A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Structural Configurations of Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs).

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Abstract

In recent years Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) have become increasingly interested in developing their Games specific management know-how which enables them to increase efficiency in a tight timescale. In response to calls for systematic capturing of information on structures, operational policies and plans (Elphinston, 1999) this paper proposes the use of configuration theory for the study of organisational formations of OCOGs. For the work of OCOGs to be documented and most importantly for knowledge to be meaningful to future OCOGs, researchers need to first understand OCOGs as an organisational species. The proposed approach can facilitate such thinking by allowing comparisons between data of an OCOGs structural and situational characteristics at various stages in its lifecycle and respective characteristics of a number of 'ideal type' configurations as defined by Mintzberg (1979, 1992). The proposed conceptual framework is discussed in this paper in an attempt to aid researchers in posing relevant questions, operationalising concepts and understanding the boundary conditions of the related research paradigm.

Introduction

The Olympic Games are a mega sporting event presenting a set of unique challenges and opportunities for its host city organisers most of which are documented in the recent studies of Preuss, (2000), Klausen (1999) Tooley and Veal (2000) Atlanta Organising Committee (1998) and Moragas and Botella (1995). The implications of the Olympic Games success are considerable for the host nation and increasingly, organisers are developing games-specific management know-how which they can pass on to future organisers (Elphinston, 1999a, 1999b). Similarly hosts of future Olympic Games are looking back at past practises for guidance and inspiration (Mpakouris, 1999). Arguably, the scale of operations in OCOGs is vast and researchers need a staring point for investigation and subsequent analysis. In examining OCOGs it is important to acknowledge certain particularities of their nature. They operate under the auspices of the Olympic Movement and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in particular, which is its supreme authority (IOC, 1999 rule 1 par.1). Most importantly, they enter the Olympic Movement as temporary systems following the signing of Host City Contracts which are drawn between the IOC, the National Olympic Committee of the respective country and the city hosting the Olympic Games (IOC, 1999 rule 39 par.4).

The work of configuration theorists can aid researchers seeking to understand how OCOGs operate as it provides the tools for the creation on taxonomies of organisational species and a framework for considering how structure and situational elements of organisations interrelate. Furthermore configuration theory provides diagnostic tools for understanding and tracking misfits which can affect organisational efficiency. The author argues that OCOGs are distinctive organisational species in a number of respects. Firstly, OCOGs experience birth, exponential growth and subsequent death in approximately eight calendar years. In the case of the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) size increased dramatically throughout the organisation's life cycle with 14 staff members in 1994, 375 in 1997 and 1063 in June 1999 (SOCOG, 1999). Secondly, OCOGs are unlike other organisations producing a product or delivering a service in that planning and programming for the Games takes up most of the organisation's life span. Although OCOGs exist for approximately seven years the climax of their operation during the Games amounts to less than 1% of the OCOGs life-cycle. Thirdly, OCOGs rely heavily on partnerships with agents from private, voluntary and public sector organisations from the host city's national community as well as the international community (Malfas, 2000). SOCOG received approximately 40% of its funds from the IOC (Preuss, 2000), the New South Wales government was responsible for the construction of all Games related infrastructure and International Federations provided the technical support related to the competitions.
reflection of the academic interest of those involved in the study of sport and sports organisations.

For the purposes of this paper the point of departure for studying organisational structures of OCOGs is found in work derived from the rationalist, positivist approach developed initially from Weber's analysis of bureaucracy, which seeks to capture organisational reality by identifying structural features of organisations and their environments and to evaluate the relationship between them, often by reference to statistical association. (The term Weberian is used to refer to this tradition here, though Weber's own work was in part aimed at clarifying the limitations of such a rationalist/positivist approach.) Seminal work in this tradition would include the contingency approaches of the Aston School (Pugh et al., 1976), and of Donaldson (1985).

