Sport as a complex adaptive system for place leadership: comparing five European cities with different administrative and socio-cultural traditions

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Abstract

This paper compares place leadership patterns of five European cities that have different administrative and socio-cultural traditions in order to understand the role that context plays in shaping city leadership patterns in the policy domain of sport. This paper uses an exploratory approach to analyse the city as a complex adaptive system. In pursuing this research, we investigate the main actors, structures, processes and followership patterns across different forms of city leadership (political, managerial, business and civic). Our findings show the similarities and the differences across the five cities that lead us to a two-part conclusion. Firstly, context may or may not influence city leadership patterns but it remains an essential parameter in comparative analysis.

Secondly, the main challenges for place leadership in the policy domain of sport appear generalizable and specifically we observe that civic leadership as praxis can reinforce the transformative nature of place leadership in developing and sustaining socio-economic resilience.

Keywords

City leadership, place leadership, complex adaptive systems, context, administrative culture, Europe, sport.

Introduction

Since the middle of the 20th century, cities and their hinterlands have become the engines of economic development in the advanced and many of the emerging economies (Glaeser, 2011). The United Nations estimates that over two thirds of the world's population will be living in urban areas by 2050 (United Nations 2015)

However, the rapid growth of urbanisation is accompanied by socio-economic and political wicked problems[1] that traditional forms of public policy no longer seem to solve. In this environment, different institutional and governance structures and processes become an imperative (Head and Alford, 2013; Rosenhead, 2013) and place-based leadership can contribute to responses to these wicked problems. Indeed, many

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1 A wicked problem is a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. The use of the term "wicked" here has come to denote resistance to resolution, rather than evil. Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems.

authors have recognized that leadership is the 'missing variable' in understanding the "variable performance of different places" (Bailey et al., 2010; Gibney et al. 2009; Rodríguez-Pose, 2013; Sotarauta et al., 2012) but, as Sotarauta points out, a key question is where does leadership begin and governance end. (Sotarauta, 2014).

Drawing upon the field of research on place leadership in all its variants (for example, city leadership, urban leadership, community leadership, regional leadership), we argue that place-based leadership acts as a fulcrum for leveraging institutions and societal actors to create and sustain socio-economic resilience in sub-national territories (Bentley et al., 2017; Bristow and Healy, 2014b; Rodríguez-Pose, 2013; Sotarauta et al., 2017; Sotarauta and Beer, 2017). As Beer and Clower observe, 'leadership of places, however, remains an under-developed field [since] too little attention has been paid to developing a systematic approach to understanding place leadership' (2014: 5).

In this paper, we seek to make a contribution to this field by undertaking an exploratory research to compare in the policy domain of sport how city leadership patterns in five European cities are affected by different administrative and socio-cultural traditions. The focus on European cities appears appropriate given the current conflicting demands for more decentralization at the European level, and the increased nationalism at the country level. Consequently, this environment creates the opportunity for city leadership to play a larger role in the current multi-level governance settings in Europe, as argued by Budd & Sancino (2016a).

The structure of the paper is as follows. The next section provides the theoretical background, followed by succeeding one that highlights our framework of analysis. The subsequent section presents the five city case studies. The main findings are then discussed with some concluding remarks offered in the final section.

Beyond the cross-national comparative focus, the originality of our work lies in employing the perspective of complex adaptive systems to underline the cross-cutting nature of sport as a policy system with respect to complementary socio-economic activities. In particular, we consider cities as complex adaptive systems at a macro level; sport as a complex adaptive system at a meso level; and, organizations, networks and public services in sport as a complex adaptive system at a micro level.

Background

City Leadership

City leadership may be considered as a form of public leadership that involves people and/or organizations who are in the position – both formally and informally – to activate, mobilize and lead processes that transform city and citizens' inputs, energies and resources into relevant city outcomes (Sancino, 2017). The concept is related to the overall one of place leadership or place-based leadership (Beer and Clower, 2014; Collinge et al., 2010; Hambleton and Howard, 2013; Liddle, 2010).

Various scholars have effectively highlighted the importance of place leadership in real world situations (Acuto, 2016; Beer and Clower, 2014; Collinge et al., 2010;

Hambleton, 2015; Hambleton and Howard, 2013). In this paper, we take the perspective of a city as a system of systems since a number of policy fields can be viewed as systems or sub-systems of a city, particularly if they cross-cut a number of socio-economic activities. Indeed, the systems approach to public policy has been established over many years that is now being applied more frequently in urban and regional studies (Cook and Tõnurist, 2016; Mulgan and Leadbetter, 2003; Quade, 1969). It follows that sport can be considered as a policy system since it has all typical characteristics of systems and exerts influence in other policy fields, as we discuss in the second section of this paper.

Context and leadership

The relationship between leadership and context has always interested scholars. It is an area where there is agreement for the need of further more studies but also new methodological techniques (Sotarauta and Beer, 2017). Shamir (2012) pointed out that there are at least six phenomena to analyse this relationship:

1. Leadership is determined by its context.
2. The context moderates the relationship between leadership inputs and outcomes.
3. Leadership as compensating for context or context as compensating for leadership.
4. Context as a relative unimportant aspect.
5. Leadership adapts to context.

