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Value co-creation among stakeholders in a commercial sport event

The case of X Games Norway

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Abstract

X Games Norway was the first large-scale sport event in Norway that was solely hosted by commercial companies. Since the Norwegian sport system is highly institutionalized under the umbrella of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), the hosting of the X Games outside Norwegian organized sports triggered an intensive sport political discussion. It was argued that a privately-owned event was challenging the values of Norwegian organized sports. Nevertheless, athletes, spectators, National Sport Organizations (NSOs), and other stakeholders of the event found great value in the event. Hence, the aim of this research was to analyze *how the stakeholders of a commercial sport event co-create value?*

The study is based on qualitative inquiry comprising of 1) media analysis, 2) semi-structured interviews, and 3) document analysis. The purpose of the media analysis was to identify key periods and issues of the political discussions concerning the X Games Norway and it served to identify relevant event stakeholders and their perception and relationship to the X Games. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 representatives of 10 different organizations identified as stakeholders of the X Games Norway. The documents included applications by the organizers and the NSOs, including written agreements, budgets, and other relevant appendices. Stakeholder theory and value co-creation combined was used as the theoretical framework.

Overall, findings show that the same stakeholder groups as those identified for traditional sport events (Chappelet & Parent, 2015) are involved in creating the X Games. However, some stakeholders have different roles. Furthermore, the general dimensions of value co-creation (Ranjan & Read, 2016) are reflected in the data. Special for the X Games Norway was that value also was co-created through the stakeholders understanding of a mutual goal, there was an understanding for the sport culture, and the event got a lot of exposure. The value co-created in the X Games can in some extent be threatening for the traditional organized sport, however there are also elements that can be learned from the event.

KEY WORDS: *X Games Norway, commercial sport events, action sport, value co-creation, stakeholder theory.*

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Abbreviations

ADNO: Anti-Doping Norway

FIS: The International Ski Federation

IOC: The International Olympic Committee

NIF: The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports

NSBF: The Norwegian Snowboard Federation

NSF: The Norwegian Skiing Federation

NSO: National Sport Organization

TSK: Tøyen Sportsklubb (Sport Club located at Tøyen, Oslo)

WADA: World Anti-Doping Agency

YOG: Youth Olympic Games

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1. Introduction

As a result of globalization and the increase in visibility and consumer focus, sport has become more commercialized (Byers, Slack, & Parent, 2012). Byers et al. (2012) defined commercialization as “the process used to involve something such as a product or service in the exchange of something for economic value” (p. 7). Commercialization of sport includes increased collaboration with sponsors for arenas, athletes, and sport organizations, high amounts of money for broadcasting rights for sport events, and the selling of players for extreme amounts of money (Slack, 2004). Historically, there has been a strong relationship between sport and business which continues to grow (Slack, 2004). The media has been a strong contributor to the commercialization of sport, and its impact on sport continues to grow. Broadcasting rights for sport events have become increasingly important for media organizations, as a result of its entertainment and financial value (Hoye, Smith, Nichol森, & Stewart, 2015). Hoye et al. (2015) emphasized that “sport and sport broadcasting rights have special features that are not exhibited by other media products, making them extremely valuable national and global commodities” (p. 290). These “special features” include that they are live, last for a brief period of time, are often spectacular, and often bring out peoples’ emotions (Hoye et al., 2015).

Enjolras (2002a) argued that “commercialization reduces the value of an action or an object to its financial value and ignores its historic, artistic, or relational value” (p. 195). In the recent years commercial actors have had an increased impact on sport in Norway¹ (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). Based on Enjolras's (2002a) findings, this impact can create challenges for traditional Norwegian sport. Sport in Norway is from the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports’ (NIF) point of view built around values such as democracy, volunteerism, equality, and loyalty (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). When private actors who do not need to follow NIF’s rules host a sport event, it can create discussions concerning Norwegian sport values. Specifically, it can create discussions when the focal organization is a commercial actor and the stakeholders include both commercial and non-for-profit organizations (Skille & Säfvenbom, 2011). Norwegian sport traditions are based on a high priority towards anti-

¹ For the purpose of this thesis, Norwegian sport refer to all sport in Norway, whereas “organized” or “traditional” sport in Norway refers to sport under NIF’s umbrella.

doping, according to NIF (Gilberg, Breivik, & Loland, 2006). NIF is concerned that commercial events challenge the traditional sport system in Norway which is based on voluntarism and a traditional organization structure (Fredheim, 2016).

As such, the following overall question is introduced: *Are commercial sport events a problem for traditional organized sport in Norway?*

In order to host an event the event organizers are dependent of others actors, called stakeholders (Parent, 2008). Stakeholders can be both actors involved in the event, as well as actors affected by the event (Freeman, 1984). Do stakeholders behave in a different way in commercial sport events than traditional Norwegian sport events, and is their purpose of contributing different? I believe that by investigating the stakeholders of an event one can better understand the dynamics of the sport event and the implications for the values of sport. In this research I wanted to understand how a commercial sport event, as a platform, can contribute to the creation of value among the different stakeholders. A theoretical framework suitable for these kinds of questions is value co-creation. The framework is based on the fact that several actors are involved when creating value, and that a firm does not have full control over the actors and costumers (Woratschek, Horbel, & Popp, 2014a). Looking at this from a sport event perspective, several actors are involved when co-creating value to an event (Woratschek et al., 2014a).

Since the overall question is too broad to answer completely in only one study I make my contribution by focusing on stakeholders and value co-creation and have therefore developed this research question: *How do the stakeholders of a commercial sport event co-create value?*

I will answer my research question by examining the case of the X Games in Norway. Still, based on the findings from this research project I will attempt to give my answer to the overall question. The X Games Norway has been hosted by the production company SAHR, the Norwegian television company TV2, and the American television network ESPN (Iversen, Løge, & Grünfeld, 2016). Iversen et al. (2016) stated that “X Games mark a change in how international sport events are being hosted in Norway” (p. 6). Besides making a great event their goals were to develop Norwegian competence,

contribute to Oslo's profile strategy, as well as create anchoring for the concept and this type of winter sport among the population (Iversen et al., 2016). As illustrated by Fridtjof Sæther Tischendorf, who referred to his chance of competing at the biggest event in his own country as, "a dream coming true", highlights the popularity of this event (Torstensen, 2016). In February 2016 the first X Games was hosted in Norway. The tickets were sold out, the top athletes were present, and the event made a profit (Iversen et al., 2016). An evaluation of the event done by an independent, analytic company found that the X Games reached its goals and that the event was very successful (Iversen et al., 2016). Even though the X Games was a huge success for the organizers, the event was not hosted without some challenges. Only a couple of days before the event, event organizers were accused of not taking anti-doping seriously. Two of the partners backed out and the X Games got negative media attention (Iversen et al., 2016).

