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Youth multi-sport events in Austria: tourism strategy or just a coincidence?

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ABSTRACT

Impact and legacy research of touristic issues has become more popular with the appearance of manifold approaches to examining tourism. In recent years, the region of Western Austria has successfully staged multi-sport youth events, with two being staged in Innsbruck, Tyrol (YOG 2012; ICG 2016) and one in the region of Montafon, Vorarlberg (EYOF, 2015). This leads to the assumption that the high frequency of youth sports events in these regions necessitates and therefore also follows a set hosting policy or at least a strategic approach to event bidding and staging. To examine these assumptions, a mix of desk research and qualitative interviews was chosen, encompassing bidding files, final reports, official tourism statistics, press releases from tourism boards, political working papers, internal documents and interviews with organising committee members, event experts and political representatives. Staging youth sports events is found to have left legacies in Western Austria such as generating immediate overnight stays in the low season and creating a positive image for the host regions, depending on the frequency with which events are staged and affirming the purpose of using events to boost tourism. The host areas lacked a written (youth sport) strategy and unexpectedly, the existing strategies do not include the youth sports events. However, it can be assumed in the case of Innsbruck that a hidden event strategy exists. In conclusion, the study reveals the importance of sharing events and their benefits among the various local stakeholders, thus branding the region as a host city.

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1. Introduction

Research on the impacts and legacies of major sports events has become more prevalent in the tourism, event and leisure literature (Preuss, 2015) in recent decades. Tourism legacies in particular seem to be of major interest (Cornelissen, 2004) as they also hold the promise of an enhanced economic and socio-cultural situation as well as an improved destination image (Faulkner, 1993).

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The former host cities of the Olympic Games, Innsbruck (1964, 1976) and Barcelona (1992), are described by Cashman (2006) and Chappelet (2006b) as role models for tourism development in terms of post-event legacies. The special connection of Innsbruck to major sports events has been pointed out by Schnitzer (2011). Between 2005 and 2012 Innsbruck staged annually recurring sports events as well as nine large-scale, one-off sports events. In the last four years, these events have included two international multi-sport youth events (the Youth Olympic Games 2012 – YOG 2012 and the International Children’s Games 2016 – ICG 2016), staged in the region of Innsbruck-Tyrol.

In the neighbouring province of Vorarlberg another multi-sport youth event, the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF), took place in January 2015. Besides the EYOF 2015, the World Gymnaestrada was also staged as a major sports event in Vorarlberg in 2007 (in 2019 this event will take place in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg again). Other recurring events, such as the Snowboard World Cup or the M3 Mountain bike competition, similarly take place in the Montafon Valley, Vorarlberg.

Based on the assumption that major sports events can create tourism legacies and given the regularity with which (youth) events are staged in these regions, it can be assumed that a hosting policy or at least a strategic approach to event bidding and staging is in place. Hence, the objective of this study is threefold: firstly, we identify and compare planned and realised (tourism) legacies of three junior multi-sport events, the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and ICG 2016. Secondly, we examine whether the staging of the three youth sports events was part of an event strategy of the host region(s) or the events were staged by a coincidence. Finally, we try to generalise the specific findings and adapt them to another regional context. The result of this study should be seen as the starting point for further research and should stimulate the discussion surrounding event strategies and youth event legacies for the tourism and leisure industry.

The further structure of the paper begins with a brief summary of the current literature, which is followed by a description of the methods used for the results of the analysis and a discussion offering a summarising conclusion.

2. Literature review

2.1. Events and (their) impacts on tourism

The literature on sports events is dominated by economic impact studies highlighting potential benefits as well as deficiencies of hosting such sports events. In recent years, it has become more popular among scholars to discuss other tangible relicts apart from economic impacts (e.g. creation of infrastructure) as well as intangible relicts (e.g. happiness) of these events (Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012). Event impacts on tourism can be tangible (e.g. overnight stays) and intangible in nature (e.g. re-imagining a host city) and are widely discussed among scholars. Getz (2008) points out that events are a major driver of local tourism strategies and regional marketing concepts and he confirms that the various impacts have been well documented. However, given the complexity of these events (e.g. different stages such as bidding, a high number of stakeholders, long-term impacts and intangible effects) measuring the impacts of major sports events on tourism is (still) challenging. Scholars, such as Preuss (2015), Li and McCabe (2013) developed frameworks for measuring the legacies of large-scale events in order to quantify

impacts on tourism. Li and Blake (2009) differentiate short-term tourism impacts (arising during the event) and legacies, which are related to tourists arriving in the host country before, during and after the event. Therefore, tourism legacies may extend from pre-event to post-event (Kasimati, 2003) and may generate economic benefits (Preuss, Kurscheidt, & Schütte, 2008), but also a long-term change in tourist arrivals (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011). The tourism industry in the host areas may also benefit from infrastructure originally built to cater for such events (Li & McCabe, 2013). Furthermore, Blake (2005) and Kaiser, Alfs, Beech, and Kaspar (2013) reveal that the touristic impact varies across cities, regions and countries, leading to the assumption that the impact partly depends on the current state of tourism in a city, region or country, with established touristic destinations having proportionally less ground to make up than less established ones. Taks, Chalip, Green, Kesenne, and Martyn (2009) suggest that events can be useful for raising the probability that tourists and participants will return, but that the challenge could lie in generating better collaboration between tourism marketers and event organisers, thus creating more effective ways of etching the experiences of attendees and tourists into their memory. According to Halpenny, Kulczycki, and Moghimehfar (2016), whether or not tourists re-visit a destination is greatly influenced by their attachment to the destination itself, which can also be positively influenced by events hosted by a particular destination. Not only re-visitation can be influenced by hosting events; also certain groups of tourists or stakeholders can be targeted (Preuss & Alfs, 2011). Indirect effects relating to tourism such as the hospitableness (Brenke & Wagner, 2006) of the local community need to be taken into consideration as possible outcomes of hosting events. Hence, Higham (1999) describes the importance of choosing appropriate events based on the attributes available to a host city's qualification (e.g. infrastructure).

