

The Impact of the Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty on Managing Major Sport Events

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Abstract

The recent COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the management of major sport events. However, the pandemic's distinct nature, differing from sources of uncertainty on which previous researchers have focused, as well as our society that is more networked than ever before, posed challenges existing research could not fully explain. Therefore, I aimed to understand the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events.

To achieve this, I conducted multiple case studies focusing on the Kyoto Marathon and Osaka Marathon. Based on critical realism, which I adopted as my philosophical position and meta-theory, I established the following three research questions (RQs) for a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon: (1) How did the marathon secretariat members experience uncertainty over time due to the pandemic? (2) How can the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the marathon secretariat members' activities be explained using an embeddedness perspective? and (3) How did pandemic-driven uncertainty change the way agency influences social structures in managing marathons?

Adopting a descriptive approach for RQ1, I categorized the experiences of secretariat members into the following five types: (1) Difficulty in ensuring safety, (2) A trade-off between empty expenses and accurate judgement, (3) Sponsor Considerations, (4) Concern about reputational damage, and (5) Conflict between institutional logics and stakeholders' organizational logics. Using an embeddedness perspective for RQ2, I developed five theoretical frameworks that explain how various social structures (e.g., social networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory) were activated by the pandemic with other contextual factors so they could generate the secretariat members' activities. Using Archer's (1995) dualism approach for RQ3, I found human agency, which can transform social structures by engaging

certain emanating practices, was constrained during the pandemic compared to before the pandemic period.

By exploring and explaining the impact of this novel type of uncertainty from multiple perspectives, this research contributes to our understanding of why and how unprecedented challenges like a global pandemic can constrain or reshape the landscape of major sport event management.

Résumé

La récente pandémie de COVID-19 a eu un impact profond sur la gestion des grands événements sportifs. Cependant, la nature distincte de la pandémie, qui diffère des sources d'incertitude sur lesquelles les chercheurs précédents se sont concentrés, ainsi que notre société étant plus que jamais un réseau ont posé des défis que les recherches existantes ne pouvaient pas entièrement expliquer. J'ai donc cherché à comprendre l'impact de l'incertitude liée à la pandémie sur la gestion des grands événements sportifs.

Pour ce faire, j'ai mené des études de cas portant sur les marathons de Kyoto et d'Osaka. En me basant sur le réalisme critique, que j'ai adopté comme position philosophique et métathéorie, j'ai établi trois questions de recherche menant à une explication théorique du phénomène : (1) Comment les membres du secrétariat du marathon ont-ils vécu l'incertitude au fil du temps en raison de la pandémie ? (2) Comment l'impact de l'incertitude due à la pandémie sur les activités des membres du secrétariat du marathon peut-il être expliqué à l'aide d'une perspective d'encastrement ? et (3) Comment l'incertitude due à la pandémie a-t-elle modifié la manière dont l'agence humaine influence les structures sociales dans la gestion des marathons ?

En adoptant une approche descriptive pour la question 1, j'ai classé les expériences des membres du secrétariat en cinq catégories: (1) Difficulté à garantir la sécurité, (2) Compromis entre des dépenses inutiles et un jugement précis, (3) Considérations des commanditaires, (4) Préoccupation concernant les dommages à la réputation, et (5) Conflit entre les logiques institutionnelles et les logiques organisationnelles des parties prenantes. En utilisant une perspective d'encastrement pour la question 2, j'ai développé cinq cadres théoriques qui expliquent comment diverses structures sociales (par exemple, les réseaux sociaux, la temporalité, les institutions, la politique et le territoire) ont été activées par la pandémie avec

d'autres facteurs contextuels, de sorte que les membres de l'équipe de gestion des marathons se sont retrouvés dans une situation d'incertitude et ont dû faire face à des situations d'urgence.

En explorant et en expliquant l'impact de ce nouveau type d'incertitude à partir de diverses perspectives, cette recherche contribue à notre compréhension du pourquoi et du comment d'es défis sans précédent comme une pandémie mondiale peuvent contraindre ou remodeler le paysage de la gestion des grands événements sportifs.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full name
AIMS	Association of International Marathons and Distance Races
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
JAAF	Japan Association of Athletics Federations
KAA	Kyoto Athletic Association
KMEC	Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee
NAO	Network Administrative Organization
OAAA	Osaka Association of All Athletics
OMOC	Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee
REB	Research Ethics Board
RQ	Research Question
TOCOG	Organising Committee of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games
Tokyo 2020	Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

CHAPTER I: Introduction

Background, Problems to be Addressed, and Statement of Purpose

The Coronavirus disease 2019 [hereafter COVID-19] emerged in China in December 2019 and rapidly spread across the globe, eventually being declared a pandemic on March 11th, 2020, by the World Health Organization (2020a). The unprecedented uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the suspension of many organizational activities across a wide range of industries (Klößner et al., 2021). This was no exception for the focus of this research, managing major sport events, which refers to a process of planning, implementing, and wrapping-up sport-related competitions that provide media occasions and attract substantial attendance, generating various impacts and/or legacies (e.g., economic, social, and environmental) in the host community (Chappelet & Parent, 2015; Parent & Ruetsch, 2021).

Uncertainty—a situation in which information on potential outcomes and/or their probabilities of occurrence are unavailable to decision makers (Park & Shapira, 2017)—was of particular importance for individuals considering how to manage major sport events in these turbulent times. As organization scholars point out, previous knowledge about uncertainty may not adequately explain the current organizational phenomena due to the unique nature of the pandemic (Klößner et al., 2021). The reason why previous knowledge may be incomplete also lies within human society. Our society is more networked than ever before, resulting in the rapid spread of social unrest and difficulty for organizations to address complex interactions with their stakeholders (Phan, 2021). Stakeholders are defined as any organizations or individuals “who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the [focal] organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Researchers in the sport (event) management field have been encouraged to conduct more empirical research during and after this pandemic period (Bond et al., 2022; Thomson et

al., 2022; Yamakita et al., 2024). As of the time of writing, several journals have published special issues related to the pandemic, such as *Sport and COVID-19: Impact and Challenges for the Future Volume 1 & 2* by the European Sport Management Quarterly (2021, 2022), *Managing Sport and Leisure in the Era of Covid-19* by Managing Sport and Leisure (2022), *Event Innovation and Resilience* by Event Management (2023). There have also been academic books published on the pandemic, including *Sport and the Pandemic: Perspectives on Covid-19's Impact on the Sport Industry* (Pedersen et al., 2020) and *Routledge Handbook of Sport and COVID-19* (Frawley & Schulenkorf, 2022). However, there is a scarcity of theoretical discussion within the sport event management field as Byers et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of not only examining the surface-level reactions of organizations and their stakeholders to pandemic-driven uncertainty, but also explaining why and how these occurred. In addition, given the importance of understanding the impact of uncertainty on how sport organizations adapt to environmental changes and develop strategies (Slack & Parent, 2006), there is a need for a theoretical framework to explain their responses to uncertainty. To address this lack more effectively, I extended the conceptual scope of major sport events to be encompassed by inter-organizational projects. From an organizational point of view, especially, managing major sport events can be regarded as a subset of inter-organizational projects (e.g., Sousa et al., 2016), which are temporary endeavours undertaken by multiple organizations working jointly to create a unique product, service, and/or result (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008; Project Management Institute, 2021). Like major sport event management, scholars studying those projects also call for more empirical research pertaining to the pandemic (Unterhitzenberger et al., 2021). More importantly, by considering the management of major sport events as inter-organizational

projects, researchers can incorporate insights from project management, where more theories developed in general organization studies have been discussed (cf. Doherty, 2013).

This dissertation therefore aims to contribute to the understanding of the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events as inter-organizational projects. By doing so, it also aims to advance the fields of sport event management, project management, and general organization studies. The inclusive relations for the three areas addressed in this research are shown in Figure 1.1. This figure illustrates the relationship between the three types of phenomena indicated within parentheses and the three research domains that address each phenomenon. Sport event management studies, which address managing major sport events as a phenomenon, fall within the domain of project management studies, which address inter-organizational projects. Both domains are encompassed within general organization studies, which address a broader range of organizational phenomena. Thus, Figure 1.1 implies that this dissertation's research questions (RQs), with a primary focus on managing major sport events, can be informed by previous knowledge in project management studies and general organization studies. It also implies that the findings of this dissertation can provide new insights transferable to those higher-level research domains.

Introduction to Managing Major Sport Events and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Major sport events have various impacts/legacies, both positive and negative, on the host regions (see Holt & Ruta, 2015; Thomson et al., 2019; Wise & Maguire, 2022); thus, effective management of these events is a critical endeavour (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). Major sport events are nuanced in characteristics. These characteristics are, for example, whether it is a mono- or multi-sport event, whether it is a one-off or recurring event, and whether it is a non-profit or for-profit event (Chappelet & Parent, 2015). Most multi-sport events are one-off events (a few

Figure 1.1—The Inclusive Relations of General Organization Studies, Project Management Studies, and Sport Event Management Studies



exceptions being Ancient Games like the Much Wenlok Olympian Games and Nemean Games: Chappelet & Parent, 2015). From the human resource management point of view, recurring events are usually held by so-called a pulsating organization, which refers to enduring organizations that experience fluctuations in personnel numbers (e.g., contract-paid workers and volunteers) over their event life cycle (Carlsson-Wall et al., 2017; Hanlon & Cuskelly, 2002).

Major sport events are also characterized by their diverse range of stakeholders. Organizational stakeholders are, for example, event owners (Getz et al., 2015), host governments (Carey et al., 2015; Houlihan et al., 2015), promoters (e.g., Emery, 2015), sport organizations (e.g., Bayle, 2015), sponsors (e.g., Séguin & Bodet, 2015), and the media (e.g., Boyle, 2015; Silk & Morgan, 2015). Individual stakeholders are, for example, participants (e.g., MacIntosh & Dill, 2015; Young, 2015), their support members (e.g., Kristiansen et al., 2015; Legg, 2015), and

spectators (e.g., Bodet, 2015). The community, which can be both organizational (e.g., local schools) and individual (e.g., residents), can also be deemed as an important stakeholder category in managing major sport events (e.g., Chalip, 2015; Derom et al., 2015). These stakeholders take part in or engage with major sport events with specific intentions which include, but is not limited to, urban development, economic growth, social change, educational advancement, and political empowerment, in addition to the promotion of excellence and/or grassroots sport (Parent & Chappelet, 2015; Yamakita et al., 2024).

When seeing major sport event management as an inter-organizational project, how to coordinate its organizational stakeholders within the limited time and given the context and characteristics of the event would be a key to a successful event. Individual stakeholders certainly have their importance, and their perspectives could provide valuable insights for sport event management studies. In the present dissertation, following the conceptual premise I set (i.e., managing major sports events is a subset of inter-organizational projects), the perspectives of individual stakeholders are considered as these convey through organizations (e.g., residents' perceptions influence a focal organization through discussions at a city assembly or media coverage). This also implies that even powerful individuals such as a governor, termed as political elites, exert influence on the focal organization's activities by representing certain organizations such as the regional government (cf. Danermark et al., 2019). Based on this point of view, I conducted research on major sport event management (neither event impacts nor legacies on the community) under pandemic-driven uncertainty.

The intersection between sport event management and project management is evident in the sport management literature as well. The insights of project management can inform major sport event management in the way that Parent and Ruetsch (2021) stated:

It is essential to understand the principles of project management if one is going to be successful in creating a solid plan. When working for a major sports event, everyone to some degree is asked to carry out and contribute to the development of project management tasks. Typically, there is *a central Project Management team* in an organising committee that pushes out different tasks, such as reviewing milestones for a department or completing FA [functional area] operational plans, and consolidates all the updates and information. (p. 82, emphasis added)

For the present dissertation, the central Project Management team, as Parent and Ruetsch (2021) mentioned, refers to secretariats in the organizing committee, and the activities led by the members of those secretariats are the inter-organizational projects that I focused on.

Due to its nature as an open-system organizational endeavour, major sport events have been exposed to various types of uncertainty stemming from changes in its external environment (cf. Daft, 2021). Those changes can be driven by customers (e.g., change of preference), suppliers (e.g., contract suspension), or competitors (e.g., the establishment of similar events in the same area) that directly impact the ability to achieve organizational goals, as well as broader external factors like financial crises, societal shifts, and technological innovations (Slack & Parent, 2006). In this dissertation, I focused on an external factor, the COVID-19 pandemic, that drove unprecedented uncertainty.

As the pandemic spread, major sport events such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games [hereafter Tokyo 2020], the 2023 Kinshasa *Jeux de la Francophonie*, the World Athletics Championships Oregon 2022, the 2020 UEFA European Football Championship, the 2022 Niagara Canada Games, and all six of the Abbot World Marathon Majors (i.e., Tokyo, Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago, and New York) were cancelled,

postponed or held on a reduced scale (Dickson et al., 2022; Ludvigsen & Hayton, 2022).

Organizing committees as pulsating organizations, especially their secretariats in charge of managing the events as project teams (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021), seemed to experience numerous difficulties in the limited time available under the condition of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the secretariat members of Japanese large-scale marathons (e.g., the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon) were compelled to give up on holding their events as usual (i.e., in-person marathons) and produced virtual marathons alternatively during the pandemic (Kin, 2020). This should be related to a plethora of direct and indirect factors, including the nature of the sport event that is likely to be crowded, the already overburdened local healthcare system, and the disruption to the domestic sport event industry resulting from the postponement of Tokyo 2020 (Bizen & Oshimi et al., 2022; Morgan, 2021: to be further discussed in the sections on Methodology in Chapter III). As such, major sport events are one of the most pandemic-impacted industries (Traub, 2021) and have therefore been chosen as the present research context.

As the realm of sport event management studies is conceptually encompassed by project management studies (Figure 1.1), I point out the main features of inter-organizational relationships in the light of managing sport event management. Inter-organizational projects such as large-scale construction (e.g., Swärd, 2016), Hollywood film-making (e.g., Sorenson & Waguespack, 2006), open-source software development (e.g., Grewal et al., 2006), and crisis response (e.g., Moynihan, 2008) have been studied in the project management literature with regard to their organizational structure and processes in various contexts, including under uncertainty (e.g., Lundin et al., 2015; Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). However, their inter-organizational dimension requires further investigation due to their inherent complexity (Sydow

& Braun, 2018). This dimension can be viewed as a double-edged sword from a managerial perspective. On one hand, an advantage of an inter-organizational project is that it can mobilize various resources from the multiple organizations involved (e.g., human resources, legitimacy) in contrast to a project within a single organization (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008; Orr et al., 2011). On the other hand, one of its crucial challenges is how to coordinate the different organizations with diverse demands to achieve shared outcomes within a limited time frame (Lundin et al., 2015; Parent & Ruetsch, 2021; Sydow & Braun, 2018). This applies to major sport events as their organizing committees often take an outsourcing form, comprising representatives from the event's stakeholders (Parent, 2015). More importantly, this implies researchers should bear in mind that an inter-organizational project only constitutes one of many different activities, issues, solutions, and other projects for its stakeholders, even for its organizer or owner (cf. Engwall, 2003). Endorsing this notion, I followed a perspective that inter-organizational projects are embedded in what (new) economic sociologists call social structures (Bakker et al., 2011; Sydow et al., 2004).

Introduction to the Theoretical Perspectives to Understand the Phenomenon of Interest

The so-called embeddedness perspective assumes an individual or organizational activity is influenced by social structures (Granovetter, 1985, 2017), and it can be used to understand various complex organizational phenomena such as inter-organizational projects (e.g., Packard et al., 2016; Provan & Lemaire, 2015; Sydow & Braun, 2018). Social structures, as defined in economic sociology, are aggregates of socially constructed and patterned arrangements that encompass social networks, institutions, politics, and territory (e.g., Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999; Halinen & Törnroos, 1998; Lebeau & Bennion, 2014). Because these social structures are shaped chronologically, the concept of temporality—the inherent property of time, with regard to

people's experience and expectations on the continuation from the past to the future (George & Jones, 2000; Widder, 2010)—is also considered as an important element of social structures (e.g., Granovetter, 2017; Engwall, 2003; Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008).

Project management researchers have expanded the scope of application of the embeddedness perspective by incorporating various types of social structures in the context of inter-organizational projects (e.g., Grewal et al., 2006; Packard et al., 2016; Provan & Lemaire, 2015; Sydow & Staber, 2002). As far as I, a doctoral candidate in sport (event) management studies, know, the embeddedness perspective has not explicitly been used in sport event management studies so far. Nevertheless, it is applicable to investigating the management of major sport events given the outsourcing nature of these events' organizing committees and the importance of understanding the local community for event hosting (Yamakita et al., 2024). In other words, sport event management is not solely an undertaking carried out by organizing committees but is influenced by various societal structures that they may not necessarily control (Parent et al., 2011; Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). This is the rationale behind my application of the embeddedness perspective to sport event management.

For the present dissertation, I focused on marathons as the research subjects. This selection stemmed from not only the tremendous difficulties that practitioners encountered in managing marathons during the pandemic, as mentioned in the last section, but also the aim to achieve the purpose of this dissertation through the development of a theoretical framework. Specifically, the research contexts had to be recurring events. This is because these events should be more embedded in time and in their territory than one-off sport events. One-off events are held on a rotating or bidding basis like the Canada Games and the Olympic Games while recurring sport events are characterized as regularly repeated (e.g., annual and biannual) and tied

to a specific place such as certain marathons and cycling events (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). This selection enabled a more effective consideration of the important social structures relevant to the embeddedness perspective and made it possible to compare event management and its interaction with social structures within the same territorial area, both before and during the pandemic (because they had already been occurring before the pandemic occurred). Furthermore, given that marathons are non-profit endeavours, they should be influenced by certain social structures embodied as, for example, community needs and government pressures, to a similar or even greater extent than for-profit events. The non-profit events involve multiple stakeholders, each with their own organizational logics, which means “implicit rules and underlying assumptions about what organizations *should* be” (Parsons et al., 2012, p. 271, emphasis in original). In turn, their logics can help explain what occurred in my context of interest so that I can answer my RQs and fulfill my overall purpose. Regarding the theoretical perspective, empirical research applying the embeddedness perspective to inter-organizational projects under the condition of uncertainty is currently limited (an exception being Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008). This suggests a potential contribution to the project management literature because it responds to a call Unterhitzenberger et al. (2021) made to advance the theoretical framework for projects under uncertainty.

When using the embeddedness perspective to examine the management of major sport events, however, researchers must be cognizant of the conceptual and theoretical problems that need to be addressed. Conceptually, as the meaning and categorization of social structures have diverged among researchers (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2011/2018; Frankowska, 2020, Zukin & DiMaggio, 1990), the embeddedness perspective should only be used as a theoretical umbrella. Upon reviewing various aspects of social structures under this theoretical umbrella, then, it is necessary to develop a theoretical framework for understanding phenomena of interest. To build

the theoretical framework, knowledge of meta-theory (i.e., the theory of theory that provides a higher-order perspective for theorizing a given phenomenon and linking other theories) is helpful (Svejvig, 2021). Since meta-theory can also be viewed as “the philosophy behind the theory” (Bates, 2005, p. 2), the meta-theoretical discussion is undertaken in the Philosophical Position section of this dissertation (see Chapter III).

Furthermore, researchers relying on the embeddedness perspective may underestimate or overlook the question of human agency (Granovetter, 2017; Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021). Human agency can be defined as individuals’ “motivation and ability to shape relations and create a beneficial link or dissolve an unprofitable one, or to shape an advantageous structure” (Ahuja et al., 2012, p. 437-438). The so-called structure/agency debate, which centres on whether social structures or human agency better explains a given phenomenon, is a common issue in the social sciences, including general organization studies (Borgatti et al., 2014; Reed 2005). Since the 1970s, this debate has evolved to consider how social structures and human agency can be integrated to advance the theory being used (Danermark et al., 2019). For example, Archer (1995) argued that, by integrating both, it becomes possible to develop theories that better understand the complexity of social phenomena. This also involves a meta-theoretical or ontological discussion (Tasselli & Kilduff, 2021); yet, regardless of the assumptions being relied upon, researchers should consider both approaches (i.e., social structures and human agency) for a comprehensive understanding of the management of major sport events under investigation.

In sum, I sought to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of an important and unprecedented phenomenon that cannot be adequately captured by a single approach. In a formal manner, the purpose of this dissertation was to understand the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. This research is framed using sport event

management studies, project management studies, and general organization studies. It focuses on marathons as one prevalent type of major sport events.

Dissertation Outline and Expectations of Peer-Reviewed Outlets

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II presents a literature review that guides the specific RQs to be addressed. In Chapter III, I demonstrate how I addressed the RQs in a legitimate, consistent, and ethical manner by presenting the methodology, research context, data collection, and data analysis based on the selected philosophical position. Chapters IV- VI provide results that serve as evidence for a comprehensive understanding of managing major sport events under pandemic-driven uncertainty in a cumulative manner (cf. Allison & Zelikow, 1999). In Chapter VII, I discuss the results and conclude this dissertation.

What to Do for Each Research Question

This dissertation provides three different answers regarding the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events, and discusses the contributions, and implications of each answer. Before delving into the body of this dissertation, I introduce the RQs and provide a synopsis for each of them. The three RQs correspond to the three sections in the next chapter (i.e., uncertainty, an embeddedness perspective, and Archer's dualism approach: see Chapter II), where the details will be provided.

RQ1 is *How did the marathon secretariat members experience uncertainty over time due to the pandemic?* This is guided by the literature review regarding uncertainty. I found five types of experience, which advance the discussion on uncertainty and risks addressed in sport event management studies. The results from RQ1 serve as the foundation for developing the theoretical framework in RQ2.

RQ2 is *How can the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the marathon secretariat members' activities be explained using an embeddedness perspective?* Informed by the assumption that organizational activities are embedded in social structures (i.e., an embeddedness perspective), I attempted to understand the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events by examining what social structures were activated and how these social structures influenced the marathon secretariat members' activities. Using a retroduction reasoning (i.e., typical inference used in critical realism-based research) towards the experience that I found in addressing RQ1, I inferred the social structures and mechanisms that caused the impacts. The inference was conducted by retroduction commonly used in critical realism-based research. As a result, I presented five frameworks corresponding to each experience, which eventually led to the development of theoretical frameworks that can be transferred to explaining the impact of future (or other types of) uncertainty on major sport event management.

RQ3 is *How did pandemic-driven uncertainty change the way human agency influences social structures in managing marathons?* This question considers the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on human agency in managing major sport events, which could not be fully addressed by RQ1 and RQ2. After reviewing literature regarding human agency and the interplay between social structures and human agency, I selected Archer's (1995) dualism approach integrated with the embeddedness perspective in order to compare the differences in human agency before and during the pandemic. When making that comparison, I focused on the concept of emergence and the agents involved with it. As a result, I found that innovative practices emerged around creating and developing virtual marathons in the midst of the pandemic, aided by today's technological advancements. However, human agency was restricted due to a

decreased number of agents, who were motivated and capable individuals for generating new practices compared to pre-pandemic times. In addressing RQ3, it became apparent that Archer's dualism approach did not fully capture the overlapping practices between single-fiscal years and cross-fiscal years. To deal with this limitation, I modified a new diagram of this approach, specifically tailored for recurring events.

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review the key concepts, theoretical perspectives, and existing studies germane to this research. First, I discuss the conceptual assumption in this research, namely what it means to deem managing major sport events as inter-organizational projects. Next, I review the definition and classification of uncertainty in organizational studies and reflect on how uncertainty has been researched in project management and sport event management literatures, leading to the more descriptive RQ1 for this research. Then, I discuss the embeddedness perspective and the interplay between social structures and human agency as theoretical perspectives, guiding the more theoretical RQ2 and RQ3, respectively.

Managing Major Sport Events as Inter-Organizational Projects

In the introduction, I stated that by including major sport event management in the category of inter-organizational projects, this dissertation can be linked to project management studies that largely draw on knowledge from general organization studies. To clarify, these two different endeavours share two premises that are distinct from general organizational activities: time and inter-organizational relationships. These features must be considered when comparing the results derived from this dissertation with those of other organizational activities under uncertainty. Here, I discuss these two features after outlining the concepts of inter-organizational projects and major sport event management.

Concepts of Inter-Organizational Projects and Major Sport Event Management

A project refers to a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result, which has a predetermined beginning and end regardless of whether the project's purposes have been achieved or not (Project Management Institute, 2021). Although some projects (e.g., natural disaster rescue) may not have a single fixed date of disbanding, their intra-

and inter-organizational relationships imply their temporal nature (Bakker et al., 2016). Since the mid-1960s, numerous organizations in our society have increasingly embraced management by projects, as Midler (1995) called this process projectification in a special issue of the *Scandinavian Journal of Management* (Jacobsson & Jałocha, 2021; Winch, 2014). According to Lundin et al. (2015), projectification spread as a result of the rapid growth of service companies providing professional business support to manufacturing firms began to threaten the dominance of manufacturing. When more than one organization participates in the core part of a project, the activity is called an inter-organizational project (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008). Each inter-organizational project is different in its characteristics including size, duration, and ultimate goal, and organizations/individuals launch or get involved in the project for their own purpose or responsibility (Bakker et al., 2016; Janowicz-Panjaitan et al., 2009). Next, assuming the concepts applicable to inter-organizational projects also apply to managing major sport events, I delve into the concept of time and inter-organizational relationships, which are essential concepts to better understand managing major sport events as a specific type of project.

Time

As the definition suggests, time is one of the most distinctive elements when theorizing inter-organizational projects (Janowicz-Panjaitan et al., 2009; Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Time refers to a nonspatial dimension where events (incidents in this sense) happen in irreversible succession from the past to the future (Ancona et al., 2001). Taking this temporal dimension into account is important because viewing management without it can cause similar distortions as when looking at the earth as a flat map (Academy of Management, n.d.). However, it is not only clock time which should be considered. Ancona et al. (2001) described other types of time; for example, cyclical time refers to the continuum in which events happen repeatedly and regularly.

This can apply to recurring sport events like marathons because these are usually held annually regardless of the size (see Association of International Marathons and Distance Races or AIMS, n.d.). Another type, unpredictable event-based time, refers to the continuum in which events happen repeatedly but irregularly. This may apply to important internal decisions made and external shocks such as virus surges/waves, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic because people can use them “as a reference point for things that happen before and after” (Ancona et al., 2001, p. 514). Time can be also conceptualized as a lifecycle. Similar to human life, phenomena follow a predictable development to some extent (Ancona et al., 2001). This notion has been applied to the lives of broader projects (Adams, 1978; Pinto & Prescott, 1988) as well as major sport events where the implementation mode follows the planning mode and is, in turn, followed by the wrap-up mode (Parent, 2008).

The diverse types of time woven into major sport events complicate their management and pose a challenge in applying theories from mainstream organizational studies that presume an open-ended setting (Bakker et al., 2016; Burke & Morley, 2016; Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). Time is the most crucial aspect of projects (Kenis et al., 2009) and should not be treated as a mere boundary condition (George & Jones, 2000; Langley et al., 2013). However, the difficulty in understanding the phenomenon also arises from the involvement of various organizations. Next, I review the inter-organizational dimension while continuing to focus on the concept of time.

Inter-Organizational Relationships

As projectification became recognized by researchers, they have explored how projects are used by permanent organizations (Lundin et al., 2015). Bakker et al. (2016) and Lundin et al. (2015) described projects can take on the following three forms where permanent organizations

engage in their temporal activities: (1) project-supported organizations, (2) project-based organizations, and (3) project networks. I outline each project form in Table 2.1. First, project-supported organizations refer to the form where organizational activities are supported by temporary systems, such as R&D (research and development), marketing, and engineering design. Second, project-based organizations are the form where business is basically carried out in projects, as seen in a wide range of industries including IT (software and e-commerce), cultural works (e.g., filmmaking, fashion, and publishing), and some sport events initiated by a single entity (e.g., the Tokyo Marathon primarily managed by the Tokyo Marathon Foundation). Third, project networks refer to the form established and maintained by a series of projects embedded in organizational networks, and seen in a wide range of areas from large-scale construction projects to sport events jointly managed by governments, companies, universities, and sport and other organizations (Bakker et al., 2016; Lundin et al., 2015). As project networks tend to involve a larger number of permanent organizations in project decision-making, I argue they are the most representative form of the inter-organizational aspect of projects. These include the foci of this research: the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon which are jointly managed by multiple organizations.

In mainstream organizational studies, the network form of organizational relationships is, as a relatively new form configuration, situated between the hierarchical form of relationship and the market (arm's length) form of relationship (Powell, 1990). Table 2.2 shows the stylized comparison among these three forms in terms of the normative basis, partner preference, means of communication, degree of flexibility, amount of commitment among the practice, tone or climate, and methods of conflict resolution. In general, the network form is characterized by trust between interdependent partners, which is different from the market form (i.e., contract with

Table 2.1—Three Types of Project Form

Forms of projects	Project-Supported Organizations	Project-Based Organizations	Project Networks
Characteristics of organizational activity	Supported by temporary systems	Carried out primarily in projects	Established and maintained by a series of projects embedded in organizational networks
Number of organizations involved in decision-making	Low	Medium	High
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R&D (research & development) • Marketing • Engineering design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT business (e.g., software, e-commerce) • Cultural works (filmmaking, fashion, publishing) • Sport events initiated by a single entity (e.g., the Tokyo Marathon) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale constructions • Sport events jointly managed by governments, sport and other organizations (e.g., the Kyoto Marathon, the Osaka Marathon)

Note. Adapted from Bakker et al. (2016) and Lundin et al. (2015).

independent partners) and hierarchical form (i.e., employment relationship with dependent partners) in their organizational activities (Powell, 1990). One of the advantages of the network form is its learning benefits (Hamel, 1991; Uzzi 1997). The network form facilitates organizational learning by maintaining a wider range of search routines than the hierarchical form, and conveying richer information than the market form (Kaneko & Imai, 1987; Podolny & Page, 1988). As Powell (1990, p. 304) stated, the most useful information can be “obtained from someone you have dealt with in the past and found to be reliable.”

Based on Powell’s (1990) discussion, Provan and Kenis (2007) supported the position that the network form should be treated as a distinct form, not as an intermediate form between

Table 2.2—Three Types of Organizational Form

Key features	Organizational forms		
	Market (Arm's Length)	Network	Hierarchy
Normative basis	Contract	Trust	Employment relationships
Partner preferences	Independent	Interdependent	Dependent
Means of communication	Prices	Relational	Routines
Degree of flexibility	High	Medium	Low
Amount of commitment among the practices	Low	Medium to high	Medium to high
Tone or climate	Precision and/or suspicion	Mutual benefits	Bureaucratic
Methods of conflict resolution	Haggling—Resort to courts for enforcement	Norm of reciprocity—Reputational concerns	Administrative fiat—Supervision

Note. Adapted from Powell (1990).

market and hierarchy, and proposed the use of the network governance perspective that assumes the network itself as the unit of analysis. The authors further presented three modes to compare each other: (1) participant-governance networks, which are governed by the members themselves with no separate governance entity; (2) lead organization-governed networks, which take a highly centralized approach to network governance where a single entity coordinates all key network-level activities and decisions; and (3) the network administrative organization (NAO) model, which is another centralized form of network governance where a separate entity is established specifically to coordinate the network (Provan & Kenis, 2007).

Some sport event management researchers have increasingly paid attention to the event's organizational networks. Applying Provan and Kenis's (2007) network governance typology to the context of major sport events, Parent (2015) stated those events that create organization committees can fall into the NAO-model, and this was subsequently demonstrated in a study of

network governance for the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games (Parent et al., 2017). The authors noted that the difficulty of the organizing committee as an NAO in coordinating the network lies in the selection of multiple types of linkages that depend on stakeholder goals and strategic thinking (Parent et al., 2017). Though some empirical research on inter-organizational networks in major sport events exists (e.g., Parent et al., 2015; Naraine et al., 2016), what should be emphasized when comparing these studies and other inter-organizational project management studies is their multi-sectoral and multi-level nature. For instance, a member of an organizing committee, who is from a not-for-profit sport organization, may have to negotiate with for-profit corporate representatives based on market principles or provincial government officials may have to negotiate with central government officials based on hierarchical principles. Some democratic countries, such as Canada and Japan, implement local autonomy through a three-tier structure consisting of municipal, prefectural/provincial, and national/federal levels; in Japan, although there may not always be legally binding force, the central government retains the ability to influence decision-making through providing comprehensive coordination (advice, requests, recommendations), or instructions to prefectural governments (Nagata, 2022). This suggests the unique complexity of inter-organizational relationships that must accommodate both utilitarian (i.e., focusing on maximizing efficiency) and authoritarian (i.e., relying on centralized control) logics in managing major sport events even though they primarily rely on the network form proposed by Powell (1990).

Section Summary and Considerations for the Research Questions (RQs)

This section discussed the positioning of major sport event management within the project management literature and mainstream organizational research literature. The concepts I touch upon can facilitate connecting the results of this dissertation with previous research in a

meaningful way to accumulate knowledge and compare the results with others derived in different contexts. Through the literature review, what becomes clear is understanding the management of major sport events requires recognizing the complexity of multiple time axes and inter-organizational relationships. This resonates with Bakker et al.'s (2016) claims in the project management literature that the tensions and synergies arising at such temporal and spatial interfaces within the network are not yet fully understood.

More importantly, there is a lack of research focusing on the project team that drives the organizing committee's work under the condition of uncertainty, as demanded in the project management literature (Unterhitzenberger et al., 2021). To understand the impact of uncertainty on managing major sport events, researchers should consider how to capture it and develop appropriate RQs. In the next section, therefore, I review how uncertainty has been conceptualized in general organization studies and demonstrate how the current pandemic-driven uncertainty is different from other types of uncertainty. This information then helps me derive the specific RQs to achieve the purpose of this dissertation.

Uncertainty

If an organization remains an open system, its activities are affected by uncertainty inside and outside the organization. Thus, uncertainty has long been an area of interest for researchers (Thompson, 1967). However, the occurrence of the pandemic has renewed discussions on this issue within the general organizational studies, project management, and sport event management literatures. In this section, I review conceptualizations and categorizations of uncertainty in the relevant literatures to position this pandemic. By doing so, I highlight the gap between the uncertainty that has been the focus of managing major sport events as inter-

organizational projects and the distinct uncertainty presented by the current situation. This then leads me to identifying the potential contribution of this research and presenting the first RQ.

Conceptualizations and Categorizations of Uncertainty

Thompson (1967) acknowledged uncertainty is the fundamental problem for organizations and dealing with it is the essence of management. Managers not accurately grasping uncertainty can see their strategies either fail to address threats and miss opportunities due to underestimation, or conversely, lead to decision paralysis and an emphasis on non-strategic activities like cost reduction due to overestimation (Courtney et al., 1997). The concept of uncertainty has been used at least as far back as the 1870s in the American mechanical engineering magazine where technological uncertainty was perceived by engineers, but it has long been used to characterize the organizational environment since it was later applied to organization studies (Shenhav & Weitz, 2000). Uncertainty is important in the development of organizational theories as it helps explain inter-organization relationships and organizational change/inertia (e.g., transaction cost economics: Williamson, 1975, 1985; resource dependency theory: Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; neo-institutional theory: Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; organization ecology theory: Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984). These seminal theories assume that organizations need to adapt to their uncertain environment to survive and/or that organizations can improve their performance by taking advantage of an uncertain environment.

Although I presented the definition of uncertainty in the introduction (Chapter I) as a situation in which information on potential outcomes and/or their probabilities of occurrence is unavailable to decision makers (Park & Shapira, 2017), the concept of uncertainty must be viewed from multiple facets to avoid piling up contradictory research results (Sutcliffe & Zaheer,

1998). In traditional organizational literature, for example, Duncan (1972) described an organization's environment in a 2×2 matrix of simple-complex and static-dynamic, stating that perceived uncertainty is highest when the environment is complex (i.e., with a large number of factors and components) and dynamic (i.e., with factors and components in a continual process of change). This framework has been featured in numerous management textbooks, including those for sport organizations (e.g., Slack & Parent, 2006).

However, another framework proposed by Rumsfeld (2002) is worth noting, as it was employed by organization scientists, Phillip H. Phan and Geoffrey Wood, to conceptually analyze the impact of uncertainty on organizational activities during the pandemic (Phan & Wood, 2020). According to the authors, in decision-making under uncertainty, four categories of uncertainty can be identified: Known-Knowns (i.e., Certainty), Unknown-Knowns (i.e., Risk), Known-Unknowns (i.e., Knightian Uncertainty), and Unknown-Unknowns (i.e., Pure Uncertainty) as presented in Table 2.3. This framework stems from an "infamous" press briefing on February 12, 2002, in which Donald Rumsfeld, former U.S. Defense Secretary, attempted to justify the attack on Iraq by implying the danger of Saddam Hussein's regime was Unknown-Unknowns (Phan & Wood, 2020, p. 425). First, Known-Knowns refer to a situation where information is already recognized and can be easily accessed and used for decision-making, which is actually not deemed as uncertainty. Second, Known-Unknowns refer to a situation where information is recognized as missing or incomplete, but can be identified and researched to improve decision-making, which is often deemed as Risk. Third, Unknown-Knowns refer to a situation where information is available, but not yet recognized by decision makers, which is generally regarded as Knightian Uncertainty. Fourth, Unknown-Unknowns are situations where information is not recognized, and therefore cannot be researched or used in decision-making,

Table 2.3—Four Categories of Uncertainty

Categories of Uncertainty	Definitions
1. Known-Knowns (Certainty)	A situation where information is already recognized and can be easily accessed and used for decision-making.
2. Known-Unknowns (Risk)	A situation where information is recognized as missing or incomplete, but can be identified and researched to improve decision-making.
3. Unknown-Knowns (Knightian Uncertainty)	A situation where information is available, but not yet recognized by decision makers.
4. Unknown-Unknowns (Pure Uncertainty)	A situation where information is not recognized, and therefore cannot be researched or used in decision-making.

Note. Adapted from Phan and Wood (2020) and Žižek (2004).

which denotes pure uncertainty (Phan & Wood, 2020).

Among the four categories, the third, Unknown-Knowns (i.e., Knightian Uncertainty), may seem difficult to understand at first glance. Although Phan and Wood (2020) did not explicitly state it, this is the category that was later added by a Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2004). He referred to the abuse of prisoners by the U.S. military in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and suggested that if Rumsfeld considered the danger of Iraq as Unknown-Knowns, which is a threat that he could not even imagine, then the Abu Ghraib scandal represented Unknown-Knowns, which are the beliefs and assumptions that ordinary Americans deny and pretend not to know, even though they underlie their public values.

In project management studies, Machiels et al. (2023) stated Unknown-Knowns (i.e., Knightian Uncertainty) are sometimes interchangeable with Known-Unknowns (i.e., Risk) in project management research and practice, but these two concepts are theoretically different. According to Knight (1921), from whom the alternate name for Knightian Uncertainty originated, Risk can be statistically quantified based on empirical data from past events (Daniel

& Daniel, 2018; Sanderson, 2012). In contrast, Knightian Uncertainty is “what Knight (1921) calls estimates, a range of possible future outcomes that can be identified but their probabilities cannot be quantified” (Machiels et al., 2023, p. 2).

In sport event management studies, many researchers have examined risk management (e.g., Boo & Gu, 2010; Brynildsen & Parent, 2021; Chang & Singh, 1990; Hanstad, 2012; Toohey & Taylor, 2008). For instance, Leopkey and Parent (2009a), focusing on two major sport events in Canada through the lens of organizers and stakeholders, identified 15 types of risk. These 15 types of risks can be categorized into nine tangible types of risks, that is, environment, financial, human resources, infrastructure, legacy, operations, organizing, sport, and threats, and six intangible types of risk, namely interdependence, media, participation, political, relationships, , and visibility (Leopkey & Parent, 2009a; Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). The risk categories these researchers provided are presented in Table 2.4.

Through their research, Leopkey and Parent (2009a, p. 199) redefined the concept of risk management as “a proactive process that involves assessing all possible risks to the events and its stakeholders by strategically anticipating, preventing, minimizing, and planning responses to eliminate or mitigate those identified risks”. Subsequently, Leopkey and Parent (2009b) identified seven risk management strategy categories commonly used by stakeholders to address risks: reduction, avoidance, reallocation, diffusion, prevention, legal, and relationship management. The risk management strategies they provided are presented in Table 2.5.

Next, I review the sources of uncertainty, which are also concepts that can give rise to new risks as Fanousse et al. (2021) emphasized. To recognize the novelty of the pandemic-driven uncertainty, on which this research focuses, it is necessary to identify and categorize the sources of uncertainty, and compare them by category.

Table 2.4—Risks in Managing Major Sport Events

Risk Type	Risk Category	Examples
Tangible	Environment	Pollution, destruction of the natural environment
	Financial	Return on Investment, lack of sponsorship and government support
	Human resource	Training, sufficient number of paid staff versus volunteers
	Infrastructure	Existing versus new infrastructure
	Legacy	Public availability of new infrastructure post-Games
	Operations	Venue management, logistics, safety, and security
	Organizing	Bureaucracy, legal, organizational change, leadership
	Sport	Officiating issues, number of athletes/teams registered vs. showing up
	Threats	Epidemics, terrorism, weather
	Intangible	Interdependence
Media		Positive vs. negative coverage
Participation		Public access, ticket availability
Political		Changes in government, national unrest
Relationships		Meeting/balancing stakeholder needs
Visibility		Reputation, support for the event, brand

Note. Adapted from Leopkey and Parent (2009a) and Parent and Ruetsch (2021).

Distinctiveness of Present Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty

A review of previous organizational research on uncertainty implies that by differentiating the sources of it, researchers can emphasize the distinctiveness of the particular uncertainty being investigated. Organization researchers have discussed the multiple sources of

Table 2.5—Risk Strategies in Managing Major Sport Events

Risk management strategies	Examples
Reduction	Planning (e.g. defining organizational goals), staffing (proper recruitment and training), using previous experience, test events
Avoidance	Research and evaluation, risk assessment
Reallocation	Transferring the risk or the responsibility for the risk to others
Diffusion	Creating back-ups, spreading out the risks to others
Prevention	Rules and regulations, bans, replacements
Legal	Laws, consent forms, contracts/agreements
Relationship management	Stakeholder engagement, cooperation, partnerships, negotiation

Note. Adapted from Leopkey and Parent (2009b) and Parent and Ruetsch (2021).

uncertainty, such as market instability (e.g., Podolny, 1994) to technological innovation (e.g., Gilbert, 2005), organization-specific events (e.g., Beckman et al., 2004), human-made disasters (e.g., Mitroff et al., 1987), terrorist attack (e.g., Hall, 2016), natural disasters (e.g., Moynihan, 2008), and pandemic/epidemic (e.g., Rao & Greve, 2017). In traditional literature, researchers categorized the sources of uncertainty faced by complex organizations into internal and external (e.g., Duncan, 1972; Thompson, 1967). However, as the type of uncertainty perceived in organizational activities has increased, the categories to describe such uncertainty have also expanded. In Table 2.6, I list sources of uncertainty, including the COVID-19 pandemic as a new source of uncertainty, and specify their characteristics related to scale, duration, and whether the uncertainty is life-threatening or not.

What stands out based on the comparison among the sources of uncertainty is the specificity of the present COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred outside of the organization, is

Table 2.6—Selected Sources of Uncertainty

Source of Uncertainty	External or internal	Scale (if external)	Duration	Life-threatening
Market Instability	External	Inter-sectoral	Unknown	Not necessarily
Technological Innovation	External	Inter-sectoral	Unknown	Not necessarily
Organization-Specific Events (e.g., turnover in top-management, scandal)	Internal	N/A	Short	Not necessarily
Human-Made Disasters	Both	Local-international	Short-Long	Yes
Terrorist Attack	External	Local	Short	Yes
Natural Disasters (e.g., storm, flood, and earthquake)	External	Regional	Short-long	Yes
Previous Epidemics/Pandemics (e.g., SARS, Ebola, Zika)	External	Regional-international	Unknown	Yes
COVID-19 Pandemic	External	Global	Unknown	Yes

global in nature, is of unknown duration, and is life-threatening (Klöckner et al., 2021). Of course, COVID-19 is not the first infectious disease that threatened major sport events given previous epidemics/pandemics stem from, for example, SARS (ahead of the 2002 FIFA men’s World Cup in Japan and South Korea), the Ebola virus (ahead of the 2015 Africa Cup of Nations Football tournament) and the Zika virus (ahead of the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil) and there are also some studies on major sport events during such epidemic/pandemic (McCloskey et al., 2020; Mean & Ammon, 2004; Parnell et al., 2022; Shipway, 2018; Walters et al., 2017). However, due to its scale as well as our society being more connected than ever, existing knowledge on pandemics may not fully capture the organizational phenomena around major sport event management under the condition of this unprecedented uncertainty (cf. Mithani,

2020; Phan, 2021). In other words, it is expected that the current pandemic will be an opportunity to enhance research in this area (cf. Phan, 2021).

In turn, applying this COVID-19 pandemic-driven uncertainty to the Rumsfeld (2002) framework, Phan and Wood (2020) argued it is not a so-called black swan or the Unknown-Unknowns described by Taleb (2007).

Indeed, in hindsight, they could have been foreseen. Such events are simply a surprise *from the perspective of the decision maker*—because the decision maker was unschooled, inexperienced, insensitive, or simply unconcerned. This is akin to Rumsfeld’s known-unknowns and unknown-knowns. (Phan & Wood, 2020, p. 425, emphasis in original)

Phan and Wood (2020) were rather surprised by how governments of developed countries that claim to have scientific, political, and technological expertise were unable to handle the spread of the virus and the disruption stemming from it. This is also evident in the case of the Japanese government’s slow and insufficient response, including border closures and lockdowns, after the outbreak of COVID-19, which contributed to the spread of the virus nationwide (Kodama et al., 2022).

This leads to two implications. First, in a situation where powerful regulations cannot keep up with some decision-making timelines that are crucial for event planning, project team members of major sport events may have struggled with the managing-in-a-fishbowl scenario, where in the public eye, they had to weigh the satisfaction and safety of stakeholders in making decisions to cancel, postpone or prepare to hold their events (Bond et al., 2022). Second, uncertainty caused by the pandemic may have been interrelated with other types of uncertainty to bring not only public health risks but also economic and social risks (Machiels et al., 2023). These can also be considered unique features of pandemic-driven uncertainty.

Section Summary and the First Research Question

Through the above literature review on uncertainty, it is clear that uncertainty comes in multiple types and sources, and by considering these categories, the conceptual distinctiveness of pandemic-driven uncertainty can be revealed. This means that the findings of this dissertation focusing on the new pandemic-driven uncertainty can demonstrate the empirical value (i.e., contribution to the literature).

Furthermore, a research gap is also seen in the sport event management literature. Similar to what Machiels et al. (2023) pointed out for project management researchers and practitioners, risk and uncertainty are being used interchangeably. To be precise, although a lot of researchers have addressed risk management, they did not clearly distinguish between risk and uncertainty. In other words, they potentially fail to differentiate Risk, also known as Unknown-Knowns, from Knightian Uncertainty, also known as Known-Unknowns. In addition, the concept of Unknown-Unknowns (i.e., Pure Uncertainty) in major sport event management, which some researchers have mentioned, contradicts Phan and Wood's (2020) statement that such occurrences are rare, even in the case of a pandemic. The confusion about these concepts, and that uncertainty and risk are not conceptually identical, coupled with that desirable response to each type of uncertainty may differ, can pose problems for appropriate management (Ward & Chapman, 2003).

Regarding the perception towards the occurrence of the pandemic, as Phan and Wood (2020) acknowledged, hindsight suggests the pandemic and the subsequent economic shock (i.e., the halt in production and consumption cycles) was predictable to some experts considering the history of pandemics. What these authors refer to as the unpredictability came from witnessing "how poorly governments and companies in the developed world, who claim scientific, political, and technical expertise, dealt with it" (Phan & Wood, 2020, p. 427). Having said that, the authors

also acknowledge decision makers are often unprepared to respond to the pandemic for some reasons such as cognitive myopia and political exigency (Phan & Wood, 2020). This seems accurate when looking back at the sport event industry just after the occurrence of the pandemic. The extent of the impact of the pandemic was unpredictable to sport event managers because the worldwide shutdowns of countries were unprecedented. Thus, event planning and preparations were almost impossible. However, now that we have had a worldwide shutdown due to a pandemic, we can look back at event members' experiences to understand their perceptions and what they did during COVID-19 so we can be prepared for a future similar scenario. Therefore, I propose the following as the first RQ:

RQ1. How did the marathon secretariat members experience uncertainty over time due to the pandemic?

Toward Theoretical Perspectives

Major sport events where mass gatherings were expected had to be suspended for a while after the WHO declared the pandemic (Bond et al., 2022; Memish et al., 2020). In the context of Japanese marathons, the organizing committees, especially their secretariats, suffered from the mass-gathering nature of events (e.g., starting point where runners gather and spectators along the roadside) as well as the disruptions to the social structures beyond sport due to the postponement of Tokyo 2020 (Kin, 2020). This situation falls within Engwall's (2003) warning that "no project is an island" (p. 789); researchers should be aware of projects' embeddedness when they elucidate these phenomena. In the next section, I therefore review the embeddedness perspective that guides the second RQ about how and why managing major sport events under uncertainty are affected by what surrounds the event's activities.

Embeddedness Perspective

The embeddedness perspective, developed in economic sociology, helps researchers understand how social structures affect organizational activities (DiMaggio, 1990, 1994; Granovetter, 1985, 1990, 2005a, 2005b; Granovetter & Swedberg, 2011/2018; Ratajczak-Mrozek, 2017; Swedberg, 1997). In this section, I first introduce how the perspective's core concept called embeddedness was born and has evolved in economic sociology and organization literatures. I then review various types of social structures examined in the general organization, project management, and sport event management studies. For each type, I also critically discuss its relevance and applicability in examining major sport event management under uncertainty. This series of discussions guides RQ2.

A Brief History of Embeddedness

The concept of embeddedness originally referred to the extent to which economic activity is affected by social structures and emerged in discussions about the relationship between the economy and society (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2011/2018). Although the relationship between economy and society has been analyzed by sociologists for over a century (e.g., Durkheim, 1893/2014; Simmel, 1900/2004; Weber, 1927/2017), Karl Polanyi (1944) was the first scholar who stated the economy is embedded in society (Granovetter, 1990). In his seminal book: *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi (1944) discussed economic activities (e.g., allocation and transaction of scarce resources) before and after the industrial revolution in England, asserting that economic activities before the Industrial Revolution were constrained by non-economic institutions (e.g., religion and norms) while economic activities after the Industrial Revolution are affected by market principles (e.g., the market price determined by supply and demand). Polanyi (1944) called this shift the great transformation and pointed out that economic activities

had been disembedded from social structures as the modern market economy developed.

Attempts to understand the economy continued with neo-institutional economists' theories (e.g., human capital theory: Becker, 1964; agency theory: Jensen & Meckling, 1976; transaction cost theory: Williamson, 1975), incorporating non-economic human behaviours (e.g., malfeasance and moral hazards), which had been neglected neo-classical economics, into economic models.

In 1985, however, Mark Granovetter revisited Polanyi's (1944) work in his seminal article: *Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness*, and the concept of embeddedness gained attraction again. Granovetter (1985) modified Polanyi's idea, stating that embeddedness can be applied to today's economic activities, and asserted researchers should consider structures of social relations (or networks) to understand these activities. When Granovetter wrote the article, there were two dominant accounts of economic activities: (1) an under-socialized account where economic activities are understood as the result of the pursuit of self-interest by rational individuals, and (2) an over-socialized account where economic activities are understood as the result of customs or norms mechanically and automatically followed by individuals. Granovetter (1985) argued both opposite accounts are paradoxically similar in the sense that they neglect the social relationships in which the individuals are embedded. Embeddedness is an alternative idea (and a critique of neo-institutional sociologists) aiming at a more accurate understanding of economic activities (Powell, 1990). Granovetter's work eventually became the start of a new economic sociology (Granovetter, 1990).

Since then, the concept of embeddedness has spread to a range of social science fields, and the subject of study has expanded from individual economic activities to various organizational activities (see Granovetter & Swedberg, 2011/2018; Smelser & Swedberg, 2005). Following recent studies (e.g., Braun, 2018; Zuckerman, 2014), I focus on organizational

activities for managing major sport events as embedded subjects, which include the exchange, transaction, and provision of any goods, services, or information directly related to a given organization's business.

Types of Social Structures

While Granovetter (1985) and his followers (e.g., Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999; Uzzi, 1996) presented networks as social structures to explain various organizational phenomena, others (e.g., DiMaggio, 1990; Zukin & DiMaggio, 1990) proposed different types of social structures under the umbrella of the embeddedness perspective. In Table 2.7, I present the types of social structures that have been considered in the perspective and their respective definitions. Here, I provide an overview, underlying theories, and relevant empirical studies for each type of social structure.

Social Networks

Although Blau (1974) stated that social structures are used with a variety of meanings, the influence of social networks on individual and collective phenomena has been widely recognized in general organization studies (Kilduff & Brass, 2010), including project management studies (Sydow & Braun, 2018) and sport event management studies (Bakhsh et al., 2022). The influence of social networks on organizational activities has been categorized into three forms: relational embeddedness, structural embeddedness, and positional embeddedness (Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999; Polidoro et al., 2011). Corresponding social structures for each form can be dyadic relations, triadic relations, and network positions. According to Gulati and Gargiulo (1999), dyadic relations are represented as the cohesive ties created by the history of interactions between two organizations, which are likely to nurture reciprocity and trust, leading to further cooperation. Triadic relations are represented as the existence of a common partner,

Table 2.7—Types of Social Structures Considered in an Embeddedness Perspective

Social Structures	Definitions based on an Embeddedness Perspective	Selected Literature
Social Networks	The patterns of relationships and interactions among individuals or organizations.	Granovetter (1985, 1992), Grewal et al. (2006), Gulati (1995), Gulati and Gargiulo (1999), Podolny (1994), Polidoro et al. (2011), Uzzi (1996, 1997, 1999)
Dyadic relations	Cohesive ties created by the history of interactions between two organizations.	
Triadic relations	Ties represented as the existence of a common partner, which can create trust and leads to cooperation between two organizations.	
Network position	The structural importance of an organization's position in the network, providing greater access to resources and better potential partners.	
Temporality	The inherent property of time, with regard to its subject experience, specifically regarding the continuation from the past to the future.	Granovetter (2017), Halinen and Törnroos (1998)
Institutions	A relatively permanent system of social rules that govern how individual and organizational activities are and should be undertaken.	Baum and Oliver (1992), Granovetter, (2017), Hodgson (2006) Mahoney and Thelen (2009)
Politics	The structure and process of exercising power to constrain, promote, or sometimes define the organization's goals, direction, and key parameters in its activities. Politics can be characterized by policies and individual aspects that can influence a given organization's activities.	Halinen and Törnroos (1998), Le Breton-Miller et al. (2011)
Territory	A geographical space that shapes individual and organizational behaviours within a social network.	Burt et al. (2016), Frasquet et al. (2018), Halinen and Törnroos (1998), Hess (2004), Lebeau and Bennion (2014)

Note. Definitions are my own based on relevant literature.

is likely to cooperate with one another (Granovetter, 1992). This is because common ties shared by the two organizations are regarded as a signal that the partner is trustworthy (Gulati, 1995).

Deterrence due to the belief that opportunistic behaviour by either organization may also be reported is another mechanism that creates trust (Burt & Knez 1995; Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999).

A network position is also a structurally important element of the set of connections as a social

structure (Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999). Organizations that are more centrally positioned have greater access and control over resources including information within their networks than organizations with lower levels of centrality (Polidoro et al., 2011). In addition, highly central positions can provide organizations with trust and recognition, which makes it easier to find better partners (Polidoro et al., 2011).

Many project management researchers have adopted the embeddedness perspective, focusing on social networks. Aaltonen et al. (2010), for example, used this approach to analyze the relationship between local stakeholder relationships and unexpected events (e.g., delays due to different permission processes) during international projects. The authors expanded the traditional view by examining project stakeholders through dyadic relationships, discussing triadic relations in project networks and the impact of indirect stakeholder influence (Aaltonen et al., 2010). In major sport event management studies, the term embeddedness has not been explicitly used, but the importance of nurturing stakeholders' social networks has been acknowledged among researchers as a success factor for event bidding (e.g., Emery, 2015) and as a purpose of event leveraging (e.g., Gao et al., 2020; Misener et al., 2020). The social network approach has also been used to understand how the stakeholders coordinated during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games (Parent et al., 2017), exploring the potential sustainability of the Youth Olympic Games by analyzing how stakeholders exert various forms of pressure on the event management (Parent et al., 2015), and examining the stakeholder network governance structures of two international and two domestic sport events held in Canada (Naraine et al., 2016). Despite its theoretical and practical importance, research on this social network approach remains insufficient, and recent researchers have recommended its further application as a theoretical framework to replace stakeholder theory (cf. Freeman,

1984)—which treats inter-organizational relationships in events as a hub-and-spoke model centred around the organizing committee—for a better understanding of various phenomena related to major sport event management (Bakhsh et al., 2022; Yamakita et al., 2024). Simply put, the influence of social networks on the activities of the marathon secretariat members during the pandemic can be investigated by focusing on the network structures and the way they are connected with each other.

Temporality

Researchers have recognized temporality should be taken into account to better understand organizational activities (Dacin et al., 1999; Granovetter, 2017; Halinen & Törnroos, 1998). According to Ligthart et al. (2016), for example, temporality can explain organizational interactions in two ways; first, an organization may decide how to collaborate with another organization based on their past positive or negative experiences (i.e., the shadow of the past); and second, an organization may decide how to collaborate with another organization based on their expectation of working together again in the future (i.e., the shadow of the future). As noted earlier, project management researchers, who emphasize the importance of time, have long recognized that past experience and future expectations can make a difference in organizational processes and outcomes (DeFillippi & Sydow, 2016; Engwall, 2003).

While temporality has been used to complement the social network approach to explain organizational phenomena, project and sport event management researchers have also used this concept in ways specific to the nature of their research subjects. In other words, researchers recognize that organizational activities undertaken for project and sport event management are embedded in their temporal system, prominently characterized by their time constraints (Bakker, 2010; Goodman & Goodman, 1972; Janowicz-Panjaitan et al., 2009). For example, Jones and

Lichtenstein (2008) discussed four types of inter-organizational projects under uncertainty from the embeddedness perspective, with a focus on social networks and temporality. Yet, the word temporality they used referred to the extent to which the projects were embedded in the temporal nature of the project, rather than the experience or expectations of the connections with stakeholders. Sport event management researchers have also followed this approach. Focused on the 1999 Pan American Games, Parent (2008) found that the organizing committee and its stakeholders faced issues specific in each of three modes: planning, implementation, and wrap-up, which comprises the sport event lifecycle. Parent (2010) later examined decision-making processes by the organizing committee based on this sport event lifecycle. The author used a temporal concept called environment velocity¹ (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988) that influences decision-making to understand this organizational phenomenon. As a result, Parent (2010) argued that decision-making processes may change when the organizing committee transitions from one mode to the next and presented key strategies used for each mode. Thus, it is important to bear in mind that there are temporal concepts specific to social networks and the nature of the project, which do not necessarily exclude each other when understanding major sport event management.