6. Leadership defines the context.

Shamir also argued that the general analysis of leadership in a specific context

> 'should be complemented by comparative studies that do not focus on a single context but examine and compare manifestations of leadership in different contexts' (Shamir, 2012: 354).

Considering the characteristics of city leadership, this relationship becomes very specific. Context can be analysed from two perspectives: firstly, as the independent variable of leadership and, secondly, as the dependent variable of leadership. For the former perspective, the starting point is the idea from which Osborn et al. developed the theory on contextual leadership, 'change the context and leadership changes' (Osborn et al., 2002: 797). The latter perspective derives from the fact that context, like places, can be considered also as socially constructed and not objectively composed and that, in given circumstances and characteristics, leadership can change, create and define context (Shamir, 2012: 349) or, in other words, shape and re-shape it (Collinge et al., 2010: 367). Thus, city leadership is influenced by context that embeds it but, at the same time, city leadership influences the context, the city and the community it governs.

In a recent work, Hambleton (2015) argued that four different forces affect the context in which place-leaders act:

- environmental forces ('whose limits are non-negotiable');
- socio-cultural forces,

6

- economic forces; and,

- governmental forces.

In this paper, we focus only on socio-cultural and governmental forces and in particular on how administrative and socio-cultural traditions may influence the development of city leadership patterns. There is a general tendency to classify countries in families or groups, according to the common characteristics they share. In the European context, the literature on this topic is extensive and various classifications can be used depending on the dimensions considered (Bennet, 1993; Denters & Rose, 2005; Hesse & Sharpe, 1991; Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2014; Page & Goldsmith, 1987; Painter & Peters, 2010). In this paper, we consider Europe as being characterised by five different administrative and socio-cultural traditions: Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, Napoleonic/Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Scandinavian, as set out in Table 1 below).

Table 1: Five Different Administrative and Socio-Cultural Traditions in Europe

	Anglo-Saxon	Germanic	Napoleonic /Southern Europe	Scandinavian	Eastern Europe
Formal constitutional basis of state	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State and society	Pluralist	Organicist	Interventionist	Organicist/ Welfarist/ Open Government'	Mix of European and Soviet approach

Organization of government	Limited governmen tunitary, with variable 'local self-governmen t'	Integrated; cooperative federalism and interlocking coordination	The indivisible 'Jacobin' Republic; hierarchica l and centralized ; clientelism	Decentralized through administrative and/or political decentralizatio n	Reform Europeanizatio n- regionalism with political polarization and unitary bureaucratic state; vertically disaggregated;
Civil service	Quite high status, unified, neutral, generalist, permanent.	Very high status, permanent; legal training; upper ranks permanent, but can be openly partisan	Very high status, permanent, specialised elite training; segmented 'corps', politicized	High status; professional, nonpoliticized (Sweden: segmented and decentralized)	Reform. Highly politicized; political training; permanent (except for Baltic states characterised by depolitization)

Source: Own elaboration from Painter and Peters (2010)

Framework of analysis

As stated above, this paper attempts to compare city leadership patterns of five European cities that have different administrative and socio-cultural traditions in the domain of sport. Our analysis is based on two starting points. Firstly, city leadership patterns can be studied within a conceptual and analytical framework established by Budd and Sancino in a previous contribution (2016a). Secondly, considering the city as a complex adaptive system at a macro level (a system of systems) and sport as a complex adaptive system at a meso level (within a city system).

The city leadership framework

We draw upon various studies (Hambleton 2015, Hambleton and Howard, 2013, Hartley 2002) as well as our previous work (Budd and Sancino, 2016a) to set out four sub-types of city leadership that interact dynamically:

- *Political leadership*: the function of political representation and democratic intermediation in the wake of public policy formulation. It deals with the democratic processes that are activated to take and/or to influence the main decisions concerning the life of the citizens living in a given place;

- *Managerial leadership*: the function of public service delivery (public policy implementation). It deals with the public services that are designed and delivered in a given place;

- *Business leadership*: this function deals with the processes of co-creation of private value provided by the private sector and by its interaction with the public and voluntary sectors;

Civic leadership: the function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value. It deals with all the processes provided by the community and its actors operating outside the traditional realm of the public and private sector.

Within this classification, we identify four elements of city leadership (Bryson et al., 2015; Grint, 2000; Huxham and Vangen, 2005):

- *the actors (who):* the enablers of the city leadership, individuals, groups, institutions, etc., which play a key leadership role in the life of the city;

- *the structures (what):* facilities, arrangements, organizations that support and enables leaders to achieve their goals and to implement decisions stemming from their roles;

- *the processes (how):* the way in which actors use structures and resources to achieve their goals as part of their roles;

- *the followership patterns (why):* the kind of followership that actors have and the way in which leaders and leadership enhance it.

Using the analysis of the sub-types and the elements of city leadership in the sport system, we highlight similarities and differences in city leadership patterns of cities that belong to different administrative and socio-cultural traditions.

