"Free sports": organizational evolution from participatory activities to Olympic sports

by

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Abstract

Free sports are the phenomena that have rapidly developed from lifestyle activities to professional competitive sports over the last several decades. Known for distinctive counter-culture values, many popular free sports, such as snowboarding or BMX, have recently become largely commercialized and experienced significant organizational change.

The main research question of this study is how free sports have organizationally evolved over time. This thesis focuses on patterns and mechanisms of structural change and evolution of values of these sports. The research utilized a multiple case qualitative methodology and is presented as a cross-case study of three international sports: competitive snowboarding, competitive skateboarding, and sport climbing. A review of existing literature identified the theory of new institutionalism as being particularly relevant to this study and thus, supplemented by resource-dependence theory, this forms the theoretical framework for this research.

This study found that as a result of organizational evolution, informal organizational arrangements, which were historically typical for free sports, have not been uniformly replaced by formalized structural arrangements of mainstream sports. In addition, the organizational fields of these free sports are found to have adopted multiple logics, such as commercial, competitive, and traditional free sport logics. The notion of cultural legitimacy of international sport organizations appears to be central to explaining organizational evolution of free sports. As conflicts revolving over the "ownership" of international sports and the practice of "umbrella" governance are found to be of great concern in free sports, it is the relationship between cultural and regulatory legitimacy that these issues are addressed through. Finally, it is found that multiple power/dependence relationships existing in organizational fields of free sports are largely underpinned by commercial interests and strategies of the Olympic movement.

In terms of contribution to theoretical knowledge, this study extends previous applications of institutional and resource-dependence theories to free sports and reveals that the process of institutionalization of sports does not necessarily lead to change of values in macro perspective. However, it can facilitate and foster a separation between two different "versions" of the same sports: competitive sports and traditional sports. This study contributes to wider practical sport management knowledge by raising a question of sustainability of culturally legitimate but un-

conventional international sport organizations in the global sport business. Another implication of this study is challenging the IOC as a source of regulatory legitimacy for sports and questioning the belief that all sports strive for the Olympic Games, which is taken for granted as the ultimate goal of evolution of sports in a global context. This is a major call of this study to both academics and practitioners, as governance of international sports is expected to remain the topic of a great debate in academic literature and popular media.

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List of Abbreviations

ARISF	Association of IOC Recognised International Sports Federations
BMC	British Mountaineering Council
ESPN	Entertainment and Sports Programming Network
FIFA	International Federation of Football Associations (*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*)
FIRS	International Federation of Roller Sports (*Fédération Internationale Roller Sports*)
FIS	International Ski Federation (*Fédération Internationale de Ski)*
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IASC	International Association of Skateboarding Companies
ICC	International Council for Competition Climbing
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ISF	International Snowboard Federation
ISF	International Skateboarding Federation[1]
IWGA	International World Games Association
NBC	National Broadcast Corporation
NGB	National governing body
NSBF	Norwegian Snowboard Federation
NOC	Norwegian Olympic Committee
NSA	National Skateboard Association
NSO	National sport organization
SLS	Street League Skateboarding
TTR	"Ticket to Ride" Pro Snowboarding

[1] ISF will be used for the International Snowboard Federation only in Chapter 4. In other chapters ISF will be used for International Skateboarding Federation

WADA World Anti-Doping Agency

WCS World Cup Skateboarding

WAS We are Snowboarding (union of snowboarding athletes)

WSF World Snowboard Federation

UCI International Cycling Union (*Union Cycliste Internationale)*

UIAA International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation *(Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme)*

USAS United States Association of Skateboarding

1. Introduction

This introduction aims to set out the context that this study is situated within. It begins with the definition of free sports and the background of this phenomenon. This is followed by a brief description of organizational features of free sports. Finally, this introduction provides an outline of the research problem, research objectives, key assumptions, and the structure of the thesis.

In the last 30 years, participation in and media coverage of "extreme" sports, which are also labelled as "action," "young," "free," "lifestyle," "whiz," "new," or "adventure" sports have increased remarkably (Gillis, 2001; Bennett, Henson and Zhang, 2002; Puchan, 2004; Breivik, 2010; Vivirito, 2011). Examples of such sports include aggressive inline-skating, snowboarding, mountain-biking, motocross freestyle, and free climbing. Although it is recognized by the majority of researchers that extreme sports are not just a "flash in the pan," (Puchan, 2004, p.177) as they have already created substantial industries around them, there is still a limited body of academic literature that focuses on them.

The origin of the term "extreme" as it is applied to these newer sports is not clear, but it is commonplace to classify sports as "extreme" or "action" if they include high risk levels, unconventional rules or techniques, and are considered counter-cultural (Bennett at al, 2002; Puchan, 2004; Sun, Ji and Ae, 2010; Breivik, 2010). The meaning of "extreme sports" shifted from outdoor activities of the late 1980s/early 1990s like scuba diving, surfing, hang gliding, skydiving, and mountaineering to more youth and urban sports like skateboarding, snowboarding, and BMX bicycling (Breivik, 2010). With regards to terminology, there are several terms used in academic literature to discuss specific groups of sport, which is the focus of this research. In the majority of the studies (Mawson, 2002; Bennett and Lachowetz, 2004; Booth and Thorpe, 2007; Sun et al, 2010, Vivirito, 2011, X Factor, 2011) the terms "extreme" and "action" are used. In some contributions (Puchan, 2004; McNamee, 2007; Breivik, 2010) the same sports are referred to as "adventure" sports. The terms "alternative," "lifestyle," and "free" sports can be also found in academic literature (Booth, 1995; Rinehart, 1998). Although there are subtleties involved in all these terms, there is much overlap between the definitions as used in the literature. There are, however, five distinctive features of adventure sports suggested by Breivik (2010, p.262), and this research adheres to these. These features, which define a very specific group of sports, are used for the purposes of this research because they are common across the range of definitions and descriptions used.

1. *Sports that have unusually high elements of challenge, excitement, and (in most sports) risk.*

This was an initial idea of extreme sports, which can be best illustrated by the development of B.A.S.E. jumping—jumping from objects like bridges, antennas, spans, and cliffs. Arguably, this is the most extreme and dangerous sport (Breivik, 2010) in that is based on the thrill of freefall and involves "the ability to maintain control over a situation that verges on complete chaos" (Lupton, 1999, p.151-152)

2. *Sports that take place in demanding natural or artificially constructed environments.*

This is the feature that visually differentiates free sports from mainstream ones. While the latter are performed in standardized environments—which can be replicated (e.g. football pitch or swimming pools)—the set-ups for the former are challenging for professional athletes and simply dangerous for amateurs. Examples include big waves in surfing, steep slopes in freeride skiing, and kicker ramps in motocross freestyle.

3. *Sports that represent a freedom from or opposition to the dominant sport culture.*

Whereas the definition of "extreme" sports highlights the excessive levels of danger that athletes expose themselves to, the term "free" or "alternative" sports refers to the same range of sports but points out the distinctive nature of those sports, which is to symbolize an alternative to the mainstream sport culture with its rule-bound and competitive spirit (Midol and Broyer, 1995; Wheaton, 2000). The rise of snowboarding was described as "an opposition and protest against certain aspects of modern societies" (Breivik, 2010, p. 262) that was reflected in the way snowboarders dressed, behaved, and performed. Competitions were not common in first years of extreme sports as these activities emerged not as a sports but

> …as a way of life and a form of resistance to the mainstream sport culture of particular groups of young people who were searching for alternative ways of expressing their identities and interacting with the world.
>
> Girginov (2010, p. 407)

4. *Sports that are individualistic pursuits but tend to build groups and subcultures around the activity.*

Free sports are characterized by a certain artistic sensibility and "express a particular and exclusive social identity" (Wheaton, 2000, p.258). Surfing has been the longest existing and the most researched example of what "free" sports means. Its hedonistic philosophy and anti-competition

ethic of counterculture has been studied by many academics, including Booth (1995), Wheaton (2000), and Booth (2004). These studies explored main features of surfing's unique subculture and identified tensions within this sport related to the introduction of formal regulations and a bureaucracy of professionalism as the antithesis of the hedonistic ideals of these sports.

5. Sports that are more loosely organized than mainstream sports.

This feature is specifically discussed in the next section.

Based on the review of relevant literature and an assessment of various sports against five characteristics provided earlier in this introduction, the list of free sports and their disciplines is presented in **Appendix 1.** In line with the discussion on terminology at the start of this introduction, there was a need to be consistent throughout this thesis and use one term referring to the group of sports, which has just been examined above. Throughout the course of the research, it emerged that the term "free" sports would be the most appropriate to use with regards to the research problem as it directly refers to the "freedom of expression", which has been an underlying philosophy of these sports. At the same time, it must be noted that the term "free" is brought forward only for the purposes of consistency and in order to provide the relevant references throughout. It is meant that the terms "adventure," "extreme," 'whiz", "alternative," and "action" sports refer to the same group of sports so are equally relevant to the context of this research and could also be used.

1.1. Organization of free sports

Many adventure sports have had a history of self-organization as "loose groups decided on their own how to build identity and values, how to develop techniques and skills" (Breivik, 2010, p.270). However, in spite of general resistance of free sports to institutionalization (Wheaton, 2000) and wide-spread anti-competitive postmodern ideology at their early ages, "organized competition was essential for public acceptance of their sport" (Booth, 1995, p.193), thus some national governing bodies were formed quite early in many free sports. Examples of such governing bodies were Australian and American surfing associations in the early 1960s (Booth, 1995), the U.S. B.A.S.E. Association in 1981 (Tomlinson and Leigh, 2004), and the International Mountain Bicycling Association in 1988 (IMBA, 2015). Those first voluntary organizations were founded by what Downs (1967, cited in Slack 1985, p.163) termed as "zealots":

> … people who have an avid interest in promoting a particular cause… and who also possess some semblance of the leadership quality that Weber termed charisma. These people were able to draw to themselves a sufficient number of "disciples" to form the basis of an organization.

In free sports, event organizers and athletes were these "zealots," so these first organizations were managed by people who came from these sports and who were passionate about them.

The major reason for establishment of those administrative associations was a need to regulate and promote specific sports and run basic competitions (Booth, 1995). However, individualism and non-competitiveness, which have historically been distinctive features of free sports, have had an impact on their history of organization. As competitions were of limited significance in the early ages of free sports, federations mostly served just as competition organizing institutions. In many free sports, such as snowboarding, B.A.S.E jumping, or skateboarding, film and video making has always been as important as competitions (Breivik, 2010, p.270). Also, as discussed earlier, challenge, excitement, and risk are integral parts of participation in these sports, so the activities are closely aligned with the precepts of "play" (Rinehart and Sydnor, 2003, p.6) rather than with the routine of training and performance in the standardized environment of mainstream sports. This resulted in another distinctive feature of organization of extreme sports: grassroots participants are not institutionalized with governing bodies (Rinehart and Sydnor, 2003). In other words, the organization of those sports has been formalized only to a certain extent with regards to competitions of elite athletes.

In an attempt to structure the current state of organization of free sports, this research project has identified four groups of actors that exist within these sports. These groups are based on Breivik's (2010) view on organization of adventure sports and are key to understanding the organizational context of this study.

1. *Formal sport organizations.*

These are governing organizations that can be best seen in sports that became part of the Olympic Games, for example, the International Cycling Federation (UCI) that is the formal governing organization in relation to the sport of BMX.

2. *Organizations and individuals who are focused on commercial and marketing aspects of free sports and deal with media, sponsors, and videos making.*

The process of commercialization of free sports has played one of the key roles in shaping the organizational landscape of free sports and will be discussed in detail within this thesis. The biggest example of commercial institutions in free sports is the X-Games. The X-Games arrival in 1995 marked the start of extensive commercialization of extreme sports. Jackson, Grainger, and Batty (2004, p.201) put the X-Games alongside with the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup, and the Super Bowl, claiming that this event was "produced in order to attract television audiences whose capacity to consume is sold to prospective promotional agents."

3. *Professional free sports athletes*

As TV and sponsors' money entered extreme sports, the majority of leading athletes became professionals.

> Back when I started, there weren't many skateboarders or BMX riders making a living… This is a viable career option for people now. Our sports are not just niches, novelties or fads. This is here to stay.
>
> Tony Hawk, skateboarding star in Vivirito (2011, p.26)

Consequently, as was experienced by many mainstream sports earlier in the twentieth century, both larger free sports, like snowboarding and mountain-biking, and smaller or newer free sports, like ice climbing and free-running, took a similar path from amateurism to professionalism.

4. *Loose groups of performers resisting institutionalization.*

The essence of free sports is their alternative and hedonistic culture opposite to mainstream sports (Wheaton, 2004; Breivik, 2010). Inevitably, a certain part of idealistic "hardcore" performers, especially in outdoor adventure activities like sea kayaking, paragliding, and surfing, were sceptical towards competitive sports and emphasized creativity and performance. So there has been serious resistance to institutionalization since the early years of those sports. Scott (1971) describes how the market orientation of commercial television in the United States in the mid-1960s violated the traditional norms of surfing competitions, which resulted in withdrawal of many world class surfers from TV "staged" competitions in order to preserve the creativity and self-expression of what was called the art of surfing. The existence of this group—world-class athletes resisting institutionalization— is a unique organizational and cultural aspect of this

field. This strong core philosophy of "freedom of expression" seems to be the reason why these sports sometimes are referred as "free" sports.

1.2. Research aim and objectives

Free sports are relatively new phenomena in global sport. They have grown from the participatory activities and have been notable for their distinctive alternative origin. Some authors touched upon the topic of the organization of free sports from social (Booth, 1995; Wheaton, 2000; Breivik, 2010) and marketing (Bennett et al, 2002; Puchan, 2004; Bennett and Lachowetz, 2004) perspectives, and their studies provide an initial understanding of the phenomenon. However, the topics of organization of international free sports and their organizational evolution have not been thoroughly studied. Many free sports, such as skateboarding, snowboarding, and BMX, have lately become very attractive in commercial terms, so it might have been expected that they would develop in a more institutionalized way that would fit media and sponsors. The move towards commercialization and subsequent professionalization was likely to facilitate a change in the way free sports are organized. However, due to quite different and distinctive features of free sports, which have come from their culture and are central to initial understanding of their organization, the nature and patterns of organizational evolution of free sports have not been clear and require investigation.

This thesis seeks to address the question of how free sports have evolved over time. It aims to provide a broader understanding of structural and cultural features of the organizational field of free sports. The major contribution of this research from an academic perspective is a thorough explanation of organizational evolution that free sports have gone through as they have responded to external and internal pressures. Of particular interest is the question of whether the professionalization and growth of governing bodies should be inevitably reflected in more formalized organizational environments similar to the organization of mainstream sports.
This research has the following objectives:

- to critically evaluate the process of organizational evolution of free sports;
- to reveal and analyze rationales and mechanisms behind changes in free sports;
- to investigate an evolution of structural arrangements in free sports;
- to examine whether/how values of free sports have changed.

1.3. Definition of sport

There was a need to make an assumption regarding the definition of sport in order to define the research objectives and the scope of this research as some issues related to the research topic have been debated. While it is accepted that sport has a contested definition (Lagaert and Roose, 2014), for the purpose of this thesis a specific definition of sport needs to be used. Out of various definitions and suggestions, the assumption of this thesis is that *sport is an institutionalized, competitive* activity (Coakley, Hallinan, Mewett, and Jackson, 2008). In other words, the activities considered in this research project are called sports if they have organized competitions and formal organizations that manage these activities. Due to the initial non-competitive nature of free sports, there has been much debate on whether some of these activities can be considered as sport. For example, skateboarding is one the most debatable sports as there has been no consensus in literature, web forums, or social media (Stratford, no date; Cave, 2014; X-Games, 2014; Guzyk, 2014) whether freestyle skateboarding can be even classified as a sport. Freestyle skateboarding has never been primarily concerned with competing against each other and winning contests, which are arguably the major attributes of sport, so many participants argue it is not a sport. One opinion states:

> … [skateboarding] is an expression of who you are as a person and how you view the world around you and what you make of it. Skating IS NOT about being better than someone, winning contests, and . . . upping people . . . it's not a sport. And if you think it is you're not a real skater. Skateboarding is an art form.
>
> Steve Latimer,
>
> skateboarding participant from the United States of America (X-Games, 2014)

This highlights that free sports are flexible and loosely regulated social phenomena, so what is called free sports in this thesis might not be even called sports elsewhere. Nonetheless, the term "sport" will be used throughout this thesis as long as the activity includes competitions and is institutionalized. This means that activities without a competitive element, such as casual street skateboarding, hobby snowboarding, or weekend rock climbing, are not part of this research as it focuses on professional competitive sports.

1.4. Structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two will provide an analysis of the literature and build a theoretical framework for this thesis. Relevance of new institutionalism and resource-dependence theories to the research context will be discussed based on the literature review. The notion of specificity of sport will be applied, so a review of studies will focus on structural and cultural features of sport. Chapter Three will justify the choice of research methodology as the multiple case study research design is employed. Following this choice, three case studies are identified based on a number of criteria. This chapter will also specify data collection and analysis methods as well as explain how this particular study addresses the concepts of validity and reliability.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six focus on specific international free sports: competitive snowboarding, competitive skateboarding, and sport climbing. They summarize data collected and discuss the organizational evolution of these sports over the last few decades in terms of structural arrangements, values, and logics of sports. As derived from data analysis, relationships of all sports with the Olympic movement have played an important role in their evolution, so this aspect is specifically addressed. Chapter Seven brings these three sports together as it deals with the cross-case analysis of research findings and critically evaluates reoccurring themes, which emerged from these three case studies. This chapter assesses shared and unique features of three sports and summarizes them in a comparative table.

Chapter Eight discusses the findings of cross-case analysis in terms of theoretical frameworks: new institutionalism and resource-dependence theory. The main themes will be addressed within the existing theoretical concepts, such as legitimacy, and compared with contemporary research. This chapter will support the Chapter Nine, which concludes the thesis by addressing the research objectives, outlining implications, and limitations of this study and suggesting future areas of research.

2. Organizational evolution of free sports: review of literature

This chapter builds a theoretical framework for the study of organizational evolution. The applicability of new institutionalism thinking and resource-dependence theory to the research context is justified based on an extensive literature review. The review of the relevant empirical studies is focused on organizational fields of sports as the perspective of specificity of organization of sport is employed. The notions of organizational isomorphism, institutional pluralism, and cultural legitimacy are discussed with reference to key studies.

First of all, this thesis employs the notion of specificity of sports, which is advocated by Slack (2003) and Chadwick (2009). This concept questions sport as rational economic activity and sees it as a deeply socio-culturally embedded institution. For much of its existence, competitive sport had been recognized as a unique "not-for profit cultural practice that delivers a range of memorable experiences and social benefits" (Smith and Stewart, 2010, p.11). Therefore, studies of the organization of sport are different from general management studies because sport management is "as likely to have a social-psychological foundation as much as it does an economic one" (Chadwick, 2009, p.192). Thus, this literature review will be largely built upon literature related to sport management and the evolution of sports. Some references to mainstream literature will be made though.

2.1. Evolution of modern sport, its professionalization and commercialization

Modern sport is the result of the evolution of various activities that developed over the decades and centuries. Guttmann (1978) studied the evolution of sports and identified distinguishing characteristics of modern sport:

- Secularism
- Equality of opportunity to compete and in the conditions of competition
- Specialization of roles
- Rationalization
- Bureaucratic organization
- Quantification
- The quest for records

These features were the foundations for modern competitive sport. However, sport has further evolved from the time of Guttmann's (1978) study, so the characteristics that define the evolution of sports in twenty-first century are different. For example, secularism hardly plays a major role in the evolution of sports nowadays. Instead, development of sports over the last few decades has become subject to increasing professionalization and commercialization.

Sport has had a commercial component almost since its invention.

> As its evolution over the past 250 years has demonstrated, sport as an activity is not primarily a form of play — corrupted or otherwise - but a type of commercial entertainment, analogous to the theatre, the cinema or popular music.
>
> Collins (2013, p.127)

Commercialization of sport refers to the process of development of business principles and logic of profit maximisation in line with consumer capitalism values (Bordieu, 1998; Andrews, 2004). As Donnelly (1996) suggests, commercialization of modern competitive sport have been engendered by two major interfering phenomena: television and sponsorship. Throughout the 1960s–1970s, television developed an interest in broadcasting sport competitions (Slack, 2003). Sport broadcasting quickly attracted commercial companies that started to sponsor competitions, teams and particular athletes. Consequently, commercialization has "seeped down to the lowest levels of organized sport" (Donnelly, 1996, p.31).

The second major phenomenon, which has recently influenced the evolution of sport, is professionalization. The process of professionalization (Vollmer and Mills, 1966) refers to the evolution of professions and the movement toward correspondence with "professional model", which consists of "a series of attributes which are important in distinguishing professions from other occupations" (Hall, 1968, p. 92). Dowling, Edwards and Washington (2014, p. 520) highlight that the concept of professionalization has only been discussed within the field of sport management since the late 1980s and early 1990s, citing the studies of Kikulis, Slack, and Hinings (1992, 1995), Macintosh and Whitson (1990), Thibault, Slack, and Hinings (1991). In sport management literature, the term professionalization has been used to describe quite various phenomena, ranging from the financial remuneration of athletes, hiring of paid staff and coaches, to the employment of more sophisticated management practices in order to increase organizational effectiveness (O'Brien and Slack, 2004b; Taylor, Doherty and McGraw, 2008; Skirstad and Chelladurai, 2011). However, as far as the evolution of sport over the last few decades is concerned, professionalization is mainly understood with reference to those managing sports organisations rather than

athletes and coaches. According to Robinson (2010), this type of professionalization in sport over the past few decades is the major consequence of commercialization.

The study of Dowling et al (2014) discusses the concept of professionalization in modern sport and clarifies this term. It establishes three broad classifications of professionalization in sport:

- Organizational professionalization: the narrowest conceptualization that considers individual organizations as a unit of analysis.
- Systemic professionalization: refers to a process by which an external factor causes some form of field-level change.
- Occupational professionalization: the broadest conceptualization that deals with the evolution of entire occupations.

Systemic professionalization is differentiated from its organisational and occupational counterparts in that it is brought about by an external rather than internal influence (Dowling et al, 2014, p.524). As far as sport management studies are concerned, O'Brien and Slack (2003, 2004), Skinner, Stewart, and Edwards (1999) and Whitson and Macintosh (1989) used systemic conceptualisation of professionalization in their studies. O'Brien and Slack (2003, 2004), for example, examined the sport of rugby at the field-level and found that developments therein led to a change from a traditional volunteer orientation towards an increasingly professionalized alternative. The increasing relevance of sports in social life has been reflected in relatively rapid period of its professionalization over the last 30 years, as studies of Gomez, Opazo and Marti (2008) and Hoye, Nicholson and Smith (2008) demonstrated.

Among all the contextual disturbances, arguably, commercialization and professionalization have had the most impact on sport. Describing the history of the Rugby Union in New Zealand, Owen and Weatherston (2002, p.26) claim that throughout the twentieth century this sport had evolved from a player-centred form of amateurism to a more spectator-oriented sport and had become media-centred. The prediction of the full professionalization of the Rugby Union that was attributed to the inexorable tendency for sports in capitalist societies to become bound-up with money values proved right (Dunning and Sheard, 1979, Dunning, 2005). The processes of commercialization and professionalization of sport challenged traditional amateur values and attitudes of sport, as they

> … limit the flexibility of sport organizations to respond to changing market demands and increasing competition from other entertainment alternatives. As a result, many sports are attempting to align their cultures with business practices…
>
> Hoye et al (2008, p.507)

To summarize, whereas the evolution of sports has been very much about rationalization of sport, its quantification and growth of competitive aspect of sport until the 1970s, in the most recent decades commercialization and professionalization of sports have driven the development of modern sports in line with the growth of consumer capitalism and adoption of business approach.

2.2. Theoretical perspectives relevant to study of organizational evolution of sport

With professionalization and commercialization as two major phenomena affecting the evolution of modern sports over the recent decades, the following review of literature will justify that there are two major perspectives—new institutionalism and resource-dependence theory—that have the potential to provide an analytical and explanatory framework for this thesis. The relevance and the value of these perspectives to the research question will be discussed and evaluated in the next few sections. Another theoretical perspective that was identified as relevant to the study is processual analysis. This approach will be discussed in the methodology chapter though, as it guided the methodology of this research and underpinned the choice of design and methods.

2.2.1. New institutional perspective

The discussion following in the next few sections aims to justify the appropriateness of new institutionalism to understanding the evolution of sports within this research project and describe the main ideas of this theoretical framework based on review of relevant literature. New institutionalism considers organizations from a sociological perspective and argues that they change in order to conform to expectations in a surrounding field.

2.2.1.1. Organizational field and Institutional logics

The concept of organizational field is emphasized within the new institutional theory, as researchers recognized the value of concentrating attention on more delimited sets of organizations. DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) concept of "organizational field" (influenced by Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "champ" or social field) and Scott and Meyer's (1983) concept of "societal sector" (influenced by the work of public policy analysts and community ecologists) recognized that

> … both cultural and network systems gave rise to a socially constructed arena within which diverse, interdependent organizations carry out specialized functions. It is within such fields that institutional forces have their strongest effects and, hence, are most readily examined.
>
> Scott (2004, p.465)

As highlighted by Scott (2008, p.44) the organization "field" or sector was identified by sets of authors [DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Scott, 1983] as a new level of analysis particularly suited to the study of institutional processes. Organizational field is represented by organizations and individuals that are involved in institutional life: suppliers, consumers, governing bodies, competitors, and other participants with a common meaning system (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Organizational field is a community where "participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than actors outside of the field" (Scott 2001, p. 84); so institutional ideas circulate across organizational boundaries (Sahlin and Wedlin, 2008).

Organizational fields are affected and shaped by various internal and external pressures. As identified by Aaker (1995), Cousens and Slack (2005), and Amis, Slack and Hinings (2004), within the sport industry, *external pressures* might include (but are not limited to) the following phenomena:

- fluctuating economic situations,
- growing commercialization and greater competition in the market place,
- rising societal interest in sport and leisure,
- globalization,
- technological advancements,
- alterations to geopolitical boundaries.

In context of evolution of modern sports, these different types of external pressures have been illustrated in academic literature with reference to mainstream sports. Commercialization is the key phenomenon that affected organizational evolution of sport. In previous sections, commercialization of sport was briefly discussed with the use of Rugby Union example. In terms of other key pressures, Thibault (2009) identifies specific aspects that have recently fostered globalization of sports, such as the growing transnational flow of athletes; the increased involvement of global media organizations in sport; and the impact of sport on the environment. Speaking about technological advancement, Smith and Westerbeek (2010) suggested that the nature of sport was changing both in terms of spectatorship (as a consequence of the introduction of new platforms and media channels) and in participation (sport becomes accessible to anyone with the right technology).

There are also *internal factors*, which can shape organizational fields. According to Meyer and Scott (1983), organizational fields contain multiple internal influences, some rule-like, others normative, others borrowed from standard setters as the members of a field were much more differentiated. Scott (1995, 2001 and 2008), developed three pillars of the institutional order in organizations and organizational fields:

- regulative pressures that emphasize rule setting and sanctioning within the fields,
- normative elements that refer to relational systems and social patters in organizational fields,
- cultural/cognitive factors that involve shared conceptions and frames through which meaning is understood.

Key features of these three pillars are outlined in **Figure 2.1**.

According to Scott (2008), cultural-cognitive systems are the key components that bound organizational fields together. Friedland and Alford (1991) called them "Institutional Logics" and argued that all contemporary institutions, even the global ones such as Christianity, capitalism, family, and democracy, had logics that guide action. Institutional theorists (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 1991; DiMaggio, 1991; Hinings, Thibault, Slack, and Kikulis, 1996; Jepperson, 1991; Scott, 2001; Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings, 2002) describe logics as specific patterns of norms and values emphasized in an institutional environment of a particular organizational field. Conformity to these values and norms is inevitable for organizational actors in order to "receive and maintain legitimacy, and survive and prosper" (Danisman, Hinings and Slack, 2006, p.303), so

Figure 2.1 Three pillars of institutions.

	Regulative	*Normative*	*Cultural-Cognitive*
Basis of compliance	Expedience	Social obligation	Taken-for-grantedness Shared understanding
Basis of order	Regulative rules	Binding expectations	Constitutive schema
Mechanisms	Coercive	Normative	Mimetic
Logic	Instrumentality	Appropriateness	Orthodoxy
Indicators	Rules Laws Sanctions	Certification Accreditation	Common beliefs Shared logics of action Isomorphism
Affect	Fear Guilt/ Innocence	Shame/Honor	Certainty/Confusion
Basis of legitimacy	Legally sanctioned	Morally governed	Comprehensible Recognizable Culturally supported

Source: Scott (2008, p.60)

they arise among individuals and across organizations within an institutional field (Abrahamson and Fombrun, 1994). This is how institutional logics in organizational field are created (Scott, 2000; Thornton, Jones and Kury, 2005).

The notion of dominant institutional logics as a dimension of organizational field was first introduced by Alford and Friedland (1985), developed by cognitive theorists (Prahalad and Bettis, 1986; Porac and Thomas, 1989; Abrahamson and Fombrun 1994), and empirically tested by Scott (2000). In the research of the latter, organizations in a healthcare field were found following a dominant institutional logic of the field, which was the logic of corporation and the market, and drifting from the traditional logic of medical profession. MacIntosh, Doherty, and Walker (2010, p.446) summarize further evidence of dominant institutional logics within several industries: food retail (Ogbonna and Harris, 2002), health care and insurance (Lee and Yu, 2004), sport (Choi and Scott, 2008; Smith and Shilbury, 2004), and fitness (MacIntosh and Doherty, 2010).

Applying the notion of dominant institutional logics to organizational fields of sports, Southall and Nagel (2008), Peachey and Bruening (2011), and Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) confirm findings of Scott (2000) and suggest that over time a field's dominant institutional logic is adopt-

ed as unquestioned taken-for-granted facts and determines what is acceptable or not acceptable. Prahalad and Bettis (1986) assert that the organizational field's dominant logic is in fact a manifestation of organizational culture at macro-level because it represents shared ideas and beliefs that guide the behaviour of decision makers in organizational field. Therefore, as accepted by O'Brien and Slack (2003), the term "dominant institutional logic in organizational field" is an equivalent of the term "macro-culture," which can be defined as a macro-organizational force "rooted in beliefs, norms, and mental models shared by numerous organizational members . . . that spans numerous organizations in a social system" (O'Neill, Beauvals and Scholl, 2004, p.3-4).

Regarding this particular study of free sports, it is believed that the concept of organizational field is an appropriate and comprehensive approach to this context. First of all, it fits to the concept of systemic professionalization, which is described by Dowling et al (2014), as a field-level change happening under pressures. As was shown by O'Brien and Slack (2003, 2004) and Skinner et al. (1999) professionalization is a systemic pressure of environmental shifts resulting in organisational field evolution. These scholars emphasized changes that occurred more collectively across multiple organizational domains rather than internal changes. Thus systemic professionalization suggests the appropriate unit of analysis is 'beyond that of a singular organisation and closer towards a field level examination' (Dowling et al, 2014, p.524).

Secondly, the concept of organizational field is different from that of an industry and may include organizations, especially regulatory agencies, outside of particular industries (DiMaggio, 1988, 1991). Organizational arrangements employed in free sports have been often of informal character, so it is essential to identify all the influencing parties, even though they might lie outside of the industry, and consider their impact on processes within specific organizational fields. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is an example of an organization that has no formal relationships with many free sports but is thought to be able to influence a transformation of particular fields of free sports.

Thirdly, the notion of institutional logics is an important aspect of organizational field to consider for the purposes of this research, as it is believed to be particularly applicable to the context of free sports. As previous studies (Choi and Scott, 2008; Smith and Shilbury, 2004, Southall and Nagel, 2008; Peachey and Bruening, 2011; Skirstad and Chelladurai, 2011) demonstrate, in terms

of new institutional theory free sports can be seen as organizational field and its unique alternative culture can be discussed as the field's institutional logic. Hence, it is important to bring the theoretical framework of new institutionalism together with the theory of culture, so a brief overview of the relevant literature follows. Finally, the notion of organizational field has been already successfully employed in studies of organization of specific sports (Cousens, 1997; O'Brien and Slack, 1999, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Cousens and Slack, 2005; Southall et al, 2008; Southall and Nagel 2008; Skille, 2011).

2.2.1.2. Dominant sport culture and subcultures

According to the influential English historian and theorist Raymond Williams, "culture" is one of the most complex and confusing words in the English language and should be understood broadly as "a whole way of life". Most of the early academic contributions (Schein, 1985; Enz, 1986; O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell, 1991; Peters and Waterman, 1982) suggest that values constitute the core elements of culture. According to Rokeach (1973, p.25),

> … to say that a person has a value is to say that he has an enduring prescriptive or proscriptive belief that a specific mode of behaviour or end-state of existence is preferred to an opposite mode of behaviour or end-state. This belief transcends attitudes toward objects and toward situation; it is a standard that guides and determines action, attitudes toward objects and situations, ideology, presentations of self to others, evaluations, judgements, justifications, comparisons of self with others, and attempts to influence others.

In organizational field, values can be understood as beliefs that circulate among people and organizations, so values define what is socially preferable thus constitute culture of organizational field. While it is understood that culture involves more than values, assessment of culture through examination of values has been commonly used in cultural studies. Most of the early academic contributions (Schein, 1985; Enz, 1986; O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell, 1991; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Wiener, 1988) suggested that values constituted the core elements of culture. In addition, many other studies have used value-based dimensions to measure culture: for example; Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), Hofstede (2001), Hampden-Turner and Trompenaar's (1997) and Goffee and Jones (1996).

Based on analysis of studies of Lee (1989), Pawlak (1984), and Smith and Stewart (1999), Smith and Shilbury (2004, p.134) indicate that

> . . . the emergence of sport management as an independent discipline of theoretical study has encouraged the suggestion that sport cultures may possess unique characteristics . . . These unique cultural characteristics tend to revolve around extremely strong playing achievement and success orientations, often at the expense of other organizational dimensions such as financial security.

This argumentation is in line with a more general suggestion of Hoye, Nicholson, and Smith (2008, p.507) that people and organizations involved in sport have unique ways of approaching and thinking about things. Sport culture can be defined as "a set of core values, beliefs, and attitudes that are common to sport, which set the standards for acceptable behaviours within the sport industry" (Hoye et al, 2008, p.507), for example sovereignty of success and victory, strong competitive ethic and traditional "masculine" traits.

Donnelly (1996) argues that there is a single dominant sport culture (which he terms "prolympism), which had been established throughout the twentieth century. Prolympism has been created as an articulation of Olympism and professionalism. "As evidenced by the vast amount of media, public, and academic attention they have attracted", these two sport ideologies have been dominant over the past half-century and "have become the yardstick by which all other forms of sport are judged" (Donnelly, 1996, p.25). Donnelly (1996) suggests that the modern Olympism emerged in the first phase of globalization, when the first international movements were created (Robertson, 1992; Hoberman, 1995) and has developed into one of the most known philosophies of sport. On the other hand, professionalism was not associated with any distinct philosophy, but as discussed in the previous section, there has been an increasing professionalization of sport throughout the last 30-40 years. Even though in the past Olympism and professionalism represented two different ideologies (amateur and professional sport), they now seemed to merge into a global sport monoculture that is based on the idea of "playing to win"(Donnelly, 1996, p.26). The growing dominance of this "prolympism" culture has been evident in increasing televisualization and commercialization of sport and the difficulties experienced by indigenous and alternative sport ideologies (Donnelly, 1996). This has directly affected free sports: for example, Midol (1993) and Midol and Broyer (1995) demonstrated incorporation of some of the biggest "whiz" sports, such as freestyle skiing and snowboarding, into the dominant sport culture in France.

Apart from an understanding of what the dominant culture of the modern sport is, from theoretical perspective, there is a need to use the concept of subcultures in order to apply cultural theory to the context of this study. According to Donnelly (2007, p.369-370), subcultures are "cultural units sharing much in common with the larger parent cultures, but also possessing identifiable cultural elements of their own" and are defined by the following characterictics:

- identifiable groups: subcultures are identifiable groups within a culture or across cultures;
- composition: subcultures are collectivities of small groups and individuals;
- cultural characteristics: their members employ similar artifacts and symbols, engage in similar types of behaviour, and adhere to a set of norms and values specific to the subculture;
- distinctive nature: cultural elements have a distinctive nature and are somewhat different from those of the culture(s) in which they exist;
- life style and resources: achieved subcultures represent a major element in the life style and allocation of resources of their members;
- scope and potential: achieved subcultures are formed around beliefs and behaviours that have scope and potential;
- fulfillment of individual needs: subcultures are actively created and maintained by their members as long as they meet the needs of their members;
- interaction and communication: subcultures are created and maintained by face-to-face interaction and other forms of communication between their members.

As mentioned in the introduction, subcultures built around free sports are one of the distinguishing characteristics of this group of sports. Tomlinson, Ravenscroft, Wheaton and Gilchrist (2005, p.15) suggest that that these sports are "lived cultures" that are fundamentally about "doing it", about taking part. A typical example of subculture is the subculture of climbers, which is considered as legitimate (achieved) subculture as its cultural characteristics developed at two levels (Donnelly, 2007):

- Primary level: knowledge and behaviour directly connected with the act of climbing, such as teaching climbing skills and the knowledge necessary in order to climb safely;
- Secondary level: ancillary knowledge and behaviour not directly concerned with the act of climbing, such as dress and language specific to the subculture; status concerns; environmental and ethical concerns; access problems; the responds to accidents and fatali-

ties; concern over external controls and growing institutionalization; and the social characteristics associated with non-climbing behaviour.

These characteristics established the exclusivity of the climbing subculture, which is related to "the distance of cultural norms from the subcultural norm" (Donnelly, 2007, p.373).

Linking the notions of culture and subcultures to organizational field, it is reasonable to follow the approach of Danisman et al (2006) who discussed culture of organizational field from differentiation and integration perspectives, and applied these perspectives to sport. Danisman et al (2006) summarized the main stances of these two views based on studies of Ouch (1981), Deal and Kennedy (1982), O'Reilly et al. (1991), Martin (1992, 2002), Abrahamson and Fombrun (1994), Baritone and Mooch (1991), Gregory (1983), Jermier et al. (1991), and Riley (1983). It has to be said that apart from integration and differentiation views, there is a third perspective of culture developed by Martin (1992) – fragmentation view. However, this perspective fits to examining organizational culture of a specific organization rather than a culture of organizational field: it describes culture by ambiguity and short-term affinities among individuals within organization that are quickly replaced by a different pattern of affinities as new issues arise (Martin and Frost, 1996). This issue-specific and organization-specific approach is seen as not particularly beneficial to the aim of this thesis, so this thesis follows the approach employed by Danisman et al (2006) and focuses on two possible views of cultures in organizational fields:

Integration view of culture

- Under institutional pressures, the values and norms of actors from different organizations are similar across organizational field.
- Culture in organizational field is monolithic and homogeneous.

Differentiation view of culture

- Shared values and beliefs are based on individuals' functional, occupational, and demographic characteristics, so differentiated based on organizational structures.
- This view emphasizes cultural heterogeneity and views organizations as a mosaic of subcultures.
- A subculture may support the dominant values (enhancing) or deny the dominant values (countering) or simply exist alongside the dominant culture.

Integration and differentiation views of culture have major implications as they underpin the concepts of organizational isomorphism and institutional pluralism, which will be outlined and discussed in a sport context in the next sections.

In summary, culture is a broad concept, with countless definitions and interpretations. In adopting new institutionalism as a theoretical framework, this research will investigate organizational fields from the macro perspective of the whole sport. Therefore this research focuses on cultures and subcultures in the macro perspective that, as discussed earlier, are manifested in the institutional logics of the organizational field. For the purposes of this thesis, macroculture will be discussed through the values of free sports. While it is understood that culture is more than values and important features may be reflected in other dimensions, such as acceptable ways of working and norms, as discussed above, values have been largely used in mainstream literature to examine cultures. A review of studies of organizational culture in sport management (**Appendix 2**) also highlights values as the foremost element of culture. Most notably, Smith and Shilbury (2004, p.151), who investigated culture of Australian sport organizations, concluded that "of the 12 axial codes, which have become the dimensions of organisational culture derived from the data, the most prominent was named "Values". Therefore, this study adopts a values-based approach for an approximation of macroculture of free sports.

2.2.1.3. Organizational legitimacy in new institutional theory

One of central concepts within new institutionalism is the concept of organizational legitimacy. Summarizing the works of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Tolbert and Zucker (1983), Greenwood (2008, p.100) sees the new institutionalism as largely "identified with an emphasis on legitimacy rather than efficiency as an explanation for the success and survival of organizations." The notion of legitimacy in new institutional theory was briefly introduced by Zucker (1977) and further developed by Meyer and Rowan (1977). Then Meyer and Scott (1983) suggested a definition of organizational legitimacy as

> . . . the degree of cultural support for an organization—the extent to which the array of established cultural accounts provide explanations for its existence, functioning, and jurisdiction, and lack or deny alternatives . . . In such a[n] instance, legitimacy mainly refers to the adequacy of an organization as theory. A completely legitimate organization would be one about which no question could be raised. [Every goal, mean, resource, and control system is necessary, specified, complete, and without alternative.] Perfect legitimation is perfect theory, complete (i.e., without uncertainty) and confronted by no alternatives.
>
> Meyer and Scott (1983, p. 201)

It can be seen that organizational legitimacy is directly connected to the the culture of the organizational field as it is measured against values, and beliefs. To be precise, this type of legitimacy should be referred as cultural legitimacy in order to differentiate it from regulatory legitimacy. Therefore, cultural legitimacy

> . . . is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.
>
> Suchman (1995, p. 574)

In contrast, regulatory legitimacy originates not from institutional logics, or culture, but from "rulemaking and enforcement activities within the agencies of the State" (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008, p.56) or cross-national governing organizations. Examples of subjects of regulatory legitimation in sport include national sport federations, which are empowered by state to develop their sports and also authorized by national Olympic committees to run qualifications for the Olympic Games.

While the sources of regulatory legitimacy are relatively easy to identify, as they are normally state authorities and governing organizations, which define rules and regulations in organizational fields, the sources of cultural legitimacy are of more abstract construction. As highlighted by Greenwood (2008), based on Giddens (1984) and Seo and Creed (2002), institutional logics are sources of cultural legitimacy, so the central issue of the concept of legitimacy is to determine who has collective authority over cultural legitimation in a specific setting. This question has been very much discussed in literature (Meyer and Scott; 1983, Ruef and Scott, 1998) with communities, popular opinion, industry analysts, political activists, and society-at-large suggested as a source of legitimacy especially over long periods of time. However, there is a lack of application of the concept of organizational legitimacy to the institutional fields of sport, so there is a potential for it to be used more in studies of organizational change in sports.

2.2.1.4. Organizational isomorphism

Based on institutional studies of diffusion (Strang and Soule, 1998; Tolbert and Zucker, 1983), Greenwood et al. (2008, p.55) argue that "the more numerous the adopters of a practice, the more widespread its acceptance and the greater its legitimacy." This creates a link between cul-

tural legitimacy and mimetic isomorphism, which is considered in the next section. As seen from the integration perspective of culture of the organizational field, "beliefs that are shared by managers across organizations . . . tend to increase the level of organizational inertia and similarity" (Abrahamson and Fombrun, 1994, p.728). Institutional theorists Meyer and Rowan (1977), DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Zucker (1983), and Powell (1991) argue that organizations in a field modify their features towards increasing compatibility with environmental characteristics, for example, change structures to conform to expectations about appropriate design.

> Because environments are uncertain and people's interests are ambiguous, organizations seek to incorporate these elements into their practice as a way to signal their legitimacy in a cultural meaning system . . . Organizations would bureaucratize their boards, professionalize their staff, and implement formal tracking systems not primarily to carry out their technical tasks more efficiently but to participate in culturally legitimated action, or "rationalized myths"
>
> Binder (2007, p.549)

This homogeneity is attributed to external pressures and social expectancies and is known as **institutional isomorphism**—"the constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (Hawley, 1968 cited in DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 147)). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) found out that organizations were bound by the logic of the institutional sphere and call this phenomenon "iron cage" whereby "bureaucratisation and other forms of organisational change occur as a process that makes organizations more similar and not necessarily more efficient or successful" (Peachey and Bruening, 2011, p.203).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three mechanisms, by which institutional isomorphism takes place:

1. Coercive isomorphism

It stems from political influence: "the more powerful organizations legitimate certain organizational structures and impose coercive pressures on network peers to conform" (O'Brien and Slack, 2004, p.16). There are also pressures by "cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983, p.150)

2. Normative isomorphism

This mechanism is associated with professionalization as members of an occupation struggle "to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 152).

3. Mimetic isomorphism

This type of isomorphism derives from uncertainty, which drives organizations to mimic the actions of other organizations that are considered legitimate or successful. Kraatz (1998) suggested three types of diffusion processes which influence mimetic behaviours:

- "bandwagon": a growing number of adopters of an innovation or strategy which may drive other organizations in the field to adopt the same change;
- status-driven: organizations mimic the changes of large or prominent organizations in the field;
- social learning of adaptive responses: organizations "vicariously evaluate the outcomes peers have obtained and benefit from the lessons they have learned as a result of their earlier adoption decisions" (Kraatz, 1998, p. 625).

Over time, these three mechanisms force organizations within the same field, with similar desires and facing similar pressures, to be legitimate, to become isomorphic with each other and the environment (Silk and Amis, 2000). They replicate not only practices but values and beliefs that guide organizational life, which could partially explain the existence of industry-wide organizational culture (Chatman and Jehn, 1994; MacIntosh and Doherty, 2008; Ogbonna and Harris, 2002, MacIntosh et al, 2010). Conformity to the dominant institutional logics creates "cultural homogeneity among individual actors across organizations through an institutional environment that results in institution-wide shared cultural values and practices" (Danisman et al, 2006, p.302).

The reasons behind and patterns of organizational isomorphism in a large number of sport organizations across several sports and countries have been researched by sport management scholars. An overview of the major relevant studies is presented in **Appendix 3.** For instance, Rugby Football Union has been the most discussed sport among international researchers (Dunning, 1999, 2005; O'Brien and Slack, 1999, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Skinner at al, 1999) with regards to adoption of the institutional logics of commercialization and professionalization. The case of

professionalization of the Rugby Football Union is an example of macro-organizational change on an international level, which confirms the suggestion that "just as values and ideas can be institutionalized, they can also be deinstitutionalized" (Skinner et al, 1999, p. 174). This international sport adhered to its roots for more than one hundred years of its organization's history: "amateur values were heavily institutionalized in this community through not only the clubs playing history but also its structures, rites, rituals, myths and culture" (O'Brien and Slack 2004, p.169). National governing bodies of the Rugby Football Union faced the need to implement a rapid organizational change in order to address environmental change after the decision to go professional was announced by the International Rugby Football Board in 1995.

Deinstitutionalization of amateur values and a shift in dominant institutional logic in organizational field of the English Rugby Union were empirically investigated on macro- and micro-levels by O'Brien and Slack (1999, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). Based on postulates of institutional theorists (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983; Powell, 1991), it was suggested that organizational field's change could be explained by analysing the change in the field's dominant logic (O'Brien and Slack, 2003), which is the manifestation of culture of organizational field in a macro perspective. Studies of O'Brien and Slack (1999, 2003, 2004a, 2004b) demonstrated how isomorphic institutional pressures of professionalization put on clubs by Rugby Football Union caused a "bandwagon" effect and also highlighted the role of status-driven and social learning processes that characterized the mimetic isomorphism and diffusion of new professional logic in the organizational field of the English Rugby Union. According to Kraatz (1998 cited in O'Brien and Slack, 2004a), these processes "thrive under conditions where there are inadequate channels for sharing information, and where there is a reluctance among actors to do so in the first place." Skille (2011, p.87) refers to metaphor of "blind leading the blind"(O'Neill, Beauvals, and Scholl, 1998, p. 101), when characterizing the nature of change in organizations such as the English Rugby Union as "apparently in fear that others will apply similar models successfully, and without analyzing one's own context."

In the study on change in organizational field of four North American professional sport leagues, Cousens and Slack (2005) demonstrated how the institutional logics of action of league and franchise leaders shifted from sport-specific qualities to entertainment value of their sport. These scholars have highlighted the role of information exchange in this fundamental change as league leaders "looked to each other and to other entertainment companies, rather than to organizations within their sport, for solutions to strategic problems" (Cousens and Slack, 2005, p.39). An-

alyzing the domination of commercial logics in North American college sport, Southall et al (2008) specifically emphasized the role of key stakeholders, and broadcasting media in particular, as "cultural intermediaries" in the diffusion of strategic innovations in periods of high uncertainty (O'Brien and Slack, 2004, p.19) whose decisions can "contour, and be contoured by, the dominant institutional logic" (Southall et al, 2008, p.682). Referring to Altheide and Snow (1979) and Duncan and Brummett (1991), Silk and Amis (2000) argue that this media logic has become taken for granted like "subconscious naturalized code" (Silk and Amis, 2000, p. 288), so it mediates spectator-sport via broadcasting.

More recently, several academic contributions on structural characteristics of national sport organizations (NSO) in Scandinavian countries (Augestad, Bergsgard and Hansen, 2006; Fahlen, 2006; Skille, 2011) revealed that they experienced institutional isomorphism in a global context. NSOs are all connected to the norms and regulations of international sport federations and the International Olympic Committee through the international structure of promotion and development of sports, thus exposed to the processes of coercive isomorphism and prone to displaying a large number of organizational similarities (Gomez et al, 2008). The study of Augestad et al. (2006) shows the processes of development of the Norwegian elite sport system as a primarily coercive and normative isomorphism, which emanated from professionalization and stemmed from trends in international elite sport (Skille, 2011). This evidence of organizational isomorphism, which sees sport organizations becoming homogeneous in their cultures and structures, demonstrates the relevance of new institutional perspective to organizational field of any modern sport. As free sports have also been experiencing the pressures of commercialization and professionalization, in this study organizational change can be analyzed through the framework of new institutional theory.

2.2.1.5. Institutional pluralism

The majority of research on organizational fields "has tended to emphasize how a dominant logic uniformly shapes organizations in a field, reinforcing notions of stability and institutionalization" (Lounsbury, 2007, p.289). However, Binder (2007, p.549) summarizes some criticism of new institutionalism made by Fine (1984), Hirsch and Lounsbury (1997), Scully and Segal (2002) and Hallett and Ventresca, (2006a, b) and the notion of organizational isomorphism:

> By prioritizing the institutional logics that get carried into organizations by script-following actors, new institutionalism has a view of action that deprives people of generative creativity in their responses to their environments. Because it assumes that coercive, mimetic, and normative forces are so strong that people in organizations have little choice but to adhere to these institutional scripts, it overlooks those actors' multiple and local meanings…
>
> Binder (2007, p.549)

This criticism resulted in development of the notion of institutional pluralism**.** This concept is underpinned by the differentiation view of culture of organizational field, which suggests that organizations can fulfil multiple purposes and embody multiple logics (Kraatz and Block, 2008). Slack and Hinings (1992) provide evidence that "organizations are not merely passive receptors of institutional pressures" (O'Brien and Slack, 2004, p.17). More recently, Reay and Hinings's (2005) study of health care services in Canada identified that with the change of the field's structure and dominant logic to the one focused on business, the earlier dominant health-care logic of the medical profession was still in place.

> This focus on competing logics redirects institutional research away from isomorphism and the segregation of institutional and technical forces and toward an appreciation of how multiple forms of rationality underlie change in organizational fields.
>
> Lounsbury (2007, p. 289)

So this new perspective requires a conceptualization of institutional fields as more fragmented and influenced by multiple, competing logics.

The possibility of competing logics co-existing is applicable and important to a discussion on organizational change in the institutional field of sports as it is strongly linked to the debate of competing "sport" and "business" logics. Based on an ambiguous history of sport and two contrasting approaches to its management, this issue has been of considerable academic attention (Hess and Stewart, 1998; Slack, 1998; Smith and Stewart, 1999; Mangan and Nauright, 2000; Hess, 2008, Smith and Stewart, 2010). Along with the wide acknowledgement of isomorphic trends in development of sports, a significant number of researchers (Thibault, Slack and Hinings 1991; Kikulis, Slack and Hinings, 1995a, b; Fahlen 2006) found heterogeneous processes facilitating evolution of sports as well as the homogeneous ones.

A recent study by Steen-Johnsen (2008) on Norwegian snowboarding focuses on network structures, which emerged when alternative and flexible snowboarding organizations had to become part of more traditional sport institutions. Network design was suggested by Mintzberg (1979) and described by Slack (1997, p.82) as having

> . . . low level of formalization, a lack of structured hierarchy of authority, and high levels of horizontal differentiation, with specialists grouped into functional units for organizational purposes, but often deployed to project teams to do their work.

By the application of network theory, the study by Steen-Johnsen (2008, p.355) demonstrates "specific characteristics of network organizing, and how these differ from, and challenge, established ways of organizing sport." Therefore, contesting the notion of organizational isomorphism, Steen-Johnsen (2008) found the evidence of institutional pluralism on the national level of the organization of snowboarding. There were two competing logics existing in Norwegian competitive snowboarding rather than a single dominant logic. These were the traditional logic of snowboarding as an alternative "play" activity and the mainstream sport logic based on the Olympic values. These two logics are manifest in different organizational forms: formal institutional frameworks created under the isomorphic pressures brought with the Olympic integration and informal network arrangements within organizations created and led by snowboarders.

Recent studies by Southall et al (2008) and Southall and Nagel (2008) also provide evidence of the co-existence of contradictory institutional logics—educational and commercial—in today's college-sport setting, thus reflecting contention of institutional pluralism that "most environments are subject to multiple competing logics that provide a foundation for ongoing contestation and change" (Lounsbury, 2007, p. 302). Several phenomena have been highlighted as those driving variations in responses of sport organizations to environmental pressures (Kikulis, Slack, and Hinings 1995b, 1995c; Amis et al, 2004; Fahlen, 2006), such as organizational capacity, subunit interests, power and interest arrangements, resistance to institutional pressures, and interactions with organizations outside the field. It was also shown by several scholars that different institutional logics could coexist in sport's organizational field as a result of differences in fundamental activities of sport organizations and their size and availability of resources (Thibault et al. 1991, Smith and Shilbury, 2004, Smith and Stewart, 2010). Those contributions demonstrated the applicability of the notion of institutional pluralism to studies of organizational fields in sports.

In some cases (Southall et al, 2008, Southall and Nagel, 2008, Skirstad and Chelladurai, 2011), based on the benefits of coexistence of different institutional logics realized by individual organizations, they made structural changes that allowed them maintaining the original logic with the adoption of the new ones. For example, NCAA has developed the new governance structure - consisting of three distinct and autonomous divisions - that allowed educational and commercial logics to coexist (Southall et al, 2008, p.695). More recently, the empirical findings of Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) underpinned by Kraatz and Block's (2008) institutional pluralism, demonstrate how sports organization (Norwegian multisports KIL club) may adopt three different logics (amateur, professional and commercial) in order to conform to varying institutional pressures and serve achievement of three different goals (sport participation, sport excellence, providing entertainment for fans).