Institutions

Institutions refer to a relatively permanent system of social rules that govern how individual and organizational activities are and should be undertaken (Granovetter, 2017; Hodgson, 2006; Mahoney & Thelen, 2009). Examples of institutions include governments, religion (e.g., “The Church”), banks, universities, and marriage (The Merriam-Webster.com

¹ According to Parent (2010), “a high velocity environment is one that is dynamic and includes changes in the environment (in stakeholders, regulations, and technology, for example) making information inaccurate, obsolete, and/or unavailable” (p. 293).

Dictionary, n.d.). Institutions are underpinned by (neo-)institutional theory, which advocates that organizations can enhance their performance and survivability by conforming to the norms and social roles and expectations of the community where they operate (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott & Meyer, 1983; Oliver, 1991). By aligning themselves with reputable institutions, these organizations can gain access to various resources, including high legitimacy, and improve predictability for the future (Aldrich & Auster, 1986; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978;). This underscores the importance of considering the influence of local communities and governments in the course of organizational practice (Wiewel & Hunter, 1985).

Neo-institutional theory has provided a useful framework for understanding the social environment in which sport event management takes place, and how it shapes the activities of event bid committees, organizing committees and their stakeholders (e.g., Agyemang et al., 2018; Ellis et al., 2016; Gao et al., 2020; Parent et al., 2015; Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Strittmatter, 2016, 2017). Notably, Leopkey and Parent (2012) investigated the emergence and evolution of legacy and its governance within the Olympic Movement by applying neo-institutional theory as a theoretical framework; in doing so, they showed how institutionalized norms and roles shaped the behaviour of key stakeholders of the Olympic Games. For the present dissertation, I investigated the influence of institutions on the marathon secretariat members and stakeholders during the pandemic by focusing on their social roles, and any other socially expected norms that shaped their activities.

Politics

Politics refers to the structure and process of exercising power to constrain, promote, or sometimes define the organization's goals, direction, and key parameters in its activities (Wamsley & Zald, 1973). It can be divided into policy and individual aspects. Policies refer to

“governance principles that guide courses of action and behavior in organizations and societies” (Aguinis et al., 2022, p. 858), which include laws, regulations, and guidelines issued by powerful organizations such as governments. The individual aspect typically refers to the existence or behaviours of political elites, who have an influence on organizational decision-making. Political elites (e.g., politicians and industrialists) may hold important positions in various network levels, and they can influence the distribution of resources (Halinen & Törnroos, 1998). However, it is not only political elites who engage in politics. Given the definition of power as “the ability to influence the behaviour or ideas of one or more people” (Byers et al., 2012, p. 121), the general public can have power, as Foucault (1975/1995) suggested that power is spread throughout contemporary society and connected to practical knowledge. Sport (event) management researchers, Slack and Parent (2006) discussed sources of individual power, including: (1) legitimate power, also known as authority, which is derived by virtue of one’s position within their organization and perceived by their subordinates; (2) coercive power, which is derived by possessing the ability to punish others; (3) expert power, which is derived from one’s valuable knowledge, experiences, or skills. The power exercise can be observed in the context of inter-organizational relationships as well. For example, resource dependency theory, which defines power in the way that “the power of A over B comes from control of resources that B values and that are not available elsewhere” (Davis & Cobb, 2010, p. 6), indicates that even small organizations can gain a strategic or competitive advantage over larger ones by making the larger organization’s activities dependent on their own material, financial, information, or legitimacy resources.

As above, politics is a prevalent and complicated social structure in which organizational activities are embedded. One can say this makes it difficult to elucidate managing major sport

events because it is strongly connected to politics, especially local politics (see Andranovich et al., 2001; Burbank et al., 2001). For this dissertation, therefore, focusing on what or who exercised power and how it was exerted in the context of the marathon during the pandemic enables to facilitate the understanding of the activities of marathon secretariat members under uncertainty.

Territory

Territory can be defined as a geographical space that shapes individual and organizational behaviours within a social network (Frankowska, 2020). Knowledge about territorial embeddedness has been advanced by researchers who introduced the concept of embeddedness in the fields of economic geography and social geography (e.g., Burt et al., 2016; Hass, 2004). Being embedded in a particular territory can have positive effects on organizational economic activities, such as building personal relationships that create a sense of belonging and facilitate access to local resources and knowledge, and understanding shared norms and values (Frasquet et al., 2018; Molina-Morales et al., 2012). However, once a lead organization cuts its ties within a territory (e.g., disinvestment), a process of disembedding can occur, potentially undermining the previous base for the organization's growth and value creation (Hess, 2004). Thus, the concept of territory has contributed to a more detailed explanation of organizational activities through its integration into social networks, temporality, and institutions (Halinen & Törnroos, 1998; Lebeau & Bennion, 2014). Rousseau and Fried (2001) encourage organization researchers to consider not only geographic factors (e.g., infrastructure, climate, and natural resources), but also temporal (e.g., historical events and change), and cultural (e.g., communication styles and attitudes towards work) factors in a location being investigated.

Although explicit terminology is not specified, territorial embeddedness is an important concept for both theory and practice in sport event management studies. This is because sport event management is dependent on the actual venue to stage the event, and it relies on a wide range of resources in the local community (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). Major sport event managers, particularly of publicly funded events, need to propose a better fit between the event's concept and the host location to justify their plan (Hautbois et al., 2012). For stakeholders, physical and psychological proximity to the event location can be a reason for differences in support for the event (Chalip, 2018; Derom et al., 2015; Séguin & Bodet, 2015). For this dissertation, examining the factors originating from the embeddedness of individuals and organizations in a given territory can facilitate the understanding of the activities of marathon secretariat members under uncertainty.

Section Summary and the Second Research Question

Under the umbrella of the embeddedness perspective, reviewing the key social structures is critical to understand organizational activities. Through the literature review, I identified theoretical arguments that explain the mechanisms of their influence in general organization studies and relevant research where inter-organizational projects have been investigated. Although the term embeddedness per se has not been explicitly used among sport event management researchers, this review demonstrates that the seminal works in organizational studies can be applied to studying major sport event management as inter-organizational projects. In the present dissertation, the embeddedness perspective is employed to better elucidate the activities of secretariat members under the condition of pandemic-driven uncertainty by taking into account the influence of social structures.

The review in this section highlights the necessity to treat the embeddedness perspective multidimensionally (Frankowska, 2020; Halinen & Törnroos, 1998). Given that there are multiple types of social structures, each with its own standing theories, integrating them allows me to better explain complex organizational phenomena (cf. Cunningham, 2002; Slack & Hinings, 1992). As a concrete approach, since the focus of this dissertation (i.e., managing major sport events) emphasizes inter-organizational relationships as a key characteristic, I argue that, by centring on the type of social networks and supplementing it with other types of social structures, this dissertation can effectively enhance the explanatory power of the embeddedness perspective. Furthermore, this review highlights the deficiency of the embeddedness perspective in organizational research under uncertainty (few exceptions being Aaltonen et al., 2010; Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008; Podolny, 1994; Romo & Schwartz, 1995). Given the uniqueness of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasingly networked and complex state of our society (Phan, 2021), this deficiency would present an opportunity to contribute to all literature related to organizational activities, including sport event management. Therefore, following RQ1, to integrate various social structures in a meaningful way and achieve the purpose of this dissertation focusing on the marathon secretariat members' activities during the pandemic, I propose the second RQ as follows:

RQ2. How can the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the marathon secretariat members' activities be explained using an embeddedness perspective?

Beyond Social Structures

This section derives the RQ for considering social structures. However, it is not sufficient to achieve the purpose of this dissertation. The main problem is that the embeddedness perspective does not assume the human agency of the project members including the secretariat

members. While acknowledging the need to consider the influence of social structures on managing major sport event under pandemic-driven, this perspective falls short of understanding *by whom and how those social structures have been created*. As people are currently in an extension of the past (Ancona et al., 2001), examining what happened in the past is necessary to understand the present social structures. I also argue that a different theoretical framework is needed to do so. Moreover, addressing this problem presents an opportunity to contribute to practitioners. It can generate forward-looking discussions by explaining phenomena caused by pandemic-driven uncertainty, where the social interaction among individuals transformed the social structures during the pandemic. In the next section, I touch on the long-standing structure/agency debate and review relevant research in general organization and project management literatures to discuss this issue and guide the final RQ.

Interplay between Social Structures and Human Agency

As mentioned in the introduction (Chapter I), human agency refers to individuals' motivation and ability to exert influence on their interactions with social structures (Ahuja et al., 2012). Such individuals are referred to as agents², who can express their human agency by either reproducing or transforming the social structures they are embedded in, regardless of whether these structures are advantageous to them (Danermark et al., 2019). The critique about the lack of the human agency concept in the embeddedness discussion is not novel, but it persists. For example, Hass (2007) emphasized its importance in the conclusion of his book *Economic Sociology: An introduction* as follows:

² Although some scholars use the term *actor(s)* to refer to those individuals (e.g., Granovetter, 2017), I use the term *agents* in a plural form to refer to them as a collective or a group, rather than an individual (Archer, 2000, 2017; Parker, 2000). This is to distinguish agents from actor(s), which, more broadly, refers to everyone who acts with intention and purpose, and to emphasize that the influence on social structures are made by collective individuals rather than by an isolated individual (Archer, 2000, 2017; Danermark et al., 2019).

Sociologists stress embeddedness in social structures and forces, and it sometimes seems that people have no agency – no capacity to act. This is the pathos of sociology: good at telling us how powerless we are (unless we are elites), bad at telling us what we can or even should do. To make the subject more attractive, economic sociologists must develop concepts of agency and structure to show us where the limits of action are – but also to show us how we can create opportunity or at least maneuver and survive within the limits of individual agency. (Hass, 2007, p. 210)

Thirteen years later, however, Hass (2020) made a similar argument again in the second edition of his book. Granovetter, who is a founder of new economic sociology, also mentioned the structure/agency debate (e.g., Granovetter, 2002). Touching upon the interplay between the two concepts, he encouraged researchers to develop more nuanced theories to explain the process and outcomes, which ultimately lead to more effective policy interventions (Granovetter, 2017).

In this section, I first introduce how the structure/agency debate has been treated in the social sciences, which has resulted in the development of duality and dualism approaches aimed at addressing the underlying dilemma. I then compare these two approaches, drawing on the views of influential proponents for each, including some project management researchers (while no one has, at least explicitly, engaged in this debate in the sport event management studies). Lastly, I explain the rationale behind my decision to adopt the dualism approach for the current research which guides the third RQ.

Traditional and Alternative Approaches in a Structure/Agency Debate

The contradiction between social structures and human agency has presented a longstanding conflict in the social sciences, especially for those who are interested in the development of society (Danermark et al., 2019). Traditionally, such scholars have attempted to

explain social phenomena by taking one of two positions (Giddens, 1984; Parker, 2000): either society dominates people (e.g., Durkheim, 1897/1997) or people construct society (e.g., Weber, 1904-1905/2012). The former, what I call the social structure approach, is known as structuralism, objectivism, mechanistic determinism, or fact paradigm, whereas the latter, what I call the human agency approach, is known as humanism, subjectivism, voluntaristic idealism, or action paradigm depending on the literature (Danermark et al., 2019, Giddens, 1984, Parker, 2000). I present a comparison those two traditional approaches in Table 2.8. Borrowing from the philosophy of science, one can see that the difference between these two approaches is essentially based on the ontological assumptions they rely on. These assumptions give rise to differences in beliefs about which of social structures or human agency should be reduced to the other (Danermark et al., 2019; Parker 2000). These assumptions also lead to distinct methodological principles for each approach. The social structure approach can be implemented through methodological holism, which suggests an explanation should start from social phenomena and move to individuals, whereas the human agency approach can be implemented through methodological individualism, which suggests the explanation should start from individuals and move to social phenomena (Danermark et al., 2019).

However, both approaches have critical issues to explain social phenomena. For the social structure approach, it is difficult to explain variations in people's values, activities, as well as historical change, while for the human agency approach, it is difficult to explain relatively stable patterns of social structures (Parker, 2000). Due to these shortcomings, scholars started developing alternative approaches to overcome the structure/agency debate.

During the unresolved structure/agency debate, sociologists began attempting to understand social phenomena through the integration of these concepts. To overcome the conflict

Table 2.8—Two Traditional Approaches in a Structure/Agency Debate

Traditional Approaches	Social Structure Approach	Human Agency Approach
Also known as	Structuralism, Objectivism ¹ , Mechanistic determinism, Fact paradigm	Humanism, Subjectivism ¹ , Voluntaristic idealism, Action paradigm
Influential scholars	Émile Durkheim (1897/1997)	Max Weber (1904-1905/2012)
Ontological assumptions	Social structures reduce agency; No agency	Human agency reduces social structures; No social structure
Social structures	Social structures remain even if agents being linked by them replace and poses inherent powers that reproduce them.	Social structures constitute aggregations of human behaviours.
Human agency	Human agency can only mediate the reproduction of social structures.	Agents are free beings, acting in the light of the meaning they assign to the social structures, as well as socializing with others to be knowledgeable and reach a goal.
Methodological principles	Methodological Holism —Explanations should start from social phenomena and move to individuals.	Methodological Individualism —Explanations should start from individuals and move to social phenomena.
Shortcomings	It is difficult to explain variations in people’s values, activities, as well as historical change.	It is difficult to explain relatively stable patterns of social structures.

Note. Adapted from Bhaskar (1979/2014), Danermark et al. (2019) and Parker (2000). ¹The terms objectivism and subjectivism used here do not refer to epistemological positions in the philosophy of science, but to positions in the antinomy regarding the explanation of social phenomena, which are often used in Giddens (1984) and Parker (2000).

between social structures and human agency, there are two main approaches. One is the duality approach, which assumes that social structures and human agency are “connected to each other

in such a way that they make up two sides of the same coin” (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 71). The other is the dualism approach, which assumes that social structures and human agency are mutually dependent phenomena but are not two moments of the same process (Danermark et al., 2019).

John Parker (2000) stated, “the debate is no longer about *whether* structure and agency are related, but the *nature* of that relation – should it be one of identity or non-identity?” (pp. 9-10, emphasis in original) and contrasted the initially influential alternative, the duality approach (e.g., Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu) and its counterapproach, the dualism approach (e.g., Margaret Archer and Nicos Mouzelis). In recent work, Danermark et al. (2019), also compared the seminal works of Giddens with Archer as well as Roy Bhaskar, who built the foundation of Archer’s seminal works. In this section, I focus on Bourdieu and Giddens as proponents of the duality approach and Bhaskar and Archer as proponents of the dualism approach. Prior to the detailed discussion, I present a comparison of the alternative approaches in Table 2.9, including their selected proponents, relevant theories, ontological assumptions, and methodological principles.

Duality Approach

Pierre Bourdieu’s Genetic Structuration. One of the representative social scientists who endorsed the duality of social structures and human agency is a French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. Known as the founder of practice theory, Bourdieu emphasized practice and developed what he called genetic structuralism (e.g., Bourdieu, 1972/1977, 1980/1990). Practice refers to applying embodied understanding to assess how general principles, such as rules and criteria for making judgments of various kinds, can be related to specific cases (Taylor, 1993). To Bourdieu, practice is the key to understanding social phenomena from a historical standpoint,

Table 2.9—Two Alternative Approaches That Overcome a Structures/Agency Debate

Alternative Approaches	Duality Approach	Dualism Approach
Selected Proponents	Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984), Stones (2005), Bauman (1973)	Archer (1995), Bhaskar (1979/2015), Collier (1994), Mouzelis (1991)
Relevant Theories	Practice Theory	Critical Realism (as a meta-theory)
Ontological Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social structures and agency are not separate phenomena; they make up two sides of the same coin • Human agency is enabled and constrained “through” a social structure, not “by” it, and, relatedly, a social structure is theorized as “both medium and outcome” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25) of agentic practice (Lok & Willmott, 2019) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social structures and human agency are mutually dependent phenomena but are not two moments of the same process • Social structures necessarily predate the social actions which reproduce and transform them; the former establish the extant limits or constraints within which contemporaneous social situations and sequences of interaction occur
Methodological Principles	Explanations should be done focusing on only one or the other side through, for example, putting one of them in Giddens’s methodological brackets.	Explanations should be done by focusing on the interplay between social structures and human agency.

Note. Adapted from Archer (1995), Giddens (1984), Danermark et al. (2019) and Parker (2000).

and his requirement that understanding must be relational can only be met through practice (Parker, 2000). Bourdieu (1988) explicitly claimed that only practice overcomes “the rock-bottom antinomy upon which all the divisions of the social scientific field are ultimately founded, namely, the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism” (p. 780). He also mentioned other traditional antinomies including material and ideal, mind and body, and being and becoming; but the last set, particularly the concept of becoming, is important because it focuses on practice as linking moments of time, namely past, present, and future (Parker, 2000).

Bourdieu (1980/1990) stated: “Practice unfolds in time...Its temporal structure, that is its rhythm, its tempo, and above all its directionality, is constitutive of its meaning... because it is entirely immersed in the current of time, practice is inseparable from temporality” (p. 81). As such, we *become* through practice (Parker, 2000). In relation to this, Bourdieu (1972/1977) argued social structures themselves are products of historical practices, and that the principle of their production is also a product of these structures, thereby supporting the duality of his approach.

Another key idea for practice is *habitus*—“a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170), which is also a product of historical events as a deeply internalized structure (i.e., a pattern of thoughts) for individuals (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). In Bourdieu’s approach, human agency is both enabled and constrained by habitus (Parker, 2000). By weaving the concept of habitus into the structure/agency debate, Bourdieu criticized both subjectivism and objectivism as follows. As a counterargument to subjectivism’s premiss of creative, rational, and self-interested individuals, the power of human agency arises from being positioned and socialized within historical structures of competing interests (where Bourdieu referred to as field); in turn, as a counterargument to objectivism’s premiss of automatic mechanisms for maintaining these structures, it is suggested that they persist as agents know how to apply them in constantly changing situations (Parker, 2000).

Anthony Giddens’s Structuration Theory. While Bourdieu emphasized habitus to explain how individuals internalize social structures and externalize them as part of their beliefs and activities, Giddens’s work, which I describe here, emphasizes the recursive relationship between social structures and human agency, constantly reshaping each other (Parker, 2000). Anthony Giddens, an English historical sociologist of modernity, may be the most famous

scholar in the structure/agency debate for his influential approach called structuration theory (Danermark et al., 2019). Structuration theory as his solution for the debate came from his methodological works between 1974 and 1984 (e.g., Giddens, 1974, 1976, 1979, 1981); notably, *The Constitution of Society* (Giddens, 1984) is well known as the culmination of his work over the decade for developing structuration theory (Parker, 2000). Giddens is similar to Bourdieu as he argued that society is constituted by practice that arises and is reproduced in space and time (Giddens, 1984). However, Giddens differs from Bourdieu in terms of some fundamental concepts, including social structures and agency, as well as their relationships.

As for human agency, structuration theory emphasizes that individuals are agents who have knowledgeable—the ability to reflect on their own and others’ activities—and it occurs repeatedly during people’s interactions with one another (Danermark et al., 2019; Giddens, 1984). Giddens, stating “agency refers to doing” (Giddens, 1984 p. 11), also acknowledged agents’ capability, which is the ability to act otherwise to change the state of affairs (Parker, 2000). In turn, structures refer to “rules and resources” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Rules that govern signification (i.e., how an individual should interpret a given event) allow meaningful communication; resources that govern domination (i.e., what means should be employed to achieve goals) enable the exercise of power, such as controlling people or material objects; and both of them governing legitimation (i.e., what should happen in each situation) enable moral sanction (Giddens, 1984; Parker, 2000). In addition, these structures are inherited from the past, which implies “agency is dependent on being knowledgeable about a legacy of ways and means of doing things” (Parker, 2000, p. 59). To Giddens (1981), as the uses of social structures by the knowledgeable agents are conducted in recursive nature, he defined structure as both the mediums and outcomes of human agency. The recursive implications of using structures offer no

guarantees of their continuity, but they can still be used as potential resources in the future as long as they are updated (Parker, 2000). Structuration theory subjectivizes (i.e., internalizes) social structures by deeming them as a virtual reality whose generative force is realized only through their practical application by agents (Parker, 2000).

Based on these concepts, structuration theory unites social structures and human agency as follows. First, agents make a difference in the state of affairs by “making sense of situations and a command of relevant resources,” namely having access to prerequisites for activities represented as structures (Parker, 2000, p. 58). Second, these structures only exist in practices per se and as “memory traces” of knowledgeable agents (Giddens, 1984, p. 17). These are the major reasons why this approach is deemed duality. To structuration theorists, social structures and human agency are inseparable as structures can be constituted for both enabling and constraining human activities at the same time (Danermark et al., 2019). For example, social networks provide a resource for a businessperson to be able to negotiate with a particular political elite, but at the same time, it contains rules for how to communicate to make a business successful. When they communicate, they reproduce the structure of social networks simultaneously as they use it (cf. Danermark et al., 2019).

Structuration theory, like the original social structure approach and the human agency approach, has methodological principles. Giddens (1984, p. 288) suggested that researchers can disregard the other side to study one side of the duality as he assumed they are mutually reductive. In other words, by focusing on either side, researchers can delve into the specific mechanisms at play within each domain. This approach is called methodological brackets, which creates two types of analysis: “strategic conduct analysis” for investigating human agency and “institutional analysis” for investigating social structures.

Structuration theory has been refined by Giddens's followers (e.g., Manicas, 2006; Stones, 2005). In project management studies, by deeming project management as "projects-as-practice" (Hällgren & Söderholm, 2011, p. 500), some researchers discussed the applicability of the duality approach to investigate the dynamic processes of complex inter-organizational projects (e.g., Lundin et al., 2015; Sydow, 2021). However, this duality approach has received considerable criticism from researchers who stress the importance of time (of course, including project management researchers). The approach those critics support is called dualism, which is gaining attention as the alternative to overcome the structure/agency debate. Next, I review the foundation of this dualism approach, as well as why this is considered superior to the duality approach by these researchers.

Dualism Approach

Critiques of the Duality Approach. In his 1979 book, *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of the contemporary human sciences*, Roy Bhaskar, a British philosopher, criticized the duality approach as reductionistic because it posits that society is internalized in individuals and individuals are externalized in the consciousness of society (Bhaskar, 1979/2015). Bhaskar (1979/2015) suggested that social structures and human agency are mutually dependent but fundamentally distinct concepts (i.e., not dialectically related). Without this distinction, he argued, it would be impossible to explain *emergence*. Emergence refers to a social phenomenon where something new arises from the interaction between components in a system, leading to the appearance of new properties in structures or new practices among agents that cannot be fully understood by analyzing the individual components in isolation (Bhaskar, 1979/2015; Danermark et al., 2019). Giddens denied the existence of emergence in society (e.g., Giddens, 1984, p. 171-172), implying that "neither agents nor structures can be analyzed as

phenomena with independent powers and mechanisms” (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 79). Furthermore, the inherent characteristics of duality have been criticized for impeding the understanding of processes in social phenomena. Bhaskar (2016) specifically criticized structuration theory for underestimating the time dimension of society as follows.

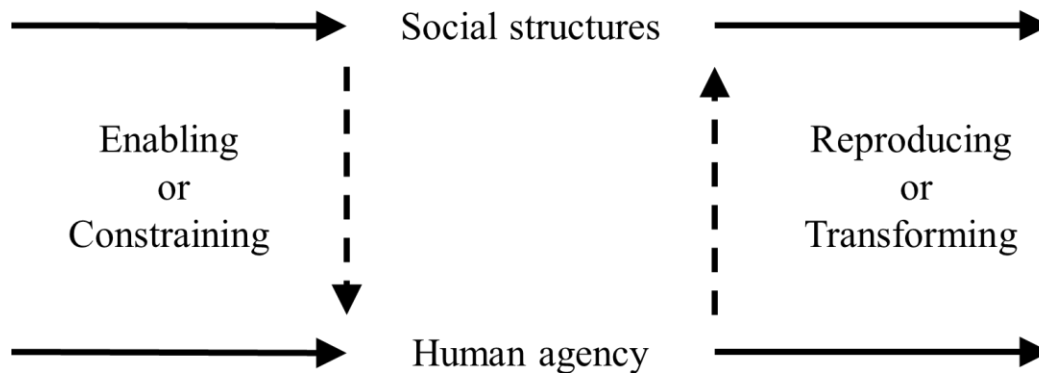
[Giddens’s structuration theory] encourages a picture of the social structure packing up or dissolving when we go to sleep, so that in the morning we might invent an entirely new one. The trouble with this idea, attractive though it is, is its voluntarism and neglect of the massive weight of the past. (Bhaskar, 2016, p. 53)

This criticism of the temporal dimension has drawn the attention of organizational scientists, particularly those in project management studies (which will be mentioned again later in this chapter). As such, Bhaskar developed a model to overcome the structure/agency debate and better explain ongoing social phenomena based on these critiques and his (ontological) assumptions regarding the social sciences.

Bhaskar’s Transformational Model of Social Activity. Although Bhaskar (1979/2015) did not intend that our society exist without human activities, he assumed social structures themselves are simply there. This ontological assumption stems from his critical realism stance (I further describe this philosophical position in Chapter III). To Bhaskar, all human activities “presuppose the prior existence of social structures” (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 80), which means that individuals do not create society from scratch, but reproduce or transform it. Moreover, social structures cannot be reduced to human behaviour and vice versa. Thus, the dualism approach has been illustrated as the process in which social structures influence human agency, which in turn influences social structures, by denying reductionism and embracing human agency as a necessary condition for social structures. Like Bourdieu and Giddens, those

who support the dualism approach acknowledge that the objects of social sciences are relational, but unlike Bourdieu and Giddens, they claim that relationships themselves exist independently (e.g., wage labour relations already exist before you get involved in society and will continue to exist even after you retire: Danermark et al., 2019). Based on these notions, Bhaskar developed the Transformational Model of Social Activity (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1—Bhaskar’s Transformational Model of Social Activity



Note. Adapted from Bhaskar (1979/2015) and Danermark et al. (2019).

This diagram³ highlights that social structure (enabling or constraining human agency) and human agency (reproducing or transforming prior the social structures), which mutually influence each other, are situated in distinct layers. This also implies a methodological consequence that, unlike Giddens’s methodological brackets, when conducting social scientific research, it is necessary to investigate the interplay between social structures and human agency, rather than just focusing on one of them alone (Danermark et al., 2019). It was accepted as a basic model depicting the dualism approach, and it was advanced by Bhaskar himself (e.g., Bhaskar, 1989/2011) and his successors (e.g., Archer, 1995). Next, the focus is on Margaret

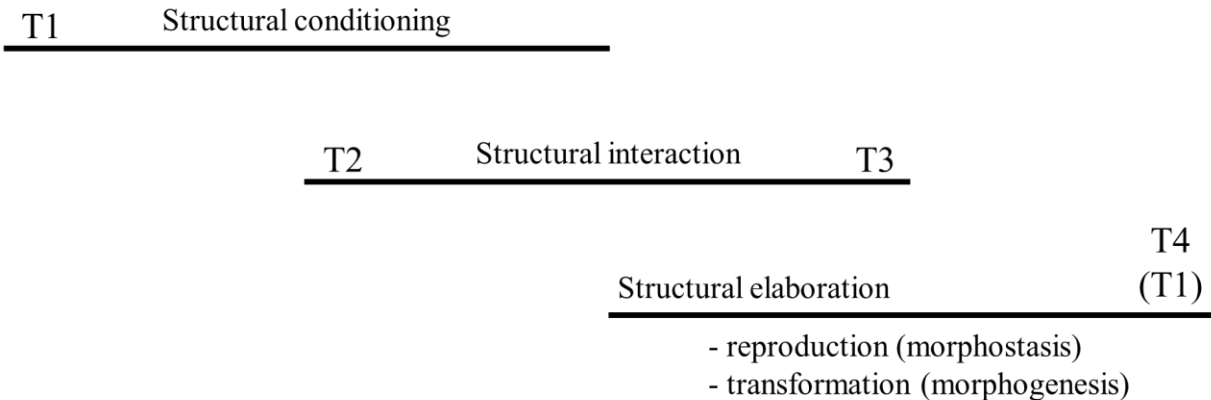
³ Although Bhaskar (1979/2015) offered this as a model (i.e., Transformational Model of Social Activity), I represent it, along with others created based on it, as diagrams (i.e., Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.3). This is because they assume “how a particular process unfolds over time” rather than serving the purpose of explaining and/or predicting a specific phenomenon (Sutton & Staw, 1995, p. 376).

Archer, a scholar who arguably developed the most influential diagram in today's dualism approach (Danermark et al., 2019).

Archer's Morphogenetic/Static Cycle and its Integration with Bhaskar's Model.

Following Bhaskar's work, Margaret Archer, a British sociologist, emphasized that the interplay between social structures and human agency occurs over time, and argued that it is necessary to introduce the dimension of time into the analysis to consider emergence as a process (Archer, 1995). This is the core doctrine of the approach that Archer (1995, p. 15) formulated and called "analytical dualism." The term dualism implies that social structures and human agency are situated in separate layers while the term analytical implies that the interactions between these layers can only be identified through investigation by the social sciences, not "at the muddled level of events and experiences" (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 81). Archer (1995) assumed that agents are enabled or constrained by social structures in their activities and that agents elaborate (which she also called morphostasis) or transform (which she also called morphogenesis) the structures, similar to Bhaskar. Placing the basic model of social structures and human agency in the temporal dimension, Archer (1995) initially illustrated analytic dualism as a diagram called the morphogenetic/static cycle (see Figure 2.2).

Archer's morphogenetic/static cycle can be described by referring to Danermark et al. (2019), who summarized the cycle well. The cycle begins at T1 (i.e., Time 1), where social structures exist that are emergent results of social interactions among agents in the previous cycle. These pre-existing social structures produce conditions where activities unfold. This process is called structural conditioning. Regarding the agents who are structurally conditioned, we must bear in mind that there can be two or more groups; for example, one group (e.g.,

Figure 2.2—Archer's Morphogenetic/Static Cycle

Note. Adapted from Archer (1995). T represents time (e.g., T1=Time 1). Thus, this diagram indicates that time flows cyclically from left to right, and the reproduced or transformed structures in the phase T4 become the preexisting structures (T1) in the next cycle.

capitalists) is interested in maintaining a structural property while another group (e.g., labourers) is interested in changing the same property⁴. Thus, structural conditioning that enables or limits agents' activities (or practices) occurs by often dividing individuals into some groups (this is called conditioning activities). In the second phase between T2 and T3, agents interact with each other within the situations given by the social structures that condition their activities but do not determine them. Agents have their own powers, primarily their intentionality, which cannot be reduced to structural powers. They can react to situations structurally conditioned in innovative ways based on their own power. This phase can be deemed as a mechanism where the causal power of social structures is mediated through human agency (Bhaskar, 1979/2014; Elder-Vass 2010). Social structures are not capable of thinking or acting; it is individuals who act and respond even within conditioned situations. At T4, as a result of these interactions, the social structures being questioned are elaborated, which are either reproduced or transformed. Archer (1995) named these terms morphostasis and morphogenesis, respectively, which became the

⁴ This implies that researchers can also consider agents as collectives, not only individuals (Danermark et al., 2019).

name for this cyclical diagram. Similar to Giddens, she believes these structures are often an unintended consequence of the social intersection, stating “society is that which nobody wants, in the form in which they encounter it” (Archer, 1995, p. 165).

Archer’s (1995) cyclic diagram, as presented in Figure 2.2, reflects her notion that researchers need “a theoretical approach which is capable of *linking* structure and agency rather than *sinking* one into the other” and “structure and agency can only be linked by examining the *interplay between them over time*” (p. 65, emphasis in original). One advantage of her approach over Bhaskar’s is the overlapping of each phase, as shown by the overlapping horizontal lines in Figure 2.2. Archer (1995) argued that Bhaskar’s diagram could be misleading as it suggests that the effects of social structures on human agency or *vice versa*, are instantaneous, though it takes time, especially for structural transformation. Nevertheless, Archer (1995) presented a more visible and understandable diagram (see Figure 2.3) by integrating Bhaskar’s into her own approach. Hereafter, I refer to this as an archetype of Archer’s dualism approach.

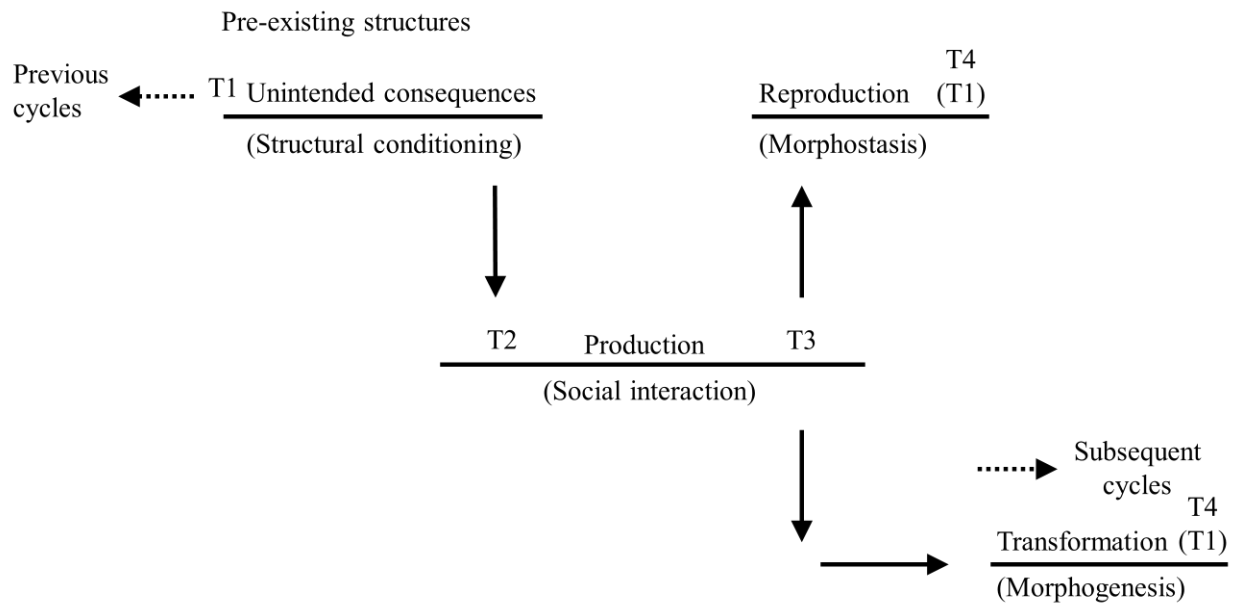
Archer’s Dualism Approach Preferred by Organization and Project Management

Researchers

Since the 1970s, the structure/agency debate may have evolved into the duality/dualism debate, thanks to the seminal works of philosophers and sociologists, including those described above. In organizational studies, this duality/dualism debate is often viewed through the lens of Giddens vs. Archer, and Archer’s dualism approach is typically preferred (e.g., Archer, 2000; Reed, 1997, 2005; Mutch, 2005). The main reason for this preference is that Giddens’s structuration theory assumes that it cannot logically investigate the temporal relationship between social structures and human agency, as pointed out by Archer (1995).

Project management researchers have argued that Archer’s dualism approach can provide

Figure 2.3—Superimposition of Bhaskar’s Transformational Model of Social Activity and Archer’s Morphogenetic/Static Cycle



Note. Adapted from Archer (1995).

a nuanced understanding of time, which can lead to more effective project management practices (e.g., Benítez-Ávila et al., 2019; Müller, Zhu et al., 2018; Müller, Sankaran et al., 2018; Winch & Sergeeva, 2022). For example, Benítez-Ávila et al. (2019) relied on Archer (1995) to develop a process framework for investigating governing in ongoing public-private partnerships projects. The authors suggested that Archer’s dualism approach, which is based on emergence and using time as a key to link social structures and human agency, clarifies how past relationships between different organizational logics influence present activities and shape future interactions for activity paths of interest (i.e., contractual governance and relational governance) positioned in the morphogenetic/static cycle. This approach explained the emergence of complex relational and contractual governing activities through structural properties, as well as it explained both the reproduction and transformation of the governance structure through the social interaction among agents (Benítez-Ávila et al., 2019). Similarly, Müller, Zhu et al. (2018) used Archer’s

dualism approach to develop a theoretical framework for understanding balanced leadership (i.e., the process of combining person-centred and team-centred) in project management. In particular, they employed the morphogenetic/static cycle of structural conditioning, social interaction, and structural elaboration to explain the interaction between the two types of leadership as a continuous flow of individuals' exposure to social structures, their human agency executed in social interaction, and the possible change of existing social structures. Their theoretical study was used to follow five empirical case studies conducted by Müller, Sankaranet et al. (2018), investigating how project managers identify team members who can act as leaders within the developed framework. Overall, Archer's work offers a beneficial approach to the interplay between social structures and human agency, and it can help project management researchers gain a deeper understanding of the role of time in organizational phenomena.

Section Summary and the Third Research Question

In this section, I discussed the brief history of the structure/agency debate and explained why Archer's dualism approach is likely to contribute the most to understanding social phenomena among previous solutions, particularly in the context of interest in this dissertation. Although this present dissertation can address the lack of the structure/agency debate in sports event management studies, my interest is not to challenge Archer's dualism approach, which would require more philosophical work, but rather to complement the embeddedness perspective. The embeddedness perspective, situated in the phase of structural conditioning (i.e., from T1 to T2 in Figure 2.3), does not necessarily assume human agency, which could lead to misunderstandings of the influence of the past and misleading people's potential for the future (Granovetter, 2017; Hass, 2007, 2020). Moreover, although the integration of temporality into the embeddedness perspective enables the consideration of the influence of agents' experiences

and expectations regarding their activities, it does not account for the cyclical reproduction or transformation of social structures (like Bhaskar, simply distinguishing the past, present, and future in his initial diagram).

Archer's dualism approach is also compatible with the context of the present dissertation, which focuses on managing recurring marathons under pandemic-driven uncertainty. This is because it positions the emergence identified during the pandemic in the continuous interplay between social structures and human agency that is repeated throughout the marathons' historical development. The virtual marathons held as an alternative to in-person marathons during the pandemic may be an example of emergence. I argue that it is one of the impacts of the pandemic that has changed the practice of managing marathons. Based on Archer's dualism approach, however, any countermeasures like the virtual marathons cannot be fully explained without considering the historical interplay between social structures and human agency. Without the historical interplay, it is not possible to adequately discuss the potential future conditioning of agents' activities and social structures (e.g., identifications of the event, and roles of each stakeholder) that have the potential to condition agents' activities next.

Therefore, I employ Archer's dualism approach integrated with the embeddedness perspective for this dissertation. This combined approach allows me to expand the investigation of social structures' influence on activities undertaken by agents under pandemic-driven uncertainty that has been found up to RQ2. In particular, I focus on the activities during the pandemic and identify the emergence of social structures created in the current social structures, taking into account the impact of past activities of agents involved in the marathons and discussing the social structures that will be reproduced or transformed. Derived from the last part of this literature review, RQ3 is as follows.

RQ3. How did pandemic-driven uncertainty change the way human agency influences social structures in managing marathons?

Chapter III: Research Methods

Presenting clear but sufficiently detailed research methods, along with the justifications of certain approaches and techniques allows readers to comprehend the ethical process used in answering RQs (American Psychological Association, 2019; Lê et al., 2019; Tracy, 2010; Zhang & Shaw, 2012). In this section, I describe the philosophical position, methodology, research context, data collection, and data analysis selected for undertaking the present research. To ensure a coherent integration of these elements, I also demonstrate the legitimacy of the knowledge I derived from this research.

Philosophical Position: Critical Realism

Clarifying a philosophical position is important for researchers as it guides their decisions regarding methodology, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of findings in a coherent manner (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2017). These positions, which encompass ontology (i.e., the study of being and reality) and epistemology (i.e., the study of knowledge), inform assumptions about what exists and what the world looks like, and how we know what we claim to know (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ontological stances can be divided into realism, asserting only one reality exists independently, and relativism, asserting multiple subjective realities exist and are shaped by context (Crotty, 1998). Tied to this ontological orientation, one's epistemological stance depends on their assumptions about the relationship between a subject (i.e., a researcher) and an object (i.e., a phenomenon being studied). For example, epistemological objectivists assume knowledge can be attained through discovering a phenomenon that has inherent meaning, while epistemological constructionists assume knowledge is gained through

interpreting the meaning that is created through interaction with the phenomenon (Crotty, 1998)⁵. The connection between ontology and epistemology is traditionally depicted through two distinct lines, where the first line links ontological realism with epistemological objectivism, and the second line links ontological relativism with epistemological constructionism (Crotty, 1998).

In this research, however, I position myself within critical realism, which challenges the philosophical dualism typically associated with ontology (Bhaskar, 1975/2008). While critical realism is a relatively recent development in the philosophy of science (with the original version of the most influential text, *A Realist Theory of Science* written by Roy Bhaskar being published in 1975), it has made outstanding philosophical and meta-theoretical contributions through the works of Bhaskar and his successors such as Margaret Archer (1995), Berth Danermark (Danermark et al., 2019), Dave Elder-Vass (2010), Andrew Sayer (2000), and many others. Most importantly, it is increasingly being recognized as a valuable philosophical position for social scientists pursuing plausible causality to explain why and how a certain phenomenon occurred (Danermark et al., 2019; Wynn & Williams, 2012). According to critical realism, causality can be established “if and only if it is the case that some event E would not have occurred, under the conditions that actually prevailed but for (the operation of) X” (Bhaskar, 1979/2014, p. 101). Nevertheless, to investigate causality, critical realists do not rely on experiments like natural scientists do. According to Danermark et al. (2019), this is because critical realists assume that our knowledge of reality is conceptually mediated and that social science deals with objects that are socially produced and defined. Also, these objects cannot be studied in a completely closed system like experiments in natural science. Thus, Critical realism emphasizes the importance of

⁵ Although not commonly seen in sport management studies, subjectivism is another major epistemological stance that assumes a researcher can derive knowledge by giving meaning to a phenomenon that does not inherently possess any (Crotty, 1998).

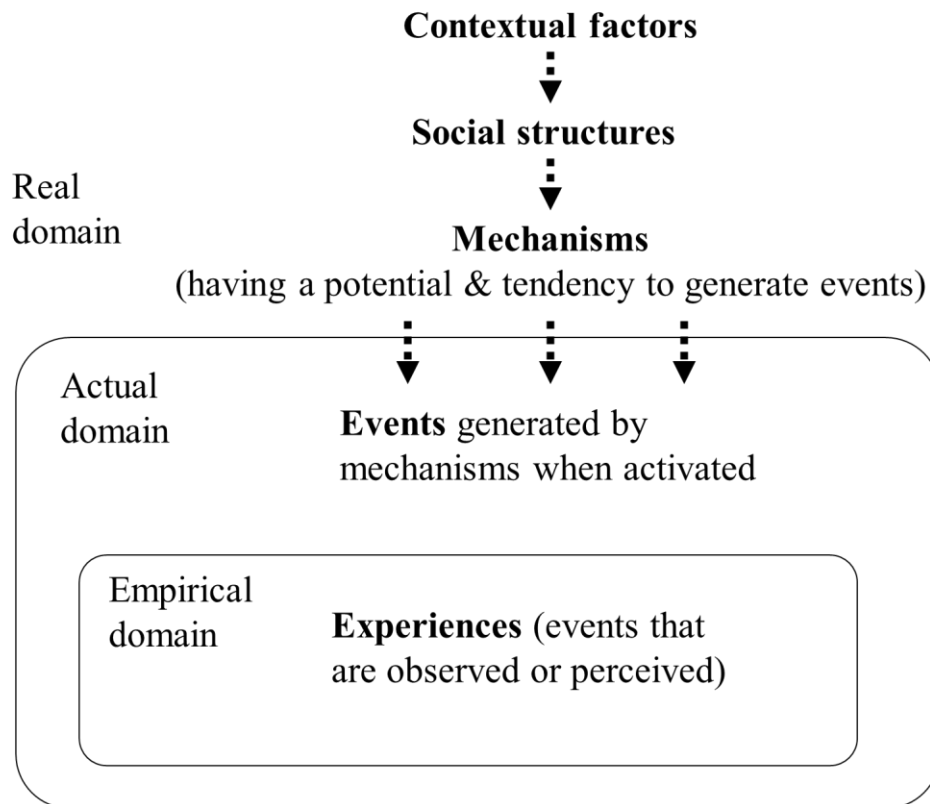
conceptualization when investigating causality and gaining insights into phenomena (Danermark et al., 2019). To conduct critical realism-based research in a consistent manner, I outline the (1) ontological; (2) epistemological; and (3) methodological assumptions of this philosophy.

Ontological Assumptions of Critical Realism

A primary assumption of critical realism is that reality is arranged in different levels or strata (Bhaskar, 1975/2008; Bunge, 2009). Bhaskar (1975/2008) referred to these levels as the ontological depth, which consists of three overlapping domains: real, actual, and empirical (see Figure 3.1.). The real domain is where critical realists posit the existence of an independent reality, including social structures that shape it. To critical realists, social structures are deemed as invisible frameworks or sets of rules which influence how entities act, interact with each other, and evolve over time (Danermark et al., 2019). In this dissertation, to theorize the phenomena to which the embeddedness perspective is applied using critical realism (as a meta-theory), I consider the term social structure employed by the aforementioned economic sociologists and those employed by critical realists as compatible. Mechanisms, which Bhaskar described as “nothing other than the ways of acting of things” (Bhaskar, 1975/2008, p. 14), are inherent to those social structures and have the potential and tendency to generate certain events (Sayer, 2000; Smith, 2006). In the present research, informed by the embeddedness perspective, I assumed social structures, such as social networks, institutions, politics, and territories have such potential and tendency to exert causal powers. For a mechanism to function, it needs not only a structure(s) but also the right condition(s) in place. Conditions, here I refer to contextual factors, can be considered as a trigger or threshold that activates the social structures (Sayer, 2000). In this dissertation, one notable contextual factor is the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it should be noted that such events generated may not always be observable or perceptible by humans

(Danermark et al. 2019). It is also possible that no change occurs if multiple mechanisms offset each other (Gambetta 1998). When explaining such unseen mechanisms, critical realists often employ the analogy of the law of gravity (Danermark et al., 2019). For instance, if the reaction force of a table cancels out gravity, the mug placed on the table will not fall to the ground. In addition, the social structures and the potential and tendency to exert powers they hold do not necessarily persist over time or across different contexts, as critical realism adopts an open systems view (Wynn & Williams, 2012)⁶.

Figure 3.1—Three Overlapping Domains of Reality in Critical Realism



Note. Adapted from Bhaskar (1975/2008), Radulescu and Vessey (2009), and Sayer (2000).

The actual domain is where a multitude of events are occurring. Here, an event is defined as “a specific happening or action resulting from the enactment of one or more mechanisms”

⁶ Because critical realists posit the existence of an open system in the world, they inherently neglect the assumption of consistent regularities (Danermark et al., 2019; Sayer, 2000).

(Wynn & Williams, p. 792). The phenomena of interest in this research, which I refer to as managing major sport events, are supposed to occur in this domain. Again, those events may not necessarily be observed and perceived by humans, and this is why it makes sense for the next empirical domain to be included in this actual domain.

The empirical domain is where people experience events that are observed or perceived. Although we cannot experience all events due to our bounded rationality, critical realists should bear in mind that “the existence of a world in which many significant events occur without being observed or perceived by anyone is an assumption upon which scientific discovery is based” (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p. 792). Returning to the instance of the unmoving mug, even if the phenomenon was not actually observed, examining the mug empirically (or talking to someone who has encountered it) can be useful for inferring the unseen mechanisms that explain its state. This is why dividing reality into three levels, and therefore including the empirical domain, can be an entry point for critical realism-based researchers to collect data allowing them to reach beyond appearances and uncover the underlying social structures, contextual factors, and mechanisms (Downward & Mearman, 2007).

Epistemological Assumptions of Critical Realism

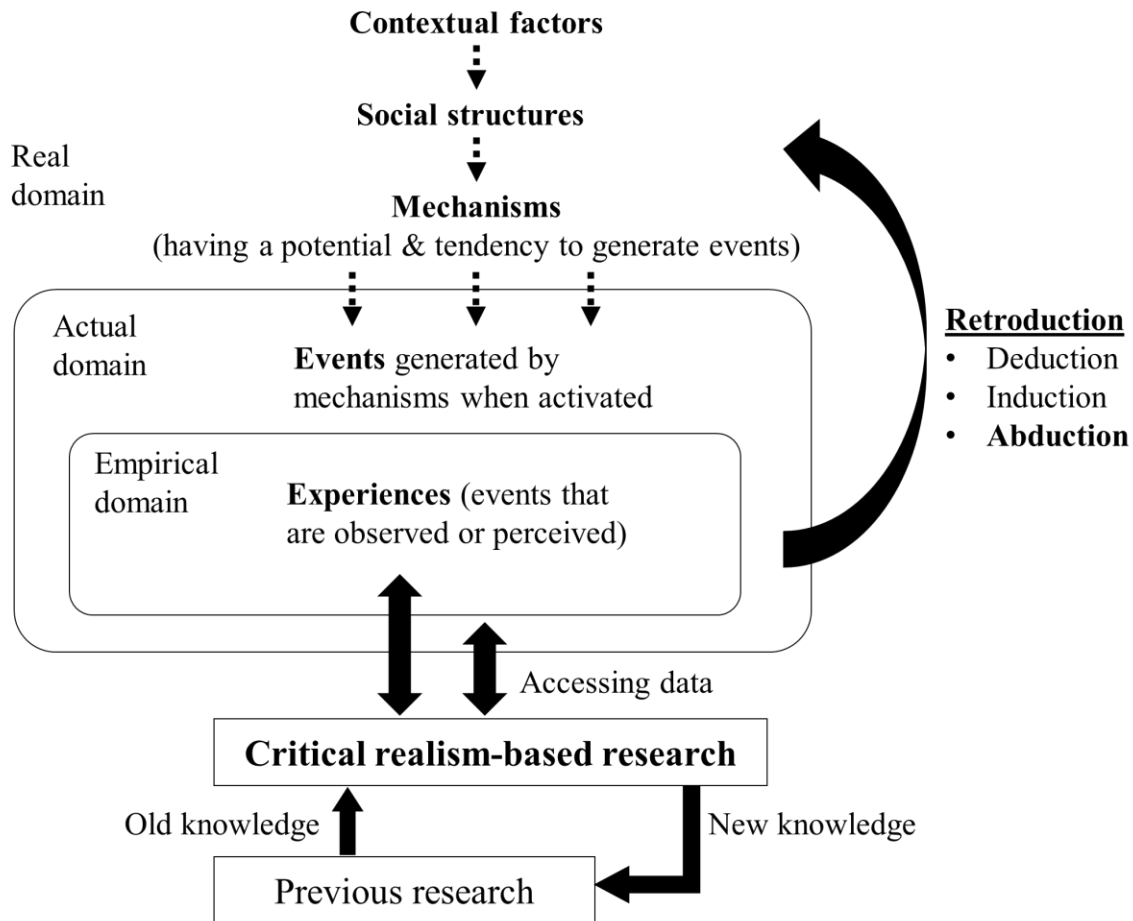
As a philosophical stance located between epistemological objectivism and constructionism, critical realism posits that, unlike constructionists tied to relativism, reality exists independently of our knowledge, but also that, unlike objectivists tied to realism, reality cannot be fully understood through neutral empirical observations alone as our knowledge of reality is conceptually mediated (Danermark et al., 2019). This stance stems from critical realism’s epistemological assumption that our understanding of reality depends on language and concepts which can change over time and social contexts; as such, what researchers observe is

not conceptually- and theoretically-determined, but conceptually- and theoretically-dependent (Danermark et al., 2019). Thus, critical realists do not necessarily place a particular emphasis on prediction like some post-positivist researchers informed by objectivism; instead, they seek to offer explanations through social structures and their mechanisms (Wynn & Williams, 2012). Critical realists also assume it is possible to attain legitimate knowledge through the creative construction and critical examination of theories, while acknowledging the fallibility of scientific knowledge of reality, particularly social reality (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). These assumptions then inform methodological ones.

Methodological Assumptions of Critical Realism

While critical realism takes a relatively tolerant stance on the methodological choice for conducting research aimed at discovering or extending knowledge (Edwards et al., 2014; Sayer, 2000), there are some methodological assumptions that should be emphasized. One of these is related to an inference, logical reasoning, or what Danermark et al. (2019) refer to as thought operation. In critical realism-based research, under the aggregated inference umbrella called retrodution, three types of (sub)inference are used for advancing theories: deduction, induction, and most importantly, abduction (Danermark et al., 2019). Figure 3.2 illustrates how critical realists gain new knowledge through research (Bhaskar, 1975/2008; Radulescu & Vessey, 2009; Sayer, 2000; Zachariadis et al., 2013). They do so primarily by accessing the empirical and actual domains, and by retrodution. Since retrodution and abduction are not necessarily well known in sport (event) management studies but prime analytical tools, I briefly outline these concepts and their roles here.

Figure 3.2—The Retroductive Approach of Critical Realism for Knowledge



Note. Adapted from Bhaskar (1975/2008), Radulescu and Vessey (2009), Sayer (2000), Zachariadis et al. (2013).

First, Danermark et al., (2019) defined retrodution as:

A thought operation involving a reconstruction of the basic conditions for anything to be what it is, or, to put it differently, it is by reasoning we can obtain knowledge of what [social structures and contextual factors] are required for a phenomenon to exist. (p. 224)

As a central process of logical reasoning for critical realism-based research, retrodution moves from concrete to abstract (and back again) to investigate the social conditions (i.e., contextual factors) under which mechanisms are functioned in the world (Fletcher, 2017; Lawson, 1997). Although it may be easy to confuse retrodution with abduction, it is actually

positioned as a superordinate concept that includes abduction as well as deduction and induction (Wynn & Williams, 2012).

Abduction, the term coined by an American philosopher, Charles S. Peirce in the late 19th century, refers to an “inference or thought operation, implying that a particular phenomenon or event is interpreted from a set of general ideas or concepts” (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 223). Abduction can be a difficult concept to understand (Danermark et al., 2019), as it has often been incorrectly referred to as induction (see Gehman et al., 2018). However, it is a distinctive and indispensable form of inference in critical realism-based research. For example, if you witness ten apples falling from a tree, you may inductively conclude the other apples may fall as well (i.e., a general principle), while you may also abductively conclude there must be something that caused the apple to fall, most likely gravity in this case (i.e., a plausible explanation). Moreover, to conclude that gravity causes apples to fall, you may deductively test another tree to see if the apples really fall due to gravity. The difference in the principles between deduction, induction, and abduction are presented in Table 3.1, which shows that abduction is a generating process while deductive is a logical process and inductive is an empirical process (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021). Although abduction is the prime thought operation in retrodution, all three forms are available for the purpose of theoretical advancement (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013).

In evaluating research quality in social sciences, another key assumption of critical realism-based research is that a thick description of contextual factors, social structures, and empirical evidence enhances methodological trustworthiness (Wynn & Williams, 2012). As such, multiple methods (or so-called triangulation) is also recommended in such research endeavours (Hodgkinson & Rousseau, 2009; Syed et al. 2009).

Table 3.1—Deduction, Induction, and Abduction in Advancing Theories

	Features	Principles	Criteria
Deduction	Syllogistic reasoning where, if the major and minor premise are both true, the conclusion must be true.	Inferring specific instances from general rules	Logical validity
Induction	Statistical (quantitative) or narrative (qualitative) analysis of data (specific instances) to find a probabilistic function of relationships between variables (the truth). The truth is uncertain.	Inferring general rules from specific instances	Empirical truth
Abduction	The generative process of creating and evaluating explanations that would render the anomaly understandable.	Inferring plausible explanations from unexplained phenomena	Plausibility

Note. Adapted from Sætre and Van de Ven (2021).

Critical Realism-Based Research in the Sport Events Management Literature

The philosophical works of Bhaskar and his successors have extended beyond the core social sciences of economics (e.g., Fleetwood, 1998), sociology (e.g., Maccarini, 2012), and psychology (e.g., Pilgrim, 2019) to encompass general organization (e.g., Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2004; Edwards, 2014; Fleetwood, 2005; Tsang & Kwan, 1999; Tsoukas, 1999), and project management (e.g., Müller et al., 2013; van der Hoorn, 2020; Wang et al., 2021) as applied studies⁷. In the field of sport event management, since Parent (2005) employed critical realism in her doctoral dissertation focusing on the 2001 *Jeux de la Francophonie* and the 1999 Pan American Games, several empirical articles (e.g., Liang et al., 2022; Ziakas, 2023), conceptual articles (Byers et al., 2020), and doctoral dissertations (e.g., Derom, 2014; Nedvetskaya, 2015) have adopted the philosophical position. Regarding sport (event) organization research during

⁷ Critical realism has also been employed in the fields of sport and health sciences (e.g., Alderson, 2022; Scambler, 2022).

the pandemic, Byers et al. (2022) pointed out that researchers' predominant focus has been on a superficial level of reality, such as exploring stakeholder reactions; they encouraged the adoption of critical realism to enable a deeper level of analysis into how and why such phenomena can occur. Moreover, previous sport event management research relying on critical realism have, at most, provided the ontological assumption related to stratified reality and have approached causality, but have not yet extensively discussed the meta-theoretical use of the interplay between social structures and human agency, methodological assumptions including the retroductive (abductive) inference, and the application of these assumptions to existing research methods. Therefore, by filling these methodological gaps, the present dissertation can make a methodological contribution to the field of sport management. Next, I describe methodology used in this research.