Sport as a System within a City

Our second starting point is the idea that sport is a system nested within other systems that are at play. As Budd and Sancino argue, sport can be considered as a policy system 'because it can be a trigger for other related systems (e.g., tourism, health, leisure and quality of life)'(Budd and Sancino, 2016b: 19). In broad terms, systems can be defined as:

> Complexes of elements standing in mutual interaction as wholes. Any particular system is an entity that maintains its wholeness by the mutual interaction of its parts, which can be a subsystem (part) of another system, depending on the observer focus of interest or could be a whole when facing downward and a part of

another system when facing upward. (Koestler cited by Bertalanffy Center for the Study of Systems Science (BCSSS), n.d.)

Considering the peculiarities of cities and their economic and socio-cultural development and the contemporary wicked problems they face, however, this definition appears too general. With respect to the city, viewing it as a complex adaptive system may hold out the prospect of a more comprehensive analytical framework. Indeed, there is a developing discourse and literature on complex adaptive systems on a regional scale, particularly related to the exploration and explanation of their capacity to be (or not) resilient (Bristow and Healy, 2014a, 2014b; Martin-Breen and Anderies, 2011; Vale, 2014). For these authors:

> Complex adaptive systems are comprised of groups of heterogeneous individuals or agents' (such as cells, consumers, nations, atoms) between which are inherently dynamic relationships. The agents in complex adaptive systems are constantly reacting to what the other agents are doing and to the environment, and are thus continually evolving through feedback and learning. As a result of their interconnected structure, these systems exhibit unexpected emergent properties—these are structures or patterns that cannot be reduced to the properties of the agents themselves. (Bristow and Healy, 2014a: 95).

In particular, Bristow and Healy draw upon this proposition to investigate regional economic resilience. In doing so, they note that an emergent property of complex adaptive systems is the ability in regions and localities to develop self-organisation.

That is, an organisation does not need to establish a formal leadership because it is generated spontaneously from the 'bottom-up', by the individual decisions and interactions of the agents. Within this property, organisational control is decentralised and devolved and novelty, innovation and resilience are more easily generated (Martin-Breen and Anderies, 2011; Carpenter et al., 2001). Thus, a city that has adaptive capacities will create different ways of dealing systemically with the whole range of wicked problems that societies are currently facing. Within these capacities, appropriate forms and patterns of city leadership provide the agency for developing and sustaining these properties of complex adaptive systems, at three different levels: macro level (the city); meso level (policy domain of sport); and. micro level (organizations, networks and public services in the policy domain of sport).

Sotarauta and Beer's recent contribution on the role of agency in place-based leadership is pertinent here since they focus on the shift from the structure of government to the agency of governance (and the role of place based leadership within it) (Sotarauta and Beer, 2017). We would argue, however, that our different categories of city leadership bridge the spectrum of structure and agency, with managerial leadership towards the former and civic leadership towards the latter. Indeed, we would further argue that civic leadership is an important component of self-organisation within a city's complex adaptive system. In this regard, followership is a central outcome of agency within civic leadership.

Focusing now on sport as a complex adaptive system, it's important to point out that the public focus on sport is a crucial part of social life, as well as being central to government and governance within it. In the last 50 years, sport has indeed played an increasing role in the development and shaping of identity and culture in most countries and, as many sports have become global through events, competitions, leagues and the revenues generated by clubs and government expenditures on sport have risen exponentially. The need to develop a new perspective that considers sport as a policy field is highlighted by the European Commission itself. Indeed, Eurostat, the EU's statistical agency has started to regularly disseminate harmonised statistics on sport, in particular data about the employment in sport; international trade in sporting goods, attendance at live events; and, private expenditure on sporting goods and services (Eurostat, 2016).

Sport as an Activity-complex Economy

A relevant perspective here is to consider the role of sport in a city and in its regional hinterland as an activity-complex economy, the most comprehensive form of agglomeration economy. In urban economics, agglomeration economies are those that provide firms and households with socio-economic gains from co-locating in particular places and three types of agglomeration can be distinguished:

a) *Localisation Economies*: takes the form of benefiting from pooled labour markets and shared market intelligence in the same activity in a particular place.

b) *Urbanisation Economies*: refer to unlike activities located in the same place encouraged by the provision of transport infrastructure, research and development facilities and other supporting factors.

c) *Activity-complex Economies*: they refer to economies that emerge from the joint location of unlike activities, which have substantial trading links with one another (Parr, 2002).

Thus, activity-complex economies are derived from the combination of localisation and urbanisation economies plus trading links between economic agents in the same place.

In Figure 1 below, we schematically represent sport as an activity-complex economy in which the main driver is greater sport participation, based upon developing and sustaining the capacities and capabilities of a set of community capitals (assets, resources and realisable opportunities). Local sports organisations and stakeholders, in association with local/regional facilities and supporting infrastructure, produce the building blocks of this kind of economy. The direct benefits and spillovers (externalities[2]) feed into these building blocks by providing a locus of interaction between four key economic sectors whose output increases as result of these latter activities. For example, a number of local sports organisations link their activities to that of health organisations to promote and sustain lifestyle benefits and well-being.