2.2. Event life cycle and hosting policies

Following the general literature on the impacts that sports event have on tourism, Kaspar (2014) introduced the event life cycle, which is based on the product life cycle (Polli & Cook, 1969) and the tourist life cycle introduced by Butler (2006). This event life cycle starts with the idea and the feasibility of staging an event (formation phase) and is followed by the phase of growth (bidding campaign, formation of organisation, venues master plan, post-event management plan, infrastructural development, event planning and event branding strategy) and the event hosting (staging) and ends with the future development of the event region. In the last phase the key questions are (1) how will the event destination position itself in the long run, (2) how will the venues be managed and (3) what kind of tourist product may be developed? In the last phase, the success of an event is related to the ability of the hosting area to leverage the images and perfections created during the event itself and to continue delivering on the dream long after the circus has left the host city (Hinch & Higham, 2011).

Getz (2008) sees the integration of events in the tourism strategy as crucial, as it influences future tourism behaviour, while Hallmann and Breuer (2010, p. 234) suggest that 'knowing that image fit favours future visit to the destination, destinations marketers should use the positive connotation of sports events'. It seems that a strategic approach in terms of a hosting policy as described by Chappelet (2006a) from a generic perspective and by McCloy (2009), using the specific case of the federal sport hosting policy of Canada,

could be helpful for (tourism) policymakers in order to ensure the long-term goals of a destination. Leopkey, Mutter, and Parent (2010) have compared the sports event hosting policies of Canada and Switzerland. They figured out that sport event policies may reduce competition with non-sport events on the one hand and may, create a number of barriers to potential sports event host (e.g. accountability, event funding, lack of support) on the other hand.

2.3. (Tourism-related) impact studies on youth sports events

The increasing number of junior multi-sport events is a new phenomenon, although they have already been existing for over 30 years. These multi-sport events have an intangible return on investment and are an expensive business (Jack, 2015), so what are the reasons for hosting them? Parent, Kristiansen, and Houlihan (2016) argue that these events do not attract substantial sponsorship or interest of broadcasters and are instead subsidised by the host government. There may be several explanations for this such as the 'myth' that hosting sports events increases participation in sport (Taks, Misener, Chalip, & Chalip, 2014). Another explanation is the international federations' desire to strengthen the development pathway and expose young athletes to competition at an early age to cement their long-term commitment and for the National Governing Bodies to explain that early specialisation is a prerequisite for eventual elite success (Hodges & Williams, 2012).

In the space of just four years, three international multi-sport youth events have been staged in the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, the western part of Austria, that is, the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and the ICG 2016. Scientific interest culminated in different research projects on these events. The research conducted into Innsbruck's sports events focused on potential management and/or tourism implications and primarily related to economic impact studies (Preuss, Siller, Zehrer, Schütte, & Stickdorn, 2010; Schnitzer, Bodner, Scheiber, Thöni, & Kopp, 2016; Thöni & Philippovich, 2008), customer satisfaction (Preuss et al., 2010; Schnitzer & Stickdorn, 2012) and the perception of these events (or aspects thereof) from the single stakeholders' view (Schnitzer, Scheiber, Lang, Brandstetter, & Kopp, 2014; Schnitzer, Peters, Scheiber, & Pocecco, 2014). In an internal report relating to the socio-economic impacts of the YOG 2012 (Thöni, Kopp, & Bodner, 2013) a survey was conducted among hotel operators ($n = 32$) in Innsbruck to ascertain their views as to whether Innsbruck should bid for future events. Sixty-nine per cent said yes, 7% no and 24% did not respond. Furthermore, they were asked for their opinion on the ideal month for staging sports events in Innsbruck. The plurality of interviewees, exactly 26 of the 32 interviewed hotel operators, stated that the best month would be January.

Schnitzer and Kopp (2012) discussed the stakeholder approach in the context of the YOG 2012, highlighting the fact that an event and its impact may be perceived differently by event stakeholders and that there is a lack of research taking a multi-stakeholder approach, which means analysing events and their impacts from different points of view (Peters & Schnitzer, 2015). In addition, an investigation examined the implications for local stakeholders by co-hosting the 2015 EYOF (Kristiansen, Strittmatter, & Skirstad, 2016).

Summarising the literature review and the theoretical fundament of our study, we realised that the (manifold) impacts of sports events on tourism (also in the regional context of the Tyrol and Vorarlberg) are well documented. However, the literature lacks

knowledge in relation to junior multi-sport events. Furthermore, impacts on tourism are very often not embraced in a wider (tourism-policy-related) context and therefore, host regions show a lack of a clear strategic direction such as a dedicated hosting policy (Schnitzer, Scheiber, Kornexl, & Thöni, 2017).

3. Contextual background

Before showing how the research questions were analysed, we will introduce the three youth events. The single events being compared are owned by different organisations. The oldest event are the ICG 2016, whose association launched the first ever games back in 1968. The first edition of the games took place in Slovenia on the initiative of Metod Klemenc. He wanted to use sport as a tool for young athletes to meet and promote understanding, tolerance and respect (Rasch, 2015). The ICG 2016 are recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and have always had the support and help of the IOC Presidents (Rasch, 2015). IOC President Jacques Rogge may also have been inspired by the ICG in his time as President of the European Olympic Committee, when he took the initiative to host the EYOF in order to promote Olympism among young people as he did with the YOG as President of the IOC in 2010 (Kristiansen, 2015; Schnitzer, Peters, Scheiber, & Pocecco, 2014).