In the British context there has been little work in the 'Weberian tradition' relating specifically to sports organisations. This tradition has however, been very evident in the Canadian work, and research relating to bureaucratisation and related phenomena, has reflected the major research efforts in this field in Canada. Four types of 'Weberian' work in this field may be identified:

(i) that which seeks to clarify the significance of conceptual frameworks relating to organisational structural and environmental variables (e.g. Frisby, 1982; Slack and Hinings, 1987);

(ii) that which seeks to operationalise theoretical constructs suggesting ways in which in principle would allow measurement of the structural and contextual dimensions of sports organisations (e.g. Frisby, 1985);

(iii) that which seeks to establish empirically (by using operational measures) the extent to which the sports organisations exhibit bureaucratisation and related phenomena, such as standardisation, specialisation, and professionalisation (Slack and Hinings, 1987; Slack, 1985; Thibault, Slack and Hinings, 1991; Kikul, Slack, Hinings and Zimmerman, 1989; Chelladurai and Haggerty, 1991); and finally

(iv) that which seeks to clarify the relationship between structural features and efficiency of sports organisations (Frisby, 1986; Chelladurai, Szyszlo and Haggerty, 1987).

The work reported in this paper relates most clearly to the third of these forms of traditional analysis and will highlight ways in which configuration theory can provide insights into OCOGs also considering the ontological assumptions of its research paradigm.

Configuration Theory

The configuration approach makes a clear break from the contingency mainstream, which has been preoccupied with abstracting a limited set of structural concepts like centralisation and formalisation, and measuring their relationships with a limited set of abstracted situational concepts, such as size and technological uncertainty. By synthesising broad patterns from contingency theory's fragmented concepts, and grounding them in rich, multivariate descriptions, the configuration approach may help consolidate the past gains of contingency theory (Meyer et al., 1993).

Configurational inquiry assumes an holistic stance, asserting that the parts of a social entity take their meaning from the whole and cannot be understood in isolation. Social systems are seen as tightly coupled amalgams entangled in multidirectional causal loops. Non-linearity is acknowledged, so variables found to be causally related in one configuration may be unrelated or even inversely related in another. In acknowledging that there is more than one way to succeed in each type of setting, the configuration approach explicitly accommodates the important concept of equifinality.

Organisational analysis has a research tradition rife with attempts at classifying organisations, as documented by Carper and Snizek (1980). Classification has been at the basis of organisational theorising, from Weber's notions of charisma, traditionalism and bureaucracy, through Burn's and Stalker's (1961) distinction between mechanistic and organic structures, to Mintzberg's distinctions between simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalised form, adhocracy and missionary organisation. It has been used to support a central tenet of organisation theory, namely that there are different kinds of organisation and that many (or all) aspects of organisational functioning are related to organisation type (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983).

Organisational scholars taking configurational approaches fall into the group of typologists or taxonomists. Conceptually derived sets of configurations are referred to as typologies while empirically derived ones as taxonomies. Typologists generally follow the Weberian logic of ideal types, accentuating key characteristics so as to draw a priori distinctions between organisations. The logic of taxonomy, on the other hand, lies in empirical classification based on multivariate analysis of multiple dimensions that may cover structures, processes, strategies, and contexts (Meyer et al., 1993). So the rationale for the production of theoretically based, empirical taxonomies is the theorised impact of taxonomic position on a wide range of other organisational phenomena. The historical emphasis on classification derives from the idea of generalisable, holistic, structural differences between classes of organisation which are central to all aspects of organisational life.
Mintzberg’s Configuration Analysis

Mintzberg (1979, 1983) presented both a typology and a theory. As a typology, his work provides a rich descriptive tool that identifies six potentially effective configurations of structural and situational factors. As a theory, it presents a series of logical arguments that result in specific predictions about organisational effectiveness as a function of the degree of similarity between a real organisation and one or more of the ideal types (Doty et al., 1993).

