-based (residents), sport-based, and business/sponsor (financially) based. The analysis was focused on special internet websites created by the four cities involved in the 2018 Olympic bid project (including press packs), the internet website of the French Olympic Committee (including the on-line video of the four cities' official presentation done for the FOC) as well as books and articles from daily or weekly newspaper (from *L'Equipe*, *L'Express*, *L'Expansion*, *L'Humanité*, *Le Monde*, *Libération*, *Nice-Matin*, *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, *La Provence*) about or referring to this bid project. A total of 24 documents were gathered (number for each city was quite equal). As this analysis progressed, emerging ideas or

³ The four French cities had until January 21st 2009 to prepare their bids, at which time they were to present their project to the French Olympic Committee.

relationships were written in memos. It is important to mention that, in our context, archival material gathering was difficult, given the timing of the study (i.e., the 2018 bid process was still on-going at the time of writing the paper) and the confidentiality of the internal documents. Nevertheless, the archival document analysis provided a description of the social (stakeholder) environment of the four cities. This analysis also provided key information related to the stakeholders involved in each bid project. This was helpful in designing the sample of interviews to be conducted.

The second data collection step consisted of personal interviews. This allowed for the testing of the theoretical views and estimating stakeholders' influence on the final local bid strategy. Twenty-eight interviews were conducted between January 2009 and May 2010. A combination of theoretical, purposive (Arksey & Knight, 1999) and snowball sampling was used in identifying individuals to interview. Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached with each of the stakeholder groups interviewed. Face-to-face interviews are generally richer in data and more appropriate, but time and geographical constraints led us to conduct some interviews by telephone (11 out of 28). Telephone interviews are harder to drive (difficulty of engaging conversation and building trust with the person interviewed); however, the primary author who conducted the interviews mitigated potential issues by clearly planning the moment of each telephone interview with the participant, providing the general topic of the interview beforehand (a summary of the interview guide was sent by email in advance). The interview guide (see Appendix A) was developed and tested (with two consultants involved in the Paris 2012 project) for coherence and logic, and focused on key issues related to the current research. Four main areas were covered during those interviews⁴: i) the local strategy for the national bid; ii) the stakeholders involved in the process; iii) the French Olympic Committee (FOC); and iv) the three others cities' strategies (beside the one

⁴ See the interview guide in appendix.

which is interviewed). The structure of the interview guide is based on the literature cited earlier (Parent, 2008 for example) and on the analysis of the secondary (archival) data, which provided an overview of the global organization of each candidacy. For each of the four candidacies, the aim was to describe the official relationships between groups, and to highlight the unofficial structure of the project and the true decision-making process. The goal of the interviews was to identify factors that could explain the gap between the official and unofficial situations. This became a key analysis point for the characterization of the kinds of stakeholders involved in the bids in light of Mitchell et al. (1997) framework. Interviews were carried out with representatives of all major stakeholder groups and lasting on average between 60 and 90 min. Table 2 provides details about the interviews.

Insert Table 2 about here

Data were gathered (archival documents) and created (interviews) in French. Data used within this paper were translated by the authors (who are fully bilingual) only at the time of writing the paper in order to preserve the integrity and validity of the information.

Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded using the inductive content analysis software Alceste. Stakeholders and cases were coded as follows: A=Annecy, G=Grenoble, N=Nice, P=Pelvoux. PM=public official, EP=economic partner, SG=sport group, M=media. For example, interview coded APM4 is the fourth public official interviewed for the Annecy's case. Coding of passages was both deductive (e.g., using the power, legitimacy, and urgency codes of Mitchell et al.'s framework) and inductive (e.g., three levels of interaction, public officials' leadership function, autonomy, decision-making process). Coding and analysis were completed within each city-case first to determine the stakeholders and their patterns of interaction. Based on each stakeholder's coded attributes

(power, legitimacy, urgency), salience was determined for each case. An inductive approach was used to analyze the data. The Mitchell and al's (1997) framework was used as a guide to structure the analysis, yet the authors were not constrained by the framework in order to allow for other trends to emerge. More precisely, data gathered provided an in-depth analysis of stakeholder classes and to identify if each group considered having the power/legitimacy/urgency attributes. Then, comparisons between cities were completed to determine any differences in stakeholder salience, behaviour, etc. and their evolution in time allowing the identification of three stages; this was done using tables (such as the salience tables presented in the results section) following Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestion of table use for analyses. Data analysis was mainly conducted by the first author in order to get a global overview of the four cities studied, to guarantee a stability of the data analysis process and to make easier the comparison of the key variables of the survey. Then, findings were discussed with the other authors for feedback (peer-checking), and compared to the literature. Using more than one data source allowed for triangulation of information and to increase the validity of the data.