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[2] Externalities are benefits and costs that flow from economic activity over and above market transactions

Figure 1. The Sport Activity-Complex Economy.

Source: own elaboration.

This type of framework has utility in examining the cross-cutting nature of sport as a policy system with respect to complementary socio-economic activities. The relative size and distribution of these activities will also depend on the patterns of city leadership. Consequently, the activities shown in Figure 1 are not exhaustive but depend upon the capacities and capabilities in each city in regard to the set of community capitals at its disposal. This is an important point as we move to examine the five case-study cities.

The Five City Case Studies

This paper contains exploratory research that is investigated using a comparative case study approach in order to highlight the differences and similarities of city leadership patters across five European cities (Yin, 1994). In particular, it focuses on the influence that administrative and socio-cultural traditions have in shaping the policy system of sport. The five cities investigated were chosen because of the important role played by sport in these cities and because they belong to the five main different European administrative and socio-cultural traditions, as set out in Table 2 below:

- Brescia in Italy (Napoleonic/Southern);

- Graz in Austria (Germanic);

- Maribor in Slovenia: (Soviet/Eastern European);

- Milton Keynes in United Kingdom: (Anglo-Saxon); and,

- Reykjavik in Iceland (Scandinavian).

Table 2. Local Government Typology and Administrative culture of the Five Cities investigated.

City	Local Government Typology and Administrative Culture	Local Government Forms
Brescia	Napoleonic/Southern Europe	Strong Mayor
Graz	Germanic	Elected by City Council

Maribor	Soviet/Eastern Europe	Strong Mayor
Milton Keynes	Anglo-Saxon	Cabinet Leader Elected Mayor if City Deal accepted
Reykjavik	Scandinavian	Elected by City Council

Source: authors interpretation Bennet (1993), Denters and Rose (2005), Hesse & Sharpe (1991), Kuhlmann & Wollmann (2014), Page & Goldsmith (1987), Painter & Peters (2010).

The researchers applied a common framework to investigate the similarities and differences that arise from the administrative and socio-cultural context with respect to sport as a policy system in each city. Data and information was drawn from primary and secondary sources, underpinned by interviews with key stakeholders in order to construct a comparative analysis.

The basic characteristics of the five cities are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Basic characteristics of the Five Cities

	BRESCIA	GRAZ	MARIBOR	MILTON KEYNES	REYKJA VIK
Population	196,480	280,252	111,832	261,762	122,460
Position (road distance)	Distance to Milan 92 km	Distance to Vienna 198 km	Distance to Ljubljana 125 km	Distance to London	n/a Capital city

				88 km - urban centre of SEMLEP[3]	
GDP per capita (2015)	€34,900	€34,700	€15,000	€47,900	€48,464
Rate of unemployment (2015)	7.9%	4.7%	10.3%	3.5%	4.0%
Civic Engagement (OECD Regional Well Being, June 2016)	7.8/10	6.7/10	0.6/10	5.8/10	7.8/10

Source: own elaboration from official data from OECD, Eurostat, ISTAT, MK Observatory, Citypopulation.de

We now examine the policy system of sport in each city using the city leadership framework we developed in earlier work. A discussion of the comparative results is undertaken in the last section of the paper.

Brescia

Brescia is a city situated closed to Milan, in the North-East of Italy. Recent studies carried out by ISTAT (the Italian statistical institution) and Sole24Ore (a national newspaper) show that the North-East of Italy is the area where the majority of citizens practice sport. . In spite of the current economic and financial crisis in Italy, that impacts directly on the sport system as well as the majority of Italian cities, sport in

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[3] SEMLEP is the South Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership, it is effectively an economic development agency for the sub-region in which Milton Keynes is the urban centre.

Brescia retains a key role in mobilizing citizens and volunteers for sport clubs and associations.

Actors (who?): In regard to Brescia's sport system, various city leaders can be identified, whose characteristics vary but who are all crucial for the sport system. Their strong interdependence is also an important component in the sport system and its leadership. The directly elected mayor plays a key role as the main decisions-maker. However, this role is ineffective without the support of the managerial leaders, as represented by the Sport Manager of the municipality of Brescia and by the chief executive officers of the municipal corporation who manage the city's sports facilities. These actors play a dual role: they are executors of mayoral policies but also the first point of contact for civic and business leaders, engaged in organizational aspects of sport activities and facilities. Business and civic leaders also play an important role in the creation of sporting communities, although, no particular leaders emerge in the instance. Their participation is fragmented and operates at a horizontal level. In fact, there are more than 164 active community organizations in the sport system of Brescia, not including the ones created informally by different sport shops who provide some group-activities and events for their regular customers.

Structures (what?): In Brescia, there are almost 260 sport facilities provided by the municipality (92), the province (39), the church (55) and local businesses (73). Thus, a key role is played by the public, private and voluntary sectors. We can observe a

particular phenomenon of associations and sport clubs who mainly base their activities on using public facilities because of public contributions and their own financial situation. On the other hand, citizens who are not linked to any specific association or sport club, usually prefer to practice sport in private facilities.