The X Games is a privately-owned event, and is therefore not under any obligation to follow NIFs rules regarding sport events. When the X Games was hosted in Norway it created a lot of discussion concerning commercial sport events. After it was announced that the X Games in Norway in 2016 was not going to have in-competition anti-doping tests the organizers were therefore highly criticized for not taking anti-doping seriously. The Municipality of Oslo was also criticized for collaborating with, and providing financial support, to a commercial sport event which did not support Norwegian sport values (Christiansen, 2016a).

This thesis is structured as followed: First, I had to identify the stakeholders and examine what they contribute to the event, as well as what they benefit from it. Furthermore I used the theoretical framework of value co-creation to investigate how the different stakeholders together create the event. To understand if there is anything specific to commercial sport events, I investigated how the stakeholders of the X Games differ from stakeholders in traditional sport events on the basis of the theoretical framework. Based on my research question I wanted to understand if the commercial event, the X Games, threatened the traditional organization of Norwegian sport, and also if the traditional organizations can learn from the event.

I am convinced that this research will be useful for the stakeholders of the event, as well as contribute to the literature in the field of sport management. By answering my research question, one can better understand the overall question: Are commercial sport events a problem for traditional organized sport in Norway? Both the traditional sport system, led by NIF, as well as commercial actors can benefit from this research, when collaborating with stakeholders at international events. Further, sport organizations in other countries can learn from the process undertaken with the X Games Norway. The stakeholders can better understand what they are a part of, and with what they contribute with compared to other stakeholders. NIF and other organizations that host events, as well as their stakeholders, can learn from the X Games Norway's success and challenges. The X Games has created a lot of discussion among sport organizations and the sport industry, and I am sure a study on this event will be appreciated.

2. Context

The term “sport event” covers “everything from local sport competitions to the Olympic Games” (Chappelet & Parent, 2015, p. 1). Sport events are not only focused on the competition; they can foster business opportunities, and can be used as a showcase for different communities and regions. Cities and/or countries host sporting events in order to gain social, political, and economic benefits (Chappelet & Parent, 2015). This chapter will give an explanation of the organized Norwegian sport system and its values, how traditional sport events are hosted, and a description of the X Games.

2.1 *Norwegian sport system, values, and traditional sport events*

NIFs vision is “sport joy for all” (NIF, 2015, p. 4). NIF is an umbrella organization for organized sport in Norway (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). National sport organizations (NSOs), clubs, regional federation, and regional confederations are all part of NIF. The sport political document developed by NIF stated that everyone should be able to perform their own sport based on their needs and wishes (NIF, 2015).

NIF wants its organization to be “a positive values creator for individuals, as well as for the society” (NIF, n.d., p. 9). NIF has developed the following organizational values (NIF, 2015):

- *volunteerism*
- *democracy*
- *loyalty*
- *equality*

Volunteerism is about allowing members to take responsibility for their sport community. NIF states that voluntary organizations are an important part of our democratic community. Voluntary organizations have a non-for-profit purpose, and sport activity in Norway is primary based on membership fees, voluntary effort, and voluntary time (NIF, 2015). *Democracy* is applicable for NIF’s membership organizations. They are freestanding units build around democratic principles. NIF also says that openness and information is central in democratic organizations, so that

members have a chance to influence decisions (NIF, 2015). *Loyalty* is important to NIF because of the organizations unity and ability to function according to their purpose and rules. *Loyalty* is also applicable for relationship among people within the organization, such as a leader and an athlete (NIF, 2015). The last value, *equality*, is based on the understanding that everyone is worth the same no matter their background. Everyone should be able to participate in the sport they want, without being discriminated because of beliefs, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability (NIF, 2015). In addition, NIF has four activity values; however, since this research focuses on the organization, the activity values are not included in this study.

Within a calendar year, Norway hosts several international sporting events (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). These events are important for the international distribution and development of sport. Having events in your own country can be inspiring for athletes, as well as increase engagement for the population (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). International events in Norway can increase the volunteering culture, which from NIFs perspective, Norwegian sport is built around (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). Members of NIF host most of the sport events in Norway. NIF states that it is important that events are hosted according to its rules and values, as well as with a responsible anti-doping program (NIF, 2015). As such, they believe that the ownership of an event should be held by a sport organization (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). Collaboration with commercial actors regarding sport events is not a problem for NIF, as long as NIF's rights are taken into consideration (NIF, 2015). In the case of the X Games, NIF did not feel that its rules and values were respected and the event was hosted without collaboration with Norwegian sport organizations (NIF, n.d.).

2.2 X Games

Based on Chappelet and Parent's (2015) typology of sports events, the X Games is categorized as a for-profit, multi-sport, one-off event. A for-profit event provides a financial return. A multi-sport event has several sports and therefore requires multiple facilities and expertise in every sport. The X Games is categorized as a one-off event since it has changed location regularly. Few events fall under the same category as the X Games (Chappelet & Parent, 2015).

The X Games is a multi-sport event hosted around the world owned by the television network ESPN, which is owned by Disney (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2011). X Games are privately-owned events for action sport, with both winter and summer editions. Action sport can be defined as “a wide range of mostly individual activities such as BMX, kite-surfing, skateboarding, surfing, and snowboarding, that differed – at least in their early phases of development – from traditional rule-bound, competitive, regulated Western ‘achievement’ sport cultures” (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2017, p. 247). The first summer edition was hosted in Newport, Rhode Island in 1995, while the first winter X Games was hosted in 1997 in Big Bear Lake, California (Rinehart, 2008). The winter edition includes competitions in free skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobile, while the summer edition includes skateboarding, BMX, and motocross. (“X Games,” 2017, “X Games Minneapolis 2017 Results,” n.d.). The X Games is hosted in several places, but first and foremost in the USA (Iversen et al., 2016).

The X Games was first hosted in Norway in 2016 in Oslo, followed by Hafjell in 2017, and Bærum in 2018 (Christiansen, 2016a; Olsen, n.d.; Waagseth, 2017). Since my data is collected before the event in 2018 my study will focus on the events in 2016 and 2017. The events in Norway have been hosted by the production company SAHR both years, with collaboration with the Norwegian broadcaster TV2 in 2016. Oslo was the first location where both winter and summer competitions were hosted in the same event. The athletes competed in skateboarding (street), snowboarding (pipe and big air), and free skiing (big air) (Iversen et al., 2016) in 2016. In Hafjell in 2017 the disciplines were snowboarding (big air and slopestyle) and free skiing (big air and slopestyle) (Høiby, 2017).