Potential host cities interested in organising one of these events need to run through a specific bidding procedure as regulated by the respective event owner (Schnitzer & Chappelet, 2014). The size and specificity of the single events are shown in Table 1, based on the concrete sample of the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and ICG 2016.

4. Methods

We used a qualitative approach in this exploratory study in order to compare the planned and realised (tourism) legacies of multi-sport youth events as well as to highlight potential event strategies and implications. Observations and results of interviews were collected together with appropriate documents. The individual data sources are described below followed by the data analysis techniques.

Table 1. Comparison of the YOG 2012, the EYOF 2015 and the ICG 2016.

	YOG 2012	EYOF 2015	ICG 2016
Athletes	1020	870	564
Volunteers	1357	1200	700
Age of athletes	15-18	17-18	12-15
Disciplines	15	8	8
Participating delegations	69	45	54
Medal ceremonies	63	29	31
Olympic village	1	32 hotels	5 hotels
Candidates	4	2	1
Duration (days)	10	5	4
Venues	6	9	7
Spectators	110,000	30,000	18,425
Media/press representatives	800	150	53
Costs	23.7 million euros	6.5 million euros	2.9 million euros
Overnight stays	40,460	7153	7000

Source: IYOGOC, 2012; EYOF-OC, 2015 and ICG-OC, 2016.

4.1. Observations

The authors were present at the three events, which afforded a point of comparison between them. For the YOG 2012, the first author was involved in the bidding as CEO and coordinated the event preparation and delivery research projects related to the YOG. He was eligible to enter all areas of the event. The third author had an accreditation that was limited to particular areas, such as competition sites, ceremonies and some non-competition areas. In addition, two of the authors observed the official city-to-city debrief between the first and the second host of the Winter YOG, Innsbruck 2012 and Lillehammer 2016. During the EYOF 2015, the first and third author observed all competition venues in Liechtenstein and Vorarlberg. In addition, the opening ceremony, flower ceremonies and medal ceremonies were visited daily. For the ICG 2016, the authors were all officially accredited by the organising committee (OC) as researchers and were also able to attend the events as observers. This means that the observations also provided insights into the daily operations and the hosting process.

4.2. Interviews

We conducted a convenient and purposeful sampling procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), as we wanted to interview bidding/OC members of all three events as well as event experts and a political representative. All members of the OCs were involved in the bidding, planning and hosting of more than one of these events. Furthermore, we interviewed representatives of the local tourism boards. In addition, informal conversations with several other members of the OCs were conducted, and these informal talks offered a greater understanding of the research issue.

Table 2. Experts for semi-structured interviews.

Interview partner	Position of interviewee	Leading questions	Interview date/ Interviewer
Christoph Platzgummer	Deputy Mayor of Innsbruck (2006–2009)	Political perspective on YOG 2012 bid	June, 9th 2014, author 1
	President Bid Committee (YOG 2012)	Youth strategy for Innsbruck	
Philipp Groborsch	Sports Coordinator (WU 2005)	Event strategy for Innsbruck and Vorarlberg	January, 17th 2015, author 1
	Head of Operations (YOG 2012)	Transfer of knowledge	
Georg Spazier	CEO (EYOF 2015)	Tourism strategy for Vorarlberg	February, 15th 2016, author 3
	Head of Marketing (YOG 2012)	Tourism, youth and event strategy for Tyrol	
Sabrina Scheiber	CEO (ICG 2016)	Tourism, youth and event strategy for Tyrol	March, 6th 2016, author 3
	Volunteer Coordinator (YOG 2012d)	Transfer of knowledge	
Markus Redl	Head of HR (ICG 2016)	Impacts of YOG 2012 and ICG 2016	April, 27th 2016, author 1
	CEO (WU 2005)	Event strategy in general	
	Head of Bid Development (YOG 2012)	Tourism strategy at destination	
Fritz Kraft	CEO Tourism Board Innsbruck (1989–2015)	Youth and bid strategy YOG 2012	November, 23rd 2016, author 1
		Event strategy in general	
Manuel Bitschnau	CEO Tourism Board Montafon	Tourism strategy at destination	December, 15th 2016, author 2
		Event strategy in general	
		Tourism strategy at destination	
		Youth and bid strategy EYOF 2015	

The face-to-face, semi-structured interviews (see [Table 2](#)) took place after the events at different locations that were convenient for the interviewees. The interviews were conducted in English and/or German due to the nationality of interviewer. The interviews lasted between 20 and 50 minutes. We tailored the interview guide to the different stakeholders due to their position and the respective event. If they had taken part in more than one event, we also asked them to make a comparison. The interviews ended with the open process-feedback question: 'Do you have anything else to add?' Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed verbatim in their original language by one of the bilingual authors. A translation of quotes only occurred when writing down the findings to preserve the integrity of the data.

4.3. Documents

We received access to several types of relevant documents, such as bidding files for the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and ICG 2016; final reports of the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and ICG 2016; official tourism statistics of the State of Tyrol and the State of Vorarlberg; press releases from the tourism boards; political working papers (e.g. coalition agreements of political parties in Innsbruck and the Tyrol) and internal documents (such as commissioned impact studies) belonging to the OCs of the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and the ICG 2016.