Processes (how?): Considering the processes that characterize the sport system of Brescia, the municipality and thus the managerial and political leaders, play the most important role in defining them. In particular, this role is reinforced by their hierarchical and bureaucratic leadership styles. Moreover, the need of associations and sport clubs for financial support, on the one hand, and the need of political leaders to be 'legitimized' by the community, on the other, produce an ambiguous relationship between political and community leaders that may lead to clientelism.

Followership (why?): From a followership perspective, citizens engage with sport facilities continually. A high level of volunteerism in civic activities mostly demonstrates this. There is also an opportunity to foster participation in decision-making and the co-production of sport activities but because there is also a strong asymmetry of power between the political and managerial leaders and the civic and business leaders, this opportunity is not often taken up.

Graz

Graz is the second Austrian city for number of inhabitants and the economic and cultural centre in the South-Eastern part of Austria. It also has increased, as a city of

sport and through sport, its visibility beyond the local and national scale. Indeed, it has always put emphasis on sport activities and supports them in manifold ways: create infrastructure, support private and civic activities with a special emphasis on the participation of the young ones, organize and subsidize events, honour successful sportswomen and men, offer advice and knowledge through its own department.

Actors (who?): Graz has a diversified leadership structure. The main responsibility rests within the political sphere and with the city councillor for "Education, Integration and Sport". This person provides long run perspectives and incentives and hence has a central role to fix policy goals. Yet he/she has to rely on the execution and management of the Sport Office that represents the managerial leadership of the city of Graz. This office executes the political guidelines, manages all activities financial support, running of the infrastructure, organizing events, giving advice and acts as intermediary between political, civic and business leaders. At the same time, the political leader depends upon many bottom-up initiatives from the civic and business world. These include the business leaders running the major clubs (football, ice hockey, basketball etc.) and financing their activities mainly through own forms of income. Hence, in order to show economic leadership for the sporting and financial success of their club, they are dependent of support for infrastructure. The main leaders here are the directors of the large professional clubs: Sturm Graz in football; 99ers in ice hockey. At a semi-professional level, the main clubs are Graz Giants in American football and UBSC

basketball. Also, there are more than 250 sport associations or small clubs in Graz, often working in an honorary capacity and that are in need for support and can register and apply for subsidies. In this sense, there is also a certain bottom-up element in the decision-making process: the followership needs help, asks for it and gets it by conforming to the rules of application.

It's important to highlight that all leaders, particularly the political and managerial ones, have to look for cooperation and coordination particularly with other political institutions on a regional and national level given the limited financial resources available.

Structures (what?): Graz's sport activities and structures are mainly provided and managed by the municipality (managerial leaders). Highlights of infrastructure provision include the building of a large indoor and outdoor swimming hall (the "Auster" - Oyster in English) about a decade ago and more recently, the renovation of the football stadium and of the ice hockey arena. This is accompanied by offering and serving a large number of various sport facilities: 28 district sport grounds with open access, 2 skating grounds, 2 cross-country ski runs, and a new hall for ball sports.

Processes (how?): The main goal and focus of the sport system in Graz is to support mass and grassroots sport activities. To achieve this goal, a special focus is on the extended financial support that political and managerial leaders provide to about 250 private sport associations, around 50 individual sports women and men who are

internationally covering more than 150 events. A special focus is on the sport

programmes for young people and activities offered during vacations for school

children throughout the year. These programmes include the provision of courses

covering different sports for more than 7000 children. There are also private clubs that

are mostly businesses, in the sense of running professional clubs (football, ice hockey,

basketball…) who are given financial support for their young academy players.

Followership (why?): Without political will and organization, exercised thanks to the

managerial leaders, sport in and for Graz will not flourish. On the other hand, without

civic participation, Graz would not be as active in sport as it is and would like to be.

Bottom-up elements come into play and, thus, become crucial together with the need of

cooperation and coordination with other levels of policy making. This is especially the

case for the business and civic leaders.

Maribor

Maribor is the second largest Slovenian city and it is generally perceived as the

unofficial capital of the Eastern Slovenia. Previously considered as the industrial centre

of Slovenia, it has gone through a harsh period of industrial decline since the beginning

of the 1990s. Throughout this period, sports maintained an important role in local

identity and civic life, as a source of pride in opposition to the capital city Ljubljana,

either through traditional sports rivalry with the capital, especially in football

competitions, or through maintaining prominent role on the international setting in its own right.

Actors (who?): The vast majority of sport in Maribor is under-financed and semi-professional at best, but mostly strongly based on amateurism and voluntary effort of sports workers. This puts the civic element in the sport system in both an important position in the city and in ambiguous relationship with politics. On one hand, this voluntary sport sector is in constant urgent need for (relatively small) financial resources, as well as maintenance and improvements in sports infrastructure. It strongly depends on public funds or quasi-private funds (e.g. sponsorships ensured by companies owned or influenced by the municipality, or assured through political connections).