Methodology: Case Studies

As general organization scientists have demonstrated more interest in critical realism (e.g., Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000; Contu & Willmott, 2005; Fleetwood, 2005; Frederiksen & Kringelum, 2021; Tsang & Kwan, 1999; Tsoukas, 1989), efforts have been made to adapt existing methodologies (even methods as well) commonly used in the literature. Case studies have been regarded as one of the most useful methodologies for explaining organizational phenomena from a critical realism viewpoint, and several methodological papers on their adaptation have been published (e.g., Easton, 2010; Wynn & Williams, 2012, 2020). A plethora of critical realism-based research in various domains including general organization (e.g., Ackroyd, 2010; Turkina et al., 2019; Tuominen & Lehtonen, 2018), project management (e.g., Müller et al., 2013; van der Hoorn, 2020; Wang et al., 2021), and sport event management (e.g., Derom, 2014; Liang et al., 2022; Nedvetskaya, 2015; Parent, 2005; Ziakas, 2023) studies have

been done using case studies. In line with them, I employed the case study methodology to address my RQs. Case studies are well-suited for researchers addressing who, what, when, where, how, and why questions on contemporary phenomena, in which they have little or no control over the events (Yin, 2018). The latter two (i.e., how and why) questions particularly align with the interests of critical realists who aim to explain the complex phenomena (Bhaskar, 1975/2008). By addressing these questions, case studies allow researchers to disentangle a complex set of constructs and their relationships with one or a small number of instances (Easton, 2010). Regarding the advantages and limitations that researchers who use case studies should be aware of, Siggelkow (2007) stated as follows:

[Case studies] can usually get much closer to theoretical constructs and provide a much more persuasive argument about causal forces than broad empirical research can. One should use this advantage. However, one will not be able to say, “You should believe my theory that A leads to B, because I show you an example here.” ... One needs to convince the reader that the conceptual argument is plausible and use the case as [an] additional (but not sole) justification for one’s argument. (p. 22-23)

In this sense, case studies are appropriate for RQs that are explanatory in nature (Easton, 2010). Nevertheless, researchers have other well-developed approaches such as exploratory case studies (Yin, 2018), which can be used for examining key aspects of under-researched phenomenon. In this dissertation, I employed this exploratory approach to address RQ1 as the key aspect (i.e., marathon secretariats’ experience) for understanding managing major sport events under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Conceptual frameworks reviewed in Chapter II, such as Phan and Wood’s (2020) framework on uncertainty, helped this exploration. To address RQ2, I employed the explanatory approach to make a theoretical advancement by focusing on why and how

questions regarding the causes and mechanisms of marathon secretariats' experience explored in RQ1 (cf. Eisenhardt, 1989, 2021; Yin, 2018). The embeddedness perspective (Granovetter, 1985) reviewed in Chapter II helped this explanation. Addressing RQ3 meant relying on the exploratory approach again to explore the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events, which the first two RQs could not cover. This was realized by focusing on the interplay between social structures and human agency, as well as by using the components of social structures proposed in addressing RQ2 to compare human agency involved in management of marathons before and during the pandemic. Archer's (1995) dualism approach reviewed in Chapter II helped this exploration. In terms of case study methodology, there are approaches that are more well-defined and structured (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989, 2021; Yin, 2018) and some that are more flexible and open-ended (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). This study adopted the approaches of Yin's (2018) and Eisenhardt's (1989, 2021) as they use existing conceptual/(meta-)theoretical ideas and frameworks to explore and explain phenomena of interest.

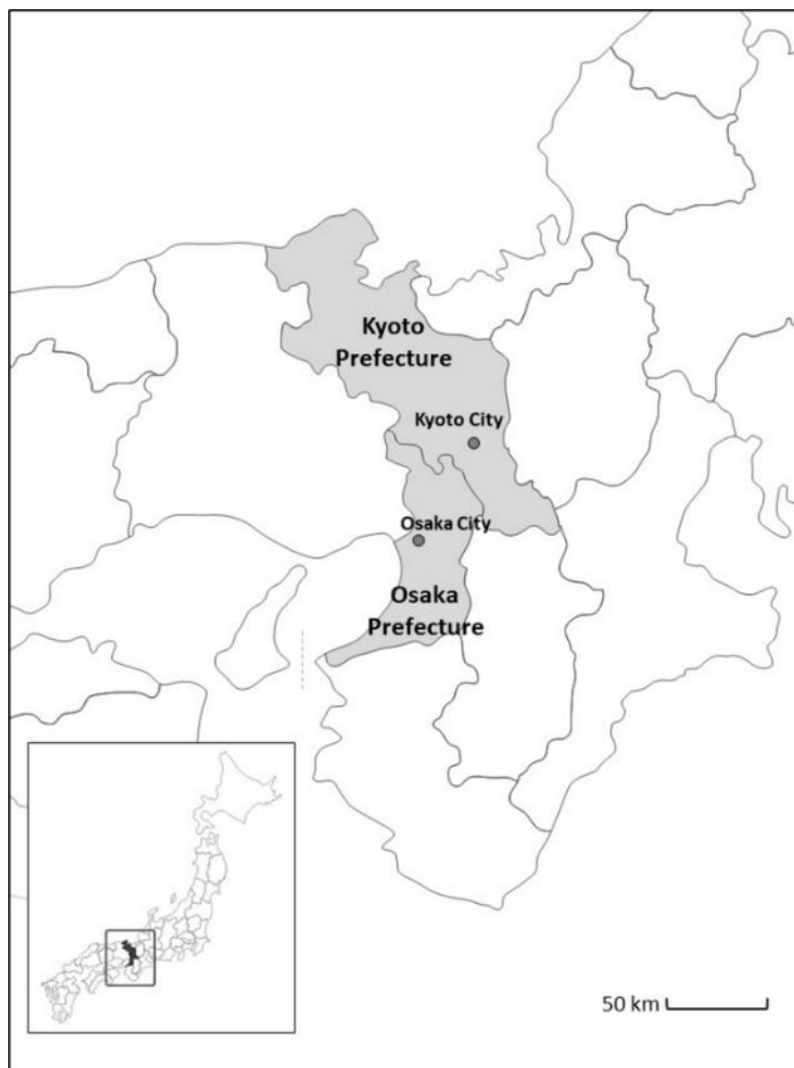
To conduct case studies effectively, there are four key considerations to keep in mind. First, it is essential to select reasonable cases. In this dissertation, I used a multiple-case design. It "relies on Yin's work (1984) on cases (and replication logic) and Glaser and Strauss' (1967) iterative process of constant comparison of data and theory," allowing me to both describe detailed case history and identify cross-case patterns (Eisenhardt, 2021, p. 148). The multiple-case design facilitates the identification of broader patterns across different cases and contexts related to a phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2018). In this regard, it differs from a single-case design, which facilitates the achievement of other research goals, such as a detailed

understanding of a revelatory phenomenon or the challenge of specific existing theories (see Siggelkow, 2007 and Yin, 2018 for more details).

I particularly focused on the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon during the pandemic. This is because of the potential for advancing theories to understand my focal phenomenon (i.e., managing major sport events under pandemic-driven uncertainty) based on the multiple-case study design (Eisenhardt, 2021), as well as its feasibility. Japan, as exemplified by the postponement of Tokyo 2020, was one of the countries most affected by the impact of the pandemic on the sport event ecosystems (Bizen & Oshimial, 2022; Morgan, 2021), and is also a country with which I have previous contextual knowledge and experience in investigating major sport events (Yamakita & Chogahara, 2018). Marathons as major sport events (or IOPs) are among the cases where the project teams (i.e., the marathon organizing committees' secretariats) had the greatest difficulties in dealing with participants clustered together and coordinating various stakeholders in a limited time (Kin, 2020). Given the importance of the broad academic and practical implications of research outcomes, the global prevalence of marathons that generate substantial economic and social impacts/legacies was another reason for selecting them as cases for this dissertation (cf. Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022; Havens, 2015). The Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon, selected as specific research contexts, were particularly where one of my primary interests (i.e., the interplay between social structures and human agency) was likely to be investigated, while controlling for alternative explanations (Eisenhardt, 2021). I could control (not all but some) alternative explanations, including the event characteristics (annual urban marathons sanctioned by the Japan Association of Athletics Federations [JAAF]), size (more than 15,000 runners), age (about 10 years old as of selecting cases), and regional contexts (Kansai, Japan: see Figure 3.3) in a broad sense. The selection of

these marathons was also legitimized through the use of the polar types case design, which could highlight distinct processes leading to different outcomes (cf. Langley & Abdallah, 2011). The presence of Japanese professors who introduced me to the organizing committees' secretariats of both marathons was also considered in the case selection process, as it increased the feasibility of the case studies. I present an overview of the two marathons in Table 3.2, and other contextual similarities and differences between the two cases are further discussed in the next section of Research Context.

Figure 3.3—A Map of Osaka and Kyoto



Note. Adapted from PowerPoint Design (2018).

Table 3.2—Overview of the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon

	The Kyoto Marathon	The Osaka Marathon
Inaugural edition	March 11, 2012	October 30, 2011
Duration	One day	One day
Frequency	Annual	Annual
Runners	15,211 (2020)	32,989 (2019)
Volunteers (approx.)	8,000 (2020)	10,000 (2019)
Organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kyoto • Kyoto Athletics Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osaka Prefectural Government • City of Osaka • Osaka Association of All Athletics
Sanctioned by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan Association of Athletics Federation • Association of International Marathons and Distance Races 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Athletics • Japan Association of Athletics Federation • Association of International Marathons and Distance Races
Secretariats (Project teams)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within the City of Kyoto • Formed by 12 members (from the City of Kyoto, the Kyoto Athletics Association, and the Kyoto City Sports Association) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located within the Osaka Prefectural Government • Formed by 12 members (from the Osaka Prefectural Government, the City of Osaka, and Osaka Association of All Athletics)
Events (pre-pandemic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Marathon (42.195km) • Pair-Ekiden (1st leg: 27.6km; 2nd leg: 14.6km) • Wheelchair Race (6.1km) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Marathon (42.195km) • Wheelchair Race (42.195km)
Consequences in 2020	Held on Feb 16, 2020 (Just before the pandemic)	Cancelled (Instead, held alternative events including the virtual marathon: December, 2020)
Consequences in 2021	Cancelled the in-person event (Instead, held alternative events including the virtual marathon: Jan-Feb, 2021)	Cancelled (But, the organizing committee decided to schedule the in-person event on Feb 27, 2022, integrating with the Lake Biwa Mainichi Marathon)
Consequences in 2022	Cancelled the in-person events again (Instead, held alternative events including the virtual marathon: Jan-Feb, 2022)	Partially held on Feb 27, 2022 (The general runner and wheelchair race categories were cancelled 11 days before the event, with about 300 elite runners participating in the race)

Note. Adapted from the Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee (2020a, 2020b, 2021, 2022), The Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee (2020a, 2022a, 2022b), and personal communications with the secretariat members of each marathon (April 18, 2022, April 26, 2022).

Second, plausible inferences are required; for critical realism-based research, this process is referred to as retroduction (or abduction). In particular, retroduction has been used in numerous explanatory case studies, even if not explicitly acknowledged as such. A notable example of this is Allison and Zelikow's (1999) seminal work, *Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban missile crisis*, which is widely considered as one of the best and most famous explanatory case studies (Yin, 2018). In the study, the authors posited three competing but complementary theoretical perspectives (i.e., rational actor, organizational process, and bureaucratic politics perspectives) to explain why and how nuclear war was averted in the Cuban Missile Crisis (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). They collected rich data and, with the consideration of previous literature, identified social structures and conditions (i.e., contextual factors) that led to the series of events, which is essentially a form of retroduction (especially, abduction). Underpinned by critical realism, retroduction is also used in project management (e.g., Fuentes et al., 2019) and sport event management studies (e.g., Derom, 2014). Following these examples, I employed retroduction in this dissertation to understand a phenomenon from multiple angles and to “help sharpen existing theory by pointing to gaps and beginning to fill them” (Siggelkow, 2007, p. 21).

Third, to fully explain a given phenomenon, its dynamic process should be investigated (Yin, 2018). This process can be defined as “a sequence of individual and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding over time in context” (Pettigrew, 1997, p. 338). The importance of dynamic processes, such as path dependency and evolutionary processes, has been increasingly recognized by researchers in recent years (e.g., Cloutier & Langley, 2020; Garud et al., 2020; Siggelkow, 2007). The emphasis on process is also an important advantage for the present dissertation, which examined the influence of temporality as a key construct of the

embeddedness perspective. It is worth noting that, for cases to serve as illustrations to advance existing theoretical arguments, researchers engage in an iterative process of moving back and forth between data and theories (Siggelkow, 2007). Allison and Zelikow (1999) employed this iterative approach in their examination of the course of events, and sport (event) management researchers who engage in qualitative research are also encouraged to do so (Skinner et al., 2021).

Lastly, it is important to be aware of the criteria for evaluating the quality of one’s methodology. Although there is no definitive rubric to evaluate case studies, Wynn and Williams (2012) have offered criteria for evaluating critical realism-based case studies specifically (see Table 3.3). These criteria are based on five critical realists’ methodological principles and were considered throughout the research process.

Table 3.3—Evaluation Criteria of Critical Research-Based Case Studies

Critical realists' methodological principles	Evaluation criteria
Explanation of events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick description of case “story” including activities and outcomes • An abstracted sequence of events (including the experiences of participants and observers)
Explanation of social structures and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the structural entities, constituent parts, and contextual conditions existing in the case • Identification of the relationships among the entities • Explication of changes to the social structure • Description of the resulting emergent properties
Retroduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of a set of plausible candidate causal mechanisms • Logical and analytical support for the existence of proposed mechanisms linking the social structure to events
Empirical corroboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical validation of proposed mechanism based on case data • Assessment of the explanatory power of each mechanism relative to alternative explanations • Selection of the mechanism(s) that offers the best explanation
Multiple-methods /Triangulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple theoretical perspectives • Multiple analytical and methodological techniques • Variety of data sources and types • Multiple investigators

Note. Adapted from Wynn and Williams (2012).

In sum, the exploratory and explanatory multiple-case studies represent appropriate methodological approaches for the present dissertation, given the purpose and critical realist assumptions. In the following section, I describe the research context including the two specific cases selected for this research.

Research Context

In the realm of general organization studies, context refers to “the organizational setting which influences the structural dimensions [of a phenomenon under investigation]” (Daft, 1989, p. 17). To better illuminate said phenomena, many organization researchers (e.g., Bamberger, 2008; Johns, 2006; Rousseau & Fried, 2001), including those in the sport (event) management field (e.g., Byers et al., 2012), have posited the importance of considering the context in which their subject organizations operate. In line with these researchers and the methodological assumptions of critical realism, I aim to provide a detailed description of the research context to improve the methodological trustworthiness of the research (Danermark et al., 2019; Wynn & Williams, 2012).

In this section, I present how the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon were established and developed until the pandemic impacted them. To contextualize these marathons, I begin with providing a brief history of marathons in Japan, followed by a comparison between the two marathons.

A Brief History of Marathons in Japan

The Dawn of Japanese Marathons

Japan has hosted numerous major sport events, including four Olympic Games (i.e., Tokyo 1964, Sapporo 1972, Nagano 1998, and Tokyo 2020). Among the Olympic programmes, a marathon is one of the most symbolic disciplines as represented by the only victory medals

presented during the closing ceremony (The Olympic Games, 2021). The origin of the Japanese marathon can be traced back to the Olympic Games. According to Takagi (2021), the first person that brought a marathon to Japan was Aijima Kanjiro, a journalist for The Osaka Mainichi Shimbun⁸ who witnessed the marathon at the London 1908 Olympic Games. After returning to Japan, he wrote a series of articles detailing the excitement of the marathon. These included descriptions of the city's atmosphere, the history of marathons, and the tragic tale of Dorando Pietri⁹. These articles, which marked the first Olympic coverage (in general) in Japan, prompted the newspaper company to organize the first marathon in Japan in preparation for sending Japanese runners to future international marathons.

The inaugural Japanese marathon, named the Great Marathon Competition, was held in 1909 and was organized by The Osaka Mainichi Shimbun. The course went from Kobe to Osaka (32km) and 20 runners qualified to compete from a pool of 408 applicants. The qualification, held at a racecourse, attracted approximately 60,000 spectators. The main race was reported as a great success, with a flashy ceremony featuring fireworks held in Kobe and a parade with a marching band held in Osaka. Takagi (2021) noted the race also played a key role in showcasing the completion of the national project of Osaka's main river excavation, which the runners were crossing during the race.

In 1912, Japan sent two athletes to the Olympic Games in Stockholm. One of the first Japanese Olympians was Yahiko Mishima, who had participated in the qualification race for the Great Marathon Competition, but at the Olympic Games, he competed as a short sprinter. The

⁸ Shimbun means newspaper in Japanese.

⁹ Dorando Pietri, an Italian marathon runner who competed in the London 1908 Olympic Games, had been leading up to the Olympic stadium until he fell just before reaching the finishing line. He finished literally sustained by an umpire and a doctor, resulting in his disqualification.

other Olympian was Shizo Kanakuri¹⁰, a long-distance runner who would later become known as the father of Japanese marathons. Unfortunately, Kanakuri withdrew from the race due to conditioning problems and fatigue from the long journey, as well as some unexpected environmental factors in Sweden. Embarrassed by his performance, he silently came back to Japan without even notifying race officials of his withdrawal. After returning to Japan, however, he worked diligently to develop the Japanese marathon as a runner and, after retiring from competition, as an opinion leader in the world of Japanese athletics (Havens, 2015).

Ekiden: Another Traditional Long-Distance Road Race in Japan

To understand the evolution of Japanese marathons, it is also necessary to know *Ekiden* which is, simply put, a long-distance road relay originating in Japan. Each *Ekiden* varies in distance and number of runners. A distinctive feature of *Ekiden* is the use of a sash called a *tasuki*, which is passed from the start to the finish by the runners who cover a designated leg of the race (ASICS Canada, n.d.). In 1917, The Yomiuri Shimbun organized the first *Ekiden* in conjunction with an exposition in Tokyo celebrating the 50th anniversary of the capital's relocation from Kyoto to Tokyo (Nakamura, 2021). This event was inspired by couriers running to deliver messages between Tokyo and Kyoto in the Edo period (1603-1868); the messengers would stop at stations along the way to rest and often pass messages to other couriers (ASICS Canada, n.d.)¹¹. This *Ekiden*, consisting of 23 legs (516km in total), included two teams, one from Kanto (i.e., the eastern region around Tokyo) and the other from Kansai (i.e., the western region around Kyoto and Osaka). Shizo Kanakuri, the first Japanese Olympian, participated in this *Ekiden* as the anchor of Team Kanto, which won the race. After the race, Kanakuri called for

¹⁰ In some literature, Shizo Kanakuri's first name is written as Shiso, and his family name is written as Kanaguri.

¹¹ The words *Eki* and *Den* in Chinese character (or *Kanji* in Japanese) mean station and delivering, respectively, but the word *Ekiden* itself has a long history, which can be traced back to the systems found in the Chronicles of Japan published in 720 (Kokugakuin University, 2017).

more competitions of Ekiden to cultivate strong marathon runners for the Olympic Games, resulting in the creation of the well-known university Ekiden called Hakone Ekiden.

Today, in the census regarding Japanese sport, marathons and Ekiden are often grouped together. According to Sasakawa Sport Foundation (2021, p. 11), the category of “Marathon and Ekiden” was ranked 4th in the survey of “Types of sport spectating on TV” (multiple answers) with a viewing rate of 30.1%¹². As a traditional team sport that emphasizes camaraderie and dedication, symbolized by a *tasuki*, Ekiden has been cherished throughout Japan and has contributed to nurturing elite marathon runners (most Japanese elite marathon runners have experienced Ekiden at some point in their careers) as well as growing the running population (ASICS Canada, n.d.; Kokugakuin University, 2017). In addition to some independent Ekiden competitions, several Japanese marathons, including the Kyoto Marathon, incorporate an Ekiden event into their programs (see the section of Case 1: The Kyoto Marathon).

Elite and Grassroot Marathon Development since the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games

Turning back to the period after World War II, Japan had been struggling to once again join the ranks of the developed countries. The Olympic Games served as a catalyst for promoting national pride among Japanese people; a marathon also played a key role. During the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games, a Japanese male marathon runner, Kokichi Tsuburaya, won a bronze medal. Because the event was held in Japan, Tsuburaya was previously underrated, and more importantly, he won an Olympic Marathon medal for the first time since World War II, his accomplishment was reported as a dramatic story of the birth of a new hero in Japanese marathon (Ichikawa, 1965). Tragically, Tsuburaya committed suicide at the age of 27 in 1968, leaving a suicide note saying, “Kōkichi is utterly exhausted and cannot run [anymore]” (Havens, 2015, p.

¹² This viewing rate followed professional baseball (1st: 48.7%), high-school baseball (2nd: 36.4%) and figure skating (3rd: 30.2%).

67). This is said due to, under pressure from the public, a vicious cycle of repetitive injuries resulting from intensive training, coupled with his frustration at his body not being able to keep up with his desire to qualify for the upcoming Mexico City 1968 Olympic Games (Belson, 2021; Havens, 2015). Nonetheless, his outstanding achievement and lessons regarding the importance of mental health have been passed on to subsequent generations of runners (Belson, 2021; Havens, 2015).

Since the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games, grassroots marathons, also known as citizens' marathons, have also blossomed in Japan, fueled by economic growth, increasing health consciousness, and the success of elite marathons. In 1967, the Ohme Marathon in Tokyo became the first marathon open to general citizens. One year before his suicide, Tsuburaya participated in this marathon, resulting in the adoption of the slogan "Let's Run with Tsuburaya" and the participation of 182 citizen runners in addition to high school runners (Havens, 2015, p. 143; R-bies, n.d.). Three years later, the Amakusa Pearl Line Marathon was established in Kumamoto, home of honorary chairman and race starter Shizo Kanakuri. This marathon, with the slogan "Slow is Beautiful" (Hart, 1982, p. 8), was intended for non-elite runners over the age of 40. Following this marathon, the magazine *Runners*, which focuses on citizen runners, was first published in 1976, marking the beginning of an increase in both the number of marathons and the running population in Japan. This trend continued until Japan's first marathon boom peaked in the mid-1980s (Yamanaka, 2010). Having said this, during this period, citizens' marathons and elite marathons were held separately, unlike famous marathons held in Western countries (e.g., the Boston Marathon, the Chicago Marathon, and the London Marathon).

The Birth of Large-Scale Urban Marathons: The First Tokyo Marathon in 2007

Despite fading in popularity in the mid-1990s due to the bursting of Japan's bubble economy, the second marathon boom started with the success of the inaugural Tokyo Marathon in 2007 (Yamanaka, 2010). The marathon, led by former Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara, was a convergence of citizen runners' desires for a large-scale urban marathon that included both elite and citizen runners and Ishihara's political ambition to leverage this major sport event to promote Tokyo's bid for the 2016 Olympic Games (Shimizu, 2015). The first Tokyo Marathon was a risky venture, as Japan had never before hosted a marathon with more than 10,000 runners or blocked off key locations in the centre of the city for such a long period of time (seven hours). For these reasons, there were concerns that critical accidents might occur, but the marathon was ultimately a great success, with approximately 30,000 runners enjoying running through the city of Tokyo (Shimizu, 2015). Although it is uncertain to what extent the Tokyo Marathon influenced the bid for the Olympic Games, it inspired the creation of similar large-scale urban marathons in other municipalities across Japan, including Kyoto and Osaka. Next, I provide an overview of the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon, along with Table 3.2.

Case 1: The Kyoto Marathon

The Kyoto Marathon is an urban marathon held annually in the spring. Since its creation in 2012, it has been jointly hosted by the City of Kyoto and the Kyoto Athletics Association [hereafter KAA], and as the highest decision-making body, the Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee¹³ [hereafter KMEC] is formed by its key stakeholders (KMEC, 2012a, 2022a). The last in-person event, held in 2020, attracted 15,211 domestic and international runners, and was

¹³ The term "Executive Committee," as used in the context of the Kyoto Marathon, serves the same function as the "Organizing Committee", a term commonly employed in sport event management field (e.g., Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). In this dissertation, therefore, when I mention "organizing committees" without specifying the context, it also includes the KMEC (i.e., Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee).

supported by approximately 8,000 volunteers (KMEC, 2020a). Sanctioned by JAAF and AIMS, the Kyoto Marathon offers Full Marathon (42.195 km), Pair-Ekiden (1st leg: 7.6 km; 2nd leg: 14.6 km), and Wheelchair Race (6.1 km) (KMEC, 2020b). As the birthplace of Ekiden, it features an event for this traditional Japanese long-distance relay race; the opportunity to run the course of the famous Ekiden races is one of the reasons for its popularity (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2011a). I present the numbers of runners in the Kyoto Marathon between 2012 and 2020 in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4—Numbers of Runners in the Kyoto Marathon 2012-2020

Edition	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Date	Mar.11	Mar.11	Feb.15	Feb.15	Feb.21	Feb.19	Feb.18	Feb.17	Feb.16
Full Marathon (42.195 km)	13913	14,860	15,321	16,004	15,749	16,858	15,832	16,289	14,802
Pair-Ekiden (1st leg:7.6km; 2nd leg:14.6km)	170	199	202	224	240	384	388	428	402
Wheelchair Race (6.1 km)	10	11	9	8	11	10	9	6	7
Total	14,093	15,070	15,532	16,236	16,000	17,252	16,229	16,723	15,211

Note. Adapted from the Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee (2012b, 2013, 2014a, 2015a, 2016, 2017a, 2018a, 2019, 2020a).

The idea of the Kyoto Marathon is somewhat inspired by the success of the Tokyo Marathon (Personal communication with a university professor working for the Kyoto Marathon since its inaugural edition, April 25, 2022). However, the Kyoto Marathon evolved as an update of its predecessor, the Kyoto City Half Marathon (1994-2009) in response to demands from runners (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2010a). The marathon's creation was also influenced by a new national sport policy: the *Basic Act on Sport* enacted in 2011, which was established by revising the Sport Promotion Act enacted in 1961 (Personal communication with a university professor working for the Kyoto Marathon since its inaugural edition, April 25, 2022). The City

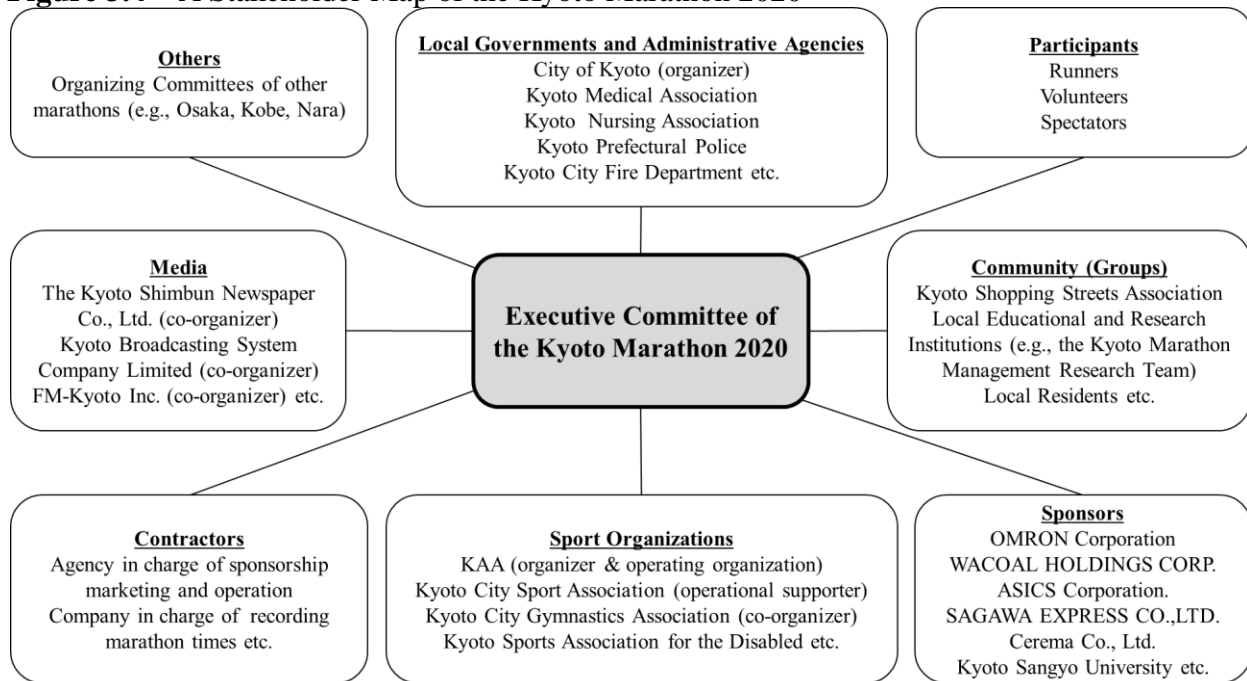
of Kyoto formulated its own version of the *Sport Promotion Plan in March 2011*, with the creation of the Kyoto Marathon was as one of the main objectives (City of Kyoto, 2016). The Kyoto Marathon also shares a similarity with the Osaka Marathon in that the budget for the event is scrutinized by the Kyoto City Council due to the city's financial difficulties (e.g., The Kyoto City Assembly, 2012a).

One of the concepts of the Kyoto Marathon is an environmentally friendly marathon, which is presented as the “DO YOU KYOTO? Marathon”, meaning “Do you act in an environmentally friendly manner?” (KMEC, 2014b). This was inspired by the date of the second Kyoto Marathon coinciding with the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (KMEC, 2014b). Following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred exactly one year prior to the inaugural marathon in 2012, the concept of “Assistance for Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake” was added to the marathon's mission until 2021 (KMEC, 2021a).

As an inter-organizational project, the Kyoto Marathon also involves many organizations from various sectors (see Figure 3.4). While the marathon is officially organized by the KMEC, its secretariat, which is formed within the purview of the City of Kyoto, technically manages the marathon. Figure 3.5 illustrates the structure of the KMEC in the Kyoto Marathon 2020.

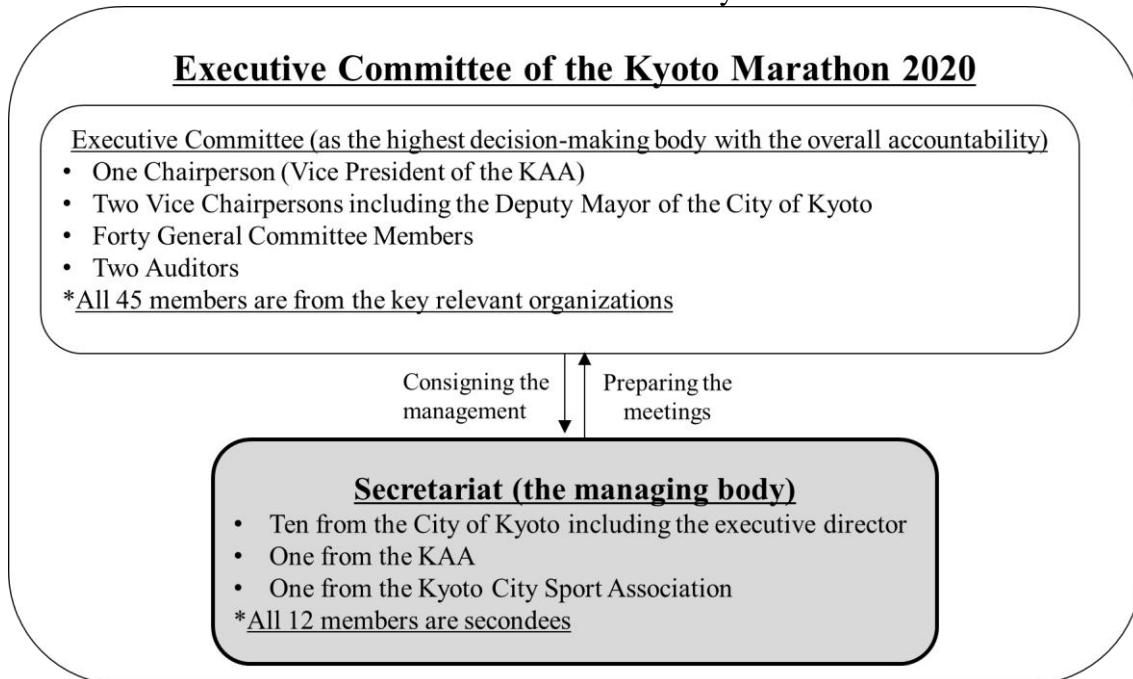
For the 2021 iteration of the event, the KMEC initially announced plans for an in-person event on March 27th, 2020, but ultimately decided to host the marathon virtually, as announced on July 31st, 2020 (KMEC, 2020). Similarly, for the 2022 event, the KMEC announced on July 14th, 2021, that the marathon, initially scheduled as an in-person event, would instead be held virtually (KMEC, 2021b). The 2022 Online Kyoto Marathon was held between January 22nd and February 20th, 2022 (KMEC, 2022a).

Figure 3.4—A Stakeholder Map of the Kyoto Marathon 2020



Note. Adapted from the Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee (2020b) and personal communication with a university professor working for the Kyoto Marathon since its inaugural edition (April 25, 2022). KAA = Kyoto Athletic Association.

Figure 3.5—Structure of the Executive Committee of the Kyoto Marathon 2020



Note. Adapted from the Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee (2021) and personal communication with the secretariat members of the Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee (April 26, 2022). KAA = Kyoto Athletic Association.

Case 2: The Osaka Marathon

The Osaka Marathon is a city marathon held annually in the fall until 2019. Since its inception in 2011, it has been jointly organized by the Osaka Prefectural Government, the City of Osaka, the JAAF, and the Osaka Association of All Athletics [hereafter OAAA], and as the highest decision-making body, the Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee [hereafter OMOC] is formed by its key stakeholders (OMOC, 2020a). The last in-person marathon before the pandemic held in 2019 attracted 32,989 domestic and international runners, and was supported by approximately 10,000 volunteers. Sanctioned by World Athletics with an Elite Label, JAAF, and AIMS, the Osaka Marathon provides Full Marathon and Wheelchair Marathon (OMOC, 2020a). I present the number of runners in the Osaka Marathon between 2011 and 2019 in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5—Numbers of Runners in the Osaka Marathon 2011-2019

Edition	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Date	Oct.30	Nov.25	Oct.27	Oct.26	Oct.25	Oct.30	Nov.26	Nov.25	Dec.01
Full Marathon (42.195 km)	27,134	28,307	29,098	29,921	30,459	30,289	30,011	30,222	32,979
Wheelchair Marathon (42.195 km)	27	36	14	21	21	9	15	16	10
Challenge Run ¹ (8.8 km)	2,002	2,115	2,137	2,039	1,854	1,961	1,982	2,025	-
Total	27,161	28,343	29,112	29,942	30,480	30,298	30,026	30,238	32,989

Note. Adapted from Hashizume and Sugimoto (2022). ¹Challenge Run was discontinued due to a major change made to the marathon course in 2019.

The creation of the Osaka Marathon was driven by the success of the Tokyo Marathon in 2007 and was brought about through the strong political leadership of Toru Hashimoto, designating the host of the Osaka Marathon as one of the governor's key projects in 2008 (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2008). He is the founder of the local political party, the Osaka Restoration

Association, and the former governor of Osaka. As such, the political landscape of Osaka (where both the governor and mayor are members of the political party), greatly influences the close relationship between the City of Osaka and the Osaka Prefectural Government in co-hosting the marathon (Personal communication with a Special Advisor to the City of Osaka and the Osaka Prefectural Government, August 20, 2022)¹⁴. However, due to austerity measures implemented by the political party, the budget for the marathon is closely scrutinized by the Osaka Prefectural Assembly and the Osaka City Council (e.g., The Osaka City Council, March 4, 2019; The Osaka Prefectural Assembly, October 10, 2012).

The concept of the Osaka Marathon is “Osaka’s New Festival,” and the most highlighted theme is charity, following the principle of the London Marathon (Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022, p. 2). Through the work of expert committees, the OMOC has developed the marathon in terms of its charity system, marathon course, and connection with other sport- and non-sport events (Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022).

As an inter-organizational project, the Osaka Marathon involves many organizations from various sectors (see Figure 3.6). While the marathon is officially organized by the OMOC, its secretariat, which is formed within the purview of the Osaka prefectural government, technically manages the marathon. Figure 3.7 illustrates the structure of the organization committee of the Osaka Marathon.

Due to the pandemic, the organizing committee for the Osaka Marathon 2020 cancelled the in-person event, initially scheduled for November 29th, 2020, and instead, decided to host

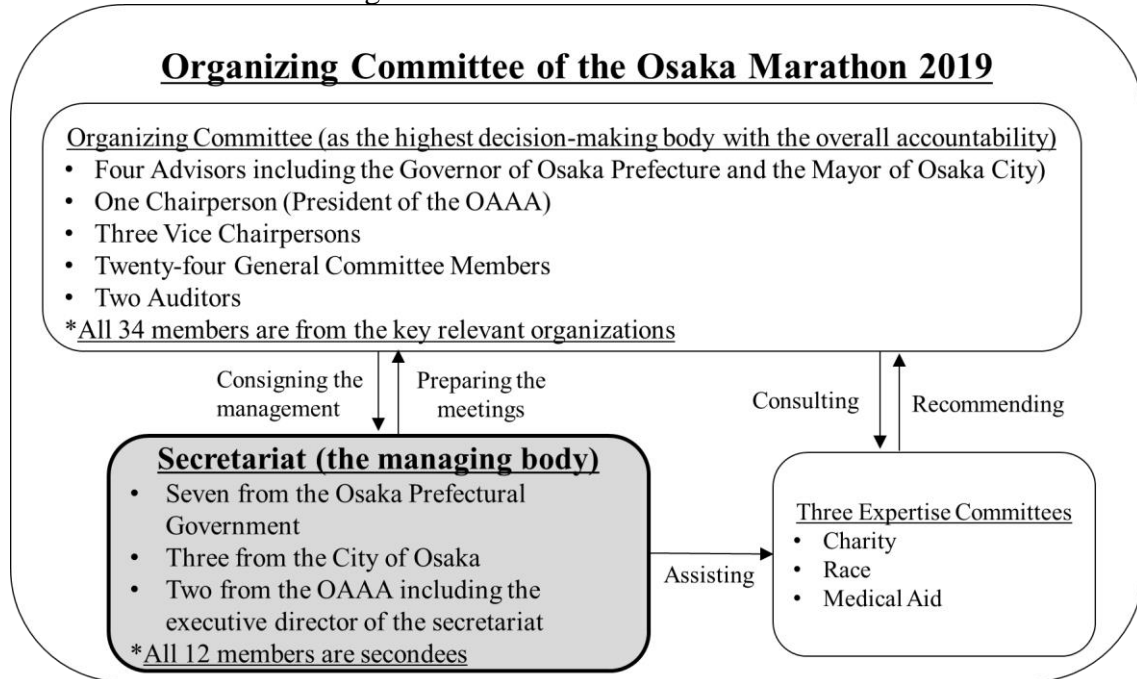
¹⁴ There used to be a political conflict regarding the administrative district reform in Osaka between the governor and the mayor. The first edition of the Osaka Marathon was held just before the upcoming unified local elections, and, at that time, the mayor agreed to the proposal to establish the marathon put forward by the governor (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2010a; The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2010b). After all, following the Osaka Marathon in 2011, the mayor lost the election, and since then, the political party launched by the governor has maintained both political positions (at least as of the time of writing this dissertation).

Figure 3.6—A Stakeholder Map of the Osaka Marathon 2019



Note. Adapted from the Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee (2020a). OAAA = Osaka Association of All Athletics; JAAF = Japan Association of Athletics Federations.

Figure 3.7—Structure of the Organization Committee of the Osaka Marathon 2019



Note. Adapted from the Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee (2020a), Hashizume & Sugimoto (2022), and personal communication with the secretariat members of the Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee (April 18, 2022). OAAA = Osaka Association of All Athletics.

alternative competitions, including a virtual marathon held in December of that year (OMOC, 2020b). Subsequently, plans were made to conduct the in-person marathon on February 27th, 2022, which would incorporate the Lake Biwa Mainichi Marathon, a race typically reserved for elite male runners and held in a neighboring prefecture, as announced on July 13th, 2021 (OMOC, 2021a). Initially, the maximum number of participants was limited to 20,000, but due to the resurgence of the virus in the sixth wave, the OMOC eventually limited participation to only 300 elite runners, a decision announced just 11 days prior to the race (OMOC, 2022b).

Differences and Similarities between the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon

There are several notable differences between the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon, including organizational arrangements, seasonality, concepts, and categories. A particularly notable distinction is the mode of initiation of these marathons, with the Kyoto Marathon being created bottom-up and as an update of a previous event, whereas the Osaka Marathon being established top-down and from scratch. Throughout this dissertation, I have considered these differences as contextual factors (including characteristics of the sport events) that can generate actual events (i.e., something that happens in this sense) by activating social structures, which may (partially) explain the divergent processes and outcomes of the two marathons during the pandemic (cf. Danermark, et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, there are also many similarities between the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon including the timing of the event's establishment, geographical proximity, the characteristics of the sport events (a large-scale annual urban marathons), and the persistent financial difficulties faced by the primary organizers. Among them, two similarities are noteworthy. The first is that substantial management and coordination of stakeholders is largely handled by a secretariat consisting of 12 secondees from municipalities and sport organizations,

and the relationship between the secretariat and the parent organizations of the secondees is crucial for both marathons. The second is that the KMEC and the OMOC, which holds regular meetings, serve mainly as forums where representatives from each stakeholder attend, vote, and present to the press on matters that have already been planned and proposed by the secretariats and agreed upon with key attendees prior to the official meetings (Personal communication with the secretariat members of the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon, July 25, 2022, August, 2022). This feature means that interviewing secretariat members was key to obtaining rich and useful information for both marathons. They serve as important sources regarding the discussion and proposals, including their own, which are not recorded in meeting minutes. Both marathons also have the characteristic of frequent turnover of secretariat members in a short period of time, as most members belong to local governments, which also places restrictions on the selection of interviewees. It was, therefore, important to seek out long-serving interviewees as well as archival materials such as newspapers and assembly minutes of the City of Kyoto, the Osaka prefectural government, and the City of Osaka to which they are accountable.

Data Collection

Data sources for this research consisted of (1) archival records and documents, and (2) semi-structured interviews (Skinner et al., 2015; Slack & Parent, 2006; Yin, 2018). Relying on multiple data sources (i.e., data triangulation; Patton, 2015) can build converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 2018), which enhances the confidence that research findings accurately reflect the realities experienced by the participants (i.e., credibility; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I endeavoured to use these multiple data sources in a balanced manner to address each RQ as effectively as possible.

Archival Records and Documents

As a low-cost, stable, and rich source of information, archival records and documents can provide useful data for research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), archival records can be defined as “any written or recorded statement prepared by or for an individual or organization for the purpose of *attesting to an event or providing an accounting*” (p. 277, emphasis in original), while documents refer to such material “*other than a record* that was not prepared specifically in response to a request from the inquirer” (p. 277, emphasis in original). In this research, I collected a variety of archival records, including minutes (or summary) of meetings, annual and final reports, guidelines for COVID-19 measures, and any other organizational data (e.g., budget, survey, and maps), and documents, including newspaper articles, magazines, books, academic papers and reports, publicly available census, and other statistical data (cf. Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018). Some of them were accessed online (e.g., websites, social media), while others were gathered in-person (e.g., libraries) or in-person (i.e., when interviewing).

Analyzing these data from archival records and documents allowed me to describe actual events and actions over time and provide contextual background, which led to identifying appropriate informants (i.e., interviewees) for the ensuing semi-structured interviews (Parent et al., 2017; Skinner et al., 2015). Immersing myself in these materials was also beneficial to help me acquire knowledge of the marathons’ historical contexts, such as the origins and evolution of marathons, as well as the process of notable events and actions during the pandemic. This facilitated the implementation of the event-tracking technique (Hannah & Eisenhardt, 2018) in the interviews, thereby enhancing their effectiveness.

Meeting minutes of assemblies (i.e., City of Kyoto, Osaka prefectural government, City of Osaka) provided remarkably rich data as the organizers of marathon. The number of meetings where their own marathons were mentioned are as follows: City of Kyoto (255); Osaka prefectural government (122); and City of Osaka (70). Newspaper articles were also valuable sources of external documents. It is noteworthy that, in Japan, newspapers are deemed as the most reliable media, as evidenced by that 61.2% of Japanese people trust newspapers, followed by TV at 53.8% and radio at 50.9% (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2021). Using newspaper databases of five major Japanese newspaper companies (i.e., The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Asahi Shimbun, The Mainichi Shimbun, The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, and The Sankei Shimbun) and one local newspaper company (i.e., The Kyoto Shimbun), I gathered articles about the Kyoto Marathon and The Osaka Marathon. I also reviewed magazines such as *Runners*, the domestic top-selling running magazine (R-bies, n.d.), as well as academic articles, books, reports, that pertained to these marathons and/or the impact and measures against the pandemic in the Japanese sport event industry. In total, I consulted 9,453 archival records and document pages (see Table 3.6).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to have “the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee” (Skinner et al., 2015. p. 55). This is an appropriate method to address *how* and *why* questions on key events and actions, as well as to gain insights into the perspectives of informants (Yin, 2018). Prior to commencing the interviews, I obtained ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Ottawa (ethics file number: H-02-22-7794) and Kobe Shinwa Women’s University as the local REB in the data collection site (ethics file

Table 3.6—Details of Archival Records and Documents

Archival Records and Documents		The Kyoto Marathon	The Osaka Marathon	General (covering both marathons)	Total
Meeting minutes of municipal governments	City of Kyoto (2009-)	1055	-	-	1055
	Osaka Prefectural Government (2009-)	-	318	-	318
	City of Osaka (2009-)	-	117	-	117
Organizing committees' archival materials (e.g., Final reports, meeting summary, websites)		170	1512	74	1756
Other Stakeholders' archival materials		107	975	-	1082
Newspaper articles	The Kyoto Shimbun (2009-)	367	161	-	528
	The Yomiuri Shimbun (2008-)	161	1897	-	2058
	The Asahi Shimbun (2009-)	134	186	-	320
	The Mainichi Shimbun (2009-)	197	199	-	396
	The Nihon Keizai Shimbun (2009-)	93	274	-	367
	The Sankei Shimbun (2010-)	50	236	-	286
Other documents (e.g., Magazine articles, academic articles and books)		63	520	587	1170
Total (9453 pages)		2397	6395	661	9453

Note. I indicated the page numbers for Meeting Minutes based on the specified format (Font: Yu Mincho; Font Size: 11; Size: Letter Size) when printed. In addition, I counted newspaper articles as one page per article, and website articles as one page based on the displayed screen.

number: 2021-6).

Interviewee Recruitment

Interviewee recruitment involved a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. Purposeful sampling is the recruitment technique aimed at “selecting *information-rich*

cases for study in depth” (Patton, 2015, p. 169, emphasis in original). Initially, I set two inclusion criteria for identifying potential interviewees: (1) those who engaged in the marathons before and during the pandemic; and (2) those in positions to interact with members of other organizations in relation to the marathon. However, for the secretariat members of both marathons, since many of them were governmental officials who were regularly replaced, I also included members who worked for the marathons only during the pandemic period (i.e., from 2020) in the interview population.

Based on my prior experiences in recruiting interviewees in Japanese society, I chose not to contact my potential interviewees out of the blue. To increase the chance of acceptance, and in accordance with Japanese customs, I began the recruitment by asking two Japanese university professors who had been working for each marathon since their inaugural editions to refer me to each secretariat (instead of contacting each secretariat directly). After the first interviews with the secretariat members of each marathon, I integrated snowball sampling into my sampling technique (Patton, 2015). This allowed me to identify and approach prospective interviewees of the secretariats and these stakeholders who met the recruitment criteria outlined above. In this way, I followed a triangulation logic in the interviewee recruitment (i.e., stories from different perspectives) to improve the credibility of this research (see Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011; Hannah & Eisenhardt, 2018). Eventually, all prospective interviewees I approached had a common acquaintance with me (even the two professors I first contacted).

In total, I conducted 21 interviews with 22 participants from both marathons’ secretariat members and their stakeholders such as host governments, sport organizations, media, sponsors, community, universities, and contractors. Including marathon secretariat members, some interviewees belonged to multiple organizations. Out of the 21 interviews conducted, two of

them were follow-up interviews with two university professors involved in the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon, conducted once each. In addition to these interviews, I conducted two supplementary interviews with experts in Japanese marathons and sport organizations, which enhanced the credibility of this research. Most interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes (on average 74 minutes). An overview of the interviews is presented in Table 3.7.

Interview Procedure

Prior to each interview, I sent a letter of information to all interviewees via email. In the Appendices, I present the recruitment texts for the marathon secretariats (Appendix A and Appendix B) and their stakeholders (Appendix C and Appendix D), as well as the letter of information for the secretariat members (Appendix E and Appendix F) and their stakeholders (Appendix G and Appendix H). I also set opportunities for potential interviewees and myself to discuss my dissertation via Zoom (n=1), over the phone (n=1), and in-person (n=4). This undertaking seemed effective in building rapport because it provided an opportunity to alleviate potential interviewees' concerns about how the interview would be disclosed, as well as an opportunity to identify commonalities between each other and share challenges they feel about the marathon under study.

Once a person agreed to participate in an interview, I sent them the consent form via email or presented it to them in person before the interview (see Appendix I and Appendix J for the secretariat members, and Appendix K and Appendix L for their stakeholders). Interviews were conducted at a location and time/date of each interviewee's choosing, such as at the interviewee's office or via a videoconferencing platform (e.g., Zoom and Teams). In accordance with Japanese cultural expectations, I brought small gifts (sweets; about \$10 per gift) with me for each interviewee when meeting in person. All interviews (except for the two follow-up

Table 3.7—Interview Overview

ID	Marathon	Affiliation of interviewee	Number of interviews	Length of interview	Interview recorded & transcribed
1	Kyoto	Secretariat	1	68 min.	Yes
2	Kyoto	Secretariat	1	77 min.	Yes
3	Kyoto	Secretariat	1	77 min.	Yes
4	Kyoto	Secretariat	1	62 min.	Yes
5	Kyoto	Secretariat	1	66 min.	Yes
6	Kyoto	Local university (Research)	1	50 min.	Yes
7	Kyoto	Local university (Research)	2	89 min.; 113m	Yes; No
8	Kyoto	Local university (Research)	1	41 min.	Yes
9	Osaka	Secretariat	1	113 min.	Yes
10	Osaka	Secretariat	1	79 min.	Yes
11	Osaka	Secretariat	1	82 min.	Yes
12	Osaka	Secretariat	1	82 min.	Yes
13	Osaka	Secretariat	1	113 min.	Yes
14	Osaka	Expert Committee (Charity) and Local university (Research)	2	105 min.; 90 min.	Yes; No
15	Osaka	Expert Committee (Charity) and Local university (Research)	1	54 min.	Yes
16	Osaka	Local university (Sponsor and Education)	1	56 min.	Yes
17	Osaka	Media company (Co-organizer)	1	63 min.	Yes
18	Osaka	Advance Create Co., Ltd. (Sponsor)	1	56 min.	Yes
19	Osaka	Advance Create Co., Ltd. (Sponsor)	1	56 min.	Yes
20	Osaka	Osaka City Shopping Street Association (Community group)	1	58 min.	Yes
21	Osaka	MOUSOU. inc (Running app developer)	1	48 min.	Yes
22	Osaka	Contracted agency company (Sponsorship, marketing, and operation)	1	73 min.	Yes

Note. The interviewees from the Kyoto Marathon Secretariat include secondees from the City of Kyoto, the Kyoto Athletics Association, and the Kyoto City Sports Association. The interviewees from the Osaka Marathon Secretariat include secondees from the Osaka Prefectural Government, the City of Osaka, and the Osaka Association of All Athletics. For privacy protection, I do not disclose who is a secondee from which organization.

interviews and the two expert interviews) were audio-recorded for an accurate rendition (Yin, 2018). No interviewee expressed discomfort or refused permission to use a recording device when requested.

I present the interview guides in Appendix M and Appendix N (for the Kyoto Marathon's secretariat), Appendix O and Appendix P (for the Osaka Marathons' secretariats), Appendix Q and Appendix R (for the Kyoto Marathon secretariat's stakeholders), and Appendix S and Appendix T (for the Osaka Marathon secretariat's stakeholders). I relied on previous literature on theoretical perspectives for information to create the interview guides. For example, the embeddedness perspective, particularly social networks, informed the question that I asked marathon secretariat members: What stakeholders influenced your organizations' activities during the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, how? Another perspective on the interplay between social structures and human agency informed questions including: How did your organization address the impact of the pandemic? Since qualitative research is iterative in nature, the questions in the interview guide were adapted as the analysis progressed to delve deeper into occurring constructs and/or their relationships (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Parent, 2010).

During the interview, I employed the event-tracking technique, in which interviewees are asked to go through a step-by-step chronology of events and actions (Hannah & Eisenhardt, 2018). This helped reduce interviewees' recall bias. To do this effectively, I presented interviewees with the key dates of announcements provided by the organizing committees (e.g., cancellation, rescheduling, meeting of the board of directors) and the information on the pandemic situation in Japan and in each prefecture where the marathons are held (e.g., declaration of the state of emergency and infection numbers) based on the document information I had collected. For interviews with organizing committee secretariat members, I also presented

them with a list of functional areas and their (potential) stakeholders created from collected archival records and documents prior to the interview. After the interview, I wrote self-reflection notes each time, which were used as clues and suggestions regarding how to interpret my data (Yin, 2018). Thus, the notes were also subjects of analysis. In the rest of the dissertation, these self-reflection notes are cited as “Interviewee #, personal communication, [date]” to follow APA 7th edition citation guideline (American Psychological Association, 2019).

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and sent back to the interviewees to generate additional data and insights, and to increase the credibility of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Smith & McGannon, 2018). As a result, six interviewees made minor revisions to their respective interview transcripts. Since data collection was conducted simultaneously with data analysis (Glaser, 1978), I found some important aspects that arose in the ongoing interviews were missed in previous interviews. To address this problem, as I mentioned above (in the subsection of Interviewee Recruitment), I conducted two follow-up interviews for each marathon (cf. Uzzi, 1997). Since the follow-up interviews were conducted with researchers at local universities, they also provided beneficial suggestions and comments for developing theoretical frameworks through retroduction when we discussed my data interpretation.

Data Analysis

In this research, I used a critical realism-based thematic analysis (Fryer, 2022; Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021) for addressing RQ1 and RQ2, and I used a comparative analysis informed by Archer’s dualism approach (Archer, 1995) for RQ3. Here, I describe the outlines and procedures of each analysis.

Critical Realism-Based Thematic Analysis

As one of the most well-known methods for analyzing qualitative data, thematic analysis has been developed in two streams, namely, what Braun and Clark (2019) described as codebook thematic analysis (e.g., Attride-Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Guest, 2012; Joffe, 2012; Lawless & Chen 2019) and reflexive thematic analysis (e.g., Braun & Clark, 2006, 2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2022; Braun et al., 2016). As the names of each analysis implies, their analytical procedures are different in their philosophical orientation; while codebook thematic analysis is grounded within a post-positivism paradigm, reflexive thematic analysis is based on what Braun and Clark (2019) called the qualitative paradigm, implying interpretivism and other assumptions that often guide qualitative inquiry (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021)¹⁵. However, since critical realism is an alternative philosophical position, both ontologically and epistemologically, an alternative approach to thematic analysis was also required. To address this, Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021) first developed the critical realism-based thematic analysis where the stratified reality (i.e., real, actual, and empirical domains: Bhaskar, 1975/2008) is assumed. The aim of the thematic analysis was also articulated based on the notion of critical realism-based research. Fryer (2022, p. 365) stated the critical realism-based thematic analysis “aims to produce nuanced causal explanations of events, countering the mistaken assumption that qualitative research cannot produce causal knowledge.”

Procedure of a Critical Realism-Based Thematic Analysis

Building on the initial work of Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021), Fryer (2022) refined the approach to fit three concepts of data, codes, and themes in analysis with the aforementioned

¹⁵ Traditionally, the post-positivism paradigm is informed by ontological realism and epistemological objectivism while the interpretivism paradigm is informed by ontological relativism and epistemological constructionism/constructivism (see Crotty, 1998).

three-layered reality. With some modifications (described below), I performed the thematic analysis based on Fryer's (2022) five-step procedure, which is presented in Table 3.8. It is noteworthy that although these steps are presented as a linear process, they are iterative in nature; namely, as researchers are likely to navigate back and forth between different steps during the analysis (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021).

Table 3.8—Outline of the Critical Realism-Based Thematic Analysis

Steps	Aims	Detailed instructions
Step 1.	Developing research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the experiences and/or events of interest • Develop one or more causal research questions
Step 2.	Familiarizing with the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim read a large proportion of the data • Make notes on initial thoughts and questions
Step 3.	Creating codes of experiences (in empirical domain) and events (in actual domain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply descriptive codes to the data using a data-led approach • Develop these codes by processes of standardization (use the same wording for similar codes) and consolidating (use theoretical terms to unite different codes) • Review codes by assessing their descriptive and interpretative validity
Step 4.	Creating codes of contextual factors, social structures, and mechanisms (in real domain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop themes (causal explanations of events) through retroduction in each element (contextual factors, social structures, and mechanisms) • Review themes by assessing their theoretical validity
Step 5.	Generating conclusions and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how to best communicate the conclusions. • Explore potential contributions and implications.

Note. Adapted from Fryer (2022).

Step 1. Developing Research Questions

The first step involves developing RQs. As Fryer (2022) acknowledged, it may seem uncommon in the procedure of thematic analysis, but it is in line with the recommendation of Braun and Clarke (2022) regarding the importance of RQs in reflexive thematic analysis design. Ideally, RQs are established prior to data collection, as changing RQs can lead to alternations in

the type of data researchers require. However, as Fryer (2022) pointed out, it is not always best to adhere to one's original RQs and adopting them during the research can yield better outcomes. In this present research, I also adjusted the RQs at some points to better address the research purpose when comparing the collected data with existing literature (i.e., Steps 3 & 4). As of writing the research proposal of this dissertation, for example, my initial RQ1 was about how managerial aspects of marathon as an inter-organizational project changed due to the pandemic-driven uncertainty. However, as the research progressed, I began to recognize the literature contribution in the experiences of marathon management under pandemic-driven uncertainty, as expressed by the secretariat members. Therefore, with additional reviews regarding uncertainty (e.g., Phan & Wood, 2020), I modified the RQ to emphasize the term experience (i.e., RQ1: How did the marathon secretariat members experience uncertainty over time due to the pandemic?). Likewise, for RQ3, I revised the initial RQ that emphasized the strategies of the secretariat members to ones that highlighted their human agency. This revision was made to achieve the purpose of this dissertation in a more academically and practically meaningful way.

To justify the use of critical realism-based thematic analysis, researchers are encouraged to incorporate at least one RQ that relates to the real domain in the stratified reality assumed in critical realism and that seeks a causal explanation of a particular phenomenon (Fryer, 2022). This is because critical realism assumes that the most effective approach to drawing causal conclusions is through in-depth and intensive qualitative research (Danermark et al. 2019). This corresponds most closely with RQ2 of this dissertation (i.e., RQ2: How can the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the marathon secretariat members' activities be explained using an embeddedness perspective?).

Step 2. Familiarizing with the Data

Adapted from the first step of Braun and Clark's (2006) approach, in the second step, researchers familiarize themselves with the raw data. This involves preparing data to facilitate analysis, skimming data while jotting down initial thoughts or ideas if necessary, and documenting information on the data (Fryer, 2022). To do so, I uploaded digitized materials (e.g., verbatim records of interviews and minutes) into the NVivo in Japanese to facilitate analysis (QSR International Pty Ltd., released in June 2021), while analyzing printed or photocopied materials (e.g., newspaper articles, magazine articles, and books) manually. After that, by reading through all the raw data, I evaluated which data were relevant and which were not relevant to the RQs at hand. This helped save time on the remaining analysis work. I also left some initial reactions of mine on the software I used or paper documents to be able to refer to them at any point during the analysis (Fryer, 2022). Documenting information on the data involves recording the circumstances when particular data were collected (Fryer, 2022). In the present study's case, this was particularly important for interview data, where I recorded information that could potentially influence the interviewees' answers, such as when and where the interview took place, what the position of the interviewees is in the context of the research, how the interview was conducted, and how the interview transcripts were modified by the interviewees.