4.4. Data analysis

We used several methods to record our observations. Most important were the field notes, where personal impressions were written down and discussed between the members of the research group following Spradley (2016). Subsequently, these notes were essential for the interview guide. With three layers of knowledge, an examination through content analysis was seemed to be preferable. The content analysis is a process to systematically analyse all types of messages and a technique which lies at the crossroads of qualitative and quantitative methods (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). The coding of raw passages was done according to a classification scheme. It can be used to unobtrusively explore large amounts of textual information in order to ascertain the trends and patterns of the words used in the interview, their relationships and the structures and discourses of communication (Grbich, 2007). The researchers read and coded the raw material and assigned it to main categories based on all the data. The emerging findings were once more compared with the data to verify the understanding and were discussed with colleagues. Finally, we sent a draft of this paper to selected participants for feedback to increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

5. Results

The following section is divided into two parts, focusing firstly on the comparison between the planned and realised (tourism) legacies of the three events and secondly on the evaluation of whether or not the events were staged following a clearly stated event strategy by the host regions.

5.1. Planned and realised (tourism) legacies

Table 1 reveals that the YOG 2012 was by far the largest event, especially in relation to budget, spectators and media coverage. The EYOF 2015 and the ICG 2016 were less formalised events than the YOG 2012, especially due to the fact that the IOC adapted the operational event handbooks from the Olympic Games to the YOG and, therefore, the policies and procedures were complex and quite sophisticated (Groboorsch, personal interview, January 17, 2015). The organisation of the EYOF 2015 was challenging because the event was co-hosted by Liechtenstein and Vorarlberg; this is also reflected in the large number of hotels at which the athletes were staying. Instead of using an Olympic Village, the 45 national teams were accommodated at 32 hotels in the Montafon Valley. The OC saw this move as an advantage, since the hotel owners could function as 'multipliers' for event communication and promotion (Kristiansen et al., 2016). Furthermore, profits would go directly to the citizens in the region, which was important for strengthening the local support for the OC. Another approach to increase the local communities' commitment to the event was a local and visible torch relay involving local schools. The ICG 2016 do not come within the patronage of the IOC, but are akin to the YOG and the EYOF 2015 in terms of their character, with juvenile athletes competing against each other in newly designed competition formats, surrounded by side events, promoting peace and friendship through sports among the world's youth. In a different way from the YOG but similarly to the EYOF 2015, the ICG 2016 had no Olympic Village, although the athletes were accommodated at five different hotels situated in Innsbruck and the surrounding villages.

In order to analyse the legacies of the three events, the planned legacies and the realised legacies are compared in Table 3. The types of legacies are based on the most common concepts included in the event literature (e.g. Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012; Preuss, 2015).

The legacies relating to tourism in the pre-event phase are not mentioned for the two events staged in Innsbruck, while the bid committee of the EYOF 2015 clearly states that the event is also intended to promote tourism. The category 'branding' may also be relevant in communications to potential tourists in terms of branding the destination with a new event. Interestingly, in the post-event legacies, the OCs focused on tangible legacies such as the number of overnight stays generated by event tourists. Table 3 reveals that the potential benefits of events cannot solely be reduced to tourism legacies. Indeed, a bundle of potential legacies needs to be created, firstly in order to obtain the right to host the event and secondly to satisfy the event stakeholders' expectations. The diversity of these legacies was also analysed in the various interviews conducted with key persons in the bidding and OCs.

If you organise a major (winter) sports event in Innsbruck you need to do it in the low season, which is mid-January. In other periods the prices for the rooms are too high for many delegations. (Platzgummer, personal interview, June 9, 2014)

Even though other stakeholders in major sports events would prefer an event to be organised at different times of the year, the tourism industry plays an important role in the final decision, as the case of the ICG 2016 shows.

Table 3. Comparison between planned and realised legacies of the selected events.

Type of legacies	YOG 2012	EYOF 2015	ICG 2016	
Planned legacies	Branding	Consolidating city's reputation as the capital of winter sport	Host region should become known among the youth of Europe	
	Values (intangible leg.)	Culture and Education Programme	Bringing Olympic spirit and atmosphere to the region	Promoting Olympic values and education of youth through sport
	Health	Positive effects on health		Setting guidelines for a healthy lifestyle
	Networks		Contribution to political and social relationships through sports	Creating the opportunity to meet and make friends
	Environment (sustainability)	Low environmental impact		
	Community	Reputation of Innsbruck as a centre of progressive youth sport and culture	Use of existing volunteer base from YOG 2012	
	Venues	Construction of permanent residences for the local community	New sports facilities in the Montafon for future international competitions	Use of city's existing venues and experience in hosting events
Realised legacies	Tourism Economy		Promote tourism Economic impact	
	Branding	First ever city to host an Olympic event three times		Continuing the legacy of the YOG 2012 by focusing on youth activities
	Values (intangible leg.)		#thecaresquare project in collaboration with the NPO "Peace and Sport"	
	Health			Campaign 'Show Your Support'
	Networks	New media strengthen the host and Olympic Movement by reaching the youth		University project (online registration tool) for other ICG events
	Environment (sustainability)	Youth Olympic Village, competition venues, recycling the look	Reducing waste project (with stakeholders) 3R's - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle	1st multi-sport event worldwide being organised as a 'green event'
	Community		Local youth shows own skills in sport and/or creative ways - school programs	Creation of the 'volunteer team tirol'; development of the volunteer community
Venues	Adaptation of cities' existing venues, building new village for social housing			
Tourism Economy	Over 40,000 overnight stays Use of budget surplus for other youth-related projects	7153 overnight stays	Around 7000 overnight stays	

Source: Bid file YOG 2012 (2008); bid file EYOF 2015 (2010); bid file ICG 2016 (2013); final report YOG 2012 (2012); final report EYOF 2015 (2016); final report ICG 2016 (2016).