In order to compete in the X Games the athletes must be invited to the event by the organizers. Athletes who won the previous year’s competitions are automatically invited, but other than that, each sport has their own inclusion criteria. There are some qualification competitions, however some athletes are invited to participate based on media exposure or status in the community (“Shaun White among athletes invited to X Games,” 2016, “X Games invite criteria,” 2015).

Since the X Games is privately owned event organizers do not need to follow the same rules as traditional competitions organizers (Christiansen, 2016a). This has resulted in

several critiques in Norway. Specifically, critiques are concerned that events such as the X Games challenge the traditional sport system in Norway which is based on voluntarism and a traditional organization structure. Norwegian sport traditions are based on the previously explained values, and a high priority towards anti-doping (Gilberg et al., 2006). When it was announced that the X Games in Norway in 2016 was not going to implement in-competition anti-doping testing², the organizers were therefore highly criticised for not taking anti-doping seriously. The Municipality of Oslo was also critiqued for collaborating and providing financial support to a commercial sport event which did not support NIF's sport values (Christiansen, 2016a). The X Games was first collaborating with the Norwegian Skiing Federation (NSF) and the Norwegian Snowboarding Federation (NSBF) – NSOs under NIFs umbrella organization – but they withdrew as a result of the anti-doping critique (Christiansen, 2016a). Even though the event brought forth a great deal of criticism it was a huge success in regards to the large amount of spectators and the financial outcome (Oliversen, 2016).

² The World Anti-doping Agency (WADA) has two lists of prohibited substances. One list includes substances that are forbidden both in and outside competitions, while the other is a list of substances only forbidden in competitions (WADA, 2018).

3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, I will describe value co-creation and stakeholder theory, which together forms the theoretical framework guiding this study. Further, the chapter will explain in which way the theories were integrated.

3.1 Value co-creation

This section will clarify some theoretical terms, give an explanation of the theory of value co-creation, and look at how value co-creation can be used in sport management and sport events.

3.1.1 Clarification of terms

Before describing the theory it is necessary to explain the meaning of the term ‘value’. ‘Value’ is used to describe benefits. This means what an actor gains from being involved in something. Value co-creation can therefore be defined as the benefits created among actors that are involved in something mutual (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). The term ‘value’ should not be mixed up with the term ‘values’, which is concerned around ideals. ‘Values’ can be defined as “the principles that help you to decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations” (“Values,” n.d.). However, ‘values’, especially organizational values (e.g. NIFs values), but also individual actors’ values can be part of the co-created value for these actors.

3.1.2 Foundation of the theory

Value co-creation is a theory from the perspective of service-dominated logic. Compared to the traditional way of thinking, goods-dominated logic, where value is created through producing and selling goods, service-dominated logic is a mindset where service is the basis of exchange (Vargo, Lusch, Horbel, & Wieland, 2011; Woratschek et al., 2014a). Service can in this setting be seen as “a process of doing something with and for another party” (Vargo et al., 2011, p. 126). In the goods-dominated logic way of thinking value is created; however in a service-dominated logic mindset value is co-created. In the service-dominated logic ‘service’ is defined as “the application of competencies for the benefit of another party” (Vargo et al., 2011, p. 126). “Service” does not represent a particular product, and it is not an add-on to goods. Service is exchanged for service, which means that goods are not the focus of the

exchange; however, the service can be provided indirectly through goods (Vargo et al., 2011).

The concept of value co-creation is that “value is co-created in a collaborative process between firms, customer, and other stakeholders” (Woratschek et al., 2014a, p. 12). The framework was first used in marketing and is seen as a joint creation of value among the firm and the consumers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The framework focuses on the benefits an actor gains from a collaboration. An actor can contribute with a value, while getting another value out of the collaboration, that another actor brought to the table. “All actors fundamentally do the same things: integrate resources and engage in service exchange, all in the process of co-creating value” (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, p. 7). All actors are doing the same, however the context defines which resources each actor integrates and which service exchanges are taking place (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). The value that is obtained by each stakeholder is based on market, public, and private resources, existing competence, and the situational context (Vargo et al., 2011). Together, this results in “a very heterogeneous value perception by various stakeholders” (Vargo et al., 2011, p. 129). “Value is not produced and sold by a firm, but created in a collaborative process between parties” (Woratschek, Horbel, & Popp, 2014b). Meynhardt, Chandler, and Strathoff (2016) argued that value must be understood in the context it emerges and to the actor it emerges from. Value is both an individual and a collective phenomenon and cannot be understood by only focusing on one component (Meynhardt et al., 2016).

Co-production and value-in-use

Based on previous research Ranjan and Read (2016) classified value co-creation into two theoretical dimensions, co-production and value-in-use. Co-production can be characterized as participation by stakeholders in the service design process, and interaction through mutual exchange and expertise (Ranjan & Read, 2016). In order to integrate mutual resources into value configuration, dialog and collaboration are central elements (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Co-production can be divided into three underlying element, knowledge (sharing), equity, and interaction. Value-in-use means that value can “arise through a process of consumption” (Ranjan & Read, 2016, p. 293). Each stakeholder’s motivation, competence, actions, and performance influence the co-

creation process. Value-in-use can be divided into the elements of experience, personalization, and relationship.

3.1.3 Value co-creation in sport management

The theory of value co-creation can be helpful to explain phenomena in sport management (Woratschek et al., 2014a). Woratschek et al. (2014a) developed a sport value framework based on the service-dominated logic where they provided 10 foundational premises (FP) that illustrated the usefulness for sport management (Figure 1).

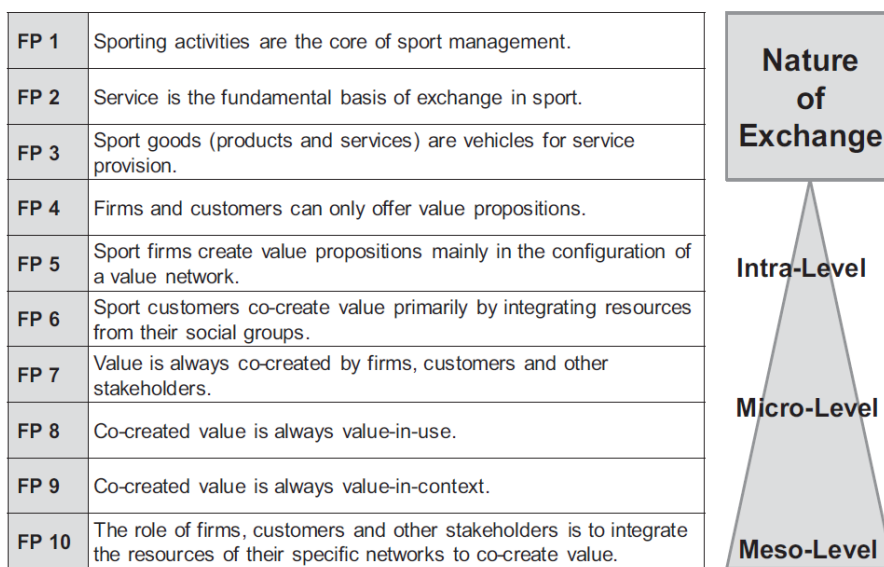


Figure 1: Sport Value Framework (Woratschek, Horbel, & Popp, 2014b, p. 19)