Step 3. Creating Codes of Experiences (for the Empirical Domain) and Events (for the Actual Domain)

The third step involves coding, which is divided into three sub-steps: applying, developing, and reviewing codes (Fryer, 2022). Following Braun and Clark's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis, the first sub-step—applying codes—recommends researchers employ a

descriptive approach to coding. Instead of using single-word codes, this descriptive approach employs relatively long codes for data. The purpose of this coding is to capture the data as they are, without being constrained by the researcher's preconceptions, whether they are semantic or latent, making it a data-driven approach (cf. Braun & Clark, 2006). However, because researchers cannot free themselves of knowledge gained from prior research, their conceptual and theoretical sensitivity inevitably influences their coding (Danermark et al., 2019). Thus, as long as the codes remain descriptive, this approach does not hinder the use of conceptual and theoretical terms (Fryer, 2022). In the present research, for example, the concept of reputational risk could be used as part of a code: reputation risk can hinder sponsorship, when an interviewee talked about sponsor considerations.

The second sub-step—developing themes—is recommended to be initiated before completion of the first sub-step, to stop the generation of a vast number of codes through the descriptive approach (Fryer, 2022). In this research, I started developing codes after applying codes to the first two interview transcripts and progressed with analysis by iterating between these two sub-steps. It is important to note that code development involves two processes called standardization and consolidation. Standardization refers to the process of combining codes that express the same content in somewhat different wording, and consolidation refers to the process of considering whether there are any conceptual or theoretical terms that can be used for the descriptive codes (Fryer, 2022). For example, in the standardization of this research, as codes: (1) I thoroughly considered how to avoid going into deficit, and (2) we must not run a deficit, expressed almost the same meaning, I used only the latter code. On the other hand, in the process of consolidation, for example, I integrated the following four descriptive codes: (1) how to avoid making a loss was a particularly important concern, and (2) wasting expenses should be avoided,

and (3) the feeling of not wanting to give up hope for the in-person marathon, and (4) simulating how much loss would occur at each stage is needed, into the more abstract and conceptual code: trade-off between empty expenses and accurate judgement, as these could collectively hold a single meaning.

It is necessary to mention the differences between Fryer (2022) and my analytical approach regarding the two sub-steps up to this point. Although Fryer (2022) claimed that the final developed codes should represent events in the actual domain (i.e., converging experiences in the empirical domain, which were written in a descriptive manner), it did not apply to my analysis. Rather, I conducted the procedures of the first (i.e., applying) and the second (i.e., developing) sub-step for both experiences and events. The reason is that (1) there are limitations to exploring events solely from the experiences of the concerned people due to their bounded rationality, and (2) it was possible to identify events from archival records and documents issued by third parties without necessarily involving the experiences of the person(s) concerned. As such, regarding the use of data, I primarily referenced data from semi-structured interviews for the exploration of experiences, while I extensively referenced data from archival records and documents as well as semi-structured interviews for the exploration of events.

The third sub-step involves reviewing codes, technically evaluating two types of validity in coding. In these processes, referring to Maxwell (1992), Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021) argued for the need to consider descriptive validity for standardization and interpretative validity for consolidation. Descriptive validity refers to the extent to which a researcher has appropriately represented the data (i.e., experiences or perspectives in the empirical domain) being coded, and interpretative validity refers to the extent to which the descriptive codes appropriately reflect the data (Fryer, 2022). Although I was the only one with the ability and right to freely move between

raw data and descriptive codes due to considerations of interviewee language usage (i.e., Japanese) and privacy, I worked on improving descriptive validity by reflecting on this process whenever issues arose during subsequent analysis. In addition, Fryer (2022) advocated for researchers to maintain Thoughts and Question documents during the review process, akin to Step 2. This is because, while thematic analysis may be good at looking at what is explicitly said in the data, it may be less good at capturing what is left unspoken. However, as Bhaskar (1975/2008) stated, such a negative aspect may be indispensable in understanding causality. In the present research, for example, I asked secretariat members about their experiences during the pandemic. Responding to my question, some secretariat members often took time to carefully choose their words when talking about their stakeholders rather than talking about themselves. This may indicate the tension in inter-organizational relationships and/or their consideration for the stakeholders in these difficult times. I recorded evaluations of interviewees, including such silences, as the Thoughts and Question documents (cf. Fryer, 2022).

Step 4. Developing and Reviewing Themes

Based on the codes generated in the last step, the fourth step involves developing and reviewing themes of key elements (i.e., contextual factors, social structures, and mechanisms) in the real domain, which lead to causal explanations that answer one or more research questions on causality (Fryer, 2022). In the process of theme development, researchers aim to infer, through retroduction, how events (in developed as codes in Step 3) are generated by particular mechanisms of causality (Danermark et al., 2019). Whereas the previous step focused on creating codes for the exploration of experiences and events, it is only during the step of theme development that researchers deliberately attend to causality based on the codes; specifically,

this is the step where researchers address the question: “What causes underlie the experiences and events of interest?” (Fryer, 2022, p. 375).

In the process of developing themes, causal explanations of events are created through retroduction. This inference is conducted by asking questions like: “What is the best explanation of what must have happened for this event to occur? Or more simply, what best explains this event?” (Fryer, 2022, p. 375). To this end, I mobilized the understanding of the knowledge obtained through the creation of codes in Step 3, as well as my own reflections on the code review process in Step 3, along with previous literature on the research subject and theoretical perspectives (Fryer, 2022).

Regarding the classification of themes, I made another modification to Fryer’s (2022) approach by dividing the generation of themes in the real domain into three elements: contextual factors, social structures, and mechanisms. Although Fryer (2022) implicitly included contextual factors and social structures under the label of mechanisms, as Sayer (2000) suggested, making these three nuances explicit can provide the necessary construct and boundary information (i.e., what can cause what under what conditions). This can facilitate the advancement of good theories (cf. Bacharach, 1989). In this research, this modification allowed me to deem and analyze social structures as constructs from the theoretical embeddedness perspective and the COVID-19 pandemic as a key contextual factor. Moreover, separating mechanisms from these elements helped to highlight core constructs that drive explanations, such as legitimacy (e.g., in institutions as another social structure). Together, this modification resulted in more detailed explanations of the phenomena under investigation.

Themes developed in Step 4 are also subject to review, similar to Step 3. The “validity” of the causal explanations derived through the development of themes is referred to as theoretical

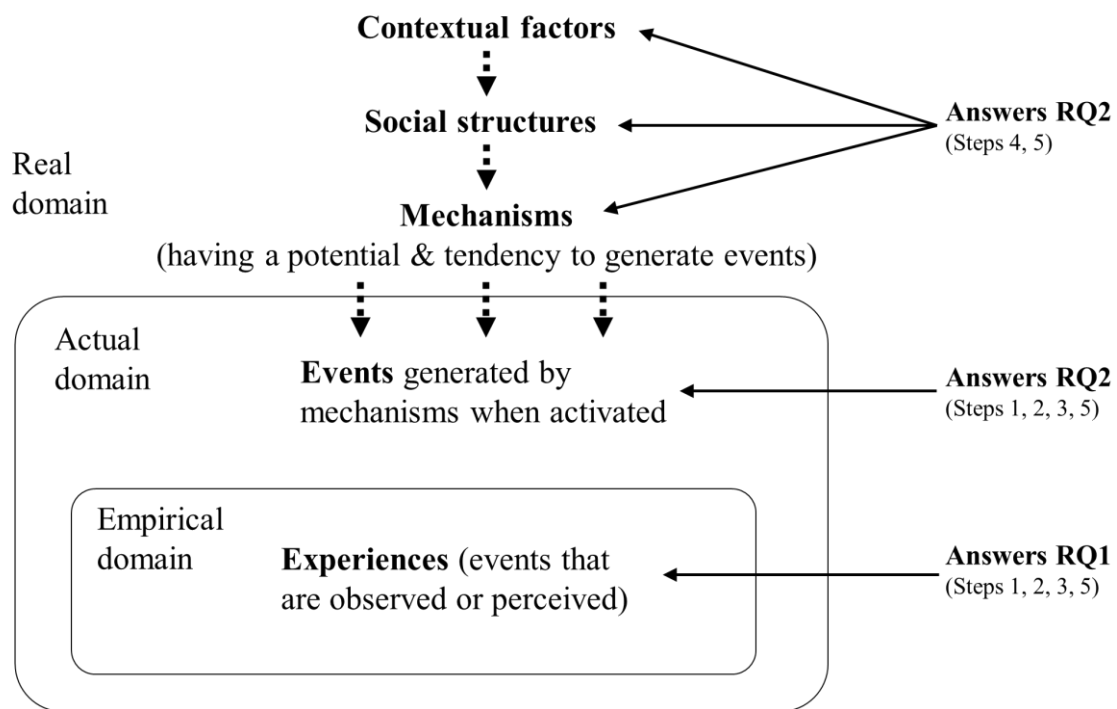
validity (Maxwell, 1992). This is evaluated by considering how well retroductive claims can plausibly explain the events based on sound logic (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). In addition to using what participants described as a rationale to ensure theoretical validity (Fryer, 2022), I used critical friends (Smith & McGannon, 2018) and constant comparison (Eisenhardt, 2021) for further support. I (as a fluently bilingual Japanese and English speaker) translated the codes from Japanese to English and consulted with my research supervisor (who is an English speaker and specialized in qualitative data analysis) acting as a critical friend (Smith & McGannon, 2018). According to Cowan and Taylor (2016), the role of critical friends is “not to ‘agree’ or achieve consensus but rather to encourage reflexivity by challenging each others’ construction of knowledge” (p. 508). In addition, when I encountered any concerns stemming from the translation process, I sought advice from Japanese-English bilingual individuals (cf. Parent & Deephouse, 2007). Constant comparisons, based on the multiple-case design (Eisenhardt, 2021), were also employed to ensure theoretical validity by considering whether a given explanation can be applied to both settings of the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon.

Step 5. Generating Conclusions and Reporting

Through reflecting on the entire analysis, Step 5 involves considering transparent and clear ways to communicate with the readers, and exploring potential contributions and implications (Fryer, 2022). To demonstrate the transparency of the analysis, I provided the developed codes and themes in Appendix K. To present the results clearly, Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021) and Fryer (2022) proposed a diagram that illustrates the causal mechanisms (in the real domain), events that tend to be generated (in the actual domain), and experiences (in the empirical domain). By adding the elements of contextual factors and social structures to the display of the real domain (cf. Sayer, 2000), I modified Fryer’s (2022) diagram, which made the

explanation of the phenomenon of interest clearer. I illustrated the adopted diagrams in Figure 3.8 below, with the presentation of which RQs relied on which steps to address which domains. Potential contributions were considered by focusing on “the points of agreement, disagreement, and extension” between the previous literature and the result of this analysis (Fryer, 2022, p. 376). Potential implications were proposed by considering how future researchers and practitioners can apply the knowledge produced from this analysis to improve their endeavours (Fryer, 2022). I have presented them in Chapter VII where Discussion and Conclusion are written.

Figure 3.8—A Causal Explanation Diagram



Note. Adapted from Fryer (2022) and Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021).

Comparative Analysis Informed by Archer’s Dualism Approach

RQ1 and RQ2 in the present study were related to exploring experiences of secretariat members and explaining their activities under the pandemic-driven uncertainty, respectively. The

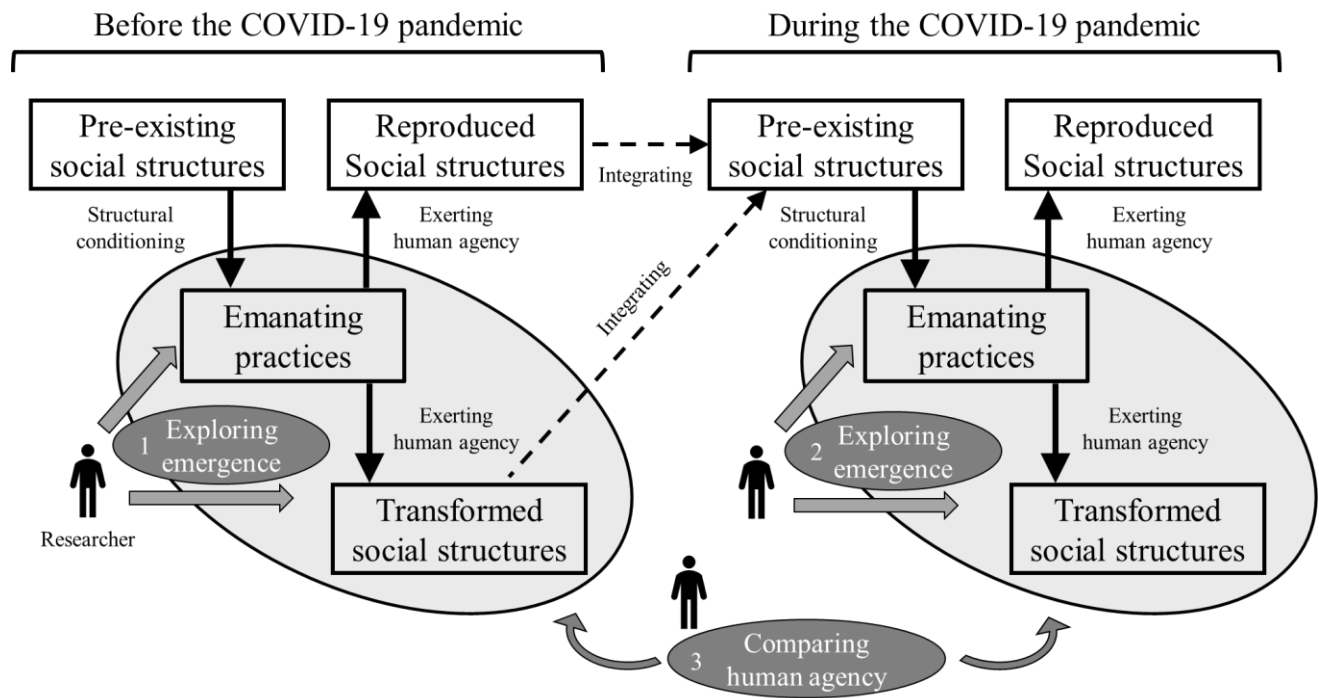
critical realist-based thematic analysis was useful to answer the RQs. However, RQ3, which concerns how agents have transformed social structures in this context, was outside the scope of the analysis. As no specific analytical method corresponding to Archer's dualism approach for addressing RQ3 was available to my knowledge, I developed an analytical framework with a specific procedure (see the next sub-section). This analysis enabled me to highlight how pandemic-driven uncertainty changed the way human agency influences social structures in this research context. In addition, since agents are individuals who are motivated and can influence social structures (Ahuja et al., 2012), the analysis included not only members of the marathon secretariats but also marathon stakeholders actively involved in its management. Ultimately, this led to a better understanding of the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing marathons by supplementing the aspect that the previous two RQs could not cover.

Procedure of a Comparative Analysis Informed by Archer's Dualism Approach

I divided the analysis into three steps: (1) exploring emergence before the pandemic, (2) exploring emergence during the pandemic, and (3) comparing human agency before and during the pandemic (Figure 3.9). The figure divides the practices related to marathon management before and during the pandemic periods. Practices before the pandemic are assumed to be influenced by pre-existing social structures, which Archer (1995) termed social conditioning. Agents, through these practices, exert human agency and either reproduce or transform the social structures.

For the first two steps (i.e., exploring emergence before and during the pandemic), I focused on the concept of emergence, which arises as new properties within social structures or new practices among agents (Bhaskar, 1979/2015; Danermark et al., 2019). Specifically, I began by identifying new practices; then, I inferred how these practices have influenced the social

Figure 3.9—A framework of a Comparison Analysis Informed by Archer’s (1995) Dualism Approach



structures. For the identification of practices, I used Fryer’s (2022) technique (i.e., the third step of the critical realism-based thematic analysis). I also identified the agents who undertook the practices. To do so for first step, I primarily used data from archival records and documents, as well as from semi-structured interviews with individuals involved with the secretariat since the inception of the marathons (The Kyoto Marathon: three interviewees; The Osaka Marathon: four interviewees). For the second step, I used data related to marathons during the pandemic, which included all semi-structured interviews. For the inference of how these practices have influenced the social structures, I reversed Fryer’s (2022) technique used to create themes (i.e., the fourth step of the critical realism-based thematic analysis) and employed retrodution. This was done by asking the question: “What is the best explanation of what must have happened for this [reproduction/transformation] to occur?” (Fryer, 2022, p. 375). To address the social structures at the time of the marathon’s inception, I started with the types of social structures (i.e., social

networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory) used to answer RQ2, ensuring compatibility with RQ2.

For the third step, I compared human agency before and during the pandemic. To do this, I conducted a descriptive comparison of the similarities and differences in not only how practices transformed social structures, but also the characteristics of the agents involved in these practices, for the periods.

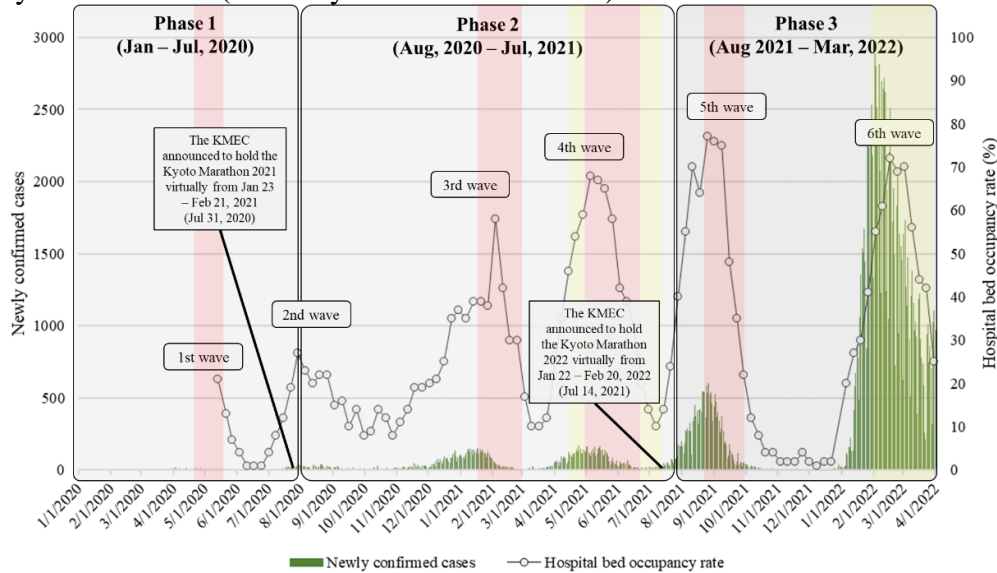
CHAPTER IV: Exploring Marathon Secretariat Members' Experience Under Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty

In this chapter, I address RQ1: *How did the marathon secretariat members experience uncertainty over time due to the pandemic?* This chapter covers a period of two years and three months, from January 1st, 2020, to March 31st, 2022. This timeframe encompasses two editions of the marathon programs that were changed twice each by the KMEC and the OMOC due to the pandemic (i.e., the Kyoto Marathon 2021 & 2022 and the Osaka Marathon 2020 & 2022). Over this period, Japan witnessed six waves of COVID-19 outbreaks. I divided the timeline into three periods based on changes in the social situation, ensuring that each period contains two waves (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2).

Phase 1 (January 2020 to July 2020) includes Waves 1 and 2. This phase corresponds to the period when the pandemic emerged, and society began to fall into chaos (Sakurai, 2021). Due to the unclear nature of COVID-19, there were very limited measures that marathon secretariat members could take, apart from “wearing masks and practicing social distancing” as a secretariat member mentioned (Interviewee 10). Phase 1 concludes with the announcement of the cancellation of in-person marathons by both marathon organizing committees.

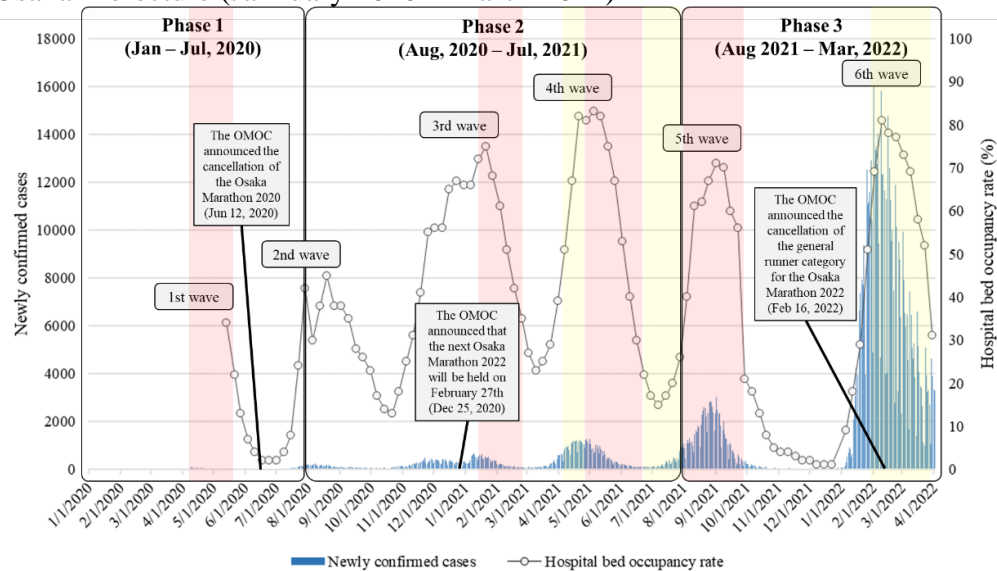
Phase 2 (August 2020 to July 2021) includes Waves 3 and 4. This phase was marked by societal anxiety triggered by virus mutations and critical discussions about whether Tokyo 2020 should be held or not. However, it also saw the beginning of a brighter outlook with the start of vaccine distribution. The Osaka Marathon, due to the aforementioned changes in the event schedule (see Research Context in Chapter III), did not have to make a decision regarding the in-person marathon's feasibility. Meanwhile, the in-person Kyoto Marathon was cancelled for two consecutive years, and that marked the end of Phase 2.

Figure 4.1—Trends of Newly Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and the Hospital Bed Occupancy Rates in Kyoto Prefecture (January 2020 – March 2022)



Note. KMEC = The Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee. Adapted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the KMEC (2020c, 2021b), and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.). The data on hospital bed occupancy rates became available starting on May 13, 2020. The light red shading and the light yellow shading indicate the period of the state of emergency and the semi-emergency measures, respectively.

Figure 4.2—Trends of Newly Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and the Hospital Bed Occupancy Rates in Osaka Prefecture (January 2020 – March 2022)



Note. OMO = Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee. Adapted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.), and the OMO (2020c, 2022c). The data on hospital bed occupancy rates became available starting on May 13, 2020. The light red shading and the light yellow shading indicate the period of the state of emergency and the semi-emergency measures, respectively.

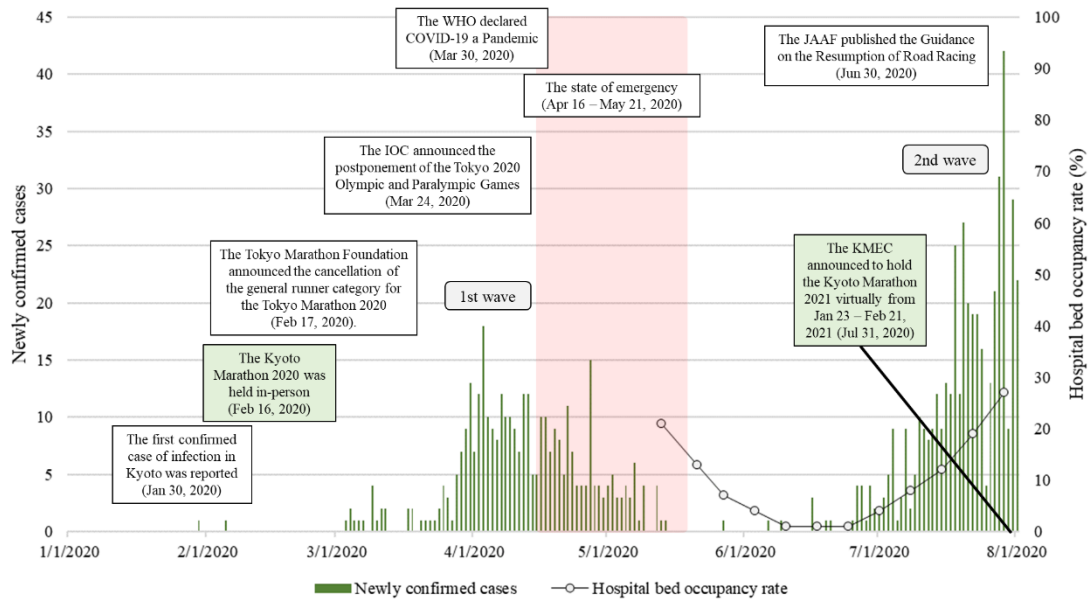
Phase 3 (August 2021 to March 2022) includes Waves 5 and 6. After the conclusion of Tokyo 2020, the possibility of hosting events became more apparent. This is because the Japanese government announced a major policy called the Vaccine-Test Package System (The Japan Times 2021) as one secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon reflected as “If participants get vaccinated, perhaps we can hold (in-person) events, can’t we?” (Interviewee 10). While the Kyoto Marathon was held in a virtual format again, the OMOC, which had decided to hold an in-person marathon, cancelled the general runner category just 11 days before the event and allowed only 300 elite runners to participate in the marathon.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict the time series of newly confirmed cases and hospital bed occupancy rates in the Kyoto Prefecture and the Osaka Prefecture, which were the indicators that the interviewees were primarily concerned about during the spread of the virus. Each figure highlights the information on the duration of the state of emergency and semi-emergency measures applied in those regions, as well as the five important announcements made by the organizing committees regarding the feasibility of marathons. Categorizing and documenting the experiences of marathon secretariat members in each phase illustrated their changing experiences, as their perspectives on the COVID-19 pandemic differed across the periods. Each phase is described in detail from Figure 4.3 to Figure 4.9. I begin by exploring the marathon secretariat members’ experiences during Phase 1.

Phase 1 (January 2020 – July 2020)

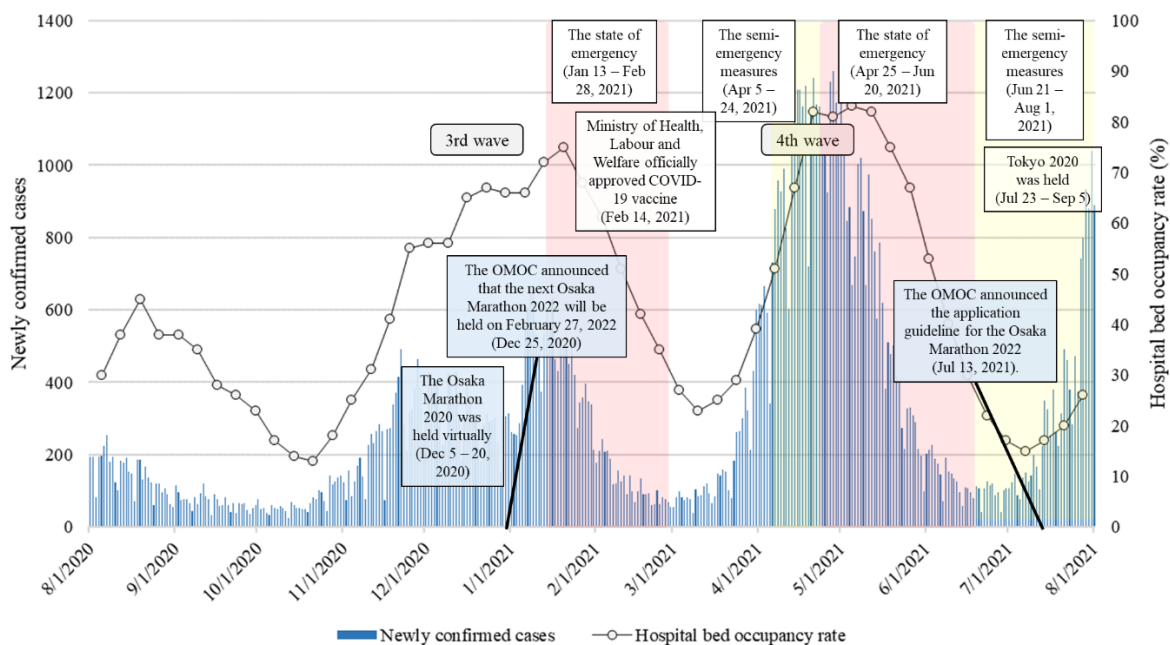
To understand the secretariat members’ experiences, I first contextualize this phase (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4). This period started on January 1st, 2020, when Japanese newspapers announced that “unexplained cases of pneumonia were confirmed one after another in Wuhan, China” (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2020a). Initially, it was just a small news item in the international

Figure 4.3—Phase 1 of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Kyoto Prefecture (Jan. 2020 – Jul. 2020)



Note. KMEC = Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee. Adopted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the KMEC (2020b, 2020c), and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.). The data on hospital bed occupancy rates became available starting on May 13, 2020. The light red shading indicates the period of the state of emergency.

Figure 4.4—Phase 1 of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Osaka Prefecture (Jan. 2020 – Jul. 2020)



Note. OMO = Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee. Adopted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.), and the OMO (2020c). The data on hospital bed occupancy rates became available starting on May 13, 2020. The light red shading indicates the period of the state of emergency.

section, but the infection situation within China and the emergency measures taken by the Chinese authorities gradually garnered substantial attention from media outlets worldwide (The British Broadcasting Corporation, January 29, 2020). In Japan, the first confirmed case was reported on January 15th (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2020a) and the Japanese government dispatched charter flights to repatriate Japanese citizens who wished to return from Wuhan to Japan (The Japan Broadcasting Corporation, January 29, 2020a). Then the cluster infection among passengers of the cruise ship Diamond Princess at Yokohama Port on February 5th, 2020, received considerable attention; by the following month, over 700 infections, including nurses, had occurred onboard the ship, making it the largest outbreak outside of China for several weeks (Mallapaty, 2020).

In Kyoto, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was reported on January 30th, 2020, 17 days before the Kyoto Marathon 2020, which was set to take place on February 16th (The Japan Broadcasting Corporation, 2020b). However, by requesting self-restraint from residents of China and implementing infection prevention measures such as distributing masks and providing hand sanitizers at the venue, the in-person marathon was successfully held without making any major program changes or cluster infections (KMEC, 2020d, 2020e). A few days later, the nationwide infection rapidly escalated; and on February 17th, one day after the Kyoto Marathon 2020, the Tokyo Marathon Foundation announced the cancellation of the general runner category of the Tokyo Marathon 2020 scheduled for March 1st. On February 20th, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2020b) issued a statement requesting event organizers reconsider the necessity of holding events. Keeping them in mind, a secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon recounted how the Kyoto Marathon 2020 was held “by the skin of their teeth,” and reflected that if the event had been scheduled just one week later, it might not have been possible (Interviewee

2). In March, temporary school closures for elementary, middle, and high schools began (The Japan Broadcasting Corporation, 2020c), the global pandemic was declared (World Health Organization, 2020b), and Tokyo 2020 was postponed for one year (International Olympic Committee, 2020). As a measure for event management, Shinzo Abe, the Japanese prime minister at that time, called for the avoidance of the Three Cs (i.e., Closed spaces with poor ventilation, Crowded places with many people nearby, and Close-contact settings such as close-range conversations) to prevent the occurrence of so-called clusters in a press conference on March 20, 2020 (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 2020). Despite the circumstances, because of the unpredictable nature of the ongoing pandemic and the ample time gap until the next marathon, the KMEC tentatively announced, as usual, that the 10th edition of the Kyoto Marathon 2021, would be held on February 21st, 2021, with runner recruitment scheduled to start after July 2020 (KMEC, 2020f).

Unlike the Kyoto Marathon secretariat members who had been observing the situation for a while since the start of the pandemic, the Osaka Marathon staff members seemed to be facing a more pressing situation. On April 7th, 2020, when a state of emergency was declared in Osaka and six other prefectures, the OMOC announced the postponement of the start of runner recruitment for the 10th Osaka Marathon 2020, originally scheduled for November 29th, 2020, by about a month (The Japan Broadcasting Corporation, 2020d; OMOC, 2020d). Following the announcement of an extended runner recruitment on May 12th, the OMOC finally announced the cancellation of the Osaka Marathon 2021 on June 12th. The announcement of the cancellation came at a time when the state of emergency had been lifted and the first wave was coming to settle. However, due to the high level of uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, it was impossible

to ensure the safety of the participants, which led to the decision to cancel the marathon (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2020a).

The first edition of The Guidance on the Resumption of Road Racing, which later became an important criterion for considering the feasibility of holding marathons, was published by the JAAF on June 30th, 2020 (JAAF, 2020). One month later, amid the second wave of the pandemic, the KMEC announced the in-person marathon would be cancelled for a similar reason as the OMO; instead, it announced the hosting of the Kyoto Marathon 2021 in a virtual format, collaborating with a running app company ahead of other events (KMEC, 2020c). Next, I present the marathon secretariat members' experience during Phase 1, categorized by performing the thematic analysis.

Difficulty in Ensuring Safety

The experience that marathon secretariat members highlighted the most during the pandemic was the difficulty in ensuring a safe and secure marathon. During Phase 1, one of the secretariat members of the Osaka Marathon stated, at the beginning of the pandemic “We didn't know what COVID-19 was all about” and mentioned that when news broke about the loss of a famous comedian to COVID-19, Japanese people seemed to start taking it seriously as a life-threatening infectious disease (Interviewee 10). It was seen as a virus that “required utmost caution, as there was no known cure, and the infection process was not well elucidated” (Interviewee 10); namely, even the meaning of ensuring safety was not fully understood. Reflecting on that time, a secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon mentioned, “We sought opinions from our key stakeholders such as the KAA and the Kyoto Medical Association, but at that point, it was too difficult to come up with a definitive conclusion like ‘This is what we can do for COVID-19 countermeasures to hold the [in-person] marathon’” (Interviewee 2).

The meaning of ensuring safety became clearer with the increasing awareness of the concept of the Three Cs amid the spread of the virus. However, it also became evident, especially for large-scale marathons, that the second C (i.e., Crowded places with many people nearby), also known as Social Distancing, posed a wicked challenge. One of the Osaka Marathon's secretariat members mentioned that they were concerned about "the operational challenge at the starting point where more than 30,000 people would gather" (Interviewee 9).

The healthcare-related issues were even more critical. As the decision on whether to proceed with the event became imminent, secretariat members of both marathons maintained close communication with their own prefectural medical associations through the members belonging to the KMEC and the OMOC, respectively. The decision to cancel the in-person marathons reached through these deliberations was accepted as a strong and legitimate basis, prominently reflected in the official announcements of both marathons (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2020b; The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2020a). A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon stated, "Consideration for healthcare professionals was essential," emphasizing that the main point of contention in the discussions with the medical association was not about how many staff members could be dispatched to the marathon, but rather the concern that holding the in-person marathon could impose a further burden on healthcare institutions that were already under strain (Interviewee 2).

A Trade-Off Between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement

Amid restrictions on face-to-face meetings with stakeholders, marathon secretariat members worked tirelessly to prepare a framework for decision-making regarding the feasibility of holding the in-person marathon, obtaining confirmation from the governing bodies (i.e., city/prefectural governments, athletic associations) and other key stakeholders like sponsors.

During the limited time, secretariat members of both marathons experienced a challenging trade-off in discussions on whether to cancel or proceed with the in-person marathon. On one hand, there was a desire to expedite the decision to avoid wasted expenses, while on the other hand, there was a desire to delay the judgement to predict the pandemic situation more accurately. A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon stated:

We considered when to make the decision on whether to hold the in-person marathon or not. Since the registration starts in late July, we worked backwards. Normally, the decision would be made in mid-June or at the latest in early July. However, we also had to take into account the COVID-19 pandemic situation. We could have announced that we would hold the in-person marathon first and then later announced the cancellation, but the expenses for the runner's items and other preparation costs would have accumulated...In the end, we simulated the potential losses and made an internal decision on whether to proceed with the marathon. (Interviewee 2)

The director of the secretariat, who is responsible for addressing the Q&A session with politicians during a meeting of the Kyoto City Assembly, at that time, answered a question, saying, "If we are really going to make the decision to cancel the in-person marathon, it needs to be done quickly. The longer it is delayed, the more costs will be incurred. It also becomes a burden on the City of Kyoto" (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2020a).

As well as the case of the Kyoto Marathon, within the Osaka Marathon secretariat, there was a huge concern regarding expenses, that once paid, would not be returned, such as ordering merchandise. As a member of the Osaka Marathon secretariat stated, the question: "How much will it cost if we go this far?" (Interviewee 9) became a major issue, and the calculation of necessary expenses was conducted intermittently in collaboration with the contracted agency

company members responsible for the marathon operation. At that time, the secretariat member felt anxiety about using sponsorship funds, which accounted for about half of the event's budget (OMOC, 2020e), stating:

Even if the costs related to runner recruitment and entry could be covered by the government's budget, what about the expenses required for the event preparations that will be necessary afterward? What if we start using money from our sponsors and then the marathon gets cancelled? We might not be able to refund it even with the subsequent entry fees. (Interviewee 9)

As such, the secretariat members needed to consider these financial aspects in the process of decision to cancel the in-person marathon in 2020.

Sponsor Considerations

Both, the Osaka Marathon, normally relies on sponsorship fees for around 50% of its income (OMOC, 2020e), and the Kyoto Marathon, normally relies on sponsorship fees for around 40% of its income (Internal document of the KMEC, 2020), experienced minimal withdrawals during the pandemic. Behind these outcomes, Sponsor Considerations, who constitute a considerable portion of the income source, was a crucial experience for the secretariat members as well as contracted agency company members who led the negotiations on behalf of the secretariats. During this period, especially when the economy came to a halt and mass gathering events themselves were socially discouraged, both marathons' secretariat members witnessed concerns regarding communication with sponsors, directly or indirectly through the agency company members. The secretariat members expressed worries about sponsors reducing advertising and promotional expenses, as well as concerns about potential negative impacts on a corporate image that may arise from sponsoring such large-scale

marathons. On behalf of the secretariat members, a contracted agency company member stated, “For many companies, there was huge concern about how ‘sponsors supporting events that gather a lot of people during the pandemic’ could be perceived by the general public” (Interviewee 22).

The transition to the virtual format for the Kyoto Marathon 2021, accompanied by a 15% budget reduction, led to decreased exposure opportunities for sponsors and reduced sponsorship fees (Internal document of the KMEC). Nevertheless, the Kyoto Marathon secretariat was exploring ways to generate sponsor benefits by not only incorporating advertisements related to the virtual marathon but also launching a virtual Expo on their official website where participants could engage with sponsors’ products (KMEC, 2021c). A member of the Kyoto Marathon secretariat member expressed their intention, stating, “When the in-person marathon comes back, we would appreciate the sponsors’ support as before” (Interviewee 1). For the Osaka Marathon, its sponsorship revenue was reduced to zero for the fiscal year, from April 2020 to March 2021 (OMOC, 2021b), but its secretariat attempted to continue its relationship with the sponsors through advertising and promotion at alternative events, including the virtual marathon.

Concern about Reputational Damage

The fourth type of experience is the Concern about Reputational Damage. Secretariat members of both marathons recognized it when considering whether to hold in-person events. This experience involved two concerns: the position of the local governments as primary organizers of the marathons and the political elites who represent the marathons.

The former concern, especially appearing when the nature of COVID-19 was still unclear, manifested as worries among the Kyoto Marathon secretariat members. One member expressed: “Is ours the only marathon doing something strange?” (Interviewee 1). It should be

noted that during a period when COVID-19 infections were rare, there was a societal issue of excessive criticism targeting organizations that had individuals infected; for instance, due to a cluster outbreak among a few students at a local university, faced a situation where the university and its students were subjected to online harassment (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2020c). Thus, the marathon secretariat members were extremely careful to research how other secretariats of similar and/or proximate marathons were doing. Their findings were used as a justification for their proposals for making decisions in terms of the marathon format at the city assembly (e.g., The Kyoto City Assembly, August 4, 2020) and the meeting of the organizing committee (e.g., OMOC, 2020f).

The latter concern was found especially in the case of the Osaka Marathon. A secretariat member reflected on that time as follows:

I had a question about whether it was appropriate to promote ‘flashy events’ [the in-person marathon]. At a press conference, the announcement was made that entries would start next week, but at the same time, the governor of Osaka was urging people to ‘refrain from going out due to the tremendous increase in COVID-19 cases.’ The governor is generally viewed favourably by residents of Osaka, so there was a concern from our standpoint about whether it was okay to say the opposite. Eventually, we decided to ‘reconsider it once more,’ and then, cancelled the marathon. (Interviewee 9)

Continuing their reflection, the secretariat member expressed that the decision to cancel in 2020 took into consideration, to some extent, “the social reputation of such individuals, including the mayor, governor, and the chairman of the OMOC, who also holds the role of chairman of the Kansai Economic Federation and has been dedicating to the 2025 World Exposition in Osaka” (Interviewee 9).

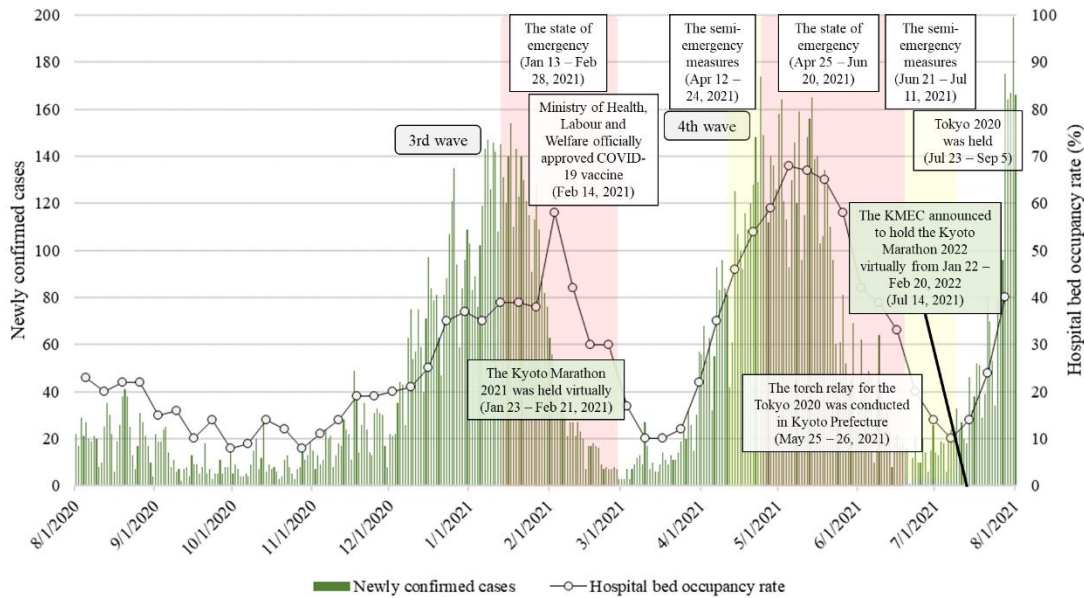
Phase 2 (August 2020 – July 2021)

Phase 2 encompasses the occurrence of the third and fourth waves, along with two declarations of a state of emergency and two sets of semi-emergency measures applied to Kyoto and Osaka prefectures (see Figures 4.5 and 4.6). While this period marked the start of COVID-19 vaccine distribution in Japan as a key step towards ending the pandemic (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2021), it was also a time when the mutation of COVID-19, including the Alpha and Delta variants, was observed (The Japan Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.). Furthermore, there were controversies surrounding the safety of vaccines, particularly within Japan, with Tokyo 2020 scheduled to begin on July 23rd, 2021, which faced critical debates (Yoshimi, 2021). These factors contributed to increased social turmoil and nationwide confusion. In addition, the City of Kyoto, which has long grappled with financial difficulties, was revealed to be facing bankruptcy (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2020b)¹⁶, which was notable news when considering the experiences of the Kyoto Marathon's secretariat members.

During this period, both organizing committees did not hold any in-person marathons. The KMEC organized the Kyoto Marathon 2021 virtually from January 23rd to February 21st. Leading up to and during the event, the KMEC organized small-scale events, such as running workshops, in both virtual format and in-person, but only during a period when the number of infections was relatively low, and with a limited number of participants. However, for the secretariat members, the most considerable impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty was experienced during discussions surrounding whether the next edition of the Kyoto Marathon 2022 should be held in-person or virtually.

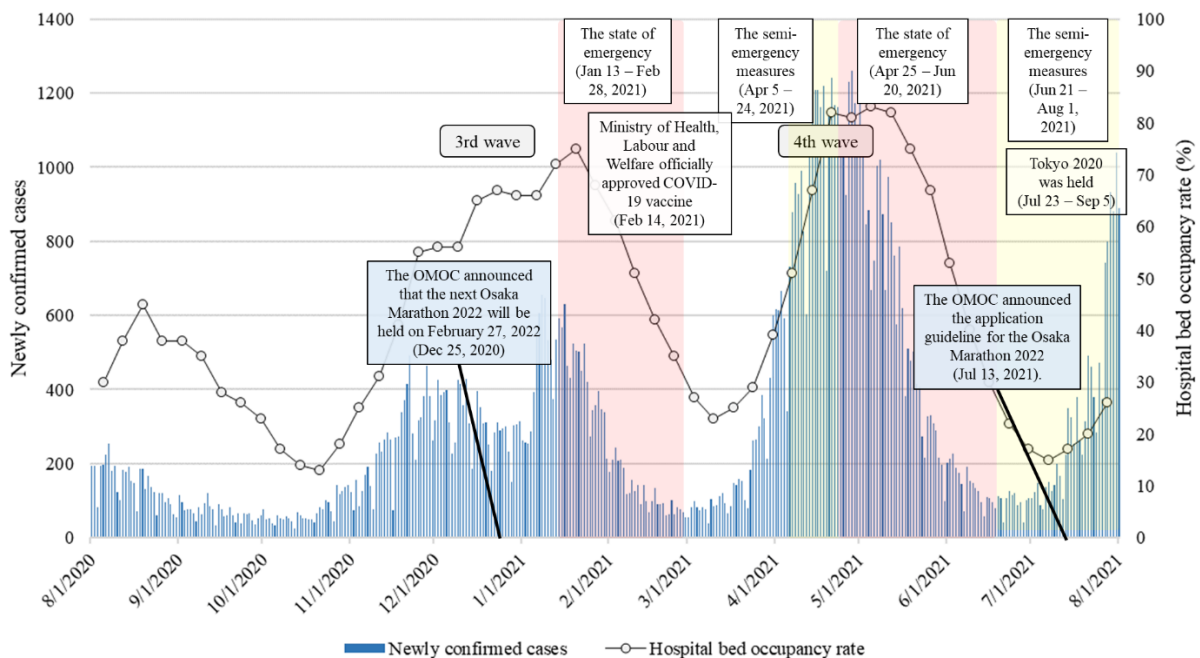
¹⁶ The mayor of Kyoto stated that the City of Kyoto can go bankrupt in the fiscal year of 2028 unless any measures are taken (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2020b). Considering Kyoto's dependency on tourism for tax revenue, "the pandemic can heighten this sense of financial crisis" (Interviewee 3).

Figure 4.5—Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Kyoto Prefecture (Aug. 2020–Jul. 2021)



Note. KMEC = Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee. Adopted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the KMEC (2021a, 2021b), and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.). The light red shading indicates the period of the state of emergency, and the light yellow shading indicates the period of the semi-emergency measures.

Figure 4.6—Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Osaka Prefecture (Aug. 2020–Jul. 2021)



Note. OMO = Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee. Adopted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.), and the OMO (2022c). The light red shading indicates the period of the state of emergency.

Meanwhile, the OMOC conducted a virtual marathon from December 5th to 20th, 2020, using a specially developed application service designed for the Osaka Marathon (OMOC, 2020h) while the small-scale running workshop, usually held as a pre-event, was cancelled for two consecutive years (OMOC, 2020i). One important milestone for the OMOC in this period was that it officially announced the Osaka Marathon's integration with the Biwako Mainichi Marathon, a prestigious marathon known for elite runners, which had been under discussion for several years (OMOC, 2020g). Because of this integration, the OMOC also announced that the next Osaka Marathon would take place on February 27th, 2022 in an in-person format (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2020c), resulting in the event date being shifted three months later than usual. As a secretariat member reflected, "Since the previous cancellation, everyone was going to hold the marathon in-person this time no matter what" (Interviewee, 10).

Difficulty in Ensuring Safety

The COVID-19 impact persisted, making it difficult to predict the waves for the marathon secretariat members. However, Phase 2 marked a period when they had access to increased information and could consider countermeasures regarding COVID-19 to some extent. The guidance from the JAAF, which was periodically revised, resulted in domestic marathons diverging from the uniformity (i.e., hesitation to stand out) seen in Phase 1. For instance, during a meeting of the Osaka Prefectural Assembly, a politician referred to other large-scale marathons held in a different prefecture during the pandemic and inquired about the conditions for holding the Osaka Marathon 2022 in an in-person format. In response, the secretariat director responsible for the Q&A session, at that time, cited the JAAF guidance, stating that the prerequisites for holding the in-person marathon included (1) the lifting of a state of emergency, (2) approval from the local government for holding the event, and (3) sufficient medical facilities for

addressing infectious diseases in the area (The Osaka Prefectural Assembly, 2020a). Likewise, in the Kyoto Marathon secretariat, which had secondees from the KAA and the Kyoto City Sport Association, “the infection prevention guidelines provided by the JAAF and the Japan Sport Association (i.e., the parent organizations of the KAA and the Kyoto City Sport Association), were taken into consideration” (Interviewee 5). These exemplified how Phase 2, through the guidance, brought about a better understanding of what it meant to ensure safety, compared to Phase 1. The distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine was also seen as good news for those who were involved in marathons. Having said this, in a situation where the future was still unpredictable for the secretariat members during the event planning mode, the concern of “what if a state of emergency is declared on the day, can the marathon really be held?” persisted (Interviewee 12).

A Trade-Off Between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement

The Kyoto Marathon secretariat, which usually starts runner recruitment in the summer, experienced this trade-off during Phase 2 again. However, with the confidence gained from the success of the previous year’s virtual marathon and the practice of the Torch Relay for Tokyo 2020 (I also mention this later in the subsection of Concern about Reputational Damage in Phase 2), the secretariat was able to make the decision to propose a virtual marathon for the second consecutive year without much heightened sense of urgency. One of the Kyoto Marathon Secretariat members stated “I believe most key stakeholders, including sponsors, came to accept that holding an in-person marathon was not realistic (Interviewee 1). In turn, despite feeling some anxiety about the future conditions of the pandemic, the Osaka Marathon secretariat members had the desire to expedite the decision-making process regarding the feasibility of holding the in-person marathon as one of them stated, “We wanted to start preparations as soon

as possible” (Interviewee 12). This was motivated by the need to advance pre-event preparations, including “securing agreements with residents and facilities along the race route,” as the date of the marathon had changed (Interviewee 12).

Sponsor Considerations

The consideration of sponsors became more important for the Kyoto Marathon secretariat members as they approached the second consecutive year of holding a virtual marathon. Through discussions with sponsors, the virtual Expo on their official website was upgraded by setting up booths for sponsors and their product showcases, as well as strengthening the promotion of their products during specific sessions of the virtual Marathon (KMEC, 2022b). Meanwhile, secretariat members of the Osaka Marathon, which did not receive sponsorship funds in the previous year, faced difficulties in acquiring sponsorship fees. One of the secretariat members stated:

Because of the need to ensure social distancing, we had to ask for refraining from cheering along the course and reconsider the number of participants. We initially wanted to recruit 35,000 runners, but in the end, we recruited 20,000. In such circumstances, sponsors saw reduced benefits...with reduced exposure, sponsorship fees became more difficult to obtain. (Interviewee 12)

During a meeting of the Osaka Prefectural Assembly, a politician expressed concerns about the sponsors’ withdrawals due to the one-year break, and in response to this remark, the secretariat director, at that time, said they plan to develop sponsor benefits through alternative events, including a virtual marathon (The Osaka Prefectural Assembly, 2020a).

Concern about Reputational Damage

As previously mentioned, Phase 2 can be characterized by the social unrest surrounding Tokyo 2020. As its name suggests, Tokyo 2020 was an event centred around Tokyo, but it also involved some associated programs across prefectures in various ways. One such program was the Olympic Torch Relay, which is traditionally meant to develop an atmosphere conducive to the Games and transmit its values such as peace and friendship along its route (International Olympic Committee, n.d.). However, amid the fourth wave of the COVID-19 outbreak, that caravan fueled social anxiety nationwide (Yoshimi, 2021). Under the supervision of the Organising Committee of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games [hereafter TOCOG], each municipality involved was assigned to its own operations. In the case of Kyoto, unlike Osaka, “the Sports Promotion Office of the City of Kyoto (where most of the Kyoto Marathon secretariat members originally belong to as government employees) was entrusted with the task of operating the Torch Relay” (Interviewee 3). The Torch Relay in Kyoto City was initially planned to take place on public roads, but, due to the spread of COVID-19, it was cancelled and a proposal for a spectator-less relay at the World Heritage sites within the city was suggested by the City of Kyoto (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2021a). Nevertheless, the TOCOG rejected this proposal, and as a result, the relay took place in a neighbouring city’s stadium (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2021b). One secretariat member reflected on his experience at that time, drawing parallels with the Kyoto Marathon, and shared the following thoughts:

[During the spring of 2021], there was a lot of stress, especially due to the Olympic-related issue. The discussion about whether to hold the in-person Kyoto Marathon was almost settled as the controversy surrounding Tokyo 2020 spread throughout Japan, making the topic of the nationwide Torch Relay very sensitive. The debate about whether

to hold the Torch Relay in Kyoto became very heated, making it clear that it's almost impossible to hold large-scale events... Applying the Kyoto Marathon, how could you dare say "Let's do the Kyoto Marathon welcoming 16,000 runners" at that time?

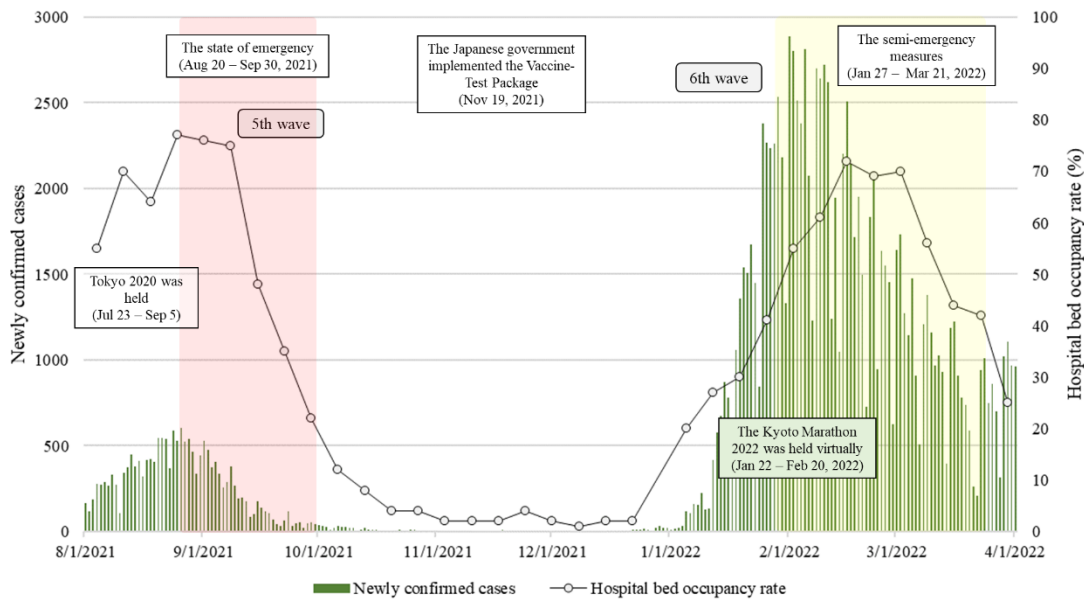
(Interviewee 1)

Meanwhile in Osaka, since the department responsible for the Tokyo 2020 torch relay was not directly related to the marathon secretariat, its members did not perceive the same level of stress as in the case of the Kyoto Marathon. During the period when the Torch Relay took place, the Osaka Marathon secretariat members faced challenges in determining the timing to start its promotion activities. Amid the fourth wave of the COVID-19 outbreak, the secretariat members have encountered "[public] opinions on both sides of the spectrum" regarding the feasibility of proceeding with the preparations for the in-person marathon (Interviewee 11). Thus, they sometimes "postponed running advertisements when it became evident that the originally planned timing coincided with a period of high infection rates" (Interviewee 12). A contracted agency company member responsible for the event promotion also reflected on that period, saying, "It was challenging to strike the right balance because while it's important to promote that the Osaka Marathon was taking proper precautions and that everyone can participate securely, we also felt that overemphasizing it could inadvertently cause reader anxiety" (Interviewee 22).

Phase 3 (August 2021 – March 2022)

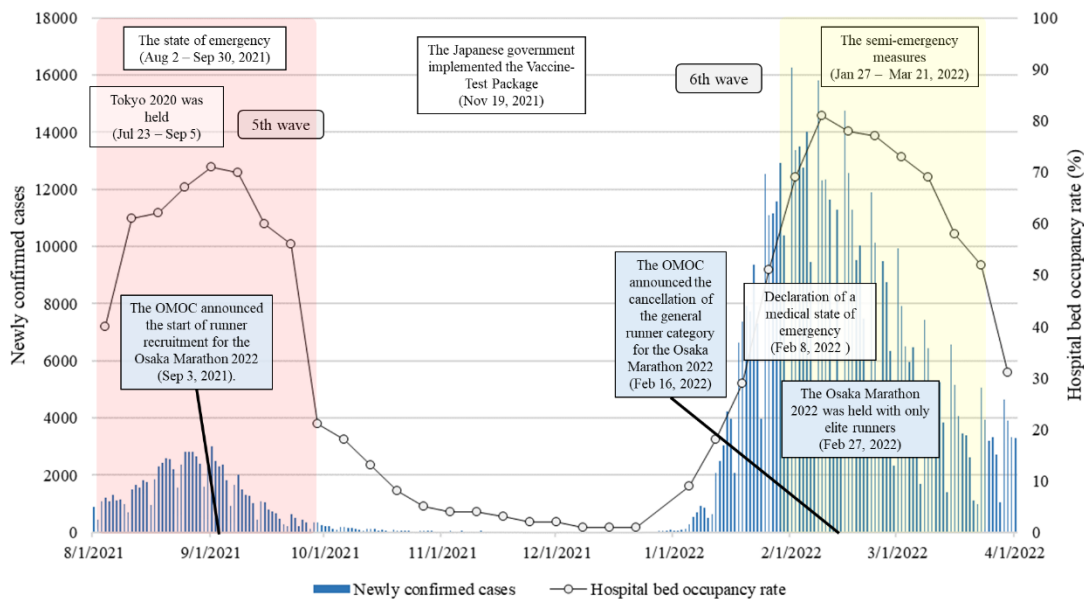
As presented in Figures 4.7 and 4.8, in Phase 3, people witnessed the tremendous turmoil of the fifth wave caused by the brutal Delta variant of COVID-19 during the period overlapping with Tokyo 2020 (from the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games on July 23rd, 2021, to the closing ceremony of the Paralympic Games on September 5th, 2021). After a

Figure 4.7—Phase 3 of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Kyoto Prefecture (Aug. 2021–Mar. 2022)



Note. KMEC = Kyoto Marathon Executive Committee. Adopted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the KMEC (2022a), and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.). The light red shading indicates the period of the state of emergency, and the light yellow shading indicates the period of the semi-emergency measures.