On the other hand, sport organizations due to their voluntary nature and ability to mobilize a lot of people are in a position of strength in regard to political leaders manifested periodically through local elections. This makes the relationship between political and civic leaders a constant power play and implies continuous communication and negotiation. Semi-professional and amateur sports clubs that have developed local civic networks do not shy away from attempting to influence political processes and may play a relatively prominent role in the local elections. This is a general phenomenon in Slovenian local politics, where the question of resources and setting up the priorities play a prominent role during negotiations preceding the local elections. Sports workers sometimes engage in the election campaign indirectly, by mobilizing

civic networks, and sometimes even directly, although not in Maribor, with non-partisan "sports lists", often with clear political affiliations and sometimes moderated by political parties and lists.

The relationship between the managerial and political is more straightforward; the managerial is clearly subordinate to the political. This is a combination of two factors. The first is the system of Slovenian local government, in which the mayor is elected by popular vote and cannot be impeached even in case of serious misuse of power, criminal offences and consistently poor results. The mayor has a very strong role in the local political system, which includes determining the agenda for the municipal council, and appointing the director (manager) of the municipal administration. The second is the relatively low level of meritocracy in administrative and managerial appointments in Slovenia in general, and at the local level in particular, of heads of administrative units. It is relatively uncommon for senior administrative or managerial appointees to be non-partisan, i.e. career managers and bureaucrats. This leads to relatively frequent changes in important managerial positions. As a result, the Office of Sports is subordinated and serves the mayor's political agenda, acting on his behalf in communications with civic leaders. This position opens up space for political negotiations, *quid pro quo* arrangements and clientelism for strong members of his cabinet.

Structures (what?): Sports facilities are provided by the agency established by the Municipality and where the political leadership plays the key role in appointment of its director. The official site for political processes is the Committee for Youth, Education and Sport of the municipal council, but it is coupled with strong unofficial sites of communication and exchange, which gives way to possibilities for political corruption and establishes strong clientelistic links.

Processes (how?). A combination of top-down processes with the mayor and his cabinet making the key decisions, and the influence exerted by the civic leaders through political negotiations, are further encouraging strong clientelism. One notable exception to this is NK Maribor, which dominates the sports scene in the city and is very independent from the political and managerial function. Due to its relative size, the income that could potentially be generated from the municipality does represent a significant portion of revenue, which is generated from sponsorships, sales of tickets and sales of players.

Followership (why?): Followership patterns are ambiguous in the sport system of Maribor. The relationships between the managerial and political leaders, on one hand, and civic and business leaders, on the other, create a context of unhealthy dependency characterized by high risk of clientelism due to the need of political support, from the formers, and of financial support, for the latters.

Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes and its sub-regional hinterland occupies a unique position in the UK and its economy. Located equi-distant between the country's two largest cities, it nevertheless has developed a set of socio-economic characteristics, capacities and capabilities that provide it with an internal dynamic. Moreover, the Milton Keynes City-Region occupies the border areas of three English regions (East; East Midlands; South-East) that are among the most economically dynamic ones in the UK. As such, the sub-region can be considered a growth pole. The boundaries of the city-region comprise the South-East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), the sub-regional economic development agency. It is clear that sports can be considered as a propulsive industry of this growth pole centred on the Milton Keynes. An initial investigation shows that the portfolio of major sports in the sub-region are badminton, basketball, cricket, football, hockey and rugby. There are also a number of secondary sports in the locality; the skills of which needed to play are less related to body co-ordination and whose promotion can increase participation, for example sailing and windsurfing, rock climbing, skiing and snowboarding. The motorsports cluster around Silverstone is also an important activity and facility, whose global and local importance and impact is sometimes overlooked.

Actors (who?): The cross-cutting relationships among different leaders and actors bring in civic and business leaders who play a crucial and influential role in the sport system of Milton Keynes. The political leadership, represented by the local authority, considers

sport as a local propulsive industry that defines its related policy strategies with respect to central government and national funding programmes. Authority for this type of leadership may increase in the future following further devolution in England, based upon the City Deals programme and some increased local fiscal discretion. The Chief Executive and Executive Directors represent the managerial leadership role, providing sport services and being influenced by SEMLEP and the presence of a number of national sport organizations, national sport teams and their stadia, particularly football, rugby and hockey. Much of the funding comes from central bodies, for example Sports England, the Rugby Football Association and the Football League.

Thus, the collaboration and cooperation with central/national actors is not only needed but essential. In this regard, civic leadership in the sport system cuts across a number of organisational boundaries. These include representation of civic associations, for example MK Sports Board and MK Dons Sport Trust, both on the board of SEMLEP as well as local authority officers being members of these two organisations boards.

Structures (what?): Milton Keynes hosts different sport facilities, managed mainly by local government and national associations, often funded by national investment programmes both public and private. Sport is central to the local authority's strategy, manifested in *Milton Keynes: International Sporting City* whose main objective is to

"develop Milton Keynes as an International Sporting City ... a concept which seeks

to attract and support regional, national and international facilities and events, and

to improve people's health and wellbeing through new opportunities to participate

in sport and active recreation."(Nortoft Partnership, 2011; 3).