> The thick amateur and volunteer culture for the love of the sport existed for almost 100 years before there was a change to the professional logic in one subunit of the club dealing with professional soccer. The old culture prevailed in the rest of the sports club, and the two logics lived side by side. The final change occurred in the professional part of soccer (Top Soccer), which had to adapt to the pressures from the commercial sector to survive as an entity. The paucity of economic resources accelerated the process of commercialization, which also resulted in changes in the organizational structure of KIL.
>
> Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011, p.350)

The adoption of three different logics was realized through both evolutionary and revolutionary changes which resulted in more divisionalised form of organization of this sport club. So based on this empirical data and similar findings from non-sports studies of Reay and Hinings (2005), Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) show how changes in organizational structure and the creation of specialized units can facilitate adoption of new logics of organizational field, while the earlier logic is not entirely removed. This evidence supports the differentiation view of culture of organizational field and demonstrates how numerous institutional logics can coexist at micro level. These findings are particularly interesting in connection to the context of this study as it is believed that institutions in free sports can be subject of various institutional logics: the distinctive dominant logics of "alternative" culture, professional and business logics.

It can be summarized that underpinned by the contention between integration and differentiation views of culture of organizational fields, both the trends of organizational isomorphism and institutional pluralism have been evident in recent academic studies on organizational fields in sport. The homogeneity of organizational structures and cultures in sport has been shown as organizations tend to resemble each other in order to behave legitimately. On the other hand, it has been found possible for several institutional logics to exist simultaneously in an organizational field of sport. As the logics of professionalization and commercialization entered the organizational field of free sports with its historically strong "alternative" macro-culture, organizational fields of free sports can be analyzed via the discussed frameworks of new institutional theory, such as institutional logics, legitimacy, isomorphism, and pluralism.

Finally, it was necessary to take into consideration the study of Washington and Patterson (2010) because of its direct relevance to both new institutional theory and the context of the research. This study analyzed the use of new institutional theory in sport management research and discussed future implications for scholars. This thesis expects to address some suggestions of Washington and Patterson (2011) and contribute to application of new institutional theory to sport studies in the following ways:

- Extend the scope of application because this study is on non-traditional sports, which are known to have unique logics behind their organization;
- Critically evaluate the conflicts revolving around "ownership" of certain free sports;
- Empirically analyze how sport organizations grow, mature, change, and decline;
- Reveal macro perspective of the sports rather than micro study.

2.2.2. Supplementary view: Resource dependence theory

This section justifies the need for an application of an alternative theoretical perspective on the study of organizational evolution of free sports—the resource dependence theory—as a supplementary theoretical framework to new institutionalism. The necessity of this framework is underpinned by the applicability of resource-dependence thinking to the context of research and also by the possibility to use this second theoretical perspective to compliment and contrast the discussion of research findings from a new institutionalism point of view.

According to resource-dependence theory, suggested by Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), organizations are often unable to generate enough resources for survival, so they depend on their environment for resources, specifically on resource allocation by other organizations. Consequently, this dependence creates uncertainty. As Davis and Cobb (2010, p.12) highlight, one of the major contributions of resource dependence theory was to bring issues of power to the forefront of organizational studies. The definitions of power and dependence were first introduced in Emerson's (1962) power-dependence theory: power of organization A over organization B was defined as the potential of organization A to obtain favourable outcomes at organization B's expense. This power is based on dependence of organization B on resources of organization A.

Power and dependence are directly linked within the resource dependence theory: an organization can be legally independent of another organization but still depend on its resources, so the organization that controls resources holds a certain power over those dependent on them. For example, producers of natural resources hold power over companies that use these resources for production of goods. On the other hand, the income of producers of natural resources is, in turn, dependent on buyers of these resources, so power-dependence relationships are mutual. Subsequently, the notions of autonomy and constraint have been developed within resource dependence theory as organizations respond to interdependence relations. The theory can be summarized by a piece of advice to organizations:

> Choose the least-constraining device to govern relations with your exchange partners that will allow you to minimize uncertainty and dependence and maximize your autonomy.
>
> Davis and Cobb (2010, p.6)

Thus, organizations employ various tactics to minimize dependence and maximize autonomy, such as finding alternative resources, forming alliances with the sources of constraint, or trading autonomy for support (co-optation).

Power-dependence relationships received a significant academic consideration in sport management science and proved to be a relevant theoretical solution to the issue of organizational change with regards to performance of national elite sport systems (Slack and Hinings, 1992; Skinner et al, 1999; Green and Oakley, 2001; De Bosscher, De Knop, Van Bottenburg and Shibli,

2006; Houlihan and Green, 2008; Sotiriadou and Shilbury, 2009). The study by Slack and Hinings (1992) used the tenets of resource-dependence theory in order to demonstrate why NSOs of Canada were involved in a major change process from volunteer-controlled entities with relatively simple structures to professionally operated, more complex governing bodies. It was revealed that their resource dependence on funding from federal government was key factor in this reorientation. The Canadian national government has put growing pressure on NSOs in attempts to improve performance of Olympic athletes and teams as elite sport success has been of increasing focus over the last decades. State pressures to deliver elite sport performance have been also notable in a number countries, for example Australia and the United Kingdom, which was covered by research contributions of Green and Oakley (2001); Oakley and Green (2001); De Bosscher et al. (2006); Houlihan and Green (2008).

As concluded by academic scholars (Greenwood and Hinings 1988; Slack and Hinings 1992; Skinner et al, 1999; Hoye et al, 2008), resource-dependence of NSOs on the state is the major factor contributing to the change from volunteer and simple structures to professional and bureaucratic ones. It has to be said though that while most studies focused on dependence of the NSOs on the state, the state is also dependent on the performance of NSOs in terms of fulfilling national targets on elite sports and pressure from the nations' populations to deliver elite sport results. More recently, with the application of network and stakeholders theories, the study by Morrow and Idle (2008) investigated how commercialism has challenged power and dependence relationships in specific international sport: cycling. This study concludes that "the central role and powerful position of organizers . . . have arisen largely through their ability to control access to their commercial events and as a result of the subsequent distribution of finance" (Morrow and Idle, 2008, p. 331).

Although the context of organization in free sports, described in the introduction, is different from mainstream sports, the pressures, which sport governing organizations, media, and sponsors put organizations in free sports under, are similar. As professionalization and commercialization grow, free sports organizations become dependent on state funding, access to facilities, sponsors contributions, and media opportunities, so they are expected to develop free sports in a more institutionalized and formal way than they used to do. On the other hand, governing organizations, media, and sponsors also become more dependent on key organizations of free sports as the latter created competitive free sports products, which sport governing bodies, media, and sponsors used for their functioning. Overall, analysing the research context of organiza-

tional field of free sports from the resource-dependence perspective will facilitate understanding of this phenomenon.

2.2.3. New institutionalism and resource-dependence theory: links and differences

In order to make full use of the application of new institutionalism and resource-dependence theory to the research context, it was necessary to analyze where these two perspectives link or complement each other and where they might offer different interpretations. This analysis was based on study of Oliver (1991) who identified converging assumptions and differences between resource-dependence and institutional theories (**Table 2.1).**

As it derives from this summary, the most fundamental difference between these two theories is that quite opposite to resource-dependence argumentation, institutional theorists suggest that organizations

> . . . incorporate elements of the institutional environment into their practice for reasons that often have little to do with technical rationality and strict efficiency concerns, or minimizing the uncertainty of resources and information.
>
> Binder (2007, p.549)

In other words, in line with organizational isomorphism thinking, organizations are thought to behave passively under external pressures and just accept structures, practices, and cultures, whereas resource-dependence theory advocates an active choice behaviour of organizations in institutional fields. Having said that, coercive isomorphism stems from political influence and has close ties to the resource dependence theory. It must be also noted that the concept of organizational field is different from that of an industry and is used not only in new institutionalism but also within the resource-dependence perspective as it pays particular attention to the role of regulatory agencies (DiMaggio, 1991) that are decision makers on resource allocation. Legitimacy is another concept that links resource-dependence and the new institutionalism approach as they both suggest that organizations seek legitimacy in institutional fields. Legitimacy was used by resource dependence theorists Pfeffer and Salancik (1978, p.194) who highlighted that legitimacy is "known more readily when it is absent than when it is present. When activities of an organization are illegitimate, comments and attacks will occur".

Table 2.1

Comparison of Institutional and Resource Dependence Perspectives

Explanatory Factor	Convergent Assumptions	Divergent Foci: Institutional Perspective	Divergent Foci: Resource Dependence Perspective
	Organizational choice is constrained by multiple external pressures	Institutional environment	Task environment
		Nonchoice behavior	Active choice behavior
Context of Organizational Behavior	Organizational environments are collective and interconnected	Conforming to collective norms and beliefs	Coping with interdependencies
		Invisible pressures	Visible pressures
	Organizational survival depends on responsiveness to external demands and expectations	Isomorphism	Adaptation
		Adherence to rules and norms	Management of scarce resources
	Organizations seek stability and predictability	Organizational persistence	Reduction of uncertainty
		Habit and convention	Power and influence
Motives of Organizational Behavior	Organizations seek legitimacy	Social worthiness	Resource mobilization
		Conformity to external criteria	Control of external criteria
	Organizations are interest driven	Interests institutionally defined	Interests political and calculative
		Compliance self-serving	Noncompliance self-serving

Source: Oliver (1991, p.147)

In terms of application of resource-dependence theory and new institutionalism to sport studies, apart from already discussed studies, which took advantage of one or the other of them, there are some contributions where both theories have been used and complemented each other. Arguably, the first and the most notable study was the one by Slack and Hinings (1992), which explained organizational change in Canadian NSOs by application of both theories and demonstrated how the resource-dependence of NSOs required them to engage in major organizational change towards a more professional and bureaucratically structured organizational design. More recently, the study of Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) investigating organizational change on a micro-level linked resource-dependence and new institutional perspectives and used both of them to evaluate organizational responses to the pressures of commercialism. In order to meet the research objectives, this thesis will also attempt to take advantage of both theories so they can complement each other as well as provide different explanations.

2.3. Summary.

This chapter was concerned with building a theoretical framework for this thesis. The choice of new institutionalism as the primary theoretical framework for this research has been made based on the applicability of its major ideas to the research context and review of empirical studies examining organizational fields of sports from a new institutionalism perspective. Specifically, the notion of organizational field and its dominant institutional logics (macro-culture) is relevant to organization of free sports, which is known for distinctive cultural features. In this connection, the postulates of new institutionalism have brought together the definitions and ideas of the cultural theory. As discussed within this literature review, underpinned by the integration view of culture of organizational field the concept of organizational isomorphism has been popular in understanding of organizational change within various organizational fields. It advocates homogeneity in cultures and structures of organizational fields. The evidence of the phenomenon of organizational isomorphism has been discussed with references to practical studies of sport organizational fields. This demonstrates the relevance of new institutionalism to organizational field of free sports that have been experiencing various external pressures and presumably a phenomenon of organizational isomorphism.

However, the possibility of co-existence of various institutional logics has been also revealed as a result of the review of some recent studies by Fahlen (2006), Southall et al (2008), Southall and Nagel (2008), and Steen-Johnsen (2008). An alternative perspective of institutional pluralism can also be applicable to the field of free sports, which in many instances has recently seen the new logics entering the field in addition to the traditional dominant logics of alternative “play” activities. Institutional pluralism is contesting the notion of organizational isomorphism, so it is important to consider this perspective in this thesis.

Employing the view of specificity of sport organization, the discussion of empirical studies in this chapter is focused around two phenomena: structures and cultures in organizational fields of sports. The studies of structural evolution of organization of sports (Greenwood and Hinings, 1988; Slack and Hinings, 1992; Skinner et al, 1999; Hoye et al, 2008) show isomorphic processes underpinned by resource dependence that force organizational change from simple structures towards more professional and bureaucratic ones. On the other hand, recent academic contributions on change in logics in sport organizations, such as Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011), demonstrated that both phenomena of organizational isomorphism and institutional pluralism were

evident. It was found that numerous institutional logics could coexist in organizational field of sport.

The review also demonstrates the relevance of resource-dependence and power relationships to studies of sport organizations. Resource-dependence thinking underpins the notion of organizational fields as organizations depend on funding from other institutions and change according to the environmental pressures. Such interdependencies create the power relationships between legally independent organizations. To summarize the implications of this literature review, organizational evolution in free sports should be discussed within the theoretical framework of new institutionalism with the use of the concepts of cultural legitimacy and supplemented by resource dependence thinking.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the choice of research methodology and its philosophical basis. First, it overviews various philosophical approaches to research with regards to objectives and context of this study. Within this part, the major pillars of this research are chosen and justified, such as theoretical perspective (interpretivism), methodology (phenomenological research), and research design (multiple case study). Then, the choice of specific cases, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques are explained. Finally, the concepts of validity, reliability, and generalizability are discussed with regards to this particular study.

The review of theoretical contributions above shows that a number of significant studies on the changing nature of organization of sports have been conducted over the last 20 years. With regards to application of new institutional theory to specific context (free sports), the concepts that deserve particular focus for an empirical study of organizational evolution of free sports have been identified as institutional logics, legitimacy, organizational isomorphism, and pluralism. The aim of the research is to investigate the processes underpinning the evolutionary development of free sports, and in support of this the research has the following objectives:

- to critically evaluate the process of organizational evolution of free sports;
- to reveal and analyze rationales and mechanisms behind changes in free sports;
- to investigate an evolution of structural arrangements in free sports;
- to examine whether / how values of free sports have changed.

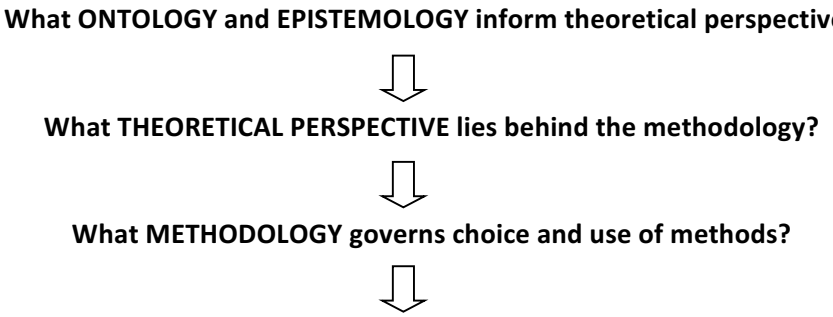
3.1. Philosophical basis of the research

The underlying philosophy of research is the crucial link between the research question and the methodology. The consistency between the philosophical basis of research, the research question and the research method is essential for any research project (Proctor, 1998). As suggested by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2003), an understanding of research philosophy helps to define the research strategy and provides justification of the choice and specific use of research methods in order to reach the research objectives. Any research in social sciences is about finding a solution to a problem by gathering information and investigating the unknown (Maylor and

Blackmon, 2005) and therefore related to assumptions about reality and how it can be understood (Jenkins, 2011).

Some questions about the possible knowledge and the relationships between the researcher and what can be known must be answered in order to show how the research methods are capable of reaching the research goals. Adapting the approach of Crotty (1998), there are four questions that determine and structure the methodology of the research project concerned (see **Figure 3.1**).

Figure 3.1. The approach to the methodology of the research project.



Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998) and the assumptions about the nature and meaning of reality (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Epistemology deals with the knowledge of being, the degree to which this knowledge is possible, and the relationships between the enquirer and the subject (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000). Ontological and epistemological stances provide "a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are achievable and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate" (Maynard, 1994, p. 10). Based on acceptance that there is either a subjective or objective reality, there are three main approaches to research philosophy, as summarized by Crotty (1998, p.9):

- **Objectivism:** meaningful reality exists apart from a mind and can be discovered as the objective truth.
- **Constructionism:** meaning does not exist without a mind, so is constructed by social processes rather than discovered.
- **Subjectivism:** object does not make any contribution to meaning, so it is only a mind, which imposes meaning on a subject.

There is also the term "constructivism" used by Robson (2002) in a similar sense as constructionism. Based on Schwandt's (1994) position, Crotty (1998, p.58) argues that constructivism focuses exclusively on "the meaning-making activity of the individual mind," whereas constructionism advocates "the collective generation of meaning" and therefore emphasizes the shaping of participants' minds by culture. In this thesis, it is the notion of constructionism that will be referred to as the distinctive cultural features of particular sports shape the knowledge on the research topic.

These major epistemological and ontological stances underpin various theoretical perspectives. In a research context, the term perspective (also called tradition or paradigm) refers to "an underlying collection of beliefs about the components of a research area and how these fit together, how these can be researched and how discoveries can be interpreted" (Wisker, 2001, cited in Jenkins, 2011). Initially, the philosophical approach to research was categorized into two paradigms (Hussey and Hussey, 1997; Robson, 2002): the positivist and the interpretive tradition that can also be considered as a synonym of the phenomenological perspective according to Jenkins (2011). Robson (2002) discusses the following paradigms: the scientific approach (with a focus on positivism), relativist approaches, and several recent traditions, such as constructivism and post-positivism. Maylor and Blackmon (2005, p.157) identify six different research approaches: Positivism, Realism, Critical Realism, Interpretivism, Constructionism, and Subjectivism. The major distinctions between the most popular theoretical perspectives are presented in **Table 3.1** with reference to methodology that is concerned with the means by which the knowledge is acquired and specific methods that might be used.

The positivist paradigm assumes that the social world exists externally, is independent of human behaviour, and can be measured through objectives methods (Easterby-Smith et al, 2003). This worldview is based on developing numeric measures of observations (Creswell, 2009, p.60), which can be the only basis for a valid generalization. A major criticism of the application of positivist approach to the social sciences is that it does not provide the methods to examine the behaviour of humans in an in-depth way. Ayer (1969) suggests that it may be something about the "nature of men" that makes the establishment of laws and the ability to generalize impossible. The obvious limitation of the positivist approach with regards to the social sciences is that the social world is very different from the natural world, so measurement methods from natural science do not adequately measure social phenomena (Jenkins, 2011).

The doctrine of post-positivism challenges the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge (Phillips and Burbules, 2000) and recognizes that "we cannot be 'positive' about our claims of knowledge when studying the behaviour and actions of humans" (Creswell, 2009, p.7). It is accepted by post-positivists that unobservable phenomena exist, as it is impossible for human beings to truly perceive the existing real world with their sensory and mental capacity (Guba, 1990, Schumacher and Gortner, 1992). Although the post-positivist approach to research in social sciences has recently become rather flexible and has recognized the effects of the likely biases of researchers, still it advocates objectivism claiming that one reality exists, any knowledge about the phenomenon must be measurable, universal, and generalizable, and this is the job of researchers to discover it.

The Interpretivist approach emerged in contradiction to positivism. It looks for "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world" (Crotty, 1998, p.67) and focuses on the meaning rather than the measurement of social phenomena. Interpretivist paradigm is very much intertwined with constructionist epistemology and represented by two popular perspectives that are similar and congruent: phenomenology, which is a philosophical paradigm, and symbolic interactionism, which is a social theory. These traditions aim to understand human behaviour through the eyes of participants and to generate working hypotheses rather than empirical facts (Robson, 2002). Phenomenologists describe the ways in which the phenomenon is experienced (Parry, 2003, Goulding, 2005) and argue it can be understood only within its context through which, in fact, it has been constructed (Pring, 2000). Symbolic interactionism is in tune with ethnography and sees meanings "as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact" (Blumer, 1969, pp. 4-5). Though similar in nature, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism ask very different foundational questions (Patton, 2002, p. 81,104):

- Symbolic interactionism: "What common set of symbols and understandings has emerged to give meaning to people's interactions?"
- Phenomenology: "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?"

In contrast to symbolic interactionism, phenomenology does not produce "… empirical or theoretical observations or accounts. Instead, it offers accounts of experienced space, time, body, and human relation as we live them" (van Manen, 1990, p.184).

Table 3.1 Major features of popular theoretical perspectives used in academic research

Theoretical perspective		Ontology	Episte-mology	Basic Beliefs	Methodology used	Preferred Research Methods
Positivism		The world is external and objec-tive.	Objectiv-ism	• There is an absolute truth • Unbiased and independent observer • Science separates facts from values • All scientific propositions are based on facts • Researchers should formulate hypotheses and test them	• Survey research • Experi-mental re-search	• Operationalizing concepts • Measurement and scaling by quantitative methods • Statistical Analysis • Using Large Sampling
Post-positivism				• Absolute truth can never be found • Researchers' values and knowledge influence what is observed • Knowledge is shaped by data, evidence, and rational consideration • Researchers should neither prove a hypothesis nor reject it • Researchers must examine methods and conclusions for bias		
Interpretivism	Phenomenology	The world is socially constructed and subjec-tive.	Construc-tionism	• Observer is part of what is observed • Science driven by human interests • Researchers should focus on meanings • Understanding and description of people's subjective experience • Generating theory through induction	• Phenome-nological research	• Establish different views of phenomena through multi-ple qualitative methods • Small samples investigated in depth and/or over time • Case Study • Interview
	Symbolic inter-actionism			• Science is a socially constituted construction and not value-free • Researchers should investigate what meanings individuals assign to actions and symbols • Pragmatism as uncritical exploration of cultural ideas and values • Inductive theory building based on observation itself	• Ethnogra-phy • Grounded theory	• Qualitative methods • Participant observation • Theory emerging arises from the data
Critical realism		The world is socially constructed and objec-tive	Subjectiv-ism	• Observer is independent • Science driven by research interests • Researchers should focus on emerging outcomes, understanding and analysis • "Explanatory power" is always at the heart of a Critical Realists' assumptions • Combination of deductive and inductive understanding	• Action research • Ethnogra-phy	• Establish different views of phenomena through multi-ple qualitative and quantita-tive methods. • Emphasize multiple perspec-tives on problems • Build on research findings through the use of multiple methods

Adapted from Crotty (1998), Sayer (2000), Riley and Love (2001), Robson (2002), Easterby-Smith et al (2003), Maylor and Blackmon (2005), Blaikie (2007), Creswell (2009), Jenkins (2011)

Critical realism has been an influential paradigm in social sciences, with particular relevance to studies where the power, attitudes, values, and cultures of groups need to be conceptualized (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000, p.19). Researchers should be critical of the world around them and look for truth and explanations of phenomena—this is how the major idea of this philosophical perspective can be formulated. Critical realists apply the ontological position of positivists while taking into consideration phenomenological critique as far as epistemology is concerned. Employing this dualism, critical realists accept the complexity of research in social sciences and agree that knowledge about the external world may be imperfect and essentially different from the mental world of a mind but still can be acquired. Typically, critical realism allows the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods (Sayer, 2000) and provides a dynamic view that is specifically relevant to the studies of change.

The research objectives and the background to the research are the essential factors that have an influence on research methodology and design (Yin, 2012; Bryman, 2008). This thesis sets out to address the fundamental question of the evolution of free sports over time. Structural arrangements and values of free sports are the two key aspects to be examined within the theoretical frameworks of new institutionalism and resource-dependence theory. Research methodology was decided in three key steps:

- first, the decision to go for a qualitative approach was made;
- then, interpretivism was chosen as a theoretical paradigm;
- finally, phenomenological research was decided as the most appropriate methodological approach to the research problem and the context.

The next few paragraphs will explain the rationales behind these choices.

As pointed out in introduction, the literature prior to this study hinted that in terms of formal structures free sports were more loosely organized in comparison to mainstream sports. Organization of free sports was often driven by its culture and thus was based on informal connections rather than formal structural arrangements (Booth, 1995; Breivik, 2010). To evaluate values and informal arrangements by quantitative instruments is hardly possible. As far as studies of values are concerned, some authors (Choi and Scott, 2008; Colyer, 2000; Smith and Shilbury, 2004) used standardized instruments, such as Competing Values Framework, to quantitatively measure the behaviour of organizational members in sports. However, these attempts have been criticized as missing some “intangible” aspects of sporting cultures.

Studying culture in sport undoubtedly involves evaluating and structuring values, beliefs, symbols, and meanings, which are hardly feasible to operationalize quantitatively. There is no reliable and applicable framework able to study culture by quantitative methods with the same quality than it can be carried out via qualitative research. So it is derived clearly from the research question and research objectives that this particular study would require qualitative methodology to be used, as it is "in better position to view the linkages between events and actions and explore people's interpretations of the factors which produce such connections" (Bryman, 1988, p.102).

Next, considering the contrasting features associated with theoretical paradigms and taking into account the distinctive and meaningful culture of free sports, as well as widespread informal structural arrangements, it appeared that interpretivism by its very nature and ability to understand meanings would be the paradigm allowing relevant qualitative methods to be used in this study. This decision was about epistemological choice between objectivism, subjectivism and social constructionism. Within the specific context of this research, it was deemed necessary to retain the epistemological position of social constructionism as this perspective suggests that meaning and knowledge about phenomena are created by participants and dependent on time, cultural context, and their background (Molander, 2003). This inquiry was most influenced by the distinctiveness of values of free sports, which were initially created by participants themselves, so it employed the ontological assumption that the world is socially constructed, subjective and can be only understood through the experience of human beings. That was the rationale behind the choice of interpretivism as the theoretical paradigm for this research.

As the literature indicated that organization and culture of free sports mirrored how participants experienced these sports and how they felt about them, it was important to understand those individuals' experiences. This type of research problem is best understood through phenomenological form of research (Creswell, 2013). Also based on the background to the research discussed in introduction, it was suggested that this study needed to be primarily explanatory, but with aspects of description, because of the lack of existing research on the organizational evolution of free sports and the need to provide a thorough understanding of the research problem in this context. As it was necessary to describe phenomenon and find its roots, phenomenological study was seen as the most relevant methodological approach to fulfil these objectives. Phenomenologists aim to focus on meanings, understand people's subjective experiences associated with specific phenomenon and find its causes. As mentioned earlier, this is the fundamental difference between symbolic interactionism and phenomenology—the former makes no distinction between

appearance and essence, while the latter recognizes this distinction and looks for the essence of phenomena. So the adoption of phenomenological approach as the research methodology was deemed to allow the research goals to be achieved, both in terms of providing the rich description of organizational evolution of free sports and examining its essence.

Indeed the choice of phenomenology as the methodological approach of this research implied that there was a clear phenomenon to be studied. This is where the theoretical premises of the study helped to define the phenomenon clearly. One of the main pillars of new institutionalism, which served as conceptual framework for this study, is organizational field. As discussed within the literature review of theories and studies on organization of sports, the concept of organizational field was identified as a very applicable framework to free sports. Specifically, the notion of dominant institutional logics (macroculture) was thought to fit the context of organization of free sports historically known for distinctive and strong values. Another theoretical perspective, which was taken into consideration, was evolution of modern sports. So with quite a number of studies in the past attempting to examine organizational change in mainstream sports, this study meant to use the premises of new institutionalism to look at organizational field of free sports in wider perspective of evolution of modern sports. That is why the phenomenon of interest of this research was defined as the evolution of organizational field of free sports.

3.2. Process research strategy

Arguably, the review of literature did not provide any definite propositions that could be formulated from the existing theoretical perspectives and tested in the context of free sports. Although some theoretical instruments were identified as applicable to the research problem and structured to some extent, it was not possible to specify hypotheses for this research and express guiding questions with a high degree of formality. Thus it was reasonable to employ theory-informed research strategy, which meant being aware of the relevant theories rather than testing any specific hypotheses. This meant an iterating cycle of deduction and induction could be followed, where some deductive structuring was possible in the form of articulated research themes and questions, but only as ‘a prelude to a more open-ended process of inductive reasoning and pattern recognition' (Pettigrew, 1997, p.344). This approach has been advocated by Pettigrew (1997, 2012) and implied a consideration of connected theoretical approach to be used as a methodological framework for this research: *processual analysis*.

As suggested by Sminia (2009) and Pettigrew (2012), Henry Mintzberg is the father of processual reseach. Mintzberg was not interested in testing theory, but focused on developing theory from case study experience:

> Start with an interesting question, not a fancy hypothesis. Hypotheses close me down; questions open me up.
>
> Mintzberg (2005, p. 361)

As explained by Pettigrew (2012, p.1319), Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Burgelman (1994) followed Mintzberg in 'avoid[ing] theoretical preconceptions in empirical enquiry and … seeing theory as a process not a product'. Such an approach to theory building through inductive and deductive forms of pattern and mechanism recognition from case studies was developed by Pettigrew (1997, 2012) and is known as «process thinking». The assumption of processual analysis is that social reality is a dynamic process, so the aim of process analysis is to catch this reality in flight (Pettigrew, 1997, p.338). Processes include sequences of events and are embedded in contexts, so can only be studied as such.

Pettigrew (1997) suggested three key features / stages of processual analysis:

- Search for patterns in the process and attempt to compare the shape, character and incidence of patterns in cases compared to each other;
- Quest to find the underlying mechanisms that shape any patterning in the observed processes;
- Linking processes to outcomes, as the purpose of a processual analysis is to account for and explain the what, why and how of the links between context, processes and outcomes.

Therefore, the holistic ambition of processual analysis is not just pattern and mechanism recognition over time in context, but also linking them to the outcomes of the process under investigation. According to Pettigrew (1997, 2012), processual analysts can achieve this by asking themselves questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’:

> … repetitive questioning about ‘how’ embodies this constant search for underlying mechanisms which drive processes, and the equally repetitive questioning about ‘why’ is the key to establishing causal links between process mechanisms and outcomes.
>
> Pettigrew (2012, p.1316)

With regards to the topic of this research – organizational evolution of free sports, it was found that processual analysis approach would facilitate reaching the research objectives. Essentially, evolution is a process and can be considered as a sequence of events and actions embedded in context. Understanding the sequence and flow of events over time is a key objective of processual research approach (Pettigrew, 1997, p.341). Since it was necessary to reveal patterns and mechanisms of organizational evolution of free sports and relate them to outcomes, the process research perspective guided the research as it focused on these categories. It is also important that processual analysis is the concept that proved to work well specifically for phenomenological studies (Pettigrew, 1997, 2012). The next section will provide more specific details on how processual and phenomenological approaches defined specific methods of data collection and analysis for this study.

3.3. Research Methods and Design

Considering the research method and strategy chosen, the research design was then created to address the research questions by providing an insight into the topic and giving interpretations rather strictly testing theories. Since the phenomenology and processual research strategy were chosen as the guiding approaches of this study, the choice of case study as the research design was apparent. All the key literature that guided shaping of the methodology of this research (Pettigrew, 1997, 2012; Edwards and Skinner, 2009; Creswell, 2013) suggested that case study would be the most appropriate qualitative research design option, because it suits both the ideas of phenomenological and processual research approaches and is aimed at developing theory rather than testing one.

In methodological terms, case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a phenomenon organizing data by specific cases for in-depth study and comparison (Patton, 2002). As another point of relevance, it was known (Wolcott, 2001) that case study was the popular method and reporting format for research conducted using new institutional theory that serves as theoretical framework for this thesis as well. Yin (2009, p.2) suggests that

> … in general case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context.

As this statement indicates, the idea to use case study method fully reflects the choice of processual analysis to examine the evolution of free sports within this research. The most challenging task of processual analysis is establishing the causal links between context, process, and outcome through the interactive cycles of deduction and induction (Pettigrew, 1997). Although the focus of case study lies in the process and the context rather than the outcome (Merriam, 1998), the outcome can be used to "… provide an anchor in the study—a constant simple repetitive question which keeps the researcher on track through the interactive cycles of deduction and induction" (Pettigrew, 1997, p.344). The opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the problem and meanings is the major advantage of case study as a research method, which is completely in line with this research's targets.

One point needs to be addressed though: the definition of case study by Yin (2014) focuses on contemporary phenomenon, whereas this research also involves studying events in the past in order to assess the process of sport evolution. However, a careful consideration of Yin (2014) suggests that it is all about 'the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to entirely historical events' (Yin, 2014, p.12). This research still focuses on contemporary, mainly because the events in free sports that are within the scope of this research are fairly recent. For example, it was possible to interview people involved in the events that happened in free sports over the last thirty years, including the very first organized competitions. This type of evidence is not usually available in a conventional historical study. The case study's approach has a unique ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations – beyond what is usually available in historical study (Yin, 2014). It is discussed above that given a very limited body of literature in the field it was necessary for this research project to establish the knowledge of how structures and values of free sports evolved over time. Thus it has to be accepted that this research involves a degree of history, as a research method, which overlaps with the case study method.

As suggested by Yin (2014, p.31), defining the unit of analysis is ctitical for understanding of how case study might relate to any broader knowledge. Thus one of the key features of designing this study was defining and bounding the unit of analysis. It was relatively straight - forward methodological choice for this study, as the justification is as follows. First of all, it was evident from the very term "sports" and from the literature on free sports that they are predominantly classified based on two criteria: "sport" and "discipline". In other words, as the list of sports and disciplines (in **Appendix 1**) was created in reading/preparation stage of this project, then it became apparent

that units of analysis have to do with specific sports, because there are quite a few various activities united under the term “free sports”. Since the definition of the unit of analysis should be primarily informed by research objectives and potential contribution to knowledge, it was also reasonable to focus on particular sport (s) for the case study(-ies) because one of the ideas of this study was to contribute to knowledge on evolution of modern sports.

Then, with reference to the theoretical framework of this research and consideration of previous contributions, the choice of unit of analysis was also about studying sports either on micro level (specific organization or territory), or on macro level (whole international sport). There has been an evident lack of academic research on international organization of free sports, so it was necessary to provide historical documentation of the process of organizational evolution of these sports. In order to fulfil this, it was decided to consider specific sports, chosen for case studies, as whole systems and, consequently, not to limit the research to specific organizations or territories. In other words, essentially, the unit of analysis of this study is specific international sport. Within international sport no obvious subunits were identified prior to the start of case study research, and there was an intention to focus on the main unit of analysis rather than on smaller subunit level. Thus this study employed holistic case study design.

Furthermore, as the case is “bounded system” (Merriam, 1998, Creswell, 1998), the boundaries of the case should be defined, or the case should be separated from the context. This appeared to be a substantial problem in our case, because of the use of the concept of organizational field, which concentrates attention on more delimited sets of organizations, as described in Chapter 2. Still it was decided to define the boundaries of the case as organizational field of particular international sports, which means the bounded system is organizations and individuals that are involved in institutional life of particular sport. However, as suggested by Yin (2014, p.50), “every type of design will include the desire to analyse contextual conditions… with the boundaries between the case and the context are not likely to be sharp”. This view is in line with Pettigrew's processual case study approach: “whatever primary unit of analysis is chosen, that unit of analysis has to be contextualised” (Pettigrew, 1997, p.345). Therefore, the boundaries of this case study design were defined as organizational field of specific sports, but some room was left for expansion of the boundaries in order to contextualise the case to fit the research objectives and the development of the analytical framework.

There are several key considerations regarding case study design, which were discussed in literature (Yin, 2014, Creswell, 1998, 2013, Robson, 2002). The first one is whether to study a single case or multiple cases. As argued by Creswell (1998), this dilemma is mainly about choosing between the greater depth (single case) and the greater chance of generalizability of the results (multiple cases). Single case design is often selected for rare or extreme cases when the idea is to test an established theory. Conversely, the multiple cases study is more likely to generate more hypotheses primarily through comparisons between cases (Rose, 1991) that can be seen as an analogy to doing multiple experiments (Yin, 2014). Pettigrew (1992) also stressed the benefits of cross-case analysis rather than within-case analysis. Multiple case design addresses the key criticism of a single case model—poor validity due to the danger of subjective bias that leads to the research lacking its explanatory application. This can be done via consistent collection of the information on the same variables across different cases and its structured and focused comparison (King et al, 1994). Based on these theoretical inputs, it was decided that the research logic and benefits of multiple case study approach would suit the needs of this study better, as it is concerned with the explanation of the organizational evolution of free sports and generating hypotheses rather than testing a specific theory in-depth on a single case. The case study approach in this thesis is instrumental (Stake, 1995) rather than intrinsic. This means it is not about focus on a specific case because of its uniqueness, but about the cases, which are used instrumentally to understand the research problem.

The second fundamental issue when designing the case study research is the case selection as there must be a clear rationale behind purposeful sampling strategy. The underlying principle is that information-rich cases must be selected that fit the purpose of the study, available resources, and possible constraints (Patton, 1990). Referring to the typology of purposeful sampling strategies developed by Patton (1990) and advanced by Miles and Huberman (1994), Creswell (1998) suggested a number of strategies that can be considered for a case study research. After a careful consideration of those strategies, it was decided to employ intensity sampling strategy for this research. According to this strategy, the sample consists of information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely but not extremely (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

The selection of these cases was based on a set of criteria, which were elaborated in order to identify rich but not unusual cases that demonstrate different perspectives of the research problem. Cases must be unique but share a variety of features. Some information on various free sports was collected prior to the start of the actual research in order to facilitate this selection. Based on critical reflections on the qualitative approach to evaluation of organizational evolution

and considering the general nature of phenomena, the following six selection criteria were identified:

Substantial participation in professional sport

This requirement is essentially about the size of the sport. Along with some sports that have a short history, there are a number of free sports that do not have many professional participants over the world. This can be due to various reasons, such as accessibility of facilities, technical requirements, cost of participation, and traditions of sports. As this dissertation considers sports within an international perspective, the intention was to avoid sports with only a small number of professional athletes over the globe.

Existence of international organization in the sport

This thesis is about organizational evolution, so it was necessary to consider sports that currently have at least a minimal level of organization in international perspective. By this, it is meant there is at least one governing body claiming its international authority over the respective sport. This was a preliminary methodological consideration as further investigation into international sport governance and legitimacy is a part of this research.

International relevance of the sport

This requirement is also about the size of the sport but takes account of territories rather than number of professional participants. Similarly to participation, in order to have a comprehensive picture of international sports, it was decided to exclude sports that are relevant to and practiced in only a small number of countries. Examples of such sports are listed in the table below.

Existence of distinct values of activity

This was a necessary but intricate requirement as it was difficult to examine culture of the sports before immersing into the detailed investigation of them. However, as the cultural aspect has a significant role within this thesis, at the case selection stage it was important to exclude sports in which culture was not sufficiently distinctive and rich to allow its impact to be assessed. Thus, a preliminary assessment of values and traditions of several sports was conducted in order to select the rich and relevant cases in accordance with findings of the literature review on traditional cul-

ture of free sports. Ultimately, selected sports all have the respective terms "culture of particular sport" mentioned a substantial number of times in the literature and in media.

Similar time period of sport establishment and popularization

As outlined in the introduction, the majority of free sports have gone through a rapid popularization and commercialization over the last three decades. There are some sports that have a significantly longer (such as surfing) or shorter (such as freerunning) international history. However, it would be reasonable to avoid these extreme cases due to the following reasons:

- In the case of younger sports, the time period might not be enough for a study of evolution to take advantage of Pettigrew's (1997) processual analysis, which, as discussed earlier, studies a sequence of events and activities so requires a sufficiently long time period to be examined.
- As stated in the data collection section, interviewing sport founders and legends would be one of the primary data collection sources. In sports established in 1950-1960s, arguably, it would be more challenging to find and approach this type of interviewees.

Therefore, it was decided to exclude the sports where the first international competitions were held earlier than the 1970s and the sports that were created less than twenty years ago.

Practical considerations / Access

Inevitably, practical concerns must be taken into account. As face-to-face interviews were thought to be the primary source of data collection and were planned throughout the spring and summer 2013, it was necessary to identify major international free sports events within this period, where key informants from every sport can be met and interviewed. These events had to be affordable in terms of travel costs from the UK. Consequently, the selected events were the Arctic Challenge in Oslo, Norway (March 2013), the X-Games in Barcelona, Spain (May 2013), the X-Games in Munich, Germany (June 2013), and the Rockmaster in Arco, Italy (August 2013). Additionally, all the interviewees had to be fluent in English.

These developed selection criteria were applied to the list of free sports (**Appendix 1**). Based on the information and these criteria, 3 cases were selected out of all identified free sports: competitive snowboarding, sport climbing, and competitive skateboarding. **Table 3.2** explains how these cases fulfil the requirements.

Table 3.2 Selection of case studies

Selection Criteria	Competitive snowboarding	Competitive skateboarding	Sport Climbing	Contrasting Examples
Substantial participation in professional sport	There are more than 2300 men and 650 women in the 2014/2015 ranking list of TTR Pro snowboarding	There are around 400 men and 70 women in professional categories of the current ranking list of World Cup Skateboarding	Currently, there are about 230 men and 215 women in total in the official ranking of the only international governing body of sport climbing (the IFSC)	Cliff Diving, Motocross freestyle, and B.A.S.E. jumping are examples of sports that have had only 15-30 international professional athletes of the very top level
Existence of international organization in the sport	International governance since late 1980s	International governance since the middle 1990s	International governance since the middle 1980s	No international organization in parkour (freerunning) or ice cross downhill
International relevance of the sport	There are around 55 countries that have professional snowboarding athletes	There are 81 member countries of the International Skateboarding Federation	There are more than 80 member countries of the IFSC	Sports, such as Street luge and Stand-up paddling are practiced in just a handful of countries
Existence of distinct values of activity	"Culture of snowboarding" is a very much used term in literature and media	"Culture of skateboarding" can be found mentioned many times in literature and media	Traditional "culture of climbing" is a common term used in literature and media	Arguably, cultures of water ski or wakeboarding are not bold and rich enough to be studied as stand-alone phenomena
Similar time period of sport establishment and popularization	This sport was created in the 1970s and became an international sport in the early 1980s. The peak growth of snowboarding was from the middle of the 1990s until 2006.	Skateboarding was invented in 1950s. However, the first international competitions were held in the late 1970s - early 1980s. Skateboarding went through a few "waves" of popularity and decline. The biggest growth was in the late 1990s.	Sport climbing was created in late 1970s and saw first international competitions in the middle 1980s. This sports became very popular throughout the 1990s.	Surfing and windsurfing are established free sports, which were born in 1940-1950s. International contests in these sports were already held in the 1960-1970s. On the contrary, parkour (freerunning) is one of the recent biggest free sports: it was developed in the 21st century.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The choice of phenomenology as methodological approach and case study as research design implied the use of certain methods of data collection and analysis. Overall, this study was guided by five key methodological assumptions of phenomenological research, as suggested by Creswell (2013):

- **Clear definition of phenomenon**

As explained earlier in this chapter, evolution of organizational field of free sports was the phenomenon to focus on.

- **Who to ask**

The participants in the study needed to be individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon in question.

- **How to ask**

In order to gather the data leading to textual and structural description of experiences, the interviews were focused on two broad general questions (Moustakas, 1994): what have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? what context or situations have typically influenced or affected you experiences of the phenomenon?

- **Phenomenological data analysis**

It was focused on highlighting significant quotes to provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon and to develop those quotes into themes.

- **Writing a description of participants experience**

Themes were used to write case study reports: essentially, the description of what the participants experienced. The case study reports and cross-case analysis focused on the common experiences of the participants and presented the "essence" of the phenomenon.

The following sub-sections detail specific methods of data collection and analysis used in this study in accordance with these five key assumptions.

3.4.1. Data Collection Methods

One of the main advantages of case study methodology, which is necessary to describe and explain a phenomenon, is that it allows incorporating multiple research instruments within the case rather than over a sample (Bryman, 1989). There are not any particular "mandatory" methods of data collection for case studies (Merriam, 1998). Easterby-Smith (1994, p. 532) characterizes data collection methods in case study approach as flexible and opportunistic. Yin (2003, p.8) highlights the case study's unique "ability to deal with a full variety of evidence–documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations." So the research design was operationalized through the use of mixed qualitative methods appropriate to the given context and able to facilitate data collection for descriptive and explanatory research.

Below are the data collection methods and an explanation why they were considered essential for this case study research.

Primary data collection method

1. Open-ended interviews and correspondences with key informants in sports

Interviews served as the primary source of data for this dissertation. As it was aimed to provide a thorough explanation and analysis of the phenomenon concerned, it was necessary to collect a number of viewpoints on research problems that would drive investigation and interpretation. Open-ended interviews are thought to offer the richest and the most extensive data for these purposes. Especially if the access to stakeholders in organizations and communities is secured, the flexible approach of non-structured interviews provides insights into the case and reveals "how case study participants construct reality and think about situations" (Yin, 2012, p.12). This research aims to deliver the necessary "thick" data by conducting open-ended interviews with key people in selected free sports.

Three interviewee categories were identified in order to provide consistency of interviewees' profiles throughout three case studies and triangulation of evidence, which is one of the key advantages of the case study method (Bulmer, 1984; Bryman, 1988). Selected categories are:

- Sport founders/legends

As this research is about evolution and historical documentation of organization of sports, it was critical to obtain data and opinions on events of the past, specifically on the early years of selected sports. As well, in order to understand traditional values of free sports, it was necessary to speak to people who were involved in sports at the time of or shortly after the establishment. Therefore, obtaining data from founders and legends of the sports was necessary. In order to identify such people, a significant reading of literature on the histories of respective sports was done. The status of founders and legends of the sports are sometimes debatable, and also there are many names associated with early years of sports, so identification of and access to sport founders/legends are subject to the researcher's bias and should be treated accordingly.

- Active international elite athletes

This is the key source of interview data as this research focuses on opinions of and information from current athletes. As a brief overview of the context of the study demonstrated, historically athletes have played a key role in organization of free sports. Also, individuality and self-expression have always been key features of free sports, so these sports have been centred around individual athletes rather than teams, federations, or specific competitions. With due respect to other actors involved in free sports (spectators, coaches, media, or sponsors), this research assumed the athlete centrality in free sports and prioritized athletes as the interview category.

- Officials of sport governing bodies and/or event organizing institutions

Sport organizations are indeed the key pillar of this research project, so it was also critical to interview officials of key international organizations in every case. People in top strategic positions of sport governing bodies were prioritized and approached. In some free sports, for example, skateboarding, the role of event organizing institutions in international organization of sport has been no less (and often more) important than the role of governing bodies. In these instances, top officials from those institutions had to be interviewed.

Secondary data collection methods

2. Documentary analysis: regulations, guidelines, policy statements, letters, and official documents.
3. Analysis of media, including articles and materials from popular press, blogs, social media, TV features, video, and photo materials.

Documentary analysis supplements the data obtained from the interviews in two ways. First, preliminary study of the documents facilitates the interviews in terms of choice of respondents and identification of key themes and specific questions. Secondly, information from documents is beneficial in post-interview period of data analysis because it has been provided without research in mind (Bryman, 1989; Jones 1991; Burgess, 1991), which means the possible biases from the interviews are reduced. Documentary and media analysis as a secondary data collection method also reflects the idea that this research is aimed to study what happened in the past. Although free sports are relatively new phenomena, there is organizational history behind them, which needs to be evaluated. Documentary evidence obtained over a long time span increases the reliability of data obtained from respondents' memories, which is the key weakness of interviewing people about the past.

In the same way as the interview data related to the past are supported by documentary analysis, the validity of the research results can be improved if the messages about the present are supplemented by the corresponding evidence from other sources. As suggested by Robson (2002, p. 312), in order to validate or corroborate some interview findings, articles in press, blogs, social media posts, and comments were used as a supplementary method of data collection in this study. In the era of social media, which have recently been massively used by participants in and commentators on free sports, these sources of information were extremely helpful as they provided first-hand opinions with no media interpretations. In terms of data collection strategy, multiple and overlapping data collection is employed in this research. This means that the process of secondary data collection was not separated from interviewing, so the researcher was fully engaged in examining the issues (Patton, 2002).

3.4.2. Data Processing and Analysis

In contrast to other stages of research project, there are not any universal methods of case study data analysis (Yin, 2012). As argued by Patton (2002, p.438), in order to demonstrate to the reader "an idiosyncratic manifestation of the phenomenon of interest", the cases must be thoroughly understood through rich description, which provides the foundation for analysis and comparison of the cases. He notes that it is critical to provide a thick description first and separate it from interpretation of data. Considering this approach and the nature of multiple case study method, as well as learning from methodological contributions of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2012), the starting point for data analysis in this study was organizing gathered evidence by specific cases for further in-depth study and cross-case analysis. In order to make comparisons between the case studies possible, interview questions were aligned with the research objectives. **Table 3.3** presents some examples of questions and how they facilitated addressing research objectives. It must be noted though that these were just basic guidelines for interviewing as other questions were asked in semi-structured interviews, depending on the need to address specific sports issues.

All interviews were recorded with Android voice recording software on a Motorola Xoom tablet and backed up by the second recording device (mobile phone). All the recorded interviews were transcribed with the help of the standard VLC player and Microsoft Word 2011. The transcripts were imported into NVivo 10.0 software. This program was used to manage and group the data. In NVivo, the system of key words and nodes was developed based on the interview question guidelines. The emerged nodes / themes, under which the information was coded, included "Traditional values," "Olympic movement," and "Commercialization." The data was also coded with reference to time periods. Example of coding can be found in **Appendix 4.**

The NVivo software served as the main tool of content theme analysis in this research. The simplest applications of NVivo content analysis to this project were a word-frequency count and word-frequency charts. This was a useful starting point for data analysis as the assumption is that the more a word is used the greater concerns it reflects (Stemler, 2001, p.3). The major application of NVivo was to reduce data and synthesize it into themes and patterns in order to analyze and create a narrative. One of the main advantages of using NVivo as the content analysis tool was that it was possible to integrate data from various sources and in different formats: from the interviews to social media content (posts, comments, tweets).

Table 3.3 Interview Guide

Objective	Possible interview questions
to critically evaluate the process of organizational evolution of free sports	• What was the organization of this sport when you started to be involved in it? • At what stage did you feel this sport became professional? • How much do you think this sport is different from the times when you just started? • What is the role of athletes in decision-making in your organization now? • How do you see the future of this sport?
to reveal and analyze rationales and mechanisms behind changes in free sports	• What was the reason for that change? • How was that decision made? • How would you describe the strategy / goals of your organization? • What impact have sponsors had on this sport? • What impact has TV had on this sport? • What do you think about the place / role of the Olympic Games / the X-Games in your sport?
to investigate an evolution of structural arrangements in free sports	• What do you think of the current organization of international sport? • What is / was the role of this specific organization? • What do you think about international governing bodies in your sport? • Do you see your sport becoming similar to mainstream sport in terms of organization?
to examine whether/how values of free sports have changed	• What does this sport mean for you? • What are the values of this sport? • How important is to win competitions in your sport? • How important is to participate in the Olympic Games for you? • Is there any fear of the culture of this sport being lost / replaced?

The following techniques of data analysis were used in this research as suggested by Yin (2012), Patton (2002) and Edwards and Skinner (2009):

- Numerous readings in order to immerse in the data for the cases;
- Continuous themes and patterns searching and matching;
- Data reduction through coding of emerging themes and patterns;
- Explanation building through refining theoretical propositions and looking for alternative explanations of initial insights;
- Cross-case comparison and synthesis through replication logic, which addresses whether the findings from a limited set of cases support any broader patterns.

The phenomenological nature of this research suggests that data collection and its analysis should not be separated and may overlap. Patton (2002) argues that such overlapping is thought to improve the quality of both data and its analysis as long as the researcher does not allow initial interpretations to confine analytical possibilities. He encourages scholars to reflect on evidence, especially looking "for alternative explanations and patterns that would invalidate initial insights" (Patton, 2002, p.437). Therefore, the later stages of data collection in this study focused on confirming (or disconfirming) the appearing patterns and deepening insights into them.

The analysis was guided by processual analysis thinking, so as suggested by Pettigrew (1997, p.344), the following iterative cycle of deduction and induction was followed:

the core question of the study -> related themes and questions -> primary data collection -> early pattern recognition -> early writing -> elaborated themes and questions -> further data collection -> additional pattern recognition -> comparative analysis -> a more refined study vocabulary and research questions.

As long as this iterative strategy of overlapping data collection and analysis was chosen, "establishing converging lines of evidence" (Yin, 2012, p.13), or triangulating, was critical for creating theory and providing robust findings. As summarized in **Table 3.4,** patterns and themes appear from all sources of evidence–interview transcripts, media items, and documents. As noted by Phelps (2006, p.56), while interviews reflect the individuals' perspective, the secondary data sources allow the researcher to confirm, clarify, or contrast the interview statements. Therefore it was triangulation of data through which the consistency of emerging patterns, hypotheses, and findings was checked. It was through triangulation that the statements about evolution of organi-

zation of free sports became corroborated or contrasted in this research. Again, this triangulation strategy assumed the necessity of reflecting on the evidence retrieved as integral part of analysis.

After the data analysis was completed, three reports were produced for each of the case studies and then e-mailed back to all interviewees for validation. After the validation and some amendments, these reports were finalized as three separate chapters. Then the cross-case analysis was performed in order to identify commonalities and differences between these cases. During this analysis, possible explanations to identified unique and shared features were sought and evaluated. Cross-case analysis follows the case study reports.

It must be noted that from the very beginning of the data analysis and case study write-up, it was deliberately chosen not to focus on theoretical frameworks in the case study reports and cross-case analysis. This decision was taken in order to avoid being biased by the theoretical constructs, such as isomorphism, and avoid "pulling" the findings from the data to fit the theory. However the structure of case study reports and cross-case chapter was built to facilitate the discussion within the main theoretical constructs of institutionalism and resource-dependence theory. Even though each case study is a unique story of evolution of specific sport, each individual report follows the same structure that includes three major parts: history or organization of sport, structure of sport, and values of sport. After findings of each case study are grouped and compared in cross-case analysis chapter, the common and contrasting themes are discussed within theoretical constructs of new institutionalism and resource-dependence theory.

Table 3.4 Triangulation of evidence

Research Objectives	Interviews			Documentary analysis	Media and social media analysis
	Sport founders / Legends	Current elite athletes	Officials		
to critically evaluate the process of organizational evolution of free sports	Evidence possible	Evidence possible	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely
to reveal and analyze rationales and mechanisms behind changes in free sports	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely
to investigate an evolution of structural arrangements in free sports	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence possible
to examine whether/how values of free sports have changed	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely	Evidence likely

3.5. Quality of research: issues of validity and reliability

The trustworthiness of findings from qualitative, flexible research is much debated mainly because of the absence of a "standard" means of ensuring reliability and validity in comparison to quantitative designs (Robson, 2002, p.169). Therefore, it was of greater importance to take into consideration the concepts of validity, reliability, and generalizability with regards to this research. As far as the case study design is concerned, two types of validity should be taken into account: internal validity and external validity (generalizability). Internal validity is concerned with appropriate operational tools for the problems being researched and the rigour, which is applied to the research design, data collection, and analysis. (Easterby-Smith et al, 2003). A significant number of theorists (Denzin, 1978; Bromley, 1986; Stoecker, 1991) suggest that internal validity is improved through the triangulation mixed methods approach. Employment of data triangulation strategy (**Table 3.4**) in this research allowed multiple independent perspectives to be revealed.

Apart from triangulation, there are a number of other strategies to strengthen the internal validity of the study (Maxwell, 1992; Mason, 1996; Padgett, 1998; Robson, 2002). In this study, it was attempted to employ the following:

- Ensuring the valid description through the use of audio recording for all the interviews with subsequent transcription;
- Demonstrating the valid interpretation through continuous justification of the steps by which interpretations were made;
- Negative case analysis: looking for examples to disconfirm the research findings;
- Prolonged involvement in the setting: reduces threat of respondents biases through development of trusting relationships between researcher and respondents;
- Member checking: presenting transcripts and interpretations to respondents;
- Audit trail: keeping full record of the researcher's activities.

It is argued by Robson (2002, p.176) that in contrast to traditional quantitative research, most threats to validity in qualitative design research are "dealt with after the research is in progress" by using evidence to develop a tentative account. Therefore, the strategies above were employed continuously for validity assessment and improvement throughout the research.