Results

Following the analysis of archival documents, we noted an emerging pattern of three interaction levels (local, horizontal, vertical), which provided the position of the different stakeholders in the systemic environment (or social network). This environment is described in figure 1.

Insert figure 1 about here

Data gathered first underline the complexity of the system with many actors involved in the various relationships as shown in figure 1. The structural relationships between the

actors must also be taken into account since the strategies developed by candidate cities impact the others at the local, horizontal or vertical levels. We noted that some groups might be more or less salient depending on the time period of the bid phase. The following section outlines the changing salience aspect of the stakeholder groups at three different stages of the bid process.

Stage one: Cities lobbying the French Olympic Committee to bid for the 2018 Winter Olympics

In the 2000's, a number of French cities were interested in bidding for the right to host the 2014 Winter Olympics. While the French Olympic Committee (FOC) was contemplating the idea of opening a national bid competition for the 2014 Winter Games, it decided not to proceed given that Paris was competing on the international stage for the rights to host the 2012 Olympics.

« The IOC did really not appreciate the position of the NOC which, for a few months, planned to present a French candidacy to the winter games in parallel to the candidacy of Paris to the 2012 Olympics international bid. » [APM1]

A few years after Paris' failed bid, a new bid project was launched for the 2018 Winter Olympics. This was the result of strong lobbying from three French cities (Annecy, Gap and Grenoble⁵).

« To me, the NOC absolutely did not start the project of a French candidacy to the 2018 Olympics Games. Today, if France competes to the international bid it is due to the determination of a few cities. Moreover, the NOC faced the hostility of the French Secretary of sport which wouldn't finance an event decided and organized by somebody else, the NOC » [APM1]

« Annecy was candidate-city for the 2014 Olympics but they pulled out their project under the pressure of the French government » [APM3]

These points underline the influence of cities interested in bidding for the Games on the FOC.

At this stage of the process, we mainly noted level-three relationships amongst the stakeholders. The level-two relationships were quite low and only dealt with solidarity

⁵ Nice entered the competition later

between the mayors of the cities involved interested in one common objective: to convince the FOC to be part of the international bid. Finally, the level-one relationships were also very low. This was due to the FOC's decision not to bid for the 2018 Olympics at that time. Hence, no stakeholder groups started thinking about the design of a candidacy.

Stage two: The national French bid

Stage two dealt with the three levels relationships. Each is described below.

The level-three relationships. Once the FOC confirmed France's intention to present a candidate city for the 2018 Olympics, it automatically became the definitive stakeholder with the power (to choose the better bid project), legitimacy (given by the IOC to represent the Olympic movement in France) and urgency (the FOC controls the timing of the competition) attributes. Each city involved in this national bid⁶ competed with the intent to convince the FOC members that it had the best candidacy.

The level-two relationships. The leaders of each bid indicated that their own strategy was developed without taking into account the strategy of their competitors

« We designed our project by our own without asking questions in regards to the others. » [APM2]

« We absolutely did not take into account the project of the others cities. We designed our strategy just like we were in the international bid. We were thinking: "what could our project bring to the IOC?" » [GPM3]

During this period, the four cities focused on answering the FOC brief and developing a winning bid project based on their specific strengths, not on the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors.

The level-one relationships. Each city developed its own governance model, which was influenced by the different stakeholder groups. A summary of each city is presented below.

⁶ Nice has joined the first three cities in the competition in October 2008

Annecy: The determination to share the responsibilities between stakeholders captured Annecy's candidacy. Annecy took a cooperative approach to its governance structure by involving representatives from the political, financial, athletics, ski resort/industry, community, and economic/business arenas as evidenced by the following quotes:

- on the bid's political governance:

« We chose a very original way to drive our project. We told the NOC that they will be the co-decision-maker and the co-organizer of the Winter Games in 2018. Today, all the strategic decisions related to the Olympics are equally taken by the mayor of Annecy, the president of the conseil general of Haute-Savoie and the NOC » [APM1]

« We thought that the NOC should feel close to our project and orientations. We should show the NOC some signs of a win-win partnership between them and us. That's why we tried to work hand-in-hand with the NOC. I think this explains the fact that we won the national bid » [APM3]

- on the involvement of the athletes:

« It was a wish of the mayor and the president of the general council to take a step back in order to shed light on the athletes. That's why EG⁷ made the presentation of the Annecy's candidacy to the NOC on the march 18th 2009 and the mayor was first presented as an athlete⁸ » [APM4]