Processes (how?): Analysing the processes that characterize the sport system of Milton

Keynes, the key role of private and voluntary sector players becomes clear. The local

authority acts mainly as trustee or intermediary rather than leader and focuses mostly on

planning strategies, programmes and activities derived from the national funding bodies

and central government. As such, there is limited direct funding for local sports clubs

and associations. Consequently, civic leadership is becoming increasingly important in

seeking and maintaining funding streams. The three forms of leadership represent the

basis of a series of community capitals to sustain the sport system in Milton Keynes.

These are set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Distribution Community Capitals

Type of Capital	Definition	Examples
Human	Knowledge, skills, health and well being developed by coaches and trainers	MK sports and medicine hub
Social	Quality of social network connections	Scale of volunteer networks in sports clubs
Organisational	Capacities to organise events and activities	MK House of Sport, providing back office services to sports organisations.

Environmental	Quality of amenities available locally for public participation	Bletchley Leisure Centre. School sports grounds, public parks.
Infrastructural	Built and natural facilities	International team training centre, Stadium: MK. Community sports coaching hub, Woughton
Financial	Income and assets available to the public and organisations	Income levels in different parts of SEMLEP area; resources available for sport from MK based companies: Red Bull, Mercedes Benz
Reputational	The extent of trust in organisations and networks	Increasing support and loyalty to sports brands, e.g. MK Dons, Northamptonshire Cricket Club

Source: Budd and Trigg (2014)

Followership (why?): The powerful and influential civic interest in sport activities creates a sport system where co-production of services and high participation are fostered. However, the role played by the national funding bodies and central government inhibit strong followership patterns at local level. Consequently, the risk of clientelism increases as the local authority acts more as an intermediary between the national and local government rather than as a leader. In regard to this risk, civic leadership may fill the policy vacuum as civic associations become more central as trustee intermediaries of the sport system in Milton Keynes.

Reykjavik

Reykjavik is the capital and largest city of Iceland. It has about 120,000 inhabitants and it is the political, cultural and economic heartland of Iceland, out of a total population of about 330,000. Fishing, service industries and high technology businesses (especially

genetic and biotechnical research laboratories) are the main economic activities in the island. Sport is very important in Reykjavik and acts as a powerful source for civic participation and as one of the main drivers for social capital creation.

Actors (who?): Collaboration between sport clubs and The City of Reykjavik goes back a long way to the first part of the 20th Century. The clubs, according to tradition, receive significant financial support from the city administration. This is based on a formal collaboration between The Department of Sport and Leisure (DSL), on behalf of the mayor, and Reykjavik Sport Union (RSU), a district association of 76 sport clubs. The latest contract was signed in the end of year 2016 in line with the Reykjavik policy in sport affairs 2012-2020. One of the standing committees of the city council, the Sport and Leisure Committee is responsible for formulating policy for sport affairs and shares responsibility for its implementation with DSL.

Structures (what?): The Municipality provides and manages the different sport facilities of the city. The structures of city leadership are thus almost entirely provided and mediated by the public sector, which – as common in Scandinavian societies – tends to have a central role in the organization of the social fabric.

Processes (how?): Apart from services provided directly by the city, such as operation of public pools, ski areas, sports clubs are to provide additional services as defined in contract, including access to facilities owned by the city, payments for facility construction and maintenance and subsidies for office operation of the sport clubs. As

already mentioned, city grants provide sport clubs with a substantial part of their revenues. Other revenues include member fees, lottery revenues, and ticket sales from sporting events.

Followership (why?): A large proportion of Reykjavik's inhabitants are registered members of sport clubs. There are 41,000 members of 76 sport clubs and the number of inhabitants in Reykjavik is 120,000. It becomes clear that sport plays an important aspect in city life and participation in the policy decision-making is high. Another key element is the role of communication and promotion of sport activities, carried out by the managerial leaders.

Discussion

Through the analysis of the sub-types and the elements of city leadership in the policy system of sport, this paper compares city leadership patterns in five European cities that have different administrative and socio-cultural traditions, in order to understand the role that context plays in shaping these patterns. Through our analysis, six phenomena are identified, as set out in the sub-section on context and leadership above, showing both consistent general patterns and differences across the five cities.

, In all the cities, the political leaders play a key governance role, for three main reasons. Firstly, they formulate policies and strategies. Secondly, they define how many public funds are available and how distribute them. Finally, they influence the managerial leaders' activity. In regard to this latter aspect we notice that all managerial

leaders appear to be in a subordinate position to the political ones. They act as executors of the political agenda and as intermediaries between the political leaders and the civic and business leaders, particularly because they are responsible for the management and organization of the sport facilities, activities and services provided by the cities.

