Causes, Forms and Consequences of the Professionalization of International Sport Federations in Switzerland: Conceptual Framework and First Results

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1. Context and topic

2. Methodology and Research Design

3. First Results
   3.1. Causes
   3.2. Forms
   3.3. Consequences

4. Discussion
1. CONTEXT - Collaborative project

- **Uni Bern**
- **UNIL | Université de Lausanne**

**Conceptual framework**

- **NF, clubs**
- **IF, CC**

- **Articles**
  - Exploratory Study
  - 8-10 Case Studies
  - Workshop for Federations

- **Knowledge sharing**
1. CONTEXT - Topic, definition and assumptions

• Topic:
  ➢ Determine the causes, forms and consequences of the professionalization of international sport federations.

• Definition
  ➢ Professionalization as a process leading towards organizational rationalisation, efficiency and project management. (Chantelat, 2001,7).

Assumptions
  ➢ The professionalization process leads to
    ▪ a strengthening of institutional management (Kikulis, 2000) and
    ▪ the implementation of efficiency-based management instruments.
1. CONTEXT - IFs in Switzerland

- **Canton of Vaud:** 27 international sport federations
- **Olympic Movement:** more than ¾ of the all Olympic IFs + the IOC are based in Switzerland
- **Lausanne:** 22 international sport federations
- **Switzerland:** 35 international sport federations

Network of similar and specialised organisations (Michaël Mrkonjic, 2014)

Advantageous legal frame: simplicity, easiness and liberalism (Pieth, 2014)
1. CONTEXT - IFs yesterday and today

**IFs in the past**

- Regulatory power
- Volunteer run associations  
  \((\text{Chelladurai, 1987})\)

**Factors of success:**  
devoted people who have time and the necessary technical and/or management skills  
\((\text{Cornforth, 2001})\)

**IFs today**

- Hybrid organisations
- Associations run by paid staff (operational level) and volunteers (strategic level)

**New challenges** (legal, ethical, administrative, commercial, new actors)

**Factors of success:**  
capacity of adaptation, competitiveness, financial resources
1. CONTEXT- Literature review

### Main focus of studies on professionalization of sport governing bodies according to Dowling (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>Occupational professionalization (Hall, 1968; Abbott, 1991)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In sport clubs (Thiel, Mayer &amp; Cachay, 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In national federations (Seippel, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Organisational professionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Systemic professionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Studies on governance and management in international sport federations with a systemic approach are lacking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4. Discussion
2. METHODOLOGY and RESEARCH DESIGN

1. **Exploratory Study**
   - IOC, ASOIF, AIOWF, ARISF, WADA, SportAccord (8 interviews)
   - Interviews, document analysis, literature review
   - Finished

2. **Pilot Case Studies**
   - FIH, FISU, FISA (15 interviews)
   - Interviews, document analysis, questionnaire, literature review
   - Finished

3. **Additional Case Studies**
   - Interviews, document analysis, questionnaire, literature review
   - 4-5 to come
Conceptual framework

Causes

- Expectations and resources of stakeholders in sport and society
  - Umbrella organisations
  - Government
  - Business partners

- Specific structure and culture
  - Growing requirements
  - Size, sport
  - Financial resources
  - Organisational values
  - Structures of decision making

- Expectations of member organisations
  - National federations
  - Clubs

Forms

- Forms of professionalization
  - Individuals (persons and functions)
  - Organisational structures and procedures (formalization, standardization)
  - Activities (sporting, business, social)

Consequences

- Expectations of and relationship with stakeholders
  - Joint ventures

- Structure, culture and processes
  - Governance and role of the board
  - HRM
  - Performance
  - Conflicts paid staff/volunteers

- Expectations of and relationship with member organisations
  - Centralization vs. regionalization

Operationalization
2. METHODOLOGY and RESEARCH DESIGN

## Operationalization of forms
(levels according to Legay, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUALS (formalization, HRM)</th>
<th>STRUCTURES/PROCEDURES (centralisation)</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES (diversification)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elected volunteers:</strong> Executive Board members, Commission members</td>
<td><strong>SPORT FEDERATION LEVEL</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPORTING ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff members</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTERNAL LEVEL</strong></td>
<td><strong>BUSINESS ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-elected volunteers:</strong> referees, technical officials</td>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL LEVEL</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOPICS**
Composition, responsibilities, socio-educational background
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4. Discussion
3. FIRST RESULTS