- on the involvement of the local population:

« Annecy tried to have clearly explain to the local population the reason why Annecy was a candidate-city for the 2018 Olympics » [M1]

« We made some surveys on the local population. The local population was with us. None young people were against the project. It was 100% support⁹ » [M1]

- on the involvement of private sector (economic forces): There was no consensus amongst interviewees regarding the involvement of the private sector. Some suggested that they were quite involved in the bid while others mentioned that, their involvement was not so real:

« An association of businessmen located in the whole region, called "Impliquons-nous", had been created. This association was in charge of the economical promotion of the 2018 Annecy project. This association was absolutely free to drive promotion by their own. We never told them "now, we do with our rules" » [M1]

« My colleague Guy Metral, president of the Annecy's economic chamber of commerce has been put aside from the project. I think this is completely unusual. » [GEP1]

⁷ E.G. won the gold medal at the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville in freestyle.

⁸ He has been world champion in down hill kayaking in 1983, 1985 and 1991.

⁹ According to a survey conducted in February 2010 by CSA, a French studies institute, 90% of the French people support the Annecy's project.

As a result, Annecy's stakeholder attributes for level-one relationships are listed in table 3.

Insert table 3 about here

Grenoble: Grenoble's bid project was quite similar to Annecy's especially in its desire to collectively drive the bid project:

« We always worked hand-in-hand with all the local stakeholders: city, general council, ski resorts, local economic forces. [...] We were all involved in a leading committee. [...] All the people involved in the project were asked to agreed all the strategic decisions » [GPM1]

« We decided to work together. [...] They understood that we are able to work in a friendship way. This was not a question of political side. » [GEP1]

« I think that there was a nice union. » [GSG1]

The support of the local population was another common point with Annecy:

« We had a real support of the population. This was the case for example in February 2006 for the venue of the Olympic torch relay » [GPM1]

« Grenoble also organized down town the Snow Games in 2008 with several competitions. Many, many people attended this event. From this time, they made the hypothesis that the "population is with us. We can launch the project" » [M1]

Our analysis suggests that while Grenoble promoted a collective approach to its bid project, its decision-making process was centred on one individual, the Mayor, with very little actual involvement from stakeholders. The mayor was also the one who made the final bid presentation to the FOC:

« We were an important proposer in the committee but we absolutely not validate anything. [...] It was planned that local big companies should have been part of the project if Grenoble was the candidate city of France. They were not so much involved in the national bid » [GEP1]

« The boss of the project always has been the mayor and this was perfectly understandable » [GEP1]

« In terms of governance of the project, we made the propositions and the mayor took the decisions » [GSG1]

« The critique of Grenoble's candidacy related to it being too much associated with by its mayor » [M1]

Grenoble's stakeholder attributes for level-one relationships are listed in table 4.

Insert table 4 about here

Nice: Nice's bid project was also designed with the participation of several groups; but similarly to Grenoble, one actor was clearly identified as the leader of the bid project:

Christian Estrosi, the mayor of Nice.

«We were organized as a reversed pyramid: the only one who was in touch with the NOC was Mr Christian Estrosi, mayor of Nice. He was the bottom of our pyramid. The upper level was composed of the ten key-persons of the project. The last level was composed of the different workshops. Each one was in charge of a specific side of the event » [NPM4]

« Our project was very strongly based on Christian Estrosi. » [NPM2]

« For the project, the only decision-maker was Mr Chrisian Estrosi.... » [NPM4]

Everything was decided and validated by the mayor. As for Grenoble, this situation was different from the Annecy case where decision-making processes were somewhat shared between the different stakeholders. Nice's stakeholder attributes for level-one relationships are listed in table 5.

Insert table 5 about here

Pelvoux-Les-Ecrins: this bid project was quite unique given the size of the city, 449 residents. Pelvoux-les-Ecrins is a village located in the French Alps. Of note, the Winter Olympic Games have never been organized by such a small city:

« When I have been asked to bid for the 2018 Winter Games, I first thought it was a joke » [PPM3]

In reality, Pelvoux's bid was a 'regional' bid, involving six ski resorts as well as different well-known destinations for winter holidays and sports. Pelvoux became the lead city for this bid project as IOC rules stipulate that an Olympic candidacy must be led by one main city. It

is interesting to note that another city in the region, Gap, was first identified as the lead city for this candidacy but withdrew just days before the official start of the bid competition.

Once Pelvoux-les-Ecrins was chosen by the local decision-makers, the key-issues were to: i) design the relevant configuration for this bid project and, ii) make all public officials from the various local government bodies feel engaged in the bid project. In terms of interplay between the different stakeholders, the management of public officials representing different constituencies remained a key challenge. Hence, Pelvoux adopted a structure that reflected this situation with a general coordinator that became essential to manage the stakeholders.