Configuration theory extends contingency approaches by demonstrating that dimensions of organisational structure, environment, culture, and ideology can cluster together as a coherent whole. Unlike contingency theory, which is reductionist in its approach to understanding organisations, configuration theory is concerned with the holistic nature of organisations. By acknowledging the importance of interpretive schemes and ideologies, configuration theory recognises and takes account of the role that agency plays in the generation of organisations (Greenwood and Hinings, 1988; Meyer, 1982). Configurational inquiry represents a holistic stance to understanding organisations, an assertion that the parts of the social entity take their meaning from the whole and cannot be understood in isolation (Meyer, Tsui and Hinings, 1993). Mintzberg (1992) sought to take the criticisms of contingency theory into consideration concluding that the dependence approach (i.e., appropriate organisational forms and strategies will depend on the kind of task or environment with which one is dealing) should be altered and that structures should be designed on the configuration approach. His configuration approach claims that convergence is evident around several configurations, which are distinct in their structural designs, in the situations in which they are found, and even in the periods of organisational history in which they are first developed.

What follows is an extract from Mintzberg’s earlier writing explaining the thinking behind configuration theory.

The ‘one best way’ approach has dominated our thinking about organisational structure since the turn of the century. There is a right way and a wrong way to design an organisation. A variety of failures, however, has made it clear that organisations differ, that for example, long-range planning systems or organisational development programmes are good for some but not others. And so recent management theory has moved away from the ‘one best way’ approach, toward an ‘it all depends’ approach, formally known as ‘contingency theory. Structure should reflect the organisation’s situation – for example, its age, size, type of production system, the extent to which its environment is complex and dynamic...the it all depends approach does not go far enough though. Structures are rightfully designed on the basis of a third approach, which might be called the getting it all together or ‘configuration’ approach. Spans of control, types of formalisation and decentralisation, planning systems and matrix structures should not be picked and chosen independently... Rather, these and other elements of organisational design should logically configure into internally consistent groupings. When the enormous amount of research that has been done on organisational structure is looked at... a convergence is evident around several configurations, which are distinct in their structural designs, in the situations in which they are found, and even in the periods of history in which they first developed.

(Adapted from Mintzberg and Quinn, 1992)

To understand the structural configurations, their planning activities, and power contexts, one must first understand each of the elements that make them up. Accordingly, before the typology of structural configurations is discussed, reference will be given to Mintzberg’s account of the basic parts of organisations, the processes of co-ordination of activities, the parameters used to design their structures, and the contingency or situational factors as these are defined by Mintzberg (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1992; Mintzberg, 1979; 1981). What follows therefore is a fairly detailed account of Mintzberg’s scheme.

Parts of the Organisation

These consist of a) the operating core where the operators, those who perform the basic work of producing products or rendering services are found b) the strategic apex of managers who oversee the systems operation c) the technological structure of analysts or staff d) the support staff and e) the ideology or culture of the organisation which encompasses the traditions and beliefs of an organisation.
Co-ordinating Mechanisms
The structure of an organisation can be defined as the total of the ways in which its labour is divided into distinct tasks and then its co-ordination achieved among those tasks. These are: a) mutual adjustment whereby co-ordination is achieved by the process of informal communication b) direct supervision as co-ordination is achieved through orders c) standardisation of work processes d) standardisation of outputs e) standardisation of skills and f) standardisation of norms (common beliefs).

Parameters of Design
The essence of organisational design is the manipulation of a series of parameters that determine the division of labour and the achievement of co-ordination. These include: a) job specialisation, performed horizontally and vertically of unskilled and professional jobs b) behaviour formalisation through the imposition of operating instructions, job descriptions, rules and regulations c) training through use of formal instructional programmes d) indoctrination which refers to programmes and techniques by which norms of the members of an organisation are standardised and e) unit grouping which refers to the choice of the bases by which positions are grouped together into units, and those units into higher order units (typically shown on the organisation chart) f) unit size as the number of positions contained in a single unit g) planning and control systems which are used to standardise outputs h) liaison devices which refer to series of mechanisms used to encourage mutual adjustment within and between units and i) decentralisation which refers to the diffusion of decision-making power and can be either vertical or horizontal.