Figure 4.8—Phase 3 of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Osaka Prefecture (Aug. 2021 – Mar. 2022)



Note. OMO = Osaka Marathon Organizing Committee. Adopted from the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (n.d.), and the OMO (2022c). The light red shading indicates the period of the state of emergency.

relatively calm period where some large-scale marathons were held in-person (e.g., the Kanazawa Marathon on October 31st, 2021; the Toyama Marathon on November 7th, 2021; the Nara Marathon on December 12th, 2021), the entire county entered the sixth wave caused by the highly contagious Omicron variant of COVID-19. In November 2021, the Japanese event industry saw a new measure called the Vaccine-Test Package System. It was a policy implemented by the Japanese government on November 19th, 2021, aimed at restarting social and economic activities by relaxing restrictions for individuals who could present a certificate proving they had received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine or a negative result from a PCR test (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 2021). The Vaccine-Test Package System and the aforementioned guidance provided by the JAAF (and the Japan Sport Association, specifically for the Kyoto Marathon) served as important criteria when considering the feasibility of holding in-person marathons.

While the KMEC proceeded with its preparations for the virtual marathon and held it, it was the OMOC that struggled amid the rapid surge of the sixth wave. Unfortunately, the sixth wave resulted in an unfavourable consequence for the Osaka Marathon 2022. Following the declaration of a state of medical emergency by the Osaka Prefectural Government on February 8, 2022, the general runner category (as well as the wheelchair marathon category) was cancelled just 11 days before the scheduled race date, with only around 300 elite runners competing (OMOC, 2022b). In this section, my primary focus is on the secretariat members involved in the Osaka Marathon during this challenging period. Of note, in this Phase 3, the experience categorized as A Trade-off Between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgment was not identified, and instead, the experience of Conflict in Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organizational Logics was identified.

Difficulty in Ensuring Safety

Ensuring safety has been a repeatedly emphasized concept throughout the preparation stages of major sport events including Tokyo 2020, but the introduction of Vaccine-Test Package System provided the Osaka Marathon secretariat with a stronger definition of this concept. That is because it was a set of guidelines provided by the Cabinet Secretariat. Just as the OAAA adheres to the guidance of its parent organization, the JAAF to sanction the Osaka Marathon as an official race, the Vaccine-Test Package System served as criteria that local governments were supposed to comply with as event organizers. One of the key features of the Vaccine-Test Package System was that it outlined the necessary conditions to enable to host of events even under a state of emergency (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 2021). However, due to the remarkably higher transmissibility of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 during the sixth wave, the contents of the package system were updated multiple times until the Osaka Marathon 2023 (Cabinet Secretariat, 2022a; Cabinet Secretariat, 2022b). At that time, following this package was necessary to ensure a safe and secure event, but the frequent rule changes posed a challenge for the secretariat members. This was because, in addition to the approaching race date, the original package was not specifically tailored for marathons. Thus, each time the secretariat members had to communicate what has been updated to the participants while applying them to the marathon's setting. For instance, initially, the rules allowed participation with vaccination only, but later on, a negative COVID-19 test certificate became a mandatory requirement. A secretariat member reflected at that time that "Adapting to these rules was quite hectic in preparation for this edition. It led to notifications that left participants saying, 'Ah, isn't it too sudden?' causing some inconvenience" (Interviewee 12).

What is worth noting is that the introduction of these guidelines changed the purpose of communication with other marathon secretariats. Efforts during Phase 1 were primarily to check directions of other marathon secretariats; but as the guidelines renewed, efforts shifted toward sharing practical knowledge and practices aligned with the guidelines. From November to December 2021, when the pandemic was relatively stable, the Osaka Marathon secretariat members visited and observed multiple marathons held in other regions to “learn from on-site practices,” such as crowd control around the start and finish lines, participants’ body temperature checks, hand sanitization, and health condition record-keeping methods (Interviewee 12).

However, the category for approximately 20,000 general runners was cancelled 11 days before the race date, and only the elite category consisting of around 300 runners took place (OMOC, 2022b). In a post-event interview with a newspaper reporter, one secretariat member explained that “We had made thorough preparations. It was a difficult decision to make” (The Asahi Shimbun, 2022). The newspaper article further reported as follows:

One of the main concerns was securing medical staff. There were some citizens’ runners who were not accustomed to regular exercise. Although life-saving measures had been implemented in previous editions, there were cases where runners experienced cardiac arrest. The plan was to have approximately 900 personnel, including 130 doctors and 170 nurses, stationed at 18 medical stations and other first aid facilities during the race. However, due to the rapid spread of infections, the healthcare system became overwhelmed. Concerns arose about the inability to secure sufficient medical staff due to healthcare professionals being occupied with COVID-19 response, as well as the difficulty in the guarantee of transporting runners to cooperating hospitals in case of medical emergencies. (The Asahi Shimbun, 2022, p. 7)

Following up the newspaper article, a secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon reflected on that they had “hoped for the sixth wave to reach its peak as soon as possible” during January 2022, but the Omicron variant marked an unprecedented number of infections (Interviewee, 10). Based on past experience, it was predictable for them that as new infections increased, there would be a subsequent increase in severe cases. Considering the strain on the healthcare system when a medical state of emergency was being declared in the Osaka Prefecture, it became inevitable to make the decision to cancel the general runner category at that point. Regarding the reasons for being able to hold the elite runner division, the secretariat member expressed the following.

The elite runners, who train regularly, have a lower risk of cardiac arrest and shorter race times. Doctors and nurses on buses following behind the slower runners during the race, they can immediately assist any runners who experience health issues. This eliminates the need for medical aid stations along the course, except for the finish line. As a result, the required number of medical staff was reduced by around 10% compared to when the general runners participate. (Interviewee 10)

Sponsor Considerations

The doubts of sponsors regarding whether to proceed with the marathon amid the sixth wave were conveyed to the Osaka Marathon secretariat members through the contracted agency company responsible for sponsorship. The tension was mounting. While understanding the doubts of sponsors, at that time, the only response that could be given to them was, “The marathon will take place. It will definitely be held” (Interviewee 22). The preparations were being made under the assumption of holding the marathon as planned. However, when it became inevitable to cancel the general runner category, the secretariat members and the contracted

agency company member felt a deep sense of remorse toward both the runners and sponsors. One of the secretariat members, who visited the sponsors to apologize after the marathon, reflected on his feelings at the time, noting the following:

When marathons are cancelled, sponsors could lose interest...Asking sponsors for money when the race is cancelled is tough... It's been very tough this time around. Since the general runner category was cancelled and only the elite runners participated, we apologized and said, "This is what happened to the general runners, but we still had the elite runners." For the sponsors, the benefits of having general runners are still the greatest. What's important to bear in mind is that sponsors don't necessarily recognize the benefits of just having elite runners. They say things like, "We don't really care about having people run the marathon faster"...Currently, every sponsor has been supportive. Despite the consequence of this edition, we are still going to make a brazen request to give us almost all the planned sponsorship fees. Even if general runners were not participating, the costs for the operation were almost the same as the usual format this time, so we had to make this brazen request, which was regrettable for me. (Interviewee 9)

As mentioned by the secretariat member, the sponsors did not withdraw their support. The secretariat and the contracted agency company member felt that the sponsors remained cooperative for several reasons through their communication. In addition to the marketing benefits, such as "securing exclusive sponsorship from one industry" and "securing participation slots for their clients and customers" (Interviewee 22), there were other factors at play. The sponsors had a "certain level of recognition and evaluation of the previous editions of the Osaka Marathon" (Interviewee 9). Moreover, with the upcoming mega event, the World Expo 2025 in

Osaka, where many of the current Osaka Marathon sponsors are involved, there was a shared goal of “building better inter-organizational relationships” (Interviewee 22). Some local sponsors also held a feeling to keep contributing to the community of Osaka no matter what (sponsors’ perceptions will be elaborated on in the following chapter). These factors contributed to the sponsors’ continued support and cooperation.

Concern about Reputational Damage

Following their concerns during Phase 2 on the announcement timing of the application guidelines. The Osaka Marathon secretariat members were mindful of minimizing criticism from stakeholders regarding the timing of runner recruitment. During the period between the fifth and sixth waves, the Osaka Marathon secretariat members explored the application of guidelines, including the Vaccine-Test Package System, to gain legitimacy for holding an in-person marathon. However, the confusion during the sixth wave resulted in experiencing concerns about reputational damage similar to when the Osaka Marathon 2020 was ultimately cancelled. Relating it to the medical aspect, the situation was even more serious. Considering Fumio Kishida, the Japanese Prime Minister at that time, had indicated the plan to dispatch medical personnel from across the country to Tokyo and Osaka in February 2022, a secretariat member stated that “The situation had raised questions about the appropriateness of seeking cooperation from healthcare professionals” (The Asahi Shimbun, 2022, p. 7).

Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders’ Organizational Logics

Several members of the Osaka Marathon secretariat shared their experiences following the confusion surrounding the Osaka Marathon 2022, which I labeled as Conflict in Institutional Logics and Stakeholders’ Organizational Logics. Institutional logic is broadly defined as a “socially constructed, historical pattern of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and

rules” (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). In essence, as a citizens’ marathon, the Osaka Marathon was born with a mission to serve as an important tool for creating the urban attractiveness of Osaka, and it is composed of five visions: staging Osaka’s new festival, promoting charity culture, demonstrating hospitality, pursuing high competitiveness, and globalizing the marathon (Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022). Since the inception of the marathon, these visions have become the marathons’ institutional logic (i.e., citizens’ marathons).

Key stakeholders of the Osaka Marathon involved in the event aligned their organizational logics with one or more of these visions. Organizational logic refers to “implicit rules and underlying assumptions about what organizations *should be*” (Parsons et al., 2012, p. 271, emphasis in original). The Osaka Marathon appeared to have a relatively harmonious environment; however, the pandemic-induced cancellations and restrictions contradicted the institutional logics that had been nurtured in the Osaka Marathon and brought forth a range of issues that highlighted the prioritization of stakeholders’ organizational logics linked to the visions within and outside the secretariat. These previously overlooked wicked problems became apparent, and the secretariat members found themselves confronting these challenges.

For instance, the question of whether the Osaka Marathon is intended for the local community, including citizens’ runners, or is aimed to be a world-class competitive marathon was raised during the decision to integrate with the Lake Biwa Mainichi Marathon in 2021 (which targeted elite runners only). This issue was once pointed out in the Osaka Prefectural Assembly in 2021, and the secretariat director expressed the intention to maintain the functionality of a citizens’ marathon while aiming to enhance competitiveness, emphasizing the synergistic effects of both aspects (The Osaka Prefectural Assembly, 2021a). However, at the end of the day, the general runner category was cancelled, and only the elite race, which also

served as a selection event for the World Championships, took place. This unintentionally contradicted the institutional logics of the citizens' marathon and conveyed a message that may have been interpreted as neglecting other elements such as festivals and charity that are embraced by the local community members. One member of the Expert Committee of the OMOC expressed their concerns as follows:

With the cancellation of the general runner category in this edition, there is a possibility that the impression like “that the Osaka Marathon has become oriented towards elite runners” could lead to a decline in participation among citizen runners. You know, while the Tokyo Marathon has had a competitive character from the outset, the Osaka Marathon has been known for providing an enjoyable experience for participants. If the competitive aspect becomes too dominant, participants who prefer to enjoy this festive atmosphere, such as those who like to run in costumes, might gradually drift away. I am concerned about the potential impact of this situation on future editions of the Osaka Marathon.

(Interviewee 14)

After the Osaka Marathon 2022, the Yomiuri Shimbun, which has been contributing to charity activities since the establishment of the marathon, published a column expressing sympathy for the members of the OMOC, including the secretariat, who had to make difficult decisions. While understanding their hardship, the column emphasized the importance of reflecting on the origins of the Osaka Marathon as a platform for promoting a charity culture; it called for a renewed focus on spreading awareness about the importance of charitable activities in future editions of the marathon (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2022a). The pandemic also made it difficult to create a lively atmosphere that has “characterized the Osaka Marathon” (Interviewee

16). A member of the Osaka City Shopping Street Association that has been offered local foods and beverages at an aid station along the course stated:

(During the preparation stage for the Osaka Marathon 2022) a suggestion was made by the members of the secretariat to provide food in individual packaging, but considering the large quantity usually provided and the workload, it was impossible...I believe that our aid station cannot be revived unless there is a situation where people are not criticized for gathering in close proximity or for not wearing masks.

(Interviewee 20).

A local university's professor, who has been documenting the activities of this association at the Osaka Marathon with students as an educational exercise since 2014, expressed the following in a similar vein.

A citizens' marathon like the Osaka Marathon is all about an event where the citizens enjoy together. So, holding it in an environment where local people are overly cautious and can't enjoy much may seem rather meaningless...It's somewhat contrary to the nature of this event. (Interviewee 16)

Another type of conflict became apparent between the institutional logics of governments as primary organizers of the citizens' marathon and the counterpart of private enterprises serving as the engine for acquiring popularity in the highly competitive marathon industry in Japan. Although this conflict had not been a prominent issue before the pandemic, the pandemic brought it to the forefront and made it a tangible reality for many stakeholders involved. One secretariat member reflected on the management of the Osaka Marathon during the COVID-19 pandemic over the last two years and three months and shared the following thoughts:

The dilemma between maximizing profits or minimizing losses creates a conflict between the public and private sectors. The government aims to minimize harm while the private sector maximizes profits. The Osaka Marathon pursued profit from its 1st to 9th editions until COVID-19 stopped the momentum. The government becomes the brake to minimize the damage. I think this is the essence of this marathon and is likely unchanged. (Interviewee 10)

Summary of Results

This chapter outlined the experience of the Kyoto and Osaka Marathons' secretariat members during the pandemic from January 2020 to March 2022. Informed by the data, I divided the given timeline into three periods to better reflect it as critical decision-making timings for both marathons and the changing social situation due to the pandemic. Through the thematic analysis, I categorized their experiences into five types (i.e., Difficulty in Ensuring Safety, A Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement, Sponsor Considerations, Concern about Reputational Damage, and Conflict between Institutional logics and Stakeholders' Organizational Logics), and presented them in chronological order, accompanied by thick descriptions to facilitate readers' contextual understanding in each phase. Table 4.1 summarizes marathon secretariat members' five types of experiences in each phase.

In the next chapter, which answers RQ2, I proceed with the theoretical explanation of secretariat members' activities that led to their experiences, which I explored and presented in this chapter.

Table 4.1—Summary of Marathon Secretariat Members' Five Types of Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Types of Experience	Phase 1 (Jan 2020 – Jul 2020)	Phase 2 (Aug 2020 – Jul 2021)	Phase 3 (Aug 2021 – Mar 2022)
1. Difficulty in ensuring safety	✓	✓	✓
2. A trade-off between empty expenses and accurate judgement	✓	✓	
3. Sponsor Considerations	✓	✓	✓
4. Concern about reputational damage	✓	✓	✓
5. Conflict between institutional logics and stakeholders' organizational logics (Particularly, in the context of the Osaka Marathon)			✓

CHAPTER V: Explaining Marathon Secretariat Members' Activities Under the Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty from an Embeddedness Perspective

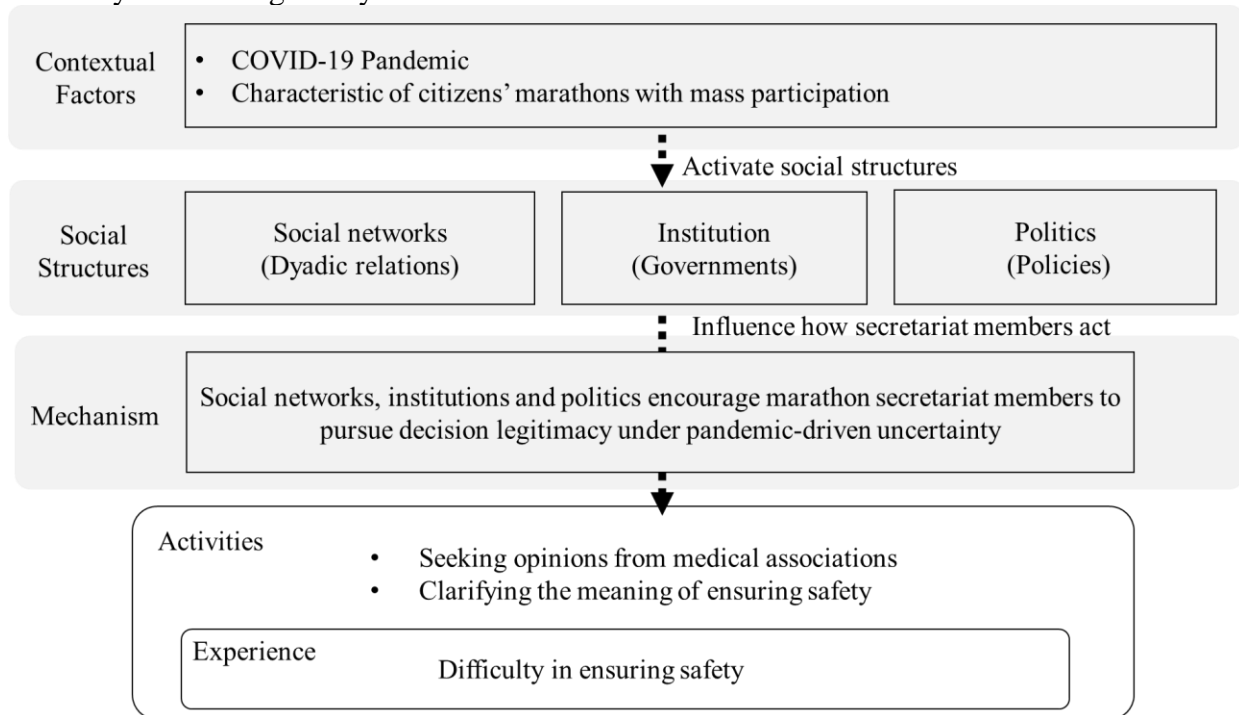
Based on the previous chapter where I explored the marathon secretariat members' experiences under pandemic-driven uncertainty, in this chapter, I address RQ2: *How can the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the marathon secretariat members' activities be explained using an embeddedness perspective?* To answer this RQ, I present the results of analyzing the activities that led to the secretariat members' experience. This analysis is anchored in critical realism, which assumes people's experiences are shaped by their interpretation of activities as events¹⁷ (Bhaskar, 1975/2008). Thus, this chapter is structured around the five distinct types of experience I explored, forming five main sections. In each section, I also present the three elements assumed to exist, though invisible, in critical realism, which are: contextual factors (i.e., triggers or thresholds to activate the social structures), social structures (i.e., aggregates of socially constructed and patterned arrangements which influence how people act), and their underlying mechanisms that explain the examined activities ending in the experiences (Bhaskar, 1975/2008; Radulescu & Vessey, 2009; Sayer, 2000; Zachariadis 2013). These are the results of retrodution within a critical realism-based analysis. Since I used the embeddedness perspective to guide this RQ, knowledge from previous literatures helped infer the plausible explanation. I also displayed five theoretical frameworks encompassing all elements the ontological assumptions of critical realism possess (i.e., experience, activities, contextual factors, social structures, and mechanisms) at the beginning of each section. The frameworks were grounded upon these elements used by Bhaskar (1975/2008), Radulescu and Vessey (2009), Sayer (2000), and Zachariadis (2013).

¹⁷ As I mentioned in Chapter III, the term events here refers to something that happens, not sport events.

Activities Leading Marathon Secretariat Members to Experience Difficulty in Ensuring Safety and their Underlying Mechanisms

As a result of the critical realism-based thematic analysis, the activities leading marathon secretariat members to experience ‘Difficulty in Ensuring Safety,’ along with their underlying mechanisms, are summarized in Figure 5.1. The dotted arrow from contextual factors to social structures indicates that the contextual factors activated the social structures. The dotted arrow from social structures to activities signifies that the social structures influenced the activities, with the mechanism for this being shown on the dotted arrow. I first describe the more explicit activities, then move to the contextual factors and social structures to ultimately understand the mechanisms. I use the same approach for the other results in this chapter.

Figure 5.1—An Explanation of How Marathon Secretariat Members Came to Experience Difficulty in Ensuring Safety



In terms of the activities, I identified two themes. The first theme is Seeking Opinions from Medical Associations. During the pandemic, discussions about whether to hold in-person

marathons could not be carried out by marathon secretariats alone. Since members of the prefectural medical associations were originally part of the organizing committees for both the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathons, secretariat members were continuously communicating with them. One secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon stated:

We have one executive from the Kyoto Prefectural Medical Association serving on the KMEC. This person acts as a liaison with the association, communicating things like “this is what the association considers,” and when we report what we’re considering about the marathon, they report to their board of directors. Then we receive deliberation on what is and isn’t possible. That’s how we are communicating. (Interviewee 1)

In the case of the Osaka Marathon, the Medical Aid Expertise Committees, an internal entity of the OMOC, newly incorporated the function of infectious disease control measures to better seek opinions from, medical associations (OMOC, 2020j).

The second theme is Clarifying the Meaning of Ensuring Safety. As I described in the previous chapter, the persistent challenge of defining what meaning of Ensuring Safety emerged consistently throughout the phases of the pandemic (see Chapter IV). During the initial phase, secretariat members of both marathons attempted to assess the feasibility of their in-person marathons based on socially accepted norms represented as the Three Cs (i.e., Closed spaces with poor ventilation, Crowded places with many people nearby, and Close-contact settings such as close-range conversations: Prime Minister’s Office of Japan, 2020). The Three Cs were later documented in the key guidelines issued by the Prime Minister’s Office of Japan (2021) and the JAAF (2020, 2022), which are the parent organizations of the respective marathon secretariat members’ affiliating organizations.

In terms of contextual factors, while the pandemic itself served as the overarching contextual factor in this dissertation, Characteristics of Citizen's Marathon with Mass Participation was identified as another contextual factor when explaining these secretariat members' activities. Here, what is important is that some contextual factors are not always directly related to the pandemic. In this case, the Characteristic of Citizen's Marathon with Mass Participation is a contextual factor that, if absent, the particular phenomenon would likely not have occurred (i.e., the social structure influencing the secretariat members' activities and experience would not have been activated: cf. Danermark et al., 2019). It was identified as an important contextual factor, as one Osaka Marathon secretariat member mentioned: "Considering the need to practice social distancing, it was difficult to make decisions about holding large scale events because there will inevitably be areas where people crowded" (Interview 10).

Considering such contextual factors and using concepts within the embeddedness perspective, I inferred that social networks, institutions, and politics allowed the marathon secretariat members to seek opinions from medical associations while clarifying the meaning of safety. In other words, in the uncertain circumstances of whether in-person marathons could be held safely and securely, while social networks provided these secretariat members with a means of communication, institutions (specifically, the social role of governments) and politics (specifically, policies) granted them legitimacy in such decision-making. Without doubt, in the decision-making about holding marathons that attract numerous participants, communication with medical associations is of utmost importance to protect the health and lives of local people. This indicates the existence of an influential dyadic relationship between secretariat members and the medical association on the activities undertaken by the secretariat members. But, at the

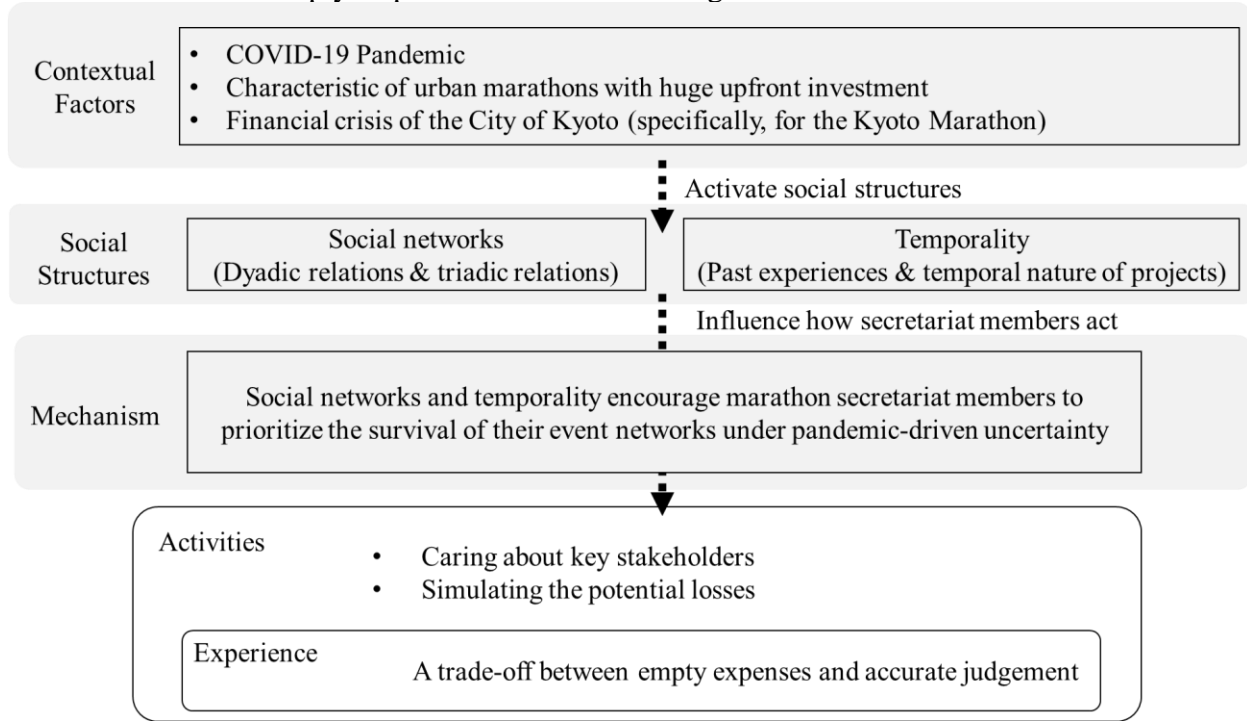
same time, some secretariat members stated “We had no choice but to cancel the 2020 event because we couldn’t avoid crowding of people [i.e., the Three Cs]” (Interviewee 10); “Without basing on the [Japanese government’s] Vaccine-Test Package System, it’s impossible to hold the marathon” (Interviewee 11); and “In a situation where there was no clear meaning of ensuring safety, what we could rely on were the guidelines from the Japan Sport Association and the guidance issued by JAAF” (Interviewee 5), exemplify that activities conducted by the marathon secretariats were also greatly influenced by social roles of governments that entails not taking risks for the sake of public welfare, as well as policies issued by the parent organization (e.g., JAAF) of the child organization (e.g., OAAA) to which some secretariat members are affiliated.

Eventually, this logical reasoning using the embeddedness perspective led me to a mechanism: *Social networks, institutions, and politics encourage marathon secretariat members to pursue decision legitimacy under pandemic-driven uncertainty*. Specifically, their activities were embedded in the dyadic relations with key stakeholders including medical associations and the parent organizations to which each secretariat member belongs, the social roles of governments for institutions, as well as policies for politics. This is one explanation for the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events from the embeddedness perspective. Moving forward, I provide other explanations for the remaining sections in this way.

Activities Leading Marathon Secretariat Members to Experience a Trade-Off Between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement and their Underlying Mechanisms

As a result of the analysis, the activities leading marathon secretariat members to experience a ‘Trade-Off Between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement,’ along with their underlying mechanisms, are summarized in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2—An Explanation of How Marathon Secretariat Members Came to Experience the Trade-Off Between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement



Regarding the activities, I identified two themes. The first theme is Caring about Key Stakeholders. In the unpredictable situation of the pandemic, the key stakeholders were the event organizers (i.e., City of Kyoto, Osaka Prefectural Government, City of Osaka, OAAA, and KAA), sponsors, and contracted agency companies. A secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon stated that “whether or not to hold the in-person marathon, and whether financial resources could be obtained” was crucial in this communication (Interviewee 10). A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon remarked that the amount of communication with the contracted agency company, which negotiated with sponsors on behalf of the secretariat, has “remarkably increased since the onset of the pandemic” (Interviewee 1). The member continued by saying that this increase was not just because of the irregular situation that had arisen, but also because “the agency, being involved with other marathons, would share information with us about other marathons as much as possible” (Interviewee 1).

Such communication was conducted in parallel with “Simulating the Potential Losses,” which is the second theme. A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon stated: “In terms of assets, we simulated how much we would lose if we stopped planning an in-person marathon at this time and used that in decision-making within the secretariat” (Interviewee 2). Similarly, a secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon stated:

In collaboration with the contracted agency company, we were calculating costs...Once the entry application begins, it incurs essential expenses amounting to tens of millions of yen. So, we simulated like “stopping at this point would avoid those costs, but beyond this point, we would start to see a deficit.” (Interviewee 9)

This simulation process was a critical activity for both secretariats.

In addition to the pandemic itself, the Characteristic of Urban Marathons with Huge Upfront Investment is another important contextual factor to make sense of the secretariat members’ activities. Keeping in mind the differences with other sport events, a secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon remarked:

Compared to Ekiden competitions for students or elite runners, it’s much more difficult to make last-minute decisions about holding the [in-person] Kyoto Marathon, which attracts tens of thousands of participants...Since we’re outsourcing tasks to private companies, even just the entry application ends up costing a substantial amount of money.
(Interviewee 4)

Similarly, an Osaka Marathon secretariat member said:

The magnitude of traffic regulations is an important point... It’s completely different between urban marathons like the Osaka Marathon and those in smaller cities... We spend

so much on safety. Thus, there is a large amount of money that has to be refunded when the marathon is cancelled. (Interviewee 10)

In relation to this characteristic of the marathons, the Financial Crisis of the City of Kyoto (specifically, for the Kyoto Marathon), as the other contextual factor, was necessary to explain the secretariat members' activities. This is because, in a situation where the pandemic makes it challenging to predict the state of infections several months ahead, proceeding with an in-person marathon that could potentially lead to a massive waste of taxpayers' money can be stressful. This stress was considered to be prominent if the organizer (in this case, the local government) was facing financial difficulties. As an example of the financial difficulties faced by the City of Kyoto, the changes in the budget for the Kyoto Marathon can be cited. A secretariat member explained, "Up until the Kyoto Marathon 2020, the expenses were partially covered by the general financial resources of Kyoto City. However, from the Kyoto Marathon 2021 onward, general financial resources are no longer used" (Interviewee 2). Instead, funding from the City of Kyoto was provided by the city's Sports Promotion Fund and the Sports Promotion Lottery (Internal document of the KMEC).

Considering such contextual factors and using concepts within the embeddedness perspective, I inferred that social networks and temporality allowed the marathon secretariat members to care about their key stakeholders while simulating potential losses. As an influence of the social network, a local assembly, which serves as a platform for the secretariats to be held accountable, emphasized the need to avoid empty expenses (e.g., The Kyoto City Assembly, 2020a). More importantly, the City of Kyoto experienced substantial losses from the first edition of the marathon in 2012 (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2012b). Concerns regarding these financial issues were constantly raised in the city assembly (e.g., The Kyoto City Assembly, 2021a).

Considering that the assembly members are appointed through elections, there exists a triadic relationship where local organizations and citizens stand behind these representatives, and such social networks restrained the secretariat members from proposing risky plans, as they were aware of the potential consequences within the networks. Conversely, during the discussion of the format for the Kyoto Marathon 2022, sharing the successful experiences of the previous edition (i.e., virtual marathon) with stakeholders contributed to an earlier decision to select the virtual format again. A secretariat member acknowledged that the success of the previous virtual marathon in 2020 expedited the decision to go virtual again in 2021: “The number of participants was large, even on a national scale...I believe we could prove that our approach was not mistaken” (Interviewee 3).

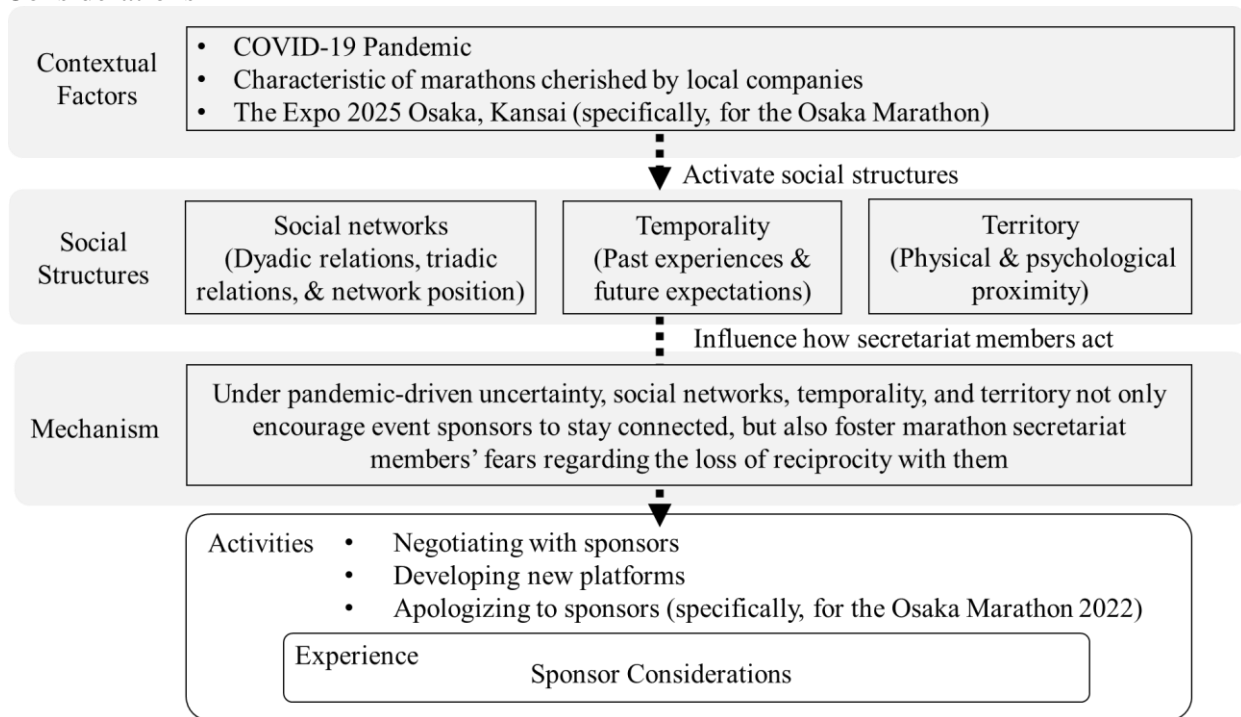
Similarly, considering the costs involved in preliminary preparations, the Osaka Marathon secretariat members were aware that “if the marathon were to be cancelled at the last minute after using the 700-800 million yen received from sponsors, we would not be able to fully reimburse that money [with funding from local governments]” (Interviewee 9). This recognition was expedited by the timing of the decision to cancel in 2020. In addition, the specific type of temporality inherent to recurring events can also be activated. For instance, when the Osaka Marathon 2020 was cancelled, the governor of Osaka prefecture stated to the press, “[Unlike one-off events,] this is a citizens’ marathon we hold annually” (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2020a, p. 24), which reflected the temporal nature of an annual event that influenced the phenomenon. These are explanations that, at least until the secretariat members experienced the Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement during Phase 2 of the pandemic (see the previous chapter), encouraged more cautious decision-making about the holding of in-person marathons, while seeking to maintain harmony within the inter-organizational network.

Connecting the main points, the logical reasoning using the embeddedness perspective led me to a mechanism: *Social networks and temporality encourage marathon secretariat members to prioritize the survival of their event networks under pandemic-driven uncertainty.* Specifically, the secretariat members were embedded in dyadic relations and triadic stakeholder relations that discouraged them from suggesting decisions that could potentially lead to the loss of support from those essential for marathon continuity, as well as past experiences of the secretariat members’ activities and temporal nature of projects for temporality.

Activities Regarding Marathon Secretariat Members’ Sponsor Considerations and their Underlying Mechanisms

As a result of the critical realism-based thematic analysis, the activities regarding marathon secretariat members’ ‘Sponsor Considerations,’ along with their underlying mechanisms, are summarized in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3—An Explanation of How Marathon Secretariat Members Came to Sponsor Considerations



Regarding the activities, I identified three themes. The first theme is Negotiating with Sponsors. This was conducted directly and indirectly (e.g., via a contracted agency company). A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon stated: “In terms of major decision-making, the relationship between sponsors and us is basically such that the sponsors entrust the decisions to us,” and “Given the reduced exposure during the pandemic, we proposed various initiatives, such as including the main sponsor’s name in the title of the virtual marathon” (Interviewee 2). The Osaka Marathon secretariat members also engaged in negotiations during the pandemic, primarily through the mediation of the contracted agency company. A member of the company reflected on the negotiation and stated that they received consultations from the sponsors about “How they [namely, sponsors] would be perceived supporting an event that gathers a lot of people during the pandemic” (Interviewee 22). The member also mentioned the challenges of addressing questions from sponsors, especially regarding the Osaka Marathon 2022, such as “Are you guys really going to hold it in-person?” (Interviewee 22).

The second theme, Developing New Platforms, was also identified in both marathon cases. During the pandemic, the Kyoto Marathon secretariat developed a virtual marathon and virtual Expo as a platform “with the aim of enhancing sponsors’ exposure to participants” (Interviewee 3). As for a virtual marathon, a secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon stated: “It is important that there are benefits for sponsors, such as having their sponsors’ names heard, while users are enjoying the Virtual Osaka Marathon” (Interviewee 10).

The third theme, Apologizing to Sponsors, only applies to the Osaka Marathon 2022, where the general runner category was cancelled 11 days before the race date. A secretariat member, while expressing regret, stated: “We visited our sponsors to apologize for the Osaka Marathon 2022 ending up being held for elite runners only” (Interviewee 9).

As for the contextual factors, other than the pandemic, I included the Characteristic of Marathons Cherished by Local Companies and the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, particularly for the Osaka Marathon. These were indispensable contextual factors when considering the landscape of sport events, including marathons in Kyoto and Osaka. First, in terms of the Characteristic of Marathons Cherished by Local Companies, a researcher who has been involved in the Kyoto Marathon from its inception stated: “Major companies headquartered in Kyoto have a strong tendency to support sports, not just marathons’ (Interviewee 7). In a similar vein, a researcher who has been involved with the Osaka Marathon since its first edition in 2011, emphasized the importance of considering the role of sponsors in these times, highlighting a particular company (to be mentioned later) that “has partnered with the Osaka Marathon for community contribution” (Interviewee 15). Second, in terms of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, like the Osaka Marathon, it had its secretariat located within the Osaka Prefectural Government office and was a contextual factor worth considering as an event involving many stakeholders related to the Osaka Marathon, including the Osaka Prefectural Government and the City of Osaka (Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, n.d.).

Considering such contextual factors and using concepts within the embeddedness perspective, I inferred that social networks, temporality, and territory allowed the marathon secretariat members to negotiate with sponsors, develop new platforms, as well as apologize to sponsors (specifically, the Osaka Marathon 2022). During the pandemic, social networks brought about the secretariat members’ activities leading to Sponsor Considerations in two ways, akin to two sides of a coin. While social networks offered the secretariat members a means and power of negotiation, the components of temporality and territory became intertwined with the social networks. On the flip side of the coin, there was a mechanism where the past experiences of

sponsors building mutually beneficial inter-organizational relationships with the marathon secretariat over the past decade enabled them to stay connected in the uncertain situation. This positive direction was reinforced by the territory since most sponsors are local companies. A member of the sponsor called Advance Create Co.,Ltd., an insurance agency based in Osaka, explained why they continued to be a sponsor of the Osaka Marathon even after the Osaka Marathon 2022 where the general runner category was suddenly cancelled, stating

This is a company based in Osaka, which is a critical reason. From an economic standpoint, some might say that it would be better for us to have our headquarters in Tokyo. However, the fact that we chose to have our headquarters in Osaka reflects our attachment to the local community. That's why we have a strong passion for being involved in the Osaka Marathon, which is held in our local area and contributes to our community. (Interviewee 19)

Furthermore, in the case of the Osaka Marathon, there was also the potential influence of an upcoming mega-event, the Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai, as a member of the contracted agency company stated: "The Expo is approaching as a likely bright future...and many of the current sponsors of the Osaka Marathon are involved in it. I think they have a desire to build better relationships with an eye toward such a future" (Interviewee 22). In particular, the Expo's executive committee, the same as the Osaka Marathon, was located at the prefectural building, and the three key figures responsible for the Osaka Marathon (i.e., the chairman of the OMOC, the Governor of Osaka Prefecture, and the Mayor of Osaka City) also served as directors for the Expo (Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, n.d.). As a secretariat member mentioned, "We are starting to receive requests to promote the Expo through the Osaka Marathon" (Interviewee 13), with the bright expectation of the Expo, the network position of the

Osaka Marathon secretariat also played an important role in attracting the interest of key stakeholders, including local sponsors, to some extent.

On the reverse side of the coin, particularly in the case of the 2022 Osaka Marathon, the passion and expectations of these sponsors caused the marathon secretariat members who announced the cancellation of the general runner category to feel apologetic not only to the runners but also to the sponsors. After the event, one secretariat member who went to apologize to the sponsors asked them for a sponsorship fee, saying, “We said that ‘we held the elite marathon, so please give us the funding.’ You know, [considering their disappointment,] doing so was very painful” (interviewee 9).

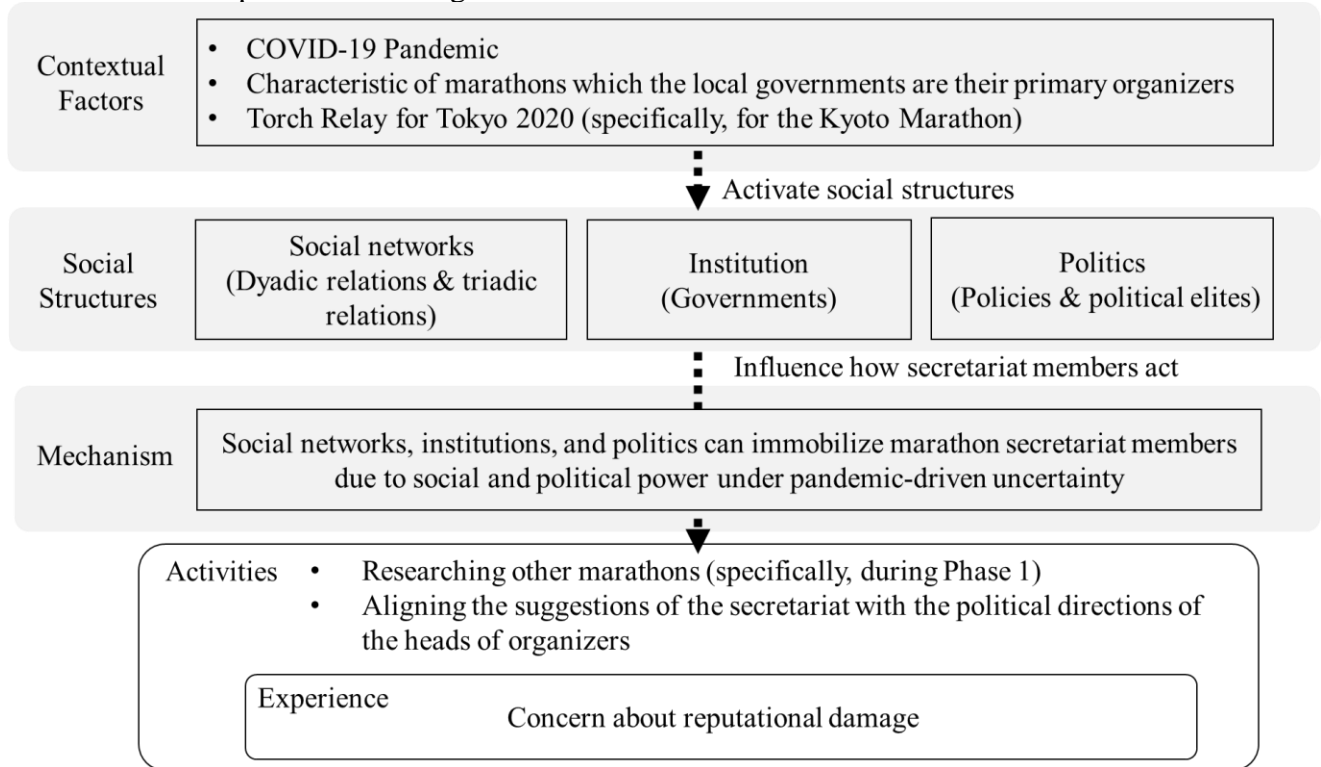
Integrating the key points, the logical reasoning using the embeddedness perspective led me to a mechanism: *Under pandemic-driven uncertainty, social networks, temporality, and territory not only encourage event sponsors to stay connected, but also foster marathon secretariat members’ fears regarding the loss of reciprocity with them.* Specifically, the secretariat members were embedded in dyadic relations, triadic relations, and network position for the social networks; past experiences and future expectations for temporality within the social networks; and as physical and psychological proximity for territory within the social networks.

Activities Leading Marathon Secretariat Members to Experience Concern about Reputational Damage and their Underlying Mechanisms

As a result of the critical realism-based thematic analysis, the activities leading marathon secretariat members to experience ‘Concern about Reputational Damage,’ along with their underlying mechanisms, are summarized in Figure 5.4.

In terms of the activities, I identified two themes. The first theme is Researching Other Marathons, which was identified in the cases of both marathons. A secretariat member of the

Figure 5.4—An Explanation of How Marathon Secretariat Members Came to Experience the Concern about Reputational Damage



Kyoto Marathon stated: “We communicated with some secretariats of nearby marathons of a similar scale...and gathered information on the internet about the commencement, postponement, and cancellation of other marathons, and shared it among us” (Interviewee 5). A secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon also inquired about “whether other marathon secretariats were planning to take place and, if they did, how they would manage them” (Interviewee 12). The OMOC’s meeting material also included the latest information on the decisions taken in other marathons (OMOC, 2020f).

The second theme is Aligning the Suggestions of the Secretariat with the Political Directions of the Heads of Organizers. As stated in the Research Context in Chapter 3, the relationship between the secretariat and the organizing committee is fundamentally the same for both marathons. A secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon explained that the secretariat consisting of key stakeholders (e.g., the organizers) has the role of “formulating agendas”

concerning issues necessary for holding the event. In contrast, the organizing committee, which houses the secretariat within its purview, is a gathering of representatives of a broader range of stakeholders and serves as the “final decision-making body that makes resolutions” on the agendas (Interviewee 11). A secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon outlined the process as follows:

First, we discuss within the secretariat. After that, we consult and report to the relevant departments of Osaka Prefecture and Osaka City, and ultimately, it goes up to the governor and the mayor. We asked like, “Is it okay to proceed this way? What shall we do about this?” In this flow, the direction is gradually determined. Of course, as the organizing committee’s secretariat, we also consult and report in the same way to the chairman of the organizing committee, who is also the chairman of the OAAA.

(Interviewee 9).

A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon also stated: “We take the mayor’s decision before the executive committee, which is the venue for making final decisions and announcing them publicly” (Interviewee 1).

In terms of the contextual factors, first, the pandemic, specifically the state of (medical) emergencies in Osaka prefecture, should be considered as an important contextual factor because it highlights the dual role of the governor, who not only stands as a head of one of the top organizers but also holds the authority to issue such states of emergencies (e.g., *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, 2022b). This leads to the second key contextual factor, Characteristic of Marathons in which Local Governments are the Primary Organizers. For the Kyoto Marathon, the Torch Relay for Tokyo 2020, a third key contextual factor, is indispensable in explaining the series of activities carried out by the secretariat members. I provide the details of it below.

Considering such contextual factors and using concepts within the embeddedness perspective, I inferred that social networks, institutions, and politics allowed the marathon secretariat members to research other marathons and align the suggestions of their own secretariats with the political directions of the heads of their marathon organizers. In the case of the Kyoto Marathon, the pandemic-driven confusion surrounding the torch relay for Tokyo 2020 as socially constructed criticisms towards the mega-event during the pandemic (Yoshimi, 2021) exerted a decisive influence on subsequent decision-making regarding the marathon. Given that the undertaking of the operations of the torch relay was assigned to some secretariat members of the Kyoto Marathon, it is also important to consider the influence of the members' self-recognized social role as government workers in their activities. A secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon stated: "While planning the Torch Relay, it became clear just how difficult it would be to hold a large-scale event like the Kyoto Marathon in-person... It's become apparent that it's nearly impossible" (Interviewee 1). This indicates that the government's social role of serving the public welfare prevented the decision to hold marathons that gathered many people during the pandemic. So there were two institutional logics in conflict: the social role of governments and the citizens' marathons institutions. But eventually, the government's institution prevailed.

After the onset of the pandemic, the heads of local governments (e.g., governors and mayors), who took the initiative of safeguarding livelihoods in their communities, and the multiple policies including guidelines issued as their directives to combat infections, were opposed to the direction of organizing such large-scale marathons in-person. Notably, both the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon had such organizations and individuals as direct or indirect key stakeholders. Researchers and marathon secretariat members with long-term

involvement in citizens' marathons pointed to the Tokyo Marathon 2022, organized by a foundation rather than a local government, which welcomed around 19,188 runners a week after the Osaka Marathon 2022 (The Mainichi Shimbun, 2022), as an example. They typically remarked, "If the local governments were not the organizers of the Osaka Marathon, the decision might have been different [although the desirability of such a consequence remains unknown]" (Interviewee 14). As a secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon reflected, "It was two years when we were generally immobilized" (Interviewee 10); their social, institutional, and political embeddedness tremendously constrained their activities during the pandemic.

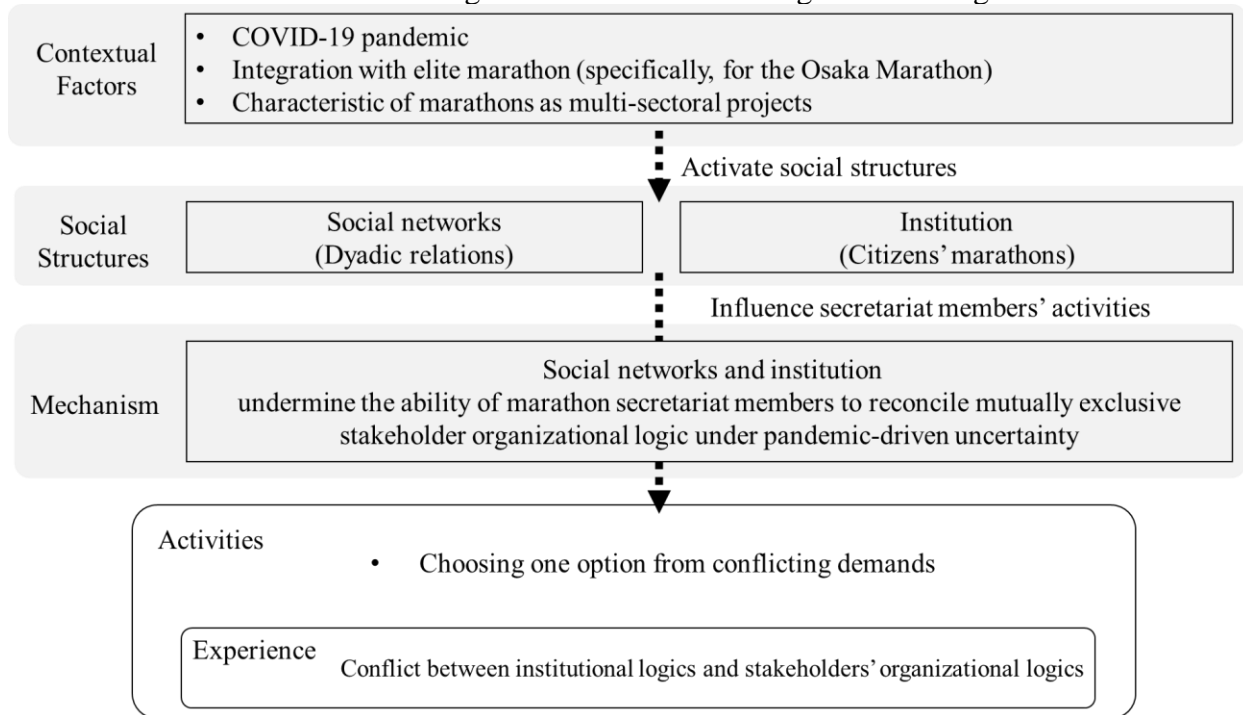
Bringing together the key points, the logical reasoning using the embeddedness perspective led me to a mechanism: *Social networks, institutions, and politics can immobilize marathon secretariat members due to social and political power under pandemic-driven uncertainty*. Specifically, their activities are embedded in specifically dyadic relations and triadic relations for the social networks; the social role of governments for institutions; as well as policies and political elites for politics.

Activities Leading Marathon Secretariat Members to Experience Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organization Logics and their Underlying Mechanisms

As a result of the critical realism-based thematic analysis, the activities leading marathon secretariat members to experience 'Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organization Logics,' along with their underlying mechanisms, are summarized in Figure 5.5. Regarding activities, I identified one theme: Choosing One Option from Conflicting Demands. This has a certain aspect of hindsight, as an Osaka Marathon secretariat member noted: "For the 2022 Osaka Marathon, we intended to proceed with the plans right up to the limit [for both elite

and general runners]” (Interviewee 10). However, the general runner category was cancelled and only the elite runners were allowed to compete in the race 11 days before race day (OMOG, 2022c).

Figure 5.5—An Explanation of How Marathon Secretariat Members Came to Experience the Conflict in between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders’ Organization Logics



As for contextual factors, other than the pandemic, the Integration with Elite Marathon is another contextual factor given the establishment of an elite runner category in the Osaka Marathon started with this edition (OMOG, 2021a). More importantly, the other contextual factor, the Characteristic of Marathons as Multi-Sectoral Projects, activated the dyadic relations between the secretariats and their key stakeholders, which were featured by the values held by each stakeholder. Some values were mutually exclusive in essence (e.g., festive atmosphere vs. serious competition, maximizing profits vs. minimizing losses: OMOG, 2014; Interviewees 10 & 14). Engaging stakeholders with different demands in multi-sectoral projects is not uncommon, and it can be argued that managing such dynamics is an important skill for project managers

(Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). However, during the pandemic, these social networks connecting various stakeholders and the institution of citizens' marathons—socially expected norms embodied as the event visions—undermined the ability of secretariat members to reconcile mutually exclusive values among stakeholders, as a secretariat member mentioned as a “dilemma” (Interviewee 10).

Consequently, the logical reasoning using the embeddedness perspective led me to a mechanism: *Social networks and institutions undermine the ability of marathon secretariat members to reconcile mutually exclusive values among stakeholders under pandemic-driven uncertainty*. Specifically, their activities are embedded in dyadic relations and triadic relations for the social networks, as well as the institution of citizens' marathons.

Summary of Results

This chapter presented the explanations of the marathon secretariat members' activities under the pandemic-driven uncertainty from the embeddedness perspective. As a result of the critical realism-based thematic analysis, I identified the activities leading to the secretariat members' experience that I explored on the previous chapter and inferred five types of social structures (i.e., social networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory) that influenced those activities. I also considered the contextual factors and mechanisms to make greater sense of the whole phenomenon. In the next chapter, by answering RQ3, I dive into the interplay between agency and social structures, which leads to a better understanding of the impact of the pandemic-driven uncertainty.

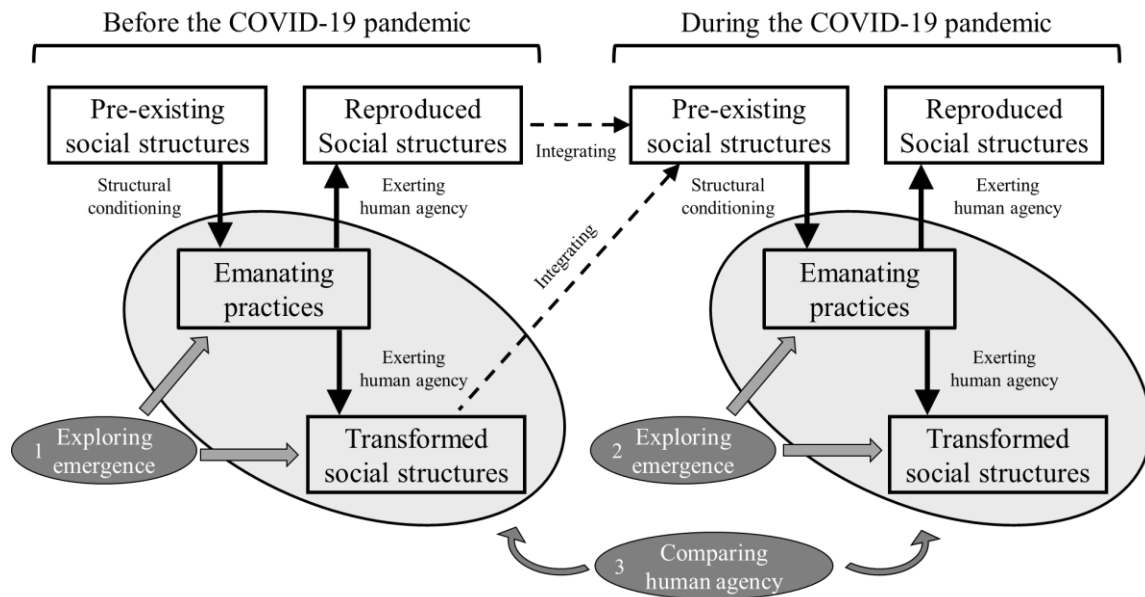
CHAPTER VI: Social Structures and Human Agency When Managing Marathons before and during Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty

This chapter answers RQ3: *How did pandemic-driven uncertainty change the way human agency influences social structures in managing marathons?* This final RQ considers the concept of human agency and its interactions with social structures before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon. Answering this RQ through a comparative analysis. This analysis informed by Archer's dualism approach (1995)—based on the transformational model of social activity (Bhaskar, 1979/2015) and her morphogenetic/static cycle—allowed me to explore by whom and how the social structures have been shaped before the occurrence of the pandemic. It also allowed me to explore by whom and how the social structures were reshaped (particularly, transformed) under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Based on these explorations, I subsequently compare human agency (and its interactions with social structures) before and during the pandemic.