For the ICG we organised the first Tyrolean School Winter Games for the pupils from the region, but it was not the best time for schools. In the end for tourist reasons we chose mid-January, which is not high season. (Spazier, personal interview, February 15, 2016)

The OC of the EYOF 2015 shows another credo, however, they previously did not want to stage their event in January, so there have been other motives.

First, we wanted to stage the EYOF 2015 in December 2014 to herald the starting winter season, but this was not approved. So we suggested March 2015 as a second preferable date to stage the event, because we cannot provide enough capacities of infrastructure and accommodation for hosting events and tourists at the same time in January, February

as well as March. However, this date was not approved, too and consequentially, January was chosen to host the EYOF 2015. (Bitschnau, personal interview, December 15, 2016)

Apart from the YOG 2012 and the ICG 2016, other events were likewise staged in January. Accordingly, the Winter Universiade took place in 2005, followed by the National Special Olympics in 2008 and the Men's Handball European Championships in 2010. This leads to the assumption that the events were not staged in Innsbruck by coincidence, even though the official reasons for proposing January as the event month may have been more complex, as revealed by the following quote.

When the IOC asked us for the proposed date for staging the YOG we said 13th to 22nd January. We argued that the weather conditions would be ideal, that the date would have synergies with other events and that the proposed date would not interfere with other junior events. Furthermore, we argued that the date had been proven by other events and we finally stated that the accommodation would be available. What do you think is the most important reason from a host city's perspective? (Redl, personal interview, April 16, 2016)

While Innsbruck did not push the creation of tourism legacies in the bid stage, the EYOF 2015 bid committee clearly stated that tourism would be promoted by hosting the event. Furthermore, it was important for the organisers to accommodate their client groups in 62 hotels (32 of them for the different national Olympic Committees).

First of all, we were short of money and we couldn't afford to build an Olympic Village. Second, we had two host countries; therefore, we had to split the different sports programmes and delegations between the two countries in respect of the co-hosting. Third, it was important that many hotels and therefore many families and villages were linked to the EYOF. Finally, it was also important to use the hotels as a multiplier: you give them overnight stays, they give you a lot of support. This strategy worked out well. (Grobersch, personal interview, January 17, 2015)

Interestingly, the number of overnight stays in the Montafon Valley did not change significantly in the month of January (Landesstatistik Vorarlberg, 2016) when comparing the years 2014, 2015 and 2016. This may be due to the succession of contracts between the hosts and the hotel business, who had to cancel the holidays of their patrons. Therefore, crowding-out effects cannot be excluded.

Capacities in accommodation businesses as well as infrastructure are important variables in case of crowding-out effects.

All in all the EYOF did not have a big influence on tourism, neither national nor international arrivals, representing one percent of total annual overnight stays. Rather the EYOF had crowding-out effects on patrons, because of the 'impoundment' of the hotels, which were provided for EYOF. (Bitschnau, personal interview, December 15, 2016)

The case of Innsbruck tells a different story as [Table 4](#) shows.

The tables detailing the number of overnight stays in Innsbruck since 2004 are based on official tourism statistics (arrivals and overnight stays by month in 2003–2010) and reveal the number of overnight stays in the months of January, February, March and December. In January an increase in the years in which major sports events took place (marked in grey) can be examined compared to other years with no events. Especially in the years 2005, 2010 and 2012, when major sports events took place, the international arrivals increased significantly, especially from participating countries. In 2008, when the National

Table 4. Overnight stays and events hosted in Innsbruck between 2003 and 2016.

Calendar year	Overnight stays/ December	Overnight stays/ January	Overnight stays/ February	Overnight stays/ March	Overall	Percentage of total January	Ranking January	Increase of tourists in January from..	Major events in Innsbruck	+/- December to year before	+/- January to year before	+/- February to year before	+/- March to year before
2003	89.339	84.985	93.534	88.876	1.120.461	7,58%	9			n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
2004	88.682	90.837	93.608	86.409	1.171.789	7,75%	7			-0.74	+6.89	+0.07	-2.78
2005	93.559	105.139	94.329	91.937	1.204.132	8,73%	3	+Australia, +China, +France, +Italy, +Japan, +Canada, +Russia, +Czech Republic, +USA, +UK	Winter Universiade	+5.49	+15.74	+0.77	+6.40
2006	99.049	86.516	94.545	93.071	1.213.734	7,13%	10			+5.87	-17.71	+0.23	+1.23
2007	105.437	91.984	96.445	88.928	1.273.171	7,22%	9			+6.45	+6.32	+2.01	-4.45
2008	103.865	101.669	110.957	103.404	1.304.781	7,79%	9	+Austria	Special Olympics	-1.49	+10.52	+15.05	+16.28
2009	108.349	98.246	98.454	83.917	1.175.837	8,36%	6			+4.32	-3.36	-11.27	-18.85
2010	108.821	108.449	106.537	98.592	1.332.877	8,14%	7	+Germany, +Slovenia, +Sweden	Handball EURO	+0.44	+10.38	+8.21	+17.48
2011	113.447	104.864	102.400	96.525	1.340.946	7,82%	7			+4.25	-3.30	-3.88	-2.10
2012	120.682	143.469	108.421	96.788	1.441.026	9,96%	3	+Australia, +China, +Finland, +France, +Italy, +Japan, +Canada, +Russia, +Sweden, +Switzerland, +Korea, +Spain, USA	Youth Olympic Games	+6.38	+36.81	+5.88	+0.27
2013	123.005	104.829	111.876	105.405	1.440.009	7,28%	10			+1.93	-26.93	+3.19	+8.90
2014	133.211	108.186	109.992	105.631	1.489.874	7,26%	9			+8.29	+3.20	-1.68	+0.21
2015	142.557	113.979	118.061	101.865	1.574.973	7,24%	9			+7.02	+5.35	+7.35	-3.57
2016	n.a.	114.953	125.784	118.913	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.		International Children's Games	n.a.	+0.85	+6.54	+16.74

Source: Landesstatistik Tirol (2016).