Fédération Internationale de Hockey (FIH)
- Creation: 1924
- Members: 128
- Staff: 38
- Headquarters: Lausanne
- Status: Summer Olympic sport
- Annual budget: 12 million CHF

Fédération Internationale des Sports Universitaires
- Creation: 1949
- Members: 167
- Staff: 41
- Headquarters: Lausanne
- Status: multisport games organiser
- Annual budget: no information

Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d’Aviron
- Creation: 1892
- Members: 142
- Staff: 19
- Headquarters: Lausanne
- Status: Summer Olympic sport
- Annual budget: 5 million CHF
### 3.1. Causes

#### External

- **Evolution of the Olympic Games economy**
  - Olympic revenue share, revenues of broadcasting rights (x 2500 in 48 years)

- **Scandals**
  - Examples: Salt Lake City, Festina, FIFAGate?, IAAF?

- **Power struggles between an IF and one of its members**
  - Example: UEFA/FIFA

#### Internal

- **FIH**
  - Governance changes in 2010 (14 FTE to 38 in 2015)
    - Clear separation of strategic and operational decisions
    - Creation of the remunerated CEO position

- **Event portfolio**: from sport focused to event focused

- **FISU**
  - Hiring of a paid Secretary General in 2007

- **Development of the FISU sport portfolio**
  - Growing n° of events (WUC 2000: 9 → WUC 2014: 28)
  - Organisation rights: 78% of the revenues
  - **Growing n° of members**: 1949: 8 → 1979: 68 → 2013: 167

- **FISA**
  - **Olympic revenue** 2012 London: USD 17.5 millions for 4 years
    - 50-60% of the annual revenue

- **Sport portfolio**: globalisation (introduction of light weight categories)
3.2. FORMS
3.2.1. INDIVIDUALS - GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

**Composition**
- Internationalisation on Executive Board, Commission and staff level

**Remuneration**
- President: compensated volunteers, but remuneration has become a « hot topic »
- Director: paid staff member

**Formation**
- General specialisation at all levels (81% with a university degree), growing number of staff members with a Master degree in sport
## 3.2. FORMS
### 3.2.1. INDIVIDUALS - FIH OBSERVATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXECUTIVE BOARD</th>
<th>COMMITTEES</th>
<th>STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIME SPENT FOR IF</strong></td>
<td>69%: &lt;5 to 10h/week</td>
<td>75%: &lt;5 to 10h/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENCE AT HEADQUARTERS</strong></td>
<td>86%: only for specific occasions (2-3 meetings/year)</td>
<td>74%: only for specific occasions (2-3 meetings/year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMPENSATION / SALARY</strong></td>
<td>Expenses paid upon invoice</td>
<td>Expenses paid upon invoice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expertise:</strong> Dominant sectors: 1. Sport, 2. Business/finances, 3. Law</td>
<td><strong>Expertise:</strong> Dominant sectors: 1. Sport, 2. Law, 3. Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Formation:</strong> 93% have a university degree; majority outside the field of sport</td>
<td><strong>Formation:</strong> 74% have a university degree; majority outside the field of sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Career background:</strong> 64% are/were amateur athletes</td>
<td><strong>Career background:</strong> 61% are/were amateur athletes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.2. FORMS
3.2.2. STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES - FIH, FISU, FISA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATIONS</th>
<th>ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOVERNANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of management instruments</td>
<td>Increased control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Strategic plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Financial audit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Staff performance evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bypassing of the decision-making body</td>
<td>Accelerate decisions and action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transfer of more decision-making power to the board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit on presidential terms</td>
<td>Avoid the establishment of political “dynasties”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- FISU president: 8 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- FIH president: 12 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- FISA president: 12 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRUCTURES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased departmentalisation</td>
<td>Rationalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- FISU: 9 (5 new since 2007)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- FISA: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- FIH: 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased distinction of functions</td>
<td>Specialisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Director, Head of, Manager, Coordinator, Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly defined procedures</td>
<td>Formalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bidding processes, event attribution, rule changes, meetings, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.2. FORMS