External validity determines the degree to which results can be generalized. As far as this study is concerned, it means how valid the conclusions from three case studies can be in relation to all the free sports. However, Yin (2012, p.18) supports the argumentation of Bryman (1988), Rose (1991), Bergen and While (2000), and Edwards and Skinner (2009) and argues that due to a lack of quantification "small set of cases cannot generalize to any larger population, nor it is intended to". In Yin's (2012, p.19) words,

> … case studies tend to generalize to other situations (on the basis of analytical claims), whereas surveys and other quantitative methods tend to generalize to populations (on the basis of statistical claims).

This kind of generalization from case studies (often referred as analytical or theoretical generalization) is concerned with the development of theory, which is believed to improve understanding of other cases and problems (Ragin, 1987; Yin, 2003; Robson, 2002). To summarize the proposition of this research in terms of external validity, while cases studies are generally considered a weak basis for generalization in statistical sense (Edwards and Skinner, 2009), analytical generalization and explanatory theories are viewed as valid outcomes of this study. Also, as this research is designed as multiple case study, the cross-case synthesis is considered as analytical generalization (Edwards and Skinner, 2009, p.214), so the results of this thesis can be viewed as "mirroring" similar cases in a natural setting and may have applicability to other cases in similar environment (Yin, 2003; Cowley, Bergen, Young and Kavanagh, 2000).

Reliability is defined as "the degree of consistency or dependability with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure" (Polit and Hungler, 1991). In other words, the reliability of qualitative research can be warranted by operating in a systematic way, so procedures should be standardized. Regarding this study, its reliability was difficult to conceptualize beforehand, as an application of mixed methods approach to the context of free sports was pioneering. However, as this is a multiple case study research, the procedures and general rules were standardized for every case via case study protocol. As suggested by Yin (2003), the following sections are included for a case study protocol to be effective in assisting with reliability:

- An overview of the case study project;
- Case study questions;
- A guide for the case study report;

Reliability is also ensured through the following research features and techniques:

- Good accessibility of data;
- Standardization of some procedures in course of data collection such as notes taking and data transcription;
- Use of reliable equipment such as digital voice recorder, transcribing software, digital video camera;
- Clear description of status of the researcher, informant characteristics, and social conditions;
- A pilot interview to be conducted to develop the appropriate skills;
- Case data base, which allows reviewing the data directly .

There was a pilot study held to test the methodology in the winter of 2012-2013. A pilot study was about the sport of BMX in the UK. Three people (athlete, official, and retired athlete) from British competitive BMX were interviewed. The interview guidelines were tested during this pilot study. The feedback from pilot interviews facilitated some minor changes in interview guidelines to be made before the main study commenced. Overall, the pilot study demonstrated the relevance of the interview guidelines, the research protocol, and the triangulation approach to the study of the research problem.

Finally, it should be noted that despite having some procedures standardized, a significant degree of freedom and flexibility was provided during the interviews in order to ensure a vibrant discussion and real-life insight in accordance with phenomenological philosophy of this study.

3.6. Summary

In this chapter, methodological issues were discussed. It is derived from the research question and research objectives that this study requires qualitative methodology to be used. Considering the specific context of this research, it is argued that the interpretivist perspective fits as theoretical perspective for this study as it is necessary to retain the epistemological position of social constructionism and the subjectivist ontological assumption. The phenomenological research methodology is believed to allow reaching the goals of this research, the main idea of which is to provide an insight to the topic and seek interpretations rather than testing any hypotheses.

This methodological choice is realized through the employment of multiple case study as research design option. As the intensity sampling strategy was used, three cases to be researched are Snowboarding, Free climbing, and Skateboarding. The study of these particular sports is focused on their international organization, and not limited to any specific territories or organizations. The research design is operationalized through the use of mixed qualitative methods: open-ended interviews and correspondences, analysis of documents, media, blogs, and social media. Data collection and its analysis are not separated and may overlap. The issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability and the ways to improve them with regards to this particular study were also discussed in this chapter.

4. Case Study: Competitive Snowboarding

> *Snowboarding has always been, and will always be, two sports. One created by outcast punk rock kids who sought to connect with the natural world and turn the universe into artwork you ride on. And the other side, a competitive sport, based on an offshoot hybrid of skiing, surfing and skateboarding … There's no one path, one-way or one track. There is only this beautiful mountain that rises up, and this magical snow that falls down – and in the golden light of the middle space between the two, a generation that plays, lives and loves at the exact point where they both connect.*
>
> *Brad Steward, former professional snowboarding athlete, one of the first entrepreneurs of the sport, interview, 2014*

This chapter discusses the evidence collected on competitive snowboarding. Starting from the history of organizational development of the sport, the next sections examine the structural and cultural aspects of the sport. The organizational evolution of competitive snowboarding will be analyzed with focus on the introduction of the sport into the Olympic Games. Snowboarding has grown from a participatory activity to an established Olympic sport over the last three decades. As the activity of snowboarding became more attractive in commercial terms, its professionalization initiated a significant change in the way the events and governing bodies of competitive snowboarding are organized. This free sport was introduced to the Olympic Games in 1998 and has remained there since.

This case study addresses the question of how snowboarding has organizationally evolved over time from free sport to Olympic sport. This chapter provides a broader understanding of the structural and cultural features of snowboarding as it has gone through this process of evolution. The case study will provide a detailed explanation of patterns and mechanisms of organizational evolution of competitive snowboarding. It must be noted that for the purposes of this research competitive snowboarding includes freestyle disciplines of snowboarding, namely Halfpipe, Slopestyle, and Big Air. Although the racing disciplines of snowboarding, such as Slalom and Boardercross, are also competitive sports, they are excluded from the scope of this research, as they represent a completely different community and culture.

4.1. Data collection

Ten in-depth interviews with key informants in the sport, including current international snowboarders in Halfpipe and Slopestyle disciplines, officials from the key sport organizations, and former elite athletes, were conducted. All the interviews, except one, were face-to-face. The names of the interviewees, their positions, and backgrounds can be found in the **Table 4.1**. The main bulk of interviews were conducted during the visit to the Arctic Challenge, the international elite snowboarding event, which was held in Norway in March 2013. Although the interviews allowed a holistic picture of the changes in the organization of international snowboarding, it should be noted that no interviews were carried out with representatives of the FIS staff responsible for snowboarding, despite numerous approaches made. The research also drew upon a small number of recent studies of the organization of snowboarding conducted by scholars, such as Steen-Johnsen (2008) and Rails (2011), as well as journal and media articles, social network and Internet forum discussions. These documents are listed in the **Table 4.2**.

4.2. Organizational evolution of competitive snowboarding

In this section the evidence collected on the case study is summarized and examined. First, there is a history of organization of international competitive snowboarding, which outline the major stages of snowboarding's transformation from first competitions to the Olympic sport. Second, the values of snowboarding are discussed in terms of how they have changed over the years of the sport's development. Finally, there is a section on the structure of international competitive snowboarding, which outlines specific features of the sport's formal organization on international and national levels.

Table 4.1: List of interviewees

<table>
<tr><th>SPORT FOUNDERS / LEGENDS</th><th>OFFICIALS</th><th>ACTIVE COMPETITIVE SNOWBOARDING ATHLETES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Brad Steward,
USA, 45 years old,
former professional snowboard athlete, one of the first entrepreneurs of the sport. Currently he is Marketing Director of Bonfire and Salomon Snowboarding.
(interviewed by e-mail)</td><td>Gerhard Heiberg,
Norway, 73 years old,
The IOC Member; the Head of the IOC Marketing Committee; Member of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports; Chairman of the Lillehammer 1994 Olympic Organising Committee</td><td>Roger Kleivdal,
Norway, 25 years old,
professional snowboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Terje Haakonsen,
Norway, 38 years old,
former competitive snowboard athlete. Recently he has been involved much in video filming and event organization.</td><td>Cecilia Flatum,
Norway, 38 years old,
The Vice-President of the World Snowboarding Federation, the President of Norwegian Snowboarding Association</td><td>Luke Mitrani,
USA, 22 years old,
professional snowboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">Reto Lamm,
Switzerland, 43 years old,
Former professional snowboarding athlete,
co-founder of TTR Pro Snowboarding.
Currently he is the President of
the TTR World Snowboarding Tour</td><td>Louie Vito,
USA, 25 years old, professional snowboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Scotty James,
Australia, 18 years old, professional snowboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Christian Haller,
Switzerland, 24 years old, professional snowboarding athlete</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4.2: Documents used in the preparation of the case study report

Author	Title	Access
The IOC	Olympic agenda 2020: 20+20 recommendations	http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic_Agenda_2020/Olympic_Agenda_2020-20-20_Recommendations-ENG.pdf
The IOC	Olympic agenda 2020: Context and background	http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Olympic_Agenda_2020/Olympic_Agenda_2020-Context_and_background-ENG.pdf
Heino, R.	What is so punk about snow-boarding?	Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 2000, 24, pp.176-191.
Humphreys, D.	Snowboarders: Bodies out of con-trol and in conflict	*Sporting Traditions,* 1996, 13 (1), 3-23
Humphreys, D.	'Shredheads go mainstream'? snowboarding and alternative youth	International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 1997, 32(2), 147-160.
Natives	ISF folds operations	http://www.natives.co.uk/news/international-snowboard-federation-folds/4625
Larsen, M.	TTR and FIS create task force	http://sports.espn.go.com/action/snowboarding/news/story?id=6700691
Larsen, M.	FIS rejects TTR proposal, talks end	http://xgames.espn.go.com/snowboarding/article/7219564/fis-rejects-ttr-proposal-joint-olympic-qualification-system-negotiations-end
Larsen, M.	Terje and the IOC	http://xgames.espn.go.com/snowboarding/article/5771760/terje-haakonsen-ioc-delayed-decision-include-not-include-slopestyle-olympics
Larsen, M.	Meet Mr. IOC	http://espn.go.com/action/snowboarding/news/story?id=6132274
Popovic, M.	From Terje to the Flying Red To-mato: snowboarding's incorpora-tion into the Olympic Games	Proceedings: International Symposium for Olympic Research. Oct. 1, 2006, pp. 157-168
Rails	Project RAILS: Reviewing and ana-lyzing the international level of snowboarding	Master student project (2011)
Steen-Johnsen, K.	Networks and the organization of identity: The case of Norwegian snowboarding	European Sport Management Quarterly, 2008, 8(4), 337.
Transworld Sport	Snowboard history timeline	http://snowboarding.transworld.net/uncategorized/snowboard-history-timeline-part-31990s/ http://snowboarding.transworld.net/uncategorized/snowboard-history-timeline-part-21980s/
Leigh, E.	First Dissent: Who Runs Snow-	http://www.redbull.com/en/snow/stories/133

	boarding? Part 1	1582331450/first-dissent-who-runs-snowboarding-part-1
Leigh, E.	First Dissent: Who Runs Snowboarding? Part 2	http://www.redbull.com/en/snow/stories/1331582839664/first-dissent-who-runs-snowboarding-pt2
Austin, L.	Terje Haakonsen On The FIS Decision	http://www.snowboarder.com/featured/terje-haakonsen-on-the-fis-decision/
www. Snowboarder.com	WAS Launch: We Are Snowboarding	http://www.snowboarder.com/news/was-launch-we-are-snowboarding/
Gross, G.	Why the IOC can no longer ignore the World Snowboard Tour part 1	http://snowboarding.transworld.net/photos/why-the-ioc-can-no-longer-ignore-the-world-snowboard-tour-part-1/
Gross, G.	Why the IOC can no longer ignore the World Snowboard Tour part 2	http://snowboarding.transworld.net/photos/why-the-ioc-can-no-longer-ignore-the-world-snowboard-tour-part-2/
www.boardsportsource.com	Interview with Reto Lamm	http://www.boardsportsource.com/#!/article/the-friday-interview-ttr-tour-2-0-centralizing-riders-tv-rights
Barr, M.	Terje Haakonsen: Why I still hate the Olympics	http://whitelines.com/features/comment/terje-haakonsen-why-i-still-hate-the-olympics.html
Bridges, P., Andersen, H.	Boycott the Olympics: The IOC Needs Snowboarding More Than We Need Them	http://www.snowboarder.com/featured/boycott-the-olympics-the-ioc-needs-snowboarding-more-than-we-need-them/
Passan, J.	It's time for snowboarders to do one thing: Boycott the Sochi Games	sports.yahoo.com/news/it-s-time-for-snowboarders-to-do-one-thing--boycott-the-sochi-games-221805274-olympics.html
Morgan, E.	The Death of Style in Contest Snowboarding? Ethan Morgan and Sage Kotsenburg Speak Out	http://onboardmag.com/features/talking-points/the-death-of-style-in-contest-snowboarding-ethan-morgan-and-sage-kotsenburg-speak-out.html
Ligety, T.	Tyranny of FIS	http://www.tedligety.com/opinion/
Barr, M.	Shaking Hands With The Devil: Final Throw	http://snowboarding.transworld.net/photos/shaking-hands-with-the-devil-final-throw/
Hope, N.	Sochi 2014: Can the Winter Olympics rival the X-Games?	http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/winter-sports/24225868
Branch, J.	Snowboarder Danny Davis's Ambivalent Comeback	http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/16/sports/snowboarder-danny-davis-sochi-olympics.html?_r=1

4.2.1. The history of organization of competitive snowboarding.

Competitive snowboarding has always been a part of a bigger phenomenon of snowboarding activity. As professional snowboarding athlete Christian Haller suggests, competitive snowboarding is very different from most other sports, as

> … it is not only sports, but also is a lifestyle and big community behind that … there are so many different approaches. People can never ride a contest, but they can live from snowboarding. And there is a competitive side of snowboarding, which is kind of another world. You know it is up to you – there are a lot of opportunities [to do snowboarding].
>
> Christian Haller, professional snowboarder, Switzerland (2013, interview)

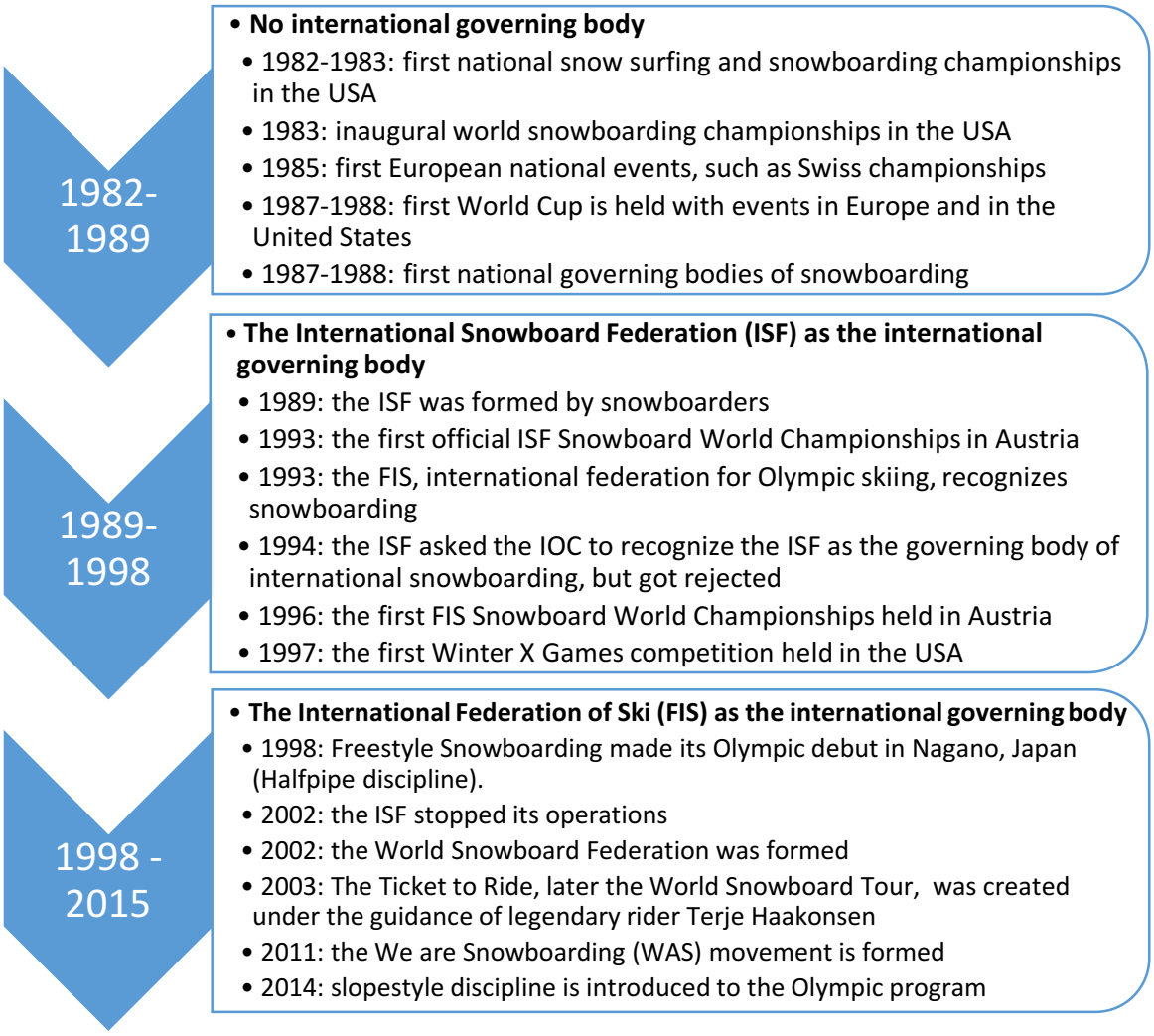
Therefore, the competitive aspect of this activity can be seen as only one of the opportunities for snowboarding participants. The first national and international snowboarding competitions were held in the early 1980s. The first national governing bodies were formed soon after in the USA: North American Snowboard Association in 1987 and United States Amateur Snowboarding Association in 1988. **Figure 4.1** summarizes the main organizational developments of competitive snowboarding over the last three decades, which will be discussed in detail below.

4.2.1.1. The origins and features of initial organization of international snowboarding

It emerged from the research that historically the development of snowboarding has not been primarily driven by governing organizations. As it was pointed out by Steen-Johnsen (2008, p.343):

> … a strong link has always existed with commercial interests, such as board and equipment producers, magazine publishers and filmmakers. It may be argued that in co-operation with private event organizers, the snowboard industry has been a driving force in developing the snowboard culture. The nature of this culture is global, as magazines and products are distributed and consumed worldwide, and as events and films represent a modern ‘‘circus’’ that moves continuously from one location to the next …

Figure 4.1: Timeline of the history of organization of international competitive snowboarding



Sources: Transworld Sport (1996), RAILS (2011), Natives (2002)

In the early 1990s, snowboarding became an attractive platform for marketing of various brands to a young audience. Its popularity increased and made some commercial actors, such as the NBC Sports and the ESPN, to start organizing action sport events, such as the X-Games and Dew Tour, which included snowboarding. Since then, the X-Games, run by a TV company and supported by major beverage producers, have been considered by snowboarding athletes as the most credible snowboarding event in the sport, as highlighted by Louie Vito:

> I definitely do all the X-Games … because this is a great TV coverage for us in the [United] States. Most of the US contests are either on ESPN, or on NBC. And that is really big.

Louie Vito, professional snowboarder, USA (interview, 2013)

Athletes benefit from the X-Games in terms of individual commercial opportunities due to the role of TV coverage and sponsorship in modern sport. However, their love for this event is not only due to commercial reasons. Winning the Olympic Games presents even greater opportunity in terms of commercial potential, but most interviewed athletes also indicated that, even though they put an extra effort in order to qualify for the Olympics because of the commercial benefits, they still consider winning the X-Games as the most credible competitive achievement within the snowboarding community.

> [The Olympic Games] . . . is not necessarily the biggest contest in snowboarding. But outside of the snowboarding it gives the viewers a perspective what is that sport like . . . But in the actual snowboard world I don't think it really matters. The X-Games feels just bigger, for example. The Olympics are just more credible to the outside world.
>
> Luke Mitrani, professional snowboarder, USA (interview, 2013)

The reasons why the X-Games are more respected than the Olympic Games can be summarized in two arguments. Firstly, the X-Games are organized by the people from the snowboarding community and in consultation with the athletes in terms of contest setup, safety, judging system, and athlete facilities. So the X-Games are very much respected as a commercial organization with great understanding of snowboarding. There has been a difference in perception of commercial actors from snowboarding community and others who are not:

> A sharp line was drawn in the interviews between commercial actors that were not part of the snowboard culture and who seek to profit from it, such as banks or other commercial businesses… and commercial actors that belong to the snowboard network, such as board producers and magazines.
>
> Steen-Johnsen (2008, p.343)

In other words, the companies seeking only profits from snowboarding have not been welcomed by the snowboarding community, whereas commercial and media businesses integral to the activity have been respected. Therefore, even though the X-Games represented commercial interests, they have been always perceived as part of the snowboarding network. Secondly, the organization and environment at the X-Games encourages creativity and self-expression and are

more relaxed and closer to the snowboarding culture, rather than the very formalized, technical, and competitive Olympic culture.

> I would love to win the X Games more than have a gold medal [of the Olympic Games], for sure… [At the Olympics] it's not so much about who did the best run… It's about who did the most flips and the most spins. I hate that about it. I don't agree with it.
>
> Danny Davis, professional snowboarder, the United States (New York Times, 2014)

The example of the X-Games demonstrates that commercial actors have a deep credibility in snowboarding, and some of them have more cultural legitimacy than governing bodies.

Nonetheless, the international snowboarding community created a number of institutional structures (Heino, 2000). To facilitate the rapid growth of snowboarding as a professional sport, the International Snowboard Federation (ISF) was formed by snowboarders in 1989. It was, however, very different from conventional sport federations. The ISF was created as a global governing body for the sport with an intention to organize and control international competitions and to develop the sport in a way that would ensure its culture would be maintained (Rails, 2011; Popovic, 2006). An earlier board member of the ISF, interviewed by Steen-Johnsen (2008, p.344), emphasized that:

> . . . snowboarding was a sport that from the outset was not particularly organized. But still we were running an internationally comprehensive work organizing competitions. And from the time when the first snowboard was seen on the slopes, we were innovators and created the culture and image around snowboard activities. But this was the snowboarders' own work; they determined the rules. They were behind the development and very few adults interfered.

The word "adults" here highlights not only that snowboarding has its roots in the youth culture, but also the idea that the ISF organized snowboarding differently from the mainstream federations. While mainstream sport organizations acted in a formal "adult" way, the ISF advocated an informal way of organization for snowboarding and remained "the kids in baggy pants and backward hats" rather than businessmen in suits (Natives, 2002). This lack of formal organization meant that regulations emerged progressively, were developed by the snowboarding community and managed by the ISF, which described itself as not just a sport governing body but a "lifestyle/peace movement and philosophy" (Natives, 2002). It was necessary for the ISF to be more than a sport federation in order to be culturally legitimate in the international snowboarding

community as it had been an anti-establishment community to a significant extent. The ISF played a leading role in the organization of the sport in the early 1990s representing "a common cause and a collective counter-culture identity to traditional sport" (Steen-Johnsen, 2008, p.344) and developing snowboarding in a way to preserve the lifestyle (Popovic, 2006).

Due to this, the ISF evolution was very different from the development of a conventional sport governing body that usually involves formalization, bureaucratization, and "the new forms of integration and differentiation inside the organization" (Gomez et al, 2008, p.8). This was highlighted in the interview of Reto Lamm (2013), a former elite professional snowboarder and the current President of the TTR World Snowboarding Tour, who said that snowboarding:

> . . . has been a progressive sport since the beginning . . . In the very beginning the idea of snowboarding was a new sport that has a different approach to everything.

The ISF had never been much concerned about formalization of competitions but, for example, rather had to push the progress of snowboard technology via contests:

> It [the ISF] was a bunch of riders who organized events and who organized the things to make it more fun for themselves . . . . They were always willing to try something new. It was through competition in the ISF that modern race boards were designed… Unlike the more stuffy, bureaucratic International Ski Federation . . .[that] have a 300-page book to tell you how to do (an event).
>
> Christian Hrab, snowboard coach, former snowboarder, Canada (Natives, 2002)

The ISF acted as a network. It served as a facilitating organization for professional snowboarders, event organizers, media, photographers, and producers but did not organize them in any formal sense (Steen-Johnsen, 2008). At the national level, snowboarding federations were created in countries such as the USA, Norway, Canada, Switzerland, and Japan. However, these federations were not directly governed by, but were aligned with, the ISF in an informal way. At the local level, these "soft" governance arrangements reflected quite a distinctive feature of the organization of snowboarding: grassroots participants were not institutionalized by governing bodies (Rinehart and Sydnor, 2003), or, in other words, the organization of snowboarding had been formalized only to a certain extent with regards to competition of elite athletes.

4.2.1.2. Introduction to the Olympic Games

It is argued (Heino, 2000; Rinehart, 2003; Steen-Johnsen, 2008) that snowboarding gradually became more mainstream and lost a big part of its rebelliousness throughout the 1990s with the heavy spread of competitive snowboarding in mainstream media and its usage in marketing. As suggested by Rinehart (2003), this happened due to the move from expressive sport (driven by participants) to spectacle sport (driven by rewards), which led to the adoption of "must win" logic among at least some snowboarders. As competitions got extremely popular and became a source of income for athletes, by the middle of 1990s competitive snowboarding was accepted by most athletes, so it was not in a complete opposition to mainstream sports and skiing, in particular, anymore.

Commercialization and worldwide growth of popularity of snowboarding triggered its inclusion into the Olympic programme that had the biggest impact on the organization of the sport and brought controversy. As Gerhard Heiberg (2013), the IOC member and the Head of the IOC Marketing Commission, explained in the interview, in the middle 1990s, when the IOC realized that the Olympic Games were not good at addressing young people, this organization identified snowboarding as an attractive sport for young audiences:

> I was also Chairman, President and CEO of 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games. And from that on, I have seen that the IOC is not good enough to take care of the young people. So . . . we started to talk about how to get young people more interested in sports and especially in the Olympic Games . . . So we put on snowboard in 1998 in Nagano and we have developed snowboard together with the people from the skiing federation. This has been very important task for us: to try and find the right sports for people, let's say, between 16 and 24 years old. Snowboarding is a very good example of action sports.

The search for the relevant sports has been ongoing since, but snowboarding became arguably the first and the best example of a free sport, which was selected by the IOC and included into the medal program of the Winter Olympic Games since 1998.

In order for a sport to become an Olympic sport, there must be an international governing body, which is recognized by the IOC as the one and the only legitimate (in terms of the Olympic movement) organization responsible for the sport globally (IOC, 2015). The introduction of snowboarding was different from the introductions of other new Olympic sports in the 1990s, for example, badminton in 1992 or triathlon in 2000, which followed the application of their respective international federations for IOC recognition and subsequent inclusion in the program. However, it is argued by Steen-Johnsen (2008) and Rails (2011) that the ISF was never intending snowboarding to become a part of the Olympic movement. In other words, before 1994, the ISF, the leading international governing body of snowboarding run by the snowboarders themselves, never was pro-active in terms of the Olympic application and had no intention of fulfilling the IOC criteria in order to be recognized by the Olympic movement.

Snowboarding was "fast-tracked" into the Olympic program under the umbrella of the International Federation of Ski (FIS), the global governing body for skiing and has remained there since. According to the IOC member Gerhard Heiberg (2013, interview), the FIS (that was already the IOC recognized international governing body for various ski sports) proposed snowboarding for the Olympic program in 1994, shortly after the Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer. One of the leading snowboarding athletes at that time and the current President of the TTR World Snowboarding Tour, Reto Lamm (2013, interview) suggests that delegating the right to run the Olympic snowboarding to the FIS was probably the cheapest and the easiest option for the IOC:

> Basically the IOC doesn't want more international federations because for them it will be more cost and more work. This is why they give the FIS the mandate to work with snowboarding, to find a solution.

As the snowboarding community were wary of a kind of organization such as the FIS, characterized by Transworld Snowboarding Magazine as a "bureaucratic giant," in 1994 the ISF asked the IOC to recognize the ISF as the governing body for international snowboarding but received "a three sentence reply" from the IOC that the FIS already governed that discipline (Transworld, 1996). At that time, the IOC was not willing to provide any explanation to the ISF, but the reasons behind that decision were described by Gerhard Heiberg (2013) in his interview:

> . . . the mentality of the snowboarders was a little different from the mentality of — let's call it — traditional sports on the Olympic program. So these young people

> came with a different attitude, with a different mentality especially in the beginning. So at the IOC we felt that it was good that the FIS takes care of them.

This statement from the IOC official suggests that the IOC considered the FIS, which was a traditional and very hierarchical governing body, as the only organization able to look after snowboarding athletes.

However, it is also possible that an alternative reason why the FIS pro-actively claimed the governance of Olympic snowboarding was the commercial attractiveness of the sport. As outlined in the first chapter, the Olympics are highly commercialized event, so the sports included in the program are provided with significant funding from the IOC and also have indirect benefits, such as sponsorship and media rights valued at much more for Olympic sports than for non-Olympic sports. As Reto Lamm explains in his interview, at the time of snowboarding's inclusion the FIS had a clear understanding of possible benefits of the decision to take over the sport:

> . . . snowboarding is very attractive sport commercially. So the FIS had a genuine interest to get their hands on snowboarding, because it is a young and booming market in the whole world. And at that point if FIS would have said "No, we don't want to deal with snowboarding," it would have stayed with snowboarders. But the FIS wanted to take it and the IOC gave it to the FIS.
>
> Reto Lamm, former professional snowboarder and the current President of the TTR World Snowboarding Tour (2013)

Similar opinions have been also raised by Heino (2000) who highlights that the FIS accepted snowboarding as effectively one of the ski disciplines, having no prior interest in it and no understanding of its culture.

There is also an opinion that it is likely that the IOC decision to empower the FIS with the right to run Olympic snowboarding was driven by established commercial relationships between the IOC, the FIS, and the Olympic sponsors. This position has been mainly advocated by Terje Haakonsen, one of the best international competitive snowboarders of the 1990s, who has been an influential figure in snowboarding over the last two decades and is known as the only snowboarding athlete boycotting the Olympic Games. When explaining how iconic Terje Haakonsen was, Henning Anderson noted:

> Throughout the 1990s, Terje Haakonsen was more triumphant in halfpipe snowboarding than Christiano Ronaldo is in soccer today. He said no to the Olympics because the IOC gave his sport to the International Ski Federation (FIS). Terje was only twenty-four. According to his peers at the time he could easily have won the gold medal, but his consciousness said no. To this day, he is the only individual athlete having said no to the IOC and the Olympics based on sports political reasons. In all these years after his decision, he has been warning his fellow snowboarders about the Olympic pitfall . . .
>
> Henning Andersen, the organizer of the Arctic Challenge snowboarding event, in Bridges (2014)

Terje Haakonsen claims that "they [the IOC] gave FIS, a ski federation, control of snowboarding, totally for commercial reasons" (Haakonsen, 2014). In his interview in 2013, Terje also suggests that

> . . . the IOC possesses so much political power in the sporting world. Commercial companies and the TV companies saw this sport [snowboarding] growing insanely and capturing a lot of TV viewers . . . And of course, the FIS President goes to the same dinners with the IOC guys and sits on the same boards with them . . . They [the IOC officials] are only there for commercial interests. So of course an idea was born why should not they include snowboarding in the Olympics. They [the IOC officials] knew what they were doing.
>
> Terje Haakonsen, the influential snowboarder of the 1990s (2013, interview)

In other words, Terje Haakonsen claims that commercial interests were the key factor in the FIS decision to take over the snowboarding in the middle 1990s. This position has not had much support from current professional riders. It has had some support from some former international snowboarders, such as Reto Lamm, who also suggested in his interview that from the IOC position it was a political decision rather than a commercial one, so the IOC was clearly in a position to influence the FIS to bring the competitive snowboarding under its governance and into the Olympic program. However, even though both Terje Haakonsen and Reto Lamm are coming from snowboarding community, their opinions on the IOC and the FIS cannot be considered independent as they are both stand behind the TTR organization:

> Our thought-leader Terje hates on the Olympics because the skiers are in charge, but he can't really be considered a neutral, given that it would be hugely in his in-

> terest for the TTR/WST/Latest Acronym to become the vehicle through which qualification took place. I have absolutely no doubt that his primary objective is to do what is best for snowboarding, but he is not exactly independent.
>
> Whitelines (2014)

Overall, the discussion above suggests there might have been a number of organizational, cultural, political, and commercial reasons for the IOC to delegate the Olympic snowboarding to the FIS.

4.2.2. Values of snowboarding

The culture of snowboarding activity was anti-competitive from the beginning as it was built on and characterized by the major features of all "board cultures," mainly skateboarding and surfing, which emphasized individuality, play, and a strong sense of expressionism (Heino, 2000; Steen-Johnsen, 2008). The early snowboarders "embodied freedom, hedonism and irresponsibility" (Humphreys, 1996, p.9) in contrast to the expensive and bourgeois sport of skiing, which was framed by a strong set of rules of conduct (Thorpe and Wheaton, 2011). A majority of ski resorts originally banned snowboarders because they behaved and dressed differently and often broke resorts regulations. So snowboarding was an underground activity in the backwoods with some competitions but in a form of social gatherings rather than organized contests (Rails, 2011). As the interviews indicate, the majority of professional snowboarders still feel their sport is closer to skateboarding and surfing than skiing, even though the sport of snowboarding has been effectively managed by skiing governing bodies for almost two decades. To emphasize this, many athletes expressed their honour at representing Burton, the manufacturer of snowboarding equipment and apparel, that is solely created and owned by snowboarders, rather than mainstream sport brands. For example, Cristian Haller, professional snowboarder from Switzerland, says in his interview that he is

> . . . really proud to ride for Burton cause it is snowboarder-owned, privately-owned company . . . It is hard these days for companies like this. They struggle and they don't do things like beachwear, skiing shirts etc. I like that. Snowboarding has its own thing, and it will always be like this I think.

Individualism and non-competitiveness have historically been distinctive features of snowboarding more closely aligned with the precepts of "play" rather than with the routine of training and

performance emphasized in the standardized environment of mainstream sports. A vivid example of this is the current Olympic snowboarding champion Sage Kotsenburg from the USA, posting the following statement in the Twitter social network in an attempt to demonstrate how snowboarding culture is different from the mainstream sports:

> "Training" and "snowboarding" should never be used in the same sentence
>
> Kotsenburg (2013)

In line with this statement and despite the institutionalization and adoption of a "must-win" culture in competitive snowboarding, most interviewees still consider the traditional values of snowboarding such as creativity, play, fun, and friendship as more important than hierarchy, nationalism, and winning. Even today, when snowboarding is a well-established Olympic sport, it is culturally not all about competitions and winning, as noted in the interview of professional snowboarder Luke Mitrani:

> We do the contests, but we also ride together and have fun, because that's why we love snowboarding. I don't snowboard because I want to win a contest. I snowboard because of the same reason I started doing it—because it is just fun.
>
> Luke Mitrani, professional snowboarder, USA (2013, interview)

The role of competition has always been perceived of limited significance among all activities in snowboarding: for example, free riding activities and video making have always been as important as competition. This has been highlighted by both previous research (Breivik, 2010) and several interviewees in this research, such as current professional snowboarding athlete Christian Haller:

> For me still freeriding and filming are the absolute main goals of a snowboarder, I feel. You can do that after the contest career as well. I have a kind of core vision of snowboarding I like – and that's free snowboarding I pay a lot of attention to ... and it is a great way to express your individual and your character.
>
> Christian Haller, professional snowboarder, Switzerland (2013, interview)

This opinion is coming from one of the best contemporary snowboarders, who focuses his career on competitive snowboarding but accepts that this is only one dimension of contemporary snowboarding activity among the others. The most popular of snowboarding non-competitive activities over the last two decades was filming the videos that represented "an alternative source of employment for snowboarders that are anti-competitions because they provide snow-

boarders the opportunity to receive sponsorship and recognition amongst their contemporaries" (Coates, Clayton and Humberstone, 2010, p.1087).

Olympic snowboarding has never been considered by the elite athletes as the dominant or the most important way of snowboarding. According to professional snowboarder Luke Mitrani, the fact that Olympic snowboarding makes the general public more aware of snowboarding does not cancel the existence and the importance of other snowboarding activities:

> . . . there will always be another side to it [snowboarding]. And that is the side that would be cool for us to show the people. There are two sides of it — the competitive one and then just snowboarding — exploring mountains and having fun. And a lot of people, for instance, who watch the Olympics can only see the competitive side of it.
>
> Luke Mitrani, professional snowboarder, USA (2013, interview)

These words from a young rider are in line with position of Terje Haakonsen, one of the veterans of snowboarding, who suggests in his interview that ". . . this is only the competition part. People who are doing freeriding are not involved in contests and are not caught up in that politics."

Essentially, the Olympic movement manifests the competitive aspect of sport and reflects the cultural ideals of western capitalist sport that snowboarders were opposed to. Therefore, the FIS and the IOC encountered a lot of cultural resistance when snowboarding was introduced to the Olympic Games. Brad Steward, one of the first influential snowboarders and entrepreneurs, provides several examples of how neglectful the FIS was to the culture of snowboarding:

> It's hard to imagine now, but some of the original FIS ideas for snowboarding included the following: Snowboarders will wear the same uniform as the ski team. Snowboarders will each be asked to do the same group of tricks, whoever completes that group of tricks the best will win. No music in the Pipe. Alpine will be the predominant discipline. All athletes will train solely with the team and all equipment used in the Olympics must pay a FIS Pool fee to belong (big money). Coaches will select all riders, none of the existing US events will qualify Olympic team athletes... I could go on.
>
> Brad Steward, former professional snowboarder, USA (interview, 2014)

The ideas listed above are simply unthinkable for freestyle snowboarders because athletes in this sport have always embraced the culture of creativity, individuality, and fun. That is why it was unthinkable for them to wear uniforms, do the same tricks, train only within teams, and ban music. The mentioned ideas were not realized, but, inevitably, since the inclusion of snowboarding into the Olympic Games, snowboarders have been very concerned that "snowboarding values such as creativity and individuality would lose ground to nationalism and professionalism with FIS in the large Olympic machinery" (Rails, 2011, no page number). They resisted not the particular competition but rather the organizational hegemony and bureaucratic style of the IOC and the FIS that promoted snowboarding as part of the dominant culture under the discipline of skiing (Heino, 2000; Coates et al., 2010). Overall, it can be concluded that cultural change was resisted among the elite international snowboarding in the early years of its Olympic journey, and traditional snowboarding values have remained relatively strong.

However, over the last two decades, the current international athletes have accepted what can be called "the positive aspects of mainstreaming and legitimation" of their sport (Heino, 2000, p.188). They now believe that snowboarding being an established part of the Olympic Games is beneficial for their careers and for the development of the sport in general:

> In our sport it is nice to have such a big contest [as the Olympic Games] . . . I think since the Winter Olympics came around, it is the biggest contest in snowboarding — the world's bests on the world stage. And as an American, if you do win the Olympics, you can really set up your career outside of snowboarding after that. Being Olympian in the US means a lot, it carries a lot of clout . . .
>
> Louie Vito, professional snowboarder, USA (2013, interview)

Although the acceptance of the Olympic Games by snowboarders as the most important competition does not necessarily suggest an acceptance of Olympic values, it still indicates a significant change from the view of Terje Haakonsen, the snowboarder of the earlier generation, who did not compromise on the values of snowboarding when he boycotted the Olympic Games. It did not happen immediately in 1998, but as suggested by snowboarding athlete Christian Haller, after three Winter Olympic Games, snowboarders accepted the Olympic Games as the most important contest, which the athletes and the sport benefit from:

> I think it is very logical that competitive snowboarding will go mainstream, or is mainstream [already]. That might sounds hard, but I think it is kind of the only way the sports get bigger . . . I feel that since Torino [2006] the Olympics are the

most important snowboarding event. I feel like the media, snowboarding community itself . . . approved it.

Christian Haller, professional snowboarder, Switzerland (2013, interview)

This acceptance of the Olympic Games is largely due to commercial opportunities but is also due to the fact that competitive snowboarders have got younger over last two decades. In his interview, Terje Haakonsen (2013, interview) admits that the biggest difference in contemporary snowboarding from snowboarding of the 1990s is the age of the athletes: "there are 14 year old guys now at the top level". Thus, the current generation of athletes has witnessed snowboarding only in Olympic era and are likely to perceive Olympic snowboarding as an integral part of the activity.

Overall, inevitably, due to the integration into the Olympic movement, international competitive snowboarding has become more homogenized into the mainstream sporting culture since 1998. As noted by Breivik (2010, p.270) "gradually parts of the snowboard milieu have been swallowed by the formalized sport culture and has become part of the Olympic sport culture with its competitive events and ideology." The evidence of this research demonstrates that traditional snowboarding values are still very much relevant for freeriding activities but not that dominant in the competitive sport of snowboarding anymore. Nevertheless, even though the competitive dimension has changed, the sport still carries some major values of snowboarding, such as individualism, self-expression, and opposition for tight control.

4.2.3. Structure of competitive snowboarding

As it is outlined in the history section, traditionally, informal organizational arrangements have been typical for international competitive snowboarding. This was most evident from the example of the ISF, the first international governing body of snowboarding, which was characterized as a network organization and acted in line with the underlying values of snowboarding activity. The documentary analysis, reviews of media, and the interviews suggest that the inclusion of competitive snowboarding into the Olympic program brought a significant change in the organization of the sport. This section aims to analyze the current structure of international snowboarding and address the issues of whether those network relationships have survived through

the period of organizational evolution and how this type of organization corresponds to the mainstream frameworks brought into the sport with its integration into the Olympic movement.

4.2.3.1. Organizational evolution and resistance on the international level

Since the FIS was granted the right to run the Olympic snowboarding, it has not recognized any other established international snowboarding competitions and organizations but has been running its own international contests: the FIS Snowboarding Cup, and the FIS Snowboarding Championships. On the international stage, the FIS defeated the ISF, so the latter was declared bankrupt and stopped its operations in 2002. Terje Haakonsen notes that the FIS was able to sell snowboarding media and sponsorship rights in one package, alongside its already established skiing competitions, which was the major reason the ISF went bankrupt:

> . . . the FIS guys say the TV companies something like "You won't get the FIS skiing, if you don't sell our snowboarding." And if you don't have any TV, you don't have any sponsorship. And that was the history, because they [the FIS] had so much political power. That is how they operated. And they still do this.
>
> Terje Haakonsen, the influential snowboarder of the 1990s (2013, interview)

Therefore the FIS strong political power and lobbying on the media market ensured its competitive advantage over the ISF.

Throughout the last 15 years, the FIS has rejected any cooperation with other international snowboarding organizations or governing bodies. It has organized Olympic snowboarding according to its experience in organization of skiing and the frameworks that fit the Olympic movement. The FIS rigid and authoritarian organizational approach can be illustrated by the words of American alpine skier Ted Ligety (2014, no page number), who publicly expressed his disagreement with some FIS decisions and warned snowboarding athletes:

> FIS's tyranny has gone on long enough. It seems FIS is going out of their way to ruin the sport. FIS runs a dictatorship. They demand absolute control then try to butter their will in a fake cloak of benevolence. Athletes, SRS (Association of Ski Racing Suppliers) and NGBs (national governing bodies) are completely impotent in their ability to create positive change in our sport or to stand against rules FIS

> imposes . . .The athletes to this point have had zero representation in the decisions FIS makes. When we hear of FIS's decisions and we disagree we are ignored … Faceless committees make these decisions, and once the mandates are passed down their ego doesn't allow them to admit wrong and reverse rules that are so obviously wrong. Unfortunately for alpine ski racing FIS monopolizes the sport so any and all changes will be hard fought or take FIS vastly rethinking their position in how the sport processes or more likely regresses … This should serve as warning for sports like freeride skiing and snowboarding, don't let FIS monopolize your sport. FIS will bleed your sport dry of what has made it so cool.

This FIS approach was in stark contrast with the flexible governance of the ISF, which was very much about snowboarders creating the organization of the sport themselves and being open to adjust its structure. According to Reto Lamm (2013, interview), former elite professional snowboarder and current President of the TTR World Snowboarding Tour, the FIS and the IOC has not taken specific culture and organization of snowboarding into consideration:

> . . . it is not just the question of who is managing the sport. It is the question of how is it manageable to manage so many sports into one concept. And for the IOC the problem is to "micro-manage" different sports. So they cluster sports and just call it skiing. This [snowboarding] goes under skiing. The problem is that the ski federation has too many sports that they have to deal with. And snowboarding is an emotional sport and not just a sport, which has general values of sport. Snowboarding has much more complex values like lifestyle, music, fashion . . . all of that. And you can't put snowboard fashion under ski fashion. You can't put a cross-country skier and a snowboarder into the same box. These are two different lifestyles and two different cultures.

As there has been a huge debate on and concern about the Olympic snowboarding and the FIS governance, snowboarding can be acknowledged as, arguably, the first sport within the Olympic movement that highlighted the necessity to take cultural aspects into the account when introducing a sport into the Olympics.

Considering the contrast between the FIS and the ISF governance, historical negative attitudes of snowboarders to skiers and the fact that the FIS had not dealt with snowboarding before its Olympic inclusion, there has been a strong resistance and heavy criticism of the FIS approach from professional snowboarders. As this research indicates, since the Olympic introduction of the sport the main concern among the snowboarding community and media has been about the

way the sport has been organized and managed by the FIS. Major concerns fall into the following four categories:

1. **The FIS Snowboarding department has lacked power inside the FIS itself in comparison to the organizational frameworks dedicated to skiing.**

> I have been to the FIS meetings. I can say that snowboarding has absolutely no political power within the FIS. All the way down through the structure of the FIS there is a tiny board or a council for snowboarding. It is almost impossible to have a change from there up to the top. It will take maybe 5 or 6 years. So this is how snowboarding is positioned in the FIS.
>
> Cecilia Flatum, Vice-President of the World Snowboarding Federation, Board Member of Norwegian Snowboard Federation (interview, 2013)

2. **The FIS snowboarding competitions overlap significantly with other international contests that are highly respected by the top international athletes.**

This situation was most apparent with regards to the Olympic qualification when, in order to qualify for the Olympics, the riders had to participate in the FIS events at the expense of missing other bigger contests.

> If we want to go to the Olympics, we have to do the FIS. But if you want to do the world tour, you have to go through the TTR [Ticket to Ride snowboarding tour] because the best ones are doing the TTR. People are doing the FIS just to qualify.
>
> Roger Kleivdal, professional snowboard athlete, Norway (interview, 2013)

3. **Organization of the FIS snowboarding events has been often of concern in terms of quality and safety.**

> We get quite well trained under the FIS, but as far as the riding standards go it is nowhere near the high quality of [the other events, such as] the X-Games, Dew Tour, any TTR event or the Arctic Challenge.
>
> Scotty James, professional snowboarder, Australia (interview, 2013)
>
> FIS was never made for snowboarding and they clearly have no concern over rider safety.
>
> Eric Rovin (2013)

4. **Lack of the athletes' voice in decision making regarding the organization of the sport, rules, judging, and its calendar.**

This issue became apparent in 2011 when the top international riders published an open letter to the IOC raising concern about the way they had been treated by the FIS and their inability to participate in decision-making.

> I think our voice should be put first because we are the riders and not the guys who make the contests . . . And it is important that we can tell them something like "This is not good. This is scary. We want to do this another day with better weather, maybe tomorrow." That would probably never happen in the FIS.
>
> Roger Kleivdal, professional snowboard athlete, Norway (interview, 2013)

> It would be great for the FIS to be more athlete-driven and focus on safety, financial security, and fairness in their approach. What do the letters of the FIS truly stand for? Fear Instead of Success, Finances Instead of Safety?
>
> Brad Steward, former professional snowboarder, USA (interview, 2014)

Overall, the FIS governance methods were totally opposite to the values of snowboarding that are based on individualism, creativity, and flexibility. Together with traditional opposition of snowboarders to the skiing community and the reluctance of the FIS to co-operate with existing snowboarding organizations, this contributed to the strong resistance from professional competitive snowboarders and people involved in sport with regards to the FIS organization of snowboarding. There have been various examples of this resistance over the years. There is a non-profit organization that is called "F**k FIS: Snowboarders against FIS control," which has more than 6000 Facebook followers and is known for spreading anti-FIS stickers at many snowboarding events. Various professional snowboarding athletes criticized the FIS in media and social networks. For instance, there was a Facebook post of Marco Grilc, professional snowboarder from Slovenia, accompanied by the photo of insufficiently lighted snowboarding course before the FIS competitions:

> Dear FIS I know you really don't care but this is a bit too dark for snowboarding…
>
> Grilc (2013)

Finally, in 2011, the *We are Snowboarding* (WAS) movement was created by professional snowboarding athletes largely due to a high number of riders' complaints against the FIS and the IOC. This movement now acts as the athletes' union and a platform to raise a collective athlete voice on important organizational matters. In particular, the WAS movement became globally known

when it produced an open letter from top international athletes to the IOC asking for "a fair and objective decision making process" with regard to Olympic snowboarding (WAS, 2012). A number of online petitions can be found in support of this request, but none of these efforts have found any response from the FIS or the IOC.

As an alternative to a competitive ethos brought to the sport by the IOC and the FIS, in 1999 Terje Haakonsen created "The Arctic Challenge" event, which was concerned with creativity and self-expression rather than winning. In opposition to the FIS Snowboarding World Cup, in 2002 a number of riders, event organizers, and sponsors established the TTR (Ticket to Ride) World Snowboarding Tour, which has been managed by TTR Pro Snowboarding. In contrast with the FIS, the TTR Pro Snowboarding is a dedicated snowboarding organization, addressing the issues of competition safety and athletes' voice within its structures. This is highlighted by a Norwegian snowboarder Roger Kleivdal in his interview:

> . . . we can have no say there [in the FIS]. But in the TTR it has been better. We can actually tell them to change the course if that is scary or we don't want that or we need [half]pipe a little bit better. And they change it. That is pretty cool. So the TTR is better than the FIS for sure.

On a level of strategic decision-making, TTR Snowboarding has a substantial representation of the athletes and the event organizers. The President of the TTR Snowboarding, Reto Lamm, provides an example of the athletes' role in the decision-making process at 2014 General Assembly of the organization:

> . . . it's actually the riders that are asking for this [the change of format of World Snowboarding Tour] from us. [The athletes] Stale (Sandbech), Torstein (Horgmo) and Kjersti (Buaas) came to us and were the representatives at the GA [General Assembly] and stood up in the open session and addressed the entire hall . . . and said "we want the World Snowboard Tour to run this. This is what we want, and exactly what the guys are presenting here is exactly what we need for our future." And so everyone could see that it was a necessity that everyone wanted. So . . . we were given the mandate both from riders and from the event organisations to roll this out.
>
> Boardsportsource (2014)

Therefore, apart from the Olympic snowboarding and the FIS World Cup tour that has been governed by the FIS since 1998, the TTR Snowboarding has been an alternative international snowboarding organization, which substituted the ISF in 2002 and organizes snowboarding competitions in a more flexible and athletes-driven way than the FIS does.

The FIS has never had any connections to the TTR Snowboarding and has never organized any grassroots snowboarding. The TTR Snowboarding connected to snowboarding grassroots by establishing the World Snowboard Federation (WSF) that takes care about the lower-tier and junior competitions structure. As the President of the TTR World Snowboarding Tour, Reto Lamm (2013, interview) believes, the TTR Snowboarding has been existing as a network of various snowboarding organizations and individuals:

> We are a non-profit organization and we are network. We are not the company, not the privately owned company that can dictate… We have such a big network of intelligence with the TTR and so much integrity from people, like event organizers, riders, judges, board of directors. Everyone has so much integrity to work with this system. I believe we have managed to put up a pretty sexy system for riders too, because we speak their language. It is easy to copy everything, but in the very end it is always about who is going where, and who is doing what. That history is ours I think. You can't copy friendship. You can copy everything, but you can't copy friends and emotional connection to an idea. And that is where the FIS is lacking, because it is not their idea, even though they are trying to show it.

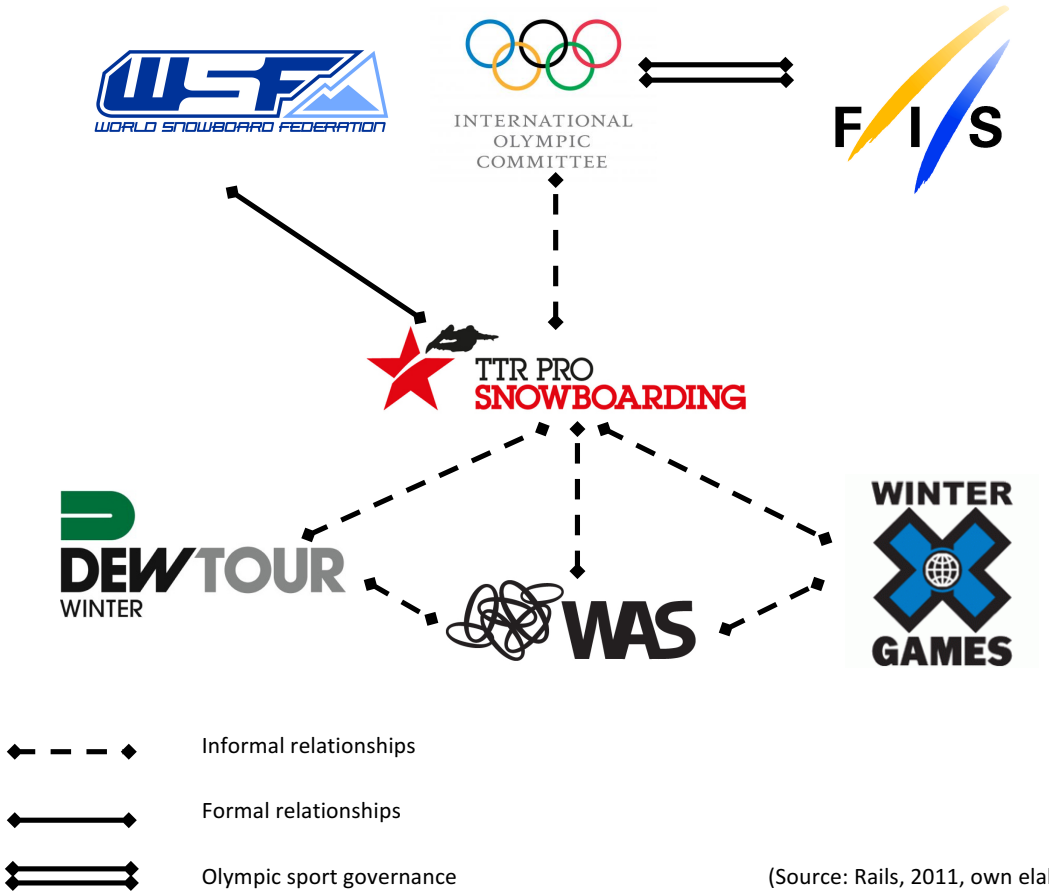
This quote indicates that the TTR Pro Snowboarding has been inspired by snowboarding values and the traditional "network" way of organization of competitive snowboarding.