Situational Factors
The following contingency or situational factors influence the choice of the design parameters and include:

a) the age and size of the organisation which affect particularly the extent to which its behaviour is formalised and its administrative structure elaborated. As they age and grow organisations appear to go through distinct structural transitions, for example, from simple organic to elaborated bureaucratic structure or from functional grouping to market based grouping.

b) the technical system of the organisation which influences especially the operating core and those staff units most clearly associated with it. When the technical system of the organisation regulates the work of the operating core, as is done in mass production, it has the effect of bureaucratising the organisation by virtue of the standards it imposes on lower level workers. Alternately, when the technical system succeeds in automating the operating work, as is done in process production, it reduces the need for external rules and regulations enabling the structure to be organic. When the technical system is complex, as is often the case in process production, the organisation has to create a significant professional support staff to deal with it and then decentralise selectively to that staff many of the decisions concerned with the technical system.

c) the environment of the organisation which can vary in its degree of complexity, in how static or dynamic it is, in the diversity of its markets, and in the hostility it contains for the organisation. The more complex the environment, the more difficulty central management has in comprehending it and the greater the need for decentralisation. The more dynamic the environment, the greater the difficulty in standardising work, outputs, or skills and so the less bureaucratic the structure.

d) the power factors of the organisation include external control, personal power needs, and fashion. The more an organisation is controlled externally, the more centralised and bureaucratic it tends to become. This can be explained by the fact that the two most effective means to control an organisation from the outside are to hold its most powerful decision maker, the chief executive officer (CEO), responsible for his/her actions and to impose clearly defined standards on him/her (performance standards or rules and regulations). Moreover, because the externally controlled organisation must be especially careful about its actions, often having to justify these to outsiders, it tends to formalise much of its behaviour and insist that its CEO authorises key decisions. A second factor, individual power needs (especially by the CEO) tend to generate excessively centralised structures.

Structural Configurations
Simple Structure
In the simplest case, co-ordination is achieved at the strategic apex by direct supervision. The configuration called simple structure emerges, with a minimum of staff and middle line. Little of the behaviour in the organisation is formalised and minimal use is made of planning, training, or of liaison devices. The organisation has to be flexible because it operates in a dynamic yet simple environment, often by choice since that is the only place where it can outsmart the bureaucracies. The organisation is often young, in part because time drives it toward bureaucracy, in part because the vulnerability of its simple structure often causes it to fail. Many of these organisations are often small, since size too drives the structure towards bureaucracy.

Machine Bureaucracy
The machine organisation is the offspring of the industrial revolution, when jobs became highly specialised and work became highly standardised. Such organisations require a large technocrature to design and maintain systems of standardisation, notably those that formalise its behaviours and plan its actions. To enable the top
managers to maintain centralised control, both the environment and the production system of the machine bureaucracy must be fairly simple, the latter regulating the work of the operators but not itself automated.

Professional Bureaucracy
In this configuration co-ordination is through standardisation of skills of its employees. The organisation needs highly trained officials in the operating core and considerable support staff. In having to rely on trained professionals to do its operating tasks, such organisations surrender a good deal of their power to the professionals. So the structure emerges as highly decentralised horizontally. The professional organisation is called for whenever an organisation finds itself in an environment that is stable yet complex. Complexity requires decentralisation to highly trained individuals, and stability enables them to apply standardised skills and so to work with a good deal of autonomy.

Divisionalised Structure
Organisations will sometimes be divided into parallel operating units, allowing autonomy to middle-line managers of each, with co-ordination achieved through the standardisation of outputs of these units.

The divisionalised configuration differs from the others in the respect that it is not a complete structure, but a partial one superimposed on the others. Each division has its own structure. The result is a limited form of decentralisation down the chain of command. The central headquarters can not use too much direct supervision to control the divisions so they rely on performance control systems, in other words, the standardisation of outputs. Because headquarters’ control constitutes external control the structures of the divisions tend to be drawn toward the machine form.

Adhocracy
Complex organisations engage sophisticated specialists, especially in their support staffs, and require them to combine their efforts in project teams, co-ordinated by mutual adjustment. This results in the adhocracy configuration in which line and staff as well as a number of other distinctions tend to break down.