#### 3.2.3. ACTIVITIES - FIH, FISU, FISA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FIH</th>
<th>FISU</th>
<th>FISA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPORTING</strong></td>
<td>Development: all levels, all ages</td>
<td>Development: integration of new sports</td>
<td>Development: develop rowing worldwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control: international events calendar, sport and its variations</td>
<td>Control: events and their organisation</td>
<td>Control: FISA event programme, World Cup and international Regattas calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>BUSINESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not a priority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Main activities</strong>: TV, events, commercial partners, diversification</td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong>: most gender-balanced team sport (equal billing at international level, equal TV coverage at World Cups)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Rights</strong>: mixed model (50/50) between FIH and organisers</td>
<td><strong>Education</strong>: university environment; stimulate scientific research; educational programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong>: monopoly of football, image control, coherence</td>
<td><strong>Sport for all</strong>: International University Sport Festival (first edition 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong>: sports community, creation of deliberately commercial sport products (short form version sport: Hockey5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. FORMS

SUMMARY

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**Structures & Procedures**

1) Centralised governance in the hands of a strong leader: FISU
   - One person in charge of political and operational decisions

2) Separation of powers (political/strategic and an operational level): FIH
   - Clear separation in Statutes and reality

3) Tandem President/Director General: FISA
   - Decision-making power is shared quasi equally between the two

---

**Activities**

Core activity: sporting aspects
- FISA: global development of rowing
- FISU: new sports, rules' laboratory
- FIH: control over events, rules, sport

Core activity: business aspects
- FIH: commercial products; innovation
- FISU: events (rights); innovation

Core activity: social aspects
- FISU: education, academic research
- FIH: gender, sport for all

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**Individuals**

- Paid and increasingly specialised staff
- Volunteer but compensated president
- Clear job descriptions
- Recruitment procedures, head hunting

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3.3. CONSEQUENCES

Management of IOC dependency
- Diminish the financial dependency
- Adaptation to IOC expectations to stay on the Olympic programme

Management of governance based on core identity and values
- Recruitment of the President and the Director based on implication in the system (network) and their sport profile

Management of network qualities
- Challenges: empowerment of members (CAs, NFs), self-sustainability at all levels (CAs, NFs), top-down professionalization

Management of internationalisation
- Multicultural staff but same sporting values/spirit, family despite rationalisation processes

Pivotal role of Director
- Director: omnipresent, hinge
- President: spokesman, external representation, political role
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1. CAUSES

EXTERNAL
- Olympic revenue share
- Scandals

INTERNAL
- Governance changes
- Events
- Paid Secretary General
- Paid staff

2. FORMS

Structures & Procedures

1) Centralised governance in the hands of a strong leader: FISU
   - One person in charge of political and operational decisions

2) Separation of powers (political/strategic and an operational level): FIH
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Activities

Core activity: sporting aspects
- FISA: global development of rowing
- FISU: new sports, rules' laboratory
- FIH: control over events, rules, sport

Core activity: business aspects
- FIH: commercial products; innovation
- FISU: events (rights); innovation

Core activity: social aspects
- FISU: education, academic research
- FIH: gender, sport for all

3. CONSEQUENCES

Management of IOC dependency
Management of governance, core identity and values
Management of the system
Management of internationalisation
Pivotal role of Secretary General
## 4. DISCUSSION

### ATTEMPT OF ESTABLISHING A TYPOLOGY

| Traditional form (FISA) | IOC revenue dependency (50% or more), small budget  
|                        | Sport focus  
|                        | Strong values accompanied by a systemic reluctance to change  
|                        | Professionalisation at the top (IF), little top-down radiance (CA, NF)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak CAs: little support from and cooperation between IF and CAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Transitional form (FIH) | IOC revenue dependency (<50%) + increasing diversification of activities  
|                        | Event focus + creation of deliberately commercial sport products  
|                        | Strong values but also innovative and creative  
|                        | Empowerment of CAs: integrated bodies of the IF, close cooperation, CAs support their NFs with means and support from the IF |
| Independent form (FIFA?) | Complete independence from IOC revenue and the Olympic system + important incomes from broadcasting and sponsoring  
|                        | Event focus + economy and community around the sport  
|                        | More subject to scandals (corruption, betting, doping)  
|                        | Strong and powerfull CAs |
4. DISCUSSION
4.2. LIMITS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

LIMITS
- Interviews essentially with people from the headquarters
- Limited access to internal documents
- No direct contact with the Continental Associations

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES
- Try to contact at least one continental member per IF in the following case studies
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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BIBLIOGRAPHY