4.2.3.2. Contemporary organization of international snowboarding

In fact, some scholars, such as Steen-Johnsen (2008) and Rails (2011), and interviewees (Reto Lamm and Cecilia Flatum) used the term "network" to describe the whole modern organization of the international competitive snowboarding. According to Steen-Johnsen (2008), the organization of international snowboarding is characterized by informal relations and the absence of formal leadership. Rails (2011) used a stakeholder analysis and the network theory to explain the organization of snowboarding. It was found that international snowboarding was "a complex

network of stakeholders, rather than a simple hierarchic or solar structure" consisting of IOC, FIS, TTR, WSF, WAS, X Games and Dew Tour (**Figure 4.2**).

Figure 4.2: Organization of international competitive snowboarding



(Source: Rails, 2011, own elaboration)

Also two key characteristics of the international snowboarding network were explored by Rails (2011): density, which reflects the number of ties in the network, and centrality, which describes the quality of relationships between the actors:

> The network as a whole is characterized by a low degree of density with few formal informational lines between the actors. A consequence is that the flow of communication in the network is arbitrary. In today's situation there is no global governing body in international snowboarding. Neither is it possible to point out one actor with a superior power to control the flow of information and resources, as this depends on the context and subject matter. For example FIS has higher

> centrality as it is a Gatekeeper regarding snowboarding in the Olympics. It appears that different actors have power over, and for, different aspects of international competitive snowboarding.

Thus Rails (2011) identified the low degree of density and centrality, as different actors have influenced over various segments of international competitive snowboarding. It also confirmed the findings of Steen-Johnsen (2008) that there was no single global governing body for snowboarding, which all organizations relate to, and decisions emerged through interaction in the network.

To summarize, although snowboarding has been part of the Olympic movement for the past 20 years, there has been strong resistance to formalization and bureacratization of snowboarding, which manifested in the international structure of this sport. Snowboarding has remained a network, which is different from most other Olympic sports that are organized hierarchically with one international governing body at the top of the pyramid. So snowboarding organizations have hardly copied any structural practices from organizations of other Olympic sports as they have preserved informality and decentralization in its structural arrangements.

4.2.3.3. Change on the national level

The organization of competitive snowboarding at national level also went through a dramatic change in order to reflect the global evolution of sport. Before the IOC decided to give the right to run the Olympic qualification to the FIS, the sport of snowboarding had been effectively funding itself through sponsorship and TV money. As snowboarding was not an Olympic sport prior to 1998, in most countries there was no money available from the national sport organizations either for snowboarding organizations or ski federations to develop snowboarding and conduct competitions in this sport. Cecilia Flatum, Vice-President of the World Snowboarding Federation and Board Member of the Norwegian Snowboard Federation, gave an insight into what she witnessed in the late 1990s. According to her, after the FIS takeover, the ski associations of all the member nations were required conduct Olympic qualification in snowboarding in their respective countries:

> It all actually started back in Nagano [1998 Olympics] with something that should have never happened. There was snowboarding before that, but it was not inter-

> esting to the nations because it was not an Olympic discipline . . . When the IOC decided to give the qualification the FIS, then the ski associations of all the member nations had to start making systems for the snowboard qualifications. So what happened on the international level has also happened on the national level. This is maybe the destiny of snowboarding because the national level reflects the international level. And sport is organized very differently in many countries. And in many countries you don't get any funding until you are the Olympic discipline . . . So the situation now is that many nations have two associations: ski associations which take care about snowboarding for the Olympics and national snowboard associations which are without any governmental funding. For sure, they are weak and do all the grassroots level. And the worst thing is that they do all the grassroots level, and when these riders become good they go to the industry and qualify through the ski associations. It is kind of a political circle. We all are connected in this circle and don't get out of it.
>
> Cecilia Flatum (interview, 2013*)*

Described framework looks unfair to the local snowboarding event organizers, who also raised their voice against the FIS and its financial opacity, in particular:

> Recent figures from FIS show that snowboarding has become their most important sport in the [2014] Olympics. Of all FIS sports in the Olympics, snowboarding had 28% of all TV exposure worldwide. This is much more than their traditional heritage of alpine skiing, cross-country skiing and ski jumping . . . Where does all the money go? We in snowboarding certainly don't see any of it. If we were to use TV exposure figures as a key for splitting the money between the Olympic FIS sports, then snowboarding, with its 28% of all FIS TV exposure, should receive a fair share of 100 million dollars for each Winter Olympics. A substantial amount probably disappears into the black hole of FIS administration and other FIS sports, but surely some of it must be spent for the greater good of snowboarding? We know snowboarding event organizers who have given up their FIS World Cup status because they have not received monetary support from FIS.
>
> Henning Andersen, the organizer of the Arctic Challenge snowboarding event, in Bridges (2014)

Therefore, in most countries an organizational paradox exists: national ski federations receive government and FIS funding and take care of snowboarding in terms of Olympic qualification, but the rest of snowboarding activities, including grassroots, are handled by the dedicated

snowboarding federations, which do not actually have access to any Olympic funding. This situation has been continuously straining the relationships between national snowboarding organizations, event organizers, and national skiing governing bodies.

Nevertheless, in one country where snowboarding organizations were politically strong enough, they managed to obtain control over the Olympic qualification, which ensured government funding as well. Flatum (2013, interview) and Steen-Johnsen (2008) refer to the example of the Norwegian Snowboard Federation (the NSBF) that was an independent organization federated to the ISF in the 1990s. In 1999 the NSBF won a hard battle in order to attain the status of an autonomous federation responsible for snowboarding within the Norwegian Olympic Committee (NOC) as the Norwegian Skiing Federation also sought to incorporate the sport, arguing that Olympic snowboarding was organized through the FIS. Describing the change, which happened in the NSBF since it entered the NOC in 1999, Steen-Johnsen (2008, p. 355) highlights two tracks:

> On one hand, there is a harmonization with formal requirements of external stakeholders expressed, for example, in an increased accountability towards sponsors, and in the enhanced contact with the OT [the elite sport unit of the NOC]. On the other hand, there is an increased and more conscious use of the network form in order to maintain contact with the ‘‘grass roots’’ and the core of the community.

Therefore, the governance of snowboarding in Norway has not been passed to the skiing authority but stayed with a snowboarding organization. Consequently, organization of competitive snowboarding in Norway can be characterized by a “strong degree of interactivity in organizational processes, the informality and the preference for making decisions without the explicit use of authority” (Steen-Johnsen, 2008, p.347). So in the case of Norwegian snowboarding, the network structure of national snowboarding organization continued to influence the sport, even though some formal criteria had to be fulfilled by the NSBF. In a small number of other countries, such as Switzerland, the United States, and Canada, there are snowboarding federations that are independent from any ski authorities and have managed to gain a formal legitimacy to organize their national snowboarding within the FIS and the Olympic contests. However, in the vast majority of countries, the power over snowboarding lies with skiing associations.

Over the last 15 years, all national organizations in charge of Olympic snowboarding had to implement some mainstream sport organizational practices in order to comply with the requirements and expectations of the FIS and national Olympic and sport organizations. First, the national federations had to introduce performance specialist positions, such as coaches and physios, into their structures. Even a decade ago, it was extremely unusual for a snowboarding athlete to have a coach and follow a certain training regime. As described by Luke Mitrani, professional snowboarder from the USA, in his interview

> . . . snowboarding has changed so much from how it used to be . . . Ten years ago you could go out and [get] drunk the night before [competition]. That's the lifestyle the snowboarding was.

Consequently, performance support from the national organizations to elite snowboarding athletes (such as training camps) is now provided on a national basis. This often clashes with individual plans of athletes and thus contradicts the traditional snowboarding values of internationalism, as top snowboarders like to ride together with the best colleagues irrelevant of the nationalities of each other:

> We live in different countries; we have friends all over the world. I support my teammates from the US, Finland, Canada, not necessarily from my country. All my support has been the manufacturers' support.
>
> Terje Haakonsen, influential snowboarder of the 1990s, Norway (interview, 2013)

Another mandatory requirement of national federations is that their members must be registered with local sports clubs that have to follow a set of formal rules in order to be acknowledged (Steen-Johnsen, 2008). Elite athletes are also obliged to have the FIS registration in order to participate in the FIS events, Olympic qualification, and the Olympic Games. Some athletes have been reluctant to follow these regulations as they do not want to associate themselves with any formal institutions, let alone the FIS that they complained about.

4.3. Conclusions of the case study

This case study report identified and summarized several specific patterns and mechanisms of the process of evolution of competitive snowboarding over the last three decades.

Patterns of evolution

1. Snowboarding has never been about competitions only, therefore many athletes and organizations focused on other manifestations of activity, such as freeriding and video filming. The research indicates that most professional snowboarders and those involved in this sport see participating in such non-competitive activities as important as taking part in competitions.
2. Traditional values of snowboarding, such as expressionism, individualism, flexibility, and absence of binding regulations, have been preserved over the years and it is evident that most individuals and organizations still appreciate them.
3. Over the years, international competitive snowboarding has functioned as a network, which is in line with the values of snowboarding. Its major feature has always been that there is no leading international governing body, which all the actors can relate to. So the international snowboarding organizations, such as the ISF and the TTR Pro Snowboarding also adopted a network model of governance. The way the international competitive snowboarding is organized can still be described as network of organizational actors. A number of stakeholdes that have constitutued the international structure of competitive snowboarding were identified.
4. The organization of international competitive snowboarding has always been far from conventional and is likely to look confusing to those outside of this sport. This results in a lack of coordination and an overlapping competition calendar, which affects the interests of media, sponsors, athletes, and fans of the sport. Alternatively, there are more opportunities and flexibility within snowboarding because the structure is not hierarchical as in most mainstream sports.
5. Organizational frameworks have been created at the international level (the FIS) and across the nations, either via established snowboarding departments in ski federations or by adjustments to existing snowboarding federations in order to comply with expectations and criteria for organizations managing Olympic sports. Inevitably, due to the integration into the Olympic movement, international snowboarding has become more institutionalized and

homogenized into the mainstream sporting culture since 1998 in that snowboarding athletes have to be members of the national federations and to participate in the FIS competitions. The national snowboarding federations, or snowboarding departments in skiing federations, have to meet the regulations of the global sport organizations, such as the IOC, the FIS, and the WADA. National snowboarding organizations, which wanted to have full control over the sport, had to make serious structural changes and cultural compromises, such as athlete registrations and introduction of performance staff, in order to adapt to the changing environment and to become legitimate governing bodies and secure funding from national authorities.

Mechanisms of evolution

1. It is evident that until 1998 organizational evolution of competitive snowboarding was largely driven by snowboarders themselves and various commercial actors (event organizers, equipment producers, and media) rather than governing bodies, which is a distinctive feature of competitive snowboarding
2. The IOC decision to include snowboarding into the Olympic program from 1998 was influenced by the intention to raise the interest of young people in the Olympic Games.
3. The research also suggests various other reasons as being behind the decision to put specifically the FIS in charge of Olympic snowboarding, such as cost, structure, culture, and commercial opportunities.
4. It is clear that the Olympic inclusion catalysed change in organization of snowboarding and created a cultural conflict, which has been running over the years. However, despite strong pressures for greater institutionalization and bureaucratization, as the IOC and the FIS attempted to discipline the snowboarding community, still it is evident that an alternative culture of snowboarding has continued to influence its organization as is clear by the prominence of the TTR World Snowboarding Tour.
5. The results of this research suggest that, even though professional snowboarding athletes have struggled to exist under the FIS umbrella, after the period of strong resistance they accepted the mutually beneficial relationships with the Olympic movement due to the appeal of the commercial opportunities, as commerciality has always been present within snowboarding.

5. Case Study: Competitive Skateboarding

Skaters have a completely different culture from the norms of the world's society. We dress differently, we have our own language, use our own slang, and live by our own rules… Please stop viewing us a totally negative race of people. The few people who have come up and watched us skate and spoken to us know that we are nice, educated, and intelligent.

Maeda (1991, p. 17)

This chapter examines the evidence on competitive skateboarding. It presents the results of the investigation into how the organization of competitive skateboarding has changed to date and what organizational and cultural issues this sport had to deal with. In terms of organization, skateboarding is a challenging terrain to research as the sport of skateboarding has no clear boundaries. It originated from an activity of skating city streets and objects with 4-wheel boards. To be precise, skateboarding in this study means competitive freestyle skateboarding that includes disciplines of Vert, Park, Street, Big Air, and Pool. Competitive skateboarding in these disciplines is considered as sport in this research, but it is only a part of wider phenomenon, which has existed for the last three decades and can be called the activity of skateboarding. Even international competitive skateboarders are not just athletes "who happen to ride skateboards, but are 'skaters,' expected to participate in a lifestyle associated with involvement in the sport" (Honea, 2013, p.1255).

5.1. Data collection.

The primary evidence for this case study was collected by interviewing eleven people involved in competitive skateboarding: current and former professional international skateboarders and officials from the governing organizations. The names of the interviewees, their positions, and backgrounds can be found in the ***Table 5.1***. Interviews were conducted during the visits to two European X-Games events in 2013 in Barcelona and Munich. Also some interviews were carried out via phone and Skype due to time and cost constraints of this research project. The analysis also draws on some documents and materials, such as journal articles, discussions in web forums, and social networks, which are listed in ***Table 5.2***. They allow a consideration of additional perspectives of skateboarding experts, non-professional participants in skateboarding activity,

and people interested in skateboarding. To summarize those sources, they may be referred as the "skateboarding community".

Table 5.1: List of interviewees

<table>
<tr><th>OFFICIALS</th><th>SPORT FOUNDERS / LEGENDS</th><th>ACTIVE COMPETITIVE SKATEBOARDING ATHLETES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Gary Ream, USA

President of the International Skateboarding Federation, USA Skateboarding and the International BMX Freestyle Federation, President and partner in Sports Management Group, Inc., owner of Woodward Camp (interviewed by Skype)</td><td>Rob Dyrdek, USA

40 years old, former professional skateboarding athlete, entrepreneur, producer, actor

Founder of the Street League Skateboarding</td><td>Sandro Dias, Brazil

39 years old, professional skateboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Christophe Hubschmid, Switzerland

Director General of the International Cycling Union from 2011 to 2013 (interviewed by phone)</td><td>Neil Danns, UK

One of the first professional skateboarders in Europe, British and European Champion</td><td>Elliot Sloan, USA

26 years old, professional skateboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Christian Baumann, Switzerland

Deputy Director and the IOC Liaison at the International Cycling Union from 2007 to 2014 (interviewed by phone)</td><td colspan="2">Neal Hendrix, USA, 41 years old,

Professional skateboarding athlete

The Athlete Representative at the International Skateboarding Federation, judge, reporter, and manager</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Gerhard Heiberg, Norway, 73 years old

The IOC Member; the Head of the IOC Marketing Committee; Member of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports; Chairman of the Lillehammer 1994 Olympic Organising Committee</td><td></td><td>Ryan Decenzo, Canada

28 years old, professional skateboarding athlete</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Brad MacClain, USA

24 years old, professional skateboarding athlete</td></tr>
</table>

Table 5.2. Documents used in the preparation of the case study report

Author	Title	Access
Chinner	Summer Skate Olympics at Kumba Skate Plaza	http://www.kimberleydiamondcup.com/2014/11/summer-skate-olympics-kumba-skate-plaza/
Kailee Brad-street	Street League Endorses ISF As Official IOC Skateboarding Federation	http://business.transworld.net/152294/news/street-league-endorses-isf-official-ioc-skateboarding-federation/
Nick Butler	Skateboarding not rushing to join SportAccord's "closed club" as ISF President shrugs off ineligibility	http://www.insidethegames.biz/sports/non-olympic-sports/351-other/1022342-exclusive-skateboarding-not-rushing-to-join-sportaccord-s-closed-club-as-isf-president-shrugs-off-inelligibility
Nick Butler	Skateboarding must retain "unique" identity even if it joins Olympics, they claim	http://www.insidethegames.biz/sports/non-olympic-sports/351-other/1022155-exclusive-skateboarding-must-retain-unique-identity-even-if-it-joins-olympics-they-claim
Nick Butler	New partnership hailed as boost for skateboarding's Olympic ambitions	http://www.insidethegames.biz/sports/non-olympic-sports/351-other/1021915-new-partnership-hailed-as-boost-for-skateboarding-s-olympic-ambitions
Leigh Roche	Skateboarding and BMX Freestyle in the Olympics?	https://suite.io/leigh-roche/5t5d2tw
Jordan Guz-yk	What's So Bad About Skateboarding In The Olympics?	http://www.33mag.com/en/2014/03/10/whats-so-bad-about-skateboarding-olympics
Bloomberg News	Dyrdek: Make Skateboarding an Olym-pic Sport	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKKstnVMz_c
Larry King	Tony Hawk on "Larry King Now"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vWVUY3VYho
Sean	Stalefish: skateboard culture from the	San Francisco, California : Chronicle

Mortimer	rejects who made it	Books, 2008
The IOC	Executive Board meets to discuss Olympic Agenda 2020	http://www.olympic.org/executive-board-meets-to-discuss-olympic-agenda-2020
The ASOIF	UCI to Discuss Skateboarding with IOC again, as McQuaid Continues Fight against Armstrong "Complicity" Claims	http://www.asoif.com/News/News_Article.aspx?ID=3403
Webb Brixey	SKATEBOARDING VS. THE OLYMPICS: A BRIEF HISTORY	http://www.jenkemmag.com/home/2012/09/04/skateboarding-vs-the-olympics-a-brief-history/
Colin Bane	Tony Hawk discusses Olympic possibilities	http://xgames.espn.go.com/skateboarding/article/10558695/skateboarding-very-likely-2020-olympic-games
Becky Beal	Skateboarding: The Ultimate Guide	Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, LLC.
Tripp Mickle	IOC weighing skateboarding, BMX for Tokyo Summer program	http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/SB-Blogs/On-The-Ground/2014/02/SochiSiteBMX.aspx
Brock Buesing and Paul Glader	Skateboarding in the Olympics?	http://sports.espn.go.com/action/skateboarding/news/story?id=6274791
ISSA Forum	Skateboarding (in general): getting organized	http://www.slalomskateboarder.com/phpBB/viewtopic.php?t=2336
Haveboard	No Olympic Skateboarding	http://haveboard.com/no_olympic_skateboarding/
"Clarkie" Clark	No Skateboarding in the Olympics!	http://www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/656/763/888
The ISF	Mission Statement of the International Skateboarding Federation	http://www.internationalskateboardingfederation.com/about/mission-of-the-isf

Devon O'Neil	No rush for gold	http://xgames.espn.go.com/skateboarding/article/8253956/skateboarding-unlikely-become-olympic-sport
Colin Bane	ISF, UCI, and the IOC	http://sports.espn.go.com/action/skateboarding/news/story?id=6361581
The SLS	About the SLS	http://streetleague.com/about/
The X-Games	Would you rather see skateboarding in the Olympics or hoverboards come to life?	https://www.facebook.com/XGames/posts/10152005468606964

5.2. Organizational evolution of competitive skateboarding

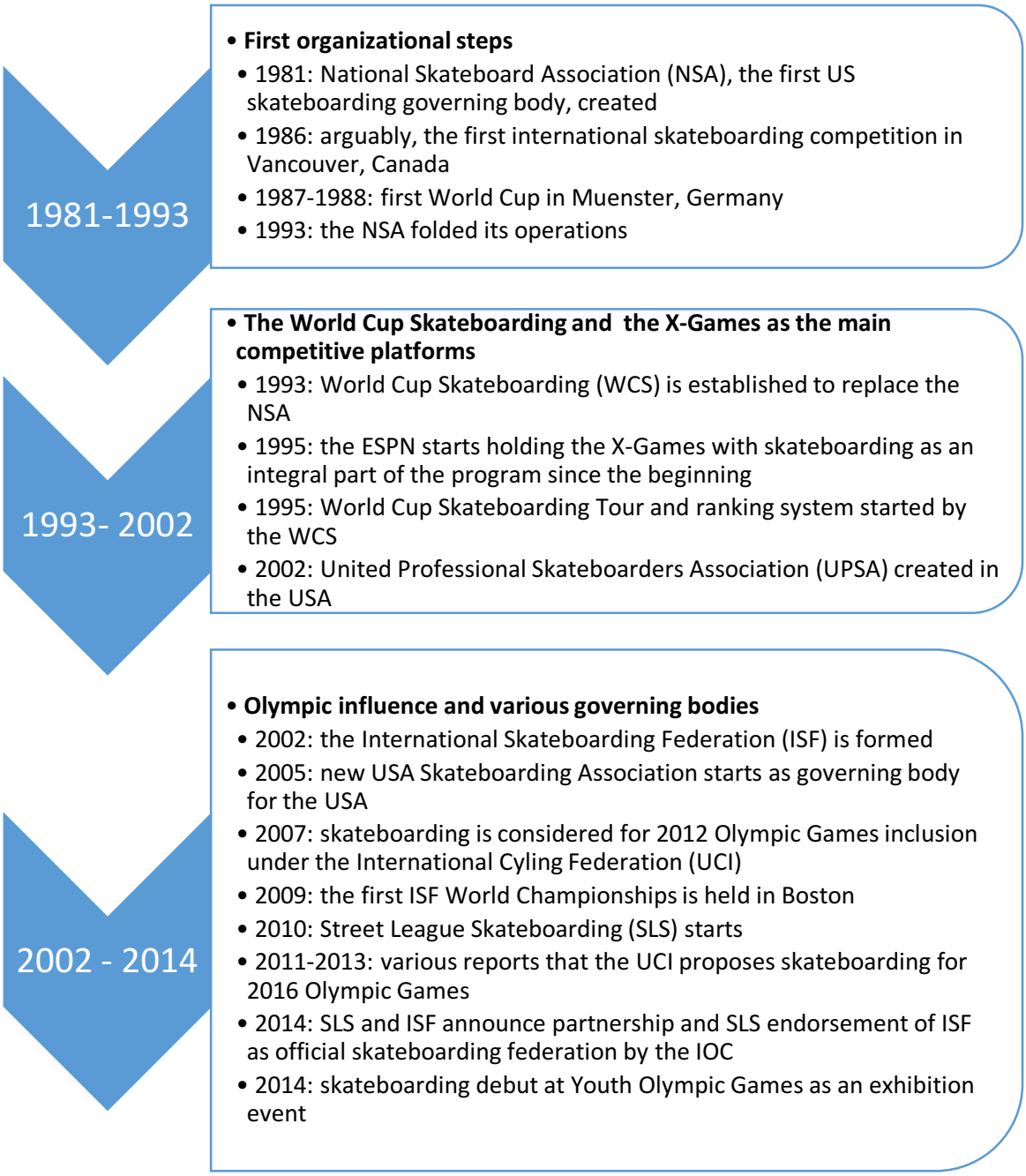
This section starts with the discussion of the history of competitive skateboarding, which includes an overview of relationships between skateboarding and the Olympic movement. The culture of skateboarding is examined in the next part, which attempts to explain how the values of skateboarding have influenced change in the sport. Finally, the structure of the competitive sport is presented, and the roles of various actors are examined with particular attention to their role in skateboarding's possible Olympic prospect.

5.2.1. The history of organization of competitive skateboarding

The history of organization of competitive skateboarding is much connected to the periods of its popularity in the USA and subsequent commercialization and professionalization of the activity. This research clearly indicates that the USA has always been the dominant country in terms of competitive skateboarding development. Therefore, the organization of skateboarding in the

USA has mainly driven the global organization of the sport. **Figure 5.1** presents the timeline of major organizational events in international competitive skateboarding.

Figure 5.1: Timeline of the history of organization of international competitive skateboarding



Sources: WCS (2014), ISF (2014), SLS (2014), Beal (2013)

5.2.1.1. The origins and features of initial organization of international skateboarding

A significant number of skateboarders became serious about competitions during the 1980s and 1990s and actively participated in contests with the intent of seeking recognition and sponsorships. The early 1980s marked the arrival of the first professional skateboarding athletes who were able to make a living thanks to commercial interest of the sponsors and competitive skateboarding. Former professional skateboarder Neil Danns (2013, interview) from the UK suggests that skateboarding

> … became a sport with the arrival of the likes of Tony Hawk [the most successful and richest professional skateboarder of all time] who started to have a clear-cut image and to push the limits … And he became the first real sportsman, real athlete. And a lot of people followed that. Before that it was really just a lifestyle—like going to skate, having a beer, just hanging on. And I witnessed that a lot in America when I first went there as a professional skateboarder. For example, in Texas the lifestyle of quite many skateboarders was getting up around 3 p.m., going skateboard from 5 until the evening, and then partying until 4 in the morning. They did that constantly. And because that was not for me, I had to move to California where I saw people did skateboarding more like sportsmen, like athletes. They were planning routines, their tricks, because they realized that more money was flowing in with sponsors.

Therefore, professionalization of skateboarding was driven both by athletes, who wanted to make living out of skateboarding and sponsoring companies that aimed to promote their goods or services.

Subsequently, the rise of professional competitive skateboarding and the need for a recognition of it as a sport facilitated the creation of governing organizations, or "Corporate Bureaucracy of Skateboarding," as it is called by Beal (1995). As Frank Hawk, the father of Tony Hawk, was "unimpressed by the level of organization of skateboarding competitions and wanted to create a more professional setting for his son and other young people who skateboarded" (Beal, 2013, p.22), he created the National Skateboard Association (NSA), the first governing body for the sport in the USA, in 1981. In 1986, the NSA received non-profit corporation status from the State of California. It was quite different from what conventional sport governing bodies were as the NSA board of directors included the chief executive officers of the major commercial entities,

which were involved in skateboarding, namely Vision, Powell/ Peralta, Santa Cruz, Transworld Skateboard, and Thrasher magazines (NSA, 1990). Such a heavy involvement of commercial actors underlined the NSA commitment to organize a corporate and commercialized form of sport through sponsoring amateur and professional events throughout the USA (Beal, 1995).

Throughout the 1980s, the NSA played the leading role in commercialization and legitimization of competitive skateboarding in the USA. The popularity of the sport started to spread outside the USA, and Beal (2013) highlights the contest in Vancouver, Canada, which was held during the World Expo Fair 1986, as the first international skateboarding competition. In the same year, the city of Munster, Germany hosted the first European Cup, which obtained the status of skateboarding's World Cup in 1989. However, in the beginning of 1990s skateboarding popularity began to decline, because of the US economy recession (Beal, 2013), so the sport faced difficult times both commercially and organizationally. The NSA President at that time, Don Bostick, was one of the organizers of the World Cup competitions in Munster from 1989 to 1993, and that is when it became clear to him that skateboarding needed "an Organization that encompassed more than just North America and one that worked for the skater's best interests" (WCS, 2014). As Don Bostick recalls in a recent interview,

> … after going to Europe, it opened my eyes to what skateboarding was internationally. When the NSA … went under, I knew there was interest and a place for skateboard body in organizing and sanctioning events around the world.
>
> Don Bostick,
> former professional skateboarder, international skateboarding event organizer,
> ISF official and entrepreneur; interviewed by Young (2013, p.40)

The popularity of skateboarding started to build again with the creation of the ESPN X-Games, or the ESPN Extreme Games, as they were first called. Skateboarding was included in the program of the inaugural Games in 1995, with Vert discipline as the key event and has remained there since. There have been several different disciplines of competitive skateboarding in the Games: Vert, Big Air, Street, Park, and Bowl. The sport of skateboarding and the X-Games have formed a mutually beneficial alliance over the last 20 years and, thanks to skateboarding and few other key action sports, such as BMX and motocross freestyle, the X-Games have become a hugely successful and influential worldwide sport event. Because of the growing popularity of the X-Games, skateboarding has grown tremendously since its low in the early nineties. As highlighted

by Beal (2013, p.37), since the advent of the X-Games skateboarding has been promoted not only by its traditional media, such as skateboarding magazines and movies, but by mass media, which have played a significant role in establishing widespread appeal of skateboarding and have been a fundamental driver in the further commercialization and institutionalization of it. These developments have been mainly due to the global television broadcast of the X-Games and the wide spread of internet video and broadcasting services, such as Youtube, in the 2000s. So the X-Games cannot be called a governing body of skateboarding, but their impact on the organization of this sport has been huge and likely much bigger than any influence of any governing bodies that have ever been in charge of skateboarding. For example, Beal (2013, p.40) notes that in 2000s the leading professional skateboarders demanded a pay raise and better working conditions from the X-Games organizers, not from any existing skateboarding governing bodies.

Yet, the institutionalization of skateboarding in the X-Games era was visible in the growth of the number of various governing skateboarding organizations that were created and/or developed in the late 1990s – early 2000s. World Cup Skateboarding (WCS), the new global governing body for the sport, was formed in 1993 "learning from the mistakes that the Skateboard Industry made during the NSA years … [and] made a commitment to the skaters in developing and directing skateboard competitions around the globe" (WCS, 2014). WCS adopted the NSA regulations and started to run international events based on experience, which was gained while administrating the last four years of the NSA (WCS, 1999). Since 1995, WCS have been running the World Cup Skateboarding Tour, maintaining an international ranking system for professional skateboarders and claiming to be "skateboarding's official global body" for over the last two decades (WCS, 2014). WCS President Don Bostick summarizes the role of WCS as organizing and establishing "quality skateboarding competitions around the world and offer[ing] a ranking system that honours and gives value to skaters' accomplishments in competitive skateboarding" (Young, 2013, p.40).

In addition to WCS, the International Skateboarding Federation (ISF) was established in 2002 after "stakeholders in the sport agreed a need to establish a governing body to provide direction and governance" (Cutler, 2011, p.30) for skateboarding. A number of skateboarders and representatives of skateboarding companies were behind the establishment and functioning of this organization, including:

- Gary Ream, the ISF current President, owner of Camp Woodward, the biggest commercial operator of action sports and gymnastics facilities in the United States;
- Don Bostick, the WCS President, a former professional skateboarder, international skateboarding event organizer and entrepreneur;
- Dave Carnie, former Executive Director of the USA Skateboarding, editor of skateboarding magazine, owner of skateboarding decks brand;
- Tony Hawk, the most successful skateboarder in history, entrepreneur, millionaire.

As can be seen from the ISF Board composition (ISF, 2014), the interests of skateboarders are well represented within this organization: there are four current athletes and one former athlete on the board. On the other hand, the ISF has always been very commercially focused as all the Board members also represent various commercial interests. Overall, the ISF can be considered as the first international governing body of skateboarding, as it has a great representation of all the continents on the board, which the WCS has not. Organizational relationships between these organizations will be discussed later in this chapter.

Another issue, related to the history of organization of international competitive skateboarding, is whether this sport could have been organized as a part of so called roller sports, which include inline-skating, inline hockey, roller derby, inline freestyle, and rink hockey. Since the 1960s, the leading international organization for roller sports has been the International Federation of Roller Sports (FIRS). According to FIRS (2014a), roller sports include skateboarding in various disciplines (slalom, downhill, street, and vert). Therefore, in the opinion of FIRS, skateboarding clearly belongs to roller sports. For example, the FIRS announced that skateboarding would be one of the disciplines of the inaugural Roller Games, "the first unified World Championships for all disciplines of Roller Sports" (FIRS, 2013a) that will be staged in 2017. According to the FIRS (2013b) Statues, this organization has the International Technical Committee of Skateboarding in its structure, which has no voting rights within the FIRS Board though. This demonstrates that skateboarding has less power than any other roller skating disciplines within the FIRS. The FIRS organizational efforts directed at skateboarding have always been quite negatively received by people who organized international skateboarding competitions, as noted by Dave Carnie:

> These roller skaters trying to claim control of skateboarding was almost as insane as a bunch of volleyball players trying to become the governing body of basketball
>
> Dave Carnie, ISF Board member, the former Executive Director of USA Skateboarding, cited in Bane (2011, no page number)

Such a backlash was related to skateboarding values, which suggests that roller skating has nothing to do with skateboarding and should not interfere in its development (Rinehart, 2013). The FIRS actions have always lacked any support from skateboarding athletes and community, while there has been a significant degree of support towards the ISF. Until recently, the FIRS had not been well connected with best athletes and event organizers in international skateboarding, so the FIRS statements and actions were not underpinned by any support from the actual sport and had no real consequences for organization of sport. However, the FIRS has still got a part to play in the Olympic perspective, which will be covered in the next section.

5.2.1.2. Skateboarding and the Olympic movement

Even though skateboarding has never been on any official IOC short lists for inclusion in the Olympic Games, in connection with its booming international popularity and growing coverage of competitive skateboarding in the X-Games era (Beal, 2013), inevitably there have been a lot of reports and debate discussing Olympic perspectives of skateboarding and relationships between the sport and the Olympic movement, such as Koraeus (2005), Bane (2011), Buesing and Glader (2011), O'Neil (2012), Roche (2012) and Brixey (2012). Over the last two decades, the Olympic movement saw several free sports entering the program of the Olympic Games, such as snowboarding, BMX, and mountain biking. As previously noted, Gerhard Heiberg (2013), the IOC member, suggests that this process was largely influenced by the fact that the Olympic Games were losing their appeal to the younger audience. The IOC acknowledged this negative trend in the late 1990s and has been constantly looking for sports attracting ages between 16 and 24:

> … climbing, skateboarding and others—this is important for us. We see that these sports are growing and they should be part of the Olympic program. And little by little we hope to get more of these sports to our program.
>
> Gerhard Heiberg (interview, 2013)

According to one of the most influential leaders of the skateboarding community, Don Bostick,

> NBC [broadcaster] has been the guiding force in directing the International Olympic Committee (IOC) towards vert skateboarding . . . The fact that skateboarding is even being considered, is because of the huge impact and success of the snow-

> boarding Halfpipe event at the past [2002] Winter Olympics in Park City, Utah. The success of ESPN X Games, the Gravity Games and various Action Sports events around the world have made an impact on the IOC. NBC has a long term contract with the IOC, so they are trying to get Action Sports into the Olympics. The feelings is that the Olympics need to stay in tune with the times. Action Sports meaning; skateboarding, BMX Freestyle and Aggressive Inline. Vert is what excites NBC. It's really that simple.
>
> Don Bostick, former professional skateboarder,
> international skateboarding event organizer,
> ISF official and entrepreneur, cited in Koraeus (2005)

Therefore, it can be assumed that NBC, the American television broadcaster, has played the most active part in making the IOC consider skateboarding as a potential Olympic sport as it was interested in bringing it into the Olympic Games since the early 1990s.

As skateboarding has always been quite fragmented in organizational terms, there has never been a leading international federation responsible for the whole competitive skateboarding, which is a mandatory requirement for any potential Olympic sport. Over the last decade, the organizational behaviour of several sport governing bodies can be linked to the potential inclusion of skateboarding into the Olympic Games. Therefore, there is a need to consider a number of governing bodies involved in organizational relationships between competitive skateboarding and the Olympic movement in various capacities as it may help explaining patterns and mechanisms of evolution of the sport as a whole and change in some governing bodies in particular.

As far as the ISF is concerned, one of the founders and the current president of the ISF, Gary Ream (2013), suggests in his interview that the mission of the ISF has been "to protect the skateboarding, to make sure that if it enters the international sport scene, which is the Olympics, it will be represented in a proper way." This is in line with what professional athletes are concerned about. For example, Elliott Sloan (2013), professional skateboarder from the USA, suggests in his interview that

> … one thing that has always been holding [skateboarding] back: the Olympics have kind of strict set of guidelines towards what sport can enter… If we would go in, I would just hope that it would be run correctly enough…

Here is also an insight from Tony Hawk, a legendary professional skateboarder, on the thinking behind the creation of the ISF:

> I think the catalyst for the formation of ISF was to have a committee ready if the IOC wanted to put skateboarding in the Olympics . . . There are a lot of different hoops you have to jump through and a lot of bureaucracy to become a sanctioned organiser of an event and change how the IOC sees you as a sport. The formation of the ISF was the skateboard industry being proactive and preparing for that Olympic opportunity. There are other established committees and sanctioning groups that can claim jurisdiction over skateboarding and have no agenda for Olympic inclusion. I think it is a good thing that the skateboarding industry was organised enough to protect itself in that respect.
>
> Tony Hawk interviewed by Cutler (2011, p.30)

Therefore, a need to preserve skateboarding culture and protect competitive skateboarding from governmental control of non-skateboarding organizations was acknowledged among the key people in sport. According to Brixey (2012), as long as inclusion of skateboarding in the Olympic Games is inevitable, it should be done under control of people from skateboarding:

> . . . as long as there's money to be made there are going to be people out there looking to take skateboarding, package it and sell the sh*t out of it. And there's no doubt that the Olympics will get hold of skateboarding at some point, whether that's 2016, 2024 or later . . . But I feel a little better about it, knowing we've got people, like Dave Carnie or Tony Hawk [both the ISF founders] looking after it who are trying to ensure that the damage done is minimal.

Therefore, the establishment of the ISF in 2002 was clearly connected with a need to protect skateboarding, which was felt by key skateboarding organizers, companies, and athletes to be necessary as a result of a perceived interest of the IOC in skateboarding.

Moreover, the current President and one the founders of the ISF, Gary Ream (2013), recollects in his interview that in 2003 the IOC asked the ISF directly to "organize skateboarding," because the IOC was not happy about the way the introduction of snowboarding to the Olympics was handled. This fact is also confirmed by Don Bostick:

> Last year the IOC contacted Gary Ream the owner of Woodward Camp, about Action Sports in general. Since Gary has been involved with Gymnastics for many

> years on an Olympics level, and the fact he has been involved with Skateboarding, BMX and Inline, he was a logical connection . . . The IOC is very interested in Action Sports and they originally asked Gary and Mike [Jackie, a former President of USA Gymnastics and the USA Skiing] to help them so they would be dealing with the correct people from the various sports
>
> Don Bostick, former professional skateboarder, international skateboarding event organizer, ISF official and entrepreneur, cited by Koraeus (2005)

In fact, initially the IOC and the skateboarding leaders had an idea to organize a federation of action sports. This initiative, however, was not supported by the skateboarding community, as the ISF Vice-President Don Bostick explains:

> The first thought was to organize an Action Sports Federation that would be the International Governing Body for Skateboarding, BMX Freestyle and Aggressive Inline Skating. Gary [Ream] then called a meeting that included many different facades of each sport. With Skateboarding, all of us that were in the meeting wanted no part of being involved in an Action Sports Federation. We're skateboarding and we have our own identity, no one was going for it. In fact no one wanted skateboarding in the Olympics. Gary informed us that the IOC and NBC want it in (eventually) and that if it is going to go that direction, we as an industry should have some control on our sport and therefore get involved. The result was the creation of USA Skateboarding and the International Skateboard Federation.
>
> Don Bostick, former professional skateboarder, international skateboarding event organizer, ISF official and entrepreneur; cited by Koraeus (2005)

There are two important findings with regards to the above quote describing the establishment of the ISF. First, in the early 2000s major skateboarding stakeholders, who were essentially representing the skateboarding companies and athletes' interests, did not want skateboarding to become an Olympic sport. Secondly, the main reason the ISF was created was due to a strong concern that the IOC and NBC would inevitably include skateboarding in the Olympic Games, so the competitive skateboarding community needed a governing body to protect and represent the interests and values of skateboarding and to align them with the IOC vision and criteria. Gary Ream (2013, interview) suggested that the ISF was

> . . . in the position of influence, but not in the position of power. That means to make sure that we organize . . . [skateboarding] the right way, so we do not inter-

> fere with any other vision as it relates to other organizations and other event series we interfere with. We want to make sure skateboarding stays real and free. The Olympic Games only take place one time every four years. We need to unite the skateboard community for that particular event and then walk away from it.

In order to be recognized by the IOC, the ISF became a member of WADA, the IOC-sanctioned anti-doping agency and started to organize the ISF World Championships (Beal, 2013). According to Don Bostick (cited by Koraeus, 2005), another major goal of the ISF was "to set up each country with an official National Governing Body, so that if skateboarding does go to the Olympics, each country is set up properly to deal with the future business." The ISF has done a good job in bringing national skateboarding federations under the ISF umbrella: there are currently 77 member countries from five continents (ISF, 2014). This satisfies the IOC criterium for the sport to get recognized (IOC, 2015). However, despite all these efforts and numerous informal contacts between the ISF and the IOC reported by Ream (2013, interview) and media (Mickle, 2014) over the last decade, so far the IOC has not recognized the ISF as the international governing body of skateboarding.

In fact, among international governing bodies claiming to be in charge of international skateboarding the FIRS is the only one that is recognized by the IOC. There is conflicting information on the year of the recognition: the FIRS (2014a) claims that it was recognized by the IOC in the middle of the 1960s, whereas the IOC (2013b) states that it happened in 1998. However, it is clear that the FIRS is recognized by the IOC as the international federation responsible for all roller sports. Even though the FIRS has never organized or sanctioned any significant international skateboarding competitions of international athletes, it has been in the unique position as the only IOC-recognized international sport organization that claims skateboarding as one the disciplines under its jurisdiction (FIRS, 2013b). Koraeus (2005) suggests that in the early 2000s there were even some discussions between the FIRS and the IOC on a potential approach for skateboarding:

> Because skateboarders have not had any large high-level organisation one way to move forward for some has been to jump in to other existing organisations, like Roller Associations. And yes, maybe it could work if having sections for Rollerskates, Inlines, Skateboard, snakeboards, luge and the likes . . . It has been Olympic talks among both roller people and skateboarders. Now it seems like the International Olympic Committee has given an application to the International

> Roller Association and that they have been trying to contact the skateboard world (which is not easy because who is speaking for all the worlds skateboarders?). Maybe it's time that someone did? But this is of course a painful project.
>
> Koraeus (2005, no page number*)*

Therefore, it can be assumed that at least at some point the IOC considered skateboarding as one of the roller sports and therefore recognized the FIRS as the international governing body for skateboarding among other roller sports. On the other hand, the fact that the IOC also approached the ISF might mean that the IOC did not consider the FIRS as a suitable governing body for the Olympic skateboarding. The IOC has never stated that clearly, but there is a more recent example that demonstrates that, at least, the FIRS considers itself as the IOC recognized authority for skateboarding.

The matter concerned is the FIRS recent bid to include roller sports into the program of the 2020 Summer Olympic Games. In order to encourage new sports to apply for inclusion in the Olympics, the bidding procedures were organized by the IOC over three years (2011-2013). The FIRS was one of seven international federations that made it to the IOC shortlist based on 39 evaluation criteria but eventually failed the final cut as wrestling won and was re-instated in the Olympic program. It is known (IOC, 2013) that the FIRS proposal was to include the roller speed skating on track into the Olympics. However, one paragraph of the FIRS evaluation section in the "2020 Olympic Games Shortlisted International Federations Report" is important for understanding of skateboarding's Olympic status:

> The FIRS states that skateboarding, downhill (with inline skates and /or skateboard) and inline Alpine (downhill slalom with inline skates) could be proposed in future Olympic Games. The previously mentioned competitions are all linked to objective evaluation criteria tied to chronometric control. Among the roller sports, there are also other disciplines, such as half-pipe and street (inline skating and skateboarding), that are subject to artistic judgement.
>
> IOC (2013, p.25)

Even though this FIRS application was essentially about roller sports, it also mentioned its skateboarding plans, which was likely done in an attempt to convince the IOC in sustainability of the FIRS Olympic bid.

In the past, there was another international federation that indicated the willingness to take skateboarding into the Olympic program under their patronage. This organization stands out because it had not dealt with the organization of skateboarding at all until the IOC became interested in this sport and the idea of its Olympic inclusion started to circulate. Neither had it ever mentioned skateboarding in its official communication, let alone stated any authority over it. This organization is the International Cycling Union (UCI), the global governing body of all cycling sports, from traditional road and track cycling to some modern disciplines such as BMX and mountain bike. Cycling has been present at all modern Olympic Games since 1896, and the UCI has been the international governing body for Olympic cycling since its creation in 1900 (UCI, 2014). Unlike the FIRS that considers skateboarding a roller sport, the UCI prefers to view skateboarding in wider sport perspective—as one of the wheel-based sports:

> They [BMX freestyle and skateboarding] all related to wheels, they're all related to bikes as such, and from that point of view cycling is the sport that can bring those disciplines in.
>
> Pat McQuaid, the UCI president in 2006-2013 (Williams, 2011)

The UCI also justifies its right to bring skateboarding into the Olympics by the arguments of practical consideration. Christoph Hubschmid (2013, interview), Director General of the UCI in 2011-2013, suggests that the Olympic competitions in skateboarding can share the facilities with the BMX competitions, and the practical advantage of the UCI as the current Olympic governing body of the BMX is that it can "bridge" these two sports. This is a very reasonable argument, although not all the disciplines of the BMX and skateboarding can share the facilities as technical criteria for some disciplines can vary. Also, the most popular (and likely to be selected for the Olympics) disciplines in skateboarding may not necessarily correspond to the most appealing disciplines in BMX. For example, Vert (Halfpipe) is one the key disciplines in skateboarding but is not the most popular one in the BMX. Consequently, should both skateboarding and BMX freestyle be selected for the Olympics, there is a good chance some facilities would not be used by both sports.

An attempt to "fast-track" skateboarding to 2012 Summer Olympics via the UCI was well documented in media (Beard, 2007; Bane, 2011) and discussed in forums (Letsrun, 2014). The information is controversial though. After a series of meetings between the officials of the IOC and the UCI in 2007, the UCI sports director, Olivier Quejuiner, indicated that technically it would not

be a problem for the UCI to stage a skateboarding event in 2012, so they needed only the green light from the IOC (BBC, 2007). However, despite the IOC being reported as being keen to have skateboarding at the London Games (Bane, 2007), later it was reported that the attempt failed because of the UCI internal disagreement on the matter:

> The proposals did not even make the [UCI] organisation's agenda at its recent annual congress in Germany. It canvassed opinion among its federations around the world, but they failed to give their unanimous backing and without the endorsement of a current Olympic sport, skateboarding's chances were dead.
>
> Beard (2007, no page number)

Williams (2011) agrees that a lack of support from within the UCI organization, dominated by members of the traditional cycling disciplines, played the key role in the failure of the bid. Also, it is clear now that it was an attempt to rush competition skateboarding into the 2012 London Olympics, while at the time there was no sufficient organization in this sport, and the timing for the IOC and the UCI decision was really tight. Sandrine Tonge, a spokeswoman for the IOC, admitted that back in 2007 the challenge

> . . . was the necessity to create a structure within the skateboarding community … There was, back then, no recognized national entities or World Championships.
>
> Buesing and Glader (2011, no page number)

Overall, the sport of skateboarding was barely organized for the Olympic inclusion in 2007, and that probably made both the IOC and the UCI refrain from it.

Consequently, the UCI kept pushing and lobbying the idea of skateboarding entering the Olympics under its authority. For example, Pat McQuaid, the UCI president at time, declared again in 2011 that the "UCI could, without much difficulty but through a lot of work, bring skateboarding into the UCI structure and onwards into the Olympic program" (Bane, 2011). As believed by Buesing and Glader (2011), one of the reasons that the UCI bid was backed by the IOC was that the UCI former president, Hein Verbruggen, was a senior member of the IOC throughout the last decade. This opinion is another indication of the political issues that have surrounded the introduction of new sport to the Olympic Games recently.

It was also suggested that the UCI became more flexible as a federation and the issue with the national federations had been sorted out in the following manner: "we would work with national [cycling] federations so that they could integrate local groups [of skateboarders]" (ASOIF, 2013). In 2011 Enrico Carpani, a spokesman for UCI, stated that discussions with the IOC were ongoing to introduce skateboarding together with BMX freestyle into the Olympic program for Rio de Janeiro 2016 Games (Buesing and Glader, 2011). According to Sportcal (cited in Andersen, 2013), in 2013 during the IOC Executive Board meetings it was revealed that the UCI was ready to make a proposal to include skateboarding in the 2016 Olympic program. However, despite the fact that UCI was thought to have more flexibility with regards to skateboarding recently, the sport did not make it to any list of the UCI disciplines.

To summarize, over the last decade there has been considerable media information and discussion regarding the possible inclusion of skateboarding into the Olympic Games. Although it is evident that the IOC has been communicating with several governing bodies on this topic, the relationships between the Olympic movement and competitive skateboarding remains informal and rather complicated with several organizational actors involved. Reportedly, there is a strong interest of the IOC in the sport of skateboarding, however, this interest seems to have been far from materializing into any concrete Olympic bid. This situation is best characterized by Brad McClain, professional skateboarding athlete from the USA:

> I have heard that talk about the Olympics for several years now. I don't know how serious that is, if they [the IOC] actually would do that.
>
> Brad McClain, professional skateboarder, USA (interview, 2013)

Nevertheless, a perceived interest of the IOC in skateboarding led to a significant structural change, such as formalization of the sport in a dedicated international governing body, the ISF, and required number of national federations, and some organizational developments in other governing bodies, the UCI and the FIRS.

5.2.2. Values of skateboarding

In a study of the subculture of skateboarding in the USA, Beal (1995, p.256) suggests that since the 1960s:

> . . . at times of high popularity, various commercial interests have tried to capitalize on the activity by promoting it as part of the dominant sport culture, that is, as a legitimate sport, one which promotes competition, win-at-all-costs attitude, and extrinsic rewards.

However, until the middle of the 1990s, competitive skateboarding and its commercialization were associated by most skateboarding participants with corporate and bureaucratic behaviour. For instance, this is how Beal (1995) reported skateboarders' attitude to competition during the series of contests run by the Colorado Skateboard Association (CSA), one of the state affiliates of the NSA, in 1991:

> Most of those attending the contests were not actually competing but rather participating in the peripheral activities of watching, fraternizing, and skating apart from the contest. These skaters used the contests to meet new people, learn new tricks, and skate on new and challenging courses . . . As Doug [a 25-year old skater from Welton] stated, "Skaters, even in contests, it's more an attitude of having your best run, making all your tricks as opposed to beating somebody. It's not 'I got to beat this guy, this is the guy I'm going to beat'." This negotiation between a corporate form of skateboarding and the interests of the skaters is reflected in the registration process. Contestants placed themselves into an appropriate category based on age and experience. Each contestant then had a corresponding registration number and color to denote the category pinned on his shirt . . . Many of the skaters pinned their numbers so they were difficult to read (e.g., upside down, or at the very bottom of the shirt). This intentional rejection of conformity demonstrates that these skaters were not fully dedicated to the values of the mainstream sport.
>
> Beal (1995, p.259-260)

The culture of the skateboarding community has always been based on opposition towards mainstream sport competitive values and towards corporate bureaucracy. The following quote illustrates values of skateboarding activity and the way a skateboarder is expected to perceive the world:

> Skateboarding, traditionally speaking … has always been "anti" all of this bullsh*t. Anti money. Anti corporation. Anti organization. Anti representation. Anti judgment. Anti hero. Anti team mentality. Anti segregation. Skateboarding, when viewed through a skater's eyes, is anti everything that sucks in the doldrums of the everyday world of "reality." You don't skate to get roped into the reality of mass marketing, conspicuous consumption, and the rest of the bullsh*t that constitutes the reality of everyday life. You skate to escape the realities of everyday life. That's why we do it. Everyday life isn't particularly "fun." Skateboarding is.
>
> Stratford (no date)

It can be suggested that these anti-establishment values, which were fundamental to skateboarding, affected the development of competitive skateboarding as a sport, because there has always been a lack of dedication to competitive skateboarding among most athletes and resistance to organizational processes. However, it must be noted that as described earlier since the middle of the 1990s when the X-Games and Tony Hawk as the role model of competitive skateboarding arrived, competitive skateboarding has become accepted and chased as a career option by many athletes.

Nevertheless, this research provides the evidence that the culture of skateboarding has still remained distinctively different from mainstream competitive sports that emphasize importance of training hard and winning. Over the decades, many participants have viewed skateboarding as an alternative lifestyle rather than as a sport in which winning competitions is important (Wheaton, 2004). None of the modern top competition skateboarders, who were interviewed, consider winning competitions as a number one career priority. For example, 38 year-old professional skateboarder from Brazil, Sandro Dias, who is one of the best in the world in the Vert discipline, claims in his interview that nothing has really changed in his attitude toward skateboarding since he started this activity for fun as a kid:

> The feeling that I am still having is that skateboarding is for fun. And it is all the same because I love to do this. I am a professional skateboarder not because it is all about the money. I am a professional skater, because I love to skate. I love to skate every day still. I love to skate with my friends. I don’t like to practice for a contest, I like to skate! That is the difference. Kids practice for tricks for the contests [nowadays]. I don’t like this.
>
> Sandro Dias, professional skateboarder, Brazil, 38 years old (interview, 2013)

As it can be seen from this quote, skateboarding athlete from an older generation sees younger athletes as paying more attention to skateboarding competitions and trainings nowadays. However, not all of the younger generation consider winning skateboarding contests as their main priority. Here is how 23 year-old American skateboarder Brad McClain describes how important having fun is in comparison to winning a skateboarding event:

> It is good to do well, of course. But as long as you are here [at the X-Games contest] . . . whether I am placed the first or the last—it is all the same really. If you do the contest and if you get the first place but you don't have fun skating with anybody up there, then it really doesn't matter. I am skating with my friends, travelling the world, skating one of the sickest[2] parks that are built just for you. How could you not enjoy yourself? So I don't think it is all about winning. It is just having a good time, promoting your sport and just showing people what you've worked for.
>
> Brad McClain, professional skateboarder, USA (interview, 2013)

Likewise, most interviewees expressed their deep and sincere belief in what can be called alternative skateboarding values. For example, Elliott Sloan, a 26 year-old professional skateboarder from the United States, points out that inventing new tricks and gaining respect from fellow skateboarders is more important than competing and winning, which he recognizes as the main source of income though:

> Competing is really only one part of skateboarding. Obviously that is what the most of us make a good part of our living from. But for me I would say the most rewarding part is learning the new tricks, just doing the stuff that has not been done. I have done some tricks that have never been before, and it was really recognized within the skate community. You are curious, and other skaters really have respect for you. It is not really about the TV and hype, but you really have the respect of other people who have done something amazing.

Therefore, the research provides significant support to the opinion that traditional sport values of competitiveness and winning are still not seen as the most important ones by modern skateboarding professional athletes, despite the fact they take part in competitions.

[2] Sick - slang term often used in skateboarding communities. It means crazy, insane, awesome.

Therefore, it is clear that culturally skateboarding is very different from most mainstream sports and hardly fits the ideas of the Olympic movement. For example, an amateur skateboarder, Guus Van der Spek (X-Games, 2014), just doesn't

> . . . get skateboarding in the Olympics. It doesn't belong there. It's not a sport or discipline, it's bigger than that.

Arguably, it would not be an understatement to say that historically there has never been a more "anti-Olympic" sport than skateboarding. Most skateboarders do not consider themselves competitors but exactly the opposite: they are all friends and "homies."[3] Meanwhile, the Olympic Games is the biggest sport competition in the world, so the main idea of the Olympics is the best athletes compete against each other in order to identify who the very best is. Stratford (no date) points out that

> . . . [the] Olympics gives one man (or woman) a chance to reign victorious over their peers, and bask in the "joy of victory", while every other . . . loser gets to suffer through the "agony of defeat." This is totally contrary to what skateboarding is all about. In skateboarding, you determine your own destiny. You're not measured against other people. You're measured against what you're made of.

That is why most skateboarding participants suggest that essentially the Olympic Games stand for everything that skateboarding stands against.