« Jean-Marc Passeron was the real general coordinator of the project. He was the one who made the link between all the stakeholders » [PPM2]

The existence of a general coordinator overseeing public officials was the uniqueness of this bid project compared to those of Annecy, Grenoble and Nice. In terms of working process, this structure seemed to work well partly due to its legitimacy with the different stakeholders. The general coordinator was a well-known personality in his community. He was a successful businessman and a politician (member of the general council of the Hautes-Alpes). Consequently, public officials, economic leaders, and the local population perceived him as an appropriate partner.

Unlike other candidate cities, the coordination of the different stakeholders (economic, athletes, local population) was not a key point for Pelvoux's bid. As suggested above, the emphasis was in coordinating the representatives of the different public institutions involved in the bid project. According to our data, this organization succeeded because of the legitimacy of the main official (general coordinator) and the shared wish to bid for an event such as the Olympic Winter Games. Given their small size, the cities involved did not face

political opposition (the political union was strong and easier to achieve) and created much enthusiasm from all stakeholders.

« At the beginning, we were the good candidacy which was supposed to lose. Then, we became the alternative project which could win the national bid »
[PPM2]

« Working on the project month after month, we all started to believe that we could win » [PPM1]

Pelvoux-les-Ecrins's stakeholder attributes for level-one relationships are listed in table 6.

Insert table 6 about here

Stage three: Annecy is chosen as the French candidate-city for the international bid

In March 2009, Annecy was chosen as the French candidate city for the international bid¹⁰. At this point, the level-two relationships were based on a “gentlemen’s agreement” between Annecy and the three others cities which lost the national bid as evidenced by the following quotes:

« We felt close to the candidacy of Annecy. We offered to help them » [NPM2]
« The mayor announced our support to the Annecy’s project but Annecy has its own leading team. Except in a symbolic view, they don’t need our help »
[GPM3]

Beside, we noticed that the level-three relationships were Annecy-led. From March 2009, this city is the official candidacy representing France in the international bid. The FOC supports the Annecy’s bid project in being dependant of if

In summary, this section provided an analysis of the systemic environment of the 2018 Olympic French bid. This environment was quite complex due to three main interaction levels. Second, we found that even with a common calendar and a common objective, the driving stakeholder groups and their respective salience differed from one bid project to the

¹⁰ The level-1 relationships in Annecy’s case were similar to the one explained in stage two.

other (i.e., stakeholder salience is context/case dependent). Third, we noted changing stakeholder salience; this was dependent on the moment of the analysis in the bid plan (stage one, two or three), some stakeholders became more or less salient by gaining or losing attributes. These results are discussed in the following section.

Discussion

The goal of our study was to analyse the stakeholder relationships, identify their salience and then determine stakeholder-based key bid success factors. Findings indicate that the systemic environment is much more complex than what the literature suggests (cf. Turner & Westerbeek, 2004). Analyzing the bid phase of a major sporting event needs to take into account different levels of which are important when a candidate-city is chosen to host the event and when all the others stakeholder groups become partners of a bid. Bidding for a major sporting event like the Olympic Games mobilizes a number of stakeholders. In some cases, involvement is due to interest in the bid project. In other instances, the leaders of the bid may solicit other stakeholders to participate due to specific benefits that they may bring to the bid and, in the end, increase the probability of winning. Thus, some individuals have experience in the bid process, they are good negotiators, their background as businessmen or top athletes enable bid teams to build good relationships with voting members who select the host city, etc. This refers to two factors stated by Turner and Westerbeek (2004): the importance of the bid team composition and relationship marketing. In the French bid case, the stakeholder approach allowed us to note an important change in saliency between the three interaction levels (local, between bids, and with the event owner) and over the course of stages 1 (deciding to bid), 2 (national bid competition), and 3 (choice of national bid and international bid competition).

Moreover, Wolfe and Putler (2002) note that individual and collective self-interest can be different and lead to opposite, and even prejudiced goal attainment and strategies. For the

2018 Olympics French bid, findings highlight that the different stakeholders were part of one of the four candidacies if, in a general point of view, the fit between them was strong enough. In other words, while stakeholders may be heterogeneous in the general needs and wants, they are (or should be) complementary in their desire to achieve the goal of winning the right to host the event. Therefore, becoming a host-city of the Olympic Games appears as a federative goal providing relationships between people involved in the different groups which would be beyond political or partisan divisions. These divisions may have existed within the four candidacies studied, but a sort of gentlemen's agreement perhaps meant that these divisions did not emerge as a key feature in the data. Thus, the unity of each single group was preserved. While this was true for the period studied (the French national bid) for this paper, it may not have been the case in the periods before and after the national bid competition. For example, the city of Gap, who planned to submit a bid for the event, decided not to enter the national bid competition, because the unity of the stakeholders in terms of goals and strategies could not be guaranteed. Interestingly, after winning the national bid, the general manager of Annecy's candidacy did not continue to the international bid phase, as he could not agree with the business model of the project.