Woratschek et al. (2014a) suggested that one should analyze value creation in one of the levels, intra, micro, or meso. FP 1-3 expresses the nature exchange, and do not belong to any of the levels. FP 4-6 is the intra level where individual actors are analyzed. FP 7-9 contains the triads of actors and belongs to the micro level. Only the 10th FP belongs to the meso level which grasps the “entire network of actors involved in value co-creation on a sport market and their relationship with one another” (Woratschek et al., 2014b, p. 2) . The framework focuses on the sport industry, but actors from politics, government, and other industries must also be included in order to understand the entire phenomena, as “analysis cannot focus solely on sport organizations and sport firms” (Woratschek et al., 2014a, p. 19).

Much of the previous research on value co-creation in sport management has been done at either intra- or micro level (Woratschek et al., 2014b). These studies have focused on the role of either one actor or the relationship between a sport firm and their consumers. Even though this research is useful, it does not cover the full idea of value co-creation.

3.1.4 Value co-creation in sport events

Sport events can provide a platform where all the stakeholders at an event co-create value within a network (Woratschek et al., 2014a). At sport events value is co-created when different actors at the event collaborate, which lead to a creation of relationships (Hedlund, 2014). Value co-creation within sport events can be used to investigate how different actors, together, create the value of an event (Woratschek et al., 2014b). Even though one actor might be responsible for the event, the value cannot be created by the event organizer alone, as “other stakeholders at various stages before, during, or after the event also contribute its value” (Woratschek et al., 2014a, p. 10). Durchholz and Woratschek (2012) argued that co-creation of value at sport events is a network process where all actors contribute to the output. Public authorities, media, spectators, and sponsors all influence the event before, during, and after the event, and are therefore a part of the value co-creation process.

3.1.5 Application of the theory in the study

Since I am researching the entire context of the X Games in Norway and including most of the stakeholders, my research of the value co-creation will be analyzed at the meso-level (Woratschek et al., 2014a). Woratschek et al. (2014b) argued that “the nature of sport management can only be captured and traditional approaches in sport marketing, sport management, and sport economics broadened if studies are also conducted at the meso-level” (p. 2). In my study both sport firms and other organizations, such as the Government and sponsor, are included. I examined what each of the stakeholders bring to the event, and what value they get out of it. I use Ranjan and Read's (2016) categories and examines if value is co-created through the dimensions of: knowledge (sharing), equity, interaction, experience, personalization, and the relationship among the organizers and the stakeholders.

3.2 Stakeholder theory

This section will explain stakeholder theory, how stakeholder theory has been applied in sport event studies, and explain how the theory was applied in this thesis.

3.2.1 Foundation of the theory

Stakeholders are “the individuals, groups and/or organizations contributing, voluntarily or involuntary, to a focal organization’s activities, and/or who may benefit or bear the risks of these activities” (Byers et al., 2012, p. 162). The purpose of stakeholder theory is to identify stakeholders and look at the extent of influence they have on an organization (Rowley, 1997). Stakeholder theory is useful when seeking to “explain and predict how an organization functions with respect to the relationship and influence existing in its environment” (Rowley, 1997, p. 887). There are several definitions of stakeholders, but this thesis follows Freeman (1984) who defined stakeholders as a group or an individual who can affect or be affected by an organization. This is a broad definition, but is suitable when the stakeholders first have to be identified (Parent, 2016).

Donaldson and Preston (1995) divided stakeholder theory in three different aspects; descriptive/empirical, instrumental, and normative. The descriptive/empirical aspect focus on describing, and in some cases explaining, an organizations characteristics and behaviors. “Descriptive justification attempt to show that the concepts embedded in the theory correspond to observed reality” (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 74). The aspect covers the relationship between the organization and the stakeholders in their environment. The instrumental aspect is used to identify the connection, as well as lack of connection, between stakeholder management and achievement of goals (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). This aspect attempts to interpret and offer guidance regarding “stakeholder approaches and commonly desired objectives” (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, p. 71). The normative aspect tries to investigate a corporation’s function, often involving moral or philosophical guidelines (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). This current study falls under the normative aspect since it investigates each stakeholders function and how their collaboration creates value.

3.2.2 Stakeholder theory in sport event studies

Stakeholder theory is commonly used in research on sport events (e.g. Kristiansen, Strittmatter, & Skirstad, 2016; Leopkey & Parent, 2015; Parent, 2008; Parent, Kristiansen, Skille, & Hanstad, 2015). Parent (2008) argued that “organizing committees spend large amount of time and money building and maintaining relationships with various partners to acquire the necessary resources to host events effectively” (p. 136). Stakeholders can have a lot of influence on an organizing committee, and it is therefore necessary to maintain a good relationship with different stakeholders. Whether a stakeholder accept an action from the focal organization or not it can have positive or negative affect on present and future actions, and hereby impact the success of the event (Parent, 2008).

Sport event research that applied stakeholder theory mainly focused on either the focal organization itself, the stakeholder, or the relationship between the focal organization and its stakeholders (Parent, 2008). Chappelet and Parent (2015) identified eight different stakeholder groups for sport events (p.12):

- The organizers
- The sport organization
- The participants
- The support
- The community
- The funders
- The media
- Other stakeholders

The organizers consist of bidding and hosting organizers, the organizing committee staff, and volunteers. The sport organization is the event owners and the sport federations. The participant stakeholder group includes both the athletes and the spectators, while the support includes family and the athletes’ entourage. The community consist of the residents in the local community, tourism organizations, and other community groups. The funders are the local, regional, and national government, as well as sponsors. The media includes the broadcaster, written press, and social media.

Other stakeholders can be additional actors involved with the event such as security agencies and non-governmental organizations (Chappelet & Parent, 2015).

3.2.3 Application of the theory in the study

As previously stated, I follow Freeman's (1984) definition of stakeholders. Several researchers have discussed that this definition is too broad (e.g. Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997). Parent (2016) however used this broad definition in her dissertation because "sport event literature had not determined who the sport event stakeholder groups were" (p.58). Since I am researching an event where no previous research has defined the stakeholders, a broad definition is most suitable. Therefore, I first identify the stakeholders before investigating their impact.

