Nation-Based versus Industry-Based Governance of Freestyle Sports: An Institutional Analysis of the Olympic Impact on International Snowboarding

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Introduction
With the decision to include five new sports into the Olympic programme for the 2020 Tokyo Summer Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) poses a substantial challenge to the governance of subcultural freestyle sports such as skateboarding and surfing. In particular, skateboarding received attention because of controversies in the skateboard community and different board sports organisations campaigning to be selected as the governing international sport federation. The Olympic status will definitely impact on the future competition structure of these sports, given that the current governance relies on board sports industries (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2011) having pioneered competitions and event series decades ago. Some skateboarders therefore worked against becoming Olympic and are still opposing the decision because they fear the same problems that snowboarding faced and is still facing after having joined the Olympics at the 1998 Nagano Games. Against this background, we examine the past and present development of competition structures in international snowboarding with the aim to better understand better the institutional governance of the sport with a focus on freestyle snowboarding. Its governance structure currently appears to be fragmented due to conflicts between the IOC system, the board sports industries and independent snowboard organisations.

Theoretical Framework
Our specific combination of the sociological theory of institutional logics and new institutional economics constitutes a powerful and flexible socioeconomic approach to the study of governance structures in sports. While the sociological part captures the logics of social interaction of relevant actors, the economics part provides constructs for an efficiency assessment (Kurscheidt, Klein & Deitersen-Wieber, 2003). This theoretical framework enables us, firstly, along institutional logics (Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2013; Friedland & Alford, 1991), to examine how and why the international snowboarding competition structure developed into a fragmented organisational framing, and secondly, based on particularly transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1975), to analyse which efficiency consequences this structure may imply. Thus, the institutional logics part of the approach delivers a sound theoretical foundation for the following efficiency analysis of the governance structure of snowboarding, which is actually the ultimate aim of the present study.

Methods
The data for the analysis were generated by qualitative research methods in order to capture the full depth and breadth of the organisation of international snowboarding through (1) first-hand information from insiders in international snowboarding, (2) document and literature analysis, and (3) participant observations. Three of the group of authors have own experience from snowboard organisations on national and international levels, both as elected voluntary delegates in governing bodies and employed staff. Two authors are still involved in snowboarding as organisers of regional and national competitions. This experience shaped an intuitive idea of the organisations and relationships scrutinized here. Thus, conversations with former top-level snowboarders and representatives from snowboard organisations as well as from the industry were conducted which generated valuable information on formal and informal affiliations, individual perceptions, strategic orientations as well as organisational structures within (inter)national snowboarding. A multitude of documents circulating within national and international snowboard organisations, such as statutes, rules, contracts, agreements, minutes of General Assemblies (GAs), board and committee meetings were analysed. These predominantly internal documents cover all proposals, formulations
of strategies, motions and lists attendees of meetings, members, etc. from National and international Ski and Snowboard Federations. In addition, we analysed two membership reports of the World Snowboard Federation (WSF) mapping the organisational and financial structure of 40 Federations globally. Overall, we considered 223 documents in the course of the analysis. Observations rely on the participation of at least one of the authors during their voluntary and professional service at meetings of international snowboarding from 1999 until 2015 covering general assemblies, board meetings, strategic meetings and special committee meetings.

Results and Implications
Two dominant and contradicting logics of freestyle snowboarding were identified, a dual institutional system which we call the nation-based and industry-based governance model. The institutional logics derived from historical development, and are reinforced recent years due to separated structures facilitating conflict based on uncoordinated demands. The first dominant logic in international snowboarding was based on the industry enhancing commercialism, freedom and non-hierarchical structures. When the International Ski Federation (FIS) incorporated snowboarding, international snowboarding moved into another institutional sphere, including hierarchy, professionalism and Olympism. The logic of traditional sports, represented by FIS in this case, influenced and became dominant in international snowboarding when IOC defined FIS as the international governing body of the Olympic sport. The reinforcement of this nation-based logic clashed with the existing organisation and spirit of snowboarding. By providing a theoretical model, we argue how this decision of IOC created an inefficient transaction environment in the case of freestyle snowboarding and lead to negative impacts on the sport. Other freestyle sports repeatedly discussed to join the Olympics, such as surfing and skateboarding, may be warned to early find solutions for mediating the inherent contradiction of logics. They might risk the same fragmentation of their governance as snowboarding does. The latter now has the challenge of defragmentation and ‘post-Olympic mediation.’ Yet, the similarities in style and culture in both the nation-based and industry-based governance subsystem may be used as a trigger towards a more efficient structure in the future.