Consequently, the values of skateboarding do not fit to the organizational features that are traditional and obligatory for Olympic sports. For example, the Olympic Games are the event where athletes represent not themselves but their respective countries. This means all the appropriate elements of national identity, such as national flags displayed next to the athlete's names on TV broadcasts, national uniforms being used at all the Olympic events, national anthems, and flags during awarding ceremonies. Skateboarding participants claim that what they do is a way to express personality, so it is about individuality and has little to do with nationalism (X-Games, 2014). Competitive skateboarding has never had a doping testing practice either. As was mentioned above, even organized competitions are quite new to skateboarding, so doping testing is

[3] Homies – slang term often used in skateboarding communities. It means friends from home town who one usually does skateboarding with.

something unthinkable for many skateboarding participants, something that goes against traditional values of their activity.

Many participants expressed their views strongly against skateboarding in the Olympics in online petitions (Haveboard, 2007; Clark, 2014), and publications (X-Games, 2014, Stratford, no date), suggesting that alternative cultural values, which skateboarders have always stuck to, are "incompatible with the disciplinary, hierarchical, nationalistic Olympic regime" (Thorpe and Wheaton, 2011, p.831). For example, more than 3500 people signed this petition:

> With due respect for Olympic Athletes, we the undersigned skateboarders and advocates strongly request that the IOC NOT RECOGNIZE SKATEBOARDING AS AN OLYMPIC SPORT, or use skateboarding to market the Olympics. Further, we ask that the IOC NOT recognize any individuals or groups claiming to be the IOC recognized governing body of skateboarding or provide funding to them. Skateboarding is not a "sport" and we do not want skateboarding exploited and transformed to fit into the Olympic program. We feel that Olympic involvement will change the face of skateboarding and its individuality and freedoms forever. We feel it would not in any way support skateboarders or skateparks. We do not wish to be part of it and will not support the Olympics if skateboarding is added as an Olympic sport.
>
> Clark (2014)

Thus there is a fear in the skateboarding community that skateboarding values can be oppressed by the dominant Olympic culture if skateboarding joins the Olympic movement. At the same time, it is suggested (Stratford, no date) that the IOC does not realize how different skateboarding values are from the Olympic ones, and how rebellious this sport is:

> . . . [the] problem that almost everyone recognizes with all of this and, the one thing that the mass media has yet to really latch on to is that, skateboarding is quite unlike any other Olympic sport. And, skateboarders are not really your typical Olympic "athlete", either. Within the world of skateboarding, this is widely known and, typically, carried as a badge of pride. I'm not so sure that the Olympics is ready for "athletes" that are cut from this cloth of outward rebellion that most skaters are cut from. For that matter: I'm not even sure if the Olympics really know what they're getting themselves into.

Therefore, if skateboarding is included in the Olympics one day, the IOC and skateboarding governing bodies would have to compromise on each other's values, such as institutionalization of

sport or retaining a fair degree of anti-establishment, formality in sport regulations or creativity of expression in skateboarding, strict judging criteria or choosing the personal favourite.

Nonetheless, this research indicates that some skateboarders are supportive of the idea of Olympic skateboarding in general. One of the most known skateboarders in the world, Rob Dyrdek, who recently retired as competitive skateboarder and now is the Street League Series organizer and media celebrity, goes further and suggests in his interview that skateboarding should be in the Olympics and that "it would be incredible for a skateboarder to win the gold for his country." His younger colleague Elliott Sloan, professional skateboarder from the USA (interview, 2013), also expresses his positive attitude towards the idea of Olympic skateboarding but admits that many of fellow skateboarders are against it:

> I would love to see it [skateboarding in the Olympics]. I am not sure if it is going to happen in my lifetime. A lot of people don't want to go to the Olympics, but I think it might be cool.

The most interviewed skateboarders were also quite open to the Olympic inclusion but on the other hand concerned about the way it might be organized within the Olympic movement. The opinion of Sandro Dias, an international skateboader from Brazil, highlights their belief that skateboarding should only enter the Olympics on "skateboarding terms":

> I agree to see skateboarding in Olympics, because skateboarding is something, which is worldwide . . . As far as the Olympics respect our rules, it would be good for us. As far as they respect our love to skateboarding, it would be good for the Olympics. If they try to change something like our rules, format of competition, our lifestyle that would be not good–I don't agree then. I am out then, cause we don't need the Olympics. They need us, because they are too "old." So if they need us, please respect us. But if they keep our format and our rules to fit them into the Olympics, it would be very good for us. And that would be very nice for the market and for the whole industry.
>
> Sandro Dias, professional skateboarder, Brazil (interview, 2013)

The major concern here is how the Olympic skateboarding should be organized in order to preserve skateboarding values, have credible regulation and judging system.

As highlighted above, skateboarding competitions encourage creativity and style, so there are very loose judging criteria based on artistic impression. Brad McClain, professional skateboarder from the USA, expresses a concern in his interview that inclusion of skateboarding in the Olympics is complicated,

> … because judging in skateboarding is so difficult . . . when it comes down to skateboarding, the style counts. You have to make it look good and smooth. And it comes down to a personal taste for the judge. So to put skateboarding in the Olympics, they [the IOC] have to really figure out the judging system that will be accepted by everybody. Otherwise you are going to have controversy for every single contest. So I guess maybe the only way it would work is that if you have the right judges and consistency of their thinking.
>
> Brad McClain, professional skateboarder, USA (interview, 2013)

Therefore, a major concern of skateboarding athletes has been about how skateboarding's flexible competition arrangements would fit into quite rigid Olympic frameworks.

> In the Olympics they have really strict judging, like certain things count like these many points. Once it is judged like that, skating will change. Skateboarding is totally different than anything else, than any sport in the Olympics. There are so many other things you can judge and look out. It is not just about one trick, but so many things: it is how you do the trick and the style. It is a really touchy subject.
>
> Elliott Sloan, professional skateboarder, USA, (interview, 2013)

As it can be seen from these quotes, there is a concern among professional skateboarding athletes that the sport arrangements of competitive skateboarding might be treated in the wrong way, even though many Olympic sports, such diving, synchronized swimming, gymnastics, and figure skating, include a subjective "artistic impression" as one of the judging criteria. To summarize, even though the values of skateboarding are very different from the Olympic culture and the idea of Olympic skateboarding is not well received in the skateboarding community, some top international athletes find it acceptable for skateboarding to enter the program of the Olympics but at the same time suggest that this must happen only if there are no changes to existing skateboarding rules and traditions.

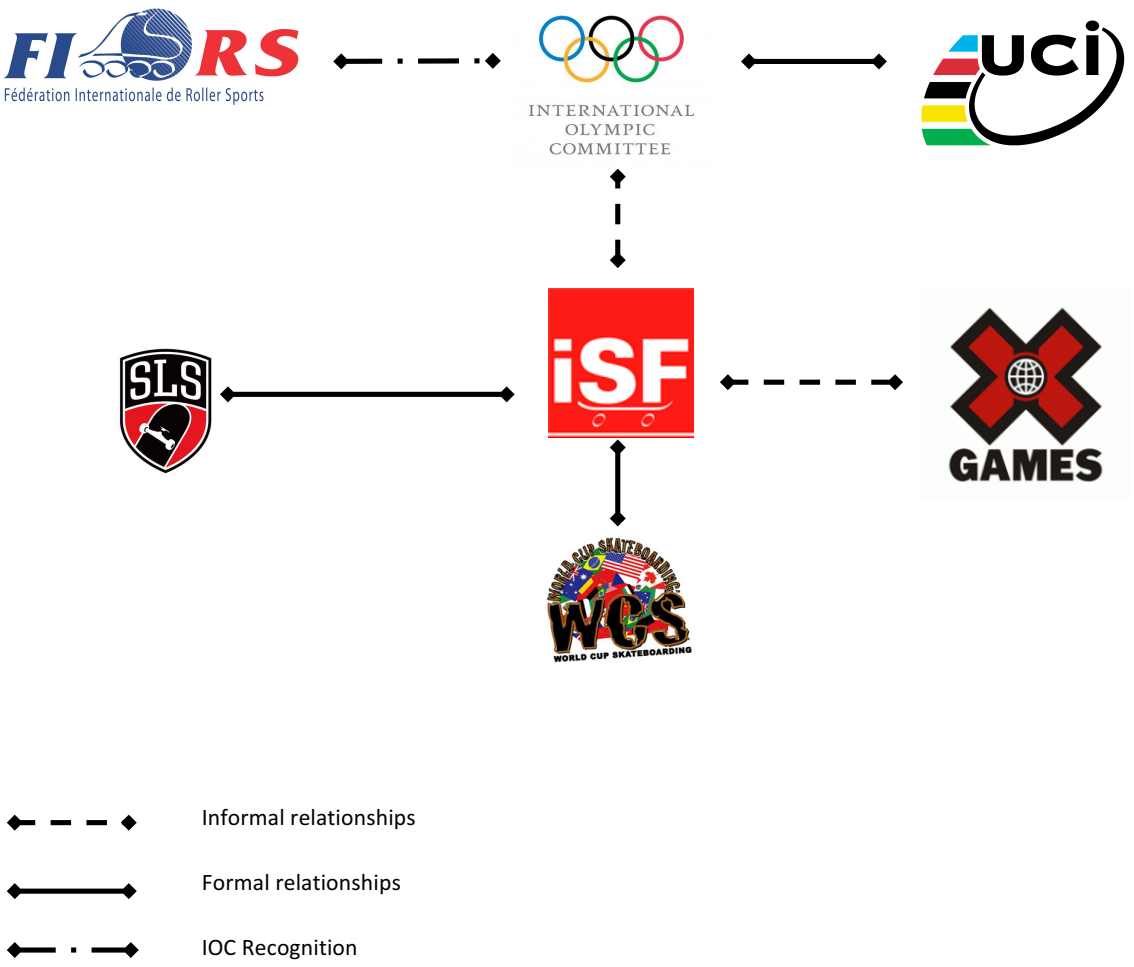
5.2.3. Structure of competitive skateboarding

In skateboarding community, there has always been a fear of autonomy loss and a belief that skateboarding must always be organized by skateboarders (Thorpe and Wheaton, 2011). As a consequence, international skateboarding still has little organizational structure and functions as huge network of individuals and organizations. This is how Gary Ream (2013, interview), the ISF President, answers the question whether skateboarding needs more formal organization in order to become a legitimate Olympic sport:

> I think the word "organized" is a very dangerous word. I believe skateboarding needs to be skateboarding, like it has been in the past. I think obviously the term "organized" is the term, which can be used very loosely based on regimes and applications of the world. But it has to always have the ability to be creative, artistic and ever-changing. That what the youth demands. So yes, there needs to be some level of organization. For instance, the Street League has some level of organization within what they do. The X-Games has some sort of organization within what they do. And then there is the World Cup Skateboarding that has some organization of what they do. I think as long as it [skateboarding] stays independent and creative in these regimes and different operations around the world, then it will always present what skateboarders believe is important.

Therefore, there has been an understanding among the officials in charge of competitive skateboarding that skateboarding athletes and community would reject any significant changes that would copy the organizational practices of mainstream sport governing bodies. From a structural perspective, as competitive skateboarding has remained very fragmented over the last two decades, a number of international organizations, such the FIRS, the UCI, and the ISF, have attempted to establish control over this sport. These attempts have been mostly connected to the Olympic perspectives of competitive skateboarding as the interest of the IOC to make the Olympic program more relevant for younger audience has been expected to materialize in the introduction of skateboarding into the Games. **Figure 5.2** presents the map of international governing bodies connected to skateboarding (FIRS, UCI, ISF) and the biggest event's organizers (X-Games, World Cup Skateboarding, Street League Skateboarding).

Figure 5.2: Organization of international competitive skateboarding



As already mentioned, the establishment of the ISF was a direct consequence of a perception of increasing interest of the IOC in the sport of skateboarding since the beginning of the new century and as a result of the efforts of several influential people and organizations within skateboarding wanting to control the future organization of the sport. As it can be seen from the figure above, the ISF has established relationships with the biggest competition organizers in skateboarding. The SLS and the ISF work together to "evolve the SLS Super Crown World Championship global qualification system as it becomes the official street skateboarding World Championship for the ISF" (Transworld Sport, 2014, no page number), which has been organized by the WCS so far. Although both the WCS and the ISF claim to be governing bodies of the sport of skateboarding, they have never been in competition for global legitimacy and are very much tied to each other. The WCS serves as an operational sport organization that is responsible mainly for

organizing competitions and managing sport aspects of skateboarding. The ISF was created to represent skateboarding on a bigger political stage, and specifically concerning the Olympic Games, and is a more strategic sport organization that acts as the ultimate governing body at the top of the pyramid of the relevant skateboarding's continental and national sport organizations, such as The European Skateboard Association and The United States Association of Skateboarding (USAS).

Via its network, the ISF remains connected to the huge market of skateboarding in an informal way, despite being a de-jure non-for-profit organization. As described earlier, the founders and the current officials of the ISF are coming from skateboarding industry and had held other positions in skateboarding commercial enterprises as well as in International Association of Skateboarding Companies (IASC)[4]. In fact, the idea of a skateboarders' governing body (which materialized in the ISF) was born during one of the IASC open meetings when Gary Ream explained "that if the world of skateboarding doesn't pull together and enter the Olympics on purpose, someone else will eventually succeed in entering it" (Cave, 2014, no page number). As of today, the ISF office is based in Woodward Camp Pensylvannia, the action sport business venture of Gary Ream. Therefore, it is evident that the ISF represents not only skateboarding participants as a governing body but also skateboarding companies in an informal "network" way.

Echoing Tony Hawk, who said multiple times that the Olympic Games needs skateboarding more than skateboarding needs them (King, 2014), the ISF always maintains the position that skateboarding does not "necessarily need to be in the Games, and the non-competitive component of skateboarding, with or without the Games, will always be its heart and soul" (Gary Ream cited in Bane, 2011). So it can be argued that whereas the FIRS was driven by strong desire to be in the Olympic Games, the ISF was mainly motivated by the need to protect the interests and culture of skateboarding. That is how the ISF President Gary Ream reiterates this position and hints at other organizations trying to claim the authority over the sport:

> We have the luxury of not needing to hurry, and of being able to say No . . . We don't have to do anything but protect our position and make sure that it's not giv-

[4] The International Association of Skateboarding Companies "is a diverse group of skateboard manufacturers, distributors, contest organizers, private skateparks, and individuals. A collaboration of people passionate about skateboarding- with the single aim of protecting the integrity of skateboarding and pushing skateboarding forward on a global level" (IASC, 2014).

> en out to somebody else that just doesn't get it, which would be disastrous for skateboarding and for the IOC.
>
> Gary Ream interviewed by Bane (2011)

However, the latest developments demonstrate that still informal but regular connections between the ISF and the IOC have developed into a close cooperation between these governing bodies, with the ISF starting to play a more pro-active role in a push for skateboarding into the Olympics. For example, in October 2013, shortly after an opportunity to enter the 2016 Olympic Games with the UCI was gone, the ISF released the video called "ISF's Olympic Pitch for Skateboarding," which stated why skateboarding must be in the Olympics (Wheelbasemag, 2013) and was meant to target the members of international skateboarding community. Quite distinctly, the ISF has adopted the Code of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and currently includes 77 member countries (ISF, 2014). These organizational features correspond with the IOC criteria for Olympic sport, thus indicating the ISF willingness to come up with the Olympic bid. Windyman (2014) also suggests that the ISF is getting closer to the IOC recognition and if this happens, the ISF will take that recognition away from its current formal holder, the FIRS.

For decades, the FIRS has claimed skateboarding as part of the roller sports. As discussed in the history section, the actual role of this governing body in organization of international skateboarding has been minimal as it has never been connected to the community, key competitions organizers, and other skateboarding organizations. However, using its arguably legitimate position with regards to skateboarding and its status as the IOC recognized governing body, the FIRS claims that it is responsible for organization of international skateboarding even though it has no support from leading athletes and organizers, nor it has ever staged any significant competition in skateboarding. However, the FIRS future plans regarding skateboarding have been recently reinforced by the fact that the FIRS, which has never demonstrated any interest in developing competitive skateboarding, appointed one of the most influential European skateboarding event organizers, Titus Dittmann, as the Chairman of the FIRS International Committee of Skateboarding (FIRS, 2014b). This FIRS appointment can be seen as an attempt to strengthen their credibility in skateboarding in the eyes of the IOC and skateboarding community, ensuring that the FIRS is in the position to bring forward an Olympic bid on behalf of international skateboarding.

Finally, the UCI is the cycling governing body that has not been involved in development of the international skateboarding but was thought to lead or facilitate possible Olympic introduction

of this sport. If the relationships between the UCI and the IOC are considered, indeed, the UCI has been in the best possible position in comparison to the FIRS and the ISF as it has an established connection with the IOC due to the long-term presence of cycling in the Games. However, according to Williams (2011), the UCI hoped to introduce skateboarding without losing any of its cycling events from the Olympic schedule so rejected an idea to remove some existing disciplines in the Olympic program in order to allow skateboarding in. This was confirmed by the UCI officials Christian Baumann and Christophe Hubschmid in the interview:

> I am sure you are aware that we tried to put it [BMX freestyle and skateboarding] into the Olympic program of the 2016 Games in Rio. Unfortunately we were rejected by the IOC . . . The reason was actually not rejecting . . . [them], but maintaining the existing list of disciplines which closed the door for new disciplines . . .This was mainly a political decision I would say. All the new disciplines were rejected. We want this, but we don't want to include it at the expense of other cycling disciplines. So this will be up to the IOC to decide.

Until late 2014, the IOC prohibited increasing the number of medal disciplines in order to make sure the program of Summer Olympics did not grow any further (Heiberg, 2013, interview). With "Agenda 2020" recently approved by the IOC, it now allows more sports. It is extremely difficult to summarize the current UCI stance in skateboarding, as no information has been provided in media or interviews. From the interview of the UCI officials Christian Baumann and Christophe Hubschmid it was understood that the UCI was always open to develop the sport and provide an organizational umbrella for skateboarding but still focused on cycling disciplines. Therefore, until recently the UCI has been very cautious with any statements regarding skateboarding as it has considered its organization as an inappropriate one and the culture of skateboarding as completely different to cycling. It might be an indication that the UCI has considered the matter carefully, including examining the attitude of the skateboarding community toward the UCI and potential conflict of cultures.

There is another organizational issue, which was discussed earlier from a cultural perspective and is to be addressed in order for competitive skateboarding to be considered as a candidate sport for the Olympic Games: the format of competitions and judging criteria. Arguably this concern can be addressed by existence of the Street League Skateboarding (SLS), the competition series founded by professional skateboarder Rob Dyrdek in 2010 to "foster growth, popularity, and acceptance of street skateboarding worldwide" (SLS, 2014, no page number). The SLS is the

competition series in the Park discipline of skateboarding that has the Instant Scoring Experience judging system that

> . . . provides instant, real-time results for every skateboarding trick . . . [and] creates fast paced real-time understanding of exactly what place every skater is in at every moment of the event. There are five Street League judges. Each judge has an ISX [Instant Scoring Experience] dial. They judge each trick that is done in each section. This will allow the viewers and skaters to know exactly what place everyone is at every moment of the event, allowing the winner to be known at the very instant the last trick the event is scored.
>
> SLS (2014, no page number)

This competition format and judging system became a completely new experience for international competitive skateboarding and, in organizational terms, serves as a link between the traditional culture of skateboarding creativity and some standardization of competition rules. This is how the SLS founder describes the idea behind these series and its appeal to the Olympic movement:

> The idea is who can do the hardest tricks when it matters. And by scoring each trick everybody knows what place everybody is and what level they've got to skate at . . . What we are trying to do is basically to prove it like "Ok, we did it," so this works for you [the Olympic Games]–take this! I don't think that they [the IOC] would bother switching it [the format of SLS competition], because they don't understand it well enough. And if they did, these guys [athletes] just would not do it.
>
> Rob Dyrdek, former professional skateboarder,
> Street League Skateboarding organizer, entrepreneur,
> TV presenter and celebrity, USA, 39 years old (2013, interview)

As noted earlier, elite skateboarding athletes have been positive about the idea of joining the Olympic movement, but some are concerned the values and rules of competitive skateboarding will be significantly changed when the sport is introduced to the Olympic Games. With the introduction of the SLS competition format, some skateboarding athletes realize that this is how skateboarding would look like, should it enter the Olympic Games:

> The Street League is the reason why the Olympics would even consider taking it, because this is about as close to the Olympic skateboarding as you might have built it yet. They [the SLS] worked pretty hard to make it structured: everything

> can be judged only one way . . . If they [the IOC] are on a fence thinking about the decision, I'm sure they are watching this [Street League] as a guide of what they might do.
>
> Brad McClain, professional Park skateboarder, USA (interview, 2013)

Thus, at the moment the SLS is the only competition format deliberately introduced as an organizational compromise between traditionally loose competition rules, which reflect skateboarding values, and the need of standardization of some sport regulations. To be more specific, in terms of following skateboarding values, the SLS format does not restrict athletes in what tricks they do. It does, however, favour the technical side of skateboarding rather than its "style" component as the instant scoring is focused on the difficulty of tricks and not on style. However, this compromise is likely to increase the chances of competitive skateboarding to join the Olympic Games.

5.3. Conclusions of the case study

The history and current state of organization of international competitive skateboarding are discussed in this chapter in terms of structural and cultural features and the impact of the biggest environmental forces. Some important patterns and mechanisms of evolution of competitive skateboarding can be summarized from this case study report.

Patterns of evolution

1. The research suggests that traditional skateboarding values, such as expressionism, individualism, and anti-establishment have always been strong in competitive skateboarding.
2. International competitive skateboarding has always functioned as a network, consisting mostly of commercial actors, such as media companies, event organizers, and equipment producers. The role of governing bodies has always been of limited significance in skateboarding organizational structures. There has been no indication from skateboarding athletes and event organizers that international skateboarding needs a single organization to govern it.

3. While there has been no call for more formal organization from the skateboarding community, still several organizations claimed to be representing skateboarding internationally, and their interest in skateboarding can be directly linked to the idea of Olympic skateboarding.
4. It has been fundamentally key for skateboarding athletes and community that competitive skateboarding has remained managed by skateboarders. Therefore, there has been a strong opposition to the Olympic future of skateboarding, coming mainly from the amateur skateboarding community and warning that traditional skateboarding values will not survive in competitive sport as they are in a strong contrast to the Olympic regulations and frameworks.
5. On the other hand, participation in the Olympic Games is viewed by the majority of skateboarding athletes as a step forward for the sport.
6. However, it is widely argued among them that skateboarding must only enter the Olympic Games on skateboarding terms as there is an assumption that the IOC needs skateboarding, not vice versa. This assumption can be seen as debatable or even an arrogant one, as one might argue that if the IOC really wanted skateboarding, it would have been already in the Olympic Games.

Mechanisms of evolution

1. The two biggest phenomena, which affected skateboarding in the last two decades and initiated significant structural changes in it, are the X-Games and the Olympic movement. Although it is mostly claimed by professional athletes that winning competitions is not the most important thing in sport, the competitive aspect of skateboarding has been growing throughout the X-Games era and has been reflected in growth of number of competitions, governing bodies, and commercial opportunities in competitive skateboarding.
2. The interest of governing bodies to skateboarding has been directly connected to the idea of Olympic skateboarding: some federation, such as the FIRS and UCI, considered including skateboarding under their “umbrellas” for the Olympic bid, while the ISF was created to protect skateboarding in the wake of concerns over its Olympic introduction.

3. Support of an idea of Olympic skateboarding coming from elite athletes is likely to be down to the possible individual career benefits and overall greater recognition of their sport if it obtains the Olympic status.
4. Whereas it still remains to be seen whether the IOC interest materializes, this perceived interest already led to some structural changes in skateboarding, most notably, the establishment of the ISF, the dedicated international governing body aiming to protect skateboarding values while it is integrated in mainstream sport frameworks. At the moment, however, there is no clear indication which organization is preferred by the IOC for a potential Olympic inclusion of skateboarding as at different points over the last fifteen years it approached the FIRS, the ISF and the UCI on this matter.

6. Case Study: Sport Climbing

You have to find your way of climbing—what you prefer, where your destination is . . . At the beginning climbing was a great adventure. And it is a great adventure. But I also was very focused and motivated athlete. I really liked to compete with other climbers and to climb competitions. But this is just a certain aspect. I still really like the challenge. But I am looking more for a combination of adventure and the challenge of climbing. And that is a great opportunity of climbing, because you can make your own rules. And you want to decide how you want to do it . . . It is all about your creativity and how you want to interpret it for yourself. And I like this freedom that you can decide where you go climbing, when you go climbing and how much risk you want to go climbing. That is so fascinating…

Stefan Glowacz, professional climbing athlete, Germany, interview, 2013

This case study focuses on competitive climbing: free sport that has not been integrated into the Olympic programme but has recently attempted to join it. For the purposes of this research the term "climbing" must not be confused with the term "mountaineering." Climbing (also referred to as "free climbing") is about conquering rocks, whereas mountaineering might involve climbing but is a broader term that includes various activities aiming at conquering mountains. Sport climbing, which can also be referred as competitive climbing, is a sport, which involves climbers conquering the climbing roots on natural rocks or artificial walls in real-time contests against each other. Currently, there are three most practised disciplines in competitive climbing: Speed, Lead, and Bouldering (with the latter two often referred as Difficulty disciplines).

This chapter discusses the organizational evolution of the sport of climbing over the last few decades. First, the history of organizational development of the sport is presented. Further subsections will evaluate the structural and cultural features of international sport climbing. Structural arrangements in the sport will be discussed through the lens of organizational structures of governing bodies and the role of athletes in their decision-making. Change in values will be assessed by comparison of the contemporary values of sport climbing with the values of traditional climbing. The organizational evolution in competitive climbing will be analyzed with focus on the relationships of the sport with the Olympic movement and the attitude of professional athletes to the Olympic prospect.

6.1. Data collection

Primary evidence for this case study was obtained from in-depth interviews with twelve key informants in the sport, including current international climbing athletes and coaches in Bouldering and Lead disciplines, officials from the key governing organization, former international athletes, and traditional climbers. The names of the interviewees, their age, and positions can be found in **Table 6.1**. The majority of interviews took place during the visit to the Rockmaster, the international climbing competition in September 2013. Due to time and cost constraints of the research project, two interviews were not face-to-face but email and Skype interviews. The analysis also draws on other documents and materials, such as journal articles, official statements of the governing bodies**,** web posts, and discussions. They are listed in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.1: List of interviewees

<table>
<tr><th>SPORT FOUNDERS / LEGENDS</th><th>OFFICIALS</th><th>COMPETITIVE CLIMBING ATHLETES</th><th>OTHERS</th></tr>
<tr><td>Stefan Glowacz,
Germany, 48 years old
Professional climbing athlete: sport climbing until the late 1990s; since then he is focused on adventure outdoor climbing</td><td colspan="2">Sean McColl,
Canada, 26 years old
Professional sport climbing athlete
The IFSC Athletes President</td><td>Roman Krajnik,
Slovenia,
39 years old
Professional sport climbing coach</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Marco Maria Scolaris
Italy, 55 years old
The IFSC President
(interviewed by e-mail)</td><td>Rustam Gelmanov
Russia, 26 years old
Professional sport climbing athlete</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Jerome Meyer,
France, 35 years old,
Former competitive athlete, the IFSC Sport Manager (interviewed by Skype)</td><td>Alex Puccio,
USA, 24 years old
Professional sport climbing athlete</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

	Helmut Knabl Austria, 54 years old, The IFSC Vice-President	**Jacob Schubert** Austria, 23 years old Professional sport climbing athlete	
	Paola Gigliotti Italy, 53 years old The IFSC Honorary Member in charge of human and social programs		
Iker Pou, Spain, 36 years old Professional climbing athlete: does both sport climbing and adventure outdoor climbing			
Eneko Pou, Spain, 39 years old Professional climbing athlete: does both sport climbing and adventure outdoor climbing			

Table 6.2: Documents used in the preparation of the case study report

Author	Title	Access
Sport Accord	The International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) discussion of the Olympic project	http://sportaccord.com/en/news/the-international-federation-of-sport-climbing-ifsc-discusses-olympic-project-0-17579
Sarah Stirling	Competitions, Funding, the Olympics and the BMC	http://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/page.php?id=2114
UK Climbing	Exclusive interview: David Lama	http://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/page.php?id=5147
Dougald Mac-Donald	Lead Climbing Only For 2020 Olympic Bid	http://www.climbing.com/news/lead-climbing-only-for-2020-olympic-bid/

Dougald Mac-Donald	New Olympic Plan: Climbers Must Compete in Bouldering, Lead, and Speed	http://www.climbing.com/news/new-olympic-plan-climbers-must-compete-in-bouldering-lead-and-speed/
Abigail Wise	Why Rock Climbing Should Not be an Olympic Sport	http://www.nerverush.com/why-rock-climbing-should-not-be-an-olympic-sport/
iSportconnect	Profile of the week : Marco Maria Scolaris - President, International Federation of Sport Climbing	http://www.isportconnect.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18079&Itemid=471
Sport Business International	Interview with Marco Scolaris, the IFSC President	*Sport Business International, 2012*, 07, *p.58*
The IFSC	What is the IFSC?	http://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/about-ifsc/what-is-the-ifsc
The IFSC	The IFSC Values	http://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/about-ifsc/what-is-the-ifsc/values
The IFSC	Climbing Competitions' History	https://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/about-ifsc/what-is-the-ifsc/history
The IFSC	The President's message	http://www.ifsc-climbing.org/index.php/about-ifsc/what-is-the-ifsc/president-s-message
The UIAA	History	http://theuiaa.org/history.html
The UIAA	Revenue Generation for UIAA (2010 – 2014): Report to Sport Accord IF Forum 2009	http://www.sportcentric.com/vsite/vfile/page/fileurl/0,11040,5197-199994-217217-159733-0-file,00.pdf
Jackie Kiewa	Traditional climbing: metaphor of resistance or metanarrative of oppression?	*Leisure Studies*, 2002, 21, 2, 145-161

Scott Tyson	Competition Climbing: An Overview of the History and Organization of Rock Climbing Competitions	*Association of Outdoor Recreation & Education Conference Proceedings*, 1991, 107-113
Olivier Aubel and Fabien Ohl	THE DENEGATION OF THE ECONOMY: The Example of Climbing in France	*International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 2004, 39, 2, 123
Stephan Potgieter	Exploring rock climbing discourses	University of Pretoria: Master's Thesis
Jillian Rickly-Boyd	Lifestyle climbing: Toward existential authenticity	*Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 2012, Vol. 17, No. 2, May, 85–104

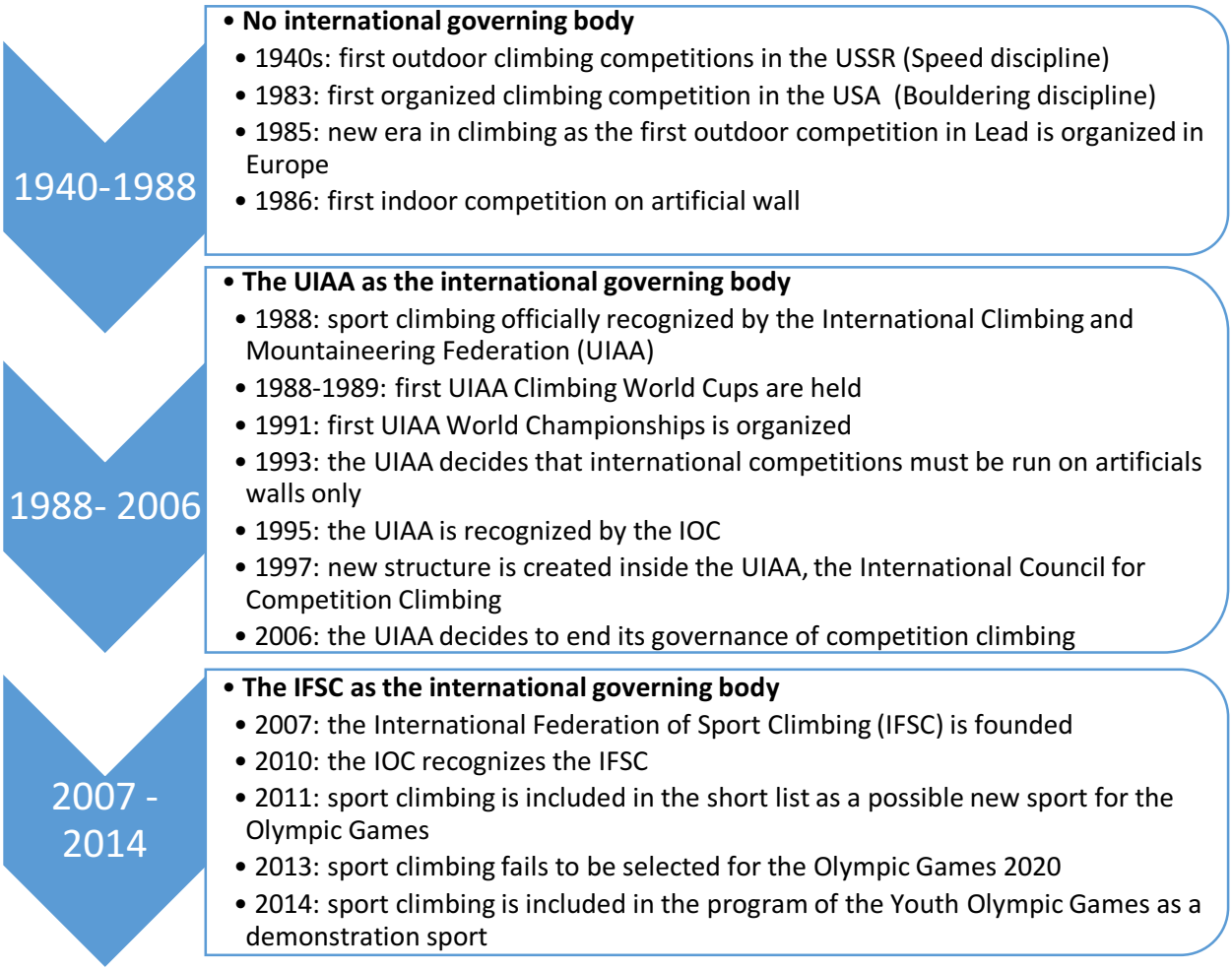
6.2. Organizational evolution of sport climbing

In this section, the major results of the case study are reported. After the history of organization of competitive climbing, which includes discussion of its relationships with the Olympic movement, there are two sections that focus on the values and structure of international competitive climbing.

6.2.1. The history of organization of sport climbing

To summarize and visualize the brief history of organization of international sport climbing, **Figure 6.1** presents it in three separate periods: in accordance to the international governance of this sport.

Figure 6.1: Timeline of the history of organization of international sport climbing



Sources: Tyson (1991), UIAA (2014), IFSC (2014a)

6.2.1.1. The origins and features of initial organization of international sport climbing

As Aubel and Ohl (2004) suggest, the *"sportization"* and *"emancipation"* of climbing from mountaineering happened in the 1970s, when in France's cliffs outside mountainous areas were created as free-climbing zones and an activity, which can be called traditional outdoor climbing, continued its codification, meaning that every natural climbing route should be given a difficulty grade by climbers themselves. These grades have functioned in traditional climbing since then. Although different grade systems have been used in rock climbing, the very existence of these

systems managed by athletes demonstrates that athletes effectively run traditional rock climbing and can be considered a unique feature of organization of this activity:

> One of the distinctive aspects of climbing is its governance. No organization or referee declares the winners of outdoor climbing. Climbers . . . create new climbs and give them grades. The grades hold until another climber manages to do the climb and either confirms or disputes the rating.
>
> Story (2011, no page number)

Whereas the codification of climbing routes provides climbers with opportunities to challenge each other by conquering the routes of greater difficulties, this is an indirect competition. Although traditional climbing cannot be considered as a competitive sport, in this study it was necessary to refer to this activity because sport climbing and its main organizational and cultural features originate from traditional climbing.

Climbing as a sport is a relatively young phenomenon, and it has only been professionalized and institutionalized in the last three decades. The French climbing community played an important role in development of the international organization of the sport climbing as the first indoor climbing competition was organized in 1986 at a gymnasium in Vaulx-en-Velin, a suburb of Lyon (IFSC, 2014a) by the French Mountain and Climbing Federation. At that stage the "potential future for Sport Climbing became clear as all climbers began to show interest in this new branch of their sport, even those who appeared reluctant at first" (IFSC, 2014a, no page number). An indoor competitions circuit quickly gained much popularity, and after the proposal of the French Mountain and Climbing Federation sport climbing was recognized by the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA) in the late 1980s (Stirling, 2009). By then, the UIAA had already been involved in rock climbing by agreeing on the climbing difficulty grades but primarily had been dealing with mountaineering, alpinism, and hiking matters (UIAA, 2014). Consequently, the UIAA became the first international governing body of competitive climbing and started to organize the Climbing World Cup in Speed and Lead from 1989 and the World Cup in Bouldering from 1999 (IFSC, 2014a). Apart from organizing competitions, the UIAA needed to address the environmental impact of climbing: as this activity became popular and use of fixed equipment, such as bolts, on mountain crags and cliffs grew. In May 2000, the UIAA Council approved the document "To bolt or not to be," what was "an acceptable compromise" between "the preservation of some rock in its natural state suitable for traditional climbing and the bolting of cliffs for sport climbing and the securing of mountain routes" (UIAA, 2000, no page num-

ber). However, since then, all major international climbing events were held on artificial walls due to possible negative environmental impact of competitions on natural rocks (IFSC, 2014a). Therefore, it can be summarized that under the UIAA throughout the 1990s the contemporary sport of competitive climbing was shaped and institutionalized.

As the UIAA was in charge of the sport from the late 1980s to 2006, this period can be described as the final "sportization" of free-climbing, which was marked "with the structuring of a competition system organized into a hierarchy, from the departmental to the international level" (Aubel and Ohl, 2004, p.127). Being essentially the mountaineering governing body, the UIAA had to create some specific organizational frameworks dedicated to competitive climbing in order to organize the international sport climbing competition circuit. These frameworks changed as the sport of competitive climbing grew. First, in 1987 together with the launch of first UIAA climbing competitions, two new bodies were formed by the UIAA: the CEC commission *(*Commission de l'escalade de competition) and CICE Committee (Comité international des compétitions d'escalade). They were responsible for training officials (judges and forerunners) and creating competition rules (IFSC, 2014a). In organizational terms, these commissions were added to the existing UIAA organizational structure, which already included several commissions, for example, mountain protection commission, safety commission, and medical commission (UIAA, 2014), and formalized the sport. In the late 1990s, new governing structures within the UIAA were introduced with more focus on sport functions, including the International Council for Competition Climbing (ICC). In particular, the ICC was created in order "to guarantee sufficient autonomy to the sport and to provide it with the tools required for growth and development" (IFSC, 2014a). At the national level, sport climbing was similarly integrated into the national mountaineering governing bodies through establishment of dedicated committees within them. For instance, in the UK the leading national sport climbing body is the Competitions Commission, which exists within the BMC (British Mountaineering Council), the national mountaineering and climbing organization along with various other commissions, such as Access Management Group, Clubs Committee, Equity Steering Group, and Guidebook Committee (BMC, 2014).

However, in the middle of 2000s as the UIAA "recognised that it was no longer possible to keep all the sections of the UIAA together as a single federation" (UIAA, 2014), a radical structural change occurred in the organization of international sport climbing. In 2006, the UIAA decided to

allow sport climbing to leave the UIAA and to create an independent international federation, specifically for competitive climbing. This is how the UIAA explains what happened in 2006:

> . . . Competition Sport Climbing developed very different ethics and style. Competition Sport Climbing is generally practised indoors and has a very urban character. These differences produced a rift within the UIAA between supporters of traditional mountaineering and those driving the development of modern Sport Climbing competitions. When it was recognised that the conflict could no longer be resolved and was blocking the development of both organisations, the General Assembly in Banff, Canada in 2006 decided to cease governing international sport climbing competitions on artificial surfaces.
>
> UIAA (2009, p.11)

This UIAA statement suggests that, in fact, this international governing body allowed sport climbing to leave because of the cultural conflict: the culture of sport climbing was too different from the rest of mountaineering activities managed by the UIAA. The key words in the above quote are "indoors," "urban in character," and "artificial surfaces." So, to put it simply, by 2006 sport climbing became too "artificial" for the UIAA.

Consequently, in 2007 the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) was created by 48 national federations (IFSC, 2014a). This organization became the sole international authority for all the matters concerning competition climbing that provides "the direction, regulation, promotion, development and furtherance of the sport of competition climbing on a world-wide basis" (IFSC, 2014b). Thus, the IFSC is currently a very young organization that, according to Marco Scolaris, the IFSC President,

> . . . has spent its first years to build up a dynamic but solid structure, based on principles of good governance, universality, equal opportunities and transparency; spectacular events ruled by highest standard of rules; athletes inclusion in the IF decision-making processes at all levels; anti-doping policies and athletes health and integrity protection.
>
> "The President's message" (IFSC, 2014b)

To summarize, throughout the history of its organized existence, competitive climbing evolved from being governed by an international organization of broader activity, mountaineering, to becoming independent in terms of organization with the IFSC as a dedicated international governing body for sport climbing. Considering the reasons behind the UIAA decision, it can be sug-

gested that by 2006 the values of competitive climbing became too distant from the values of traditional climbing, which created the conflict within the UIAA. This suggestion will be examined in a later section of this case study focusing on climbing values.

6.2.1.2. Sport climbing and the Olympic movement

As identified in the first chapter, over the last two decades the Olympic movement has been the major sport phenomenon affecting the organization of free sports. Therefore, for a thorough understanding of patterns and mechanisms of organizational evolution of sport climbing, it was necessary to study how the organizational relationships between competitive climbing and the Olympic movement evolved. This meant investigating the history of relationships between the international organizations in charge of competitive climbing and the IOC.

Though the UIAA was recognized by the IOC in 1995 and remained in charge of international sport climbing for the next decade, it never formally proposed sport climbing for the program of the Olympic Games. This fact is quite surprising considering that the UIAA set out that "the IOC recognition was originally closely linked to the development of sport climbing competitions on artificial surfaces, a popular form of climbing" (UIAA, 2009). However, it has not proposed sport climbing for the Olympics because of the rift between sport climbing and mountaineering, which eventually led to the structural change of 2006 (UIAA, 2009).

With regards to the IFSC, making sport climbing an Olympic sport has never been explicitly stated as the primary goal of this international sport governing body. However, the fact that the Olympic bid materialized very quickly under the IFSC suggests that this governing body may have been established with this idea in mind. Consequently, straight after the IFSC establishment in 2007, its first target was to apply for the IOC recognition to represent sport climbing within the Olympic movement (iSportconnect, 2013). In parallel, the IFSC sought support for the Olympic bid from the national member federations of climbing and got it even before the final IOC recognition. For example, that is how the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) explained its decision to back climbing to become an Olympic sport after consultation in 2009:

> The competitive climbing scene has long cherished an Olympic dream—in fact, some participants have been cherishing it since the sport's inception, over 20 years ago. Now, at last, that dream is inching closer. Following consultation amongst the BMC Areas, the National Council agreed that the BMC would support the idea of climbing becoming an Olympic sport. This support will be based on competitions taking place on artificial structures only.
>
> Dave Turnbull, CEO of the BMC, interviewed by Stirling (2009)

The IFSC got a provisional IOC recognition in 2007 and the final recognition in 2010. Based on the facts that the IFSC pro-actively pursued the Olympic future, fully adopted the Olympic values, and declared sport climbing a completely indoor sport on artificial structures, it is likely that competitive climbing in the IFSC era experienced significant changes both in structure and culture. Whether the evidence of this research project confirms this or not will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

Although in official statements the IFSC has not mentioned financial benefits as one of the major factors contributing to the sport climbing's push for the Olympics, in the interviews the IFSC officials referred to the resources needed for development of the sport across the nations and explained the tangible benefits of being an Olympic sport for the national federations. In his interview Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director, suggests that becoming an Olympic sport

> . . . is important of course, because for example, if you are the owner of gym and you come to the mayor of your city asking to build the climbing wall, then it is very different for the authorities if you are an Olympic sport. And we really have some small countries, some poor federations which would benefit from the additional funding which Olympic sports get.
>
> Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director (2013 interview)

In other words, with regards to the financial benefits of possible Olympic inclusion, the IFSC acts as a union of national sport organizations and attempts to facilitate their access to the nationally allocated resources that are available for the Olympic sports. These kinds of resources are not provided directly from the IOC or the IFSC but allocated on the national level in order to develop Olympic disciplines in respective countries. Helmut Knabl, the ISFC Vice-President, also points out in his interview that

> . . . a lot of countries only fund the Olympic sports . . . [With this funding] many young climbers can go competitions without paying themselves. Expenses are

> paid by government money. And for me this is a key point. That is why I want to have climbing inside the Olympic Games. The moment it happens, a lot of countries will have a look if they have climbing in their countries and if they want to have it inside their national Olympic committees. From this moment we get money from the governments. I don't believe that climbers don't want to have more money. Even those rock climbers who do the hard routes in the mountains ask for sponsoring. So the youth will get protected money from the government automatically. It would be a big advantage.
>
> Helmut Knabl, the IFSC Vice-President (2013, interview)

This IFSC vision and focus on the Olympic bid is a very reasonable and professional approach to organization and development of sport climbing. However, it does not have much to do with the values of free sports, which have always considered the Olympic movement as a form of corporate bureaucracy.

Overall, there is an understanding within the IFSC that development of competitive climbing "does not depend heavily on becoming an Olympic sport . . . The only question is how fast and which direction it will develop" (Meyer, 2013, interview,). The same is suggested by Alex Honnold, professional climber from the USA, who argues that, in a bigger perspective, sport climbing will not fundamentally change but highlights the financial topic:

> I don't think that an Olympic appearance would drastically change that whole trend . . . It might speed things up a little bit. It might bring a bit more money to the sport, but probably wouldn't revolutionize anything.
>
> Alex Honnold, professional climber, the USA, interviewed by Wise (2013)

There is no secret among climbing athletes that the IFSC has struggled to generate resources for further global development of sport climbing. Here is the quote from the interview of Rustam Gelmanov, one of the top international climbing athletes, who compares the UIAA and IFSC in terms of how sport climbing developed under their governance:

> Competition climbing was booming in Europe in 1990s. There were more sponsors and more spectators in the 1990s than now . . . The UIAA has been established long time ago and has more connections and support [than the IFSC], for sure. The IFSC President decided to reduce some events costs, including prize money. So from the early 2000s sport climbing has not progressed much.
>
> Rustam Gelmanov, professional climbing athlete, Russia (2013, interview)

The IFSC World Cup has not got any major sponsors since it was created and has never been able to sell its TV rights. Sport climbing has not been part of the X-Games since its brief appearance there in the early 2000s. Thus, it is evident that, as far as the IFSC Olympic bid is concerned, along with the reason of sport promotion in general, it has been driven by the possibility of securing the Olympic funding for the sport.

As the result of the IFSC efforts, in 2011 the IOC included sport climbing in the short-list as a potential new sport for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games, which was described by the ISFC (2014a) as "the start of a new millennium for climbing". Even though the application of sport climbing to become an Olympic sport was unsuccessful, it is important to analyze some of the organizational issues which became a matter of concern in connection with this bid. Fundamentally, the IFSC was not consistent in the choice of specific disciplines for the Olympic bid. Initially, the IFSC announced that Lead climbing would be the sole event in its Olympic proposal (MacDonald, 2012). However, shortly after that, the IFSC reversed this decision and proposed the combination of three climbing disciplines (Speed, Bouldering, and Lead) as the only medal event of sport climbing in 2020 Olympic Games (MacDonald, 2013). This plan would

> . . . offer a complete presentation of the vertical challenges of climbing to the audience, while showing all the spectacular features each discipline has . . . The three together will be a perfect display of the Olympic motto.
>
> Anne Fuynel, the IFSC communications director, interviewed by MacDonald (2013)

According to Degun (2013), the IFSC decision was influenced by a recommendation of the IOC Technical Commission that evaluated the 2012 World Climbing Championships. This decision has been questioned very much by sport climbing athletes, such as Jacob Schubert, claiming in his interview that

> . . . they [the IOC] really tried to change our sport a lot. Many changes were not that good I think. Also I did not like the idea of having the combination of Lead, Bouldering and Speed as an Olympic sport at all, because we don't have it right now. I think if we make it to the Olympics, we should have a medal for each discipline.
>
> Jacob Schubert, professional climbing athlete, Austria (2013, interview)

Thus, it is possible to argue that the IOC recommended the IFSC change the organization of sport climbing specifically for the Olympic Games without being fully aware whether different disciplines of climbing were suitable for a one-medal contest.

It is believed to have been a poor choice because in modern sport climbing no athletes combine all three disciplines. Some athletes combine Bouldering and Lead, but Speed climbing requires completely different skills and training program. Thus, the communities of Speed climbing and Bouldering/Lead climbing are quite different and distant from each other. As a result of the suggestion to combine all three disciplines in a one-medal event, the credibility of the IOC was undermined in the sport climbing community as can be demonstrated by the following quote:

> It's great to see speed not being left out but speed is totally different from lead and boulder . . . the IFSC needs to know what they are doing. It is still understandable of boulder and lead were together . . . There's a reason why you don't see top speed climbers doing all three . . . . I agree that they should give out medals for the top 3 in each discipline and trophies to the overall winners. Otherwise they will only force the top climbers to step out of the competition. If this is the IOC recommendation they should not even listen to it as the IOC probably knows nothing about climbing.
>
> A comment from user Samsom in reply to McDonald (2013)

This comment raises a bigger issue of who owns the sport and who has the power to decide a specific sport's representation in the Olympic Games. The above quotes suggest that the IOC cannot act as an expert in climbing disciplines, so the IFSC has to be the decision-maker and to know what the best option for the sport is. There is a suspicion that the IOC was guided by other considerations in choosing a combined event, such as moving away from gigantism of the Summer Olympic Games:

> It's all about the IOC wanting to have minimum athlete numbers at the Olympic Games. Perhaps not the most preferred possible start . . .
>
> A comment from user Mac Stirling in reply to MacDonald (2013)

The issue of limiting the number of sports, disciplines, and athletes within the Olympic Games will be considered in detail later in this thesis within the cross-case analysis. Overall, as it can be seen from the evidence above, the credibility of both the IOC and the IFSC has been questioned with regards to the development of sport climbing disciplines within the Olympic movement.

6.2.2. Values of climbing

In order to evaluate the cultural change in competitive climbing, it was necessary to identify the contemporary values of sport climbing and examine how they have changed since the beginning of climbing activity. When the activity of rock climbing started to become popular in the 1980s and was not even considered as a sport, first professional climbers did both adventure rock climbing and competition climbing. During those early years, quite distinct values of the climbing community were formed. The interviews with Stefan Glowacz, Eneko and Iker Pou, Rustam Gelmanov, Helmut Knabl, and literature (Kiewa, 2010; Aubel and Ohl, 2004; Rickly-Boyd, 2012) helped to summarize four common traditional values that were historically important for climbing:

1. Passion for adventure, travel, and challenge:

   > For us it [climbing] . . . is more of a lifestyle, of course, rather than sport. We are doing climbing travels during the last 15 years . . . There is nothing special that we would like to reach. It is more about the motivation. It is about new places, meeting new people.
   >
   > Iker and Eneko Pou, professional climbers, Spain (2013, interview)

2. Desire to be close to nature (life outdoors):

   > Climbing is not a city sport. It just entered the cities with the indoor walls. Normally our stadium is the nature . . . Climbing was always connected to adventure because in the beginning climbing was adventure in the places where we learnt climbing.
   >
   > Stefan Glowacz, professional climber, Germany (2013, interview)

3. Camaraderie of fellow climbers:

   > Climbing is definitely very close and very small. The unique thing about climbing and its culture is that you can have friends all the way across the world . . . I think everyone is really close and really friendly. Climbing is more of a laid-back sport, more like surfing or snowboarding. It is more of a lifestyle than a mainstream sport. It is not like soccer or anything else. It is an individual sport, but at the same time you hang out with your friends.
   >
   > Alex Puccio, professional climbing athlete, the USA (2013, interview)

4. Being an anti-establishment community to a certain degree:

> I can also highlight the freedom of athletes in climbing. Most of us are absolutely free wanderers who just like climbing and travelling around the world. Most of us are "hippies," let's say. Normal people often envy us.
>
> Rustam Gelmanov, professional climbing athlete, Russia (2013, interview)

This section attempts to explain whether these traditional values of climbing have survived through the organizational evolution and if they can help explaining its patterns and mechanisms.

As described by Potgieter (2006) and Kiewa (2010), sport climbing started to separate from traditional climbing in the late 1980s. According to Potgieter (2006), the pre-prepared nature of the climbing routes, its ''fixed'' protection, and more competitive element became the main features of sport climbing in comparison to traditional climbing. In fact, distinction between traditional climbing and sport climbing was initially created mainly by the use of safety measures in order to remove much of the risk of climbing:

> Traditional climbers insist that cliffs should be climbed from the ground up. Climbs should not have been inspected beforehand (by abseiling down the climb); nor should parts of the climb be practised whilst on toprope (a rope tied to an anchor-point at the top of a cliff that stops a climber from falling any distance). Although traditional climbers use a rope as a safety back-up, it is not intended as an aid for climbing–climbers should not 'rest' by hanging on the rope at any time. The 'sports' climbers, on the other hand, engage in all these practices. Characteristics of sports climbing include an acceptance of cliff modification and 'working climbs' in the name of safety; an emphasis on image, with high levels of publicity and media coverage; rapid development and adoption of technologically advanced equipment; and the promotion of formal competition. Because of these practices, traditional climbers believe that sports climbers have embraced consumerist society.
>
> Kiewa (2010, p.148)

Thus, sport climbing separated from traditional climbing with the commercialization of the activity and growing emphasis on competition. Overall, it is thought to be the result of rationalization of climbing activity in the context of social reality, which is done through the "incorporation of the values of rationalized society" (Kiewa, 2010, p.150) and is "very much suited to today's achievement-oriented world" (Potgieter, 2006, p.16).

Likewise, it was evident from the interviews of climbing athletes involved in this research project that they tended to associate themselves with either traditional climbing or sport climbing. Most athletes practice both traditional rock climbing and competitive climbing at different stages of their careers, but recently it has been considered extremely difficult to combine both in the same period of a climber's career. Roman Krajnik explains this in his interview in more detail:

> If you want to be a good competition climber, rock climbing won't help you so much at the moment. In the past, for example, 5 years ago rock climbing and indoor climbing was really a good combination. But now I think in competitive climbing the level goes so high, so . . . it is really hard to combine everything these days because there are more competitions every year. You don't have time for that if you want to be a good competitive climber.
>
> Roman Krajnik, professional climbing coach, Slovenia (2013, interview)

Apart from the growing performance requirements and different training regimes, there is one key factor that has contributed to developing segregation between traditional climbing and sport climbing: the reluctance of traditional climbers to deal with organizational issues of competitive climbing. That is how this phenomenon is described by Rustam Gelmanov:

> If you want to do official competitions, there are some rules of course. We have some "weird" requirements like medical cards, insurances . . . Therefore there are many good athletes who don't do the competitions because they are just reluctant to meet those criteria. So you have to "put up" with federation and other organizational stuff, if you really want to be a good athlete. This "federation" stuff is a problem for many athletes. For example, one of the best climbers in the world Chris Sharma does not do any competitions, because he simply does not like this official stuff. He doesn't bother about rankings, places. He thinks freedom is lost in there. But everybody knows Chris because he is very strong climber, a legend.
>
> Rustam Gelmanov, professional climbing athlete, Russia (2013, interview)

The fact that one of the best world climbers is not willing to participate in the IFSC competitions because of the associated bureaucracy and is still considered a legend suggests that traditional climbing values are still supported among the top international climbing athletes nowadays. Similarly, the quote of top climbing athlete David Lama confirms that there are modern athletes who support traditional climbing values of opposing control and regulation of governing bodies:

> It wasn't with a heavy heart that I left the competitions. Already back in 2008 I felt that my perceptions and visions for my climbing future didn't fit within the confines of a gym or a set of rules. When leaving the comps I actually had the intention of coming back in some years, but to be honest for the moment I don't see a single reason why I should, especially with the format that still exists. I still climb in the gym to train, but I'm not sure if I'll ever fit into the world of rules and regulations again that the World Cup currently represents for me.
>
> David Lama, professional climber, Austria, interviewed by UK Climbing (2012*)*

The major finding from the above is that a division between traditional climbing and sport climbing is mainly not about different groups of climbing athletes (as mentioned above, most of them still do both) but about different sets of values and different logics underpinning their activities.