Moreover, results underline that public officials seem to play a central role within a bid project. From a political, symbolic and strategic point of view, public officials were the ones leading the 2018 Olympic bid projects for their region. Indeed, they were central in the network of stakeholders. This supports Rowley (1997) regarding the importance of stakeholder centrality, and Westerbeek, Turner and Ingerson (2002) who consider that government support for bids is one of the primary criteria for success in such an endeavour.

The stakeholder analysis conducted in this study also contributes to our understanding of the ways cities can win a bid. It appears that no actor who belongs to a stakeholder group should have a definitive status by itself, especially for level 1-relationships. This was

identified as one of the main weaknesses of Grenoble's and Nice's bids. These two bids were deeply embodied by their respective mayors (public official stakeholder group), which is often the case in bid projects. However, our results suggest that it may be more advantageous for an entire stakeholder group to be engaged in a bid project as opposed to one single actor (i.e., mayor). This was the case of Annecy where the public official's stakeholder group had the definitive status and was perceived to be the bid leader. To win a bid, it seems appropriate for the public officials' stakeholder group (as a whole) to have the definitive status. The degree to which this holds true for other countries (outside France) is a point worth further investigation.

Second, in the case of bids for sporting events, the position of the "sport group" is decisive. The sporting event owners, who are also the voting members, are often former athletes or top managers of international sport organisations. As a result, they pay particular attention to the role played by the sport stakeholder group in the different bids and their specific strengths (e.g., do the athletes think that the bid they support is appropriately designed for athletes taking part in the event?). Hence, the sport group should have a key strategic position in the bid project in order to have a positive impact. At a minimum, this stakeholder group should be an expectant stakeholder group, that is, one with a moderate level of salience following the Mitchell et al. (1997) framework. This was the case for Annecy and Grenoble but not for Pelvoux-les-Ecrins and Nice. In fact, the position of the sport group in the local system (level 1-relationships) was identified as a key weakness for Pelvoux-les-Ecrins and Nice. In our analysis, Annecy's bid project was the one bid that best respected these different principles (a whole political stakeholder group involved and the place of the sport group in the bid). One can surmise that it is one of the reasons why this bid was chosen to represent France in the international bid competition for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games.

Third, we propose that to design a winning bid project, few stakeholders should have a latent status. Otherwise, the bid committee may be driven by only one stakeholder group which could be a risky proposition as it does not allow for the presentation of a strong, united, and convincing bid. This was the case for Pelvoux-les-Ecrins and Nice, each having three stakeholder groups with the latent status. This could explain the failure of their respective bids. If few stakeholders should be latent, several stakeholders may be expectant in order to impact the bid. But such a configuration is feasible if the core bid managers are strong enough (e.g., are definitive stakeholders in their own right) to manage the multitude of expectant stakeholders.

We support the notion that stakeholder analysis is relevant to identify key success factors of a bid for sporting events. This is a complementary approach to previous studies notably conducted by Ingerson and Westerbeek (1999), Westerbeek, Turner and Ingerson (2002), and Feddersen, Maennig and Zimmermann (2007). The stakeholder effect can be perceived as a relevant key success factor for a bid alongside others already mentioned in the literature. This theoretical input is also based on the qualitative method we used in our paper while most previous studies used a quantitative approach. However, our analysis should be confirmed by future studies. In particular, the relevance of this stakeholder approach has to be tested in two other settings. First, in order to design a general model related to such a stakeholder approach, future studies should examine bids for other major sporting events. This would underline the most relevant key success factors for winning a bid for major sporting events generally speaking, and not only for Olympic Games. Second, the investigation of international Olympic bids could provide additional insights. Addressing this gap is necessary because the final goal of all such bid committees is to gain the right to host the (international) event. Studying an international bid through a stakeholder approach would be important to identify a general model of analysis and success factors. But it is also a study

with has a higher degree of difficulty due to the different political, economic, social and/or territorial contexts to consider for each bid project.