Special Olympics were hosted, the domestic tourism increased (+30%). Also February and March show a slight increase in overnight stays in years of hosted events. Only December shows an inconsistent number of overnight stays in pre-event periods. Furthermore, in the last decade the total of overnight stays in Innsbruck has increased in absolute numbers (January 2004: 90,837 – January 2016: 114,953; overall 2004: 1,171,789 – overall 2015: 1,574,973). A direct link can be made between the increase in the number of overnight stays in January and the major events, as the official press releases from the local tourism office confirm (Innsbruck Tourismus, 2016). While Table 4 does not state the country of origin of the hotel guests, we know that parents and friends (including neighbours and grandparents) visited Innsbruck, when associated athletes participated in the YOG 2012, EYOF 2015 and ICG 2016 (Kraft, personal interview, November 23, 2016; Kristiansen, 2015; Scheiber, personal interview, March 6, 2016). In addition, when observing these events, we constantly met and talked to international entourage that explained that they would stay an extra week and visit Salzburg and Vienna on their way home. The youth event was the main purpose of the trip, but they were not averse to turn an initial sport trip into a cultural trip in the end (Kraft, personal interview, November 23, 2016). Furthermore, studies on mega sports events (e.g. Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011) found out that these events create an increase in overnight stays before and after the event. This effect, which is only (short) term in nature, could be confirmed only partially in the interviews with the tourist operators (Bitschnau, personal interview, December 15, 2016; Kraft, personal interview, November 23, 2016).

A review of the numbers leads to another assumption, namely that the local governing body goes along with hosting events in January to boost their economic impact, on the one hand, and to counter the lack of tourists by attracting event tourists, on the other. However, neither the internal documents provided by the OCs nor the political programmes in the host cities indicate the existence of a clear strategic approach to hosting events in the low tourist season. While the city of Innsbruck solely mentioned that it would strive to host events together with other partners, where the events are sustainable (Stadt Innsbruck, 2012), the State of Tyrol at least stated that it would support youth sports events and elaborate criteria for sustainable sports events (Land Tirol, 2016).

5.2. Event hosting strategy

Relating to the second research question of whether or not the host regions of our case studies were following a hosting strategy, we did not find any written documents. The interviewed experts working in the tourism industry confirmed the inexistence of a hosting strategy as the following excerpt shows:

It's true that we have hosted many major sports events in the last fifteen years. Well, after hosting the Winter Olympic Games twice, we are working off almost all kind of events in order to get international visibility, to enhance tourism and to use our state-of-the art infrastructure. To be honest, we don't have an event strategy and not at all a youth-events sports strategy (e.g. we also have the World Winter Masters Games in 2020), but we have a good sense of perception of what kind of events fits our destination. Last, but not least, and this I would consider our strength, the most relevant stakeholders come to a joint solution in a short period of time. (Kraft, personal interview, November 23, 2016)

Furthermore, Bitschnau (personal interview, December 15, 2016) and Kraft (personal interview, November 23, 2016) stated that the most important impacts on tourism were not only the number of overnight stays on occasion of the events, but also media attention, international reputation, city branding and presenting the hospitableness of the regions. From an urban regimes' perspective major events are staged for a few more reasons, as the interview with Platzgummer (personal interview, June 9, 2014) summarises:

We were bidding for the YOG, because we felt that Innsbruck with the Olympic heritage of the Games in 1964 and 1976 would be the ideal place for the first ever Winter YOG. The idea of brushing up the Olympic image, showing the world that we carefully managed the Olympic legacies with an innovative event such as the YOG was very fascinating. Finally, we also saw quite a lot of synergies, like the building of 440 new apartments for social housing, a strategic fit with the positioning of the city as a young, vibrant University City and creating impacts on tourism. (2016)

In relation to a less prestigious and less media-driven event such as the ICG 2016, the event may create no more than a minor impact such that the relevance of staging this event must be questioned.

Of course the ICG 2016 were not as important as the YOG 2012 in terms of the impact on tourism. However, with the ICG 2016 we created around 7,000 overnight stays in a period of low season and more importantly we created soft legacies in relation to tourism. The youth of today communicate to the world that they are in Innsbruck and use social media to tell how great the region is ... and these youths, having had a great time, will come back when they are older. I think we should analyse not each single event, but the whole picture – a series of events in our city – as part of a wider strategy. (Spazier, personal interview, February 15, 2016)

Scheiber (personal interview, March 6, 2016) supports the analysis of Spazier (personal interview, February 15, 2016) and highlights that family members also travelled from overseas to stay with their children during the ICG event.

We know from research that the YOG 2012 had an impact on tourism; at least from a short-term perspective. The YOG tourists generated a primarily economic impact equal to 1/3 of the operating budget of the organising committee. The ICG 2016 must be seen differently: we know that approximately 300 athletes' families and friends came to Innsbruck; some even did a round trip through Austria for two weeks. This must be considered.

Finally, Redl (personal interview, April 16, 2016) asks why a host should bid for and stage events and sets it in relation to tourism.

When we ran the national bid campaign for the Winter Olympic Games 2014 and the bid for the YOG 2012 we were asking ourselves 'Why should we bid for the YOG?' We listed the arguments and in the end, we always came to the same conclusion: it was because the city of Innsbruck and the whole region of the Tyrol have a high strategic fit with the aims of the Olympic movement and the event would ideally support the long-term goals of the host area. A key element within these thoughts was the existing tourism infrastructure and its potentials in developing the brand of Innsbruck-Tyrol as THE (winter) tourism destination in the world.