It is an organic structure that relies for co-ordination on mutual adjustment among its highly trained and highly specialised experts, which it encourages by the extensive use of the liaison devices, integrating managers, standing committees, and above all various task forces. Typically the experts are grouped in functional units but deployed in small market based project teams to do their work. To these teams, located all over the structure in accordance with the decisions to be made, power is delegated over different kinds of decisions. So the structure becomes decentralised selectively and distributed unevenly, all over the structure, according to expertise and need. All the distinctions of conventional structure disappear in an innovative organisation like adhocracy. With power based on expertise, the staff distinctions evaporate.

Missionary Organisation
Mintzberg identifies a sixth structural configuration, which is a variant of the professional bureaucracy and the simple structure. Because the operators of the missionary organisation can be trusted to pursue its goals, free of any central control, the structure can be highly decentralised and so Mintzberg (1994) likened it to a professional bureaucracy. Because the members of this charismatic type of organisation allow immense power to their leader, Mintzberg describes it as having a simple structure. This, he suggests, is a hybrid structure. Moreover, the work of such organisations is often simple and routine, as in the Machine Bureaucracy; its members often work in quasi-autonomous cells or orders, as in the divisionalised form; and the members are prepared to co-operate with each other when necessary, as in the adhocracy. The missionary configuration would have its own prime co-ordinating mechanism - socialisation, or the standardisation of norms - and a corresponding main design parameter - indoctrination.

Mintzberg’s typology of configurations can also be used to consider various postures that planning, plans, and planners might take under different circumstances.

The strategy process is viewed by Mintzberg (1992) as an interplay of the forces of power, sometimes highly politicalised. Rather than assuming that organisations are consistent, coherent and co-operative systems, tightly integrated to pursue certain traditional ends, Mintzberg exhibits different premises. He shares the views of Quinn (1977) that organisations’ goals and directions are determined primarily by the power needs of those who populate them. His analysis raises the question: for whom does the organisation really exist? For what purposes? If the organisation is truly a political entity, how does one manage effectively within it? Of course these questions are also the focus for analysis of, for example, Marxist and feminist theorists. The difference here is that Mintzberg does not give primacy to structures of class or gender in addressing this question. Indeed he may be described as class/gender blind though his work does potentially have important implications for analysis of wider social structures.

Configuration Theory as a Framework for study of OCOGs
This paper seeks to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of OCOGs. To this effect, the focus is primarily on enabling the derivation of a taxonimisation OCOGs exhibited structural and situational features throughout their lifecycle.
Mintzberg’s typology of configurations represents the only account of configurations of such characteristics and has been very influential because it goes beyond a twofold distinction (mechanistic, organic) retaining the essential elegance and simplicity which is the hallmark of typologies (Meyer et al., 1993).

The following table presents the various ideal type configurations presented by Mintzberg in terms of their respective co-ordinating mechanisms, key parts of the organisation and type of decentralisation evident. The last column of the table hypothesises about the stage in an OCOG’s lifecycle which most clearly resembles some of the configurations.

Table 1 Mintzberg’s Configurations and OCOG’s Life-cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration</th>
<th>Main Key part of the organisation</th>
<th>Type of decentralisation</th>
<th>OCOG’s Life-cycle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple structure</td>
<td>Direct Strategic Apex</td>
<td>Vertical and horizontal decentralisation</td>
<td>Start up year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Standardisation of work processes</td>
<td>Technostructure</td>
<td>Limited horizontal decentralisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Standardisation of skills</td>
<td>Operating Core</td>
<td>Horizontal decentralisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divisionalised Structure</td>
<td>Standardisation of outputs</td>
<td>Middle Line</td>
<td>Limited vertical decentralisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhocracy</td>
<td>Mutual adjustment Support Staff</td>
<td>Selected decentralisation</td>
<td>Games Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary Organisation</td>
<td>Standardisation of norms</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Decentralisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Mintzberg (1979) and Mintzberg and Quinn (1992)

Each OCOG starts as a small organisation resembling a simple structure. As it ages and grows it develops some features of a professional bureaucracy until it grows out of itself by forming venue based divisions just before the games (Epplinhton, 1999). The Games-time configuration may be seen to resemble a hybrid between a divisionalised structure, an adhocracy and a missionary organisation given the importance of decentralisation of decision making during the Games as well as the enormous interplay of thousands of volunteers and the importance of ideology and behavioural norms. Finally after the event OCOGs can be seen to exhibit some of the structural characteristics of a missionary organisation which aims to close down all operations and ultimately lead the organisation to its closure.