Most of the previous stakeholder theory research on sport events are done on the Olympic Games (e.g. Leopkey & Parent, 2015; Parent, 2008; Parent et al. 2015). I am therefore convinced that a stakeholder theory study on a different kind of event is appreciated.

3.3 Combining the theories

Since there is no previous research on the X Games in Norway it was necessary to discover the stakeholders involved, which explain why stakeholder theory was suitable. Stakeholder theory is "a theory about how business works at its best, and how it could work. It is descriptive, prescriptive, and instrumental at the same time" (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & De Colle, 2010). Value creation and trade are key words within stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2010). Freeman et al. (2010) argued that stakeholder theory is concerned with creating value for all stakeholders of an organization. Stakeholder theory can be a useful tool to analyze how value is created by, and for, different actors. Each stakeholder is affected by the action of the focal organization and the other stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2010). An organization is a part of a network with several stakeholders, and the organization need to consider the value of all actors who can influence them (Freeman, 1984). In my research I looked at what stakeholders contribute with and what they get out of the event, with focus on cooperation with other actors. My research focused on the relationship between the focal organization and its stakeholders, as well as the relationship between the different stakeholders. Rowley (1997) argued that relationships occur within a network, and that

the focal organizations stakeholders also have a relationship among each other. In my research I have looked at value co-creation from several stakeholder groups, and how their contribution affects the focal organization, as well as affects other stakeholders. Value co-creation fits well with stakeholder theory since its purpose is to understand how the stakeholders contribute with value.

4. Previous research

In this chapter, I will give a brief introduction to previous research of commercialization of sport, X Games, and roles of stakeholders in traditional sport events.

4.1 *Commercialization of sport*

Byers (2016) argued that “commercialization of sport is the process of exploiting a sports property for an economic return, usually through print and electronic media, advertising and marketing, and promotion, within a mass market” (p. 25). Commercial actors are primarily organized for profit. Cooperation with commercial actors has become normal in today’s sport society, however the X Games is a fully commercial event and it was hosted by a commercial broadcaster (Enjolras, 2002a; Iversen et al., 2016). Commercialization of sport is an ongoing process, which requires research to be constantly updated. There are several research studies focusing on commercialization of sport. Enjolras (2002b) examined the commercialization of voluntary sport organizations in Norway. Sport in Norway is based on voluntary work, and only voluntary organizations can be members of NIF (Enjolras, 2002b). Enjolras (2002b) found that the most competition-oriented and team dedicated organizations were the ones that were the most commercialized. His research also concluded that increased commercialization in voluntary sport organizations did not reduce the level of voluntary work.

Hughes and Coakley’s (1984) study argued that elite sport events have become mass media events and that commercialization can change sport into a more entertainment-orientated than sport-orientated business. The original meaning of sport can be damaged, but on the other hand, commercialization can lead to increased viewers and increased economic benefit. Slack (2014) also argued that the media have a large effect on sport. He argued that commercial actors in sport can have both positive and negative impact. Commercial actors often have more money than voluntary organizations and are able to contribute to environmental- and health promotion actions. Contrastingly, commercial actors are often more concerned about themselves and how they maximize revenue (Slack, 2014). Enjolras (2002a) argued that commercialization of sport can be problematic because of values conflicts, contribution to a distortion of sport activities, and that it threatens sport socialization function. Further, he debated that

commercialization highlights market values such as money, fame, and power, which leads to decrease sport values such as fairness, braveness, competition spirit, fair play, solidarity, and community (Enjolras, 2002a).

There are also studies conducted on the commercialization of different sports. For example, Edwards and Corte (2010) studied the commercialization of BMX, while Maguire (1988) examined the commercialization of English elite basketball. O'Brien and Slack (2004) studied the increased commercialization in English rugby union. Edwards and Corte (2010) discussed different types of commercialization which all have had an impact on BMX. They found that BMX has developed from being a typical lifestyle sport and into a more typical commercial media sport. The commercialization has fostered criticism from some athletes, while others see it as a great opportunity for the sport, especially for talented athletes who have the opportunity to make a career of the sport. Maguire (1988) found that commercialization of English elite basketball significantly affected the sport. The structure and rules of the sport were changed in order to speed up the games and make it more attractive to the audience. The outcome became more important to the coaches and players, rather than the experience of playing the game. Due to commercialization entrepreneurs have also become increasingly interested in English elite basketball and have, in various degrees began to control the sport regarding ownership and rules. O'Brien and Slack's (2004) study on English rugby union found that due to commercialization the clubs had to engage with a bigger social network. This turned out to be challenging in the beginning; however, they managed to incorporate these new actors, such as sponsors and media, in their network in a better way after a couple of seasons. They found that by collaboration, all the actors could learn from each other and conflicts became easier to handle.

Coates, Clayton, and Humberstone (2010) did a study where they examined the impact commercialization has had on the subculture in snowboarding. The sport has during the last 20 years increased its popularity and media interest, which has threatened the original subculture. Snowboarders, as members of a typical lifestyle sport, have traditionally resisted mainstream sporting values. After a professionalization process of the sport, among others by including the sport in the Olympics and an increased number of commercial events, such as the X Games, values in the snowboarding culture experienced a change. The researchers found that commercialization changed the

stereotypical image of snowboarders, but some snowboarders still resist the professionalization, by boycotting the Olympics. However, they also pointed out that in order to influence the sport, snowboarders have to become involved in the organization (Coates et al., 2010). Further, Strittmatter, Kilvinger, Bodemar, Skille, and Kurscheidt (2017) looked at the development of the snowboarding competition structure. They discussed the Olympic impact of the sport, and found that the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) decision to give the International Ski Federation (FIS) the responsibility to organize snowboarding in the Olympics have had a huge impact on the structure of the sport. They argued that this governance structure can create problems when negotiation with commercial actors.

4.2 X Games and its relations to traditional sport

There has not been conducted any research regarding the X Games in Norway; however, there are some research on X Games as a phenomenon. Rinehart's (2008) research focused on how ESPN has contributed to change typical lifestyle activities into popular media sports through X Games. ESPN views its selves as the "worldwide leader in sport", but research discussed whether these activities are sport or just leisure activities (Rinehart, 2008, p. 175). Regardless, the researcher argued that ESPN has managed to build a successful event and a brand with the X Games. Skateboarding, free skiing, and snowboarding are all sports that easily identifies with the X Games, which shows that ESPN has had great success with its brand (Rinehart, 2008).