In relation to the EYOF 2015, the CEO of the OC was very critical of the bidding strategy and the reasons for staging the EYOF 2015 in Liechtenstein/Vorarlberg.

I think one of the key lessons from the EYOF 2015 is that potential hosts should think before they bid. I believe that Liechtenstein and Vorarlberg had a great idea by bidding for a cross-border Olympic multi-sport event. Somehow, they anticipated the IOC Agenda 2020. Anyhow, I didn't see a clear tourism strategy for that event. It was good for the development of some infrastructural projects and to bring the Olympic Values to the youth of the host regions, but from a touristic perspective the benefit must be considered marginal. (Grobersch, personal interview, January 17, 2015)

6. Discussion

The combination of the desk research and the conducted interviews helped us to gain a clearer picture of the research questions in relation to tourism legacies of youth sports events in Western Austria, to potential event strategies in the host regions and possible touristic effects on host regions.

6.1. Legacies of youth sports events on tourism

The analysis of the key documents for the bidding for and staging of the events as well as the interviews with experts revealed that tourism legacies were created as a result of youth sports events: the creation of immediate overnight stays in the low seasons and of a positive image and branding for the host region in the context of (winter) sports events. These findings tie in with the results of the study by Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2011), who found that the promotion of tourism through the staging of events is very much dependent on the type of event, the participating countries and its timing (peak or off-peak season). Furthermore, Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2011) believe mega sports events have anticipation and legacy effects, which apply to the legacy effects in the case of Innsbruck, showing constant surpluses in overnight stays in the month of event hosting and the following months. The anticipation effects can be observed in inconsistent effects on overnight stays.

In the case of the YOG 2012, the EYOF 2015 and the ICG 2016, the events took place in off-peak periods; they targeted an international group (45–69 delegations) as well as a future-oriented and communicative target group (youth) which was accompanied by adults (coaches, family members). However, tourist policymakers need to be careful about whether these creations of immediate overnight stays simultaneously cause crowding-out effects in the hosting region especially such as in the case of the EYOF 2015 in the Montafon Valley. These crowding-out effect could not be noticed in Innsbruck (Kraft, personal interview, November 23, 2016) due to the high number of hotel rooms available.

Another difference between the regions of Innsbruck and the Montafon Valley could be determined in terms of the frequency with which events take place. While the EYOF 2015 can be considered as an 'isolated' major event in a tourism region (Montafon Valley), other annual small-scale events do not create a considerable number of overnight stays. In contrast to the Montafon Valley, Innsbruck aims at hosting major (one-off) events regularly. By hosting events on a regular basis, a destination may also carve out a profile for itself as a quality tourist destination that is worth visiting (Preuss, 2007). Therefore, events may be useful for branding a destination (Anholt, 2005; Smith, 2005) due to the high (media) attention generated when broadcasting the event. The in-depth interviews revealed that

hosting major events in mid-January constituted an attempt to balance the seasonality of winter tourism in Innsbruck.

In addition to the legacies relating to tourism and branding, other legacies were also defined and reached as shown in Table 3 (e.g. social housing in the Youth Olympic Village, projects relating to the environment). While the research on the EYOF 2015 in Vorarlberg remains marginal, the OC of the YOG 2012 commissioned several studies on the impacts of the YOG, for example, the economic impact of the YOG 2012 created by the event tourists. Apart from tangible legacies, several intangible legacies were also identified (e.g. creating networks, friendships, Olympic values). The findings of the present study underline the research conducted into the intangible legacies of the YOG (Schnitzer, Scheiber, Nagiller, Walde, & Tappeiner, 2016), which concludes that intangible legacies have to be considered as multidimensional concepts.

6.2. Lack of a youth sports event strategy

One of the key findings of this investigation was that, irrespective of how successful the analysed events were, the host areas lacked a written (youth sport) strategy. In the case of the EYOF 2015, neither the Montafon Valley tourist board nor the working agreements within the regional government had agreed on a written strategy for hosting a (youth) sports event. Although a written sports strategy exists for the State of Vorarlberg, the impact of (youth) sports events on tourism is not mentioned at all. In the case of Innsbruck-Tyrol, it is slightly different as the government of the State of Tyrol has written a strategic paper for sports facilities which mentions the need to host events. In spite of this, a clear strategic approach for attracting events is still missing, as it has already been criticised by Schnitzer (2013). However, some approaches in this direction must be mentioned.

- The Innsbruck city council and the Tyrolean government have committed to staging (sustainable) events in the future, even though they do not have a clear written strategy.
- Investments in the modernisation of the Innsbruck's Olympic venues amounted to more than EUR 150 m between 1999 and 2005; by staging international events on a regular basis (Schnitzer, 2011), a (hidden) event strategy can be assumed.
- In 2005 the Tyrol Tourism Board launched the 'sport tirol' platform (Tirol Werbung, 2016), which merges sponsoring activities for the 'Tirol' brand, B2B activities, marketing campaigns for major sports events with the aim of boosting the image of the Tyrol as a (sports) tourism destination.
- The Winter Universiade 2005 was a starting point for several strategic considerations as mentioned by Bielowski and Schnitzer (2009). These were (1) reaching new target groups, especially the youth, (2) professionalising the organisation of major sports events with experts and systematic knowledge transfer, (3) focusing not only on tangible legacies and (4) sharing the burden of organising the event among more stakeholders.
- Settling a government-driven hosting strategy may work only if the strategy is not driven only by single politicians, but based on a solid foundation of different stakeholders, such as venue owners, tourism organisations and other service providers.