In incorporating Mintzberg’s typology of configurations in the study of OCOGs a careful consideration of its boundary conditions needs to be undertaken. Typologies may be valid in some industries and not in others or in some sectors of the economy and not in others. Note that the machine bureaucracy configuration does not apply to OCOGs as its environment and ‘production system’ is never simple; and culture which is not identified as a situational factor by Mintzberg, has been shown in the case of OCOGs to play a very important role in affairs internal and external to the organisation (Klausen, 1999). Research has shown that Mintzberg’s theory is a powerful predictor of organisational effectiveness when it is not interpreted as a grand theory of organisations intended to apply across the population of organisations (Doy et al., 1993). Mintzberg’s typology, therefore, can inform the processes of operationalisation of concepts and drawing of hypotheses on relationships among organisational characteristics variables, but need not reflect an assumption that the taxonomy of OCOGs throughout their lifecycle developed will necessarily resemble Mintzberg’s typology. Indeed, evidence of particular characteristics of sport organisations (Theodoraki 1996, Theodoraki and Henry, 1994) leads us to expect that OCOGs will exhibit some features which are institutionally specific such as existence of powerful public sector boards, resource dependence, and given the roles of the IOC and the greater Olympic Family, a powerful external coalition.

Listed below are some classic relationships anticipated by theorists such as Donaldson (1985) and Mintzberg (1979). These may influence the nature of research questions and aid in the generation of hypotheses. The size of organisations, for example, is anticipated, to be positively associated with standardisation of tasks and, the formalisation of objectives, specialisation, age of organisation and professionalisation of staff; while complexity of the organisational environment, is assumed to be associated negatively with centralisation, and standardisation, but positively associated with specialisation.

As OCOGs age and become bigger they are also expected to exhibit greater professionalisation of staff; and greater standardisation of tasks. The reasoning underlying these anticipated relationships is as follows. The larger organisations become, the more likely they are to require subdivision of duties and responsibilities to remain effective. Thus, because of problems of control, larger organisations would be expected to be more standardised in the way they operate, have more formalised objectives, and greater specialisation. They are also more likely to seek to ensure that standards are maintained by appointing professionally qualified staff, as the resources of the organisation increase with size. Age and size might is also assumed to be related as new organisations will tend to be small, until they are able to establish themselves. This rationale is specified more fully in Mintzberg’s (1979, pp. 227-235) derivation of a series of hypotheses relating to expected relationships.
The structural Configuration Research Paradigm and the study of OCOGs

Any research on OCOGs as organisations needs to be founded on the realisation that the ability to analyse phenomena of various kinds in organisations depends on the adequacy of the theoretical schemes employed. Such theoretical schemes not only guide the search for significant relationships among the limitless ‘facts’ that exist in the organisational settings of OCOGs but also assist in establishing the difference in the researcher’s eyes, between simply knowing of a phenomenon and understanding its meaning. As a consequence, the research efforts can be aided by the substantive body of organisation theory. Bedeian (1980) claims that theory serves both as a tool and as a goal. The tool function being evident in the proposition that theories guide research by generating new predictions not otherwise likely to occur. As a goal, theory is often an end in itself, providing an economical and efficient means of abstracting, codifying, summarising, integrating, and storing information.

After reviewing the emerging theoretical perspectives available to organisational analysts one can then investigate how these perspectives could be mediated for purposes of inclusion and application in the research. Morgan (1986) argues that the research possibilities raised by different theoretical perspectives need to be harnessed in order to yield the rich and varied explanations offered by multiple paradigm analysis. Like Morgan, Wilmott (1990) is also concerned with paradigm plurality. Both examine Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) scheme of competing paradigms. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979) social science can be conceptualised in terms of four sets of assumptions related to ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology (see figure 1).

Willmott explores the possibilities for reconciling what Burrell and Morgan regard as the irreconcilable features of these paradigms. He argues that the assumption of paradigmatic closure should be challenged by examining the attempts of Giddens (1979, 1982) to integrate subjective and objective paradigms.