With respect to the phenomenon of leadership as compensating for context or context as compensating for leadership, there appears to be an ambiguous and tense relationship between political and civic leaders. In all cities, even if in different ways and levels of tension, political and civic leaders are in a dependency relationship, due to the need of political support, for the former, and of financial support, for the latter. This relationship, similarly being present in all cities, is then developed differently across cities when considering followership patterns. Indeed, given the current European and national socio-economic pressures and wicked problems to be confronted, the degree of success of the cities in addressing these tensions and ambiguities is becoming more variable. Consequently, the role of civic leadership may act as important source of trusteeship and intermediation between the different spheres of governance. Allied to followership, this potential outcome may help city leadership ameliorate and manage the wicked problems they face. In this regard, an analysis of the sport system may provide insights for other public policy domains

The phenomenon that leadership is determined by its context relates to the way that followership is enacted. The Italian case shows a strong asymmetry of power

between the political leaders and the civic and business leaders that can result in a high risk of clientelism. The Slovenian case show a more collaborative and coordinated reality as does that of the Austrian case, whereas the English case is characterized by weaker followership patterns at the local level. In the case of Iceland, on the other hand, followership is highly fostered and the potential for self-organization and for self-leadership are more apparent.

In all five cases, the foregoing analysis opens up a line of research enquiry whose main question is the degree to which the patterns of city leadership and their underlying institutional conditions start to converge. In particular, how civic leadership and its followership begins to develop a more legitimate function in sub-national governance across Europe.

The phenomenon that leadership adapts to context varies across cities and is related to the institutional arrangements that characterize the political leadership, particularly the actors and processes. In the Italian and Slovenian cases, where there are directly elected and thus potentially strong mayors, leadership is more centralized while in other cases, such as the Icelandic and the Austrian ones, leadership appears more distributive and collaborative.

The phenomenon that leadership defines the context establishes the relationship between local and central government that strongly differs in the cases we analyse. In particular, in the Slovenian and English cases, this relationship is highlighted but while

for the former local government needs and aims to collaborate with higher levels of policy making in order to provide better services and funding. In the English case central government plays a dominant role and the discretion of local government is tightly constrained by higher level decisions and strategies.

In bridging the formal attribution of power of local government and the informal attribution of governance of city leadership, the different types of city leadership provide a spectrum of decision-making processes. At first sight, political and managerial leadership appear to be within the realm of government, whilst civic and business leadership within the realm of governance. In a changing global and local public policy environment, differences can be become blurred. In part, this depends upon the robustness of administrative and cultural traditions and their institutional underpinnings in each place. But, as noted in the analysis of the sport system in the five cities, the role of followership within city leadership becomes a potentially vital fulcrum in enabling more legitimate and inclusive governance and by implication government.

Thus, we can argue that the administrative and cultural context can both influence and at the same time be irrelevant in shaping city leadership patterns, in accordance with   some aspects of the analysis on which the paper focuses. However, it remains essential to acknowledge and consider the context when carrying out comparative analysis since it allows a better understanding the phenomena identified.

Conclusions

In this paper, we aim to compare city leadership patterns in five European cities investigating whether administrative and socio-cultural factors affect elements (actors, structures, processes and followership patterns) and types (political, managerial, civic, business) of city leadership. We observe some common phenomena despite the different contexts such as the key role of political leaders, the tension between political and civic leadership and the intermediary role of managerial leadership. There are also some differences in the way followership is enacted (for example the potential for self-organization and for self-leadership was more detected in the Icelandic case); in institutional arrangements (for example a more centralized leadership where there are directly elected mayors); and, in the relationship between central and local government (for example, very crucial in the Austrian and English cases). Of course, this paper is exploratory in nature at this stage and draws mainly upon early stage primary and secondary data underpinned by interviews with key stakeholders.

This approach clearly has many limitations that need to be acknowledged, especially in terms of deepness and richness of the data available for this comparison and as well as in terms of investigating the relationships amongst some of the concepts highlighted. However, we believe that our work has some merit in showing the potential for a sound cross-national dialogue as an important feature of place leadership studies. That is, the systemic nature of leadership cuts across disciplinary and sectoral silos. This paper, in particular, contributes to framing place leadership as a social process

constituted by geographical and historical factors and conditions. By the same token, the dynamic interaction of the different elements and forms of place leadership requires a complex, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach. From this perspective, we think that the concept of complex adaptive systems is particularly suited for studying place leadership. Moreover, in terms of our findings, it is interesting to point out that we found in all the five cities a shared understanding about the underdeveloped civic potential for exercising place leadership.

As argued elsewhere and in our previous work, city leadership provides the missing link between socio-economic development and governance. The increasing symbiotic relationship between governance and leadership opens up the possibility of the civic form of city leadership gaining increased followership as a more transparent and legitimate means to formulate policy and decision-making in confronting the wicked problems in cities in contemporary Europe

This suggestion certainly deserves greater attention from research but also policy perspectives. As a final point, we believe that future studies should further utilise the comparative framework here presented in order to better understand some key issues. For example, the relationship between governance, power and leaders' role as suggested by Sotarauta (2016) that arise by considering place leadership as a complex meta-concept constituted by different constructs that may take different combinations depending on contextual factors.

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