This issue has already been raised by Schnitzer et al. (2017). In order to avoid constant changes in strategic direction emanating, for instance, from major sports events, a written 'event strategy', implemented by a Sports Commission or (publicly) owned event bidding and organising company could be a useful solution, and one that has already been implemented successfully in other contexts (e.g. Event Scotland, Sport Event Denmark).

With regard to the final points, it must be mentioned that a legacy company, owned by the State of Tyrol, the city of Innsbruck and the Austrian Olympic Committee, has been established in the wake of the YOG 2012. The Innsbruck-Tirol Sports (2016) can therefore be seen as a strategic unit, attracting major (youth) sports events for the region of the Tyrol as stated in its mission:

Innsbruck-tirol sports gmbh (ITS) is a sustainable company, formed from the legacy of the 1st Winter Youth Olympic Games 2012 in Innsbruck, Tyrol. The idea behind the company is the conservation and the further development of knowledge which was accumulated during the organisation and realisation of the Youth Olympic Games. ITS actively promotes the Olympic values and the well-being of every individual. We are constantly maintaining and extending the existing (sports) network. In the long term we want to develop our own events in the area of sport for young talents and acquire and implement new major (sports) events in Innsbruck and the Tyrol.

Considering Kaspar's (2014) event life cycle approach, it must be noted that this approach may be useful for a mega event, but it is less suited for a regular (major) sports events as typically staged in Innsbruck or the Montafon region, unless the single event life cycles are not merged into a hosting policy.

Even though our analysis revealed the missing written (youth) event strategy, the CEO of the Tirol Tourism Board underlines the importance of sports and sports event for the tourism development of the region:

Sports is part of our life culture and we clearly want to position ourselves as the sports regions number one. Sports events play an crucial role in this context as they present the beauty of our area to a global audience. (Magreiter, 2016)

A youth sports strategy should be driven by several regional stakeholders. Apart from local government and the local tourism board, the local community and the tourism industry (e.g. hotel owners) seem to be vital partners in the hosting of a youth event which per se does not provide an income such as a senior sports event does in terms of revenues (mainly caused by not selling TV rights). In relation to the YOG 2012, Schnitzer, Bodner, et al. (2016) found that local youths seem to develop a general interest in sports events as part of an intangible legacy. This is strengthened by the events hosted for local youths and international competitions. Participating in events rather than just observing them engages the local community. This seems to lead to a higher interest in sporting events, and over time it becomes easier to bid successfully for such events in the future. This finding may be promising in terms of defining and shaping a youth sports strategy, although other results of the interviews were less promising for a youth sports events strategy in Innsbruck. For example, Scheiber (personal interview, March 6, 2016) and Spazier (personal interview, February 15, 2016) had to admit that the *innsbruck-tirol sports gmbh* was not involved in attracting the Junior

World Championships in Rock Climbing for 2017, which was clinched solely by the national climbing federation.

To conclude this part of the discussion, it must be noted that although Innsbruck does not appear to attract events by coincidence, there needs to be a fluid process for winning events, following a comprehensive strategy and shared by the most relevant local stakeholders.

7. Conclusion and implications

This study is a first step to understanding the motivation of host cities for bidding for and staging multi-sport youth events in their areas. We recognise that there are some methodological limitations to this case study on the Innsbruck-Tyrol region, as we focus only on winter sports events. This makes it difficult to transfer these outcomes to other regions or regions concentrating on summer tourism. Another limitation may be the small number of in-depth interviews, which may make it harder to apply our findings to other events as well. The strength of the present study is that we interviewed key persons from three different events and event regions in order to provide one of the first examinations of the relationship between sports host organisation, tourism and community branding.

The comparison of the pre-event and post-event legacies showed that no attempts are made at reconciling the ideas stated in the bid stage with the realised aims after the event. Finally, the study reveals the importance of sharing the benefits and the burden of events among the different (local) stakeholders, as their support is vital for the branding of a region as a winter sports city. The local community (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012; Schnitzer et al., 2017) plays a crucial role, as the case of Vorarlberg and the EYOF 2015 demonstrates.

Furthermore, the results of our analysis revealed that Innsbruck and the region of Tyrol are quite advanced and experienced in terms of staging events on a regular basis. Our findings do somehow relate to the data at hand, agreeing that there is no written hosting policy. However, in Innsbruck a strategy is recognisable and publicly represented for example by Magreiter (2016) with the opinion that mega sports events are a booster to utilise and optimise present infrastructure and to develop new trends. Especially the near future will bring some events to the Tyrol, which promises innovation potential in terms of tourism.

In the case of Vorarlberg (Montafon Valley) the desk research and the interviews given reveal neither a youth sports strategy nor a clear and written overall tourism strategy. The case of the EYOF 2015 can be seen as a single, positive highlight in the off-season period, but remains a single event, categorised as large in scale, but not relevant to the development of tourism.

The lack of a hosting policy is not unique to Innsbruck. Another example of missing awareness of a hosting policy are the YOG 2016 in Lillehammer, where the touristic development due to hosting the YOG in 2016 was not considered in the planning process in any way, according to the official report of the YOG 2016 (Holmestad, Dalsegg, Rogn, & Ulateig, 2016). According to Chappelet and Lee (2016) only a few European countries have sport event strategies.

To conclude, we suggest greater attention should be placed on some research gaps scholars still need to close such as tourism as a strategy for attracting multi-sport youth

events. Sports event strategies as part of a hosting policy are yet to be examined thoroughly. Specifically, youth events have barely been examined in this context; this study can be seen as an important pilot study for future studies. By selecting a well-known (winter) tourism destination, an important first step has been undertaken.

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