However, it can also be seen that other traditional climbing values have not changed significantly over the years of existence of competitive climbing. Most notably, the traditional value of camaraderie is widely acknowledged by the interviewees as one of the most important values existing in the modern sport climbing:

> I think it is really something special in climbing, because it is not just a normal sport like athletics or some other more known outdoor sports. I think it is really something about culture and community, because climbers are the only sportsmen who help each other. During competitions they help not only their team members, but also the guys from other countries. Altogether they help each other to find the best way through the route. I think this is really special for this sport. You will find something like that in none of other sports
>
> Roman Krajnik, professional climbing coach, Slovenia (2013, interview)

Schubert notes this too:

> What makes climbing really special for me is that it is not just doing some sport, but also hanging around with friends and training together. Especially in bouldering, you just sit around with ten other friends, try to boulder together, try to find new solutions together. If someone finds a solution, he tries to explain it to the other guys. It is the same thing in competitions. We are all really good friends whoever makes finals or not. We know each other, try to help each other, learn from each other. It is such a great community, and I love it.
>
> Jacob Schubert, professional climbing athlete, Austria (2013, interview)

While finally,

> …in climbing there is a feeling of one big family . . . the relationships between competitors are friendly in climbing. You are challenging the route, not the opponent.
>
> Rustam Gelmanov, professional climbing athlete, Russia (2013, interview)

These quotes provide evidence that the spirit of camaraderie amongst professional climbing athletes, which has been one of the key cultural features of climbing since its creation, has remained one of the most important values of competitive climbing.

To compare, the following values are currently declared by the IFSC (2014c) as inspiring and guiding this organization:

- Respect and support for Olympic Values and Principles;
- Preserving the environment in organizing and promoting the activities;
- Doping free sport;
- Accessible;
- Safe;
- Low cost;
- Healthy and educational activity for youth;
- Equality between men and women;
- Competitive;
- Fair, transparent, and objective competition judging rules;
- Sport for All.

As it can be seen from the list of the IFSC values, they are "founded on the modern sport principles and values, cultivating them along with sport growth and development" (IFSC, 2014a). In other words, many of the IFSC values (such as doping free sport; equality between men and women; sport for all; competitiveness) are universal to any modern sport governing body and in line with the criteria of the IOC for Olympic sports. It is highlighted by the IFSC President Marco Scolaris (2013, interview) that "history and tradition lay in the essence of the sport itself" and, indeed, several traditional climbing values, such as preserving the environment and fair rules, are still very important for the competitive sport. Overall, however, it is evident that the IFSC values are significantly different from traditional climbing values. The following quote of a legendary climber Stefan Glowacz demonstrates how far the modern sport climbing values has gone from traditional values:

> Climbing in the Olympic Games is far away. It is really far away… I really don't care, I have to say. If it becomes an Olympic sport, then it is an artificial climbing of course. It would be bouldering and artificial walls. It is so far away from my climbing. That is a different discipline.
>
> Stefan Glowacz, professional climber, Germany (2013, interview)

With regards to the Olympic future of climbing, it is also necessary to consider how climbing's Olympic pursuit is perceived by professional climbing athletes and members of the climbing community. In other words, an important question in order to understand the current culture of competitive climbing is whether the respondents think sport climbing should be part of the Olympic movement. The opinions on the Olympic matter are mixed. On the one hand, the leading international athletes, who focus on the competition side of the climbing, generally support the idea of joining the Olympics:

> Yes, every kid and all the people who are interested in sport watch the Olympics. I have been watching the Olympics on TV since I was a kid as well. Of course, this is something that you really appreciate. And it is always cool to watch. Many sportsmen, and I am one of them, dream of being a part of them one day.
>
> Jacob Schubert, professional climbing athlete, Austria (2013, interview)

Thus support for Olympic climbing from competitive athletes has been inevitably influenced by a prospect of personal recognition and an opportunity for professional athletes to benefit from enhanced commercial opportunities, which they realize. Athletes, like Sean McColl, are also looking at the bigger picture and suggest that integration of climbing into the Olympic movement would be mutually beneficial:

> Even if it is not me who gets a chance to go there, I think climbing is a good thing for the Olympics. And I think the Olympics are good for competition climbing.
>
> Sean McColl, professional climbing athlete, Canada (2013, interview)

Nevertheless, there are also concerns among the competitive climbing athletes about possible effects of their sport's growth and further commercialization if it becomes one of the Olympic sports:

> I think with the Olympics I am more like half and half. On one hand, yes it would be cool because our sport will get bigger. We would have more money in the

> sport, and the whole thing would just grow. I mean more money for athletes, more money for competitions, bigger events, and bigger sponsors coming into climbing which would be awesome. But on the other side, I really like it to be small. I like that climbing as a sport is very intimate, very small. The world is so big and the climbing is so small, so you are very close, even if you are far away from your friends.
>
> Alex Puccio, professional climbing athlete (2013, interview)

This quote raises a concern that those traditional climbing values, which are still relevant for sport climbing, might be eventually lost if climbing becomes an Olympic sport. It is argued that even though competitive climbing is a sport, it has been always about achievements rather than medals:

> [Inclusion to the Olympics] . . . risks glamorizing the sport and shifting its focus from personal accomplishment to gold medals. This type of competition may negatively impact the kind of community that's perfectly content practicing in a dirty old basement bouldering gym . . . Do we really want to risk changing a sport where the champions are known for their encouraging words, generosity and pure love of the outdoors? I look at climbing as a giant family, but if it grows we won't be able to get as close to each other because there will be so many people . . . It will be about winning and the glory of being the gold medallist instead of accomplishing something great.
>
> Michaela Kirsch, professional climber, the USA, interviewed by Wise (2013)

So the bigger topic is whether sport climbing would continue to lose the cultural ties with traditional climbing. This issue is best illustrated by the statement from David Lama, the former World Cup winner in sport climbing, who does only outdoor climbing since recently:

> Generally speaking, I believe that competition climbing will further evolve and more and more become a sport of its own, much further away from the original climbing than now. This doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing, but it's simply not my thing. For me the World Cup currently doesn't breathe "climbing DNA" and that's what I'm missing.
>
> David Lama, professional climber, Austria, interviewed by UK Climbing (2012*)*

Therefore, one scenario, which presumably could be fostered by inclusion of sport climbing into the Olympics, is that the sport will move further away from traditional climbing because of the widening cultural rift.

It is evident that the IFSC realizes the concerns of sport climbing becoming too artificial and losing the values of traditional climbing. For instance, Helmut Knabl, the IFSC Vice-President, admits that the sport might undergo this kind of change in case it enters the Olympic Games, but is

> . . . not afraid about climbing becoming too technical… It is always a development. And every time you try to develop something it could be going the wrong way in the first moment. Then you have to change it and be flexible . . . Also my feeling is that climbing is not going in one direction. And the Olympic medal sport does not influence climbing on outside areas, on the rocks, on the high mountains. I never believe that Olympic sport will influence something on climbers who are doing the high routes. This is the difference for me. But I am sure that being an Olympic sport climbing will grow much faster . . . For example, there is a sport of cycling. It is an Olympic sport, but nothing has changed in "hobby cycling". Or look at the marathon runners. They are really small family, but look at the marathons around the world. In the front there are winners of the Olympics, but behind them are hundred thousand other people doing marathons.
>
> Helmut Knabl, the IFSC Vice-President (2013, interview)

Thus, the IFSC official suggests that a possible future Olympic status of sport climbing would not affect the development of traditional outdoor climbing but will be of benefit for the development of the whole activity of climbing. Overall, it is clear that becoming an Olympic sport is the IFSC's main priority and would be seen as a major positive breakthrough for the sport. The Olympic benefits will pay off any concerns, according to Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director:

> I think sport will be different anyway—in Olympics or without them. I understand the concerns, but climbing is not only the competition sport. There are other aspects of climbing, and I know a lot of guys who are not doing competitions, but they enjoy climbing, the same like freeriding in snowboarding. Anyway I see more benefits of becoming the Olympic sports, because it gives a lot of visibility to wider audience and new opportunities.
>
> Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director (2013, interview)

However, whether the drifting of the sport side of climbing away from its traditional values (or from "climbing DNA," as was well articulated by David Lama) can be managed, or should be

managed, is another interesting question. Iker and Eneko Pou, professional climbers from Spain, hint that it is all about direction that sport would opt to go to:

> . . . on one hand, it [the Olympics] is a good thing, especially for people who dedicate themselves to indoor climbing. But on the other hand, it is another step off the mountain/outdoor philosophy. People now are more focusing on outdoor "plastic" climbing. And this sport is getting more and more different. Like we have gymnastics on one side, and mountain adventures on the other side . . . It is a good thing because people will know more about climbing. But they will know only one side of climbing, and sport will be going in this direction . . . or sure if climbing becomes the Olympic sport, the economic benefits will go this way. We are not sure that this is good for our sport. I think our sport is an outdoor sport and adventurous. Everything else is interesting, but is not a main activity of our sport.
>
> Iker and Eneko Pou, professional climbers, Spain (2013, interview)

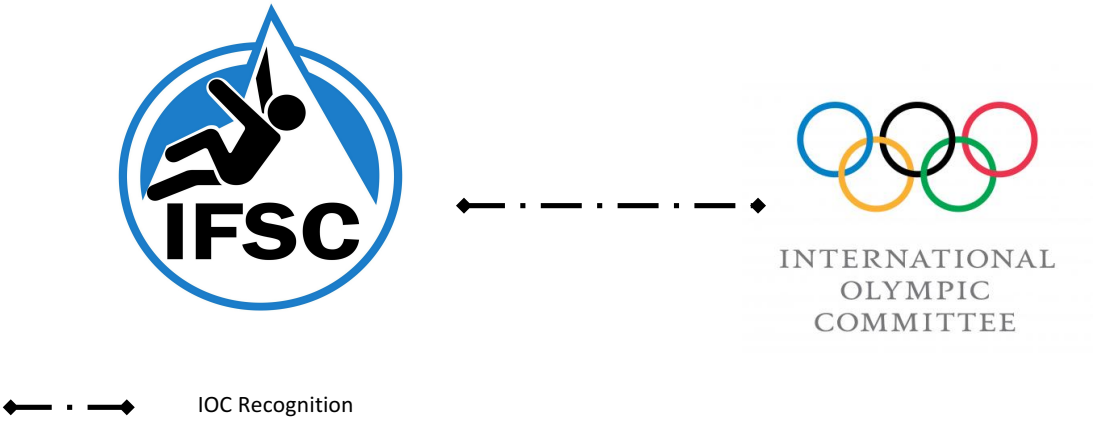
Indeed, nowadays climbing as a sport can be presented to spectators in a variety ways, so different values can be highlighted to consumers of the sport. Therefore, it is largely up to the IFSC to manage the cultural change and preserve traditional values. If this is raised as a matter of concern of the athlete community, it is the cultural change process that can be controlled by the IFSC as the international sport governing body. It can be concluded that the IFSC has been able to preserve some of the traditional climbing values but has been recently mainly focused on integrating new Olympic values to the sport as it keeps chasing the Olympic introduction. Consequently, competitive climbers expressed some fears that if sport climbing enters the Olympics, it might go further away from its original outdoor roots and lose parts of traditional climbing culture.

6.2.3. Structure of sport climbing

As explained in the history section, since 2007, in terms of organization of the sport, competitive climbing has been organized independently from mountaineering and has developed quite a simple hierarchical structure. The IFSC became the international federation responsible for the whole sport globally, so the IFSC is an exclusive agent representing competitive climbing and is recognized by the IOC (**Figure 6.2)**. Currently, the IFSC unites 82 national federations that are not necessarily dedicated climbing federations but usually govern both climbing and mountaineering in their countries (IFSC, 2014a). The IFSC obtained memberships in several sport associations,

such as ARISF, Sport Accord, and IWGA, and adopted the WADA anti-doping code (IFSC, 2014a), which was indeed mandatory for the Olympic bid.

Figure 6.2: Organization of international sport climbing



Source: IFSC (2014a)

As the IFSC Sport Director Jerome Meyer revealed, even though the IFSC has grown in functions since its establishment, it has not grown in size and has remained a very small organization:

> We have some administrative and financial staff. But at the same time we are very young and quite small federation. There are only 4 of us [employed on a full-time basis]. The good thing is that we own our sport and we are totally in charge of our sport.
>
> Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director, interview, 2013

It can be highlighted that, in organizational terms, the IFSC position of the one and the ultimate international authority in sport climbing is similar to organization of most mainstream sports, such as football, track and field athletics, and cycling. The existing compact organizational structure of the IFSC allows the organizational decision-making to be faster and more flexible. The IFSC President Marco Scolaris perceives this approach to be innovative for international sport governing bodies:

> We are bringing some fresh air and something that is completely new, a sport that is completely clean and interacts with the youth. Since we are a small sport we are also flexible. When something goes wrong it is relatively easy to go to our

> members and international federations and say "look, we need to change something here because this doesn't work." Then it can be done in a couple of months, whilst other organisations that have been around for a century can take longer. That is why I think it would be interesting to work with the IOC to propose a new model of sport.
>
> The IFSC President Marco Scolaris interviewed by iSportconnect (2013)

The IFSC was created by professional climbers and employs people who do climbing themselves. This organizational feature used to be typical in the early history of free sports and seems to have been preserved in sport climbing as well. For example, Marco Scolaris, the IFSC President, and Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director, did competitive climbing in the past and keep climbing themselves. Marco Scolaris was an amateur climber and "a pioneer of bouldering in Italy in his younger days" in the 1980s (iSportconnect, 2013), whereas Jerome Meyer is three times consecutive winner of the World Cup, winner of the European Championship, and four-times Champion of France. Both the IFSC officials and the current athletes, for example Rustam Gelmanov in his interview, consider the fact that the IFSC Board and employees are all either people who regularly do climbing or did it in the past as a benefit for the organization of the sport. That is how Jerome Meyer describes one of the benefits of being a former climber from the organizational perspective:

> Obviously I am really careful of what the athletes say. For me it is important to listen to them. Being a former athlete, I know perfectly what they want. And I am always supportive to them. So the President is really supportive to them [and] . . . is still climbing.
>
> Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director, interview, 2013

Even though the IFSC President Marco Scolaris claims in his interview that it is not necessary to be climbing athlete in order to work for the IFSC, it seems that this might be an unspoken rule of the organization and the consequence of a very small size and young age of organization as all its employees are coming directly from the climbing sport.

The climbing background of the IFSC officials is believed to have an impact on organization of the sport as people with similar backgrounds are likely to create homogeneous logics in an organization that underpins the structural arrangements. This can provide an explanation to the cultural features, identified in the previous section, specifically, the fact that some values of traditional

climbing remained preserved in competitive climbing because there are a number of former climbers of an older generation on top of the IFSC. As far as the organization is concerned, from the IFSC perspective, the athletes' interests have always stood on the pinnacle of the whole organizational philosophy of this international sport governing body. The IFSC President Marco Scolaris explains this approach in his interview (2013):

> We have tried over the years to create a (different) way to manage the sport. Athletes are the centre of our activity, therefore we want to be "athletes" at all levels of the organisation. That is to say to recreate in the management the same atmosphere that usually one meets in the climbing community, where mutual respect and the joy of the effort reign. Not easy, but possible. Even when the sport grows and interests increase . . . it is a challenge for the future . . .

Regarding specific tools that athletes can use to influence the IFSC decision making, first of all, they are strongly represented in the IFSC through one of commissions: the Athletes Commission. The President of the Athletes Commission is a member of the IFSC Board and has a vote on the Board. In his interview (2013), Sean McColl, professional climbing athlete from Canada and the current President of the Athletes Commission, gives an insight on how this framework functions in comparison to the other sports:

> My official position is the IFSC Athletes President or Representative . . . My main job is to get the voice of the athletes to the executive board of the IFSC. On that executive board I sit there with a vote, which is actually very important in the voting process. I was on the Olympic Athletes Commissions Forum, and I know a lot of the other sports who are even in the Olympics, but are struggling to gain an athlete vote on the executive board. It is a lot of politics, and the Athlete President really brings the voice of the athletes and the wishes of the athletes . . . I bring it to the Executive Board and sometimes there are certain rules either we are going to get rid of or we want to make new ones to make them better. But there is always something that athletes are trying to do to make it better or easier or faster for the athletes.

This quote demonstrates the difference between sport climbing and the majority of mainstream sports that, on paper, are all required to have athletes' commissions. In comparison to most global sport governing bodies, where the athletes are thought to be "little represented" (Forster and Pope, 2004, p. 101), the will of the climbing athletes has played a much bigger role in organizational evolution of international sport climbing. The above statements from the top figures in the climbing's international governing body indicate that whereas the IFSC attempted to integrate the sport climbing into the Olympic movement through satisfying the IOC criteria and applying some mainstream sport values to the sport's organization, it also preserved a quite different approach, which has been inherent into this free sport. This approach is focused on the athletes and transcends the actual structure, so the athletes have strong decision-making rights and their interests play key role in organization of the sport.

As it is evident that the athletes have been empowered to influence the organizational development of international competitive climbing, another connected issue arises from the interviews. Even though within the IFSC there are tools and structures for international professional athletes to raise their voice, the majority of the athletes are not willing to exercise this right. The ISFC Sport Director Jerome Meyer summarizes the current stance of the athletes' role in sport climbing's decision making:

> So technically they [athletes] are represented everywhere and they can block anything. So on the paper it is really perfect for the athletes–they are really inside the IFSC. In reality athletes have to have a motivation to participate in these procedures . . . So with couple of people willing to work with the athletes and a good system, the athletes can change something if they really want to. If they don't do something, that means that they don't agree on something or they don't really want to change it.
>
> Jerome Meyer, the IFSC Sport Director (2013, interview)

In line with this statement, the climbing athletes interviewed also believe that they are given enough tools to influence the organization of competitive climbing via the IFSC Athletes Commission but could have been more active in exercising this power:

> I am the member of athletes union. But I'm too lazy to be involved in the work of athletes' commission, because I think that no major changes can be implemented in sport via athletes' commission. Normally some minor changes in rules are discussed there . . .

Rustam Gelmanov, professional climbing athlete, Russia (2013, interview)

This quote demonstrates that some athletes do not believe that their actions can change the sport. Also, they simply do not have a desire to be involved in the IFSC organization, which is equal to the organization of the whole international sport climbing. The following words, coming from Jacob Schubert, an active member of the athletes' commission, confirm that, in fact, there have not been many changes implemented by athletes, even though the structure has emerged to protect their interests:

> I am on the athletes' commission . . . Sometimes we are thinking about the ideas, because there is always something to improve . . . [However,] there were not so many things that we have already done in the past . . . There are some motivated guys in it, but also some not so motivated who should work a little more.
>
> Jacob Schubert, professional climbing athlete, Austria (2013, interview)

Thus, even though international sport climbing athletes have been well empowered in terms of their representation in the major international governing body of the sport, the IFSC, and in their ability to influence the organization of the sport, in practice they could have had much stronger voice in decision making as many athletes are not interested in organizational issues or not fully convinced that they can influence the development of the sport and initiate changes in it. It can be suggested that this lack of athletes' contribution relates to the culture of climbing and, specifically, the influence of traditional value of climbing of being free and anti-establishment. From the IFSC point of view, it may have affected the development of competitive climbing in a negative way, as many leading athletes have been reluctant to become involved in organizational issues and participation in decision-making.

6.3. Conclusions of the case study.

This chapter discussed the organizational evolution of international sport climbing. It was discovered that this sport experienced significant structural and cultural changes over the last three decades. Here is the summary of the patterns and mechanisms of the process of organizational evolution of sport climbing.

Patterns of evolution

1. Traditional climbing gave roots to competitive climbing, but over the last three decades, a clear separation occurred between traditional climbing and sport climbing. They have become two completely different activities in terms of where they are held and who participants are.

2. As competitive climbing developed, there has been a gradual change in culture: a range of new values were adopted by professional sport climbers, which emphasized competitive aspects of sport and are similar to the values of mainstream sports.

3. Nevertheless, it is evident that some values of traditional climbing have survived within sport climbing and are still strong in this sport.

4. In terms of structure, competitive climbing is the sport that is now globally managed by one organization, the IFSC, which was created after the years that sport climbing spent under the governance of the international mountaineering federation, the UIAA.

5. Unlike the most mainstream sports, in sport climbing the IFSC have employed mainly athletes, and athletes have always had an extremely good representation in the decision making at the international sport governance level. To put it short, since international climbing became independent from mountaineering organization climbing athletes effectively have owned their sport.

Mechanisms of evolution

1. The spread of competitive aspect of climbing and increase in number of dedicated climbing gyms have been the main mechanisms of evolution of sport: the difference from the early years of sport is that nowadays athletes mostly start climbing careers in indoor climbing gyms and are motivated by competitive values rather than opportunities

for oudoor adventures, which used to be one of the primary values in traditional climbing.

2. In terms of organization of competitive cimbing, since the establishment of the IFSC, this governing body has clearly put significant efforts into making climbing an Olympic sport and has been supported by climbing athletes and national federations. The evidence suggests that making climbing an Olympic sport is the main priority for this governing body and influenced the organizational evolution of international sport climbing.

3. The need to get an access to Olympic funding has been also recognized and supported by international competitive climbers. They support the idea of Olympic climbing based on the assumption that this change would bring more benefits to the sport in general and their sport careers in particular.

4. Along with general support for the Olympic ambitions of sport climbing among the community, there are also some concerns about what change the Olympic movement might bring to the sport and how manageable this change would be. These concerns are related to the culture of climbing activity and suggest that if sport climbing enters the Olympics it is likely to move further away from its original outdoor roots.

5. Despite sport being effectively "owned" by athletes, many of them are found to be uninterested in participating in organizational processes. This phenomenon can be explained by strong belief in some traditional values of climbing, such as being anti-establishment, still existing among many climbing athletes, who consequently may not be willing to institutionalize with governing bodies. To summarize, even though competitive climbing has gone through a gradual formalization and its organization has become similar to mainstream sports over the last two decades, there are still strong traditional cultural values in place that are incompatible with the new structures.

7. Organizational evolution of international free sports: cross-case analysis

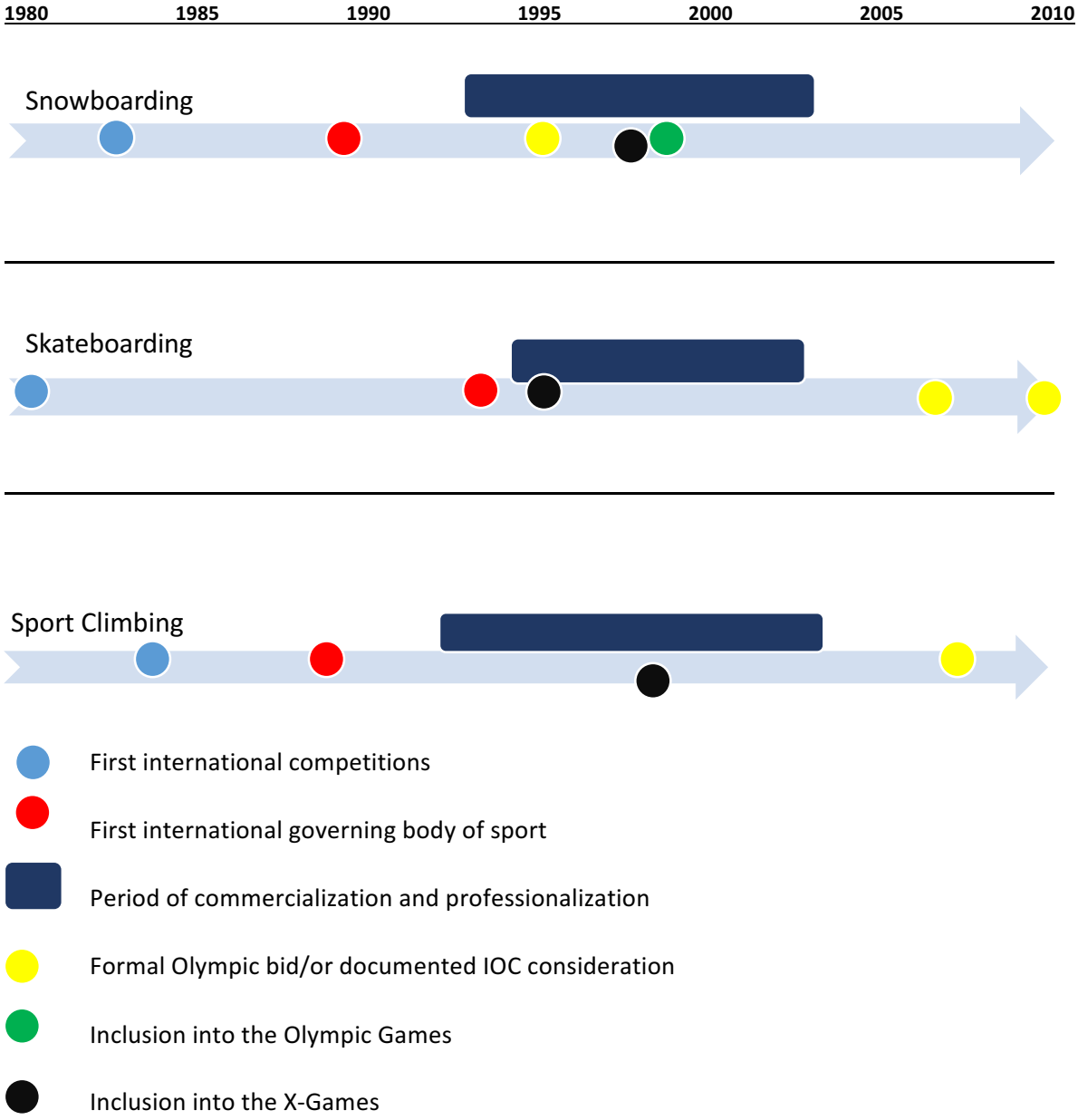
As the previous chapters are dedicated to the in-depth presentation of the findings for each case, this chapter provides a cross-case analysis of these findings and discusses a number of reoccurring themes, which emerged from three case studies. This section identifies the key findings from individual case studies, compares and contrasts them. As emphasised in the methodology chapter, each sport is unique in a number of ways, but it is also evident that the cases share a variety of features. Accordingly, both unique and common attributes of three environments are analyzed in this chapter and summarized in the cross-case comparative table at the end. The findings of cross-case analysis will be discussed in depth in the next section in terms of existing knowledge and the contribution of this research to furthering understanding in this field.

7.1. Timeline of organizational evolution

Three sports—competitive snowboarding, competitive skateboarding, and sport climbing—are of focus in this research project. Whereas each of these sports has its own unique history, as overviewed in the respective sections above, an initial basis for analysis is the timelines of the major organizational developments in the sports (**Figure 7.1**). From these timelines, it can be seen that the sports of snowboarding, skateboarding, and climbing have very similar timing and order in terms of major organizational events. In all three sports, the first organized international competitions were held in the early 1980s. They were followed by the emergence of first international governing bodies associated with each sport. Whereas the first governing bodies of competitive snowboarding and skateboarding were the governing bodies formed by athletes of these sports, the first governing body of sport climbing was a long established international governing body of mountaineering. Later though, a dedicated sport climbing governing body took over the sport, while, conversely, international competitive snowboarding and skateboarding became, to a different degree, dependent on governing bodies of other sports: skiing and cycling/roller-skating, respectively. This is an interesting trend: over a similar period of time, sport climbing switched from an "umbrella" federation to a single sport federation, whereas snowboarding experienced exactly the opposite change. There is no coincidence that such changes in both sports were related to important developments in their relationships with the Olympic movement. It is evident

that, on one hand, organization of international snowboarding changed due to the introduction of the sport to the Olympic Games, and, on the other hand, sport climbing organizational "independence" was achieved with the Olympic idea in mind. The reasons behind such opposite changes are quite complex and can be explained by power/dependence relationships between international sport organizations and the IOC. They will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Figure 7.1 Comparative timeline of organizational evolution of three sports



As it was identified throughout the research, changes in the organization of three free sports were largely influenced by several sport governing bodies, such as the FIS, the UCI, the FIRS, and the UIAA, which managed other sports but were found to have a real or perceived interest in free sports with the Olympic bid in mind. The only current Olympic sport among the three is snowboarding, which stands out as its timeline is very condensed in comparison to skateboarding and climbing. It took snowboarding only 15 years from first organized competitions to its first Olympic Games, and therefore the speed of organizational evolution was much faster in competitive snowboarding than in skateboarding or climbing. This can be explained by the fact that snowboarding was the first free sport to make it to the programme of the Olympic Games. As its inclusion was fast-tracked and facilitated by the strong IOC willingness at that time, it is clear that among three sports the organizational development of competitive snowboarding has been the most affected by the Olympic movement.

As for the sports of skateboarding and climbing, these sports have not yet become Olympic sports but for different and, arguably, quite opposite, reasons. The IFSC has been enthusiastic about the Olympic bid but has not succeeded in it. As a consequence, it can be concluded that sport climbing has been restricted in its development because there has been no IOC support. The case of potential Olympic skateboarding is more complicated as, reportedly, the IOC has been interested in it for a while but has not brought it into the Games because of complicated and often informal organizational arrangements with several organizations claiming authority over skateboarding. Consequently, skateboarding remains the only sport among the three without the IOC recognition. The impact of the Olympic movement on patterns and mechanisms of organizational evolution of all three sports will be cross-examined in a dedicated section of this chapter and then will be analyzed in terms of theoretical concepts.

7.2. Role of commercial interests in organizational evolution of free sports

As described in the introduction to this thesis and in literature review, from the early years of free sports their image and organization has been shaped by commercialism and brought forward by companies like Nike, Pepsi, MTV, and ESPN (Breivik, 2010, p.268). The role of commercial interests in organizational evolution was discussed in a number of other instances throughout the case studies. For example, even though the values of skateboarding were very anti-commercial initially, the development of international competitive skateboarding has been largely due to the intention of athletes to make professional careers in skateboarding because of the opportunities offered by sponsors wishing to market their products. Consequently, skateboarding governing bodies have always been relatively commercially focused as they included representatives of board producers, skateboarding facilities, and shoes and apparel companies. In skateboarding, the dominance of commercial representatives was demonstrated by the board composition of the skateboarding governing bodies—the first one, the NSA, and the current one, the ISF. Therefore, in fact, competitive skateboarding has always been a corporate and commercialized form of sport.

The same can be generally said of snowboarding. Media were the major force behind the rapid popularization of competitive snowboarding:

> I always hate the argument that "It's all the media's fault", but I can't help feeling it applies in this case. I hear the opinions of a fair few snowboarders, and there is nowhere near the level existential angst about who is top of the tree, or whether competitive snowboarding matters in the real world compared to what you might believe if you look at the social media feeds from the worldwide snowboarding media. At the end of the day, I'd wager most snowboarders overall weren't too fussed about whether snowboarding should be in the Olympics, or whether the winner of the slopestyle is automatically the best in the world. I think they were mostly thinking "Oh cool, some snowboarding on the tv, lets have a look at that"…
>
> Gavin Robbie, Facebook user commenting on Whitelines (2014*)*

The X-Games, organized by the ESPN television company, are the biggest commercial phenomenon that affected the sports of snowboarding and skateboarding but not climbing. The X-Games

is not run by a governing body (which is always the case for major events in mainstream sports) but by the fully commercial enterprise and supported by major sponsors. However, as claimed by the top professional athletes in both skateboarding and snowboarding, the X-Games are the most credible and the best organized competition in free sports. This demonstrates that, with regards to free sports, the event run by a commercial agent, the X-Games, is better received by athletes than the biggest event in global sport, the Olympic Games. One simple explanation is, of course, that the X-Games are better organized technically, as they are held every year in the same place by the same organization. This is indeed a legitimate explanation for such a technical sport as snowboarding, which requires a lot of skill, expertise, and effort to build a course. However, for sports like skateboarding and snowboarding, the quality of the competition has not been all about winning and having the best possible course. Therefore, another explanation derives primarily from the case of snowboarding and lies within the notion of cultural legitimacy of organizations responsible for the events. The FIS is empowered to manage Olympic snowboarding, as it obtained the regulatory legitimacy from the IOC. Nonetheless, the FIS has always lacked support of snowboarding athletes and organizations, so there has been very little cultural legitimacy underpinning this organization. At the same time, the institutions such TTR Pro Snowboarding and the X-Games have been in an opposite position: they were not legitimized by either the FIS or the IOC but have had support of snowboarding athletes, organizations, and actors. Regulatory and cultural accounts of researched sports will be discussed further in the next chapter.

It is also evident from the above timelines that all the sports were already relatively commercialized before the arrival of the X-Games. However, the introduction of sports to the X-Games fostered further commercialization and professionalization of these sports. Even though the first governing bodies already existed in each sport before the X-Games arrival, this event might have been the force for greater formalization for some sports and speeded up the organizational evolution. This is mostly evident in skateboarding, where several different international governing bodies emerged in the X-Games era. However, as none of the governing bodies were influential enough to control international competitive skateboarding, the X-Games have effectively been the most powerful organization in this sport for two decades. As highlighted in case study, the leading professional skateboarders demanded pay rise and better working conditions from the X-Games organizers, not from any existing skateboarding governing bodies. First, this instance shows that the power in skateboarding sits with the athletes. But also this means that the X-Games possesses more power that any governing organization in skateboarding. The X-Games

has also had an impact on snowboarding and climbing, but arguably power has sat with the governing bodies in these two sports rather than with the X-Games. While sport climbing had only a short presence within the X-Games and the impact on this sport was minimal, snowboarding has been an integral part of the X-Games. However, competitive snowboarding joined the Olympics earlier than the X-Games and overall has been much more affected by the Olympic movement than by the X-Games.

Over the last three decades, the Olympic movement has been remarkably commercialized by the IOC, which changed from a small non-commercial organization to a wealthy and powerful institution (Barney, Wenn and Martyn, 2002). As much as the IOC is the organization that takes care of the Olympic ideals, it is also a commercial organization. The cases of skateboarding and snowboarding, the only current Olympic sport, demonstrate that the Olympic movement has also been largely underpinned by commercial thinking. Several interviewees referred to the Olympic sponsors, such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and broadcasters like NBC, that appreciate snowboarding in the Olympic program and would welcome skateboarding because these sports are extremely relevant to the North American mass consumer market, the main market for these companies. For example, Neal Hendrix, professional skateboarder from the USA interviewed in 2013, thought that skateboarding was destined to be in the Olympics because of its commercial potential:

> Skateboarding is going to be in the Olympics for sure. The IOC wants it. The broadcasters around the world want it. NBC in the US pay the most money to the IOC to be Olympic broadcaster. NBC does some big skateboarding events like the Dew Tour. They really want skateboarding . . . It is going to be on for sure.
>
> Neal Hendrix, USA, professional skateboarding athlete, the Athlete Representative at the ISF (2013, interview)

On the contrary, there were concerns about chances of sport climbing becoming an Olympic sport because this sport is not that popular in North America:

> To be honest, I don't think climbing will make it into the Olympics . . . Unless the US starts to get more interested in sport climbing, it won't be an Olympic sport. Sport climbing is not big in America.
>
> Rustam Gelmanov, international sport climbing athlete (2013, interview)

So commercial appeal of sport to the North American audience appears to be a significant factor in terms of the Olympic inclusion.

The above quotes highlights that the Olympic Games are much commercialized as they exist to make profit to allow them to forward broader sport and social objectives. In the same way as in the study of Morrow and Idle (2008, p.325), the UCI strategy for change has emphasized commercial considerations, the IOC strategy of changing the Olympic Games was also underpinned by commercial thinking. Therefore, the analysis highlights that along with the IOC intention to get young people more interested in the Olympics, commercial interests have driven introduction of free sports to the Olympic Games. In pursuing both of these major interests—attracting young people and meeting demands of sponsors—the IOC has also become dependent on certain sports joining the Olympic movement. There is also a suggestion that, at least in snowboarding, the IOC patterns the strategy of the X-Games when considering introduction of new disciplines into the Olympic Games:

> X Games, despite their corporate heart as an ESPN made-for-television event, have deep credibility in the world of snowboarding. It explains, in part, why the Olympics keep adding established X Games events.
>
> Danny Davis, professional snowboarder, the United States
>
> (New York Times, 2014)

This quote on snowboarding and the above quote on the interest of the IOC in skateboarding suggest that not only development of sports depends on the Olympics, but vice versa. The IOC strategy and its commercial success might also be dependent on specific free sports joining the Olympic movement and on the X-Games, the commercial event, which acts as an indicator of the credibility in free sports.

Snowboarding was the first free sport to become part of the Olympic programme, and although it was already a commercialized sport before entering the Olympic Games, the increased media exposure of snowboarding at the Olympic Games led to a further growth of commercialization. The continuing commercialization of snowboarding has also facilitated the attitude of athletes towards the Olympic Games. As it can be concluded from the interviews, athletes prioritize the Olympics among all the other competitions. They are primarily focused on the Olympic Games as a commercial and career opportunity:

> If you get a medal there, you can do many things with that, especially in snowboarding which is such a popular sport now. You are medallist in this sport, and

> people only hear about this sport during the Olympics. You see snowboarding on the TV every year, and if you won the Olympics, it just carries a lot of clout. So it is important for me—if I can do well at the Olympics, it would be great and would help out my career a lot too.
>
> Louie Vito, Professional snowboarder, USA (2013, interview)

As this and earlier quotes suggest, athletes see commercial benefits of performing well at the Olympic Games. Having said this, it is acknowledged that apart from commercial opportunities there have been certainly other factors contributing to change in athletes' perception of the Olympic movement, such as the prestige of the Olympic Games and the arrival of the new generation of athletes focused on the competitive element in snowboarding, which is essentially epitomised in the Olympics.

As far as free sports are concerned, the prestige of the Olympic Games widely acknowledged through all three case studies can be seen as a reflection of the quest of the respective sports for legitimacy. In other words, the drive for the inclusion of climbing and skateboarding into the Olympic Games can be attributed to desire to "legitimize" the sports. It is the prestige of the Olympic Games that made some people feel that their sport can only be considered a "proper" sport if it is a part of the Olympic Games.

> We believe that being in the [Olympic] Games is the natural aspiration of all sports as defined as such…
>
> Marco Scolaris, the IFSC President (2013, interview)

So this seems to be more of a belief or a feeling rather than a rational realization that sports need to be in the Olympics.

There is a link between commercial interests and legitimacy of the sport though. It was described by Beal (1995, p.256) how commercialization and legitimization complement each other in the early years of professional skateboarding:

> At times of high popularity, various commercial interests have tried to capitalize on the activity [of skateboarding] by promoting it as part of the dominant sport culture, that is, as a legitimate sport, one which promotes competition, win- at-all-costs attitude, and extrinsic rewards.

Based on the studies in rock climbing (Donnelly, 1993), mountain biking (Gray, 1992), and skateboarding (Beal, 1995), it can be argued that legitimization of free sports was driven by commercial interests. Also a few instances in the case studies confirm this idea, as, for example, the ISF, which was expected to facilitate the inclusion of skateboarding into the Olympic Games and was established by the leading representatives of commercial skateboarding companies. So essentially, irrespective of what the main driver of the inclusion of sports into the Olympic Games (which is seen as an achievement of proper legitimacy) might be in each specific case, such legitimization can always be of benefit to commercial interests existing within the sports. Subsequently, those actors possessing commercial interests are likely to support legitimization of sports.

To conclude, commercialism has been a naturally inherited feature of free sports, and its rise has reflected the growth of free sports in general. Although it is apparent from the research analysis that commercial interests influenced the organizational evolution of competitive snowboarding, skateboarding, and climbing, the impact on each of these sports varied significantly. Competitive climbing has always been considerably less commercialized than the sports of skateboarding and snowboarding that both have had a similar approach to commercial interests allowing a reasonable degree of commercialization to be present within their sports. Therefore, it is possible to argue that less commercialization in climbing has been reflected in organizational evolution of this sport. For example, snowboarding was fast-tracked into the Olympics via the FIS, and there was a reported interest of the IOC and various governing bodies to “organize” skateboarding, but there has been no significant interest and competition among international governing bodies to be in charge of sport climbing as the UIAA essentially dropped it. In other words, the limited commercial attractiveness of sport climbing has been reflected in the fact that its governing body had to “push” for this sport to enter the Olympics, while there has been a “pull” from the IOC for snowboarding and, reportedly, for skateboarding.

7.3. Values of sports and their impact on organization

The values of each of three sports in this research have strongly influenced the development of these sports and their organizations. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, free sports originated from participatory non-competitive activities and have been surrounded by subcultures of young people. The co-existence of two versions of the same type of activity but with different values emerged as a distinct feature of all three sports concerned. The first version of the activity can be labelled as *traditional* and is manifested in freeride snowboarding, street skateboarding, and outdoor rock climbing. These activities cannot be considered as competitive sports, even though they are often executed by professional athletes and constitute a source of income for them through promotion and sale of video footage and sponsorships. The second version, which is the focus of the case studies, is professional, *competitive sport* itself in the form of competitive skateboarding, competitive snowboarding, and sport climbing. As all three case studies reveal, the second sport version inherited values from the first traditional activities. For example, that is how skateboarding is seen by Sandro Dias, competitive skateboarding athlete:

> I like to skate for fun with my friends and go to do my things. Competitions, demonstrations: these are the other things. But in my heart skateboarding is still my love. It is the best thing that I like to do.
>
> Sandro Dias, professional skateboarder, Brazil (2013, interview)

Overall, as the competitive versions of skateboarding, snowboarding, and climbing developed in the last three decades and essentially became fully professional competitive sports, still the values of traditional activities influenced the development of each of these sports to a large degree.

The major common values of skateboarding, snowboarding, and climbing reflects the way the competitive sport activity is perceived by participants: in all three sports, winning competitions is not necessarily the ultimate career goal for athletes as the value of winning competitions has always been less important than other values, for example, friendship, enjoyment, and self-expression. Therefore, the role of competition has always been of limited significance among all three sports as, for example, video making and challenging outdoor activities, such as freeride snowboarding and rock climbing, have always been as important as competition. Even though skateboarding, snowboarding, and climbing have emerged as competitive sports, still competi-

tions get a mixed reception in respective communities. For example, here is a quote from one of the most popular contemporary snowboarding magazines, which reflects this attitude:

> … in snowboarding, we are yet to get truly comfortable with competition as the vehicle through which we establish pre-eminence. Like a hair shirt that we have to wear during the winter to keep out the cold, we put up with competition; but it leaves us irritable, uncomfortable and jealous of the guys in boardshorts.
>
> Whitelines (2014)

However, as all three sports went through significant changes, such as commercialization and professionalization of organization, the importance of winning medals, to athletes, has inevitably grown in all of them but to a different degree. Since competitive snowboarding became an Olympic sport, the importance of winning competitions, and especially winning the Winter Olympic Games, increased dramatically according to top snowboarding athletes, although a reluctance to compete with each other is still very much relevant for freeride snowboarding athletes. Competitive climbing has been distinct from traditional climbing for some time as all the competitions are staged on artificial climbing walls, which does not reflect traditional values of outdoor rock climbing. As a consequence of separation of sport climbing from traditional climbing and mountaineering, there has been an increasing recognition of competitive values and most interviewed athletes expressed their appreciation of the Olympic Games.

> I think that climbing in the Olympics would be a great thing for our sport. I have always been a really big fan of the Olympics. I remember waking up really young and watching the Olympics.
>
> Sean McColl, professional climbing athlete, Canada (2013, interview)

This quote epitomizes what many other climbing and snowboarding athletes also said: they have simply been the fans of the Olympic Games from childhood and dream of being part of it.

However, the contemporary sport of skateboarding is remarkably different from the other two sports as it can be still called the most "anti-competitive" sport amongst professional sports. There is still relatively little focus on the competitive aspect of skateboarding among the athletes. Nevertheless, with the growing popularity of major competitive platforms of skateboarding, such as the X-Games and the Street League Skateboarding, and ongoing discussion over the Olympic inclusion, there has been an increasing acceptance of competitive skateboarding as an integral part of skateboarding culture.

In snowboarding, the existence of major traditional values, such as individualism, self-expression, and opposition to tight control, have been manifested in the ongoing critique from top athletes towards the FIS and the IOC over their handling of the Olympic snowboarding, a reluctance to follow these organizations' regulations, and even an open confrontation between athletes and the FIS. Traditional skateboarding values, which are similar to snowboarding, have arguably remained the most intact over the last couple decades when compared to the change in the values of snowboarding and climbing. As suggested earlier, this can be explained by a historical connection between skateboarding and snowboarding communities. These close ties mean that skateboarding athletes and influencers are very aware of patterns of organizational evolution in snowboarding and issues, which affected competitive snowboarding since it entered the Olympics. Subsequently, as skateboarding leaders do not want skateboarding values to be affected in the same way by global sport organizations, they have taken preventive action in order to make sure skateboarding will enter the Olympic Games only "on skateboarding terms". It was highlighted in skateboarding case report that the major structural change in this sport was the establishement of the ISF in order to specifically "protect" skateboarding if it enters the Olympic Games.

Overall, even though Rinehart (1998, p. 410) suggested that the growing TV coverage of the X-Games "basically denied that artistic, lifestyle portrayal in favour of a competitive sport ethic" so competitive values have become integral to these sports and have been accepted by top athletes, the findings of this thesis suggest that traditional values of skateboarding and snowboarding have remained strong and respected. Quite in contrast with skateboarding and snowboarding, the traditional values of climbing have not remained dominant in sport climbing. As discussed earlier, a distinct segregation between the two types of activity, traditional outdoor rock climbing and sport indoor climbing, was a major factor contributing to organizational evolution of this sport. The IFSC is a very young sport governing body that was created recently to specifically take over competitive climbing from the UIAA, so the IFSC has less concern with the culture and tradition of outdoor climbing. The creation of the IFSC indicated that sport climbing's organizational future would be distant from that of outdoor activities of mountaineering and rock climbing. Even though some traditional climbing values still exist within the IFSC circuit, this organization emphasizes competitive and Olympic values, which are relatively universal to any mainstream sport.

7.4. Evolution of organizational structures

The formalization of competitive snowboarding, skateboarding, and sport climbing varies as a consequence of the way free sports have historically developed. As highlighted in the introduction, free sports were typically characterised by a lack of organizational structure and high informality in organization. Breivik (2010, p.260) argued that due to the strong underlying philosophy of free sports, which has been opposed to the mainstream sport culture, they were not managed "in the same way as mainstream sports, by organizational frameworks, strict rules, and regulated competitions in clearly defined environments." However, the structures of the sports under review have evolved in other ways over last three decades. As these sports became attractive in commercial terms, their governing bodies started developing the sports in a more institutionalized way, which would fit TV and sponsors. It can be seen that the move towards commercialization and subsequent professionalization of organization initiated a significant change in the way governing bodies of the concerned sports are organized. Effectively, under increasing pressure from media and sponsors they were required to "echo some of the stereotypical characteristics of mainstream sport" (Rinehart and Sydnor, 2003, p.6), such as hierarchical frameworks of competitions and governing bodies, institutionalization of athletes, and providing a more standardized product: regular competitions that are broadcasted and sponsored. Overall, there is no indication of one dominant trend and neither a straight-forward answer on whether these structural developments have been primarily driven by external pressures and internal forces in respective sports. The case studies demonstrated variation of patterns in this regard.

Once again there has been a striking contrast between the evolution of structure of international sport climbing when compared to structures in skateboarding and snowboarding. Essentially, since sport climbing separated from traditional climbing, it has always had a leading international governing body at the top of the sport's governance hierarchy and effectively in control of international sport climbing. The IFSC is a small organization, but currently there are no alternative international governing bodies in sport climbing. This is in line with the hierarchical organization of the majority of mainstream sports. On the contrary, neither competitive skateboarding nor competitive snowboarding has or has had an international organization, which all international sport actors can relate to. As identified through the interviews and can be seen from the associ-

ated organizational maps, skateboarding and snowboarding have functioned primarily as networks of governing bodies, event organizations, and people involved in sport. These networks have been very informal, so little formal relationships between organizations have ever existed. They

> … coordinate their actions without having a central authority, and they may tolerate strong heterogeneity without losing the ability to reach shared goals.
>
> Steen-Johnsen (2008, p.340)

Thus, international organizations in snowboarding, such as International Snowboard Federation and TTR Pro Snowboarding, and organizations in skateboarding, such as the NSA and the International Skateboarding Federation, can be characterized as *facilitating organizations* within network structures rather than conventional sport federations sitting at the top of the sport hierarchy. Therefore, in terms of structural arrangements and evolution of organizational fields, a common theme arisen both in skateboarding and snowboarding was the prominence of network structures in these sports in contrast to the hierarchy of sport climbing.

The existence of "umbrella" international federations and their relevance to free sports as an organizational framework is another key topic emerging from analysis of all three sports. An "umbrella" international sport organization is an international sport federation that governs more than one sport. In case studies concerned, there are several international sport organizations that have served as "umbrella" organizations at least at some point: FIS (skiing and snowboarding), FIRS (roller skating and skateboarding), UIAA (mountaineering and climbing). Also, the case study of skateboarding documented that the cycling federation, the UCI, had a chance to become an umbrella organization for skateboarding. The existence of such umbrella governing bodies is an interesting phenomenon, which seems typical for free sports but is not very common in mainstream sports. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze whether this is a relevant organizational solution for free sports and what impact umbrella federations have on them.

The most informative evidence on whether umbrella federation could be a relevant organizational framework was obtained from the climbing case. The UIAA initially adopted sport climbing as an umbrella organization but gave up its leadership over sport climbing in 2006. In this instance, the IFSC, which took over sport climbing from the UIAA, serves as an example of a sport federation dedicated to one sport, which is opposite to the idea of umbrella federation. This is

very unusual for international sport federations to give up a sport, as, for example, the FIS and the UCI have always wanted to keep different sports together, even though there might have been significant cultural differences between the sports under their jurisdiction. However, as discussed in the climbing case study report, the cultural rift between sport climbing and outdoor mountaineering sports underpinned that structural decision. In fact, despite that organizational decision, the UIAA

> . . . had learnt from this experience and at the same General Assembly in 2006 the UIAA statutes were amended and the concept of unit members was introduced, thus enabling mountain sports' federations involved in international competition to join the UIAA while maintaining a high degree of autonomy. The intention is to provide a means to keep different mountaineering disciplines under the umbrella of a single mountaineering and climbing organisation. An important argument was that multiple organisations led to higher costs and the loss of important synergies for the national member mountaineering federations.
>
> UIAA (2009, no page number)

Thus, even though it can be assumed that an umbrella federation is normally of benefit to a group of connected sports, cultural differences often do not allow these alliances to exist, so they either split or face resistance issues. This research project identified relationships between the FIS and competitive snowboarding as the most evident example of resistance from specific sport community towards an umbrella governing body. Terje Haakonsen explains the reasons for it:

> FIS has five different sports! There is always competition for priority within the FIS. The best skiers have threatened to create their own series several times, and it is not because they are satisfied with the way FIS runs things . . . It irritates the FIS leaders that biathlon crushes their sports in television ratings in Europe. But why is biathlon Europe's most popular winter sport on TV? Because it has its own association and guides the development of the sport itself. They only have to focus on one thing, one sport. They get up every day and think about how they can make the product better for athletes and fans.
>
> Terje Haakonsen, the influential snowboarder of the 1990s (Austin, 2011)

This quote suggests that a failure of umbrella organizations, such as the UAA and the FIS, to connect with free sports might be explained by a simple organizational suggestion that it is always preferable to have one governing body responsible for and focused on one sport. Arguably, the major issue about umbrella governance is what criteria should be fulfilled in order for several

different sports to beneficially exist under one organizational umbrella and whether these criteria should include cultural considerations.

7.5. Power of the Olympic movement and its impact on organization of sports

Another reoccurring topic throughout all three case studies was the power of the Olympic movement to influence the organizational development of sport and whether sport needs or is able to protect itself from that influence. Whether Olympic status has already been achieved, as in snowboarding's case, a possibility for climbing, or a perceived interest in skateboarding, the amount of debate around this topic indicates that the impact of a sport's inclusion into the program of the Olympic Games upon structure and culture is considered a significant factor in organizational evolution of these three sports. The major issues connected to the role of the Olympic movement in evolution of organizational fields, were focused around two questions:

- What permits governing bodies to be in charge of free sports within the Olympic Movement?
- How much autonomy do these governing bodies have from the IOC?

As already discussed in this chapter, inclusion into the Olympic Games provides sport in general and athletes in particular with bigger commercial opportunities. Athletes realize that they can monetize their Olympic status through increased prize money and sponsorships, so they focus on preparation for and qualification to the Olympics. Consequently, sports that enter the Olympic Games become more commercialized, which has been evident in snowboarding over the last couple of decades. This case was also an example of how commercialization of sport, facilitated by its Olympic introduction, has changed the international organization of the sport. First, the Olympic governance has been awarded to the FIS, the organization, which had never dealt with snowboarding before. Secondly, the International Snowboard Federation went bust, arguably as a consequence of the sport entering the Olympic Games via another organization. A third key change, resulting from commercialization and the Olympic introduction of snowboarding, was the emergence of a new international snowboarding organization, TTR Snowboarding. Therefore, it can be summarized that the current structure of international snowboarding is complete-

ly different from the structure of sport twenty years ago, has been underpinned by commercialization and shaped by the inclusion of the sport into the Olympic Games.

Bigger commercial opportunities of being within the Olympic movement are indeed realized by those involved in the sports of climbing and skateboarding, as well. That is one of the major reasons the IFSC has been trying to convince the IOC to include climbing into the Olympics, and the athletes unanimously support this bid. This is also why elite skateboarders want to participate in the Olympics and several organizations (the ISF, the FIRS, and the UCI) attempted to claim their authority over Olympic skateboarding. However, as highlighted above, the current commercial value of international skateboarding is considered to be significantly bigger than the value of climbing, so there are contrasting perceptions of the possible impacts of Olympic inclusion on competitive skateboarding and sport climbing from a commercial point of view. Whereas there is a widespread opinion that the IOC needs skateboarding more than skateboarding needs the Olympics, sport climbing authorities and athletes are extremely pro-active in pursuing the Olympic future of their sport.