Grounded on Archer's (1995) dualism approach, Figure 6.1 illustrates the framework I used to present the outcomes of the data analysis for this chapter¹⁸. First, I present the emergence explored in the emanating practices and transformed social structures (1. Exploring emergence in Figure 6.1). Regardless of whether they are reproduced or transformed, these social structures integrate into new social structures that influence emanating practices during the pandemic period. Second, I present the results of the same analysis conducted during the pandemic period (2. Exploring emergence). Finally, I present the comparative results of human agency between these periods (3. Comparing human agency). These three types of results constitute each section, respectively, of this chapter.

¹⁸ Figure 6.1 is slightly modified based on the diagram illustrating the analytical procedure described in Chapter III.

Figure 6.1—A Framework Illustrating the Three Types of Results Presented Regarding Social Structures and Human Agency



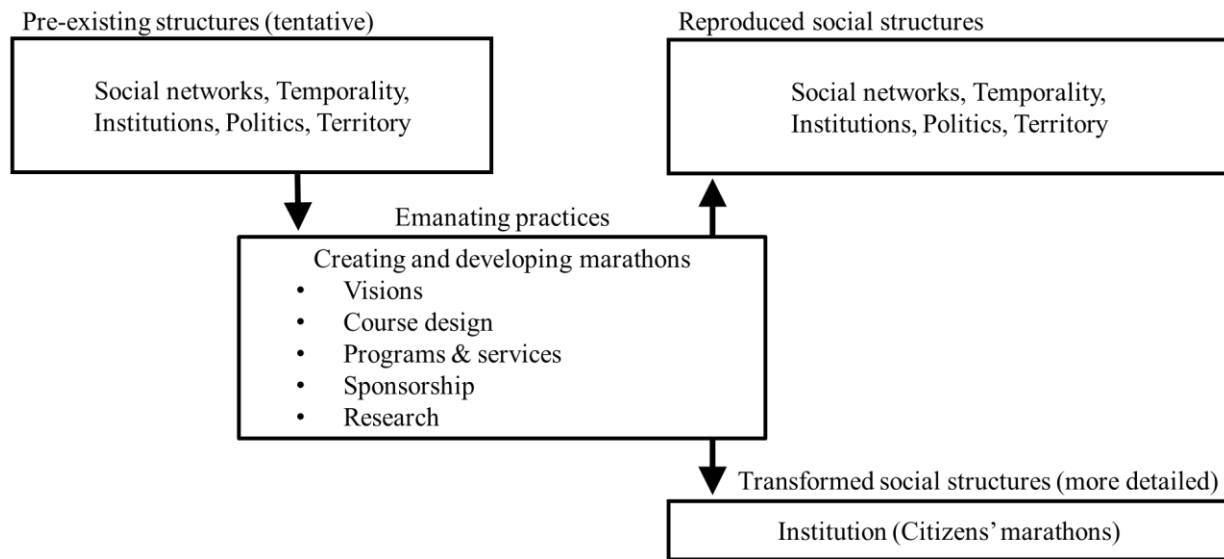
1. Emanating Practices, Agents, and Transformed Social Structures before the Pandemic

In this section focusing on the pre-pandemic period for the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon (i.e., from the creation of each marathon to the occurrence of the pandemic), I present emanating practices and how the agents exerted their human agency that influenced certain social structures through engaging in the practices. This section is mainly composed of six identified practices (i.e., visions, course design, programs & services, financing, sponsorship, and research) that are under the overarching practices of creating and developing marathons. These are followed by the section on the transformed social structure (i.e., the institution of citizens' marathons). I show the overview of the results in Figure 6.2 and present the details below.

Creating and Developing Marathons

For both marathons, once it was officially decided to consider their inaugural events, a preparatory committee, which later became the organizing committee, was established to

Figure 6.2—Emerging Practices and Reproduced/Transformed Social Structures around the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon before the COVID-19 pandemic



determine the outline of the event (OMOC, 2014; The Kyoto City Assembly, April 20, 2010b).

As I mentioned in the Research Context section (see Chapter III), given that the Kyoto Marathon was created as an update of the former Kyoto City Half Marathon (1994-2009) organized by the City of Kyoto with the KAA, and the Osaka Marathon was initiated as a tool of the then Osaka Prefecture Governor's key projects, it is necessary to understand the governments' institutional logics when considering creating and developing both marathons and their organizing committees. I describe this next.

Legally speaking, the organizing committees of both the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon (i.e., KMEC and OMOC) are unincorporated associations, and their secretariats are in the City of Kyoto and Osaka Prefectural government, respectively (KMEC, 2022a; OMOC, 2022d). From the inception of the marathons, most of the secretariat members have a governmental background, where a precedent-based logic (i.e., a preference for adhering to past practices) is fundamental. An expert committee member of the Osaka Marathon, who is knowledgeable about the Japanese administrative context, spoke about this logic:

(In Japanese administration) if there is a precedent, the activity is more likely to be continued. On the other hand, for the first attempts without precedent, the key lies in the decision of the person in charge at that time, and the explanation of how well-prepared they are to get it approved. Even for initiatives without precedent, once implemented, they are often continued by addressing any complaints or problems. So, creating the first instance is the most challenging, for sure. It is difficult to realize unless the motivation of the decision makers among the stakeholders and the individuals responsible for explaining to them are aligned. (Interviewee 15)

Interviewee 15 also mentioned: “(If there has been any change,) it might be better to recognize that it occurs not because of the organization responsible for specific areas, but because of the judgment of key individuals within the organization.” In other words, during the creation and development of the marathons, when new practices emanated (i.e., emergence), the human agency of practitioners involved in these activities was exerted. Next, I describe more the detailed practices found before the pandemic.

Visions

The first type of practice I identified was to set (and keep updating) visions. A vision can be defined as a statement that describes what an event desires to achieve in the long run, and to set it may be the most fundamental practice for holding major sport events as it can give legitimacy to any kind of activities (cf. Corporate Finance Institute, n.d.). In the context of the Kyoto Marathon, visions are referred to as Main Concepts. About one year and four months before the first edition of the Kyoto Marathon, a Director of Marathon Preparation in the Sports Promotion Office shared four keywords—the basis of the main concepts under consideration—at the city assembly, which were (1) Historical and cultural city (i.e., Kyoto is the city that attracts

many tourists), (2) Environmentally symbiotic city (i.e., Kyoto is the city where the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty on climate change adopted in 1997), (3) City of road races (i.e., Kyoto is the birthplace of Ekiden), and (4) High civic engagement (i.e., Kyoto, home to excellent companies and universities, is a community with a strong sense of self-governance) (The Kyoto City Assembly, November 9, 2010a). However, in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11th, 2011, the main concepts of the inaugural Kyoto Marathon were eventually set as (1) Revitalization of Kyoto & Japan, and (2) Reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake (The Kyoto City Assembly, July 19, 2011a). From the Kyoto Marathon 2014, the Revitalization of Kyoto & Japan was replaced with “DO YOU KYOTO? Marathon,” which reflected the commitment to promoting an environmentally friendly society through the marathon, became the main concept, alongside the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction (KMEC, 2014b)¹⁹. Next, I describe the agents involved in this practice.

The preparatory committee, which initiated the formulation of the Kyoto Marathon’s visions included “[academic] experts and local sport organization members” (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2010c). As one researcher stated, “I believe the Kyoto Marathon is positioned as a key event for the City of Kyoto in terms of sport promotion” (Interviewee 7). Clearly, the Kyoto City Citizen Sports Promotion Plan enacted by the City of Kyoto in March 2011 listed the Kyoto Marathon as an important initiative for “promoting citizen sports of doing, watching, and supporting” and “promoting the attractiveness of Kyoto nationally and internationally” (City of Kyoto, 2016, p. 3). In other words, the formulation of the main concepts of the Kyoto Marathon was primarily influenced by the City of Kyoto as the organizing body. However, given the development of this sport promotion plan involved “individuals recommended by sport

¹⁹ The main concept of the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction was carried on until the 2021 edition, marking 10 years since the earthquake occurred (KMEC, 2022a).

organizations, researchers, and publicly recruited citizen members” (The Kyoto City Assembly, January 24, 2011b), the human agency was exerted not only by government officials of the City of Kyoto but also sport organization members, academic experts, as well as citizens.

Regarding the Osaka Marathon, under the mission of “Incorporate as an important tool in Osaka’s urban attractiveness creation strategy,” five visions were set: (1) staging Osaka’s new festival, (2) promoting charity culture, (3) demonstrating hospitality, (4) pursuing high competitiveness, and (5) globalizing the marathon (Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022, p. 2). As introduced in the Research Context section (see Chapter III), the birth of the Osaka Marathon differed from the Kyoto Marathon in that it was proposed through top-down directives from the governor at that time, and there was no previous running event that served as its predecessor. Since it was established from scratch, the Osaka Marathon was novel compared to the Kyoto Marathon. These visions have not changed from the inception of the marathon to the present.

According to the archival record of the OMOC (2014), the consideration for the Osaka Marathon began with three officials of the Osaka Prefectural Government, indicating that the Osaka Marathon is an event led by the administration. After that, the first preparatory committee meeting (which later became the organizing committee) was held about two years and two months before the inaugural Osaka Marathon. Each vision reflects the nature of each organizer of the Osaka Marathon. For example, Vision 1 (staging Osaka’s new festival) and Vision 3 (demonstrating hospitality) are aligned with the administrative strategy, while Vision 4 (pursuing high competitiveness) and Vision 5 (globalizing the marathon) are aligned with the OAAA’s objective (OAAA, n.d.). In addition, academic experts also engaged in creating those visions; Vision 2 (promoting charity culture) is an example. One academic expert involved in formulating that vision commented as follows:

When launching a new citizens' marathon, I was asked by the Osaka Prefecture officials to consider a unique feature not traditionally seen in Japanese marathons. They seemed to have a desire to specialize in charity, and I was consulted on how to conceptualize it and asked to oversee the establishment of its program. (Interviewee 15)

This expert subsequently became the chairperson of the Expertise Committee on Charity and has been leading the charity program up to the present. Thus, similar to the Kyoto Marathon, the practices related to the visions of the Osaka Marathon included government officials, sport organization members, and academic experts as agents.

Course Design

In both marathons, from the establishment of the preparatory committees to the present day, an important practice regards course design. In designing the marathon course, the government's aim to showcase the city's charm to participants and the sport organization's aim to create a record-friendly marathon to attract competitive runners were intermingled (although both marathons eventually prioritized course design to attract general runners rather than elite runners: e.g., The Kyoto City Assembly, 2010a; The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2010a). Furthermore, because the marathons use public roads, negotiations with police, and persuading residents were required. I describe below how practices regarding course design were carried out in each marathon.

For the Kyoto Marathon, when the secretariat was established within the Sports Promotion Office in the City of Kyoto in April 2010, the members started addressing essential aspects of course design, such as creating a course proposal and conducting traffic surveys in relation to the proposal (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2010b). For example, the secretariat members, based on public opinions, worked on proposing an attractive marathon course that

would allow runners to fully enjoy the world heritage sites during the race (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2010). As a result, the course was designed to traverse the seven World Heritage sites in the City of Kyoto (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2012c). Members of KAA, including those seconded to the secretariat, also engaged in brainstorming ideas to create a safe and comfortable marathon course that would be sanctioned as an official race by the JAAF²⁰ (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2010b). At the same time, however, they also needed to cope with the requests presented by the Kyoto Prefectural Police, who were responsible for traffic regulations, to ensure that emergency vehicles, including fire trucks and ambulances, could respond without hindrance (The Kyoto Shimbun, June 8, 2011, p. 1). One specific concern over potential traffic congestion caused by holding the marathon made the secretariat members provide concrete measures (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2010). The geographical factor of Kyoto not having urban expressways in the central part of the city (i.e., during the race, it is necessary to restrict the use of major roads that run through the city) gave weight to this concern; subsequently, the secretariat launched a campaign called No My Car Day to reduce traffic volume by 35% (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2011a). This included explanations to residents and local businesses, calls for the use of public transportation, and requests for travel agencies to refrain from bus tours on race day (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2010). Although there have been minor changes to the marathon course so far (e.g., KMEC, 2015b), this series of practices, including the No My Car Day campaign, was led primarily by city officials and staff from sport organizations, and continued up to the 2020 edition before the pandemic (KMEC, 2020b).

²⁰ Having the JAAF official support allows for the recruitment of international athletes through the JAAF and provides other benefits such as receiving advice and guidance (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2011a). The Kyoto Marathon has been officially supported by the JAAF since the 2015 edition (KMEC, 2015b).

The practice regarding course design for the Osaka Marathon is similar to that of the Kyoto Marathon. In the process of planning the first Osaka Marathon, the members from two local governments and the OAAA cooperated in investigating and discussing course design and safety measures (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009a). For the course design proposal, the officials of Osaka Prefectural Government conducted the residents' monitoring survey (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2009b), and the secretariat members of the preparation committee including members of the OAAA addressed one of the most challenging aspects, negotiations with the Osaka Prefectural Police. One secretariat member stated:

Negotiations don't conclude in one session. We explain at the prefectural police headquarters first, and then ask them to pass it down to the local jurisdiction. If any new concerns arise during the discussions with members from the local jurisdiction, then we go back to the headquarters again. (Interviewee 9)

Based on the proposed course design, there was another diligent effort. The secretariat members needed to "gain an understanding from the residents and businesses along the course, which aimed at building community support and addressing any concerns or questions they may have had" (Interviewee 12). The Osaka Marathon has been held as the JAAF-sanctioned race since its first edition; but following its success, the JAAF decided to be an official supporting organization for the Osaka Marathon (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2011a).

The main difference between the Osaka Marathon and the Kyoto Marathon is that, from the 9th edition of the Osaka Marathon 2019, there was a major change in the course layout. This was a change from the course that started in the central part of the City of Osaka and ended in the bay area, to a more runner-friendly course known as the Central Finish, which has both the start and finish points located in the city centre (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2018a). This change, based

on requests from runners, was officially discussed within the OMOC's expert committee chaired by a professor from a local university at least since 2013; however, including negotiations with the Prefectural Police, it took over six years to realize (OMOG, 2014, The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2017a). As such, in the creation and development of the Osaka Marathon's course design, not only government officials and members from a sport organization but also (academic) experts were actively involved.

Programs and Services

Stemming from the visions created and updated, countless programs and services have been developed in both marathons. In their development, the number of agents increased. Below, I describe who was involved in notable programs and services in each marathon.

In the Kyoto Marathon, programs and services underpinned by the main concepts have been enriched year by year. For the concept of the Reconstruction of Great East Japan Earthquake, there have been donations to the charity for the earthquake (donations incorporated into the entry fees and calls for donations at the venue), the set up of support booths at the Marathon expo (exhibiting photos of the disaster-affected areas and selling specialties in those areas), and the creation of message bibs for the disaster-affected areas; these have been carried out in conjunction with local NPOs and businesses (e.g., KMEC, 2012c, 2020g). In addition, students from a local university have continued to contribute to the relief efforts since the inaugural event, by producing and selling Kyoto's specialties (e.g., The Kyoto Shimbun, 2020d).

For the concept of the "DO YOU KYOTO? Marathon," in addition to the No My Car Day campaign, the practices started with such as the implementation of My Bottled Water supply, and the paperless transition for printed materials (KMEC, 2014b). With each successive edition of the marathon, various eco-friendly practices have been implemented, such as recycling

warm clothing at the start point (KMEC, 2015c), donating leftover food from aid stations to food banks (KMEC, 2017b), and creating medals from small electronic appliances (2018b).

Also, there were symposiums where experts from key stakeholders (e.g., local universities, sport-related companies, sport organizations, and the city government) discussed the benefits and trends of marathons (e.g., *The Kyoto Shimbun*, 2013), first aid training workshops conducted by nursing schools also takes place prior to the marathon (*The Kyoto Shimbun*, 2015a), running workshops organized by local universities (e.g., *The Kyoto Shimbun*, 2017a), and the creation of a map of public bath facilities by the City of Kyoto in conjunction with the facility owners (e.g., *The Kyoto Shimbun*, 2016). Regarding local businesses, at aid stations alongside the course, local shopping street members distributed local products (e.g., *The Kyoto Shimbun*, 2014), and another local business provided a free app that offers audio-guided tours of tourist attractions around the marathon course (e.g., *The Kyoto Shimbun*, 2015b).

Meanwhile, the Osaka Marathon also has involved the participation of various stakeholders in its programs and services. Among the five visions of the Osaka Marathon, practices based on promoting charity culture and demonstrating hospitality are noteworthy. To promote charity culture, a notable charity program for the Osaka Marathon was established and has been developed. A chairperson of an expert committee on charity, who has been leading the charity program, reflected on the time when he received a consultation about charity from an official of the Osaka Prefectural Government:

I felt that Japan was lagging in combining citizens' marathons with charity. I took the London Marathon and the Chicago Marathon as benchmarks, where various NGOs and NPOs are involved, and many runners participate in charity fundraising with specific missions. I then contemplated how to incorporate the charity programs from the UK and

the US into the Japanese style of marathons²¹...I highlighted that Osaka has many public buildings, roads, and bridges that were constructed through citizen donations or beneficiary contributions, as well as cultural facilities donated by local companies. So, I proposed that the marathon should emphasize the footprints of such a giving culture in Osaka and become a marathon that revolves around exploring these aspects. (Interviewee 15)

This expert's proposal resulted in the creation of the Osaka Marathon's own charity program, which recruits charitable organizations (or donation recipients) based on charity themes and offers many participants, including all runners, the opportunity to participate in charitable activities (OMOC, 2011). According to Hashizume and Sugimoto (2022), who reviewed the progress of the charity program of the Osaka Marathon, experts from academia, private companies, and foundations discussed and established basic guidelines, setting seven charity themes: forest conservation, support for athletes with disabilities, support for children suffering from illness and their families, cancer eradication, preservation and beautification of cityscapes, promoting physical and mental health of children, and striving for a world with access to clean drinking water.

A dedicated office for the charity program was initially placed within a co-organizer media company (before shifting to the organizing committee's secretariat from the 2015 edition of the marathon). Since being selected as the co-organizer media by the Osaka Marathon Preparation Committee (later OMOC) in a public recruitment process, this company has been

²¹ The researcher emphasized that the main challenge was the difference in perception of charitable activities between Japan and Western countries. In the interview, he highlighted that while Buddhism has a long-standing tradition of donation practices, it is often seen as a means to accumulate personal virtue. In addition, although specific charitable activities and organizations exist in Japan, there is a lack of a norm for everyday charitable actions as seen in countries like the UK.

involved in reporting and dedicated their efforts to related programs, including the charity program (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2010b). This media company has also contributed to the development of this charity program by researching how the money raised through the program is subsequently used (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2012a).

For the inaugural marathon, eight NPOs were selected as charitable organizations, implementing a system allowing runners to choose their preferred charitable organization. From the 2013 edition of the marathon, a Charity Runner System was introduced, enabling participants to secure an entry slot by raising a certain amount of money. The Osaka Marathon 2014 saw the introduction of public applications for charitable organizations, and from the Osaka Marathon 2016, spontaneous ancillary events by the charitable organizations (e.g., charity runner meet-ups and joint running practices) began, enriching the practices year by year. Moreover, from the inaugural Osaka Marathon 2011, activities involving various stakeholders, such as symposiums featuring experts from various sectors, ancillary event collaborations with local businesses, and charity merchandise sales have been conducted.

For the vision of demonstrating hospitality, practices centered around vibrant shopping streets, symbolic of the City of Osaka, were identified. As a local business, the Osaka City Shopping Street Association has provided Osaka's specialty food and beverages at an aid station since the first edition of the marathon (Osaka City Shopping Street Association, n.d.). For this practice, members of the aforementioned co-organizer company leveraged their position as media outlets to connect with other stakeholders. For example, through a collaboration with the company, students majoring in media studies at a local university (it is also a sponsor of the Osaka Marathon) have engaged in the food provision activity initiated by the Osaka City Shopping Street Association since the 2014 edition of the marathon. The students have covered

the enthusiasm of the members of the association and food offerings, managed the official social media of the aid station, operated a booth at the Osaka Marathon EXPO on the day before the race, and volunteered to hand out food to the runners on the day of the marathon (e.g., The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2015, 2019a)]. A professor, who has been supervising these students, mentioned that through their activities, “the students are having a good experience forming connections with local businesspeople, with whom they normally do not have the opportunity to interact” (Interviewee 16).

Furthermore, like the Kyoto Marathon, numerous pre-event practices carried out by local organizations were identified at the Osaka Marathon. For instance, a local university’s track and field teams organized running workshops (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2011b), and local businesses such as hotels and gyms provided lockers, showers, and public baths for runners (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2010c).

Sponsorship

Sponsorship refers to “a business relationship whereby one or more partners provide financial or other support in return for some effort that aims to assist that partner to meet their business objectives” (Byers et al., 2012, p. 129). As one of the important practices for the development of sport events, cultivating sponsorship was initiated by outsourcing (contracted) agency company. In the case of the Kyoto Marathon, since incurring a considerable deficit in its inaugural marathon, there has been a reduction in outsourcing and an increase in sponsorship activities conducted by the secretariat members (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2018). In the case of the Osaka Marathon, all sponsorship activities were led by a contracted agency (Interviewee 10, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

For both marathons, the involvement of outsourcing contracted agencies is essential to organize events on a scale of tens of thousands of participants. One ad agency involved with both marathons since the inaugural editions has multiple roles; one of these is building good connections with sponsors to secure sponsorship fees (KMEC, 2018c; Osaka Prefectural Government, n.d.). Considering the knowledge and experience accumulated through engaging in other sport events and the networks of organizations and individuals they have links with, even though they are contracted agencies, they play a key role in various practices within the stakeholder network (Interviewee 10, personal communication, April 21, 2022).

As evidenced by the Kyoto Marathon relying on sponsors for about 40% of its budget (Internal document of the KMEC, 2020) and the Osaka Marathon for about 50%, it is clear that cultivating sponsors is financially important (OMOC, 2020e). However, what is noteworthy is there were also activities conducted by sponsors which actively engaged the marathons to create unique values. Beyond merely giving the sponsorship fee, they have provided many forms of assistance using their expertise in their respective fields. For example, in the Kyoto Marathon, sponsors promoted their products and latest technologies at the Kyoto Marathon Expo held before and during race day (e.g., The Kyoto Shimbun, 2017b), and a delivery service company promoted the event by placing stickers on their vehicles running within the city (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2014), while a health equipment company provides their own AED (Automated External Defibrillator) devices (KMEC, 2018d). In the Osaka Marathon, for example, a cleaning company supported the pre-event cleaning activities carried out by local NPOs (also a charitable organization of the Osaka Marathon) and residents a few days before the race (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2012b), and a telecommunications company has broadcasted the race live on the internet for free (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2011c).

One notable case was found in the Osaka Marathon, where a local insurance agency called Advance Create Co., Ltd. has sponsored the Osaka Marathon since 2013. A member expressed that the company's sponsorship is meaningful in the sense that, for example, they create their internal project team for participating in the event, which can "foster a sense of unity among colleagues" and "the company's commitment to contributing to the local community" (Interviewee 18). Another member highlighted that their involvement in the Osaka Marathon aligns with their "dedication to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices, enabling them to enhance investor relations" while contributing to the fulfillment of the marathon's visions, particularly its charity aspects (Interviewee 19).

As such, there are instances where "sponsors (i.e., solely focusing on a business aspect) become partners" who are autonomously involved and share a connection with the event's visions, acting as agents involved in new practices (Interviewee 14).

Research

In the case of the Kyoto Marathon, a team called the Kyoto Marathon Management Research Team, consisting of sport management research seminars from three local universities, has been conducting surveys on the impact of the marathon on runners, volunteers, and residents. This practice is based on a memorandum of understanding "signed annually since the first edition of the KMEC, and the results of these surveys contribute to improving the quality of event management" (Interviewee 7). While those researchers do not make any ultimate decisions about event management, their research is an important practice in demonstrating that the event is managed based on scientific evidence. A researcher, who is one of the research members, stated:

Secretariat members of the Kyoto Marathon pay close attention to our feedback to enhance the marathon each year. The feedback from runners has been used to improve services, while citizen feedback, for example, concerning issues faced by residents near the course such as traffic regulations, has informed negotiations with the police. Also, volunteer feedback has been instrumental in proposing the need for training sessions for volunteer leaders. (Interviewee 7)

Furthermore, some of their research focusing on the Kyoto Marathon has been published in international and domestic journals (e.g., Matsunaga et al., 2014, explored volunteer motivation structure in Kyoto Marathon; Nagazumi et al., 2014, examined the relationship between the residents' recognition to the social impact and the hosting intention toward Kyoto Marathon; Ninomiya et al., 2019, investigated the relationship between destination image and marathon runners' behaviours). As such, they have established a system where they contribute to the management of the event while leveraging their academic expertise.

In the case of the Osaka Marathon, researchers from a local university have also been commissioned by the organizing committee to conduct surveys on runners, volunteers, and spectators, and the results are reported by the co-organizer media company, which serves as survey collaborators every year (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2012c, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017b, 2018b, 2019b, 2020d). A professor, who initiated this research project since the first edition of the marathon stated:

One of the major features of our research is that we conduct surveys with specific themes for reform each time. As a member of the OMOC's expert committee on charity, I am well-acquainted with the overall positioning and direction of the charity, which facilitates the incorporation of OMOC members' perspectives into our research, too...On the other

hand, while there are often requests from secretariat members of the OMOC for specific questionnaire items, we strive to avoid bias in our surveys. We ensure scientific neutrality. We have set up discussions with the secretariat members and proceeded with the survey in a mutually agreed-upon manner. (Interviewee 14)

The outcomes of their continuous research on changes in participants' awareness regarding charity, one of the important visions of the marathon, have been compiled into academic reports and books (e.g., Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022, reflected and discussed the Osaka Marathon focusing on citizens' sport, charity culture, and urban creation) and have served as valuable feedback for activities in the Osaka Marathon.

In these ways, researchers from local universities have been actively and continuously involved in both marathons. Their theme-based, scientifically neutral research contributed to supporting evidence-based management of the marathons and pursuing event visions.

Transformed Social Structure before the Pandemic

Through various practices for the creation and development of the marathons before the pandemic, I found that the institution as a social structure (i.e., the Institution of citizens' marathons) was transformed. Both the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon were born under the influence of the success of the Tokyo Marathon 2007, Japan's first large-scale citizens' marathon. However, to establish their own uniqueness, members of the preparation committees involved in their creation, as well as their stakeholders, set visions that went beyond traditional sport-focused competitiveness from the stage of vision setting. For the Kyoto Marathon, this refers to the assistance of the reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake and environmental awareness campaigns; for the Osaka Marathon, it refers to fostering a charity culture and showcasing the unique hospitality of the host region. Based on these visions, both

marathons' secretariat members, along with local stakeholders not limited to sport organizations (e.g., NPOs, businesses, sponsors, universities, and citizens), actively and continuously initiated a wide range of practices. This transformed the institution of citizens' marathons, traditionally seen as sport events for elite athletes, into events cultivated by citizens themselves to pursue certain visions (The Yomiuri Shimbun, 2010d).

This aspect of being created and developed by local stakeholders is important because it was not coincidental; it was intentionally designed. For instance, the OMOC in its planning committee states the following: "In future event management, it is effective not just for organizers to unilaterally disseminate information, but to ensure that it develops in a two-way interaction with stakeholders" (OMOC, 2014, p. 11).

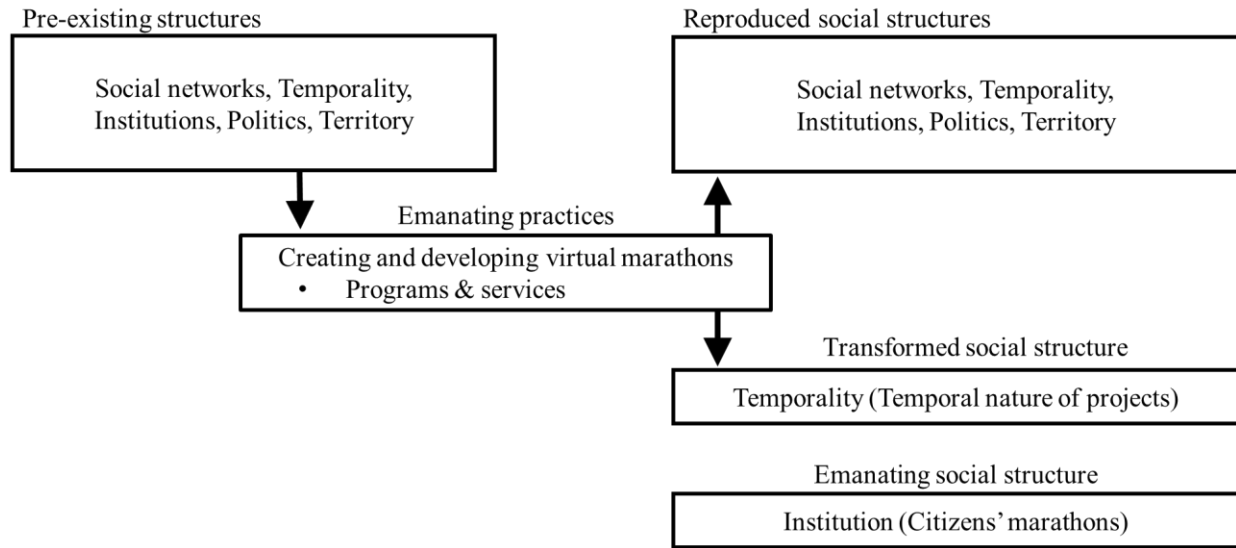
Regarding the social structures of social networks, temporality, other institutions (e.g., the social role of government), politics, and territory, no evidence of transformation was found within the collected data. This implied that agents in the two marathon cases were acting in accordance with the influences of these social structures that would have originally existed. Next, I show the results of identified practices and transformed social structures of both marathons during the pandemic.

2. Emanating Practices, Agents, and Transformed Social Structures during the Pandemic

In this section focusing on the pandemic period for both marathons, I present emanating practices and how the agents exerted their human agency that influenced social structures through engaging in the practices. This section is composed of one identified practice, programs & services, which falls under the overarching practices of creating and developing virtual marathons. These sections are followed by a transformed social structure (i.e., temporal nature of

projects) and emanating social structure (i.e., the institution of citizens’ marathons). I provide an overview of the results in Figure 6.3 and present the details below.

Figure 6.3—Emerging Practices and Reproduced/Transformed (Emanating) Social Structures around the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Creating and Developing the Virtual Marathons

The creation and development of virtual marathons were one of a few emergences seen in both events during the pandemic. They were aimed not only at “keeping participants and sponsors connected until the end of the pandemic” (Interviewee 3) but also at creating new value (from my self-reflection interview note: An interview with a contracted agency member of the Osaka Marathon on August 4, 2022). However, they were not directly effective in fulfilling the previously established visions, and there were not many activities undertaken.

Programs and Services

During the pandemic, several alternative events, such as running schools, were organized for both marathons; but even these small-scale events had to be cancelled in some cases (KMEC, 2021a, 2022a; OMO, 2022d). The identified emergence in that context was the practice of virtual marathons (Figure 6.3), which had never been seen before in both research contexts.

In the Kyoto Marathon, it was the secretariat members who took the lead in the practice of virtual marathons. Despite being influenced by the social structures under pandemic-driven uncertainty, they believed in the necessity of continuing the marathon as an inter-organizational project. A director of the secretariat stated at the city assembly: “Virtual marathons not only provide an opportunity to enjoy running even during the pandemic but also play a crucial role in preserving the Kyoto Marathon per se and maintaining its brand value²² for the future” (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2022a). They expected their new practice would generate unique benefits. One of them is that it might increase fans of the Kyoto Marathon; virtual marathons, which can be completed in multiple sessions, are more accessible for people with disabilities, children, and beginners who have previously found it difficult to complete a full marathon within the time limit (The Kyoto Shimbun, 2020b). Although GPS (Global Positioning System)-based running apps for measuring running records have existed for a while, their use for large-scale marathons became popular in marathons across Japan since its first implementation in the Nagoya Women’s Marathon in 2020 (The Asahi Shimbun, 2020). What differentiated the Kyoto Marathon’s use of such apps was the partnership with an app company that provided a platform for optional radio personalities to cheer on participants in real time while they were running (KMEC, 2021a). A secretariat member stated:

The live cheering feature of the app, where the voices can directly reach the runners, was a new tool that we had never seen before. It can be used as a promotional and advertising tool, and we found it enjoyable when we actually tried it, which led to the proposal for its implementation. (Interviewee 3)

²² In this context, brand value can refer to the high level of stakeholder recognition and appraisal for the Kyoto Marathon (Interviewee 1, personal communication, on July 25, 2022).

This member also mentioned participating in a virtual running school conducted by a former Olympian who serves as an ambassador for the Kyoto Marathon. He had the experience of being called out by the person in real-time when they registered their name; he reflected “the sense of togetherness that comes from running with others seemed perfect for an online platform, and that’s where it all started” (Interviewee 3). In the Kyoto Marathon 2021, while the running records were measured by employing an app used in other events, the unique programs using the dedicated app took place 16 times during and during the period of the virtual marathon, with each program focusing on themes related to the attractions of Kyoto (KMEC, 2021).

According to the final report of the Virtual Kyoto Marathon 2021 (KMEC, 2021), the programs welcomed 2,858 participants in total while 9,916 runners registered for the virtual marathon itself. The total page views for the online Expo, where participants interacted and sponsors’ products and services were showcased, reached 1,247,482 views. In 2022, the Kyoto Marathon was once again held in a virtual format, as the director of the secretariat stated that “the ongoing pandemic made it difficult to accurately predict the situation and that we did not want to impose any further burden on the healthcare professionals” (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2021b). According to the final report of the Virtual Kyoto Marathon 2022 (KMEC, 2022), the number of registered runners for the virtual marathon decreased slightly to approximately 7,600 people, but the number of participants in the program using the app increased to a total of 3,373 people. Also, the total page views for the online Expo, enhanced by adding information about local businesses and running clubs, surpassed the previous year, reaching 1,317,481 views.

The efforts made by the secretariat members, despite unprecedented circumstances and limited budget, were recognized by the Kyoto City Assembly, as the event became one of the

most well-attended marathons (The Kyoto City Assembly, 2021c, 2022). Reflecting on the efforts of the past two years, a secretariat member stated:

To make the Kyoto Marathon more resilient in the future, it is important to create a system where sponsors have exposure opportunities not just during the staging time in February, but throughout the year, showcasing that the Kyoto Marathon offers various enjoyable experiences. By doing so, we can create a socially beneficial event for everyone involved. (Interviewee 1)

The secretariat of the Osaka Marathon, where the presence of the athletic association is relatively strong, initially showed limited interest in virtual marathons²³ (Interviewee 9, personal communication, on August 31, 2022). The proposal and persuasion for the virtual marathon were made by the contracted agency members responsible for the event operations and sponsorship. After the start of the pandemic, the agency members reached out to a company that provides a different application than the one used for the Kyoto Marathon. That company was MOUSOU inc., which provided an app called MOUSOU (implying “Imagination Run” in Japanese). This app “allows everyone to feel like a star runner anytime, anywhere with commentary and cheers” (MOUSOU, n.d.). A member of the app company said “Actually, this app existed before the COVID-19 pandemic” (Interviewee 21). The app provides an experience where users can listen to pre-recorded audio commentary by renowned commentators in the Japanese marathon scene and the sounds of cheering spectators along the virtual course, tailored to the distance and pace at which they are running; this immersive experience aims to enhance the runner’s engagement and motivation during their run (MOUSOU, n.d.).

²³ One reason why the athletic association showed limited interest should be because virtual marathons are not sanctioned by the JAAF (Interviewee 9, personal communication, on August 31, 2022).

The agency members responsible for operating the Osaka Marathon reached out to the app company in the spring of 2020, and following the cancellation of the Osaka Marathon 2020, a project was initiated with the aim of realizing the Osaka Marathon 2020 Virtual (Interviewee 21, personal communication, August 30, 2022). An agency member reflected on the time when they became interested in the app that was not receiving much attention at that time:

The idea to give it an Osaka Marathon twist and incorporate Osaka-style commentary or heavily feature the cheers in the Osaka dialect came about as a way to garner more interest. It was driven by the desire to create an experience that would allow participants to feel a sense of Osaka. (Interviewee 21)

A total of 8,699 individuals participated in the virtual Osaka Marathon in 2020, with 3,517 completing the full marathon (OMOC, 2021b). However, not everyone was satisfied with this novel practice. While exhibiting mixed emotions, one secretariat member reflected on the virtual marathon:

Simply put, the virtual marathon was important for maintaining our relationship with sponsor companies. We certainly wanted to use the app to showcase the attraction of the Osaka Marathon and introduce participants to the course, but it was also necessary to introduce sponsors during the audio presentations while runners were listening to generate sponsor benefits. Although other marathons were charging participation fees for virtual marathons, we did not want to do the same...ultimately, the reason for taking place in the Osaka Marathon is to revitalize the city of Osaka. So, it is crucial to have participants actually come to Osaka. In that sense, I felt that the virtual marathon wouldn't achieve that purpose. Having said this, I never anticipated the pandemic would

last this long, so perhaps we should have had a more robust scheme in place. (Interviewee 10)

A researcher, who has primarily focused on runner surveys at the Kyoto Marathon, similarly stated: “Runners cannot experience the same excitement in a virtual marathon that they do in a regular in-person marathon...The two are distinct. So, one should not think that an in-person marathon can be substituted with a virtual marathon” (Interviewee 6). The opinions of stakeholders regarding virtual marathons may not be yet settled, but it was found that this novel practice was led by secretariat members (particularly, for the Kyoto Marathon) and contracted agency company members (particularly, for the Osaka Marathon), with the cooperation of running app developers.

Transformed and Emanating Social Structures during the Pandemic

Through the creation and development of virtual marathons before the pandemic, I explored that temporality as a social structure (particularly, the temporal nature of projects) was transformed. This corresponded to what a marathon expert pointed out in a running magazine: “Marathon organizers need to provide events throughout the year” (Sasai, 2012, p. 101). With the pandemic, “the risk inherent in the traditional business model of ‘annual events’ held once a year became evident” (Interviewee 10), and with the advent of virtual marathon capabilities, this model of having multiple events within a year materialized. The Kyoto Marathon, even after the revival of in-person events, has continued with virtual marathons (KMEC, 2023). Similarly, the Osaka Marathon 2023 VIRTUAL was held prior to the Osaka Marathon 2023 that allowed general runners to participate in-person for the first time since the 2019 edition (OMOC, 2023). A member of the contracted agency company involved in the Osaka Marathon stated, “I do not

intend to downscale the actual event, but we must think about what the Osaka Marathon can offer to runners and stakeholders ‘throughout the year’” (Interviewee 22).

Another emanating (but not yet transformed) social structure is the institution of citizens’ marathons. As mentioned in Chapter IV, under pandemic-driven uncertainty, a conflict arose between the institutional logics of citizens’ marathons and the organizational logics held by stakeholders. While the online marathon was developed as a beneficial tool for the survival of the marathons, there has been notable criticism among stakeholders due to its value being seen as contrary to the traditional vision. For instance, it is difficult to enjoy the hospitality of the event location virtually (Interviewee 20, personal communication, on July 26, 2022). Having said that, if the value of the online marathon is conceptualized and successfully blended with the traditional visions, it has a good potential to become established as a new institution of citizens’ marathons.

Regarding the social structures of social networks, that is, other temporality aspects (e.g., past experiences and future expectations), other institutions (e.g., the social role of government), politics and territory, no evidence of transformation was found within the collected data. This implied that agents in the two marathon cases were acting in accordance with the influences of these social structures that would have been reshaped by the pandemic. Next, I show the comparative results of human agency between before and during the pandemic.

3. Comparing Human Agency before and during the Pandemic

In this section, I present the difference regarding how identified agents exerted their human agency that influenced certain social structures through engaging in the practices in the two periods. I present a summary in Table 6.1, which, based on the results in the preceding section, shows the emanating practices, agents who engaged in those practices, transformed (or

Table 6.1—A Comparison on Human Agency between before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Period	Before the COVID-19 pandemic	During the COVID-19 pandemic
Emanating practices (details)	Creating and developing marathons (visions, course design, programs & services, sponsorship, research)	Creating and developing virtual marathons (programs & services)
Agents who engaged in emanating practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials • Sport organization members • Media company members • Local business members • Local NPO members • Local university members • Sponsor company members • Contracted agency company members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials • Contracted agency company members
Transformed (or emanating) social structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution of citizens' marathons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The temporal nature of projects • The institution of citizens' marathons (emanating)
How to exert human agency for transforming social structures	Marathon secretariat members took the lead, and provided their stakeholders with opportunities to realize various practices together.	Marathon secretariat members (mainly for the Kyoto Marathon) and contracted agency company members (mainly for the Osaka Marathon) sought cooperation from companies with novel technologies to maintain (or cultivate) connections with participants and sponsors for their future editions.

emanating) social structures, and how to exert human agency for transforming those social structures for the Kyoto Marathons and the Osaka Marathons before and during the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, for both marathons, government officials, sport organization members, media company members, local business members, local NPO members, local university members, sponsor company members, and contracted agency company members actively engaged in the emanating practices of creating and developing marathons. These individuals were identified as agents who transformed the institution of citizens' marathons. The

ones who exerted the most human agency for a series of novel practices and the emergence of a new property in a social structure (i.e., the institution of citizens' marathons) were the marathon secretariat members, consisting of government officials and sport organization members.

Although the secretariat members took the lead of those practices, they also provided their stakeholders with opportunities to realize various practices together. What enabled the active participation of such a diverse range of stakeholders was setting multiple visions not necessarily related to the characteristics of (elite) sport, along with various practices to realize them (OMOC, 2014; Hashizume & Sugimoto, 2022). This led to an emergence of citizens' marathons, an institution unlike any that existed before in the communities.

During the pandemic, secretariat members (mainly, for the Kyoto Marathon) and contracted agency company members (mainly, for the Kyoto Marathon) led the creation and development of the virtual marathons. These individuals were identified as agents who transformed the temporal nature of projects and who contributed to emanation of the institution of citizens' marathons. They sought cooperation from companies with novel technologies to maintain (or cultivate) the connections with participants and sponsors as a secretariat member of the Kyoto Marathon said: "The virtual marathon is positioned as something that will lead into the future of the Kyoto Marathon" (Interviewee 2). The series of activities led to the transformation of the temporal nature of projects, enabling the holding of multiple events throughout the year without relying solely on the main event. It also led to the emanation of the institution of citizens' marathons—with the transition of the event space from in-person to virtual, there arose a conflict between current event visions and newly perceived values within the institution of citizens' marathons.

Comparative analysis revealed that, during the pandemic, the number of individuals possessing both the motivation and capability to engage in new practices, which could create new properties within social structures, decreased compared to the period before the pandemic. In other words, under the conditions of pandemic-driven uncertainty, exerting human agency to manage marathons among secretariat members and their stakeholders was constrained. As I revisit the quote featured in Chapter V, a secretariat member of the Osaka Marathon reflected on the pandemic period as “It was two years when we were generally immobilized” (Interviewee 10). This statement highlights the difficulties in co-creating new practices with stakeholders during turbulent times.

Summary of the Results

In this chapter, using Archer’s (1995) dualism approach integrated with the embeddedness perspective, I explored the change of the way human agency influencing social structures in managing the marathons between before and during the pandemic. As a result, I found that, during the pandemic, compared to before the pandemic, there was a decrease in agents with the motivation and capability to engage in new practices that could transform social structures. Consequently, the exertion of human agency was constrained under pandemic-driven uncertainty. In the next chapter, I discuss the reasons for this limited human agency, its implications, and insights for future research obtained during the comparative analysis process.

CHAPTER VII: Discussion and Conclusion

In this final chapter, I discuss the findings from Chapters IV-VI to answer each RQ and integrate them to address the overall purpose of this dissertation: *To understand the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events*. While interpreting the findings, I identified both similarities and differences compared to previous studies, and reflected on alternative explanations for the findings, if necessary (American Psychological Association, 2019). Based on the interpretations, I then describe contributions to theory and literature, methodology, and practice, as well as implications for researchers and practitioners. Finally, I reflect on my research endeavour, and close the dissertation with limitations, future directions, and a conclusion.

Discussion on RQ1

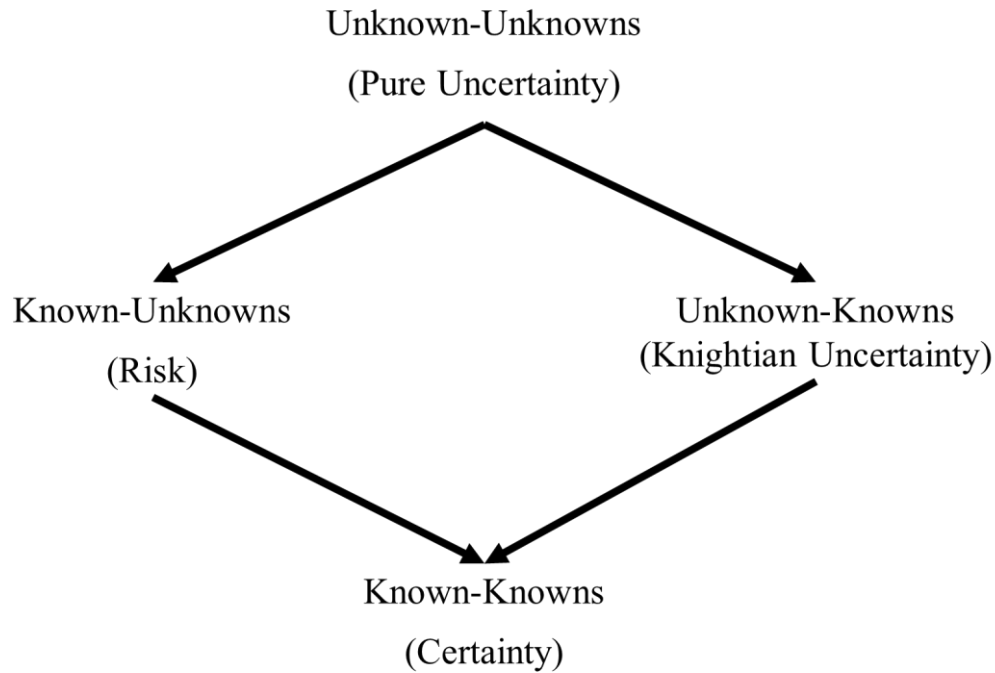
To address RQ1 (i.e., *How did the marathon secretariat members experience uncertainty over time due to the pandemic?*), I divided the pandemic period (i.e., January 2020 to March 2022) into three distinct phases, which represented critical decision-making timings for both marathons (i.e., the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon) and reflected the changing social landscape under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Then, I categorized the experiences of marathon secretariat members into five types for each phase. These types (and their corresponding phases) were as follows: Difficulty in Ensuring Safety (Phase 1-3), A Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement (Phase 1-2), Sponsor Considerations (Phase 1-3), Concern about Reputational Damage (Phase 1-3), and Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organizational Logics (Phase 3). By organizing these experiences in a chronological order that aligns with the prevailing social contexts, I was able to compare my findings with existing knowledge of uncertainty. In this section, I compare the results of my

analysis for RQ1 with the categorization of uncertainty in broader organization studies (e.g., Phan & Wood, 2020) and the related previous literature on major sport event management (as a form of project management: e.g., Leopkey & Parent, 2009a, 2009b) to consider the similarities and differences, as well as their meaning.

Categorization of Uncertainty

By applying Phan and Wood's (2020) uncertainty framework, which consists of Known-Knowns (i.e., Certainty), Known-Unknowns (i.e., Risk), Unknown-Knowns (i.e., Knightian Uncertainty), and Unknown-Unknowns (i.e., Pure Uncertainty), I interpreted that all interviewees of marathon secretariat members found themselves under Pure Uncertainty (i.e., information is not recognized, and therefore cannot be researched or used in decision making) when the pandemic occurred. I also interpreted the first four types of experience (i.e., Difficulty in Ensuring Safety, A Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement, Sponsor Considerations, Concern about Reputational Damage) represented Risk (i.e., information is recognized as missing or incomplete but can be identified and researched to improve decision making), and the last type of experience (i.e., Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organizational Logics), characterized Knightian Uncertainty (i.e., information is available, but not yet recognized by decision makers). More importantly, my analysis, dividing the pandemic into three phases, showed that these perceptions of uncertainty are dynamic (cf. Duncan, 1972). It demonstrated the way marathon secretariat members perceived uncertainty, which shifted from Pure Uncertainty towards Certainty, through either Risk or Knightian Uncertainty, which is a contribution of this study (Figure 7.1).

The transition from Pure Uncertainty to Risk becomes particularly clear when reflecting on the progression of experience related to Difficulty in Ensuring Safety. Immediately after the

Figure 7.1—A Transition Framework of Perceived Uncertainty

outbreak of the pandemic, the secretariat members lost their criteria for managing their marathons to such an extent that they didn't even understand what ensuring safety meant. Their experience created a state of Pure Uncertainty, where it was known that the new virus was causing harm to people, but why and how this was happening remained unclear. In other words, in managing major sport events, it was unknown to whom and how it could become a threat. Then, as the secretariat members went through the process, they began understanding the nature of the virus and how to address the pandemic by consulting key stakeholders, investigating other events, acquiring statements from the Government of Japan, and obtaining guidelines from parent organizations. These represent a similar proactive process of risk management that Leopkey and Parent (2009a) described as “strategically anticipating, preventing, minimizing, and planning responses to eliminate or mitigate those identified risks” (Leopkey & Parent, 2009a, p. 199).

The transition from Pure Uncertainty to Knightian Uncertainty was highlighted when reflecting on the experience of Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organizational Logics. As the nature of the pandemic threat was progressively understood, it surfaced. This occurred as an experience of conflict in logics, which marathon secretariat members and their stakeholders may have either not recognized, known implicitly, or overlooked for some reason (e.g., too busy with daily tasks).

This type of experience was found only in the case of the Osaka Marathon. There are at least two reasons for this result. One is the possibility that my research could not capture the experience from the case of the Kyoto Marathon. According to the ontological assumptions of critical realism, the absence of an experience in the case of the Kyoto Marathon does not automatically mean that it did not occur (Danermark et al., 2019). The other is the explanation from a contextual point of view, which is the possibility that it was experienced due to the OMOC taking a risk to attempt to hold the general category of the Osaka Marathon 2022 in-person until the last moment. As a result, the secretariat members felt remorse for not being able to actualize the multiple visions of the Osaka Marathon they had cultivated (i.e., institutions of a marathon) for the stakeholders. In contrast, The KMEC made an early decision to cancel the in-person marathon, especially for the 2022 edition. Although the Kyoto Marathon also has multiple visions, the secretariat members focused on taking care of the City of Kyoto's financial situation (including the huge deficit generated in the inaugural edition in 2012), the public criticism of the Tokyo 2020 torch relay, and the successful experience of their virtual marathon in 2021 to gain stakeholder understanding rather than to pursue the visions vigorously under pandemic-driven uncertainty, trying to unite to work together for the sake of inheriting this event in the future. A notable interpretation of the Knightian Uncertainty considered from this

difference is that it may not necessarily be negative for one's future projects. For instance, the consequence of the Osaka Marathon 2022 was undesirable for many stakeholders. However, it served as an opportunity to focus on more fundamental issues that surfaced because of pandemic-driven uncertainty.

Risk and Risk Management in Managing Major Sport Events

Integrating Phan and Wood (2020), I point out a mix of risk and uncertainty in the literature on managing major sport events to echo Machiels et al.'s (2023) statement for project management literature. Although Phan and Wood (2020) took into account Pure Uncertainty, Risk, and Knightian Uncertainty, sport event management researchers seemed to have considered only Pure Uncertainty as the primary concept of uncertainty when studying risk and risk management. That Knightian Uncertainty is missing from the major sport event management literature is problematic. This is because, based on the results of the present research, studies using only Pure Uncertainty might overlook board-level issues that surfaced under pandemic-driven uncertainty related to the event's visions, such as the intrinsic values of the event or the reasons for stakeholder participation. These studies should go beyond operational-level problems (e.g., risks related to the first four types of experiences explored in this research).

When it comes to major sport events, the present research showed four similarities between risk management in "normal times" and under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Of the 15 risk categories identified by Leopkey and Parent (2009a), (1) Operations (e.g., venue management, logistics, and safety), (2) Financial (e.g., Return on Investment, lack of sponsorship, and government support), (3) Visibility (e.g., reputation and support for the event), and (4) Relationships (meeting/balancing stakeholder needs) were also evident in this study. When these are compared with pandemic-driven uncertainty, first, Operations in this study

related to the experience type of Difficulty in Ensuring Safety, which, due to the nature of sport events where people easily come into contact, was a risk requiring utmost caution. Second, Financial related to the experience type of A Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement, indicating the risk involved in crucial decisions in uncertain future situations. This also involved the risk of losing sponsors due to those decisions, which represents another experience type of Sponsor Considerations. Third, Visibility related to the experience type of Concern about Reputational Damage, indicating the risk of lowering the reputation of the sport event itself and its organizers by holding an in-person marathon under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Fourth, the category of Relationships was closely related to all types of experiences, which led me to interpret them as the most crucial risk under pandemic-driven uncertainty. This is based on the characteristics of managing major sport events as inter-organizational projects (particularly, the crisis that ensues if even one key stakeholder is missing), but it indicated the risk of hindering communications (that should have been conducted without problems in more time-sensitive situations) during normal times.

Leopkey and Parent (2009a) included Threats (e.g., epidemic terrorism, weather) in their categories as well, which is the concept most similar to a pandemic. However, as previously mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic exceeded the marathon secretariat members' imagination, making it a state of Pure Uncertainty, which later diverged into other risks. Although pandemics may be seen as a risk in the future, it is still necessary to view them as changing into other risks.

Of the seven risk management strategies Leopkey and Parent (2009b) identified (i.e., Reduction, Avoidance, Reallocation, Diffusion, Prevention, Legal, and Relationship Management), the present research highlights the importance of relationship management, reduction, and diffusion as distinctive strategies. As the most crucial risk under pandemic-driven

uncertainty was Relationships, the Relationship Management strategy was the most important strategy. Again, this is due to the nature of inter-organizational relationships in major sport event management, where the problems that marathon secretariat members can resolve alone are limited. In analyzing results during the present research, activities for negotiation and cooperation with local governments, sponsors, and extremely important stakeholder groups during the pandemic, such as media associations were particularly prominent. Reduction was reported to be the most frequently used risk management strategy in normal times (Leopkey & Parent, 2009b). Even under pandemic-driven uncertainty, this was evident in many of the efforts of marathon secretariat members made, for instance, considering other sport events and societal situations in the country, setting goals according to circumstances, and making plans to achieve them. Diffusion, on the contrary, has been reported as the least used strategy in normal times (Leopkey & Parent, 2009b). It is noteworthy that under pandemic-driven uncertainty, it became a useful risk management strategy. In a situation where the business model of recouping investment in a once-a-year event became precarious, marathon secretariat members began to recognize the need for risk diffusion. One notable example is the development of a virtual marathon. By implementing virtual marathons, the secretariat members diffuse risk, which continues even after the decision to revive in-person marathons was made (see Chapter VI).

Although the differences in context between Leopkey and Parent's (2009a, 2009b) research on one-off national sport events in Canada and the present research on recurring local sport events in Japan should be taken into account (cf. Byers et al., 2012), the similarities and differences in the management of these major sport events highlight the unique impacts of pandemic-driven uncertainty. This leads to beneficial implications for both researchers aiming

for a better understanding of the phenomenon and practitioners seeking more effective and efficient problem-solving (see the Implication section in this chapter).

Discussion on RQ2

To address RQ2 (i.e., *How can the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the marathon secretariat members' activities be explained using an embeddedness perspective?*), grounded the results of marathon secretariat members' experiences (explored in Chapter IV), I explored their activities that led to these experiences. Next, based on critical realism, I employed an embeddedness perspective and inferred the invisible social structures and mechanisms that resulted in these activities. In this process, I also explored contextual factors, including general environmental factors and characteristics, to help make the explanations more sense. Subsequently, I developed five theoretical frameworks that include descriptions of mechanisms corresponding to the five types of secretariat members' experience. This serves as an explanation of why and how pandemic-driven uncertainty led to the experiences of marathon secretariat members.

In this section, I compare the functioning of each social structure (i.e., social networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory) activated under pandemic-driven uncertainty with those reported in previous literature. To achieve this, I assume the management of major sport events as inter-organizational projects and the secretariat as a Network Administrative Organization (NAO). This approach not only extends beyond sport event management literature but also advances the project management literature and the general organization literature that theoretically underpin it. Specifically, I offer propositions transferable to broader project management studies and develop an embeddedness model for the activities of NAO members.

Social Networks

As indicated by general organization researchers including Gulati and Gargiulo (1999) and Polidoro et al. (2011), I highlighted the influence of social networks on all NAO members' (i.e., marathon secretariat members) activities (see Figures 5.1-5.5). Characterized by trust and reputation, the social networks' influences were represented by either dyadic relations (e.g., transactional experience), triadic relations (e.g., common acquaintances), or network position (e.g., central to information and opportunities). These are three critical types of social structures that can be both advantageous and disadvantageous for NAO members' activities under pandemic-driven uncertainty, as similarly argued in social network studies (e.g., Borgatti et al., 2018). Regarding dyadic relations, there were instances where trust built through past transactions contributed to preventing sponsors from withdrawing. In turn, interactions between the secretariat members and medical organization members dramatically increased during the pandemic, and the opinions of members from medical institutions had a notable influence on the decision making of the organizing committee. This implies that the medical associations' salience—"the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims" (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 854)—increased because of the pandemic-driven uncertainty in comparison to normal times in major sport events (cf. Parent & Deephouse, 2007).

Next, stakeholders that have triadic relations with an NAO were highly valued for information gathering under pandemic-driven uncertainty. This helped NAO members manage risks by, for example, investigating other events and exchanging information. This means that social networks contribute to the reduction of event management risks by promoting exploration, as March (1991) advocated. Network position also helped NAOs' activities under pandemic-driven uncertainty, as Gulati and Gargiulo (1999) and Polidoro et al. (2011) argued. In this

study's case, with local governments as the organizers of the marathons, network positions of marathon secretariat members closely related to local governments assisted in maintaining relationships with organizations desiring good relations with local governments. In other words, as long as the marathon is a strategic tool of the local government, the network position has the potential to help NAO activities.

Conversely, it also became clear that social networks can restrict the activities of NAO members. For example, dyadic relations contributed to limiting risk-taking due to the pressure of not damaging the trust and reputation stakeholders have towards the NAO. Triadic relations indirectly created pressures against risk-taking, for instance, with local governments, important stakeholders of NAO members, where there is an awareness of the community groups and citizens behind politicians.