Conclusions

Our study provides an analysis of the 2018 Olympic Winter Games French bid competition using a stakeholder approach. Four cities were involved in the national competition, which allowed us to identify three levels of stakeholder interactions between them. Our analysis suggests that the position of the different stakeholder groups, notably in the level 1-relationships, partly determines the probability of success or failure of a bid. As a result, the stakeholder salience and network governance factors can be seen as the ninth key success factor of a bid (the first eight having been identified by Westerbeek, Turner and Ingerson (2002)). These findings correspond to a theoretical and empirical input which adds to previous articles identifying key success factors of a bid project for hosting major sporting events. This article is also useful for practitioners involved in bidding projects who want to identify the most relevant criteria for the awarding of the right to host major sporting events.

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Appendix A

1st topic. Strategy designed for the 2018 Winter Olympics bid

- a. Please explain the starting point of your candidacy for the 2018 Olympic Games
- b. How do you define the objectives of this candidacy?
- c. To you, what are the main cultural, social, political, sport-based dimensions of your candidacy?
- d. To you, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of your project?

2nd topic. Actors involved in the project

- a. To you, what are the major actors of your candidacy?
 - i. What is exactly their official (and non-official) function in the project?
 - ii. Who has defined these functions?
 - iii. How could you define the committee which designed the candidacy?
 - iv. What are the main features of this committee in terms of his working process?
 - v. What was your own function in this group?
- b. To you, in a wide perspective, what are the different stakeholders of this project?
 - i. How are they impacted by this project?
 - ii. What was their function in the candidacy?
 - iii. Did you notice that one or another stakeholder developed its own strategy in order to reach its own goal which was different from the official and common goal (to gain the right to be the French candidate-city for the 2018 Olympics)?
 - iii. To you, what are the really key-actors of your candidacy?
- c. Who was responsible for managing the group?
- d. To you, why was it important to make these stakeholders be involved in the project?
 - i. What were the expected goals of this relationship?
 - ii. Have been they reached?
 - iii. Did the kind of relationships between the stakeholders influence the project?
 - iv. What kind of problems did the committee face in the building the project? How have been they solved?

3rd topic. The french Olympic committee

- a. How was the relationship between the local committee and the NOC?
 - i. ...until you decided to be officially a candidate-city?
 - ii. ...during the national bid?
- b. To you, what were the objectives of the NOC in the perspective of the French candidacy for the 2018 Olympics?
- c. What is your personal analysis of what the NOC wished for this French candidacy?

- d. What was your own strategy in the way you answered, *via* your project, the request of the NOC for this French candidacy?
- e. What was your own strategy, in March the 18th 2008, when you officially presented your project? What are the choices you made?

4th topic. The other French candidate-cities

- a. Did your own project be influenced by the three others?
 - i. In which way?
 - ii. What was your reaction?
- b. How do you estimate your own project compared to the three others?
- c. Is there anything else that you would like to mention in relation to this bid?

Table 1.*The power/legitimacy/urgency's model of Mitchell and al. (1997)*

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder salience	Attributes	Stakeholder subcategory
Latent stakeholders: only one of the three attributes	Low	Legitimacy	Discretionary stakeholders
		Power	Dormant stakeholders
		urgency	Demanding stakeholders
Expectant stakeholders: two of three attributes	Moderate	Power and legitimacy	Dominant stakeholders
		Legitimacy and urgency	Dependant stakeholders
		Power and urgency	Dangerous stakeholders
Definitive stakeholders: all three attributes	High	Power, legitimacy and urgency	Definitive stakeholders

Table 2.

List of interviewees

City	Stakeholder groups	Function	Code	Method	
Annecy	① - Public Official	Mayor	APM1	In person	
		Assistant to the Mayor in charge of the 2018 Annecy Olympics project	APM2	In person	
		Local manager in charge of the sport sector	APM3	In person	
		Assistant to the president of the conseil general of Haute-Savoie	APM3	In person	
	② - Economic Partner	Project manager in Havas consulting firm in charge of the 2018 Annecy project	APM4	In person	
		Founder and director of the Aeroacom agency and president of the association called “Impliquons-nous”	AEP1	By phone	
		Marketing manager of Evian company	AEP2	By phone	
		③ - Sport Group	Gold medalist at the Turin 2006 Winter Olympic Games – Spokesman of the athletes for the 2018 Annecy project	ASG1	In person
④ - Media	Journalist for the <i>Dauphine Libéré</i> newspaper, specialist of the Annecy 2018 project	M1 ¹¹	By phone		
Grenoble	① - Public Official	Mayor	GPM1	By phone	
		Assistant to the Mayor in charge of the 2018 Grenoble Olympics project	GPM2	By phone	
		2018 Grenoble project manager	GPM3	In person	
	② - Economic Partner	President of the local economic chamber of commerce and president of the association “Grenoble companies with the Grenoble 2018 project”	GEP1	By phone	
		③ - Sport Group	Bronze medallist at the Albertville 1992 and Nagano 1998 Winter Olympic Games – Spokesman of the athletes for the 2018 Grenoble project	GSG1	In person
	④ - Media	Journalist for the <i>Dauphine Libéré</i> newspaper, specialist of the Grenoble 2018 project	M1	By phone	
	Nice	① - Public Official	French deputy in charge of the financial part of the Nice 2018 project	NPM1	In person