This contrast has been reflected in the organizational arrangements of these two sports. Even though there is a similarity between competitive skateboarding and sport climbing in the fact that their dedicated international governing bodies, the ISF and the IFSC, were both created recently with Olympic inclusion in mind, the goals of these organizations are different. The ISF was established when the IOC asked its founders to organize skateboarding, and its primary mission is to protect the culture and traditions of skateboarding in case the IOC interest materializes. On the other hand, the data analysis suggests that the main mission of the IFSC is to make climbing an Olympic sport, because this sport has struggled for resources and would welcome the commercial opportunities the Olympic status could provide.

However, the results of all three case studies indicate that, apart from commercial interests associated with the Olympic movement, there were other mechanisms for changes in structure of sport that are to do with the position of the IOC in international sport in general. In the case of competitive snowboarding, the IOC decision empowering the FIS to run the Olympic snowboarding is indicative of the power the IOC has over any sports:

> So at the IOC we felt that it was good that the FIS takes care of them [snowboarders].
>
> Gerhard Heiberg, the IOC Member (2013, interview)

This statement from the IOC member suggests that the IOC considered the FIS, which was a traditional and very hierarchical governing body, as the only organization able to look after snowboarding athletes. To summarize, there are two opposite views on why the IOC has authorized the FIS to manage the Olympic snowboarding: the IOC official suggests that this decision was motivated by paternalistic reasons, while some former and current athletes suspect that commercial interests were behind that.

On the other hand, at that time the IOC did not perceive the International Snowboard Federation, the governing body never recognized by the IOC, as a suitable organization to look after snowboarding. This was likely to do with the International Snowboard Federation's non-standard "modus operandi," which was in line with traditional values of snowboarding. It is acknowledged by Gerhard Heiberg (2013, interview) that "the mentality of the snowboarders was a little different from the mentality of … traditional sports on the Olympic program." So this is how the IOC explains the main reason to empower the FIS, not the International Snowboard Federation with authority over Olympic snowboarding. Therefore, this case of introduction of snowboarding into the Olympics demonstrates that based on its own judgement at time the IOC assessed the mentality and the attitude of snowboarders and essentially decided which governing body would run this sport. Certainly, the IOC has a regulatory legitimacy to choose sports for the Olympic program and decide which organization runs sports in terms of Olympic competitions, namely, the Olympic qualifications and the ultimate Olympic Games. However, as the evidence from the case studies suggests, the effect of the Olympic introduction on sports organization goes far beyond the Olympic frameworks. There are much more complex issues, such as survival of sport organizations (the case of the International Snowboard Federation's bankruptcy in snowboarding), change in structures and values in sports (the case of sport climbing), and resistance and open protest against control by governing organizations (snowboarders and the FIS) that are largely due to the Olympic movement's power and legitimacy.

A good example of such phenomena is also the case study of competitive skateboarding, which has been affected by the Olympic movement, even if the IOC interest in the potential inclusion

of this sport into the Olympics has never been officially communicated. However, it is well documented that the IOC consulted a number of governing bodies regarding this possibility, one of which was the UCI that had never dealt with skateboarding before. It can therefore be suggested that this approach was similar to that of the IOC cooperation with the FIS in case of snowboarding. In other words, despite having informal communication with the ISF and officially recognizing another federation, the FIRS, at some stage the IOC similarly suggested that it would be better for the UCI to "take care of" skateboarders. Essentially, this was another occasion when the IOC could be seen trying to enforce its will on sports. Therefore, issues of the IOC power and its manipulation, which surrounded the UCI interest in skateboarding, reflect the special place of the Olympic movement in global sports and its ability to change sports. Skateboarding's Olympic developments are particularly contrasting, because although the power of the IOC in global sport is very strong, its cultural legitimacy in relation to skateboarding has always been particularly weak.

Consequently, learning from snowboarding's Olympic history, the skateboarding community has been anxious about Olympic interest and reluctant to allow their sport to be governed by any international federation of other sport. As mentioned earlier, a perceived interest of the IOC in skateboarding resulted in the establishment of the dedicated international sport federation, the ISF, after the IOC informally asked skateboarding influencers to "organize skateboarding" in 2003. There has always been a strong belief among professional athletes and key skateboarding influencers, such as Tony Hawk and Don Bostick, that skateboarding should enter only on "skateboarding's terms," which are formulated and protected via the ISF. Overall, currently it seems that the IOC is more cautious about the execution of its power over governing bodies in connection to skateboarding. There has been no straight-forward organizational solution proposed for Olympic skateboarding as yet, and all communication between the IOC and several governing bodies, none of which is recognized by the IOC as a legitimate governing body for competitive skateboarding, stays behind the scenes.

Conversely, in the case of sport climbing, there is only one legitimate international governing body, the IFSC, which is solely responsible for international sport climbing and is fully recognized by the IOC. Thus, there is no question of organizational and cultural legitimacy of the IFSC in this case. However, the concern, which derives most evidently from the results of the climbing case study, is how the IOC limitations on the number of Olympic sports disciplines and athletes af-

fects the organizational evolution of free sports. The best illustration of this issue was a proposal by the IOC to have a "combined" climbing discipline for the Olympic Games instead of three separate disciplines (speed, lead, and bouldering). As discussed in the case study report, athletes did not support this proposal as it was not in line with competitive climbing traditions and values and arguably compromised them in favour of satisfying the IOC on numbers. In other words, the IOC recommendation, which was supported by the IFSC, lacked cultural legitimacy and credibility among competitive climbers. Eventually this proposal failed, but it was not the lack credibility of the bid that was the reason of failure but the fact that sport climbing was simply not good enough in addressing the IOC agenda with its bid, including the commercial potential of this sport:

> I think that the IFSC did not do a really good job for this [Olympic bid], because I think climbing is interesting for many people . . . I was quite disappointed about that, because I really thought we had a good chance. You must be really aggressive in a commercial way. They [the IFSC] could have shown climbing much better.
>
> Roman Krajnik, professional climbing coach, Slovenia (2013, interview)

Therefore, the case of the failed Olympic application of climbing was not about the failure of the IOC to enforce its will on this sport but about the failure of the IFSC to come up with a strong climbing proposition for the Olympic movement. On the other hand, it was one of the manifestations of the bigger issues, namely that international sport governing bodies have little autonomy when dealing with the Olympic movement, and the IOC has the ultimate power over sports.

7.6. Athletes' role in organization of sport and their attitude towards Olympic participation

As suggested in the introduction, the role of athletes in organization of free sports has always been significant. Consequently, in terms of methodology of this research project, it was important to examine the evolution of and the current stance on athletes voice, representation, and power in free sports. Within the course of this research project, two issues have emerged as particularly relevant to addressing this task: athletes' role in decision making in international governing bodies and athletes' views on integration of their sport into the Olympic movement. Investigation of these two areas is meant to facilitate a discussion on cultural legitimacy of dif-

ferent international governing bodies in free sports and how their cultural legitimacy corresponds to regulatory legitimacy within the Olympic movement frameworks.

7.6.1. Athletes' role in decision-making

As described in the introduction to this thesis, in the early days of free sports, athletes' involvement in decision-making and organizational matters was much greater than in mainstream sports. Even though all the international sport governing bodies are required to have Athletes Commissions, in most global sport organizations the athletes are "little represented" (Forster and Pope, 2014, p. 101). It has always been a distinctive feature of free sports, so the centrality of athletes in the organization of free sport has emerged as one of the most important issues for respondents and commentators. The International Snowboard Federation was created by snowboarders and was entirely managed by them. As sport climbing was part of the mountaineering organizational structure, the UIAA, athletes' representation became limited because sport climbing was just one of several sports governed by the UIAA. However, this changed with the emergence of the IFSC. From the IFSC perspective, the athletes' interests have always been at the pinnacle of the organizational philosophy of this international sport governing body. The IFSC President Marco Scolaris explains this in his interview in 2013:

> We have tried over the years to create a (different) way to manage the sport. Athletes are the centre of our activity; therefore we want to be "athletes" at all levels of the organisation. That is to say to recreate in the management the same atmosphere that usually one meets in the climbing community, where mutual respect and the joy of the effort reign. Not easy, but possible. Even when the sport grows and interests increase . . . it is a challenge for the future . . .

As this quote demonstrates, the will of the climbing athletes has played a significant role in the organizational structure of the IFSC as the focus on the athletes transcends the actual structure. However, the interviews of climbing athletes suggest that in practice they have hardly used this power given to them as they have not been interested in decision-making, which is connected to the traditional anti-establishment value of free climbing.

Athlete representation in governing bodies of competitive skateboarding has shown similar patterns to sport climbing. Even though, as identified by this research evidence, commercial actors

have always played the biggest role in the international governing bodies of skateboarding, athletes have also been given substantial power within sport governing organizations. The indicative example of the athletes' representation in skateboarding is Tony Hawk, who is perceived as the voice of skateboarding globally and is one of the founders and board members of the ISF. However, in practice over decades there has been a widespread reluctance of athletes to be organized by any governing body and one of skateboarding's participants, Steve G. (cited in Stratford, no date), best describes this vision:

> [Skateboarding's] evolution is the product of all of us over the last 40 or so years. In that respect, we all own it by simply doing it, but none of us has the authority to control it . . . Skateboarding has no governing body, as its direction is forged by the very act of doing it. There can't be a governing body, as it won't govern. It will produce an artificial aspect of skating created around a table and divorced from the very act it seeks to direct . . . [A] self-elected governing body is about to get rich both monetarily and in influence by claiming they speak for us, when in fact skateboarding's greatest asset is its freedom.. . . .

Therefore, although skateboarding athletes have been well represented in governing bodies, their participation in decision-making has been restricted by this widespread unwillingness to accept structures. This issue is similar to sport climbing in that athletes are well empowered by governing bodies of these sports, but most of them are reluctant to accept those governing structures and use their power.

This phenomenon derives from the culture of free sports, but presumably reluctance of athletes to participate in organizational decision making increases the risk of "non-athletes" making decisions on athletes' behalf. This situation is witnessed in snowboarding, which has been a totally different case in terms of athletes' influence on the organization of the sport. Snowboarding was created and governed by athletes, but now the most important competitive aspect of it, the Olympic snowboarding, is governed without any athlete representation because of the FIS reluctance to listen to snowboarding athletes. As the evidence suggests, snowboarding athletes have been consistently protesting against their lack of power in the FIS and the IOC decision making on Olympic snowboarding. In other words, snowboarding athletes are deprived of power over Olympic snowboarding by the FIS, whereas current climbing and skateboarding have been relatively powerful within the IFSC and the ISF but arguably have not used this power well enough as they are unwilling to take the "driver's seat".

There are hardly any implications for sport climbing athletes as there is still a strong athlete centrality within the IFSC in terms of how the organization is managed and governed. However, as the ISF has not been recognised by the IOC, it arguably has no regulatory power over Olympic-related structures in skateboarding. This means there is always a chance that skateboarding might repeat the snowboarding scenario, which means the governance would be passed to an authority with no cultural legitimacy at all and no athletes' representation. Having said this, it must be noted that the very fact of the ISF existence reflects the need of skateboarding to protect itself, which means an acceptance of structures in skateboarding to a certain extent, as this sport is known by very informal organizational arrangements even by free sports standards.

7.6.2. Athletes' attitude to participating in the Olympic Games.

Athletes' attitude to the idea, or in the case of snowboarding, the fact of their sport joining the Olympic programme is one of the keys to understanding of cultural legitimacy and resistance to structural changes: burecratization and formalization of sport. With regards to this aspect of the research, a number of key discussion points emerged. In snowboarding, the Olympic sport for almost two decades, the majority of contemporary international athletes have accepted the Olympic Games as the most important but not the most credible event in their sport. First of all, this signals that athletes see the Olympic Games mainly as commercial opportunity for their careers, as they prioritize this event ahead of others, but on the other hand do not see it as the most respected event within the sport in terms of snowboarding values. Secondly, the acceptance of Olympic snowboarding by professional athletes is "generational". As was highlighted in the case study report, the average age of international snowboarding athletes has gone down, so almost all contemporary athletes started their professional careers with Olympic snowboarding in place. Therefore, as resistance towards the Olympic Games eased over the last decade, it seems that commercial and generational factors are shaping the current athletes' perception of Olympic snowboarding rather than traditional values of the sport. As shown in previous sections, some of these values still remain strong but not enough to resist the benefits of the Olympics.

Conversely, skateboarding athletes, who have never seen their sport in the Olympic program, indicated that they could not anticipate what Olympic inclusion might bring to the sport. However, some elite athletes, who make their living from competitive skateboarding, support the idea of joining the Olympics as they see benefits for the development of the sport in general, even if Olympic inclusion does not affect them directly:

> If you are a skater in Indonesia and your government and sport federation never cared about skateboarding and now all of a sudden they decided to build ten skate parks, that is a good thing even if you are never going to be on the Olympics or ever even watch it.
>
> Neal Hendrix, USA, professional skateboarding athlete, the Athlete Representative at the ISF (2013, interview)

At the same time, it is reiterated by most professional skateboarders that they want skateboarding to enter the Olympic Games on "skateboarding terms" only. This reflects the belief, among many amateur athletes and members of skateboarding community, that the Olympic movement is a threat to skateboarding values. This is reinforced by the skateboarding community's awareness of the Olympic experience of snowboarding.

> Yes, [what happened to snowboarding] is dangerous for sure. I have been a part of a lot of these discussions. I really talked for skateboarding to be able to control its own future. Skateboarding is going to end in the Olympics for sure, but it is going to be really important who is managing it, who is controlling it.
>
> Neal Hendrix, USA, professional skateboarding athlete, the Athlete Representative at the ISF (2013, interview)

On the other hand, sport climbing athletes are not as concerned about snowboarding's Olympic journey. Even though it may seem that climbing athletes are divided on Olympic inclusion, as in other two cases, the leading international sport climbing athletes all support the idea of joining the Olympic Games and see it as a positive development for the sport because of two reasons mentioned in their interviews. First, most have been the fans of the Olympics. Second, they see the benefits for their careers, as for example Alex Puccio, professional climbing athlete from the USA. She re-iterates in her interview that she is doing sport climbing for a living and would like it to get bigger, which is inevitable within the Olympic movement. Some indifferent and negative

views on whether climbing needs to pursue the Olympic inclusion are expressed only by traditional climbers. However, as highlighted in the case study, the segregation between sport climbing and traditional outdoor climbing has become very distinct over the last two decades. In other words, the opinion of traditional climbers highlights how far sport climbing has gone from its roots and thus is not of much relevance to the Olympic prospect of sport climbing, as traditional climbers have different values and are unlikely to participate in the Olympics anyway.

Overall, the evidence from all three case studies suggests that elite athletes, who can make a living from competitive sport, almost unanimously want to go onto the Olympics, even though some of them do not consider this event to be the most credible event in terms of reflecting free sports values. These findings will be discussed within the theoretical frameworks of new institutionalism and, specifically, the notion of cultural legitimacy in the next chapter.

7.7. Resistance issues in evolution of free sports

In many extreme sports, it has been the very nature of them manifested in participants challenging "the discourses about commercialization, regulation and control, and importantly about who has power to define and shape those discourses" (Wheaton, 2004, p.20-21). The evidence from three case studies presented suggests that the IOC has often acted as the ultimate organizational power in relation to competitive snowboarding, skateboarding, and climbing by trying to influence which governing bodies should be in charge and which disciplines of these sports should enter the Olympic Games. The approach of the IOC has been very much questioned by athletes and other actors as there has been a strong belief that decision-making must involve current and former athletes of respective sports. Consequently, the actions of the IOC and its lack of communication with free sports athletes, organizations, and communities have contributed to the ongoing resistance to accept the organizational frameworks and mainstream sport values, which the IOC and mainstream sport federations attempted to apply to free sports. The most indicative examples of such actions of the IOC are listed below:

- Snowboarding: granting the right to run Olympic snowboarding to the FIS, which has no representation of snowboarding athletes;

- Climbing: recommendation of a combination event for the Olympic Games, whereas traditionally there are three separate disciplines of climbing;
- Skateboarding: informal talks with several governing bodies regarding the IOC interest in skateboarding, while there has been an absence of consultation with athletes.

Consequently, whereas the introduction of hierarchical organizational structures in international sport climbing has been accepted, similar structural changes in international snowboarding and a stated intention of implementing such changes in competitive skateboarding faced a strong resistance. As network organizational structures have been traditionally popular in skateboarding and snowboarding, the involvement of mainstream hierarchical governing bodies, such as the IOC, the UCI and the FIS, was likely one of the main reasons of organizational resistance and conflicts. For example, there is a lot of evidence gathered with regards to snowboarding. As arguably the first free sport to become part of the Olympic Games, snowboarding has faced a number of structural and cultural issues as the IOC and the FIS attempted to build a hierarchical structure for the sport at both national and international levels. The FIS has never connected to other international snowboarding competitions, such as the X-Games, the WSF, and TTR World Tour, and has not been able to create a credible structure for snowboarding that would have been accepted by athletes:

> . . . the culture difference between snowboarding and skiing is so huge that they [the FIS] will never ever be able to create a snowboard department or the cooperation that will be a success.
>
> Cecilia Flatum, the Vice-President of the World Snowboarding Federation and the Board Member of Norwegian Snowboard Federation (2013, interview)

The FIS has no connection to the grassroots of snowboarding, so there is a structural and cultural conflict as grassroots are developed by the WSF and national snowboarding federations without any Olympic funding. The disconnection of this framework has been of great concern for snowboarding organizations and event organizers. In other words, the FIS has been perceived by snowboarding organizations as just the IOC agent for snowboarding but has not had any credibility with or connection to the snowboarding community.

The resistance in three free sports is essentially a manifestation of the conflict between the traditional values of climbing, skateboarding, and snowboarding with the modern values of the

competitive versions of the respective sports. The existence of two "versions" of these sports is one of the key findings from the case studies. This distinction is most visible in snowboarding as, inevitably, due to the integration into the Olympic movement for the last two decades, competitive snowboarding has become largely homogenized into the mainstream sporting culture. As noted by Breivik (2010, p.270),

> . . . gradually parts of the snowboard milieu have been swallowed by the formalized sport culture and has become part of the Olympic sport culture with its competitive events and ideology.

Indeed, with the integration into the Olympic Movement, international competitive snowboarding has lost many of its traditional values. Nevertheless, this research does not categorically suggest that, having accepted the Olympic Games as the most important competition, international snowboarders have accepted the actual Olympic values. Rather, they have accepted the organizational structures and regulations of the mainstream sports in order to benefit from career opportunities of being Olympic athletes. Snowboarding has always had a fair degree of commerciality inherit in its culture, and snowboarders have never been against making money from their activity. However, they have always wanted to stand by the traditional values of snowboarding, such as a limited importance placed on winning competitions, freedom of self-expression, and reluctance to being regulated by governing bodies. This is still very much the case for freeriding activities but not for professional competitive snowboarding. This significant cultural gap between traditional snowboarding and its modern competitive version has been aggravated by the coercive governance of the FIS, which has not been sensitive to the cultural issues of the sport. Overall, this has created conflict between the FIS and the professional snowboarding community.

However, it is not only the Olympic movement that affects the values of free sports and facilitates the development of a strong distinction between traditional activity and competitive professional sport. Skateboarding is far from being an Olympic sport, is not recognized by the IOC, and has no formal connection to the Olympic movement. Yet, the rise of popularity of professional competitive skateboarding over last two decades has affected the way the young athletes see this activity:

> Kids practice for tricks for the contests [nowadays]. I don't like this.
>
> Sandro Dias, professional skateboarding athlete from Brazil (2013, interview)

To put this another way, while traditionally winning competitions was less important in skateboarding than enjoying the activity and having fun, there is now a much stronger emphasis on winning contests among the younger generation of skateboarding athletes. This focus on improving their contest performance in training, previously not a priority for skateboarders, indicates that the values of competitive skateboarding are changing and diverging from the traditional non-competitive values of this activity. The major reason for this was the growth of the X-Games and subsequent development of other competition platforms, e.g. Street League, which have boosted the commercial potential of the sport and consequently increased the chances for athletes to make living from it. The simultaneous arrival of role model athletes, such as Tony Hawk, who focused on the competitive side of skateboarding and benefited from his commitment to succeed in it, also facilitated the change in values of this sport. Along with the perceived interest of the IOC, a shift of focus to the competitive side of skateboarding and suggested further institutionalization of sport have become a matter of concern to many athletes and members of the skateboarding community. For example, that is how Stratford (no date, p.2) explains this stance:

> There has never been any serious movement that I know of, to legitimize skateboarding in the eyes of the powers-that-be that control which sports are recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and which aren't. The inference that could be made here is that, skateboarders just didn't give a s**t. It's not really that big of a deal to us. Skateboarding already has a fairly effective infrastructure of industry, demos, contests, appearances, and media that works to promote, support, and grow skateboarding both locally, and worldwide, completely from within. So, there has traditionally been little to no need for any sort of outside entity to legitimize skateboarding in the eyes of the world (Although the "outside entities" usually feel like we do, anyway, regardless of what we might think about it). Skateboarding is an extraordinary pastime in itself; that's almost totally obvious to anyone that's exposed to it. It's truly an American icon that has effectively spread itself all over the world, strictly based on its own merits, and its infectious appeal to kids and adults, young and old, everywhere. It doesn't need to be hawked like an energy drink, or an extreme snack. It sells itself just fine on its own.

The case study report provides much similar evidence that skateboarding participants and commentators do not feel that skateboarding needs to be formally legitimized as a sport and to be further institutionalized.

Consequently, over the last decade, there has been strong opposition to any form of organizational control of skateboarding, specifically from non-skateboarding governing bodies. This resistance to change both the values and structures of the sport has arguably been the strongest among three sports in focus of these studies. Here is how this was explained by Klein (2013, no page number):

> Skateboarders have never let outside sources determine what is good for skateboarding, it has evolved from the streets and the streets continue to dictate the atmosphere for skateboarding… No organization, contest entity or corporation can control what every day skaters do. Snowboarding is much more easily harnessed and controlled because you have to travel and pay to do it. It's a rich white guy sport, so it's fitting we have a bunch of rich white guys fighting to control how snowboarding is controlled, marketed and presented to the public.

Thus, it might be argued that skateboarding has been more resistant to mainstream sport governance and culture than climbing and snowboarding because skateboarding athletes need less money to practice their sport as they have easier access to facilities and no need to travel significant distances. Therefore, as skateboarding athletes are less dependent on governing bodies and sponsors, they are able to ignore non-acceptable control. Even when they establish international governing organization, the ISF, it is said to exist not to put some structures over skateboarding but only to protect skateboarding from being overtaken by non-skateboarding organizations.

Finally, sport climbing has shown what causes the rapid development of competitive versions of free sports and cultural changes within them. Sport climbing has never been overly commercialized. It has not been in the Olympic Games and had a very short spell in the X-Games. Yet the gap between two facets of climbing—traditional rock climbing and indoor sport climbing—has become much bigger over the last two decades and arguably is no less than in snowboarding, which is an established Olympic and heavily commercialized sport:

> Even when [now] we have the most climbers ever, when you go to the mountains, to those popular mountain climbing areas, they are completely empty . . . But they were packed when I started climbing. So here is the reason. All the climbers are starting indoor now. They don't have an experience. They can't create an instinct, which we created when started in mountains, because they know exactly

> where the difficulties are, where it becomes dangerous. They are afraid of making mistakes. So they keep staying in the indoor places . . . I realize that there is a gap between sport climbing, natural sport climbing and mountains, because people don't have so much experience anymore. They don't have so much time to spend most of their time in the mountains going climbing, to get this experience.
>
> Stefan Glowacz, professional climbing athlete, Germany (2013, interview)

Therefore, it can be suggested that even though the dominant position of the Olympic movement, as the biggest sport event platform, and commercialization have played a significant part in creating a cultural gap (or even a conflict) between the traditional version of free sports and their more recent competitive side, they are not fully responsible for it. The phenomenon of the existence of two versions of sport with different values is rooted in the history of free sports and has more to do with the introduction of an idea of having competitions in activities that were not intended to be competitive. This contrast between traditional values and competitive logics is especially visible in skateboarding:

> Contests are almost new to skateboarding I feel, because skateboarding is just an individual thing... That is always making it more fun rather than thinking about the contests only and about winning. These are not the roots of skateboarding.
>
> Ryan Decenzo, Canada, professional skateboarding athlete (2013, interview)

Indeed, the very first competitions in snowboarding, skateboarding, and climbing were held for the fun of the participants. However, a rise in the popularity of competitions and the development of organizational structures around these sports led to a competitive aspect of the activity, significant changes in values of these sports, and subsequent resistance to change.

7.8. Overview of the major findings

In order to facilitate further discussion of the main findings that emerged from this research and the application of theoretical knowledge to the relevant findings, the main features of the cross-case analysis are summarized in **Table 7.1.**

Table 7.1 Summary of the findings of cross-case analysis of the selected free sports

	Competitive Snowboarding	**Competitive Skateboarding**	**Sport Climbing**
Organizational structure	Network with several key actors	Network with many different actors	Hierarchy with one ultimate governing body
Leading international governing bodies in charge of the sport	FIS (for Olympic snowboarding) TTR (for the most of the rest competitions)	ISF is the dedicated skateboarding body. FIRS claimed its authority as well. UCI considered bringing skateboarding into the Olympics in the past.	IFSC
Commercialization of sport	High	Very high	Low
Included in the X-Games	Yes	Yes	No
Olympic status	Olympic sport since 1998	Not Olympic sport Not recognized by the IOC	Not Olympic sport Recognized by the IOC
Athletes representation in decision making	Strong representation in TTR No representation in FIS	Strong representation in ISF Limited representation in FIRS No representation in UCI	Very strong representation in IFSC
Major developments in sport structures	FIS taking over Olympic snowboarding in 1996 TTR establishment in 2002	Establishment of the ISF in 2002	UIAA dropping the sport in 2006 IFSC establishment in 2007
Evolution of values over the last 30 years	Competitive sport values have been accepted, but most	Traditional values have mostly remained intact.	Sport climbing has become fully indoor sport. Most traditional values

	of traditional values have remained strong.	There has been an increasing focus on importance of winning competitions.	have been replaced, mainly by universal values of mainstream sports. Only some traditional values have remained.
Attitude of elite athletes to Olympic Games	Accepted the Olympics as the most important event in the sport	Mostly agree to participate in the Olympic Games	Clearly support the idea of climbing joining the Olympic Games
Major concerns of athletes	FIS approach to snowboarding and absence of athletes voice in its decision-making	Attempts of non-skateboarding governing bodies, such as UCI, to bring skateboarding into the Olympic Games	The IOC and the IFSC attempting to change the format of sport competitions by creating a combination event for the Olympic Games
Conflicts and resistance issues	There were boycotts of the Olympics and the FIS events in late 1990s. Resistance to the FIS governance have remained since	There is a quite vocal opposition to further institutionalization and the very idea of Olympic skateboarding from skateboarding community. It is manifested in petitions and media critique.	No significant issues

To summarize, a number of reoccurring topics and patterns have emerged from the cross-case examination of competitive snowboarding, sport climbing, and competitive skateboarding. There are similarities evident in timelines of the sports, patterns of evolution of their international organizations, and major factors that affected their development. However, the process of organizational evolution of each sport possessed a large number of unique characteristics, which allows a comprehensive picture of organizational evolution to be assessed. In the next chapter, cross-case similarities, differences, and patterns will be discussed with reference to the relevant theories. This should address the research objectives and provide some theoretical ground for the conclusions of this research project.

8. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of this research in the context of the chosen theoretical frameworks and the reviewed literature. Particularly, section 8.1 attempts to relate the findings that derived from case studies to theoretical knowledge of new institutionalism. There are separate sections discussing structural and cultural changes. There is also a dedicated section on legitimacy issues in free sports, because the notion of legitimacy appears to be central to understanding of organizational field. Section 8.2 examines how organizational evolution of free sports can be explained from a resource-dependence perspective. This chapter will support the concluding chapter of this dissertation, which attempts to address the research objectives and implications of this study.

8.1. Explanations of findings from new institutional perspective

Further discussion will explore the evolution of organizational field of free sports from the new institutionalism point of view. Separate subsections will evaluate the evolution of organizational structures and cultures of the researched sports. Explanation of findings will be linked to the notions of institutional isomorphism, pluralism, and legitimacy.

8.1.1. Evolution of organizational structures

From the very beginning, new institutional theory was concerned with explaining organizational change through "convergent" change that is evident in similarities or differences among organizational structures and processes in institutional fields (Scott, 2004). Subsequently, academic discussion on structures of sport organizations has been mostly put in the context of organizational change and referred to the transformation of amateur sport organizations info professional ones leading to formalization and bureaucratization of sport. As the literature review suggests, the most studies on organizational change in sports under external pressures suggested that only in rare cases sport organizations escaped isomorphic trends and demonstrated some variations in structures. For example, the most recent and relevant studies of Augestad et al

(2006), Fahlen (2006), and Skille (2011) suggest that due to the integration of sports into the Olympic movement and into the international structures of sport development institutional fields of sport have been increasingly exposed to coercive and normative isomorphism and displayed many organizational similarities.

However, the findings of this research indicate that structural arrangements in the free sports concerned have evolved in a significantly different way in comparison to those in mainstream sports. One might have expected that professionalization and commercialization would have neglected cultural features of free sports, so the process that is similar to "civilization" in the humanist perspective of culture and is thought to establish modern competitive sport (Girginov, 2010, p.400) would have occurred and would have been reflected in bureaucratization and formalization of international sport structures. Yet it happened only to a certain degree despite coercive and normative forces entering the organizational fields of three sports concerned. According to institutional theorists DiMaggio and Powell (1983), normative pressures originate from professionalization of managing organizations, which was the case of all three sports and thus arrival of professional managers and more "professional" structures from mainstream sports could have been expected. As the case of Rugby Football Union suggests (O'Brien and Slack, 2004a, b), coercive pressures are associated with the most powerful organizations in field and their expectations of certain organizational structures. The research findings indicate that the IOC and the X-Games have been the most influential organizations within the fields of sport of climbing, skateboarding, and snowboarding. The IOC has some strict criteria regarding structure of sports, so coercive pressures for bureaucratization associated with the Olympic recognition of governing bodies have been strong on the IFSC and on NSOs of climbing and snowboarding in a similar way as found out earlier by Augestad et al. (2006) and Skille (2011). Conversely, the X-Games have not been the source of coercive pressures for any other organizational actors in skateboarding or snowboarding, as they do not interfere with organization of sport and are focused on staging the competition only.

‘

Indeed, the current structure of international snowboarding, for example, has changed completely over the past twenty years due to commercialization of the sport and its inclusion into the Olympic Games. However, it might have been expected that snowboarding would become largely institutionalized and bureaucratized by now. On the contrary, the evidence demonstrates that in many cases snowboarding actors did not follow coercive and normative isomorphic

scripts and responded to their environmental pressures in creative ways, for example, by establishing the whole new international competition platform (TTR Pro Snowboarding) instead of accepting and following the IOC-prescribed competition series, which is the FIS snowboarding tour. Overall, in terms of structural change on an international macro-level, the snowboarding case provides support to a small number of studies on national (Kikulis et al, 1995c; Amis et al, 2004) and micro-levels (Fahlen, 2006) by demonstrating the variation in organizational responses and by the very fact that the whole organization of international competitive snowboarding has not come down to one ultimate international sport organization managing the whole sport but is represented by several independent and equally important actors, such as the TTR, the FIS, and the X-Games.

Conversely, international sport climbing has one ultimate international governing body, which all the other actors in this sport relate to. The IFSC has followed the IOC criteria as all the governing bodies of Olympic mainstream sports do. However, despite following these coercive isomorphic processes by fulfilling the IOC criteria concerning the governance of the sport, the IFSC still demonstrated some variation in change as it was not much bureaucratized and remained a very small organization driven by former climbing athletes rather than professional managers. Thus, it can be concluded that contrary to most studies on structural changes in sport organizations of mainstream sports (Kikulis et al, 1992; Kikulis et al., 1995b; Amis et al, 2004; Skille, 2011), institutionalization of international sport climbing within the IFSC did not lead to substantial bureaucratization of the sports and the development of Mintzberg's (1979) professional bureaucracy within the governing body.

As sport is defined as institutionalized activity, there are organizations in every sport that are responsible for various territories and aspects of sport. Regarding global organization of sports, in every mainstream sport there is a single international governing body in charge of organization and development of sport, which usually exists as an association of national governing bodies, for example, the International Association of Athletics Federations (the IAAF). Thus, a supposition of this research project before it started was that at some stage of a specific free sport's evolution a leading international governing body would emerge. Most evidently though, both international competitive skateboarding and international competitive snowboarding have never had one leading international organization, which would be responsible for the governance of the whole sport and which all the other respective sport organizations would relate to. It was

identified that in both sports there were several international governing organizations in control of specific parts and segments of their sports. Major international snowboarding and skateboarding organizations, such as the TTR Snowboarding and the ISF, are structured as networks. Consequently, they have been institutionalized to a very limited extent and have remained relatively informal and hardly bureaucratized. In terms of Mintzberg's (1979) organizational theory, network is an organizational "adhocracy" with "the symbiotic relationship between the extreme athletes and spectators, managers of sport broadcasting, and managers of corporate sponsorships for sporting events" (Mawson 2002, p.257). Therefore, network, which is an unusual organizational design for international sports, was found to be a typical structure in skateboarding and snowboarding that has remained strongly presented even under the environmental pressures.

As highlighted in the literature review, the study of Steen-Johnsen (2008) also found the dominance of network structures on the national level (Norwegian snowboarding) that had a lack of hierarchy of authority but a high degree interactivity and informality. Having a low level of formalization, networks challenge traditional ways of sport organization in line with the values and expectation of the snowboarding community. Back to the history of organization of free sports overviewed in the introduction, the findings on network structures are in line with a lack of institutionalization and hierarchy within governing bodies—the features that have been traditionally popular in free sports. Thus, apart from acknowledgement of a network as a unique structural feature typical for free sports, a link to cultural legitimacy is apparent as existence of network structures has cultural support of athletes and other actors of organizational field as this research and the study of Steen-Johnsen (2008) demonstrate.

Therefore, network as an organizing form represents a traditional and culturally legitimate structure for free sports and, to a certain degree, may be considered as part of free sports' organizational logics. However, there is a major implication of the existence of such an organizational tradition for various actors involved in organizational field in sport: media, spectators, and sponsors. As there is a lack of central authority in sports such as skateboarding and snowboarding, it is not clear what governing body and competition is the most important and influential. For instance, because of the existence of several international governing bodies and competitions in skateboarding, which are not related to each other, it is hardly possible to identify what the ultimate world championship in this sport is and, consequently, who the world champion or the

world number one is. This is not the case for most mainstream sport, such as football or swimming. Consequently, such an unclear and unconventional sport organizational setup is likely to affect potential interest of media, spectators, and sponsors in a negative way.

8.1.2. Evolution of values in free sports

Conclusions of studies focused on professionalization of sport organizations (Greenwood and Hinings, 1988; Skinner et al, 1999) suggest that it is not only change of organizational structures that explains organizational evolution of sports. As summarized by Girginov and Sandanski (2008, p.27), structural "archetypes are concerned with large-scale, frame-breaking change and reflect a single interpretive scheme", a presupposed transition, a movement from one state to another, which is only possible in "ideal types" of economic systems. However,

> … organizational structures are not neutral value free instruments of task accomplishment but rather they are reflexive expressions of intentions, aspirations and meanings that embodied in the dominant values and beliefs found in an organization. Values and beliefs give meaning and substance to organizational structures.
>
> Greenwood and Hinings (1988, p. 295)

Kikulis (2000) also acknowledged the limitations of an approach to studying organizational evolution through movement from one archetype to another and suggested including cultural, political, and economic environments.

As identified through cross-case analysis, the existence of two "versions" of sport—a "free" one and a competitive one—has been a distinctive feature in common between all three case studies concerned. These two versions of sport are underpinned by the two respective sets of values of sports: traditional values of free sports (such as creativity, self-expression, and reluctance to follow strict regulations) and more recent competitive sport values (such as the importance of winning competitions and representing the country). Growth of competitions in free sports, which were initially created as an opposition to traditional competitive sports, led to significant changes in values. These changes were identified as a major indicator of how culturally different the two "versions" of each of three sports have become, as these sports have gone through the periods of popularization, commercialization, and professionalization over last three decades.

As discussed in the literature review and methodology chapters, values of sport are considered as an approximation of culture of sport. Therefore, in line with the views of Deal and Kennedy (1982), Abrahamson and Fombrun (1994) and Danisman et al (2006), the values of organizations and actors in free sports can be assessed from either integration view or differentiation view of culture. In this respect, there is barely any evidence found in support of an integration view of culture, as major differences exist in values of organizations and actors in each of three sports in the focus of this study. Even in sport climbing, where the most traditional values have been replaced by competitive values, there is a mosaic of subcultures across organizational field, so the culture is not monolithic. In skateboarding and snowboarding, the heterogeneity of cultures and subcultures is even more visible. To compare the studied free sports with the case of traditional sports such as rugby, it can be highlighted that while the institutional logics of the whole organizational field of Rugby Football Union was completely shifted from amateur logics to professional ones on all levels including grassroots (Skinner et al, 1999; O'Brien and Slack, 2003), traditional values of free sports have not been deinstitutionalized in either of three discussed sports.

The findings of case studies largely support the differentiation view of culture, as both traditional and competitive values are represented among key organizations and individuals. How dominant they are is defined by individual characteristics of particular sports and its actors. For example, traditional values have remained dominant in skateboarding, while competitive values emerged alongside them and have recently grown. Conversely, in sport climbing only some traditional values have remained but still they have not been completely replaced by competitive logics. The findings from the case of competitive snowboarding and skateboarding are also completely in line with the differentiation perspective in the way it was applied by Danisman et al (2006), because most traditional values of the field have been preserved while after some period of resistance new commercial logics have been accepted as beneficial to the organizational field. The acceptance of these new commercial logics has been cemented by the integration of these sports into international events, such as the X-Games and the Olympic Games, and their global media broadcasting, which played the role of cultural intermediaries likewise previously identified in studies of Southall et al (2008) and O'Brien and Slack (2004a, b).

Nevertheless, the key finding of this thesis with regard to cultural aspects of organization of free sports is that most traditional values of sports, especially in skateboarding and snowboarding, have remained strong and respected, even though it was expected that growing commercializa-

tion and professionalization of sports would deny these traditional values in favour of more recently adopted competitive and institutional values. The differences between the original values and the new values in competitive sports have been resolved in a variety of ways: some dominant values (such as creativity in skateboarding) have been enhanced, some of the values (such as being close to nature – in climbing) have been countered, and some other (for example, reluctance to follow strict regulations in snowboarding) remain intact while the new values (such as the importance of winning competitions and building competitive careers) have entered the organizational fields. Consequently, these processes created some major implications for governing organizations of the sports concerned. In order to benefit from coexistence of different logics in a similar way as organizations in studies of Southall et al (2008), Southall and Nagel (2008), and Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) did, organizations in free sports needed to make structural changes and employ strategies that would allow them to maintain some original values (and thus maintain its cultural legitimacy) but also adopt the new ones. For example, in skateboarding the ISF has structured itself in order to be eligible for potential IOC recognition, while it has also brought on board the most respected people in skateboarding, such as Tony Hawk and partnered with one of the best competition platforms, Street League Skateboarding, that allowed the ISF to be both culturally legitimate and commercially focused.

As discussed in the literature review, a differentiation view of culture underpins the concept of institutional pluralism, which suggests that not only organizations and actors in institutional fields can embody multiple logics in spite of institutional pressures (Danisman et al, 2006; Kraatz and Block, 2008), but also it is possible for several logics to co-exist within a single organization (Skirstad and Chelladurai, 2011). The findings of this research largely support these ideas of institutional pluralism, because they were evident in organizational responses of international organization in free sports. As highlighted above, it was found that the ISF, the international skateboarding governing body, was influenced by several competing logics: sport competitive logics, commercial logics, and traditional free sports non-competitive logics. Likewise, the IFSC, the international climbing organization, has gone through some institutionalization in order to be recognized by the IOC, but on the other hand it has remained very athlete-driven in its decision making, so it has escaped the “iron cage” and been influenced by multiple logics. To summarize, from the cultural perspective, this study of three free sports does not provide any significant support to the phenomenon of organizational isomorphism, which has been evident in the processes of uniform adoption of dominant logics in several mainstream sport studies by O’Brien and Slack (2003, 2004a, b), Skille (2004a), Augestad et al. (2006), and Skille (2011). There are sig-

nificant differences in the values of actors across each free sport, which means sport governing organizations do not become uniform. Instead, they have remained heterogeneous and adopted multiple logics, which supports the institutional pluralism perspective of Danisman et.al. (2006), Kraatz and Block (2008), and Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011).

8.1.3. Organizational legitimacy in free sports

As this research considers institutional fields of three sports in an international perspective, there is no surprise that the issue of legitimacy of specific sport organizations in relation to various actors and to the whole of sports has appeared to be central throughout this research. In the next sections, different aspects of legitimacy are discussed with reference to new institutional theory.

8.1.3.1. Regulatory legitimacy

The development of free sports has largely coincided with the rise of the Olympic movement. The IOC organizes the Olympic Games and acts as "the supreme authority of the Olympic Movement" (IOC, 2015). While the IOC is not an ultimate sport authority in legal terms, the Olympic Games are the biggest global event platform for sports, so the IOC is arguably the most influential international sport organization. The IOC has been recognized by state, society, and media as the sport legitimacy source, because it grants its recognition to sports thus legitimizing them. Sports recognized (or those that seek to be recognized) by the IOC have to be governed by one international sport organization, which all the other organizations relate to.

In contrast, due to the history and culture of informal network organizational arrangements in free sports, regulatory legitimacy of organizations in free sports has been a concept contested by athletes and organizations. Out of three sports of focus of this research, only international sport climbing is regulated as a hierarchical pyramid as the IFSC has the IOC recognition with no other major international sport organizations in field. However, international competitive skateboarding and competitive snowboarding have functioned as networks of various organizations, so there is no one organization that has ultimate control and authority over the whole sport. Most

notably, there is a popular opinion among a significant number of participants in amateur skateboarding that skateboarding is not a sport and does not need to be formally legitimized as a sport. In fact, one of the major findings of this research is that a regulatory authority over international competitive skateboarding is not clear as there are several international governing bodies claiming to represent it, but the IOC has not explicitly indicated whether any of those are legitimate in terms of the Olympic movement.

As long as regulatory legitimacy of international governing bodies in free sports is concerned, there are some fundamental questions derived from case study analysis:

1. Are there any relationships between evident commercialization of free sports and their legitimization?
2. Is there a need for a single international organization in these free sports that would have ultimate authority over the others?
3. Does the IOC have a right to simply appoint a single organization of its choice, which would manage a certain sport within the Olympic movement?
4. What criteria should be used by the IOC when choosing among several organizations claiming an international authority over specific sports?

There are no straightforward answers to any of these questions as they relate to wider issues of organization of global sport and its role in society. However, some considerations could be provided based on this research analysis.

Regarding the first question, as the cross-case study of three free sports indicates, there has been a link between commercialization of sport and its legitimization. An increasing popularity of international competitions in climbing, snowboarding, and skateboarding has facilitated a growing public acceptance of them as sports. The shift in all three sports can be described as a change from a participant-centred activity to a media-centred sport and is similar to organizational change in international rugby described by O'Brien and Slack (1999, 2003, 2004a, 2004b), Dunning (1999, 2005) and Skinner et al (1999). As evident from the timeline of organizational evolution of all three sports, it has been driven by several key developments: emergence of governing bodies, the establishment of X-Games, and relationships of sports with the Olympic movement. In particular, as analysis of evidence demonstrates, there is a belief among many athletes and officials that any sport should strive to become part of the Olympic movement as

this would legitimize sports. In other words, the widespread assumption is that sport is considered "proper" if it is recognized by the IOC and has a recognized international federation.

On the other hand, even though climbing, snowboarding, and skateboarding were created as non-commercial participatory activities, as they progressed commercialism has been reasonably accepted and has played an important role for most of the history of these sports. Over the last twenty years, various institutional actors, such as sponsors, media companies, equipment manufacturers, the IOC, and international sport governing bodies (not necessarily having association with sports of snowboarding, skateboarding, and climbing before) have recognized commercial opportunities associated with legitimization of these popular free sports and their inclusion into the Olympic Games. For example, there have been numerous suggestions that the IOC and the Olympic sponsors would be interested in inclusion of competitive skateboarding into the Olympics due to this sport's popularity among youth in North America and associated marketing and commercial potential. Thus, based on analysis of collected data and suggestions by previous researchers (Donnelly, 1993; Gray, 1992; Beal, 1995), it can be pointed out that legitimization of free sports has been supported and facilitated by commercialization as various actors' commercial interests have benefited from legitimization of sports. However, it must be noted that this suggestion does not mean that commercialization of sport activities always leads to legitimization of sports. Neither must it be assumed that in every free sport commercial interests act as major driver for legitimization. Indeed, there are other forces that might facilitate legitimization of sports, such as political agendas and social and media pressures. However, as this thesis highlights, becoming a legitimate Olympic sport has been widely assumed as a natural way of development for any sport activity rather than a rationalized necessity. This assumption has been arguably the main driver for legitimization of free sports.

The second question echoes the issue of "who owns the sport," which many conflicts in modern sports revolve around (Washington and Patterson, 2011, p.10) and which has caused great debate and rifts with regards to three considered free sports. For example, in sport climbing there has always been a single international federation for the entire history of its organized existence. On the other hand, snowboarding and skateboarding case studies do not provide an obvious justification for the necessity of a single authority in the sports as the "ownership" of these fields has not been established over several decades of organizational evolution. Therefore, it might be argued that in these sports there has been no need for a single regulatory authority to be es-

tablished. An alternative explanation might be that comprehensive regulatory legitimacy in free sports cannot be established without a consideration of cultural legitimacy. The case of international snowboarding provides strong evidence in support of this hypothesis as the FIS has not been able to obtain control over the whole international competitive snowboarding. This skiing organization has the regulatory legitimacy over Olympic snowboarding, but this has not been underpinned by cultural legitimacy.

A connecting topic that has been of great debate within this research project is the regulatory legitimacy of international federations of other sports to govern specific free sports, or in other words, to serve as "umbrella" federations for the Olympic movement. Integrating several sports under an umbrella of one governing body has benefits, such as reduction of administrative costs and synergy of resources. Examples of such umbrella relationships include climbing organized by the mountaineering federation (until 2006), snowboarding organized by ski federation (since 1997), and two federations (cycling and roller skating) interested in organizing skateboarding. However, this research project reveals serious concerns about the relevance of umbrella organizations to the free sports concerned. Among three sports examined, there have not been any umbrella organizational relationships that can be considered a success both for the organization and for the free sport. It is evident that there have been countless tensions between the FIS and snowboarding athletes. When the UIAA ceased its authority over sport climbing, this organization released a statement suggesting that an umbrella federation is of great benefit but only if it bridges sports that are culturally connected. So it can be suggested that since free sports have strong traditional cultures, their alliances with mainstream sports cannot benefit from each other due to the cultural differences, so they either split or face resistance issues. This might have been the reason for the UCI organizational behaviour when handling the IOC requests regarding skateboarding. It is likely that one of reasons that the UCI rejected an idea to remove some existing cycling disciplines in the Olympic program in order to allow skateboarding in was that skateboarding represented a completely different cultural community.

Consequently, there is an idea, which was discussed by a few interviewees in this research, to "bridge" sports based on cultural similarities rather than technical ones. This idea is innovative, because the IOC decision-making on governance of Olympic sports has never been driven by cultural considerations.

> What we have challenged the IOC on is to think differently when it comes to new action sport. You can't expect to have the same traditional sports model forever. Cause now every time when the new sports is introduced through the old federation, this would kind of kill the sport. And you kill the sport cultural values and everything. So we really would like to see the IOC creating some kind of facility, which makes it possible to have a kind of international action sport body. This should care about all the action sports instead of pushing them through all the traditional sports.
>
> Cecilia Flatum, Vice-President of the World Snowboarding Federation, Board Member of Norwegian Snowboard Federation (2013, interview)

If this idea is even partially realized by the IOC, it would be a completely new practice in organization of international sports. It has a potential to overcome negative issues that have recently surrounded the umbrella governance models. However, until there is a least one example of such culture-driven multisport federation, it is not clear what implications it might have for international sport structures.

The third question is a reflection of a wider discussion (Greenwood, 2008) on how legitimate the source of regulatory legitimacy is itself. Indeed, the IOC has every right to make decisions on all aspects of the Olympic movement as it is what the IOC has an ultimate authority over. However, as the role of the Olympic movement in international sport has been immense, the effects of the IOC decisions for many sports, especially those of smaller scale, go far beyond the Olympic movement. As highlighted throughout the case of international snowboarding, the appointment of the FIS as international governing body for snowboarding has had consequences for the whole international sport of snowboarding, such as the bankruptcy of the other global snowboarding organization and the protest among the athletes. Overall, currently it seems that the IOC has realized than there might be significant effects of the Olympic inclusion of sports beyond the Olympic movement itself. Thus, the IOC has been more cautious about exercising its power over sports and governing bodies. For example, there has been no straight-forward organizational solution proposed for Olympic skateboarding yet as all communication stays behind the scenes between the IOC and several governing bodies.

Finally, concerning the fourth question, currently there are no formal criteria, including the IOC ones, which would define what sports can go under one organizational umbrella, apart from an

assumption that sports must have something in common. It can be assumed that the thinking behind "bridging" snowboarding and skiing was that both of these sports involved sliding on snow. Likewise, reports in media suggested that the UCI saw skateboarding as a wheel-based sport, which made it similar to cycling and thus considered proposing it to the IOC. Therefore, in terms of regulatory legitimacy, it is likely that technical characteristics of the sports has so far determined possibility of "bridging" them under an umbrella of one institution.

However, examples of "umbrella" governance in free sports discussed within this thesis reveal that as a result of introduction of such governance models some wider (and probably unexpected) consequences have arisen, such as a rift between the cultures of different sports (sport climbing and mountaineering), resistance to accept structures in skateboarding, boycotting of competitions by some of the best athletes in snowboarding, and even a bankruptcy of an international governing body (the International Snowboard Federation). Therefore, it can be suggested that legitimization of free sports based only on their technical characteristics and existing conventional regulatory frameworks is a questionable practice. Overall, the evidence from case studies suggests that organizational evolution of free sports has been very much connected to the cultural legitimacy of institutional developments and governing organizations. For instance, skateboarding has not been legitimized yet because the organization accepted by some athletes, the ISF, has no regulatory power, and on the other hand, organizations considered by the IOC (the UCI and the FIRS) have no cultural legitimacy in skateboarding. The next section will attempt to explain organizational evolution of free sports with the use of the concept of cultural legitimacy.

8.1.3.2. Cultural legitimacy

Cultural legitimacy is the degree of cultural support for an organization within an institutional field (Meyer and Scott, 1983). The notion of cultural legitimacy of organizations has been one of the core insights of new institutional theory, so considering institutionalization processes of the last few decades and the role of culture in free sports the perspective of cultural legitimacy can be extremely helpful when analyzing the evolution of these sports. Regarding the sources of cultural legitimacy, this research project focuses on two of them:

- Institutional logics
- Representation of participants of the activity in organization

As discussed in the literature review, institutional logics in sport are a manifestation of macro-culture of sport's institutional field. According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008, p.108), institutional logics are "more than strategies or logics of action as they are sources of legitimacy and provide a sense of order and ontological security" (Giddens, 1984; Seo and Creed, 2002). As several studies of different sports demonstrated (Southall and Nagel, 2008; Peachey and Bruening, 2011; Skirstad and Chelladurai, 2011), a field's dominant institutional logic is usually adopted as taken-for-granted beliefs and values.

Nonetheless, the findings of this research on free sports indicated the absence of dominant logics in any of three sports and significant variations in the logics of organizational actors across these free sports, so the fields have remained heterogeneous. Ultimately, there is a co-existence of three major logics across institutional fields of these sports. These different logics have derived from three biggest cultural influences on free sports:

- traditional culture of free sports based on creativity, self-expression, and loose organizational arrangements;
- relatively recently adopted competitive sport culture that emphasizes winning and Olympic values;
- commercial logics, which have been to a substantial degree accepted across free sports for decades.

For example, in snowboarding the strategies of leading organizations are underpinned by these different logics: while the FIS is guided by traditional Olympic sport values, the TTR Pro Snowboarding is largely built on free sport culture. There are also the X-Games, which are mainly driven by commercial logics. Having said that, it has to be pointed out that most organizations have adopted multiple logics in order to fulfil different organizational targets, similarly to sport club analyzed by Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011). For instance, the International Snowboard Federation and the TTR Pro Snowboarding—organizations that emphasized traditional free sports logics—had also adopted competitive logics as it has been largely accepted across the field.

However, the findings of cross-case analysis suggest that traditional culture of free sports has remained the main criterion of cultural legitimacy for international sport organizations. Cultural legitimacy for governing organizations in free sports has been visible through the extent by which the organizations have been supported by athletes and communities of respective sports. For instance, the FIS has been perceived by snowboarding organizations as just a technical agent of the IOC and has not had any substantial connection to snowboarding athletes and community. This organization has completely ignored the traditional culture of snowboarding and voice of the athletes, so it has no cultural legitimacy. In order to remain credible within their respective communities, it is necessary for international sport organizations to be more than conventional mainstream sport governing bodies, to be underpinned by traditional free sport culture and to act in line with values and trends of sport communities. In this perspective, the findings of this thesis confirm the findings of Steen–Johnsen (2008), who suggested that network structures in national snowboarding serve an important legitimizing function. In other words, network structures of international organizations of competitive skateboarding and snowboarding reflect the need for governing organizations in these sports to enhance culturally legitimacy within their communities.

The second facet of cultural legitimacy, which is key to application of this concept to the context of free sports, is representation of participants of the activity in sport governing organizations. As highlighted in the introduction, historically the role of athletes in organization of free sports has been primary. This research evidence also suggests that organization of skateboarding, climbing, and snowboarding was mostly shaped by participants of those sports, who were "zealots," those with an avid interest in these sports and their organization. Therefore, athlete representation in sport organizations has its derivation in cultural legitimacy and in the social factors that influence institutional behaviour. This means athletes have had a collective authority over cultural legitimization of these three sports.

The cross-case analysis of athletes representation in international organizations of competitive skateboarding, competitive snowboarding, and sport climbing reveals a different degree of representation: from a virtual absence of snowboarding athletes within the FIS to a very high representation of climbing athletes in the IFSC, which is effectively athletes-driven. However, a major common feature between these sports is athletes' reluctance to take an active part in decision-making. In other words, whether athletes are represented in governing bodies or not, there is

still an evident lack of their participation in decision-making and organizational issues. Accordingly, there are two extremes of organizational legitimacy in three considered sports: climbing athletes are very empowered but reluctant to participate in decision-making, and on the other hand, there are snowboarding athletes who would love to raise some organizational issues but are not authorised to participate in decision-making within the organization that has a regulatory legitimacy. The lack of athletes' organizational contribution can be explained by their unwillingness to accept governance structures, which derives from traditional values of being anti-establishment and not willing to institutionalize with governing bodies. Throughout this study there were several examples of very influential international athletes, such as David Lama in climbing or Terje Haakonsen in snowboarding, who deliberately chose to participate in alternative non-competitive activities, such rock climbing challenges or freeride snowboarding and movie filming as they were unwilling to be part of organized competitive versions of respective sports governed by formal institutions. Thus, the fact that all three sports have struggled with athletes' participation in decision making can be explained by the prominence of traditional anti-establishment values and the existence of more traditional non-competitive ways of doing the same activities, which are available for athletes to switch to.