In terms of social networks, my higher-order interpretation based on the comparison of this research and previous studies is twofold. First, social networks need to be considered in conjunction with other social structures. This explains why NAOs can continue business even when trust and reputation are damaged (for instance, the huge deficit in the inaugural Kyoto Marathon or the last-minute cancellation of the general runner category in the Osaka Marathon 2022). Second, in the context of sport event management, the utility of a social network approach that goes beyond the stakeholder approach should be embraced (e.g., Bakhsh et al., 2022; Naraine et al., 2016; Parent et al., 2017). However, I argue for the further utility of the embeddedness perspective by incorporating other social structures.

Temporality

I found temporality influenced NAO members' activities, leading to two experience types: A Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement, and Simulating the

Potential Losses, and Sponsor Considerations (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3). As mentioned by project management researchers such as DeFillippi and Sydow (2016) and Engwall (2003), temporality was expressed as the past experiences and future expectations that stakeholders hold regarding the marathons and the NAO members who engaged in the projects. Regarding past experiences, for example, in the Kyoto Marathon, the success of the first virtual marathon was one of the reasons for the quick decision to hold the second virtual marathon (i.e., it aided in addressing the dilemma experienced by marathon secretariat members: A Trade-Off between Empty Expenses and Accurate Judgement). Regarding future expectations, for example, in the Osaka Marathon, the expectations of another major event, the World Expo 2025 in Osaka, which shares its secretariat office building with the Osaka Marathon in the Osaka Prefectural Government, was one of the reasons why sponsors were retained despite the undesirable outcomes of the Osaka Marathon during the pandemic.

The temporality specific to project management, including major sport events, also influenced the activities of NAO members, as project and sport event management researchers revealed (e.g., Jones & Lichtenstein 2008; Parent, 2008). In the present research, NAO members tended to avoid risks and prioritize the survival of the project network in more uncertain situations (especially, in the early phase of the pandemic), which may be related to the recurring nature of the projects. In other words, it implies that, among NAO members of recurring projects compared to one-off projects, there is a greater tendency to develop a psychological leeway for doing it again the following year.

What is noteworthy is these influences assist in explaining other social structures. For example, the influence of the aforementioned dyadic relations presupposes the goodness or badness of past experiences in cultivating trust. It is also possible that an organization in a good

network position can secure abundant resources from surrounding stakeholders because those stakeholders have favourable expectations for the future of the organization. Therefore, instead of treating it on par with other social structures (e.g., Halinen & Törnroos, 1998), I argue that it should be considered as moderating the influence of other social structures to increase understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (cf. Sydow and Staber, 2002).

Institutions

In this research, institutions influenced NAO members' activities, leading to three experience types: Difficulty in Ensuring Safety, Concern about Reputational Damage, and Conflict between Institutional Logics and Stakeholders' Organizational Logic (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Through the analysis, I identified the institutions of governments and, specific to sport, citizens' marathons.

The institution of governments includes protecting public welfare and focusing on minimizing losses rather than maximizing profits, which can be considered as institutional logics. Since both marathons were organized by local governments and most NAO members were government officials, the members were greatly influenced by these institutions. Seminal works on institutions (e.g., Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott & Meyer, 1983; Oliver, 1991) have argued that organizations can enhance their performance and sustainability by aligning their activities with their social roles within the community. However, looking at the cases in this research under pandemic-driven uncertainty, it appears that legitimacy was less a strategic tool and more a determinant that guided their important decisions on marathons. This interpretation suggests that, from a neo-institutional theory perspective, government-led projects supported by high legitimacy can normally (i.e., in normal times) access various resources and increase predictability for the future (Aldrich & Auster, 1986; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Pfeffer & Salancik,

1978). However, when dealing with unprecedented and non-negotiable challenges, like COVID-19, these projects may instead find themselves bound by their own institutions.

Another identified institution, citizens' marathons, is inherent to the marathon cases of this research, having been co-created by numerous stakeholders since the projects' inception. These are embodied in the institutional logics expressed by the visions of both projects (e.g., staging Osaka's new festival, promoting charity culture, demonstrating hospitality, pursuing high competitiveness, and globalizing the marathon in the case of the Osaka Marathon). The projects have evolved through the participation of stakeholders that aligned with their own organizational logic with it (I will elaborate on this in the next section). Similar to this research, Leopkey and Parent (2012), who researched the institutionalization of legacy in sport events, argued that institutions born within projects influenced the behaviours of NAO members and their stakeholders. However, the findings of the present research suggest that these institutions changed due to decision making under pandemic uncertainty. That is, as visions that could be fulfilled in normal times were partially lost, stakeholders that lost their legitimacy to participate emerged. This led to a conflict surfacing between institutional logics and organizational logics as Knightian Uncertainty.

Politics

I also explored how politics influenced NAO members' activities, leading to two experience types: Difficulty in Ensuring Safety, and Concern about Reputational Damage (see Figures 5.2 and 5.4). This finding is supported by Zukin and DiMaggio (1990), economic sociologists who influenced organizational studies, and project management researchers (e.g., Halinen & Törnroos, 1998). Based on previous research and analysis results, I refined and categorized the types of politics into policy and political aspects.

The policy aspect was characterized by legitimacy, like the influence of institutions. It provided standards concerning safety, which was of utmost concern in uncertain situations, thereby aiding rational discussions among NOA members about holding in-person marathons. At the same time, deviating from valid guidelines conveyed through the parent organizations of NAOs could potentially cause reputational damage to the projects, thus limiting the actions of NAO members.

The aspect of political elites was also related to reputational damage, necessitating NAO members to align their project proposals with the political direction of the top of their affiliated organizations (i.e., local governments and sport organizations in the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon). This demonstrates the prominence of hierarchical pressure that NAOs receive from their parent organizations under pandemic-driven uncertainty. In this regard, among the three sources of power mentioned by sport (event) management researchers Slack and Parent (2006)—legitimate power, coercive power, and expert power—this research indicated that legitimate power, also known as authority, which is derived by virtue of one's position within their organization and perceived by their subordinates, was the most prominent. Meanwhile, as suggested by Foucault (1975/1995), the power of the general public may have indirectly influenced political elites, including elected politicians. But, there was no evidence to indicate that it directly affected NAO members. These may reflect the key functions of hierarchical administrations in the context of a crisis such as the pandemic.

Territory

Lastly, I found that territory influenced NAO members' activities, leading to a type of experience: Sponsor Considerations (see Figure 5.3). In this study's results, and as suggested by Rousseau and Fried (2001, p. 1) in the context of general organization studies advocating

“Location, Location, Location,” not only physical proximity but also the psychological proximity of stakeholders to the event location were identified. In particular, the reason local sponsors continued their connection with the marathon beyond economic rationality under pandemic-driven uncertainty was that they felt a sense of gratitude and attachment to their communities. Furthermore, this is influenced by the quality of the interactions experienced during involvement in the project, encompassing aspects such as social networks and temporality, as well as the territory. This is in line with the arguments presented by Halinen and Törnroos (1998) and Lebeau and Bennion (2014).

This view is also consistent in the context of major sport event management (Chalip, 2018; Derom et al., 2015; Séguin & Bodet, 2015). For instance, as Hautbois et al. (2012) proposed, in the present research, this territorial embeddedness positively influenced maintaining good relations with event stakeholders, which is likely a result of pursuing a more appropriate fit between the event visions and the host regions since the establishment of the marathons.

Propositions and a Model to Better Explain Network Administrative Organization

Members’ Activities

In the previous section, I discussed explanations of NAOs’ activities under pandemic-driven uncertainty by revising previous literature on social structures that could be included in the embeddedness perspectives to help with the explanations. As an outcome of this discussion, I present the following two points.

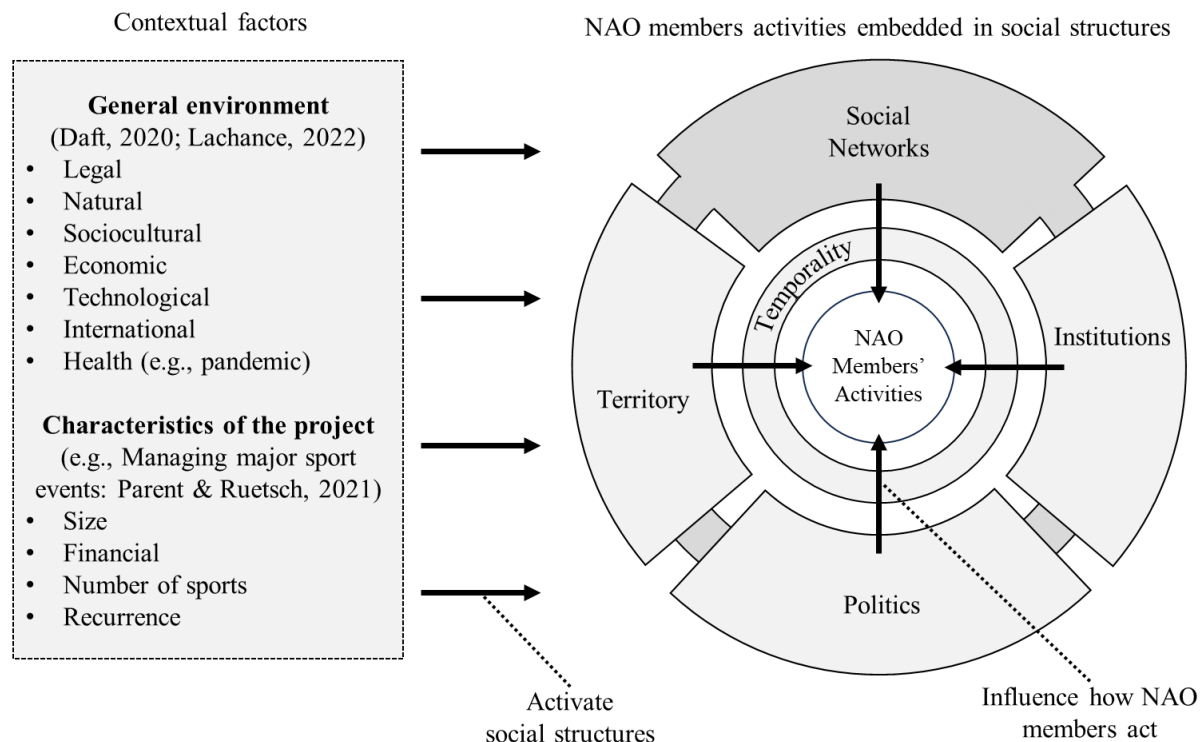
First, I offer five propositions regarding NAO members engaging in a project under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Each proposition corresponds to an element of the mechanisms in the five theoretical frameworks (Figures 5.1-5.5) I developed.

1. Social networks, institutions and politics encourage NAO members to pursue decision legitimacy under pandemic-driven uncertainty.

2. Social networks and temporality encourage NAO members to prioritize the survival of their project networks under pandemic-driven uncertainty.
3. Under pandemic-driven uncertainty, social networks, temporality, and territory not only encourage project sponsors to stay connected but also foster NAO members' fears regarding the loss of reciprocity with them.
4. Social networks, institutions, and politics can immobilize NAO members due to social and political power under pandemic-driven uncertainty.
5. Social networks and institutions undermine the ability of NAO members to reconcile mutually exclusive institutional and organizational logics under pandemic-driven uncertainty.

More importantly, the second outcome is the embeddedness model I offer (see Figure 7.2) to explain NAOs' activities through the integration of different social structures and contextual factors. Previous studies emphasize the need to handle the embeddedness perspective multidimensionally for a better understanding of organizational activities (e.g., Frankowska, 2020; Halinen & Törnroos, 1998). Likewise in the case of this research, integrating multiple types of social structures made it possible to explain complex organizational phenomena, which supports the importance of multi-dimensional characteristics. However, by employing the embeddedness perspective based on critical realism for the development of theoretical frameworks (that is, separating contextual factors from social structures to explain mechanisms enabling organizational activities), I point out that some social structures discussed in previous research must be conceptually separated from the environment as assumed in organizational theory (e.g., Daft, 2020). This is because, in this research focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, social structures are viewed as socially constructed and patterned arrangements (e.g., Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999; Halinen & Törnroos, 1998; Lebeau & Bennion, 2014) and as invisible frameworks or sets of rules influencing how entities act, interact, and evolve over time

Figure 7.2—An Embeddedness Model for Network Administration Organization Members' Activities



Note. NAO = Network Administrative Organization

(Danermark et al., 2019). Moreover, social structures are deemed as “things” that exist whether we perceive them or not (Danermark et al., 2019, p. 26). This notion encouraged me to understand other contextual factors as reasons for variations in phenomena; namely, it enabled me to state organizational activities are embedded within social structures (not the pandemic). In sum, it not only aligns with the philosophical assumptions of critical realism but also aids in enhancing the transferability when presenting research implications.

Thus, the embeddedness model for activities of NAO members (Figure 7.2) consists of contextual factors and social structures. Contextual factors further consist of general environment factors such as legal, natural, sociocultural economic, technological, international, and health (e.g., pandemic) (Daft, 2020; Lachance, 2022), and characteristics of the project; in the context of major sport events, their size, financial nature (e.g., for-profit vs. non-profit), number of

sports, and recurrence (e.g., one-off vs. recurring) can be included (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021).

These contextual factors can activate social structures, which consist of social networks, institutions, politics, territory, and temporality. The centre circle refers to the activities of NAO members. Temporality positioned is in the middle circle because it moderates the influence of the other four social structures on NAOs members' activities. In addition, as social networks not only directly affect their activities along with temporality but also underlie the influence of institutions, politics, and territory on NAOs, they form the outer circle while underpinning these three social structures.

Discussion on RQ3

To address RQ3 (i.e., *How did pandemic-driven uncertainty change the way agency influences social structures in managing marathons?*), using Archer's (1995) dualism approach integrated with the embeddedness perspective, I conducted a comparison analysis to explore human agency and its interactions with social structures before and during the pandemic focusing on emanating practices and transformed social structures in the Kyoto Marathon and Osaka Marathon. The analysis showed that pandemic-driven uncertainty restricted human agency from transforming social structures. This happened due to a decrease in the number of agents who had previously been engaged in emanating practices. This result answers what RQ1 and RQ2 could not fully address. In this section, I discuss the reasons for the reduction in human agency under pandemic-driven uncertainty and the meaning of it.

The reasons for the reduction in human agency can be summarized into three aspects: (1) the priority of emergency responses and the difficulty in advancing existing practices, (2) the requirement for specific skills and knowledge for new practices, and (3) the resistance to emanating institutions.

The Priority of Emergency Responses and the Difficulty in Advancing Existing Projects

Particularly in the early phase of the pandemic, the annual routines established over about a decade in the projects were disrupted. This led to a prioritization of various emergency responses, leaving NAO members and key stakeholders, who were responsible for or willing to contribute to the development of emanating practices, with little time to consider them. This situation potentially reduced their human agency by negatively affecting their temporal and emotional labour capacities while they were occupied with work crucial for the survival of their projects and organizations.

This suggests that the advantage of inter-organizational projects, including managing sport events, where ideas and resources are abundantly available (Jones & Lichtenstein, 2008; Orr et al., 2011), diminished due to pandemic-driven uncertainty. However, the perspective of organizational learning—“a change in the organization’s knowledge that occurs as a function of experience” (Argote, 2011, p.1124)—provides an alternative interpretation. This perspective emphasizes the importance of temporally recurring aspects, like marathon management. It is possible that the number of agents may increase over time as they continue to operate virtual marathons, just as with in-person marathons before the pandemic, through processes such as knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, and vicarious learning (cf. Argote, 2011). In other words, the reduction in agents may not be solely and directly attributed to pandemic-driven uncertainty; it can also be viewed as a consequence of engaging in a new practice.

The Requirement for Specific Skills and Knowledge

Compared to pre-pandemic, in-person marathons, the variety of agents participating in virtual marathons during the pandemic substantially decreased. As NAO members began to understand what was feasible within the pandemic-era marathon projects, they realized that their

previous business models, which relied on annual in-person events for revenue generation, carried huge financial, public health, and other types of risks. The emerging practice that emerged, aimed at maintaining relationships with participants, sponsors, and other stakeholders and ensuring the event's continuation, was the transition to digitalization (i.e., virtual marathons). This practice transformed the temporal nature of the projects and institutions of citizens' marathons into a new form. However, the planning of virtual marathons required an understanding of technology, flexible thinking, a rapidity in building relationships with new partners, and a high sense of purpose, aspects not necessarily vital in previous projects but which limited the participation of agents in this context.

This interpretation can lead to the argument for the importance of institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988). Within neo-institutional theory, it is a concept focused on individuals, defined as "the activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones" (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657). Reflecting on DiMaggio's (1988, p. 14) statement, during the pandemic, the realization of "interests that they value highly" was acknowledged as being critical. In the cases of this research, during the pandemic, few agents recognized risk diffusion and survival as highly valuable aspects. They were either secretariat members or contracted agency company members with access to secretariat resources, which may explain this phenomenon from the perspective of institutional entrepreneurship. Not all members were institutional entrepreneurs, but a few of them exhibited a distinctive presence as project leaders under pandemic-driven uncertainty.

The Resistance to Emanating Institutions

There was a notable discrepancy between the traditional vision of the project and the objectives of the new practices, which possibly led to a decrease in motivation among some agents. While virtual marathons were the sole emergent practice, the ongoing transformation of existing institutions of citizens' marathons met resistance from stakeholders, leading to a loss of human agency, particularly in its motivational aspect. From the perspective of institutional logic, resistance to change and the difficulty of adapting to the new visions were influential factors. In this study's case, sport organizations that valued in-person marathons as JAAF-certified races and local businesses and NPO members who found importance in regional revitalization showed little interest in virtual marathons.

In normal times, as Phillips et al. (2000) noted, inter-organizational practice can lead to the construction of new institutions through a negotiation process of collaboration. This explains how, before the pandemic, organizations with various logics collaborated to create the institution of citizens' marathons. According to Archer's (1995) dualism approach grounded in critical realism, the transformation (emanation) during the pandemic can be interpreted as the result of institutional adaptation practices in response to the influence of social structures changed by external environmental factors (cf. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). However, in cases like the Osaka Marathon, where existing institutions (i.e., citizens' marathons) contain multiple institutional logics, the occurrence of uncertainty can lead to a state where stakeholders' institutional demands (Pemsel & Söderlund, 2014) conflict and remain unfulfilled. This provided empirical evidence for the claim by Scott (2012) that institutions, composed of multiple elements, create resilient social systems when aligned, but can become a crucial trigger or lever for social transformation when misaligned, in the face of pandemic-driven uncertainty.

Discussion on the Purpose of this Dissertation

Through addressing RQs 1-3, I explored and explained what pandemic-driven uncertainty has brought to managing major sport events, why, and how. By integrating the answers to each RQ, the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events, can be summarized as a threat and opportunity related to the survival and *raison d'être* (i.e., the reason for being) of the events themselves, arising from the activation of social structures in which the activities of NAO members are embedded. In this section, I further discuss the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty from the temporal and inter-organizational perspectives to enable me to address the purpose of this dissertation. These perspectives are useful because time and inter-organizational relationships are two essential concepts to comprehend managing major sport events (see the section of Managing Major Sport Events as Inter-Organizational Projects in Chapter II).

From the Temporal Perspective

One feature of pandemic-driven uncertainty revealed in this research is its impact on the temporal aspect of major sport events. Even before the pandemic, NAO members' activities were embedded in the social structures of temporality as an event lifecycle. This provided NAOs with temporal direction on 'what and when to' do to implement their events while imposing temporal constraints on prior investments (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). However, the present research revealed this type of temporality was activated by the pandemic and characterized by an unknown end and constantly changing situations (mainly, caused by waves of the virus outbreak), leading to the wicked risks explored.

Addressing these risks required organizational activities unlike anything conducted in previous practices in the marathons. Thus, past knowledge and experiences were not necessarily

applicable. This led NAO members to seek legitimacy for their decision making beyond the outcomes of organizational learning over the past 10 years (since their events' inception), which should have been a strength of recurring projects. The legitimacy was sought from, for example, a new event direction of the survival of the marathons or guidelines issued by NAO's parent organizations. Moreover, under pandemic-driven uncertainty, the number of agents previously involved in various practices with motivation and capacity to improve the status quo was limited, but the few who remained exhibited creativity towards event survival (e.g., creating virtual marathons). These indicate that the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty can also be the interaction between social structures and human agency.

Consequently, this research focusing on pandemic-driven uncertainty supports the argument that temporal concepts should not merely be treated as contextual factors of a project (George & Jones, 2000; Langley et al., 2013), but as key concepts in theorizing about projects (Janowicz-Panjaitan et al., 2009; Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). In this regard, the notable contribution of this research to project (and sport event) management studies lies in treating temporality as a distinctive concept and associating it with other social structures by using the embeddedness perspective, thereby enhancing the explanatory power of projects.

From the Inter-Organizational Perspective

Another important feature of pandemic-driven uncertainty is its impact on the inter-organizational aspect of managing major sport events. In the present research, all stakeholders were impacted by the pandemic in some way, which helped foster a common understanding regarding the decision making of NAOs. This can be attributed to the scale of pandemic-driven uncertainty and its life-threatening nature. However, the stakeholder engagement of NAOs during the pandemic differed from pre-pandemic times, and this change is noteworthy.

One can find an explanation in (1) the altered needs and roles of the NAOs, and (2) the altered way the NAOs' stakeholders behave based on their unchanged needs and roles. First, the increase in communications with local governments, to which most secretariat members belong, medical associations, and sponsors, reflects the importance of those stakeholders to reduce various risks for the continuation and future development of in-person marathons. That is one of the major needs and roles of the secretariats under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Normally, sport event NAOs focus on completing the imminent event, especially as the event date approaches (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). However, under pandemic-driven uncertainty, the needs and goals of NAOs became more future-oriented. Second, the stakeholders changed the expression of their needs and roles. Before the pandemic, they pursued, for example, the enhancement of city brands, safeguarding the health of citizens, and promoting one's own products or services "by participating in the event." However, during the pandemic, some stakeholders shifted to pursuing these needs and roles "by *not* participating in the event."

These organizational phenomena can be understood by a stakeholder approach, viewing these behaviours through the lens of focal organizations (i.e., secretariats/NAOs), stakeholders, and their relationships (Parent & Ruetsch, 2021). However, NAOs and their stakeholders' behaviours are also influenced by their social structures (e.g., where they are situated within the social network surrounding the event and how much attachment they have to the event location). In this regard, the embeddedness perspective, which focuses on various social structures, appears to be more useful for understanding sport event management under pandemic-driven uncertainty.

In particular, the change in inter-organizational relationships focusing on institutional logics is notable. Major sport event management, adopting multi-sectoral and multi-level network forms, inherently contains the potential for contrasting organizational logics (e.g.,

market vs. hierarchy) to conflict (Powell, 1990; see Table 2.2). Yet, adopting a trust-based network form can help integrate various stakeholders' organizational logics into visions for the event, creating a new institution of citizens' marathons (i.e., institutionalization: Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This institution seems the *raison d'être* of the event, and its alignment with stakeholders' organizational logics forms the basis for their participation, making it a higher-order concept than needs and roles for inter-organizational relationships. However, with the onset of the pandemic, the secretariats could not hold the usual in-person marathons and instead held virtual marathons aimed at the event's survival. This suggests the potential for deinstitutionalization—an erosion of institutionalized ideas—(Oliver, 1992) of the citizens' marathon.

In summary, the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on the inter-organizational relationship aspect of major sport event management can be interpreted as changes in NAOs' and their stakeholders' needs and roles, as well as the relationships bound by historically co-created institutions and the stakeholders' organizational logics of stakeholders.

Contributions

In this section, I describe the contributions deriving from this dissertation's findings. These contributions demonstrate why and how this research advances theory and literature, methodology, and practice.

To Theory and Literature

This dissertation's notable contributions to theory and literature are linked to (1) the explanation of organizational responses to uncertainty; (2) the importance of human agency being integrated with the embeddedness perspective; and (3) the application and advancement of Phan and Wood's (2020) uncertainty framework. Of note, to address the purpose of this research,

I conceptually treated managing major sport events as inter-organizational projects. By doing so, this dissertation was also designed to have the potential to advance the fields of sport event management, project management, and general organization studies.

The Explanation of Organizational Responses to Uncertainty

In the project management literature, including sport event management, there was a demand for more theoretical research focusing on project team members (e.g., NAO members or sport event secretariat members) under uncertainty (Byers et al., 2022; Unterhitzberger et al., 2021). This dissertation responded to this need by providing propositions and a theoretical framework from the multiple explanatory case studies (see the section of Discussion on RQ2 in this chapter). To do so, I relied on critical realism as a meta-theory and the embeddedness perspective. This approach allowed me to assume the pandemic is a contextual factor that can activate social structures, influencing the activities of NAO members. The distinction between contextual factors and social structures has enhanced the explanatory power of organizational phenomena beyond what the embeddedness models in previous literature have offered. This is achieved by considering contextual factors. Furthermore, by organizing the relationships between various social structures, including temporality, which is indispensable in managing sport events and projects, the model (see Figure 7.2) becomes capable of addressing more complex organizational phenomena. I have deliberately not included the word uncertainty in the title of the model. This is because I argue that the embeddedness perspective can provide a consistent explanation for the responses of NAO members to various environmental changes.

In the sport event management literature, the embeddedness perspective, which has not been explicitly used until now, has empirically demonstrated its utility as a new theoretical perspective. The embeddedness perspective complements the stakeholder approach and social

network approaches that have been used to understand sport event management as inter-organizational projects. By incorporating a variety of social structures simultaneously (i.e., social networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory) unlike in previous sport management studies where one or two structures were considered, I was able to provide more nuanced and richer explanations of the impact of uncertainty on managing events/projects activities.

Finally, the mechanisms elucidated led to propositions generated by the analysis of the five types of secretariat members' experiences. These propositions serve as starting points for theory building as they are further investigated in future research (cf. Yin, 2017). I argue that the use of an embeddedness perspective based on critical realism, as in this study, can also contribute to the development of general organizational theory interested in the relationship between organizations and their environments.

The Importance of Human Agency being Integrated with the Embeddedness Perspective

Addressing RQ3 challenged the theoretical assumption of the embeddedness perspective, which posits that organizational activities are determined by the influence of social structures; this was an introspection by economic sociologists who have developed the embeddedness perspective (Granovetter, 2002, 2017; Hess, 2004, 2000) and called for research on this topic. In this dissertation, I answered this call by integrating Archer's (1995) dualism approach, based on critical realism, with the embeddedness perspective. My results revealed that, in unprecedented situations like pandemic-driven uncertainty, human agency is constrained, but there are still agents motivated and capable of transforming social structures. The successful comparative analysis in this dissertation between the past and present encourages researchers to attempt a better understanding of complex organizational phenomena by exploring the interplay between social structures and human agency over time.

Through my interpretations, I also provided insights into the sport event management literature on the key research topics that researchers can consider for further understanding of managing major sport events under uncertainty. These include addressing the disruption of organizational routines, organizational learning, institutional entrepreneurship, and stakeholders' resistance to emanating institutions, which can contribute to a deeper understanding of how major sport events can be managed in the face of unprecedented challenges.

The Application and Advancement of Phan and Wood's (2020) Uncertainty Framework to the Sport Event Management Literature

Addressing RQ1 demonstrated the applicability of the uncertainty framework (Phan & Wood, 2020), composed of Unknown-Unknowns (i.e., Pure Uncertainty), Known-Unknowns (i.e., Risk), Unknowns-Knowns (i.e., Knightian Uncertainty), and Known-Knowns (i.e., Certainty), to better capture the sport event-related organizational phenomena under uncertainty. It empirically uncovered the transition of how individuals experience uncertainty over time, namely, Pure Uncertainty shifts either to Risk or Knightian Uncertainty before converging to Certainty. Taking a step further, this research allowed me to develop a dynamic framework (see Figure 7.1), which contributes to the sport event management literature because this literature has tended to focus solely on Pure Uncertainty when it comes to the concept of uncertainty and overlook Knightian Uncertainty. Considering that this framework was featured in general organizational research journals, the empirical research findings on this dynamic framework also contribute to the broader general organizational literature. Moreover, the idea of Knightian Uncertainty appears to be compatible with neo-institutional theory, which addresses socially constructed common sense (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Žižek, 2004). Thus, researchers can explore this perspective further to provide a deeper explanation of a phenomenon

(e.g., examining the institutional logics of the specific event and the stakeholders' organizational logics).

To Methodology

The notable methodological contributions of this dissertation are linked to (1) the advancement in critical realism-based thematic analysis and (2) the development of a comparative analysis of human agency.

The Advancement of the Critical Realism-Based Thematic Analysis

The first methodological contribution of this research lies in improving the latest critical realism-based research methods by scrutinizing, refining, and applying them to this research. For this dissertation, which planned to use thematic analysis as the analytical method based on critical realism, the creation and development of thematic analysis specialized in critical realism in 2021 and 2022 was fortunate (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021; Fryer, 2022). In particular, the analytical procedure proposed by Fryer (2022) formed the basis for my analytical approach. However, I made two modifications to align it with the assumptions of critical realism and my RQs.

One contribution is the modification regarding the relationship between the three domains of critical realism (i.e., empirical, actual, and real) and the coding procedure. Fryer (2022) outlined a coding procedure where descriptive codes indicating individuals' experiences in the empirical domain lead to developed codes converging in the actual domain. However, this procedure implies limitations: (1) it cannot categorize answers to RQ1 for this dissertation, which specifically addresses individuals' experiences, and (2) activities represented in the actual domain can only be derived from experiences of individuals with bounded rationality. Therefore, I applied the procedure (i.e., descriptive code → developed codes) separately for both the

empirical and actual domains. This enabled me to categorize individual experiences and use archival records and documents to identify activities in the actual domain.

Another contribution is, following Sayer (2000), dividing what Fryer (2022, p. 377) referred to as “causal mechanisms” into three elements (i.e., contextual factors, social structures, and mechanisms) in the real domain. As I previously mentioned (see the section of Data Analysis in Chapter III), this approach allowed me to enhance the construct and boundary clarity necessary for advancing good theories (cf. Bacharach, 1989); it identified social structures as constructs, general environment (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) and characteristics of the event/project as contextual factors, and mechanisms presented as propositions for explaining organizational phenomena under investigation.

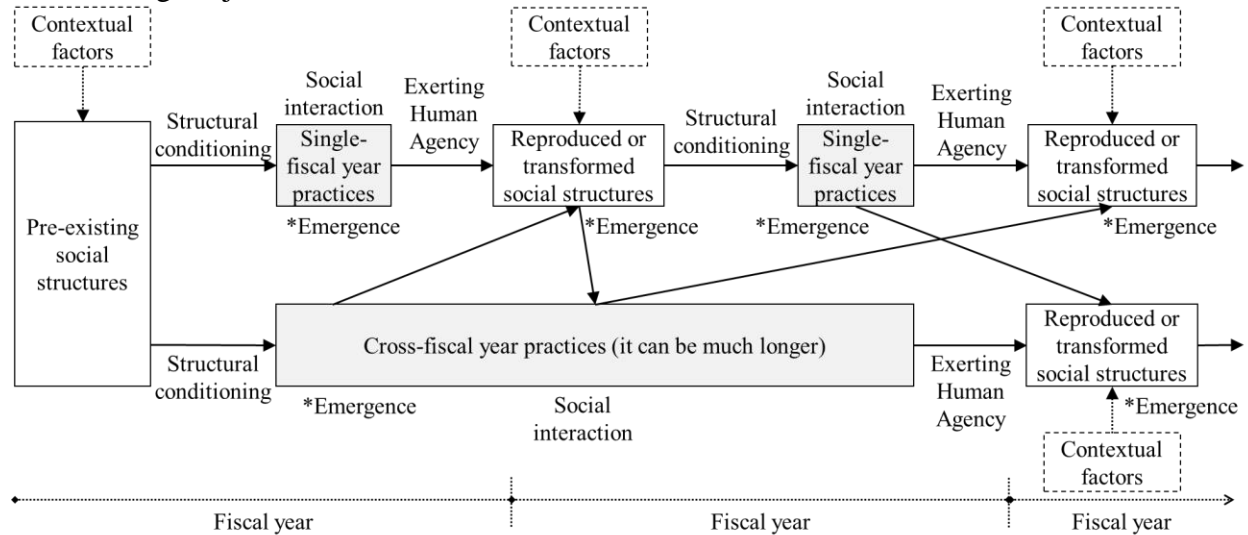
To echo Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021) and Fryer (2022), I would not say that my modifications reached perfection. But future researchers can still apply my modified thematic analysis approach to their studies.

The Development of Comparative Analysis of Human Agency

The second methodological contribution is that I developed a comparative analysis method for human agency. Since I could not find an effective analytical method in the existing literature to answer RQ3 regarding human agency, I referenced Archer (1995), who focused on the interplay of social structures and human agency, and offered and applied a framework to compare human agency between before and during the pandemic (see Figure 3.9). This approach identified emanating practices, agents who engaged in these practices, and transformed (or emanating) social structures. I propose that this approach represents the first step in developing an analytical method for comparing temporal changes in human agency.

To further improve this approach, based on the results from RQs as well as Archer (1995), and Mandikonza and Lotz-Sisitka (2016), I propose an analytical framework (see Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3—An Analytical Framework of the Interplay of Social Structures and Human Agency in Recurring Projects



Note. Adapted from Archer (1995), Mandikonza and Lotz-Sisitka (2016), and results from and RQ3. The white boxes and grey boxes represent the social structures and human agency, respectively. The asterisks indicate social interactions giving rise to emergence in practices and/or properties of social structures (as the result of transformation). The dotted-line boxes indicate contextual factors (e.g., pandemic) that can trigger the activation of social structures.

I encourage future researchers to use and refine this framework through empirical studies to determine its applicability in different contexts. Doing so can further contribute to research aimed at deepening the understanding of the interplay between social structures and human agency in major sport events with various time axes.

To Practice

The notable practical contributions of this dissertation for practitioners are summarized in three points. First, I explored the experiences of NAO members in managing major sport events under pandemic-driven uncertainty, alongside a thick description of contextual factors (cf. Wynn & Williams, 2012). These findings allow practitioners to reflect on their past activities and

consider countermeasures for future uncertainties in the temporally and inter-organizationally complex task of managing major sport events. Second, through this research employing the embeddedness perspective, I explained why and how the pandemic affects NAOs' activities, offering more abstract propositions and a theoretical framework to explain the phenomenon. Especially, the framework could be applicable not just to the pandemic but to various types of uncertainty arising from environmental changes. Thus, practitioners have guidelines for responding to future uncertainties by understanding the embedded social structures of NAOs and their functions. Third, I explored the relationship between social structures and human agency under pandemic-driven uncertainty and discussed the reasons for the reduction of human agency. These provide practitioners with insights to prepare for and deal with the reduction in human agency (e.g., reduction of agents who have the motivation and capacity to transform social structures) under pandemic-driven uncertainty. Concrete recommendations for future practitioners, including actionable strategies (What they should/can do) are outlined in the following implications section.

Implications

In this section, I offer implications from the findings of this research. These implications provide insights into what researchers and practitioners should do in response to the problems they may face.

For Researchers

I outline the key implications for researchers as follows. First, researchers should dynamically perceive uncertainty, recognizing that Pure Uncertainty shifts not only Risk but also becomes Knightian Uncertainty before converging to Certainty. This is particularly relevant for sport event management researchers who have primarily focused on Risk, prompting them to

devote efforts towards developing management strategies to address Knightian Uncertainty, distinct from traditional risk management. Since Knightian Uncertainty involves factors that cannot be statistically measured (Machiels et al., 2023), researchers may need to place greater emphasis on qualitative research methods when studying this phenomenon.

Second, researchers should separate social structures from contextual factors while considering the interrelated aspects of the social structures. Social structures, which are assumed to exist whether we perceive them or not, and the contextual factors that activate them, have inherently different roles in explaining organizational phenomena (Danermark et al., 2019). Furthermore, as demonstrated by the results of this research, all social structures do not independently influence organizational activities. To address this implication, using the theoretical model developed in this study (see Figure 7.2) can be beneficial. It enables researchers to elucidate the relationships between social structures and organizational activities while considering contextual factors, thus enhancing researchers' understanding of complex organizational activities, such as managing major sport events.

Third, researchers should not separate the discussion of social structures from human agency. As Granovetter (2002, 2017) and Hess (2004, 2000) have indicated, overly relying on a sociological perspective can lead to an underestimation of what individuals can do. Researchers, especially those focusing on recurring events/projects like marathons, should aim to cyclically understand the interplay between social structures and human agency and expand the meaning of the concept of embeddedness, thereby enhancing the explanatory power of the organizational phenomena they are investigating.

For Practice

Samsami et al. (2015, p. 215) stated “the ultimate goal of studying uncertainty in organization[s] is to face it in the choice of appropriate strategies.” To follow this statement, I outline the key implications for practitioners. First, practitioners and related stakeholders should reconsider risk management in preparation for future pandemic-driven uncertainty. This includes focusing on risks related to (1) Operations (e.g., venue management, logistics, safety, and security), (2) Financial (e.g., Return on Investment, lack of sponsorship, and government support), (3) Visibility (e.g., reputation and support for the event), and (4) Relationships (meeting/balancing stakeholder needs), which were evident in this study (cf. Leopkey and Parent 2009a). Relationships are particularly crucial as they are intertwined with other strategies. However, under pandemic-driven uncertainty, it is also important to understand that stakeholders’ needs and roles may shift to pursuing these needs and roles “by not participating in the event.” Modifying the temporal design of the project, especially for recurring events, can be a strategic approach to maintain the event while ensuring stakeholder satisfaction throughout. The creation and development of virtual marathons, as seen in the case of this research, was a good example of risk diffusion. However, the potential for such drastic changes in practice to alter stakeholders’ perceptions of the project’s visions should not be underestimated.

Second, practitioners should reflect on the alignment between the visions they hold for their events and the reasons stakeholders participate, especially in light of issues revealed by the pandemic. As these concerns relate to the existential purpose of the events, they require board-level consensus, distinct from operational-level risk management.

Third, practitioners should consider the quality of the social structures they are embedded in to prepare for uncertainties beyond the pandemic. Here are some questions, derived from the results of this research, that practitioners should ask (along with the related social structures):

- What kinds of connections do your stakeholders have with you? (Social networks)
- Where do you stand within the social network? (Social networks)
- Who are your trusted partners in the network? (Social networks)
- What are your stakeholders' experiences and expectations regarding the event/project? (Temporality)
- How should the event/project be? (Institutions)
- Where does the legitimacy of decision making come from? (Institutions/Politics)
- Are there any policies you need to follow? (Politics)
- Are there political elites who can exercise power over your event/project? (Politics)
- Do your stakeholders have an attachment to the territory? (Territory)

Answering these questions can provide practitioners with clues to simulate and understand the impact their activities may have under uncertainty.

Reflections on the Research Endeavour

Reflecting on my own experiences in this research endeavour, I present several lessons that encompass both the beneficial practices I found worthwhile and the challenges I encountered.

Definition, Definition, Definition

When reviewing a large volume of literature, one becomes increasingly aware of the confusion surrounding definitions. The same meaning can be expressed with different words, or conversely, different words can be used to convey the same meaning (e.g., research, perspective,

theory, concept, variable, context). Reading passages that seem to innocently misuse words can occasionally be frustrating, while also leading to self-reflection on whether I have unintentionally caused similar frustration in my own writing. Upon reading Danermark et al.'s (2019, p. 20) assertion that “whereas the objects of natural science are naturally produced but socially defined, the objects of social science are both socially produced and socially defined,” this confusion became clear to me. It is unlikely that we can fully unify the nuances of each word. Having said that, we must avoid this confusion as much as we can because it could hinder the transmission of our arguments. As writers, at the very least, we should provide clear definitions for nouns used in purpose statements (typically in the introduction). Moreover, for frequently used verbs, such as understand, investigate, examine, explain, explore, identify, compare, contrast, test, (critically) analyze, and (critically) reflect, we need to be conscious of their similarities, differences, and hierarchical relationships, ensuring that we can answer them when we are asked.

When a definition of a certain word includes some form of role or function, it becomes even more important. For instance, in my first semester at the University of Ottawa, I learned the definition of research for the first time. The definition presented in my qualitative research methods class was “an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through disciplined inquiry and systematic investigation” (Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2018, p. 5). While reading the definition, I was deeply impressed. One of the reasons was that, at that time, I was struggling to understand epistemology, which was taught to me as the study of knowledge (i.e., how we know what we claim to know: Crotty, 1998). While I was aware that it was something I should understand, I did not fully grasp its importance. However, when I came across the definition of

research, it clicked for me: “Ah, the role of research is to extend knowledge, so not knowing what (to extend) knowledge actually means can cause a problem.” I finally became convinced.

“So What?”

My supervisor often poses the question, "So what?" which is not only the title of the iconic song by jazz musician Miles Davis released in 1959 (see Freeman, 2013), but also an important question in various aspects of research activities. For instance, when designing a research plan, it serves as a necessary question to justify each action. When presenting research outcomes, it is essential to demonstrate their value by answering why they are important. In essence, "So what?" can be paraphrased as “Why is this important?” Personally, I believe that understanding the role of each research component can help provide an answer. It could be valuable advice to consult the publication manual of the APA to clarify the roles of elements.

Critical Reflection

In the summer of 2020, my former lab mate, Jordan T. Bakhsh introduced me to an article by Davis (1971) article titled *That’s Interesting! Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology*. At least to me, the main message of the article is that being interesting is one of the important criteria that can affect the quality of research. It involves critically reflecting on assumptions of existing knowledge. Critical reflection refers to “a process of identifying, questioning, and assessing our deeply-held assumptions – about our knowledge, the way we perceive events and issues, our beliefs, feelings, and actions” (University of Waterloo, n.d.). Although I would not say this research is interesting to all readers, since I became familiar with this notion, it has enabled me to actively address the theoretical, philosophical, and methodological assumptions of previous literature in this research process. As a result, I feel that my toolbox as a researcher has become more enriched.

Data Collection

This research revealed the pandemic-driven uncertainty saw marathon secretariat members becoming concerned about reputational damage, which also impacted my data collection. When contacting potential interviewees, I sensed their primary concern was how my research would be used. This underscores the importance of trust. Providing potential interviewees with comprehensive explanations of the research purpose, methods, and the risks and benefits of participation can enhance their trust in the researcher and improve the likelihood of consent as well as the quality of the interviews. However, at least in Japan, this alone seems insufficient. As Granovetter (1985) mentioned, Japanese society tends to derive trust from social networks.

Since I expected it from my knowledge of Japan, I began my data collection by identifying researchers (or those with an academic understanding) already involved in the marathons. It was essentially identifying triadic relations that connect potential interviewees and myself. Considering that sport management researchers are involved in most major sports events in Japan, I contacted the identified researchers, explained the purpose of the research, sought their cooperation, and asked them to introduce me to members of the marathon secretariats. This approach greatly facilitated the recruitment of interviewees. Thus, I would recommend that, to improve your recruitment chances, researchers who study sport event management (at least in Japan) know who is connected to whom and approach those who are closest to the people you want to contact and request introductions, rather than randomly making requests.

Impatience and Anxiety

The feeling of impatience and anxiety is unbearable. I have constantly suffered from these emotions (although it may be normal for Ph.D. students). In particular, there were two

major crises in this research process. The first crisis was due to the initial chaos caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to delays in crafting my initial research plan, including the phenomena being focused, theoretical frameworks, and research subjects. It pushed me into a state of depression. Although I had learned how to review literature (and I always enjoyed reviewing papers), the unexpected changes in the plan meant that I needed more preparation time. However, it was difficult to find the time, and the pressure of the deadline of the research proposal submission, coupled with the anxiety of incomplete reviews, overwhelmed me even before the investigation began.

Once data collection started, I realized the necessity of reviewing more literature for data analysis and interpretation. I understood that for qualitative researchers, it is natural to go back and forth between literature and data during data collection and analysis, but it also consumes time. I had no idea when this process would end or when it would start making sense. Even if I told my professor with hope, “I will submit it by [date],” I often could not make it. I was plagued by anxiety that I was causing inconvenience and losing trust. This marked the second crisis of mental distress. Although I do not know her real thoughts, my supervisor kept working with me to consider what approaches would work for me. This was a great relief to me. Ultimately, having supportive people who remind you of the reason why you are doing a Ph.D. is what matters. I came to my research lab because I wanted to become a researcher who can advance theories and contribute to the sport event industry through interesting research, like my supervisor. When I was in trouble, they encouraged me by saying things like “you are here for some reason,” and that is what kept me going until the end.

To summarize my reflections, I offer the following advice to students considering a Ph.D.

- (1) During the research planning phase, they should be prepared for definitional confusion (i.e.,

they do not need to be overwhelmed, but it is important to understand what role and/or function the word has). (2) They need to think about why their research is important (e.g., Who would benefit if it is done, and why? or Who would lose out if it's ignored and why?). (3) To make their research "interesting," I recommend questioning the assumptions of existing studies, philosophically, theoretically, and methodologically. Once the research begins, it is important to consider the cultural aspects of the country or organization being studied to enhance trust from interviewees (e.g., Is trust derived from social networks, economic rationality, or authority?). Lastly, and most importantly, find a supervisor who will remind you of the reasons you started your Ph.D., even in difficult times.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this dissertation provides various contributions and implications, it also has potential limitations concerning its results, which could be addressed in future research. These limitations can be divided into theoretical and methodological ones.

Theoretical Limitations and Future Directions

First, although this research indicates that Pure Uncertainty became either Risk or Knightian Uncertainty by exploring the experiences of the marathon secretariat members over time, investigating whether or how these two can become Certainty was beyond the scope of this research. Hence, it would be valuable to continue until the convergence of Risk and Knightian Uncertainty enables a theoretical and practical contribution to the field of sport event management by investigating how and why they were addressed. I argue that researchers can pay attention to instances of failure, namely, the dissolution of projects/events that NAO members were trying to avoid, as well as cases where the handling of uncertainty was successful (i.e., survival). This is crucial because it enables researchers to examine whether the patterns and

factors evident in successful cases are necessary or sufficient conditions (or both) for the difference in phenomena (Ferlie et al., 2005). This approach can contribute to the theoretical understanding of the sustainability of projects/events.

The second theoretical limitation concerns the interrelated aspect of uncertainties. This research provided an explanation of the activities of the marathon secretariat members under pandemic-driven uncertainty using the embeddedness perspective, which enabled me to propose a theoretical model (Figure 7.2). While this model incorporated the interrelated aspect of social structures, a core concept of the embeddedness perspective, it did not fully consider the interrelated aspect of uncertainties arising from changes in environmental factors. Project management researchers Machiels et al. (2023) indicated that uncertainties are interrelated, and the results of this research also implied that pandemic-driven uncertainty generated other economic and sociocultural uncertainties, thereby activating social structures. Therefore, future research investigating the impact of interrelated uncertainties on social structures could lead to the advancement of the explanation power of the theoretical framework I developed.

The third theoretical limitation is the inability to incorporate the impact of practitioners' turnover on the explanation of the decrease in human agency in managing major sport events under pandemic-driven uncertainty. The marathon secretariats of this research included both individuals who were involved in the secretariat before the pandemic and those who became involved during the pandemic. In sport event management research, it is suggested that turnover of key NAO members, particularly those with extensive skills and experience, could negatively impact organizational learning (Parent et al., 2014). Considering the possibility of future pandemics and other crises leading to uncertainty, it would be worthwhile to reconsider rules and procedures on turnover (e.g., the basic number of years and conditions required for member

rotation essential for the effective and efficient management of marathons) to prevent the loss of organizational knowledge and while incorporating new individuals to break out of a rut.

Therefore, understanding the optimal turnover system of experienced and new personnel in managing major sport events under uncertainty would be worthwhile for both practitioners and researchers to answer. Potential RQs included: What does the optimal personnel rotation in managing sport events under uncertainty look like? If such an optimal rotation is identified, what are the reasons for realizing its implementation or lack thereof? What is the impact of the turnover of individuals who undertook emanating practices under a specific type of uncertainty on management after the uncertainty period?

Methodological Limitations and Future Directions

The main methodological limitation concerns data collection and case selection. This dissertation employed a combination of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling, and relied on multiple data sources (i.e., data triangulation), which yielded information-rich and credible results. However, due to the sensitive nature of the pandemic, interviewing some key stakeholders was challenging for ethical reasons. In my understanding when conducting research on sport event management in Japan, it is usually inappropriate to initiate contact with key stakeholders without the prior consent of the respective secretariat. In my case, for instance, medical associations and sponsors, despite being key stakeholders, were not generally open to being contacted. This hesitancy might stem from their desire not to impose additional burdens on individuals already heavily engaged in managing their own pandemic-related tasks. Furthermore, due to the schedule constraints of my doctoral dissertation, I was unable to conduct real-time interviews during Phases 1 and 2 of the pandemic. This may have caused interviews' recall bias although I employed the event-tracking technique to help reduce it. I do not assert that these

limitations can always be addressed by researchers, but they are important information to consider in interpreting the results of this research. Furthermore, as this dissertation focused on two Japanese local marathon events, further research focusing on other contexts (i.e., countries, uncertainty types, characteristics of the events/projects) can be beneficial to support the analytical generalizability of the frameworks/models developed from the outcomes of this research.

The second methodological limitation is the analytical framework that I developed based on Archer's (1995) dualism approach to answer RQ3 (see Figure 6.1). This framework, by comparing human agency in managing major sport events before and during the pandemic contributed to elucidating the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty. However, during the investigation, I recognized that the cycles of specific emanating practices varied (e.g., changes in the marathon course taking place over several years). Although this discrepancy in the concurrent cycles of practices seems to influence the interplay between social structures and human agency, I was unaware of what that may be, and more importantly, my framework was insufficient to capture phenomena arising from practices with different cycles. Nevertheless, based on this reflection, I modified the framework (see Figure 7.3) for a better understanding of the interplay between social structures and human agency over time.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. To accomplish the purpose, I conducted multiple case studies focusing on the Kyoto Marathon and the Osaka Marathon, which were cancelled and/or partially held in-person events over the course of two years and three months since the

outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research outcomes can be summarized in the following three points.

First, using a descriptive approach, the experiences of the marathon secretariat members were categorized into the following five types: (1) Difficulty in ensuring safety, (2) A trade-off between empty expenses and accurate judgement, (3) Sponsor Considerations, (4) Concern about reputational damage, and (5) Conflict between institutional logics and stakeholders' organizational logics. Comparing the result with the previous literature on uncertainty, I argue that pandemic-driven uncertainty initially brings about Pure Uncertainty in managing major sport events, but after that, it transitions into either Risk or Knightian Uncertainty. Second, pandemic-driven uncertainty impacts managing major sport events through the activation of existing social structures (i.e., social networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory). Although specific social structures embedding the activities do not differ among the events, variations in consequences across the events arise. This is because the mechanisms through which social structures influence management depend on contextual differences within and outside the respective stakeholder relationship for event organizing. Third, pandemic-driven uncertainty restricts human agency when managing major sport events by displacing individuals who were previously agents, thereby limiting their ability to exert influence.

Thus, this dissertation tackled the challenge of understanding the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. A crucial aspect of understanding a given phenomenon is not only exploring what occurs, but also explaining how and why it occurs in a certain context (Bacharach, 1989). Taking this into account, the effort towards RQ2, relying on critical realism as a meta-theory and the embeddedness perspective as a theoretical perspective, enabled the explanation of the activities of marathon secretariat members (i.e., NAO members)

under pandemic-driven uncertainty. In doing so, I reviewed the conceptualization of social structures (i.e., social networks, temporality, institutions, politics, and territory) and applied them to infer the mechanisms that differentiate the role of contextual factors including the COVID-19 pandemic from social structures. This allowed me to provide more elaborate propositions and theoretical frameworks that can be utilized in future research.

The efforts made regarding the other RQs were also indispensable to achieve the overall research purpose. The descriptive approach used for RQ1 explored the experiences of marathon secretariat members which laid the foundation for RQ2, which provides insights into the study of uncertainty in the sport event management literature. The effort for RQ3, employing Archer's (1995) dualism approach to capture the interplay of social structures and human agency, identified emanating practices by agents with the motivation and capacity to enable the transformation of social structures before and during the pandemic. This enabled me to explore the impact of pandemic-driven uncertainty from the standpoint of human agency, a concept paired with social structures, which had been overlooked up to RQ2. Eventually, it offered insights into addressing the practical issue of the reduction of agents and suggested the importance of considering the historical development of the management of a given major sport event from an institutional perspective.

To conclude, this research, as a monographic undertaking (cf. Allison and Zelikow, 1999) that examines a single phenomenon from three different approaches/perspectives, contributed to understanding an important and complex organizational phenomenon. Moving forward, following the future directions indicated, a broader perspective and more detailed research are needed to explore the relationships between uncertainty and organizational phenomena not limited to major sport events.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Texts for Marathon Secretariats (English)

Dear [*enter the name of the marathon secretariat member*],

My name is Ryutaro Yamakita, and I am a PhD candidate in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, Canada, under the supervision of Professor Milena M. Parent. I am writing to you because I am currently conducting a study whose purpose is to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marathon event management in Japan.

Since [*enter the name of Japanese professor*] referred me to you, your organization has kindly agreed to participate in this research as a marathon event that has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your involvement is completely voluntary, and you will not be penalised by any organizations should you choose not to participate.

If you are interested in participating, please see the attached *letter of information*, which outlines the specific details of the study. I have also attached a *consent form*. Please read each document and return the signed consent form to me by email.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to scheduling an interview date and time at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryutaro Yamakita

Ryutaro Yamakita, M.A.
School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa

Appendix B**Recruitment Texts for Marathon Secretariats (Japanese)**

[マラソン事務局名]

[インタビューイ一名]様

お世話になっております。私はカナダのオタワ大学大学院博士課程3年の山北隆太郎と申します。[紹介者の名前を入力]教授の紹介により、現在私が博士論文のために取り組んでいる、「新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント：日本のマラソンイベントに着目して」という研究へのご参加について連絡させていただきました。

本研究についての詳細が示されております「調査内容の説明書」および「同意書」を添付いたしましたのでお手すきの際にご確認いただけますと幸いです。（同意書はインタビュー当日に私が改めて持参します）。

私は現在関西におりますが、インタビューに際しては[インタビューイ]様のご指定の場所に伺います（必要であればオンラインでも構いません）。

お忙しいところ誠に恐縮ですが、ご検討の程、何卒宜しくお願い申し上げます。

オタワ大学大学院
山北隆太郎

Appendix C

Recruitment Texts for Marathon Secretariats' Stakeholders (English)

Dear *[enter the name of organization member]*,

My name is Ryutaro Yamakita, and I am a PhD candidate in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, Canada under the supervision of Professor Milena M. Parent. I am writing to you because I am currently conducting a study whose purpose is to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marathon event management in Japan.

Since *[enter the name of event organizing committee member]* referred me to you, I seek your organization's kind participation in an interview as an organization that has a relationship with *[insert name of marathon]*.

To find out more about the study and the specific details of the interview, please see the attached *letter of information*. I have also attached a *consent form*. Please read each document and return the signed consent form to me by email.

Your involvement is completely voluntary, and you will not be penalised by any organizations should you choose not to participate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to scheduling an interview date and time at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryutaro Yamakita

Ryutaro Yamakita, M.A.
School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa

Appendix D**Recruitment Texts for Marathon Secretariats' Stakeholders (Japanese)**

[組織名]

[インタビューイ一名]様

お世話になっております。私はカナダのオタワ大学大学院博士課程3年の山北隆太郎と申します。[紹介者の名前を入力]様の紹介により、現在私が博士論文のために取り組んでいる、「新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント：日本のマラソンイベントに着目して」という研究へのご参加について連絡させていただきました。

本研究についての詳細が示されております「調査内容の説明書」および「同意書」を添付いたしましたのでお手すきの際にご確認いただけますと幸いです。（同意書はインタビュー当日に私が改めて持参します）。

私は現在関西におりますが、インタビューに際しては[インタビューイ]様のご指定の場所に伺います（必要であればオンラインでも構いません）。

お忙しいところ誠に恐縮ですが、ご検討の程、何卒宜しくお願い申し上げます。

オタワ大学大学院

山北隆太郎

Appendix E

Letter of Information for Marathon Secretariats (English)

To whom may it concern,

My name is Ryutaro Yamakita, and I am a PhD candidate in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, Canada, under the supervision of Professor Milena M. Parent. I am currently conducting a study on managing major sport events, like marathons, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marathon event management in Japan. More specifically, it is to explore (1) the marathon secretariat members experiences during the pandemic, (2) how the organizing committee has been influenced by stakeholders before and during the pandemic, and (3) how the organizing committee has addressed stakeholders before and during the pandemic.

Your participation in this study is critical to its success and will help me **derive best practices and recommendations to benefit your marathon event**. Your organization will gain an understanding of how the uncertainty directly and indirectly impact a marathon event project. This knowledge will allow your organization to develop strategies to effectively address current and future uncertainty, which can contribute to the event's sustainability. Your participation will also contribute to other events and projects in the sport industry around the world.

To do this, I would like to complete interviews with you as *[enter the position/role of the interviewee]*. You will be asked your experience related to managing *[enter event name]*. Interviews will last approximately 60 minutes and take place at a location and day/time of your choosing between *[dates to be inputted after proposal]*.

I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed as other members in the project may identify you in the reporting of the study, there is no risk of physical or social harm.

The data will be conserved for 5 years post-completion of the study. The findings of the study can be made available to you should you so wish.