Thorpe and Wheaton (2017) studied X Games as a phenomenon, where their aim was to examine the impact the X Games has on the contemporary sport-media-industry. They found that X Games succeed in attracting younger viewers. Further, they argued that the media has a great deal of impact on action sport, which the X Games is an example of (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2017). Thorpe and Wheaton's (2011) research showed that IOC has learned from ESPN in how to attract a younger crowd to its events. Their research focused on the relationships between the Olympic movement and participants and viewers of youth-oriented sports. By including snowboarding in the Olympics and by hosting it similar as the X Games, with for example DJs at the arena, IOC managed to attract younger spectators. However, Coates et al. (2010) argued that snowboarders still think the X Games is a better event than the Olympics. "X Games is a more creative and challenging event than the Olympics" is one of the arguments in their article (Coates et

al., 2010, p. 1087). Further, they argued that in order to see the best athletes and stunts in the world, the X Games circuit is the one to follow.

Action sport literature argued that culture is strong in action sport, especially in snowboarding, and contribute to shape the sport (Strittmatter, Kilvinger, Bodemar, Skille, & Kurscheidt, 2018; Thorpe & Wheaton, 2011). The culture is shaped by the community, and the X Games has been a carrier of culture in the action sport community. Commercialization of action sport has contributed to shape the culture of the sport from informal competition among friends towards mainstream sports (Strittmatter et al., 2018).

The X Games has also been used as examples in different studies of commercialization, among others by Edwards and Corte (2010), who used the event as one of their examples in their study of BMX. They argued that the event is “money driven, not sport driven” (Edwards & Corte, 2010, p. 1147). Research on the X Games in Norway is interesting because the values of the traditional Norwegian sport not necessarily harmonize with values of a commercial event to the same degree as it would in another country where commercialization is more institutionalized.

4.3 Traditional stakeholder roles in sport events

As previously stated Chappelet and Parent (2015) identified eight different stakeholder groups for sport events. Research on all of their roles has been conducted. I will in this section describe the different stakeholder groups roles based on previous research.

Parent (2015) has examined the role of the organizing committee. “The organizing committee is the core of all sports events” (Parent, 2015, p. 43). Most organizing committees are non-for-profit organizations, which mean that they cannot keep financial or material gains from hosting events. The organizing committee can hire paid staff, volunteers, and contractors. It is usually created by governments or event rights holders to prepare and host the event (Parent, 2015). In many large-scale sport events the bidding process is also part of the organizing committees job (Parent, 2005).

Bayle (2015) looked at sport events from the sport federation perspective. IOC or international sport federations are usually the owners of large sport events, while NSOs

and sport clubs organize smaller sport events (Bayle, 2015). Parent (2015) found that the sport federations provide the official permission to host the event, and provide rules and regulations for the sport competition. As well, they oversee the functioning and approve the fields of play (Parent, 2015).

The participants can be categorized as both athletes and spectators (Chappelet & Parent, 2015). MacIntosh and Dill (2015) sees athletes as an events primary stakeholder group, and further argued that “ultimately, the athlete is responsible for delivering a competition within their sport, for which an appetite to watch events in the stadium, on television and through online streaming can be considerable” (p. 125). Bodet’s (2015) study argued that “spectators are also co-creators of sport events” (p. 163). Even though a sport event can happen without spectators they bring value to the event, among others in form of economic value. Spectators can also contribute to both positive and negative atmosphere at the venue. Cheering and singing are example of positive atmosphere, while insults and fights at the arena are examples of actions that can create a negative atmosphere (Bodet, 2015).

Kristiansen, Roberts, and Lemyre (2015) investigated the parents and entourage of the athletes at a sport event. They found that their roles differ based on the athlete’s age and the competition level. As the athletes get older the parents usually become less involved, while a coach involvement might increase. Parents usually provide emotional support for young athletes. An athlete’s entourage at a sport event can consist of coaches, medical staff, sport psychologist, media coordinators, and sport-specific personnel based on the competition size and the importance of an event (Kristiansen et al., 2015).

The community as a stakeholder group was studied by Derom, Van Wynsberghe, and Minnaert (2015). Community event stakeholders are actors and beneficiaries of social event leveraging. Derom et al. (2015) examined how two Olympic Games attempted to create community-based legacies of social inclusion. The study showed that it is challenging to leverage social and community benefits, among others due to the fact that the Olympics is time-challenged. Sport events can however be hosted based on social inclusion as the main criteria, such as the Homeless World Cup (Derom et al., 2015). The study also concluded that small and medium sized sport events can offer the local

communities a great deal of leverage (Derom et al., 2015). Chalip (2015) argued that in order to create leverage, collaboration among the event organizers and destination marketers are beneficial.

The funders are usually both the Government and sponsors (Chappelet & Parent, 2015). Local, regional, and national government can all be funders of sport events (Carey, Misener, & Mason, 2015; Houlihan, Tan, & Park, 2015). Carey et al. (2015) argued that local governments can benefit from sport events in both economic and social ways. Local governments primary functions are to deliver local services and represent their residents' wishes (Carey et al., 2015). Houlihan et al. (2015) argued that support from the Government is essential for a successful sport event bid. Almost every sport events are dependent on involvement by the Government, both regarding financial support, but also political legitimacy (Houlihan et al., 2015). Seguin and Bodet (2015) found that sponsors motives for contributing at a sport event can differ from increasing sales, increasing brand awareness, increasing brand image, improving sponsors' employee morale and internal relations, and improving relationships with stakeholders. Sport sponsorship can be considered as "an exchange, a relationship, a partnership or an alliance between a sponsor and a sponsee" (Seguin & Bodet, 2015, p. 308).

Silk and Morgan (2015) and Boyle (2015) investigated the medias role at sport events. Silk and Morgan (2015) found that "the broadcaster has a critical role to perform in presenting images and/or messages which are designed to meet the socio-cultural, political, economic, or environmental objectives of events hosts and other key stakeholders" (p. 329). Boyle (2015) argued that even though there has been a development in new/social media, print media is still an important stakeholder who has the role to report from the event. Further, Boyle (2015) argued that social medias role at sport events needs to be researched in a greater extend.

4.4 Gap in literature

Previous research on stakeholders of mega and large-scale sport events has been conducted on Olympic events and other traditional sport events like the FIFA World Cup (e.g. Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008; Kristiansen et al., 2016; Leopkey & Parent, 2015; Parent et al. 2015). Research on commercialized sports and commercial sport events, such as the X Games, has focused on aspects such as the impact of

commercialization on the sport and the events impact on youths and the Olympic movement. However, there is a gap in research regarding the stakeholders of and their roles within commercial sport events. In order to answer my research question the stakeholders of X Games Norway have to be identified and their roles have to be investigated. Since the roles of stakeholders in traditional events previously have been identified, I am able to compare their roles with the roles of the stakeholders in the X Games Norway.