The research approach put forward in this paper is concerned to move away from approaches based upon the dualism between action and structure, whereby a contrast is drawn between a structural perspective which specifies abstract dimensions and abstract constraints, to an interactionist perspective which attends to symbolic mediation and negotiated processes. Willmott (1990) argues that these procedures and perspectives which, until now, used to be regarded as incompatible, must be incorporated in a more unified methodological framework.

It is important to note that the use of the configurational theoretical perspective can provide a better understanding of structural characteristics and dynamics found in OCOGs. This can be achieved through the development of analytically structured narratives which, as Hassard (1993) argue, link agents’ actions, structure and context as they interweave within structural inertia, random events, contextual discontinuities, and significant changes in the environment.

At a first stage configurational approaches can investigate the organisational structural and situational characteristics of OCOGs and develop a taxonomy of lifecycle’ stages. At a second stage an analysis of the strategy processes employed...
by staff and the consonance between the structural and strategy processes can be explored. Organisational change in the internal and external environment, as well as from one structural configuration to another, can also be investigated as they are perceived by key informants or mapped in organisational documents.

**Conclusion and implications for applied research in OCOGs**

The conceptual framework presented in this paper is founded on Mintzberg's configurationalist approach to analysis of organisations which argues for both an holistic organisational view in terms of structures and situational factors and their fit, and an examination of the balance among the above variables as mediators of effectiveness. The framework is also informed by structurationalist assumptions that to understand human actions one needs to be aware of both structural context and individual intentions and explanations, as well as the unintended consequences of their actions. This approach to analysis suggests that organisational relations must be seen as structured in time and space as the outcome of the operation of a duality of structure where this is seen as both the medium and the outcome of agency.

The creation of a workable taxonomy of OCOGs lifecycle could provide many benefits for the organisational analyst. One of the more obvious of these would be that a taxonomy will allow large amounts of information about various stages in an OCOGs lifecycle to be collapsed into more convenient categories that would then be easier to process, store and comprehend.

Equipped with adequately sensitive theoretical frameworks, reliable data and valid methods, researchers of OCOGs may document relationships between structural and situational elements. Such knowledge can assist the diagnosis of any misfit, which has clear implications for the practitioner. Furthermore, with the added temporal dimension to account for intentional disruptions of the fit/ harmony in OCOGs to adapt to a changing environment (Doty et al., 1993) the framework can help map the structural change patterns throughout an OCOG's lifecycle.

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BOOK REVIEW

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By Mike Collins

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As Toohey and Veal say in their introduction, most parts of their book are covered by more specialised volumes, but this is an overview and a very readable one at that.

Chapter 2 surveys the ancient Games, and Chapter 3 various attempts from the 17th century onwards to revive them. Chapter 4 ranges over the organising of the modern Games - the IOC and its partners, the host cities, while chapter 5 looks at the part politics plays - how regimes have attempted to use the games for nationalistic purposes, and interference by world events or the actions of athletes making a protest or a point.

Chapter 6 examines the economics and financing and chapter 7 follows with the links with TV and sponsors. Chapter 8 looks at the history of combating drug abuse and chapter 9 at the increasing involvement of women in organising and competing, but also at the continuing 'gendered disparity' that exists, as the authors neatly put it.

Chapter 10 looks at case studies of the last 3 games - how 1992 made a showcase for Barcelona to display its cultural and historic wares and leap up the public's awareness chart of European cities, how Atlanta became the private enterprise Games that annoyed the spectators with traffic chaos and high prices and all viewers with its fallible electronic results system, and how Sydney aspires to be the 'Green Games' and the best ever. Viewers of the event would probably concur over the second but the authors doubt the first and it is too soon to assess the economic impacts. Appendix 2 to this chapter usefully gives snapshot summaries of each of the modern Olympiads and linked bibliographies.

The final chapter reviews issues surrounding the future of the Olympics - the size, whether to have a permanent base, drugs, commercialisation of sport, and the reforms needed to the IOC in the light of recent scandals.