¹¹ Annecy, Grenoble and Pelvoux belong to the same territory. The *Dauphine Libéré* is a regional newspaper which is the most relevant one to discuss these three Olympics projects. Only one journalist of this newspaper was in charge of them. As a result, only one interview was done with him but the three projects were covered. Thus, this contact has been considered as three interviews of the total.

	European deputy, vice-president of the Nice 2018 project	NPM2	In person	
	Nice city director of cabinet affairs	NPM3	By phone	
	Consultant for the Nice 2018 project	NPM4	In person	
② - Economic Partner	President of the local economic chamber of commerce	NEP1	By phone	
③ - Sport Group	Silver medalist at the alpine world ski championships Sankt Anton 2001 and Bormio 2005 – Spokesman of the athletes for the 2018 Grenoble project	NSG1	In person	
④ - Media	Journalist for the <i>Nice Matin</i> newspaper, specialist of the Nice 2018 project	NM1	By phone	
Pelvoux	① - Public Official	Member of the conseil general of Hautes-Alpes, president of the association “Objective: 2018” and leader of the 2018 Pelvoux project	PPM1	In person
		President of the 2018 Pelvoux project	PPM2	By phone
		Mayor of Pelvoux	PPM3	By phone
	② - Economic Partner	President of the local economic chamber of commerce	EP1	By phone
	③ - Sport Group	Silver medalist at the alpine world ski championships Sierra Nevada 1996	SG1	In person
	④ - Media	Journalist for the <i>Dauphine Libéré</i> newspaper, specialist of the Pelvoux 2018 project	M1	By phone

Figure 2.