5. Methodology

In this chapter, I will give a description of the epistemology, the research design, the methodology, a justification for selecting the methods, as well as a description of the analysis.

5.1 Epistemology

I have conducted my research based on the epistemological approach of constructivism. Constructionists claim that “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). I wanted to look into how human beings think value is created at an event, which fits into a constructionist view. The fact that constructionists have the view that human interaction constructs meaning (Crotty, 1998), fits with my research question concerning stakeholders’ value co-creation at the X Games. I have researched what the different stakeholders believe is the value co-created at event. A constructionist view says that truths cannot be seen as either objective or subjective, but that it needs to be brought together (Crotty, 1998). Even though this study has investigated individuals’ thoughts, the mutual understanding of the people involved in the event is examined.

5.2 Research design

Research design can be defined as “a logical plan for getting from here to there” (Yin, 2014, p. 28) ‘Here’ can be referred to as questions to answer, while ‘there’ is the conclusion. The purpose of a research design is to avoid ending up with data that does not answer the research question (Yin, 2014). In this research I have chosen a qualitative approach.

The goal with qualitative research is to gain an understanding of a social phenomenon (Thagaard, 2013). A qualitative approach focuses on peoples’ perspectives and their understanding of the reality (Nilssen, 2012). Qualitative data focus on “naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural setting”, which means that the data is as close to real life as possible (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 11). By using a qualitative approach I have gained detailed data from a small sample, which gave me the opportunity to reveal complexity (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Miles et al., 2014). A qualitative approach is suitable since I have conducted research in an area where there is

little previous research (Richards & Morse, 2007). There are several research studies regarding stakeholder theory (e.g. Mitchell et al., 1997; Parent, 2016; Parent & Deephouse, 2007) and value co-creation (e.g. Ranjan & Read, 2016; Uhrich, 2014; Waseem, Biggemann, & Garry, 2017), but no research regarding stakeholders value co-creation at a commercial sport event and its influence on national sport.

5.3 X Games as a case study

The case study is an appropriate approach when investigating a contemporary, real-life phenomenon where the investigator has little control, which fits well to a sport event (Yin, 2014). The purpose of a case study is often to investigate a particular case or a small number of cases (Stake, 2005). A case study is suitable when the research question is a 'how' or 'why' question (Yin, 2014). 'How' questions are often explanatory, and seeks to explain a phenomenon instead of just describing it (Yin, 2014).

Case studies have many strengths. Since case studies only focus on one or a small number of cases, the researcher has the opportunity to invest time and energy into really understanding the complexity of the phenomenon (Blatter, 2012). Theories can be included in a greater way than in other forms of research. Case studies also provide the opportunity to reveal casual mechanisms and casual pathways (Blatter, 2012). By only focusing on a particular case, you can gain a rich and detailed description of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The researcher can pick the case he/she believes will give him/her the best opportunity to learn. Case studies can be useful for generating and testing hypotheses, but are not limited to that part of the research. Even though the findings cannot be generalized, what we learn might still be transferred to similar cases (Merriam, 2009). Another strength with the case study is "its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observation" (Yin, 2014, p. 12).

There are also some weaknesses when using a case study. Throughout the years the case study has been seen as a weak methodology in social science. Yet, it has been used frequently, not only in traditional social science studies, but also in practice-oriented fields, thesis, and evaluation resources (Yin, 2014). There have been concerns that case studies have lack of accuracy and objectivity (Yin, 2014). Another critique of the case

study is that it provides little evidence for generalization. When using a case study within constructionist epistemology, generalization of my findings is not the purpose. Case studies are often conducted by people who are interested in the case, and the goal is to describe the case so that readers can draw their own conclusions (Stake, 2005). Even though case studies are not generalizable to populations, they can still be generalized to theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014).

The X Games in Norway is a suitable case for shedding light to my research question since it received a lot of attention. Even though there have been other private, commercial events in Norway, none of them has been as big or gotten as much attention as the X Games. It was also the first time an event owned by a private, commercial TV channel cooperated with NSOs in Norway (Keul, O. 2015, Keul to the Municipality of Oslo, April 27th 2015). The X Games has a lot of stakeholders, which make researching the value co-creation exciting. The event also contributed to several debates concerning public funding and anti-doping. Based on this the X Games was a natural choice of case for the purpose of the research question. I examined X Games as a case in Norway in general, instead of choosing one of the events (2016 or 2017). In this case I had the opportunity to examine the development of the event. Due to the fact that the data collection started before the event in 2018, this event is not part of my research. Since I researched the X Games from several stakeholders' points of view, I did an embedded single case study, investigating one event from several perspectives (Yin, 2014).

5.4 Methods

This section will give an introduction to the methods I have used in my research, as well as information regarding my sample.

5.4.1 Data Collection

I have gained my data by using media analysis, interviews, and document analysis as methods. The media analysis gave me external data, where I was able to identify stakeholders and obtain public statements. The interviews gave me internal data, and I obtain the opinions of the stakeholders. The document analysis was helpful in order to gain external data about the financial support applications and general information about the event. I started my data collection with the focal organization in order to get an overview of the different actors, and then continued with the stakeholders.

Media Analysis

Media analysis is a form of content analysis which goal is to “describe the content of media messages” (Priest, 2010, p. 39). In a media analysis it is important to focus on both what is said, as well as what is not said (Rapley, 2007). Media analysis is a popular source of data in sport research, and there are several strengths concerning the method (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). By using this method, I was able to illustrate how the X Games Norway was depicted in the Norwegian media. I was also able to examine how the case developed in public. A media analysis is also an inexpensive way to collect data and the data is easily accessible (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). A weakness with the method is that one can never be sure if the media is telling the entire story, which is one of the reasons this is just one of my methods. When doing a media analysis one also has to rely on the researchers analysis of what has been communicated (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

By doing a media analysis I was able to analyze what kind of issues appeared frequently, how the issues were presented, and what different people from different organizations stated in the media (Priest, 2010). I used media analysis partly to help me develop my interview guide in order to get some background information of the discussions that has been going on in the media. By doing media analysis I was able to ask my participants about issues discussed in the media, and challenge them on quotes made by them, or their organizations. I started by doing a media analysis concerning the focal organization, before I conduct an interview with a representative from the organization. After the first interview, I was able to identify the stakeholders, and went back to doing a media analysis of them before I continued with my interviews. I think the way that I used the media analysis limited the weaknesses of the method. By asking my participants about what has been said in media, I was able to get answers concerning certain cases being communicated in a proper way or not. In the media analysis, I focused on how my detected stakeholders were presented by the media and what kinds of statements that were made, and tried to link it to value co-creation. I had to detect and analyze what the stakeholders of the X Games Norway had stated, as well as not commented, in the media. I looked at how all the different stakeholders have acted in the media, in order to be able to ask them about their statements in my interviews. This way, I was well prepared and had background information on the case. The X Games

has been a popular subject in the media in Norway, so I was able to find many articles on the topic.