However, such an attitude of athletes presumably increases the risk of others making decisions on their behalf. That is why, for example, there has been a lot of discussion on whether skateboarding is at risk to follow snowboarding's path, as a governing body of another sport, such as cycling or roller blading, may be sanctioned by the IOC to take over skateboarding. A close connection between snowboarding and skateboarding has been evident in how Influential leaders of competitive skateboarding have learnt from snowboarding's Olympic journey and initiated a "protective" structural change by creating the ISF, the governing body intended to protect skateboarding values should this sport enter the Olympics. From a theoretical perspective, these actions highlight the role of information exchange between organizations facing uncertainty in institutional fields, which was earlier identified by Cousens and Slack (2005) and Southall et al (2008). Speaking in Kraatz's (1998, p. 625) terms, in their social learning of adaptive responses, skateboarding organisations "vicariously evaluate the outcomes [snowboarding] peers have obtained and benefit from the lessons they have learned."

8.1.3.3. Interrelation between regulatory legitimacy and cultural legitimacy.

One of the key questions, which this research project attempts to address, is how cultural legitimacy in free sports corresponds to regulatory legitimacy within the global sport governance frameworks. It has been critical for the survival of international sport organizations in snowboarding, skateboarding, and climbing to establish cultural legitimacy, because the regulatory legitimacy within their institutional fields has been questioned or has not yet been established. For example, the regulatory legitimacy in international skateboarding has not been determined to date as there are several organizations claiming authority over global skateboarding, but none of them have had skateboarding recognized as a sport by the IOC. In contrast, the regulatory legitimacy over Olympic snowboarding was established two decades ago. However, as the findings of case study demonstrate, the organization that has the regulatory legitimacy (the FIS) has almost no cultural legitimacy, and there has been much concern and protest from snowboarders over the years. Instead, there are institutions, such as the TTR Snowboarding and the X-Games, which have substantial cultural support from professional competitive snowboarders but do not have any formal regulatory legitimacy within global sports.

The relationships between these two concepts have been manifested through the attitude of top athletes in these sports towards participation into the Olympic Games. Although it is understood that relationships between cultural and regulatory legitimacies are more complex than simply the athletes' attitudes to the Olympic Games, still these views indicate the degree of cultural legitimacy of the Olympic movement within free sports. Overall, the majority of athletes in competitive snowboarding, sport climbing, and competitive skateboarding want to participate in the Olympics. Moreover, elite athletes in snowboarding that has been the Olympic sport for past 17 years prioritize the Olympic Games as the event they want to be qualified for and win.

However these findings do not mean that the Olympic movement has been culturally accepted by competitive snowboarders, skateboarders, and climbers. Athletes of all three sports indicate their willingness and desire to participate in the Olympics, and almost all of them point out that there are tangible benefits of participation in the Olympic Games, both for the athletes' careers and the development of the sports in general. Having said that, most snowboarding athletes specifically highlighted that being a vehicle for popularization of the sport among general audi-

ence, the Olympic Games have always lacked credibility within snowboarding community and have often been at odds with the snowboarding culture throughout last two decades. The bottom line is that for skateboarding and snowboarding communities the IOC has dramatically less cultural legitimacy than other institutions, such as the TTR Snowboarding and the X-Games. Sport climbing has been different in this regard. As its values have significantly changed, it has become closer to the Olympic movement in a cultural sense. To summarize, the cultural legitimacy of the Olympic movement is believed to be much higher within sport climbing community than in competitive skateboarding and snowboarding. Over the two decades of the Olympic journey, snowboarding athletes have accepted a degree of regulatory legitimacy within the Olympic movement but have barely acknowledged its cultural legitimacy over snowboarding.

As cultural legitimacy reflects a degree of cultural support for organizations, it is also manifested in resistance towards governing organizations. In other words, when the cultural legitimacy of organization is significantly lower than its regulatory legitimacy, then resistance of sport participants towards this organization is likely to occur. The cross case study connects resistance in free sports back to the very fact of introduction of the competitive element to activities that were created in opposition to mainstream sports and identifies three main issues that contributed to a lack of cultural legitimacy of governing organizations in free sports:

- hierarchical mainstream sport organizations entering the institutional fields of free sports, where network organizational structures have been a common form of organization;
- cultural gap between the traditional values of climbing, skateboarding and snowboarding with the modern values of the competitive versions of these respective sports;
- lack of communication of mainstream governing bodies with free sports athletes, organizations and communities.

As far as the sources of cultural legitimacy are concerned, the research findings suggest that in snowboarding there has been a strong resistance of athletes towards a specific organization, the FIS, a hierarchical and bureaucratic international sport federation that has governed Olympic snowboarding but largely ignored the voice of athletes. There have been also strong resistance issues among the skateboarding community, but it was directed towards the whole concept of sport governance rather than towards specific organizations. Skateboarders have campaigned

against the idea of skateboarding joining the Olympic movement and corresponding requirements of governance of the sport by a single international organization. However, whilst isomorphic pressures in international snowboarding and skateboarding have encountered a strong resistance, similar trends in international sport climbing have been accepted by most participants and organizations. To summarize, the contrast between cultural legitimacy and regulatory legitimacy, which was mainly associated with institutional isomorphism of mainstream sport organizations, is central to understanding of organizational evolution of free sports. This section attempted to discuss how cultural accounts could provide explanations for existence, functioning, and jurisdiction of organizations within the institutional fields of free sports.

8.2. Resource-dependence view on institutional fields of free sports.

As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) argue, resource dependence is directly linked with power because organizations depend on each other's access to vital resources and seek to obtain control over them. In line with this view, the relationships of power and mutual dependencies have been developed between organizations in respective institutional fields of international skateboarding, snowboarding, and climbing over the last three decades. For instance, in competitive snowboarding multiple relationships between organizations have been created, so this thesis converges with Rails (2011) findings of a high-density network structure in international snowboarding. In particular, the map of actors in snowboarding demonstrates that TTR Pro Snowboarding is linked with almost all significant institutions in field, either officially or informally. As the case studies also outline, not only governing bodies but also various other organizational actors, such as global sport event organizations (e.g. the X-Games) and professional sport tour providers (e.g. Dew Tour, Street League Skateboarding) have been involved in power imbalances and mutual dependencies in the sports concerned.

The resource-dependence thinking can explain some decisions made and strategies employed by international sport federations, including developing certain relationships with the IOC, creating power/dependence relationships with other sport organizations, and establishing control over sports concerned. One of the most evident examples is the establishment and activities of the International Skateboarding Federation (ISF). The very fact of existence of this organization is

down to the IOC perceived interest in skateboarding as the ISF was established with the primary objective to "protect skateboarding" and has since been operating the strategy aimed at strengthening its control over international skateboarding. As the key pillar of this strategy, the ISF has built mutually beneficial relationships with all the key organizations in the institutional field of international skateboarding: the UCI, the WCS, the US Skateboarding, the Street League, and the X-Games. Backed by influential people of skateboarding, such as Tony Hawk, the ISF has maintained its autonomy from the IOC and an effective power over the international skateboarding network. However, in order to secure necessary resources for its existence without compromising its autonomy from the IOC, the ISF had to enter into resource motivated relationships with the biggest commercial actors in skateboarding, such as board producers, media companies, and skateboarding facilities, which are represented on the ISF board. Relationships between these organizations can be seen as mutually dependent as the ISF depends on funding from commercial entities and also their support in terms of protecting skateboarding values, while these businesses depend on the ISF in terms of preferential access to new international markets and major international skateboarding events.

Another example of application of resource dependence/power relationships to free sports is the TTR Snowboarding. This organization was created as an alternative to the FIS, which has been in charge of the Olympic snowboarding and thus has had substantial resources and power in institutional field of snowboarding. In turn, the TTR has never had an access to the Olympic resources, so its strategy has been focused on running its own snowboarding tour. This TTR Snowboarding Tour has become a successful commercial initiative. As a result of this success, TTR snowboarding has effectively created the resources for itself and ensured its autonomy from the IOC and survival in organizational field, which was crucial since the ISF, the predecessor of the TTR, went bust largely due to the FIS arrival. Whilst there have been barely any power/dependence relationships between the IOC and the TTR Snowboarding, in order to create and develop a completely new event platform in international elite snowboarding, the TTR opted to build power/dependence relationships with other organizations, such as the WSF and the X-Games. Most notably, the TTR effectively merged with the WSF in order to have a comprehensive sport development framework that covers all levels from grassroots to elite sport. In terms of dependency and power, the TTR provides some funding to development of grassroots via the WSF and obtains a significant degree of organizational control over it. In addition, the TTR entered into an agreement with the X-Games. This agreement has not affected the power balance between these leading event organizations in snowboarding but facilitated a mutually beneficial

cooperation. Major benefits of this cooperation are synchronization of event calendars and establishment of a joint international ranking system for professional snowboarders. From a theoretical point of view (Davis and Cobb, 2010), by forming these strategical alliances with exchange partners, the TTR attempted to minimize uncertainty and dependence and maximize its autonomy. Both these alliances have strengthened the credibility of the TTR Snowboarding as an international snowboarding organization that consolidates the sport. Supported by the fact that snowboarding athletes have valued the TTR organization of snowboarding much more than the FIS organization, since recently, the TTR snowboarding has started building some informal relationships with the IOC. This can be seen as a build-up for potential alliance with the major source of constraint—the IOC—and the first step to claim governance over Olympic snowboarding in the future. Overall, it derives from the data that over the last decade the TTR strategy of entering into alliances with key international snowboarding actors has facilitated the growth of this organization's political weight in field and created an opportunity to engage in debates with the IOC about the structure of the sport and potentially challenge the power of the FIS.

To summarize, the first fifteen years of the twenty first century saw the emergence and rise of international sport organizations in skateboarding (the ISF) and snowboarding (the TTR), which was commercially successful and established power/dependency relationships with the key actors in their sports. However, they remained independent from the IOC as they have operated without any access to resources associated with Olympic integration of snowboarding and skateboarding, which are the biggest resources potentially available in these sports. Even facing constraints and uncertainty over the flow of the needed resources from the environment, quite uniquely in terms of resource-dependence theory, these organizations have not sought to gain an access to the Olympic resources. Instead, they employed strategies focused on alternative resources, coming specifically from the major commercial entities in the skateboarding industry, alternative event tour snowboarding, and some key alliances in both sports. Indeed, these relationships were also motivated by resources, so there are various mutual dependencies and power imbalances that they are based on.

As highlighted in the cross-case study review, organizational behaviour and strategy of the IFSC, the international governing body of sport climbing, has been significantly different from the governing bodies in snowboarding and skateboarding. As sport climbing has recently been much less commercially attractive than snowboarding or skateboarding, there have been very little

resources available for the IFSC in comparison to the TTR Snowboarding or the ISF. This explains why the IFSC has lately had to push for sport climbing to enter the Olympic Games, while the IOC "pulled" snowboarding and skateboarding into the programme. Although in official statements the climbing governing bodies have never mentioned the resources as one of the major factors contributing to the sport climbing's push for the Olympics, in the interviews the IFSC officials referred to the resources needed for development of the sport across the nations and explained the tangible benefits of being an Olympic sport for the national federations. As can be summarized from the quotes, the IFSC has been largely driven by the interests of national climbing governing bodies because the Olympic status of a sport heavily increases chances of its funding by national sport agencies and sponsors and facilitates cooperation and development opportunities, for example, integration of climbing walls into existing multisport facilities or inclusion of climbing in school curriculum.

As already highlighted, due to a relatively limited commercial appeal of sport climbing, its further development across the globe is very dependent on the resources provided within the Olympic movement, so the IFSC has pro-actively sought access to them. In contrast to the TTR Snowboarding and the ISF, which established supply of resources alternative to the Olympic ones, the IFSC traded its autonomy to some extent. In order for sport climbing to be officially considered by the IOC the IFSC allowed the IOC to obtain a degree of power. In terms of resource-dependence theory, this IFSC organizational behaviour can be characterized as co-optation of constraint (Selznick, 1949). First, the IOC provided the IFSC with its recognition as an official governing body for sport climbing. This established initial power/dependency relationships between these two organizations as the IFSC had to fulfil the IOC criteria, adopt the Olympic values, and follow specific regulations to bid for the Olympic Games. Furthermore, the feedback on the proposal to have one combined climbing discipline for the Olympics makes one think that IOC exercised even more power over the IFSC. Irrelevant of the fact that sport climbing was not short-listed for 2020 Olympics, the IOC was accused by several interviewees of trying to influence the climbing sport regulations and, by doing this, to change traditions of the sport in order to meet their own interests and criteria, such as limiting the number of disciplines and athletes and staff at the Olympic Games. There is not enough evidence to suggest the IOC directly forced the IFSC to go down the combined discipline route, so in this case there is room for other explanations of the IFSC behaviour apart from power/dependency relationships with the IOC. However, the IFSC followed the recommendation of the IOC technical commission to propose combined Olympics disciplines, and there was a willingness to meet the IOC demands and offer

no resistance when the traditions of sport could have been compromised. In contrast, the ISF and the TTR have retained their autonomy from the IOC, the major resources provider in international sport, rather than pro-actively seeking the IOC recognition and regulatory legitimacy over their sports as the IFSC did.

Finally, the organizational strategies and behaviour of global sport event organizations can also be viewed from a resource-dependence perspective. As already highlighted, the powerful positions of the IOC, which organizes the Olympic Games, and ESPN, the television network that organizes the X-Games, have strengthened through the ability to generate and control the resources in the form of income from TV rights and sponsorships by successfully marketing free sports via, respectively, the ultimate mainstream sport framework and the dedicated free sports event platform. On the other hand, the X-Games and the Olympic Games have become dependent on international organizations in charge of free sports as these organizations are needed to introduce and develop the most attractive free sports in order to raise the events' profiles and the viewership. For example, the mutual dependency between the IOC and the FIS was based on the latter producing the actual competitive sport product for the former and the former providing significant funding for the latter. Broadly speaking, the IOC call to include more youth sports and, in particular, a reported interest of the IOC in skateboarding can also be seen as a resource-motivated behaviour because the IOC looks to improve the television ratings and appeal to youth as admitted by the IOC representatives. However, these dependency relationships have been hardly reflected in power relationships of free sports and the Olympic movement as international sport governing bodies of skateboarding, snowboarding, and climbing have little autonomy when dealing with the Olympic movement. Therefore, whilst there has been a quite mutual dependence between the IOC and the researched sports, the power imbalance has been evident as the IOC has the ultimate power within these relationships.

Regarding the X-Games, skateboarding and snowboarding have been the core sports of this competition to the extent that the event concept and program have been built around these sports. Consequently, the X-Games largely depend on skateboarding and snowboarding, which means international organizations and leading athletes have significant power to negotiate. This was demonstrated on several occasions throughout the 2000s, when leading skateboarders and snowboarders successfully requested a pay increase and improvement in working conditions from the X-Games organizers. Indeed, athletes and international organizations of these sports

have been also largely dependent on the X-Games as they have been earning significant money from the X-Games. Overall, there have been multiple mutual dependencies between the X-Games and the sports of skateboarding and snowboarding, so development of these sports benefited from the rise of this event platform, and vice versa. These relationships have facilitated an establishment of power balance and cooperation between the X-Games and international sport organizations, namely the TTR Pro Snowboarding and the ISF.

8.3. Comparison of resource-dependence and new institutional perspectives on research findings

The choice of two perspectives - new institutionalism and resource-dependence theory—as theoretical frameworks for this study was underpinned not only by the applicability of both of them to the context of research but also by the possibility to analyze the research findings by two different approaches. As highlighted by Greenwood et. al (2008, p.175),

> … institutional and resource dependence theories constitute overlapping domains of concern rather than competing explanations; both approaches deal with resource-based institutional control, but each also includes other non-overlapping areas of interest.

Therefore, the next section will attempt to outline where resource dependence and institutional theories, on one hand, can complement each other in their application to the findings of this thesis and, on the other hand, might offer different interpretations of the them. This discussion is based on Oliver's (1991) understanding of convergences and divergences of these theories, which were briefly outlined in the section 2.2.3 and can be structured around four key issues emerging from the research:

- Evolution of organizational structures in international free sports;
- Change in values and logics in institutional fields;
- Legitimacy issues in free sports;
- Power-dependency relationships.

In terms of evolution of organizational structures, major findings of this thesis support the institutional pluralism perspective, specifically findings of Steen-Johnsen (2008) on a national level and highlight the prominence of network structures in international free sports. While new insti-

tutional theory emphasizes the tendency to reproduce and copy organizational structures in response to environmental pressures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Zucker, 1977), resource-dependence theory does not specifically suggest any institutionally prescribed patterns in change of organizational structures and advocates active behaviour of organizations that can lead to various outcomes and strategies on change in structures depending on what approach ensures flow of resources and reduces environmental uncertainty for specific organizations. In terms of this research, no evidence was found from the case studies to support organizational isomorphism trends and network structures have remained popular even in snowboarding, which became an Olympic sport. This challenges new institutional theory and suggests variation of organizational responses to change as was found in similar studies on mainstream sports (Smith and Shilbury, 2004; Amis, Slack and Hinings, 2004; Fahlen, 2006). Also, the prominence of network structures suggests organizational choice is possible within the context of external constraints, which is one of the major stances of resource-dependence theory as outlined by Oliver (1991).

Another aspect of organizational evolution that was investigated in this thesis is change in values and logics in free sports. Even though three sports have demonstrated various patterns in terms of following traditional logics and adopting new logics, it can be summarized that traditional values have remained strong in all sports researched. However, along with this finding, it is also evident that multiple logics (competitive, commercial, and traditional) have been adopted and co-exist in all sports. It is in line with the studies of Smith and Shilbury (2004), Southall et al (2008), Southall and Nagel (2008) as it also supports institutional pluralism in terms of possibility of co-existence of several logics in organizational field. Again, this is a challenge to new institutional thinking of DiMaggio (1988) and Zucker (1983), who suggested that organizations conformed to dominant logics, taken-for-granted norms and beliefs in order to ensure their survival. However, as noted by Oliver (1991, p.148), resource-dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978) suggests compliance with dominant values is not necessary and advocates the advantages of active-choice behaviour of organizations.

Both theoretical perspectives used in this thesis converge on the importance for organizations to obtain stability and legitimacy (DiMaggio, 1988; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1983; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Zucker, 1983). However, they emphasize different ideas behind the need to obtain legitimacy: resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Green-

wood and Hinings, 1988) sees regulatory legitimacy as facilitating access to resources acquisition, whilst new institutional perspective (Zucker, 1977; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Meyer and Scott, 1983) extends the notion of legitimacy by highlighting its cultural aspect. Therefore, these theories complement each other in evaluating regulatory legitimacy in this thesis. Nonetheless, as the issues of cultural legitimacy was found to be central to organizational evolution of free sports and was brought to the forefront of this study, it is new institutional theory that provides a comprehensive view on legitimacy and its implications in selected free sports.

Conversely, new institutional perspective has been of extremely limited application to relationships of power and dependence between organizations in international sports of climbing, skateboarding, and snowboarding. As pointed out in the literature review, coercive isomorphism is related to political influence in new institutionalism because power tends to be attributed to the institutional environment (DiMaggio and Powell's, 1983). Coercive isomorphism has been visible in organization of Olympic snowboarding in connection with the political influence of the IOC and the FIS. Otherwise, power/dependence relationships in three researched sports are found to be multiple and mutual, so it is resource dependence theory that explains them through assuming that organizations exercise a degree of control over the resource environment (Oliver, 1991).

9. Organizational evolution of free sports: conclusions

This concluding chapter evaluates how the research objectives were achieved and, most importantly, what this thesis brings to existing knowledge. From this, it is also possible to outline the directions for future research.

9.1. Key findings of the study

This thesis seeks to understand the evolutionary processes in organizational field of free sports by identifying patterns and mechanisms of the evolution with the focus on organizational structures and values of free sports. The processes of organizational evolution of three free sports—sport climbing, competitive skateboarding, and competitive snowboarding—were the focus of this thesis. The key patterns and mechanisms, that were identified, are summarized below.

1. Although similarities in sequences of events and actions (such as arrival of first international competitions, development of first international governing bodies and periods of increasing commercialization) in all three sports are apparent, each sport is found to have possessed a number of differences in their timelines of events and actions, which define their organizational evolution.

2. Most importantly, organizational change in international competitive snowboarding, the only Olympic sport among three researched, is found to have been of much faster speed in comparison to climbing or skateboarding, because the sequence of individual and collective events and actions in this sport took much shorter time that similar sequences in other sports. This finding highlights the accelerating role of the Olympic movement in organizational evolution of free sports.

3. A number of differences were found in the case studies, but the importance of commercialization as one the major mechanisms of evolution emerged clearly from the research. Commercial interests were found to have played a significant role in changes in the organization of free sports over recent two decades and have constituted a force for their legitimization as competitive international sports evolved.

4. Increasing commercialization of free sports over the last two decades have contributed to isomorphic pressures for international governing organizations in free sports to change organizational structures and conform to dominant values of mainstream competitive sports. In terms of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) notions of institutional isomorphism and organizational legitimacy, the following patterns and mechanisms in free sports were identified:

- Due to the integration of free sports into the mainstream international sport structures, and in particular, into the Olympic movement, the organizaional fields of free sports have been increasingly exposed to coercive and normative isomorphic pressures. Particularly, the political influence of the IOC and the FIS trigerred the mechanisms of coercive isomorphism in snowboarding and through the sequence of events and actions, such as inclusion of this sport into the Olympics, the FIS recognition and the ISF bankruptcy, led to the change in organization of competitive snowboarding. To a various degree, but in all three fields the "mainstreaming" of international structures has taken place. This suggests that the structural arrangements of free sports tend to evolve towards the conventionally accepted model of international organization of sport with one ultimate organization at the top, which all the other organizationa relate to.
- Whilst these coercive isomorphic pressures for institutionalization and bureaucratization of snowboarding and skateboarding mostly encountered strong resistance among the established governing organizations in these sport, similar pressures in international sport climbing were accepted by sport governing organizations of this sport. Thus it can be seen that the evolution of structural arrangements of sport climbing led to the full formalization and "mainstreamization" of its international structure with the IFSC standing as the sport's ultimate governing body with no alternative international sport structures existing.
- However, even though coercive and normative pressures have taken their toll on free sports, these isomorphic scripts were not always followed by all organizations in free sports. There are plenty of examples of international sports organizations responding to the environmental pressures in creative ways, such as establishing the whole new international competition platform in snowboarding (instead of accepting and following the prescribed competition series); or remaining a relatively small and informally organized

governing body in sport climbing that is driven by former climbing athletes rather than professional managers.

- The mimetic mechanism of institutional isomorphism was found to be functioning across organizational fields of snowboarding and skateboarding: the role of information exchange between organizations of these two sports in their social learning of adaptive responses can be highlighted. Most notably, international skateboarding organizations learn from experience of snowboarding's organizations, and their relationships with the Olympic movement in particular, and adapt their own responses driven by uncertainty in organizational field.
- A widespread and taken-for-granted belief that it is natural for sports to emphasize their competitive aspect and aim to become part of the Olympic movement was identified as another important mechanism of organizational evolution in free sports. This can also be seen as mimetic isomorphism, because organizations in free sports effectively mimick the actions of organizations in Olympic sports that are considered legitimate (as they are recognized by the Olympic movement) and, as a result, aim to comply with the IOC regulations and the Olympic values.
- However, from a cultural perspective, sport organizations in free sports employed multiple values and different logics rather than uniformly adopted dominant logics of mainstream sports.

As the findings of this study indicate, both internal and external factors contributed to shaping organizational evolution in free sports. The most significant factors are as follows.

<u>External pressures on organizational fields</u>

1. Commercialization of sport.

Even though it might be argued that sport had a commercial component to its operation almost since its inception, commercialization has really taken off in recent decades. Growth in television coverage of sport events and sponsorship in sport shaped the way sport is organized. In particular, the Olympic movement has been heavily commercialized over the last 30 years. The key finding of this study is that organizational evolution of free sports has been largely shaped by commercialization of sport in general, and of specific events in particular (the Olympic Games, the X-Games).

2. Bureaucratization of modern sport

Bureaucratic organization has been one of the key characteristics of modern sports for decades (Guttman, 1977). The conflict between isomorphic pressures of bureaucratization and cultural legitimacy of sport organizations appears to be central to understanding of organizational change in free sports. It was found that in order to remain culturally legitimate within their respective communities international free sport organizations had to preserve and follow key traditional free sports values, such as creativity and reluctance to bureaucratization and formalization of sport. Consequently, traditional logics were not substituted with the arrival of commercial and competitive logics in organization of free sports, but there was a co-existence of multiple logics in free sports.

3. Globalization of sport and technological advancements

Over the past three decades, globalization of sports and development of new technologies have affected the way of how free sports can be exercised and consumed. With the development of global TV broadcasting, new media, online video services and internet, consumption and participation in free sports became more accessible. Even though this study didn't not focus on technological side of evolution of free sports, it is apparent that new digital technologies fostered the organizational evolution, because organizations in the fields had to conform to changes in terms of televised sport, video production, digital channels etcetera. For example, international skateboarding and snowboarding competition organizers, such the SLS and TTR, introduced instant scoring systems to facilitate judging of competitions and fit to broadcasting requirements. These systems were not typical for free sports and got a mixed reception within the fields, but these actions exemplified how external pressures influenced changes in organization of free sports.

4. Influence of the Olympic movement.

As previously discussed, the modern Olympism emerged in the first phase of globalization and developed into the biggest global formal movement in sport. One of the major findings of this study is the revelation of how great the influence of the Olympic movement on the evolution of free sports has been. One might argue that the IOC is the part of the organizational field of sports, because this governing body defines the "rules of the game" for all the international sports. However, in the early stages of the evolution of free sports, the IOC had no formal relationships with them and, actually, have not got any formal relationships with the sport of skate-

boarding yet. Another significant finding is the application of "umbrella" governing structures by the IOC: the practice of governing of "smaller" free sports by established federations recognized by the IOC based on technical similarities of sports. The implications of this practice were most clearly demonstrated by the case of snowboarding that became governed by the international skiing federation. This research's findings lead to questions about the legitimacy of this "umbrella" approach due to existing significant differences in values between free and mainstream sports. Thus the effect of the IOC on organizational fields of free sports can be characterized as a very substantial external factor of their organizational evolution.

Internal factors within organizational fields

As was highlighted in literature review, there are three pillars of internal aspects of organizational fields supporting institutional order (Scott, 1995, 2001): regulative, normative and cultural/cognitive. Here is the outline of the key findings in terms of internal factors that have defined the organizational evolution of free sports.

1. Regulative factors.

This pillar is about establishing rules within organizational fields of free sports and inspecting how organizations and individuals conform to these rules, so it is essentially about regulation and control from sport governing bodies. This study found that regulative pressures in organizational fields of free sports started to develop with the arrival of the first organized competitions. However, it was evident that governing and controlling arrangements in free sports were initially shaped by this particular task of organizing competitions and were traditionally informal. So in terms of internal factors, relatively little emphasis was put on regulatory aspects within the fields of free sports until external factors interfered.

2. Normative factors.

Normative factors are about expectations, norms of acceptable behaviour, relational systems and social patterns in organizational fields. The construction of standards and norms in organizational evolution of modern sport is linked to professionalization of managing organizations, formalization and bureaucratization of sports. Whilst this study suggests that organization of free sports has gone through a period of professionalization and formalization over the last 30 years, this process has been fuelled by external pressures rather than internal calls within organiza-

tional fields of free sports. There is hardly any evidence of internal norms or pressures in organizational fields of free sports that could force professionalization and bureaucratization of organization in fields. It is fully acceptable (and often expected) for organization in international free sports to have a degree of informality, which the IFSC is a good example of.

3. Cultural/cognitive factors

This pillar is central to understanding of organizational evolution of the field, as it involves shared conceptions, meanings, logics and taken-for-granted assumptions. Overall, cultural accounts of free sports are found to underpin structural arrangements and provide explanation for organizational evolution. All the major organizational developments in evolution of free sports can be linked to the cultural legitimacy of sport governing organizations and their actions.

To summarize, here are key aspects of change that were identified within the evolution of free sports as an organisational field:

Conceptual orientation of change:

A distinctive separation between two versions of sport—competitive organized sport and traditional free sport—was found to have occurred in all three sports. This rift of a cultural nature was fostered by commercialization and introduction of free sports to the biggest competitive events, such as the X-Games and the Olympic Games, but ultimately originated a long time ago with the very introduction of an idea of having competitions in activities that were not meant to be competitive sports and were created as alternatives to mainstream sports.

Structural elements:

Regarding the evolution of structural arrangements, this study concludes that there has been no uniform formalization and bureaucratization of structures but rather a variety of structural responses to environmental pressures. Most notably, network organizational structures in skateboarding and snowboarding, which were typical structural features of free sports since introduction of first competitions, remain prominent.

Capabilities and outcomes of change:

In terms of capabilities of the sports of competitive skateboarding, snowboarding and climbing, it can be concluded that over the period of organizational evolution all three sports vastly improved their capabilities in terms of their international presence and appeal. Although this thesis doesn't focus on sport development, it is clear that the processes and systems created within the organizational fields of skateboarding, snowboarding and climbing facilitated enhancement of key sport capabilities: number of facilities for people to participate in these sports, international competitions being held, safety and accessibility of sports. There have been various outcomes of changes in climbing, skateboarding and climbing, as the unique stories of each of these sports describe. The key outcomes with regards to different aspects of change in each sport were earlier summarized in **Table 7.1.** This study doesn't compare the outcomes of changes with any "mainstream" sport, but it is apparent that it took free sports a remarkably short period of time to "catch up" mainstream sports and become international professional sports. The key outcome of changes is that, as competition aspects of these sports developed, all three sports have evolved from non-organized subcultural activities of non-competitive nature to international professional sports.

9.2. Contribution of the research to existing knowledge

9.2.1. Theoretical contributions

This research extends previous applications of institutional and resource-dependence theories to free sports, which have unique history and logics behind their organization. As highlighted in the introduction to this dissertation, over last three decades the popularity of free sports have increased remarkably. The public profile of a number of these sports, for example, snowboarding and BMX, has been boosted through their use in media, marketing, and multi-sport mainstream events, most notably in the Olympic Games. However, academic inquiry on free sports was limited to just several studies, such as Puchan (2004) and Breivik (2010), which focused primarily on marketing and social aspects of these sports, and a small number of studies on organization of specific sports within particular territories, most notably Steen-Johnsen's (2008) research on organizational change in Norwegian snowboarding. Thus, by focusing on free sports, this research furthers knowledge and understanding of an under researched area of organization of sport .

One of the major contributions of this thesis to the notion of organizational change is the revelation that from a macro perspective, traditional values of particular sports can remain largely intact while the organizational structures of these sports undergo a significant change. Whereas previous studies of international sports pre-dominantly suggested that the logics of the whole organizational fields shifted under increasing pressures of professionalization, commercialization, and formalization of structures, this research concludes that it is possible for multiple logics to be adopted across international sports. In other words, the range of values existing in international sports can be extended. To illustrate, competitive values and even the values of the Olympics, which were not inherent to skateboarding culture, have recently become accepted in international skateboarding. They did not replace traditional values but became coexisting with them. All three case studies demonstrate that structures can follow institutional expectations, but values do not have to be replaced. The prominence of network structures in these sports emphasizes this finding because networks have been a traditional way of organization, so it is a manifestation of values. Therefore, the process of institutionalization of sports does not necessarily lead to change of values in a macro perspective. What it can facilitate though is a separation between two different "versions" of the same sports: competitive sports and traditional sports. Co-existence of these versions has been remarkable in free sports, so this is a significantly different way sports can respond to environmental pressures in comparison to what was found by previous studies.

This dissertation also furthers understanding of the role of the IOC as a source of regulatory legitimacy and specifically, challenges the IOC as a source of regulatory legitimacy for free sports as the necessity for one ultimate governing body in these sports and "umbrella" governance of free sports under mainstream sports appears unnecessary. This research also questions the belief that all sports strive for the Olympic Games, which is thought to be the ultimate goal of evolution of sports in a global context. Challenging this belief, which appears to have been taken for granted in sport, furthers understanding of international organization of sport and the Olympic Movement and is one of the major calls of this study to academics.

Historically, studies of organizational evolution and change in modern sports tend to focus on professionalization, isomorphic trends, power, and political issues (O'Brien and Slack, 1999,

2003, 2004a, 2004b; Morrow and Idle, 2008). Whereas all of these aspects can explain organizational evolution of modern sports, the importance of the concept of cultural legitimacy of international sport organizations emerges from this study. It is apparent from this research that the role of cultural legitimacy of international sport organizations in organizational field has been undervalued in sport management as cultural profiles provide a foundation for structural arrangements and determine whether organizational change is accepted or not. In this connection, the role of athletes in legitimizing structural change and the danger for culturally legitimate organization to lose the "ownership" of their sport due to not being recognised by the IOC emerge from this research.

The issue of "ownership" of particular international sports and corresponding conflicts emerged as one of the greatest concerns of this study. A number of organizations of various nature, such as international sport federations, event organizations, and commercial entities, were found to have influenced organizational evolution of free sports. Consequently, conflicts in international free sports are found to have revolved around claims of who "owns" the sport, as different institutions and individuals wanted to shape the organization of sports for particular purposes. This study demonstrated that resistance to organizational change in international sports was determined by the balance of cultural and regulatory legitimacies of governing bodies. Furthering academic knowledge on topics of ownership of sport and corresponding conflicts was highlighted by Washington and Patterson (2010) as one of the priorities for sport management research, and this study makes a contribution within these understudied areas of knowledge by bringing unique findings and challenging existing discourses.

In terms of implications of this study outside of sport, due to a high degree of specificity of sport discussed within this thesis, the findings of this project cannot be directly applicable to other fields. However, as the theories and concepts this study benefits from and contributes to can be (and undoubtedly, will be) applied in non-sport contexts, it is possible to outline some potential areas of implications outside sports according to the following themes:

- Evolution of activities

Broadly speaking, this study contributes to the notion of organizational evolution of modern sports. Undoubtedly, evolution driven by cultural values happens also outside sports. Therefore,

this study can be beneficial in examining evolution of non-sport counter-cultural activities, such as alternative forms of art and entertainment.

- Subcultures

Skateboarding, snowboarding and climbing are subcultures, so although this study focused on competitive sports it brings some new knowledge on respective subcultures and thus contribute to wider social studies.

- Regulatory and cultural legitimacy

This study highlights the importance of cultural legitimacy of organizations in organizational fields. This topic is of relevance to other organizational fields, so findings of this study can potentially inform research outside sports.

- Meta-organizations

Meta-organization perspective is a relatively new concept, which international sport organizations also fit to. Although this study did not use meta-organization theory as a framework, the data and the findings with regards to international sport governing bodies can relate to this theory. Thus, in a similar way as Einarsson (2009), this particular research in sport can potentially contribute to knowledge on meta-organizations in general.

9.2.2. Methodological contributions.

This study contributes to further knowledge through the use of combination of approaches, methods and frameworks. This allowed a comprehensive picture of such a complex phenomenon as organizational evolution to be constructed. First, as the notion of processual analysis guided this ressearch, the way it was used in this study might provide some methodological directions for future processual researchers, particularly, those studying evolution of an activity or a phenomenon. Second, employing theory-informed phenomenological approach allowed full exploration of rich qualitative data within this particular research. This strategy also helped reduce researcher's bias of having a specific theoretical hypothesis to analyze the data against. It was important to stay open-minded to themes and issues emerging from the data. It might be worth to consider using similar approach in studies that do not have an elaborated hypothesis to test, but use theories to outline main research directions.

Another original element of this study is cross-case analysis of three different fields. One of the major advantages of this approach is that each case study is a unique story of sport evolution itself, so every case study report has a potential to be published and researched further. Finally, in terms of data collection methods used, this study focuses on interviews with key informants in field, but also takes advantage of availability of the documentary evidence of people experiences in forms of news, articles, posts and comments from media and social media. It might be particularly beneficial for future phenomenological research projects to consider this model of data collection, as it allows catching reality in flight and providing a comprehensive picture of phenomenon or process by triangulating the data from different sources.

9.2.3. Practical implications

There are wider implications of this study for sport practitioners in terms of sport management and organization of international sports. Whereas it is found that network organizational structures reflect a traditionally informal way to organize free sports and are in line with values of these sports, the adherence to this type of structures is thought to restrict development of the sports. An absence of central authority and overlapping international competition structure with multiple events, tours, and organizations constitute a challenge for sport managers of these sports in terms of delivering their international proposition. In other words, it might be simply not appealing to spectators, sponsors, and media to follow a sport with no clear competition structure. So this study contributes to a wider sport management knowledge by raising a question of sustainability of unconventional organizational setups in the global sport business, even if they are considered the only culturally legitimate structures in this field.

Discussion on international organization of sport and the role of the Olympic Movement in it is thought to be particularly useful for practitioners who are involved in governance of international sports as well as in the IOC recognition of sports and its decision-making on selection of sports and disciplines for the Olympic Games. For example, one of the findings of this research is an emerging potential for a “free sport international federation”: a single international governing body dedicated to free sports. This would be a unique practice of culture-driven organization of sports rather than bridging them under purely technical sport criteria, as in case of skiing and snowboarding.

9.3. Directions for future research

This research is about evolution of sports as a process, its patterns and underlying mechanisms. Therefore, the key directions for future research should elaborate on elements this study has brought forward. First, in terms of research of specific sports on a macro-level (the whole international sport as the unit of analysis), lack of uniform changes and co-existence of isomorphism and pluralism in organizational field of free sports is the key conclusion. To a certain extent, it challenges the conclusions of previous studies that mostly reveal uniform isomorphic changes in sports. Also, as discussed in the methodology chapter, any conclusions of this study refer to just three particular sports. Thus applicability of findings of this thesis to other sports lies within analytical generalization and is limited to similar environments. Therefore, a research on other sports would be an opportunity to extend external validity of findings of this thesis or to challenge their generalizability. In particular, it would be worth to investigate the evolution of very modern sports, especially, the sports, which has just recently emerged, for example parkour, or the activities that even are not yet recognized as sport, such as electronic sports. As this thesis demonstrates, nowadays sports develop in a relatively fast manner. So studies on new sports are likely to bring a more up-to-date perspective on organizational evolution. Doing a longitudinal study on new sports would enable researchers to track their evolution in detail and improve the validity and reliability of the findings.

Another key conclusion, which future researchers might elaborate on, is the role of cultural values and cultural legitimacy in organizational evolution of sports. This study demonstrates that although cultural-cognitive elements and subcultures clearly have a strong effect on structural arrangements in international sports, there is a lack of understanding how they work and how they influence changes in sport. These issues require more research, and a good starting point might be a suggestion to research a possibility of an «international federation of free sports» emerging from this study. This idea that, essentialy, cultural legitimacy of organizations must define the structure of international free sport would require further investigation with the use of both organizational and cultural theories. It must be also noted, that in terms of methodological choices, this study has its limitations in approaching the topic of culture and logics in macro field. Values of sport served as measurement of culture within this thesis, which is an approximation to a large extent. As the limited scale of this project only allowed for this measurement

to be realized, future studies might focus specifically on subcultures in sports and apply a more in-depth measurement of them. In doing this, it might be worthwhile to attempt to apply quantitative methodology of measuring subcultures, which will broaden the academic knowledge in this regard.

Another opportunity to confirm or challenge findings of this research concerns theoretical and methodological approaches to the topic of organizational evolution and change in free sports. Whilst the chosen theories (new institutionalism and resource-dependence) were thought to be the best capable of addressing this research's objectives, there are a number of other theories that examine organizations, so they might provide different explanations to some specific aspects discussed within this thesis. In particular, network theory might be a relevant tool to assess structural arrangements of international free sports. This study revealed the prominence of network structural arrangements as a unique feature of organization of free sports, but did not discuss these findings in terms of the network theoretical perspective. Using network theory to examine the organizational evolution of sports would strengthen academic understanding of the evolutionary process and mechanisms behind the changes.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, there is also meta-organizational perspective, a relatively new concept, that this study did not specifically refer to, but that is relevant to the organizational topics in sport, as demonstrated by recent studies of Einarsson (2009) and Malcourant, Vas and Zintz (2015). Therefore, it would be worth to consider conducting a study on evolution of international sports that would focus on the role and influence of international sport governing bodies through the lens of meta-organizational theory. In particular, considering the influence of the IOC as one the major findings of this research, it can be suggested to examine the role of this ultimate meta-organization in the evolution of international sports.

Also the notion of political economy is thought to be of value to the studied topic, as the word "political" was one of the most mentioned within the research. Especially, the issues of autonomy, dependence, and control of international sport federations, which emerged from this research, can be discussed within the terms of political economy. The findings of this dissertation supports the view of Heino (2000), who considers the Olympic movement as effectively one of the major bureaucratizations of sport that tends to control sport through disciplining it. There-

fore, there is an opportunity for further studies to focus on relationships between free sports and the Olympic movement. As already mentioned, the aspects, which can be considered within such a study, have potential to extend the knowledge not only on free sports but also on the organization of modern international sport in general. One of the aspects, which deserves further academic investigation, is decision-making on sport introduction to the Olympic Games, or sport bidding process, which was referred a number of times in a political context throughout the research. Overall, there is much room to study relationships between the Olympic movement and free sports, especially in the wake of the most recent developments within the Olympic movement, such as the IOC Agenda 2020 or the Youth Olympic Games, which start involving more free sports into their program.

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Appendix 1: List of free sports for the purposes of this thesis

	CATEGORY	SPORT	DISCIPLINE
1	Adventure Sports	Adventure Racing	Adventure Racing
2	Adventure Sports	Climbing	Climbing Boulder
3	Adventure Sports	Climbing	Climbing Lead
4	Adventure Sports	Climbing	Climbing Speed
5	Adventure Sports	Climbing	Free Climbing
6	Adventure Sports	Climbing	Ice Climbing
7	Adventure Sports	Canyoning	Canyoning
8	Aerial Sports	Aerobatic Flying	Aerobatic Flying
9	Aerial Sports	B.A.S.E. Jumping	B.A.S.E. Jumping
10	Aerial Sports	Hanggliding	Hanggliding Accuracy
11	Aerial Sports	Hanggliding	Hanggliding Aerobatic
12	Aerial Sports	Hanggliding	Hanggliding Speed Gliding
13	Aerial Sports	Paragliding	Paragliding Accuracy
14	Aerial Sports	Paragliding	Paragliding Aerobatic
15	Aerial Sports	Paragliding	Paragliding Cross Country
16	Aerial Sports	Paragliding	Paramotor
17	Aerial Sports	Skydiving	Skydiving
18	Aerial Sports	Speed Riding	Speed Riding
19	Aerial Sports	Wingsuit Flying	Wingsuit Flying
20	Athletics	Running	Freerunning/Parcour
21	Bike Sports	BMX	BMX Dirt
22	Bike Sports	BMX	BMX Flatland
23	Bike Sports	BMX	BMX Park
24	Bike Sports	BMX	BMX Race
25	Bike Sports	BMX	BMX Street
26	Bike Sports	BMX	BMX Vert/Mega Ramp
27	Bike Sports	Mountainbike	Mountainbike 4 Cross
28	Bike Sports	Mountainbike	Mountainbike Cross Country
29	Bike Sports	Mountainbike	Mountainbike Downhill

30	Bike Sports	Mountainbike	Mountainbike Freeride/Slopestlye
31	Bike Sports	Mountainbike	Mountainbike Freestyle
32	Bike Sports	Trialbiking	Trialbiking
33	Bike Sports	Trialbiking	Trialbiking Street
34	Motor Sports	Moto Cross	Moto X1, X2
35	Motor Sports	Moto Cross Freestyle	Moto Cross Freestyle
36	Motor Sports	Motorbike Enduro	Enduro
37	Motor Sports	Motorbike Trial	Motorbike Trial
38	Motor Sports	Motorbike Trial	Trial Freestyle
39	Motor Sports	Motorbike Stuntriding	Motorbike Stuntriding
40	Skate Sports	Inline Skating	Inline Skating Endurance
41	Skate Sports	Inline Skating	Inline Skating Park
42	Skate Sports	Inline Skating	Inline Skating Vert
43	Skate Sports	Mountainboarding	Mountainboarding
44	Skate Sports	Sandboarding	Sandboarding
45	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Bowl/Pool
46	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Downhill
47	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Longboard
48	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Mega Ramp
49	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Street
50	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Park
51	Skate Sports	Skateboarding	Skateboard Vert
52	Skate Sports	Street Luge	Street Luge
53	Water Sports	Diving	Cliff Diving
54	Water Sports	Diving	Free Diving
55	Water Sports	Jet Skiing	Jetskiing Freestyle
56	Water Sports	Kayak	Kayak Expedition
57	Water Sports	Kayak	Kayak Rodeo
58	Water Sports	Kayak	White Water Kayaking
59	Water Sports	Kitesurfing	Kitesurfing Freestyle
60	Water Sports	Kitesurfing	Kitesurfing Speed

61	Water Sports	Kitesurfing	Kitesurfing Wave
62	Water Sports	Surfing	Free Surfing
63	Water Sports	Surfing	Skimboard
64	Water Sports	Surfing	Surfing Big Wave
65	Water Sports	Surfing	Surfing Competition
66	Water Sports	Surfing	Stand up paddling
67	Water Sports	Wakeboarding	Wakeboarding Boat
68	Water Sports	Wakeboarding	Wakeboarding Cable
69	Water Sports	Wakeboarding	Wakeskate
70	Water Sports	Wakeboarding	Wakesurfing
71	Water Sports	Waterski	Waterski Slalom
72	Water Sports	Waterski	Waterski Jump
73	Water Sports	Windsurfing	Windsurfing Fresstyle
74	Water Sports	Windsurfing	Windsurfing Speed
75	Water Sports	Windsurfing	Windsurf Slalom
76	Water Sports	Windsurfing	Windsurfing Wave
77	Winter Sports	Iceskating	Ice Cross Downhill
78	Winter Sports	Skiing	Freeskiing Back Country Freestyle
79	Winter Sports	Skiing	Freeskiing Big Air/Slopestyle
80	Winter Sports	Skiing	Freeskiing Big Mountain/Freeride
81	Winter Sports	Skiing	Freeskiing Half Pipe
82	Winter Sports	Skiing	Skiercross
83	Winter Sports	Skiing	Ski Mountaineering/Touring
84	Winter Sports	Skiing	Speedskiing
85	Winter Sports	Snowboard	Snowboard Big Air
86	Winter Sports	Snowboard	Snowboard Big Mountain/Freeride
87	Winter Sports	Snowboard	Snowboard Cross
88	Winter Sports	Snowboard	Snowboard Halfpipe
89	Winter Sports	Snowboard	Snowboard Slopestyle
90	Winter Sports	Snowkiting	Snowkiting
91	Winter Sports	Snowmobile	Snowmobile Freestyle

Sources: Own elaboration; list of key action sports compiled by Red Bull Energy Drink (www.infonet.redbull.com)

Appendix 2. Review of studies on values and logics in sport

Study	Scope of research	Data collected/ Method	Major findings
Pawlak (1984)	Organisational culture of three national sport associations of Poland : Judo, Weightlifting and Kayaking.	Publications and press reports using a rudimentary form of content analysis, supplemented with interviews	Identified three dominant values encapsulated into fundamental goals: sport success, the development of discipline and increasing participation
Slack and Thibault (1988)	Values and beliefs of key volunteers and professionals of 35 Canada's NSOs	A survey questionnaire as part of the larger study on organizational change.	'The values and beliefs of the key administrators (both professional and volunteer) of national sport organizations are, for the most part, consistent with the structural changes that have been occurring in these organizations.' (p.152)
Lee (1989)	Analysis of organisational culture and its relationship with sporting success in American football, basketball and baseball	Survey of Coaches representing six National Collegiate Athletics Association Division I Conferences	Certain cultural practices are important for a successful sports team. Cultural values of competitiveness and teamwork are suggested as advantageous
Smith and Stewart (1995)	Examination of sporting culture of an elite Australian Football League club	Triangulated case study using in-depth unstructured interviews, document analysis and participant observation	Support the conclusions of Pettigrew (1979), Gordon and DiTomaso (1998) arguing that strong and appropriate cultures 'lead to appealing outcomes… thus contributing to enhanced performance' (p. 32) At the same time, it is found that the club also possessed cultural beliefs, which are at risk of becoming inappropriate as they do not fit neatly within a rapidly changing sporting environment.
Colyer (2000)	Cultures of five selected sporting associations in Western Australia	Questionnaire was used for data collection. Competing Values Approach (CVA) was used to measure perceptions (profiles) of organizational culture.	Developed organisational culture profiles for selected organizations. The profiles were compared to the verbal descriptions of respondents. The findings confirm 'the differences between values held by volunteers and those held by employees' and reveal the inherent tensions between these two main groups of people in sport organiza-

			tions
Smith and Shilbury (2004)	Identification of set of dimensions which describe the cultures of eight Australian sport organizations	24 in-depth interviews	Revealed 12 dimensions and 68 sub-dimensions of culture, including some unique ones, which may be used to begin the process of mapping sport cultures.
O'Brien and Slack (1999, 2003, 2004)	Explored change of dominant logics of organizational field (English Rugby Union)	Case studies and interviews with key people in English Rugby Union on macro and micro levels	Identified the deinstitutionalization of amateur logic in organizational field, emergence of new institutional logic and suggested its diffusion patterns: status driven, "bandwagon" and the social learning.
Cousens and Slack (2005)	Studied the institutional logics of organizational field of North American Major League Professional Sport over three decades	Qualitative data on beliefs and institutional logics was collected from personal interviews with league and franchise leaders, from documents and historical books.	Show 'the shift from a logic that espoused the sport-specific qualities of major league matches, widely held by entrepreneurs in the field, to a logic that emphasized the entertainment aspects of sport and its value to corporate and broadcasting buyers' (p.39)
Danisman, Hinings and Slack (2006)	An examination of sources of variation in institutionally prescribed values of 33 Canadian Olympic Sport Organizations and its functional sub-units	Questionnaire designed to measure each institutional value. Interviews, written reports and prior literature were used to describe each value scale.	Find support for both the integration and differentiation perspectives of macroculture. Demonstrate that 'within-organizational dynamics serve as a source of differentiation institutional values and norms' (p.313)
Southall and Nagel (2008), Southall et al. (2008)	Examination institutional logics in NCAA basketball league	Mixed-method case-study based on analysis of games broadcasts, documents, policies and procedures	Identify coexistence of two contradictory institutional logics, educational and commercial, and analyze the consequences of the domination of the latter one.
Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011)	A microlevel study of change at Norwegian multisports club	Detailed case study examining the annual reports, the club's contracts, media clippings and conducting interviews with key individual in sports club	Tracked the emergence, acceptance and coexistence of different logics in the sports club: amateur, professional and commercial.

Appendix 3: Review of studies of structural arrangements in sports.

Study	Scope of research	Data collected/ Methodology	Findings
Kikulis , Slack, Hinings, Zimmerman (1989)	Measurement of 15 structural scales for 59 provincial sport organizations of Canada	Structured interviews and content analysis of documents	Created first structural taxonomy of amateur sport organizations consisting of 8 design types: from simple structure to professional bureaucracy
Slack and Hinings (1992)	Analysis of organizational change in 36 Canadian NSOs participating in "Best Ever" program and developing a quadrennial plan for the 1988 Olympic Games	Documentary analysis and interviews with key individuals	Explained organizational change process by application of resource dependence theory and institutional theory Demonstrated how the resource-dependence of NSOs required them to engage in major organizational change towards a more professional and bureaucratically structured organizational design
Kikulis , Slack, Hinings (1992)	Development of theoretical framework for understanding change in Canadian NSOs	Studies, documents and reports on the structuring of NSOs	Identified three most representative design archetypes which could serve as a framework for understanding change: Kitchen Table, Board Room, Executive Office
Theodoraki and Henry (1994)	Study of organizational structures of 45 British SGBs	Questionnaire survey	Revealed a typology of SGBs consisting of six "clusters"
Kikulis, Slack and Hinings (1995a)	Analysis of organizational change in 36 Canadian NSOs participating in "Best Ever" program and developing a quadrennial plan for the Olympic Games	Documentary analysis and interviews with key individuals Longitudinal study - data collected in 1984, 1986, 1988, 1992 and 1996	Found variety of tracks (patterns of change) determined by extent to which the coherence of organizational design elements shift over time: inertia, convergence, reorientation, reversal, delayed track
Kikulis, Slack and Hinings (1995b)			Challenged the idea that NSOs were passive receptors of environmental pressures and identified variation in response
Kikulis, Slack and Hinings (1995c)			Found that the shift from volunteers to professionals had not been established Examined the impact of decision-making on organizational design change
Amis, Slack and Hinings			Investigated the role of subunit interests, power arrangements and organiza-

(2004)			tional capacity in the process of organizational change
Smith (2004)	Exploratory study of eight cases of organizational change in National/State Sport Organizations of Australia	Theoretical sampling to select the cases, then interview with 3 officials of each organization	Organizational governance is the most important area for structural change
Fahlen (2006)	Compares structural organization of eleven elite ice hockey and contributing factors	Official and unofficial documentation from and on the Swedish sports confederation, the Swedish ice hockey association and clubs, and from individuals working or volunteering in these clubs	Ice hockey clubs exhibit some variation in structural features when they face similar environmental conditions and similar tasks
Morrow and Idle (2008)	Study of organizational change in international road cycling, using network and stakeholder theories	A single case study based on interviews with key informants and publicly available information	The change in global organization of road cycling "has been driven by a wish for commercial deepening within the network and by a desire to challenge some of the well-established relationships and dependencies that have existed therein" (p.315)

Appendix 4: Data coding hierarchy (examples)

	Themes	Codes (NVivo "nodes")	Sports	Sub-codes
1	Organization of Sport	International governing bodies	Snowboarding	FIS, TTR, ISF, X-Games We are Snowboarding
			Skateboarding	ISF, FIRS, UCI, X-Games
			Climbing	IFSC, UIAA
		Olympic movement		IOC, Olympic recognition, Inclusion / Exclusion of sports, "Umbrella" organization, Olympic sponsors, Agenda 2020,
2	Culture of Sport	Roots of activity		First international competitions, First international governing bodies
		Traditional values		Anti-establishment,
			Snowboarding	
			Skateboarding	Creativity / Play
			Climbing	Close to nature, Adventure
		"Mainstream" / competitive sport values		Importance of competitions/ winning, Rules of sports / judging

				Being part of / joining the Olympic Games,
3	Evolution of Sport	"Quantification" of sport		
		Professionalization		Volunteers, Professional managers
		Commercialization		Television, Sponsors,
		Bureaucratization		Formal structures, Size of organization
		Acceptance of change		
		Resistance of change/ Conflict		
4	New institu-tionalism	Isomorphism		Mimetic, Normative, Coercive
		Pluralism		
		Legitimacy		Regulatory legitimacy Cultural legitimacy
5	Resource de-pendence	Power Dependence		