Social network and stakeholders of the 2018 Olympics project

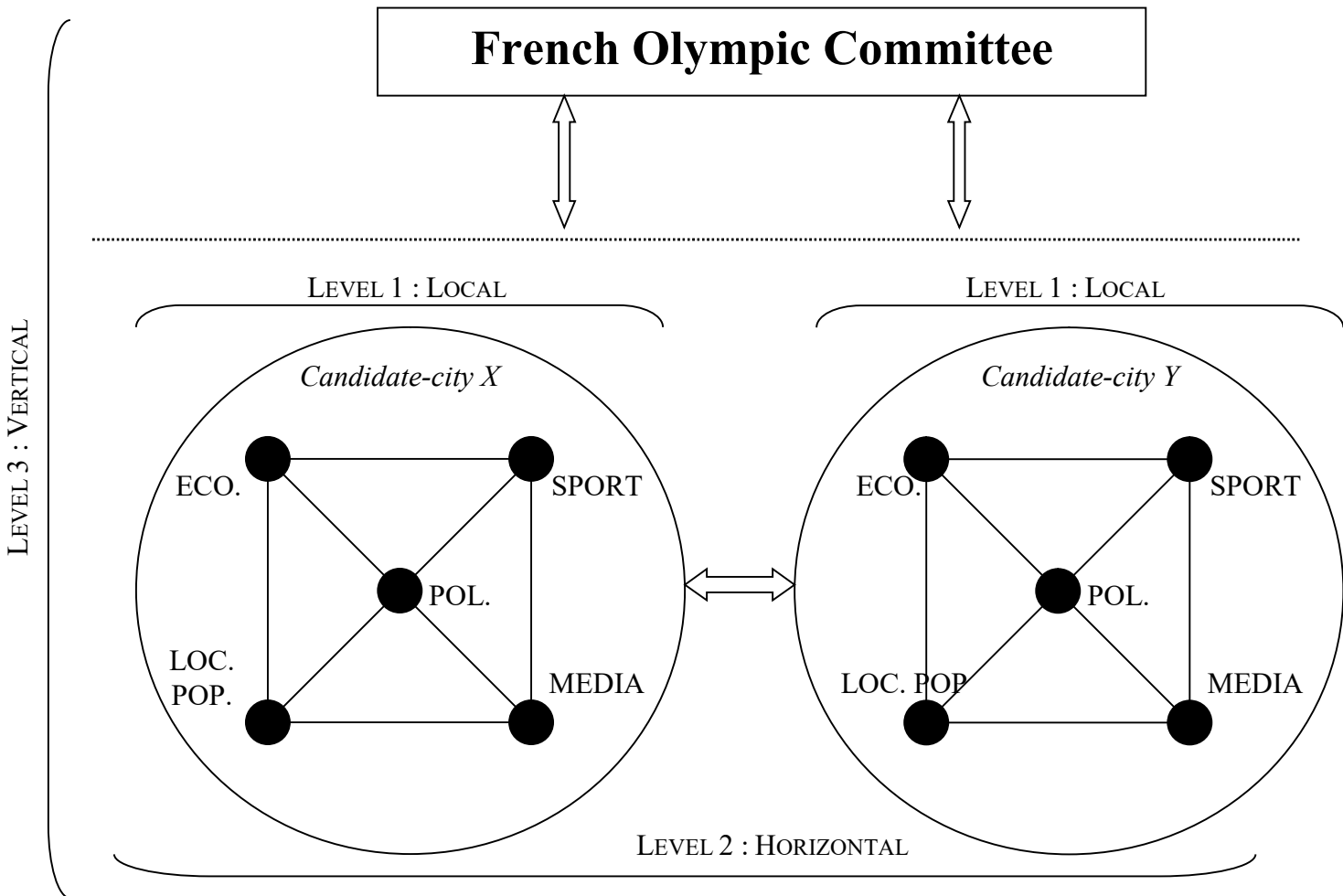


Table 3.*The P/L/U's attributes of the stakeholders in stage two (level-one relationships - Annecy)*

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder salience	Attributes	Stakeholder subcategory	Stakeholder groups
Latent stakeholders with only one of the three attributes	Low	Legitimacy	Discretionary stakeholders	/
		Power	Dormant stakeholders	Media
		urgency	Demanding stakeholders	Local population
Expectant stakeholders with two of three attributes	Moderate	Power and legitimacy	Dominant stakeholders	Sport group
		Legitimacy and urgency	Dependant stakeholders	Economic partners
		Power and urgency	Dangerous stakeholders	/
Definitive stakeholders with all the three attributes	High	Power, legitimacy and urgency	Definitive stakeholders	Public officials

Table 4.

The P/L/U's attributes of the stakeholders in stage two (level-one relationships - Grenoble)

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder salience	Attributes	Stakeholder subcategory	Stakeholder groups
Latent stakeholders with only one of the three attributes	Low	Legitimacy	Discretionary stakeholders	/
		Power	Dormant stakeholders	Media
		urgency	Demanding stakeholders	Local population
Expectant stakeholders with two of three attributes	Moderate	Power and legitimacy	Dominant stakeholders	Sport group
		Legitimacy and urgency	Dependant stakeholders	Public officials except the Mayor of Grenoble
		Power and urgency	Dangerous stakeholders	/
Definitive stakeholders with all the three attributes	High	Power, legitimacy and urgency	Definitive stakeholders	The Mayor of Grenoble

Table 5.*The P/L/U's attributes of the stakeholders in stage two (level-one relationships - Nice)*

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder salience	Attributes	Stakeholder subcategory	Stakeholder groups
Latent stakeholders with only one of the three attributes	Low	Legitimacy	Discretionary stakeholders	Sport group
		Power	Dormant stakeholders	Media
		urgency	Demanding stakeholders	/
Expectant stakeholders with two of three attributes	Moderate	Power and legitimacy	Dominant stakeholders	/
		Legitimacy and urgency	Dependant stakeholders	Economic partners
		Power and urgency	Dangerous stakeholders	/
Definitive stakeholders with all the three attributes	High	Power, legitimacy and urgency	Definitive stakeholders	The Mayor of Nice

Table 6.

The P/L/U's attributes of the stakeholders in stage two (level-one relationships – Pelvoux-les-Ecrins)

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder salience	Attributes	Stakeholder subcategory	Stakeholder groups
Latent stakeholders with only one of the three attributes	Low	Legitimacy	Discretionary stakeholders	Sport group
		Power	Dormant stakeholders	PPM3
		urgency	Demanding stakeholders	/
Expectant stakeholders with two of three attributes	Moderate	Power and legitimacy	Dominant stakeholders	Economic partner
		Legitimacy and urgency	Dependant stakeholders	/
		Power and urgency	Dangerous stakeholders	/
Definitive stakeholders with all the three attributes	High	Power, legitimacy and urgency	Definitive stakeholders	PPM1