I would like to assure you that the study has received approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) (#H-02-22-7794), and Kobe Shinwa Women's University (#2021-6). If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact:

- the principal researcher Ryutaro Yamakita,
- the research supervisor, Professor Milena M. Parent (milena.parent@uottawa.ca), or
- the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa, (ethics@uottawa.ca)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryutaro Yamakita

Ryutaro Yamakita, M.A.
School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa

Appendix F

Letter of Information for Marathon Secretariats (Japanese)

[日付]

[組織名]

[インタビューイ一名]様

調査内容の説明書

新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント：

日本のマラソンイベントに着目して

調査実施者：山北隆太郎¹⁾1) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 博士課程3年
調査責任者：Milena M. Parent²⁾

2) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 教授

拝啓

盛夏の候、皆様におかれましては、ますますのご繁栄のこととお慶び申し上げます。

私は、カナダのオタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科・博士課程3年の山北隆太郎と申します。現在私は博士論文のための研究として、日本のマラソンイベントを対象に、「新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント」に関する調査を計画しております。本調査によって、現在及び将来のスポーツイベントがコロナ禍のような社会不安の中で、効果的な運営や持続可能性をどのように実現できるかを提案します。

つきましては、[インタビューイ一名]様に対してインタビューをさせていただきたいと考えております。本調査の内容につきましては、2ページ目以降をご参照いただければ幸いです。ご多忙のところ大変恐縮に存じますが、本調査の趣旨をご理解いただき、何卒ご協力を賜りますようお願い申し上げます。

調査内容について

1. 調査目的

本調査は、日本におけるマラソンイベントを対象とし、新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメントを探索することを目的とします。

2. インタビューについて

対象者（調査参加者）：[インタビュー一名]

方法：対面による半構造化インタビュー

場所：[事務局所在地]

日時：[日時]

インタビュー時間：1時間程度

質問内容：

- [マラソン名]における[インタビュー一名]様の役割・活動
- [事務局名]と関連組織との関わり
- コロナ禍での[事務局名]における[インタビュー一名]様のご経験（目指したこと・心配していたこと・実際の活動やコミュニケーション・得られた知見や教訓など）

3. 本調査にご参加いただくことによるメリットとリスク

本調査への参加により調査参加者の所属する組織（[事務局名]）は、新型コロナウイルスの流行が組織間プロジェクトとしてのマラソンイベントにどのような影響を及ぼすのかを理解することができます。この知見は、（新型コロナウイルス流行を含めた）多様な社会不安の中でマネジメントされるイベント・プロジェクトの研究結果との比較・検討を通じて、「現在及び将来のスポーツイベントは不確実性の高い状況下で効果的な運営や持続可能性をどのように実現できるか」という課題に対する提案を可能にします。また、本調査への参加は、マラソンを含む世界中のスポーツ業界のイベント・プロジェクトマネジメントに対する学術的・実践的な貢献につながります。潜在的なリスクとしては、全ての参加者の氏名の匿名性が保護される一方（下記、『5. プライバシーの保護および結果の公表について』参照）、調査参加者の所属する組織と役割は本調査の結果報告に含まれるため、京都マラソンに深く関与する、組織の内外の人々が調査参加者を推定する可能性が挙げられます。

4. 調査への参加の自由について

調査参加者はインタビュー中のどの時点でも、参加を中止することができます。また答えにくい質問にはお答えいただかなくても構いません。またインタビューに先立ち、調査実施者は調査参加者に対してオーディオレコーダーによる録音の許可を求めますが、許可に応じていただかなくても構いません。尚、この録音許可の依頼、は会話の「文字起こし」を使用した正確なデータ分析を行うことを目的としています。調査実施者はインタビュー後、結果の公表前に、調査参加者に対して書面にて「文字起こし」内容の確認（加筆・修正・削除）を求めため、調査参加者にとって不都合な情報や、不正確な情報の公表を防ぐことができます。

5. プライバシーの保護および結果の公表について

調査参加者のプライバシー保護のため、インタビューによって得られた個人情報について、その機密性は保証され、本調査の目的以外に使用されることはありません。調査参加者の氏名は今後公表されるいかなる成果物においても提示されないため、その匿名性が保護されます（結果の公表時にはIDコードもしくは仮名を使用いたします）。インタビューから得られたデータは調査実施者・責任者によって5年間厳重に保管されたのち完全に消去されます。尚、結果の公表は私の博士論文の他、スポーツを含めたイベント・プロジェクトに関する学術誌等において行われる予定であり、成果物は公表され次第、調査参加者にフィードバックします。

6. 調査に関する質問および連絡先について

ご不明な点等ございましたら、私、山北隆太郎の携帯電話またはメールアドレスまでご連絡頂ければ幸いです。お忙しいところ恐れ入りますが、本調査へのご協力をよろしくお願い申し上げます。

Appendix G

Letter of Information for Marathon Secretariats' Stakeholders (English)

To whom may it concern,

My name is Ryutaro Yamakita, and I am a PhD candidate in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, Canada under the supervision of Professor Milena M. Parent. I am currently conducting a study on managing major sport events, like marathons, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marathon event management in Japan. More specifically, it is to explore the event stakeholder relationships before and during the pandemic and how they might have been affected by the pandemic.

Your participation in this study is critical to its success and will help me **derive best practices and recommendations to benefit your organization and others associated with the marathon event.** This knowledge will allow your organization to develop strategies to effectively engage current and future major sport events under uncertainty, which will potentially improve your organization's strategic advantage. Your participation will also contribute to other events in the sport industry around the world.

To do this, I would like to complete an interview with your organization's member(s) who is(are) in charge of *[enter event name]* before and during the pandemic. The interview(s) will last approximately 60 minutes and take place between *[enter dates to be inputted after proposal]*.

Should you agree to participate, I will use a pseudonym to protect your identity. While anonymity cannot be guaranteed as other members in the project may identify participants in the reporting of the study, there is no risk of physical or social harm.

Your involvement is voluntary. The data will be conserved for 5 years post-completion of the study. The findings of the study can be made available to you should you so wish.

I would like to assure you that the study has received approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) (#H-02-22-7794), and Kobe Shinwa Women's University (#2021-6). If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact:

- the principal researcher Ryutaro Yamakita,
- the research supervisor, Professor Milena M. Parent (milena.parent@uottawa.ca), or
- the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Ottawa (ethics@uottawa.ca)

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Ryutaro Yamakita

Ryutaro Yamakita, M.A.
School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa

Appendix H

Letter of Information for Marathon Secretariats' Stakeholders (Japanese)

[日付]

[組織名]

[インタビューイ一名]様

調査内容の説明書

新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント：

日本のマラソンイベントに着目して

調査実施者：山北隆太郎¹⁾3) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 博士課程3年
調査責任者：Milena M. Parent²⁾

4) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 教授

拝啓

新緑の候、皆様におかれましては、ますますのご繁栄のこととお慶び申し上げます。

私は、カナダのオタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科・博士課程3年の山北隆太郎と申します。現在私は博士論文のための研究として、日本のマラソンイベントを対象に、「新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント」に関する調査を実施しております。本調査によって、現在及び将来のスポーツイベントがコロナ禍のような社会不安の中で、効果的な運営や持続可能性をどのように実現できるかを提案します。

先日、[事務局名]の方にインタビューを行った際、[組織名]の[インタビューイ一名]様が[マラソン名]において重要な役割を果たしていることを伺いました。つきましては、[インタビューイ一名]様に対して、コロナ禍の[マラソン名]に関するインタビューをさせていただきたいと考えております。本調査の内容につきましては、2ページ目以降をご参照いただければ幸いです。ご多忙のところ大変恐縮に存じますが、本調査の趣旨をご理解いただき、何卒ご協力を賜りますようお願い申し上げます。

調査内容について

7. 調査目的

本調査は、日本におけるマラソンイベントを対象とし、新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメントを探索することを目的とします。

8. インタビューについて

対象者（調査参加者）：[組織名][インタビュー一名]様

方法：対面またはオンラインによる半構造化インタビュー

場所：指定場所にお伺いします（ご希望の場合はオンラインでも構いません）

日時：[日時]

インタビュー時間：1時間程度

質問内容：

- [組織名]と[マラソン名]の関わり
- [マラソン名]における[組織名]の役割について
- [インタビュー一名]様のコロナ禍の[マラソン名]における経験（目指したこと・心配していたこと・実際の活動やコミュニケーション・得られた知見や教訓など）

9. 本調査にご参加いただくことによるメリットとリスク

本調査への参加により、調査参加者および調査参加者の所属する組織は、コロナ禍のような社会不安に直面した現在および将来の組織間プロジェクトに対して、効果的に関与するための戦略を検討することが可能になります。またこれは、マラソンを含む世界中のスポーツ業界におけるイベント・プロジェクトの効果的な運営や持続可能性の向上に貢献につながります。

潜在的なリスクとしては、調査参加者および調査参加者の所属する組織の匿名性が保護される一方（下記、『5. プライバシーの保護および結果の公表について』参照）、調査参加者の役割や所属する組織のカテゴリー名（=委託事業者）は本調査の結果の公表に含まれるため、京都マラソンに深く関与する、組織の内外の人々が調査参加者や所属する組織を推定する可能性が挙げられます。

10. 調査への参加の自由について

調査参加者はインタビュー中のどの時点でも、参加を中止することができます。また答えにくい質問にはお答えいただかなくても構いません。またインタビューに先立ち、調査実施者は調査参加者に対してオーディオレコーダーによる録音の許可を求めますが、許可に応じていただかなくても構いません。尚、この録音許可の依頼は、会話の「文字起こし」を使用した正確なデータ分析を行うことを目的としています。調査実施者はインタビュー後、結果の公表前に、調査参加者に対して書面にて「文字起こし」内容確認（加筆・修正・削除）を求めるため、調査参加者にとって不都合な情報や不正確な情報の公表を防ぐことが出来ます。

11. プライバシーの保護および結果の公表について

調査参加者のプライバシー保護のため、インタビューによって得られた個人情報について、その機密性は保証され、本調査の目的以外に使用されることはありません。調査参加者の氏名は今後公表されるいかなる成果物においても提示されないため、その匿名性が保護されます

(結果の公表時にはIDコードもしくは仮名を使用いたします)。調査参加者の所属する組織名も同様に、結果の公表の際には、組織のカテゴリー名(=委託事業者)を使用いたします。インタビューから得られたデータは調査実施者・責任者によって5年間厳重に保管されたのち完全に消去されます。尚、結果の公表は私の博士論文の他、スポーツを含めたイベント・プロジェクトに関する学術誌等において行われる予定であり、成果物は公表され次第、担当者様にフィードバックさせていただきます。

12. 調査に関する質問および連絡先について

ご不明な点等ございましたら、私、山北隆太郎の携帯電話またはメールアドレスまでご連絡頂ければ幸いです。お忙しいところ恐れ入りますが、本調査へのご協力をよろしくお願い申し上げます。

Appendix I

Consent Form for Interviews with Marathon Secretariats (English)

You are invited to participate in a study titled “The Impact of the Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty on Managing Major Sport Event Management.” This study is conducted by Ryutaro Yamakita from the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, and supervised by Professor Milena M. Parent.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ryutaro Yamakita

RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISORS: Dr. Milena M. Parent, 613-562-5800 (ext. 2984) (milena.parent@uottawa.ca)

Purpose of the Study: The purpose is to learn how [*enter event name*] secretariat members have experienced managing the marathon event during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participation: Your participation includes one interview discussing how you have experienced the event during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you volunteer to participate in the interview process:

- You will be interviewed by the principal investigator one-on-one with no one else present
- Your name will not appear anywhere, but anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed
- The interview will last approximately about 60 minutes
- You consent to being audio recorded so that the principal investigator can transcribe and analyse information from the session
- You will have the opportunity to review your interview transcript

Potential Risks and Discomforts: There is no known or anticipated risks if you participate in this study beyond what you face every day. Your participation is voluntary. At any point in the interview, you may stop your participation. You do not have to answer questions you do not wish to answer.

Potential Benefits: Your organization will gain an understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic directly and indirectly impacts marathon management. This knowledge will allow your organization to develop strategies to effectively address current and future uncertainty situations, which can contribute to the event’s sustainability.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The information you share during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. The contents of the interviews will only be used for this study and your confidentiality will be protected. However, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed as your organization and role will be included in reporting of this study; accordingly, other members within and without your organization engaging in [*enter event name*] may identify you. Nevertheless, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Feedback of the Study Results to Participants: If you wish, you can request a copy of the study results.

Subsequent use of Data and Data Retention: Data from this study will be stored for five years and may be used in subsequent academic studies, publications, and/or presentations. All data will be kept in the principal investigator's password protected computer.

Acceptance:

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the above research study conducted by Ryutaro Yamakita of the University of Ottawa and supervised by Professor Milena M. Parent of the same affiliation.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5; email: ethics@uottawa.ca

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date
_____	_____
Researcher's Signature	Date

There are two copies of this form, one of which is yours to keep

Appendix J

Consent Form for Interviews with Marathon Secretariats (Japanese)

[日付]

調査参加者に対する同意書

調査実施者: 山北隆太郎¹⁾

1) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 博士課程 3年

調査責任者: Milena M. Parent²⁾

2) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 教授

私は、「新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント: 日本のマラソンイベントに着目して」に関する以下の事項について、紙面にて調査実施者による説明を受けました。

- 調査目的について
- インタビューについて
- 調査に協力するメリット・リスクについて
- 調査への参加の自由について
- プライバシー保護および結果の公表について
- 調査に関する質問および連絡先について

上記の事項に関する説明を理解した上で、この調査に参加することに同意します。

西暦 年 月 日

本人 署名

説明者 オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科
山北 隆太郎

※同意書は、調査実施者(説明者)と調査参加者(本人)の双方で保管するため、2部用意します。本用紙はご記入後、調査実施者にご提出ください。

ご不明な点がございましたら、いつでも私、山北隆太郎の携帯電話またはメールアドレスまでご連絡ください。

Appendix K

Consent Form for Interviews with Marathon Secretariats' Stakeholders (English)

You are invited to participate in a study titled “The Impact of the Pandemic-Driven Uncertainty on Managing Major Sport Event Management.” This study is conducted by Ryutaro Yamakita from the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa, and supervised by Professor Milena M. Parent.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ryutaro Yamakita

RESEARCH PROJECT SUPERVISORS: Dr. Milena M. Parent, 613-562-5800 (ext. 2984) (milena.parent@uottawa.ca)

Purpose of the Study: The purpose is to learn how *[enter event name]* event stakeholders have experienced managing the project during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participation: Your participation will include one interview discussing how you have experienced the event during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you volunteer to participate in the interview process:

- You will be interviewed by the principal investigator one-on-one with no one else present
- Your name will not appear anywhere, but anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed
- The interview will last approximately about 60 minutes
- You consent to being audio recorded so that the principal investigator can transcribe and analyse information from the session
- You will have the opportunity to review your interview transcript

Potential Risks and Discomforts: There is no known or anticipated risks if you participate in this study beyond what you face every day. Your participation is voluntary. At any point in the interview, you may stop your participation. You do not have to answer questions you do not wish to answer.

Potential Benefits: By participating, your organization will gain an understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic directly and indirectly impacts marathon management. This knowledge will allow your organization to develop strategies to effectively engage in current and future sport events under uncertainty, which will improve your organization's strategic advantage.

Confidentiality and Anonymity: The information you share during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. The contents of the interviews will only be used for this study and your confidentiality will be protected. However, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed as your organization and role will be included in reporting of this study; accordingly, other members within and without your organization engaging in *[enter event name]* may identify you. Nevertheless, a pseudonym will be used to protect your identity.

Feedback of the Study Results to Participants: If you wish, you can request a copy of the study results.

Subsequent use of Data and Data Retention: Data from this study will be stored for five years and may be used in subsequent academic studies, publications, and/or presentations. All data will be kept in the principal investigator's password protected computer.

Acceptance:

I, _____, hereby consent to participate in the above research study conducted by Ryutaro Yamakita of the University of Ottawa and supervised by Professor Milena M. Parent of the same affiliation.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the principal investigator or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5; email: ethics@uottawa.ca

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date
_____	_____
Researcher's Signature	Date

There are two copies of this form, one of which is yours to keep

Appendix L**Consent Form for Interviews with Marathon Secretariats' Stakeholders (Japanese)**

[日付]

調査参加者に対する同意書

調査実施者: 山北隆太郎¹⁾

1) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 博士課程 3年

調査責任者: Milena M. Parent²⁾

2) オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科 教授

私は、「新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメント: 日本のマラソンイベントに着目して」に関する以下の事項について、紙面にて調査実施者による説明を受けました。

- 調査目的について
- インタビューについて
- 調査に協力するメリット・リスクについて
- 調査への参加の自由について
- プライバシー保護および結果の公表について
- 調査に関する質問および連絡先について

上記の事項に関する説明を理解した上で、この調査に参加することに同意します。

西暦 年 月 日

本人 署名

説明者 オタワ大学大学院人間科学研究科
山北 隆太郎

※同意書は、調査実施者(説明者)と調査参加者(本人)の双方で保管するため、2部用意します。本用紙はご記入後、調査実施者にご提出ください。

ご不明な点がございましたら、いつでも私、山北隆太郎の携帯電話またはメールアドレスまでご連絡ください。

Appendix M

Interview Guide for the Kyoto Marathon Secretariat Members (English)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To remind you, the objective of this interview research is to understand the impact of the pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. Please try to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge; there are no right or wrong answers. The information you give today will remain anonymous. Your name will not appear in any of the research findings and only myself and my research supervisor, Professor Milena M. Parent, will have access to this information. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Background information

1. For the record, can you state your name, the name of the organization you work for, and your position in the organization?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Have you held any other positions in this organization?
4. How long have you been with this organization?
5. Could you briefly describe your role in the organization? (i.e., what do you do?)

I present an interviewee with the key dates of event announcements and the information on the COVID-19 situation in Japan and Kyoto prefecture over the past two years and three months:

The cancelled the in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021

6. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizing committee announced the in-person event cancelled on July 31st, 2020. Let me ask you about the impacts of the pandemic which has caused unprecedented uncertainty in the preparation of the Kyoto Marathon 2021 that was initially scheduled to hold on February 21st, 2021.
 - a) How was the organizational structure of the Kyoto Marathon impacted?
 - b) How were the human resources of the Kyoto Marathon impacted?
 - c) How were the financial resources of the Kyoto Marathon impacted?
 - d) How were each functional area impacted?
 - i. Marketing (e.g., consumer, communication)
 - ii. Venue management
 - iii. Volunteer management
 - iv. Risk management
 - v. Design (e.g., ancillary events, themes)
 - vi. Others
 - e) What was the main uncertainty that made the marathon secretariat's decisions and activities difficult during that period?

I present the list of stakeholders of the event:

7. Let me dig into the stakeholders which influenced the preparation for the Kyoto Marathon 2021. What stakeholders influenced your organization's activities? If so, why and how?
- a) Local governments (e.g., prefectural, city)
 - b) Sport organization (e.g., JAAF)
 - c) Sponsors
 - d) Media (e.g., mass, social media)
 - e) Community (e.g., university, hospital)
 - f) Other (partner) events (e.g., Tokyo 2020, World Masters Games 2021 Kansai, partner marathon events)
 - g) Others (e.g., virtual marathon app provisor)

For each organization mentioned by interviewees:

- i. Could you describe the relationship between the event and that organization?
- ii. When did the relationship start?
- iii. Why did the relationship start?
- iv. How did you communicate with that organization?
- v. How do you describe that organization's reputation in the event networks?
- vi. Did your organization experience any difficulties in communicating with that organization before the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?
- vii. Did your organization experience any difficulties in communicating with that organization during the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?

For each impact made by organizations mentioned by interviewees:

- i. Did your organization have any strategies to address the impact?
- ii. If so, who played key roles? Why and how?
- iii. If not, what were the consequences of them?

8. Let me ask you about the impact of public opinion on the cancelled in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021.
- a) How did public opinion impact the Kyoto Marathon 2021?
 - b) Did the secretariat have any strategies to address them?
 - c) If so, who, when, and how?
 - d) If not, what were the consequences of them?
9. To close the questions on the cancelled in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021, do you have any regrets or lessons to address pandemic-driven uncertainty?

The virtual Kyoto Marathon 2021

10. For the Kyoto Marathon 2022, the organizing committee decided not to hold the 2022 in-person event again although it was once scheduled as an in-person marathon (announced on July 14th, 2021). Could you tell me the story behind those decisions?
- a) Who (or what organizations) were involved in those decisions?

- b) What were the considerations or concerns in the decision-making process?
- c) Why and how were those decisions realized??

The cancelled in-person Kyoto Marathon 2022

11. For the Kyoto Marathon 2022, the organizing committee decided not to hold the 2022 in-person event again although it was once scheduled as an in-person marathon (announced on July 14th, 2021). Could you tell me the story behind those decisions?
- a) Who (or what organizations) were involved in those decisions?
 - b) What were the considerations or concerns in the decision-making process?
 - c) Why and how were those decisions realized??
12. Let me go dive into the influences of stakeholders in the preparation for the in-person Kyoto Marathon 2022, which was eventually cancelled. What stakeholders influenced your organization's activities? If so, why and how?
- a) Local governments (e.g., prefectural, city)
 - b) Sport Organizations (e.g., JAAF)
 - c) Sponsors
 - d) Media (e.g., mass, community, social media)
 - e) Community (e.g., university, hospital)
 - f) Other (partner) events (e.g., Tokyo 2020, World Masters Games 2021 Kansai, partner marathon events)
 - g) Others (e.g., virtual marathon app provisor)

For each organization mentioned by interviewees:

- i. How did you communicate with that organization?
- ii. How do you describe that organization's reputation in the event networks?
- iii. Did your organization experience any difficulties in communicating with that organization before the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?
- iv. Did your organization experience any difficulties in communicating with that organization during the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?

For each impact made by organizations mentioned by interviewees:

- i. Did your organization have any strategies to address these impacts? Can you provide examples?
- ii. If so, who played key roles? Why and how?
- iii. If not, what were the consequences of them?

13. Let me ask you about the impact of public opinion in the preparation for the Kyoto Marathon 2022.
- a) How did public opinion impact the Kyoto Marathon 2022?
 - b) Did the secretariat have any strategies to address them?
 - c) If so, who, when, and how?
 - d) If not, what were the consequences of them?

The virtual Kyoto Marathon 2022

14. As well as last year, the organizing committee held the virtual marathon event for January–February 2022. How was it different from last year?
- a) Who (or what organizations) were involved in those decisions?
 - b) What were the considerations or concerns in the decision-making processes?
 - c) Why and how were those decisions realized?

Closing

15. What are the key lessons to address the pandemic-driven uncertainty?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix N

Interview Guide for the Kyoto Marathon Secretariat Members (Japanese)

インタビューガイド（京都マラソン事務局）

本日はインタビュー調査へのご参加に同意いただきありがとうございます。本研究の目的は、日本のマラソンイベントを対象として、新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメントを探索することです。これから京都マラソンに関するいくつかの質問をしますが、お答えに正解・不正解はありません。今日教えていただきますことについて、[インタビューイ名]についての個人情報、分析から研究成果の発表まで匿名のまま扱われます。お名前を含む個人情報はどこにも公表されず、私と共同研究者のみがその情報にアクセスできます。インタビューを開始する前に、何かご質問はありますか？

インタビューイの組織における役割など

1. レコーディングのため、お名前、ご所属の組織名、そして組織内でのご自身のお立場を教えてくださいいただけますか？
2. 現在の役職に就いてどのくらいになりますか？
3. 現在の組織で他の役職に就いたことはありますか？
4. 現在の組織に所属してどのくらいになりますか？
5. 組織における [インタビューイ名] 様の役割について簡単に説明していただけますか？

*コロナ禍での京都マラソンに関する重要な出来事を時系列順に示した書類を示す

延期された京都マラソン2021について

6. 京都マラソン 2021は当初、2021年2月21日にオンサイトで開催される予定でしたが、新型コロナウイルス流行のため、組織委員会はこのイベントの延期を発表しました（2020年7月31日発表）。このイベント開催準備中に、新型コロナウイルス流行が、イベント運営に与えた影響についてお尋ねします。
 - a) 組織体制について
 - b) スタッフ・ボランティアについて
 - c) 財源について
 - d) 各部署の活動について
 - i. マーケティング (e.g., 参加者、参加費用、コミュニケーション)
 - ii. 競技マネジメント

- iii. 会場マネジメント
 - iv. ボランティアマネジメント
 - v. リスクマネジメント
 - vi. 大会デザイン (e.g., 付帯イベント、大会テーマ)
 - vii. その他
- e) 開催準備期間中に組織委員会の意思決定と行動を困難にしたもの（不確実であったことなど）は何でしたか？

*京都マラソン関連組織のリストを示す

7. 京都マラソン 2021 の開催準備に影響を与えた関連組織についてお尋ねします。次の関連組織からそれぞれどのような影響を受けましたか？（なぜ？どのように？）
- a) 開催自治体 (e.g., 府、市)
 - b) スポーツ組織 (e.g., 日本陸上競技連盟)
 - c) スポンサー
 - d) メディア (e.g., マスメディア、地元メディア、ソーシャルメディア)
 - e) コミュニティ (e.g., 教育機関、病院)
 - f) 他のイベント (e.g., Tokyo 2020、WMG 2021 Kansai、パートナーイベント)
 - g) その他 (e.g., オンラインマラソン運営アプリ会社)

言及された各組織について:

- i. 京都マラソンとその組織との関係性について教えてください。
- ii. その関係はどのように始まりましたか？（なぜ？いつ？）
- iii. コロナ前の、京都マラソンの組織間ネットワークにおけるその組織の立ち位置や評判をどのようにとらえていますか？
- iv. コロナ前には、その組織との連携やコミュニケーションに難しさを経験しましたか？もしそうであれば、それはどのような難しさでしたか？
- v. この開催準備期間において、京都マラソンの組織間ネットワーク内のその組織の立ち位置や評判をどのようにとらえていますか？
- vi. この開催準備期間において、その組織との連携やコミュニケーションに何か困難を感じましたか？もしそうであれば、それはどのような難しさでしたか？

言及された組織からの影響について:

- i. それらの影響に対処するための方法（戦略）は何かありましたか？（もしあれば）それはどのようなものでしたか？
 - ii. 誰が重要な役割を果たしましたか？（なぜ?どのように?)
 - iii. それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか？
8. 延期になった京都マラソン2021の開催準備に対する世論の影響についてお聞きします。
 - a) 世論は、京都マラソン2021にどのような影響を与えましたか？
 - b) 組織委員会は世論に対処するための戦略を持っていましたか？
 - c) （もしそうであれば）どのように対処しましたか？(誰がいつ?)
 - d) それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか？
9. コロナ禍での京都マラソン2021の開催準備において、学んだことや後悔していることは何かありますか？

オンライン京都マラソン2022について

10. オンサイトの京都マラソン2021の延期に伴い、組織委員会は2021年1月23日～2月21日の日程でオンライン京都マラソンを開催することを発表しました（2020年7月31日発表）。この決定の経緯について教えてください。
 - a) 誰（またはどの組織）がその決定に関与しましたか？
 - b) 意思決定プロセスにおける考慮事項または懸念事項は何でしたか？
 - c) なぜ、どのようにそれらの決定が実現されたのですか？

オンサイトの京都マラソン2022の再延期について

11. 前回同様、新型コロナウイルス流行のために、組織委員会はオンサイトの京都マラソン 2022の延期を発表しました（2021年7月14日発表）。2021年のオンラインマラソン開催からこの発表までの間の、イベントに対する関連組織の影響についてお尋ねします。
 - a) 開催自治体 (e.g., 府、市)
 - b) スポーツ組織 (e.g., 日本陸上競技連盟)
 - c) スポンサー
 - d) メディア (e.g., マスメディア, 地元メディア, ソーシャルメディア)
 - e) コミュニティ (e.g., 教育機関, 病院)
 - f) 他のイベント (e.g., Tokyo 2020, WMG 2021 Kansai, パートナーイベント)

g) その他 (e.g., オンラインマラソン運営アプリ会社)

言及された各組織について:

- i. その組織とどのように連携やコミュニケーションを取りましたか?
- ii. この開催準備期間における、イベントネットワークにおけるその組織の立ち位置や評判をどのようにとらえていますか?
- iii. この開催準備期間において、その組織との連携やコミュニケーションに何か困難を感じましたか? もしそうであれば、それはどのような難しさでしたか?

言及された組織からの影響について:

- i. それらの影響に対処するための方法 (戦略) は何かありましたか? (もしあれば) それはどのようなものでしたか?
- ii. 重要な役割を果たしましたか? (なぜ?どのように?)
- iii. それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか?

12. オンサイトの京都マラソン2022の開催準備に対する世論の影響についてお聞きします。

- a) 世論は、京都マラソン2022にどのような影響を与えましたか?
- b) 組織委員会は世論に対処するための戦略を持っていましたか?
- c) (もしそうであれば) どのように対処しましたか? (誰がいつ?)
- d) それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか?

オンライン京都マラソン2021について

13. 前年度同様、組織委員会はオンラインによるマラソンイベント開催 (2022年1~2月) を発表しました。前年度と比較した際の、この意思決定に至るプロセスについてお尋ねします。

- a) 誰 (またはどの組織) がその決定に関与しましたか?
- b) 意思決定プロセスにおける考慮事項または懸念事項は何でしたか?
- c) なぜ、どのようにそれらの決定が実現されたのですか?

終わりに

14. 新型コロナウイルス流行によって生じた社会不安への対処について重要な教訓は何でしたか?
15. 他に何か付け加えることはありますか?

Appendix O

Interview Guide for the Osaka Marathon Secretariat Members (English)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To remind you, the objective of this interview research is to understand the impact of the pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. Please try to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge; there are no right or wrong answers. The information you give today will remain anonymous. Your name will not appear in any of the research findings and only myself and my research supervisor, Professor Milena M. Parent, will have access to this information. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Background information

2. For the record, can you state your name, the name of the organization you work for, and your position in the organization?
3. How long have you been in this position?
4. Have you held any other positions in this organization?
5. How long have you been with this organization?
6. Could you briefly describe your role in the organization? (i.e., what do you do?)

I present an interviewee with the key dates of event announcements and the information on the COVID-19 situation in Japan and Osaka over the past two years and three months:

The cancelled in-person Osaka Marathon 2020

7. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event organizing committee announced the event cancellation on June 12th, 2020. Let me ask you about the impact of the pandemic which has caused unprecedented uncertainty in the preparation of the Osaka Marathon 2020, which was initially scheduled to be held on November 29th, 2020.
 - a) How was the structure of the Osaka Marathon impacted?
 - b) How were the human resources of the Osaka Marathon impacted?
 - c) How were the financial resources of the Osaka Marathon impacted?
 - d) How has each functional area been impacted?
 - i. Marketing (e.g., consumer, communication)
 - ii. Sport
 - iii. Venue management
 - iv. Volunteer management
 - v. Risk management
 - vi. Design (e.g., ancillary events, themes)
 - vii. Others
 - e) What was the main uncertainty (if any) that made the organizing committee's decisions and actions difficult during that period?

I present the list of stakeholders of the event:

8. Let me dig into the stakeholders which influenced the preparations for the Osaka Marathon 2020. Which of the following stakeholders influenced the preparations, why and how?
- a) Local governments (e.g., prefectural, city)
 - b) Sport organizations (e.g., JAAF)
 - c) Sponsors
 - d) Media (e.g., mass, social media)
 - e) Community (e.g., university, hospital)
 - f) Other (partner) events (e.g., Tokyo 2020, World Masters Games 2021 Kansai, partner marathon events)
 - g) Others (e.g., virtual marathon app provisor)

For each organization mentioned by interviewees:

- i. Could you describe the relationship between the event and that organization?
- ii. When did the relationship start?
- iii. Why did the relationship start?
- iv. How did you communicate with that organization?
- v. How do you describe that organization's reputation in the event networks?
- vi. Did your organization experience any difficulties in communicating with that organization before the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?
- vii. Did your organization experience any difficulties in communicating with that organization during the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?

For each impact made by organizations mentioned by interviewees:

- iv. Did your organization have any strategies to address the impact? If so, what were these strategies? Can you provide examples?
 - v. If so, who played key roles? Why and how?
 - vi. If not, what were the consequences of them?
9. Let me ask you about the impact of public opinion on the cancellation of the in-person Osaka Marathon 2020.
- a) How did public opinion impact the Osaka Marathon 2020, if at all?
 - b) Did the organizing committee have any strategies to address public opinion?
 - c) If so, what, who, when, and how?
 - d) If not, what were the consequences of them?
10. To close the questions on the cancelled in-person Osaka Marathon 2020, do you have any regrets or lessons learned to address pandemic-driven uncertainty?

The virtual Osaka Marathon 2020

11. Although the in-person Osaka Marathon 2020 was cancelled, the organizing committee held the virtual marathon event in December 2020. Could you tell me the story behind these decisions?
- d) Who (or what organizations) were involved in those decisions?
 - e) What were the considerations or concerns in the decision-making processes?
 - f) Why and how were those decisions realized?

The partially held Osaka Marathon 2022

12. After the cancellation of the 2020 event, the event organizing committee decided not to hold the 2021 event and announced that the 2022 event would be held as an in-person event integrated with the Lake Biwa Mainichi Marathon (announced on July 13th, 2021). However, the event organizing committee decided to cancel the general runner category on February 16th, 2022. Could you tell me the story behind these decisions?
- a) Who (or what organizations) were involved in those decisions?
 - b) What were the considerations or concerns in the decision-making processes?
 - c) Why and how were those decisions realized?
13. Let me ask you some questions about the influences of stakeholders in the preparation for the Osaka Marathon 2022. What stakeholders influenced your organization's activities? If so, why and how?
- a) Local governments (e.g., prefectural, city)
 - b) Sport organizations (e.g., JAAF)
 - c) Sponsors
 - d) Media (e.g., mass, community, social media)
 - e) Community (e.g., university, hospital)
 - f) Other (partner) events (e.g., Tokyo 2020, World Masters Games 2021 Kansai, partner marathon events)
 - g) Others (e.g., virtual marathon app provisor)

For each organization mentioned by interviewees:

- i. How did you communicate with that organization?
- ii. How do you describe that organization's reputation in the event networks?
- iii. Has your organization experienced any difficulties in communicating with that organization before the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?
- iv. Has your organization experienced any difficulties in communicating with that organization amid the pandemic? If so, could you describe them?

For each impact made by organizations mentioned by interviewees:

- vii. Did your organization have any strategies to address the impact? Can you provide examples?
- viii. If so, who played key roles? Why and how?
- ix. If not, what were the consequences of them?

14. Let me ask you about the impact of public opinion in the preparation for the Osaka Marathon 2022.
- a) How did public opinion impact the Osaka Marathon 2022, if at all?
 - b) Did the organizing committee have any strategies to address public opinion?
 - c) If so, what, who, when, and how?
 - d) If not, what were the consequences of them?

Closing

15. What are your key lessons to address pandemic-driven uncertainty?
16. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix P

Interview Guide for the Osaka Marathon Secretariat Members (Japanese)

インタビューガイド (大阪マラソン事務局)

本日はインタビュー調査へのご参加に同意いただきありがとうございます。本研究の目的は、日本のマラソンイベントを対象として、新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメントを探索することです。これから大阪マラソンに関するいくつかの質問をしますが、お答えに正解・不正解はありません。今日教えていただきますことについて、[インタビューイ名]についての個人情報、分析から研究成果の発表まで匿名のまま扱われます。お名前を含む個人情報はどこにも公表されず、私と共同研究者のみがその情報にアクセスできます。インタビューを開始する前に、何かご質問はありますか？

インタビューイの組織における役割など

1. レコーディングのため、お名前、ご所属の組織名、そして組織内でのご自身のお立場を教えてくださいいただけますか？
2. 現在の役職に就いてどのくらいになりますか？
3. 現在の組織で他の役職に就いたことはありますか？
4. 現在の組織に所属してどのくらいになりますか？
5. 組織における [インタビューイ名] 様の役割について簡単に説明していただけますか？

*コロナ禍での大阪マラソンに関する重要な出来事を時系列順に示した書類を示す

中止された大阪マラソン2020について

6. 大阪マラソン2020は当初、2020年11月29日にオンサイトで開催される予定でしたが、新型コロナウイルス流行のため、組織委員会は2020年11月29日にこれを延期しました。このイベント開催準備中に、新型コロナウイルス流行が、イベント運営に与えた影響についてお尋ねします。
 - a) 組織体制について
 - b) スタッフ・ボランティアについて
 - c) 財源について
 - d) 各部署の活動について
 - i. マーケティング (e.g., 参加者、参加費用、コミュニケーション)
 - ii. 競技マネジメント

- iii. 会場マネジメント
 - iv. ボランティアマネジメント
 - v. リスクマネジメント
 - vi. 大会デザイン (e.g., 付帯イベント、大会テーマ)
 - vii. その他
- e) 開催準備期間中に組織委員会の意思決定と行動を困難にしたもの（不確実であったことなど）は何でしたか？

*大阪マラソン関連組織のリストを示す

7. 大阪マラソン 2020 の開催準備に影響を与えた関連組織についてお尋ねします。次の関連組織からそれぞれどのような影響を受けましたか？（なぜ？どのように？）
- h) 開催自治体 (e.g., 府、市)
 - i) スポーツ組織 (e.g., 日本陸上競技連盟)
 - j) スポンサー
 - k) メディア (e.g., マスメディア, 地元メディア, ソーシャルメディア)
 - l) コミュニティ (e.g., 教育機関、病院)
 - m) 他のイベント (e.g., Tokyo 2020、WMG 2021 Kansai、パートナーイベント)
 - n) その他 (e.g., オンラインマラソン運営アプリ会社)

言及された各組織について:

- i. 大阪マラソンとその組織との関係性について教えてください。
- ii. その関係はどのように始まりましたか？（なぜ？いつ？）
- iii. コロナ前の、大阪マラソンの組織間ネットワークにおけるその組織の立ち位置や評判をどのようにとらえていますか？
- iv. コロナ前には、その組織との連携やコミュニケーションに難しさを経験しましたか？もしそうであれば、それはどのような難しさでしたか？
- v. この開催準備期間において、大阪マラソンの組織間ネットワーク内のその組織の立ち位置や評判をどのようにとらえていますか？
- vi. この開催準備期間において、その組織との連携やコミュニケーションに何か困難を感じましたか？もしそうであれば、それはどのような難しさでしたか？

言及された組織からの影響について:

- x. それらの影響に対処するための方法（戦略）は何かありましたか？（もしあれば）それはどのようなものでしたか？
 - xi. 誰が重要な役割を果たしましたか？（なぜ？どのように？）
 - xii. それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか？
8. 中止になった大阪マラソン2020の開催準備に対する世論の影響についてお聞きします。
- e) 世論は、大阪マラソン2020にどのような影響を与えましたか？
 - f) 組織委員会は世論に対処するための戦略を持っていましたか？
 - g) （もしそうであれば）どのように対処しましたか？（誰がいつ？）
 - h) それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか？
9. コロナ禍での大阪マラソン2020の開催準備において、学んだことや後悔していることは何かありますか？

オンラインマラソンイベントについて

10. オンサイトの大阪マラソン2020は中止されましたが、組織委員会は2020年12月にオンラインマラソンイベントを開催しました。この決定の経緯について教えてください。
- g) 誰（またはどの組織）がその決定に関与しましたか？
 - h) 意思決定プロセスにおける考慮事項または懸念事項は何でしたか？
 - i) なぜ、どのようにそれらの決定が実現されたのですか？

オンサイトで開催された大阪マラソン2022について（予定）

11. 2020年の大阪マラソンのオンサイトでの開催が中止された後、組織委員会は2021年のイベントを開催しないことを決定し、2022年のイベントはびわ湖毎日マラソンと統合によりオンサイトイベントとして開催されることを発表しました（2021年7月13日に発表）。しかし、2022年2月16日に組織委員会は一般ランナー部門の中止を発表しました。これらの決定の背景について教えてください。
- d) 誰（またはどの組織）がその決定に関与しましたか？
 - e) 意思決定プロセスにおける考慮事項または懸念事項は何でしたか？
 - f) なぜ、どのようにそれらの決定は実現されましたか？
12. 大阪マラソン2022の開催準備に影響を与えた関連組織についてお尋ねします。次の関連組織からそれぞれどのような影響を受けましたか？（なぜ？どのように？）
- h) 開催自治体 (e.g., 府、市)

- i) スポーツ組織 (e.g., 日本陸上競技連盟)
- j) スポンサー
- k) メディア (e.g., マスメディア、地元メディア、ソーシャルメディア)
- l) コミュニティ (e.g., 教育機関、病院)
- m) 他のイベント (e.g., Tokyo 2020、WMG 2021 Kansai、パートナーイベント)
- n) その他 (e.g., オンラインマラソン運営アプリ会社)

言及された各組織について:

- i. その組織とどのように連携やコミュニケーションを取りましたか?
- ii. この開催準備期間における、イベントネットワークにおけるその組織の立ち位置や評判をどのようにとらえていますか?
- iii. この開催準備期間において、その組織との連携やコミュニケーションに何か困難を感じましたか? もしそうであれば、それはどのような難しさでしたか?

言及された組織からの影響について:

- xiii. それらの影響に対処するための方法 (戦略) は何かありましたか? (もしあれば) それはどのようなものでしたか?
- xiv. 重要な役割を果たしましたか? (なぜ?どのように?)
- xv. それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか?

13. エリートランナーのみで開催された大阪マラソン2022の開催準備に対する世論の影響についてお聞きします。

- e) 世論は、大阪マラソン2020にどのような影響を与えましたか?
- f) 組織委員会は世論に対処するための戦略を持っていましたか?
- g) (もしそうであれば) どのように対処しましたか?(誰がいつ?)
- h) それらの結果はどのようなものでしたか?

終わりに

- 14. 新型コロナウイルス流行によって生じた社会不安への対処について重要な教訓は何でしたか?
- 15. 他に何か付け加えることはありますか?

Appendix Q

Interview Guide for the Kyoto Marathon Secretariat's Stakeholders (English)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To remind you, the objective of this interview research is to understand the impact of the pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. Please try to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge; there are no right or wrong answers. The information you give today will remain anonymous. Your name will not appear in any of the research findings and only myself and my research supervisor, Professor Milena M. Parent, will have access to this information. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Background information

1. For the record, can you state your name, the name of the organization you work for, and your position in the organization?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Have you held any other positions in this organization?
4. How long have you been with this organization?
5. Could you briefly describe your role in the organization? (i.e., what do you do?)
6. Could you tell me other sport events your organization has been engaged (if any)?

I present an interviewee with the key dates of event announcements and the information on the COVID-19 situation in Japan and Kyoto over the past two years and three months:

The relationships between the interviewee's organization and the Kyoto Marathon before the pandemic

7. When did your organization start involving in the Kyoto Marathon?
8. Why did your organization start involving in the Kyoto Marathon?
9. How do you describe the relationship with the Kyoto Marathon secretariat before the pandemic?
10. What were benefits for your organization derived from engaging the Kyoto Marathon?
11. Did you have any concerns or difficulties in engaging the Kyoto Marathon before the pandemic?

The cancelled in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021

12. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizing committee announced the in-person event cancellation on July 31st, 2020. Let me ask some questions about how your organizations engaged the Kyoto Marathon 2021 in its preparation period (until its in-person marathon was officially cancelled).
 - a) Did you have any concerns to engage the Kyoto Marathon 2021 during the pandemic?
 - b) Could you tell me about strategies your organization used to engage with the Kyoto Marathon 2021 (if any)?
 - c) How did the strategies change from the 2021 event?

- d) How did your organization actually engage with the Kyoto Marathon 2021?
- e) Did your organization discuss holding of the Kyoto Marathon 2021 with other organizations?
- f) If so, with whom and what did your organization discuss?
- g) Was your organization's way to engage with the Kyoto Marathon 2021 influenced by other (groups of) organizations? If so, why and how?
- h) How do you evaluate the cancellation of the in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021?
- i) How do you evaluate process to cancel the in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021?

The virtual Kyoto Marathon 2021

13. Although the in-person Kyoto Marathon 2021 was cancelled, the organizing committee held the virtual marathon event for January–February 2021. Let me ask some questions on this.

- a) Did your organizations involve those decisions? If so, how?
- b) What were the considerations or concerns in that decision?
- c) How do you evaluate the virtual marathon?

The cancelled in-person Kyoto Marathon 2022

14. For the Kyoto Marathon 2022, although the organizing committee initially scheduled the event in-person, they eventually cancelled it again (announced on July 14th, 2021). Let me ask some questions about how your organizations engaged the Kyoto Marathon 2022 in its preparation period (until its in-person marathon was officially cancelled).

- a) Did you have any concerns to engage the Kyoto Marathon 2022 during the pandemic?
- b) Could you tell me about strategies your organization used to engage with the Kyoto Marathon 2022 (if any)?
- c) How did the strategies change from the 2021 event?
- d) How did your organization actually engage with the Kyoto Marathon 2022?
- e) Did your organization discuss with other organizations on holding of the Kyoto Marathon 2022?
- f) If so, with whom and what did your organization discuss?
- g) Was your organization's way to engage with the Kyoto Marathon 2022 influenced by other (groups of) organizations? If so, why and how?
- h) How do you evaluate the Kyoto Marathon 2022?
- i) How do you evaluate process to prepare the Kyoto Marathon 2022?

The virtual Kyoto Marathon 2022

15. As well as last year, the organizing committee held the virtual marathon event for January–February 2022. Let me ask some questions on this.

- a) Did your organizations involve those decisions? If so, how?
- b) What were the considerations or concerns in that decision?
- c) How do you evaluate the virtual marathon?

Closing

16. Is your organization going to engage the Kyoto Marathon 2023 regardless of the situation on the pandemic?
17. What are the key lessons to engage sport events facing pandemic-driven uncertainty?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix R

Interview Guide for the Kyoto Marathon Secretariat's Stakeholders (Japanese)

インタビューガイド（京都マラソン・ステークホルダー）

本日はインタビュー調査へのご参加に同意いただきありがとうございます。本研究の目的は、日本のマラソンイベントを対象として、新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメントを探索することです。これから 京都マラソンに関するいくつかの質問をしますが、お答えに正解・不正解はありません。今日教えていただきますことについて、[インタビューイ名] についての個人情報は、分析から研究成果の発表まで匿名のまま扱われます。お名前を含む個人情報はどこにも公表されず、私と共同研究者のみがその情報にアクセスできます。インタビューを開始する前に、何かご質問はありますか？

インタビューイの組織における役割など

1. レコーディングのため、お名前、ご所属の組織名、そして組織内でのご自身のお立場を教えてくださいいただけますか？
2. 現在の役職に就いてどのくらいになりますか？
3. 現在の組織で他の役職に就いたことはありますか？
4. 現在の組織に所属してどのくらいになりますか？
5. 組織における [インタビューイ名] 様の役割について簡単に説明していただけますか？
6. [インタビューイ名] 様の組織は、他のスポーツイベントに関わりをもっていますか？

*コロナ禍での京都マラソンに関する重要な出来事を時系列順に示した書類を示す

新型コロナウイルス流行前の、京都マラソンとの関わりについて

7. [インタビューイ名] 様の組織はいつから大阪マラソンと関わりをもつようになりましたか？
8. それはどのような経緯でしたか？
9. コロナ前の両者の関係性をどうとらえていましたか？
10. [インタビューイ名] 様の組織は京都マラソンに関わることで得られたことは何でしたか？
11. 京都マラソンと関わりをもつ上で、難しかったことや心配だったことは何かありましたか？

延期された京都マラソン2021について

12. 京都マラソン 2021は当初、2021年2月21日にオンサイトで開催される予定でしたが、新型コロナウイルス流行のため、組織委員会はこのイベントの延期を発表しました（2020年7月31

日発表)。延期に至るまでのイベント準備期間中の、[インタビュー一名]様の組織と京都マラソンとの関わりについてお尋ねします。

- a) コロナ禍で京都マラソンと関りをもつことに、不安なことはありましたか?
- b) 京都マラソン2021への関わり方について、何か戦略的に考えていたことはありましたか?
- c) (もしあれば) その事前の戦略は、2020年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- d) 実際にはどのように京都マラソンに関わりましたか?
- e) その関わり方は、2020年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- f) 京都マラソン2021の開催準備期間中、[インタビュー一名]様の組織のメンバーはイベントの開催について他の組織のメンバーと話し合うことがありましたか?
- g) (もしあれば) 誰が、そして具体的はどのようなことについて話し合いましたか?
- h) そうした話し合いは、京都マラソン2021に対する[インタビュー一名]様の組織の関わり方について何か影響を及ぼしましたか?(なぜ、どのように?)
- i) オンサイトによる京都マラソン2021の延期という判断をどのように評価していますか?
- j) 延期に至るまでのプロセスをどのように評価していますか?

オンライン京都マラソン2021について

13. オンサイトの京都マラソン2021の延期に伴い、組織委員会は2021年1月23日~2月21日の日程でオンライン京都マラソン2021を開催することを発表しました(2020年7月31日発表)。これについていくつか質問をさせていただきます。

- a) [インタビュー一名]様の組織はオンラインマラソンイベント開催への意思決定に関与しましたか?(どのように?)
- b) (もしそうであれば) その決定に際しての、懸念事項は何でしたか?
- c) オンライン京都マラソン2021をどのように評価していますか?

オンサイトの京都マラソン2022の再延期について

14. 前回同様、新型コロナウイルス流行のために、組織委員会はオンサイトの京都マラソン2022の延期を発表しました(2021年7月14日発表)。延期に至るまでのイベント準備期間中の、[インタビュー一名]様の組織と京都マラソンとの関わりについてお尋ねします。

- a) コロナ禍で京都マラソンと関りをもつことに、不安なことはありましたか?
- b) 京都マラソン2022への関わり方について、何か戦略的に考えていたことはありましたか?
- c) (もしあれば) その事前の戦略は、2020年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- d) 実際にはどのように京都マラソンに関わりましたか?
- e) その関わり方は、2020年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- f) 京都マラソン2021の開催準備期間中、[インタビューイ一名]様の組織のメンバーはイベントの開催について他の組織のメンバーと話し合うことがありましたか?
- g) (もしあれば) 誰が、そして具体的はどのようなことについて話し合いましたか?
- h) そうした話し合いは、京都マラソン2021に対する[インタビューイ一名]様の組織の関わり方について何か影響を及ぼしましたか? (なぜ、どのように?)
- i) オンサイトによる京都マラソン2021の延期という判断をどのように評価していますか?
- j) 延期に至るまでのプロセスをどのように評価していますか?

オンライン京都マラソン2022について

15. 京都マラソン2021の延期に伴い、前回同様組織委員会は2021年1月22日～2月20日の日程でオンライン京都マラソン2022を開催することを発表しました(2021年7月14日発表)。これについていくつか質問をさせてください。
- a) [インタビューイ一名]様の組織はオンライン京都マラソン2022開催への意思決定に関与しましたか?(どのように?)
 - b) (もしそうであれば)その決定に際しての、懸念事項は何でしたか?
 - c) オンライン京都マラソン2022をどのように評価していますか?

終わりに

16. [インタビューイ一名]様の組織は、コロナの流行状態にかかわらず、2022年の京都マラソンに関わり続ける予定ですか?
17. コロナ禍でのスポーツイベントとの関わりについて、重要な教訓は何でしたか?
18. 他に何か付け加えることはありますか?

Appendix S

Interview Guide for the Osaka Marathon Secretariat's Stakeholders (English)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To remind you, the objective of this interview research is to understand the impact of the pandemic-driven uncertainty on managing major sport events. Please try to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge; there are no right or wrong answers. The information you give today will remain anonymous. Your name will not appear in any of the research findings and only myself and my research supervisor, Professor Milena M. Parent, will have access to this information. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

Background information

1. For the record, can you state your name, the name of the organization you work for, and your position in the organization?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Have you held any other positions in this organization?
4. How long have you been with this organization?
5. Could you briefly describe your role in the organization? (i.e., what do you do?)
6. Could you tell me other sport events your organization has been engaged (if any)?

I present an interviewee with the key dates of event announcements and the information on the COVID-19 situation in Japan and Osaka over the past two years and three months:

The relationships between the interviewee's organization and the Osaka Marathon before the pandemic

7. When did your organization start being involved with the Osaka Marathon?
8. Why did your organization start being involved with the Osaka Marathon?
9. Can you describe the relationship with the Osaka Marathon organizing committee before the pandemic?
10. What benefits did your organization derive from engaging with the Osaka Marathon?
11. Did you have any concerns or difficulties in engaging with the Osaka Marathon before the pandemic?

The cancelled in-person Osaka Marathon 2020

12. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizing committee announced the event's cancellation on June 12th, 2020. Let me ask some questions about how your organization engaged Osaka Marathon in its preparation period (until its in-person marathon was officially cancelled).
 - a) Did you have any concerns to engage with the Osaka Marathon 2020 during the pandemic?
 - b) Could you tell me about strategies your organization used to engage with the Osaka Marathon 2020 (if any)?
 - c) How did the strategies change from the 2019 event?

- d) How did your organization actually engage with the Osaka Marathon 2020?
- e) How was it different from the 2019 event?
- f) Did your organization discuss holding of the Osaka Marathon 2020 with other organizations?
- g) If so, with whom and what did your organization discuss?
- h) Was your organization's way to engage with the Osaka Marathon influenced by other (groups of) organizations? If so, why and how?
- i) How do you evaluate the in-person Osaka Marathon 2020 cancellation?
- j) How do you evaluate the process to cancel the in-person Osaka Marathon 2020?

The virtual Osaka Marathon 2020

13. Although the in-person Osaka Marathon 2020 was cancelled, the organizing committee held the virtual marathon event in December 2020. Let me ask some questions on this.
- a) Did your organizations involve those decisions? If so, how?
 - b) What were the considerations or concerns in that decision?
 - c) How do you evaluate the virtual marathon?

The partially held Osaka Marathon 2022

14. After the cancellation the 2020 event, the organizing committee decided not to held the 2021 event and announced that the 2022 event would be held as an in-person event integrated with the Lake Biwa Mainichi Marathon (announced on July 13th, 2021). However, the event organizing committee decided to cancel the general runner category on February 16th, 2022. Let me ask some questions about how your organizations engaged the Osaka Marathon 2022 in its preparation period.

- a) Did you have any concerns when engaging the Osaka Marathon 2022 during the pandemic?
- b) Could you tell me about strategies your organization used to engage with the Osaka Marathon 2022 (if any)?
- c) How did the strategies change from the 2020 event?
- d) How did your organization actually engage with the Osaka Marathon 2022?
- e) Did your organization discuss with other organizations on holding of the Osaka Marathon 2022?
- f) If so, with whom and what did your organization discuss?
- g) Was your organization's way to engage with the Osaka Marathon influenced by other (groups of) organizations? If so, why and how?
- h) How do you evaluate the Osaka Marathon 2022?
- i) How do you evaluate the process to prepare the Osaka Marathon 2022?

Closing

15. Is your organization going to engage with the Osaka Marathon 2023 regardless of the situation on the pandemic? Why or why not?
16. What are the key lessons to engage sport events facing pandemic-driven uncertainty?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix T

Interview Guide for the Osaka Marathon Secretariat's Stakeholders (Japanese)

インタビューガイド（大阪マラソン・ステークホルダー）

本日はインタビュー調査へのご参加に同意いただきありがとうございます。本研究の目的は、日本のマラソンイベントを対象として、新型コロナウイルス流行下のスポーツイベントマネジメントを探索することです。これから大阪マラソンに関するいくつかの質問をしますが、お答えに正解・不正解はありません。今日教えていただきますことについて、[インタビューイ名] についての個人情報は、分析から研究成果の発表まで匿名のまま扱われます。お名前を含む個人情報はどこにも公表されず、私と共同研究者のみがその情報にアクセスできます。インタビューを開始する前に、何かご質問はありますか？

インタビューイの組織における役割など

1. レコーディングのため、お名前、ご所属の組織名、そして組織内でのご自身のお立場を教えてくださいいただけますか？
2. 現在の役職に就いてどのくらいになりますか？
3. 現在の組織で他の役職に就いたことはありますか？
4. 現在の組織に所属してどのくらいになりますか？
5. 組織における [インタビューイ名] 様の役割について簡単に説明していただけますか？
6. [インタビューイ名] 様の組織は、他のスポーツイベントに関わりをもっていますか？

*コロナ禍での大阪マラソンに関する重要な出来事を時系列順に示した書類を示す

新型コロナウイルス流行前の、組織と大阪マラソンとの関わりについて

7. [インタビューイ名] 様の組織はいつから大阪マラソンと関わりをもつようになりましたか？
8. それはどのような経緯でしたか？
9. コロナ前の両者の関係性をどうとらえていましたか？
10. [インタビューイ名] 様の組織は大阪マラソンに関わることで得られたことは何でしたか？
11. 大阪マラソンと関わりをもつ上で、難しかったことや心配だったことは何かありましたか？

中止された大阪マラソン2020について

12. 新型コロナウイルス流行により、2020年6月12日に大阪マラソン組織委員会はオンラインでのイベントの中止を発表しました。中止に至るまでのイベント準備期間中の、[インタビューイ名] 様の組織と大阪マラソンとの関わりについてお尋ねします。

- a) コロナ禍で大阪マラソンと関わりをもつことに、不安なことはありましたか?
- b) 大阪マラソン2020への関わり方について、何か戦略的に考えていたことはありましたか?
- c) (もしあれば) その事前の戦略は、2019年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- d) 実際にはどのように大阪マラソンに関わりましたか??
- e) その関わり方は、2019年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- f) 大阪マラソン2020の開催準備期間中、[インタビューイ一名]様の組織のメンバーはイベントの開催について他の組織のメンバーと話し合うことがありましたか?
- g) (もしあれば) 誰が、そして具体的はどのようなことについて話し合いましたか?
- h) そうした話し合いは、大阪マラソン2020に対する[インタビューイ一名]様の組織の関わり方について何か影響を及ぼしましたか?(それはなぜ、どのように?)
- i) 大阪マラソン2020の中止という判断をどのように評価していますか?
- j) 中止に至るまでのプロセスをどのように評価していますか?

オンライン大阪マラソンについて

13. オンサイトの大阪マラソン2020中止に伴い、組織委員会は2020年12月5日~20日にオンライン大阪マラソン2020を開催しました(2020年11月26日実施概要発表)。これについていくつか質問をさせてください。

- a) [インタビューイ一名]様の組織はオンライン大阪マラソン2020開催への意思決定に関与しましたか?(どのように?)
- b) (もしそうであれば) その決定に際しての、懸念事項は何でしたか?
- c) オンライン大阪マラソン2020をどのように評価していますか?

エリートランナーのみで開催された大阪マラソン2022について

14. 2020年の大阪マラソンのオンサイトでの開催が中止された後、組織委員会は2021年のイベントを開催しないことを決定し、2022年のイベントはびわ湖毎日マラソンと統合によりオンサイトイベントとして開催されることを発表しました(2021年7月13日に発表)。しかし、2022年2月16日に組織委員会は一般ランナー部門の中止を発表しました。この2022年のイベント開催準備中の、[インタビューイ一名]様の組織と大阪マラソンの関わりについて質問させていただきます。

- a) コロナ禍において大阪マラソン2022と関わることに、何か懸念はありましたか?

- b) 大阪マラソン2022への関わり方について、何か戦略的に考えていたことはありましたか?
- c) (もしあれば) その事前の戦略は、前回の2019年のイベントとはどのように異なりましたか?
- d) 2022年大阪マラソンには、実際にはどのように関わりましたか?
- e) 大阪マラソン2022の開催準備期間中、[インタビューイ一名]様の組織のメンバーはイベントの開催について他の組織のメンバーと話し合うことができましたか?
- f) (もしあれば) 誰が、そして具体的はどのようなことについて話し合いましたか?
- g) そうした話し合いは、大阪マラソン2022に対する[インタビューイ一名]様の組織の関わり方について何か影響を及ぼしましたか? (なぜ、どのように?)
- h) エリートランナーのみでの大阪マラソン2022の開催という判断をどのように評価していますか?
- i) 開催に至るまでのプロセスをどのように評価していますか?

終わりに

- 15. [インタビューイ一名]様の組織は、コロナの流行状態にかかわらず、2023年の大阪マラソンに関わり続ける予定ですか?
- 16. コロナ禍でのスポーツイベントとの関わりについて、重要な教訓は何でしたか?
- 17. 他に何か付け加えることはありますか?