

The rise of the gay and lesbian international sport association: How institutional conflict impacts organizational action

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Abstract 75**

In 1980, Dr. Tom Waddell, a 1968 Olympic decathlete, got together with some friends to discuss his vision of a sporting event that emphasized "personal best" as opposed to winning (2007, unknown). With the help from the local San Francisco Arts and Athletics Association, the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) held the first and second Gay Games in San Francisco in 1982 and 1986. Since its inception, the quadrennial Gay Games have been primarily volunteer, community-driven events and have relied on the support of local and international GLBT organizations and clubs, sponsors and governments.

The GLBT sports industry has grown substantially over the last few decades. Pitts (1997) estimated that the world's gay and lesbian sports market is worth more than \$15 billion with approximately 11 million lesbians and gay Americans participating in some kinds of sports, recreation, leisure or fitness. Pitts (1997) also estimated that there were at least 500 identified gay and lesbian sport organizations in the USA, with an overall possibility of three to ten times that actual amount if organizations not listed in directories were factored into the total. In conjunction with this proliferation of these local sport organizations has been the rise of international governing and sanctioning bodies for GLBT sporting events.

Although the FGG has been the sole governing body for 25 years, in 2004, we saw a major change with the creation of a new international governing body, the Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association (GLISA) after the Montreal 2006 Gay Games organizing committee (M2006) could not resolve their conflicts with FGG. In the field of GLBT sport, which is a combination of the gay and sport field, institutional conflicts are inherent. Major changes like the creation of GLISA and competing organizations like the Out Games and the Gay Games are inevitable as organizations seek out legitimacy in a field experiencing growing pains. To explore and explain how these conflicts come about, get resolved, and the impact that conflict has on organizational fields of activities, we examine the field of GLBT sport through the lens of institutional conflict (Washington and Ventresca, forthcoming).

The work of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly his seminal work on organizational fields, institutions, and change (DiMaggio, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), provides insights that are of value in the development of an institutional conflict perspective. For Bourdieu, fields of activity are always contested arenas that emerge out of struggles over scarce capitals; they are post hoc and empirical descriptions of ongoing arenas of activity (Bourdieu, 1972/1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). By using an organizational field approach instead of the standard view of populations, groups, organizations, or institutions, Bourdieu draws attention to the relationships, patterns of interests and identities, and forms of conflict that shape the empirical reality of field contests (Swartz, 1997). Fields exist to the extent they are institutionally defined and hence are tools an analyst uses to focus and highlight particular processes and specific empirical situations. Fields are "arenas of struggle for legitimation" (p. 123). Organizational and culture researchers in sports management have used a field approach to examine the evolution of adventure racing (Kay & Laberge, 2002), changes in professional sport (Cousens & Slack, 2005), the adoption of a professional logic in English Rugby (O'Brien & Slack, 2004) and the emergence of the NCAA as the dominant association and amateur basketball in the US (Washington and Ventresca, forthcoming).

Specifically, this paper builds upon the model created by Washington and Ventresca (forthcoming) and their call to "follow-the conflict". However, we make a theoretical contribution to their research by examining a case that has yet to be resolved; Washington and Ventresca (forthcoming) had the benefit of history in that the conflict they examined occurred during the first 40 years of the 20th century. Unlike the story of U.S. college basketball, there has been no emergence of a clear institutional leader in the GLBT sport field. Nevertheless, with their focus on conflicts at the institutional logic (Friedland and Alford, 1991) and governance associational (Washington et al, 2005) levels, Washington and Ventresca (forthcoming) provide an excellent starting point to analyze the conflicts in the GLBT sport field.

This paper focuses on two types of institutional conflict and their roles in bring about change in the organizational fields of GLBT sport: contradictions, i.e. competing logics and the conflicts between organizational identity/image of GLBT sport associations; and struggles, i.e. inter-organizational conflicts, struggles for governance, power, and institutional leadership. We examine the period between 2001 when M2006 was awarded the Gay Games VII and 2004 when GLISA was formed. Archived news releases from FGG and GLISA along with numerous other websites and current new articles form the bulk of our empirical data. From this data, we answer three questions: What are the competing logics within the field of GLBT sports, what

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is the relationship between these logics and the image that M2006 projected, and how did the struggles within this field impact the struggle for dominance between FGG and M2006.

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