In order to find media articles I used the media analyzing tool *Retriever*. *Retriever* is an online media archive where you can find articles from 1945 and until today (“Mediearkiv,” n.d.). The tool gave me the opportunity to search for particular articles or all the articles on a particular topic. I searched for all articles written about the X Games, as well as specific articles concerning the different stakeholders. The tool gave me access to articles from Norwegian and other Nordic countries newspapers (“Mediearkiv,” n.d.). In order to identify which time periods the event had the most media coverage, I used the search tool and searched for “X Games”, “X Games Norway”, and “X Games Norge” without any time limitation. Table 1 shows the number of articles found using the different search names.

Table 1: *Number of articles with different search names*

Search name	Number of articles
X Games	8334
X Games Norway	265
X Games Norge	3343

When searching for “X Games Norway” some articles were excluded because they did not necessarily refer to Norway, even though they regarded the event in Norway. On the other hand some articles were not regarded around the X Games in Norway, but athletes from Norway competing in international events. Based on all three search formulations I discovered three periods with a lot of media coverage. The first period was from March 2015 to May 2015 (period 1 – planning phase), the second period was February 2016 (period 2 – Games phase), while the third period was from August 2016 to October 2016 (period 3 – post-event/ planning phase two). When searching in the different time periods I searched for “X Games” in order to not exclude any articles. Most of the articles still covered the event in Norway due to the fact that the majority of the newspapers were Norwegian. Table 2 shows the number of articles in each period.

Table 2: Number of articles found in the different periods.

Period	Dates	Number of articles
1 – Planning phase	March 2015 to May 2016	73
2 – Games phase	February 2016	412
3 – Post event/ planning phase two	August 2016 to October 2016	109

I did a media analysis on each stakeholder in the different time periods. I typed in “X Games (the name of the organization)” and “X Games (the name of the person I was going to interview)” and limited the searching dates to the different periods.

Interviews

Interviews are one of the most commonly used methods to collect qualitative data (Packer, 2011). The purpose is to “elicit information by asking questions” (Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2006, p. 133). The interviewer asks questions and listens to the respondent, while the respondent answers the interviewer’s questions (Schostak, 2006). The respondent is of possession of knowledge that the interviewer seeks (Flick, 2002). In interviews “knowledge is constructed in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 2). Interviews give the respondents freedom in their answers, and the interviewer usually gains rich data (Gratton & Jones, 2010). I conducted semi-structured interviews in my research. Semi-structured interviews is a good method since I wanted in-depth information about a specific topic (Flick, 2002). Semi-structured interviews are “designed to obtain information about peoples view, their ideas, and their experience” (Arksey, 1999, p. 96). I also had the opportunity to take a flexible approach and ask follow-up questions (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

There are several strengths by using interviews as a research method. Participants can, with their own words, talk about their own experiences. The information comes from the participants’ perspective, which makes the data more insightful (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The researcher has the ability to build a relationship with the participants, which might be crucial for collecting some kind of information. Interviews allows the participants to be set into context, and the researcher might develop a sense of time and

history (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Interviews collected face-to-face allow the researcher to observe the participant's body-language, face expression, and tone of voice (Gratton & Jones, 2010). A strength with semi-structured interviews is the possibility that unexpected data can emerge (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Some themes that would not have been brought up in structured interviews might be beneficial to the research. The respondent has the ability to reveal information about themes which the interviewer was not aware of (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Interviews also have potential weaknesses that are important to be aware of. Interviews require resources and might be time consuming (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The interviewer often has to travel to the respondents, which can end up being quite expensive. Interviews are often influenced by bias, even though it might be unconscious (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This bias might come from both verbal and non-verbal reactions, like nodding or shaking your head, which can influence the respondent's answer (Gratton & Jones, 2010). A researcher cannot be certain that the respondent is telling everything he/she knows, or are in the possession of the knowledge he/she is seeking (Schostak, 2006). A weakness with semi-structured interviews is that the interviewer needs to make choices about when to ask follow up questions, and if he/she is going to leave out some of the already prepared questions. Being able to take these kinds of decisions requires a skilled interviewer (Flick, 2002). There is also a danger that the respondent can become too dominant in the interview, and that the researcher may not get all the answers he/she was looking for (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

I believe interviews were a suitable method in my research. Interviews are a good approach when the population is small, the information can vary among respondents, the information can be complex, and the research is exploratory, which was the case in my research (Gratton & Jones, 2010). It is also a great method for gaining rich, qualitative data, and when you are looking for explanation rather than description (Gratton & Jones, 2010). I have tried to understand how stakeholders co-create value, instead of just describing that they do it. I gained in-depth knowledge about the specific event.

Sample

In order to answer the research question it was necessary to identify and interview the main stakeholders of the X Games in Norway. I used a mix between snowball and purposive sampling as my sample methods. In a snowball sampling you start with a person who meets the inclusion criteria, and then ask him/her to recommend others (Andrew, Pedersen, & McEvoy, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). In purposeful sampling the researcher choose the participants based on the purpose of the study (Coyne, 1997). The participants are the ones who have the specific knowledge or experience that the researcher seeks (Higginbottom, 2004). My inclusion criterion was a person from a detected stakeholder group whose task it is to work with X Games. This means that I did not necessarily interview the leaders, but instead the people who had the most knowledge about the event. As mentioned, I started with the focal organization and asked my participant about the events main stakeholders, in order to identify the stakeholders. I had also identified important stakeholders based on the media analysis before the first interview. When interviewing people from the stakeholder groups mentioned by the focal organization I also asked them about stakeholders in case more would be detected. Other stakeholders probably have an idea of who the important stakeholders might be based on their experience with the event. Eventually I ended up with participants from SAHR, TV2, DNB, Anti-Doping Norway (ADNO), NIF, NSF, NSBF, the political party Venstre, NRK, and the local sport club Tøyen Sportsklubb (TSK) (see Table 3). Out of my 10 participants two were women and eight men. Their age was between 31 and 66, with an average of 42 years old.

Athletes, volunteers, and ESPN were also identified as stakeholders. However, they are not part of my sample. As I research the topic based on organizational theories, athletes and volunteers are excluded as they are not organizations, and would not have provided me with insight on an organizational level. ESPN in contrast is an organization, but is not part of this study due to the extent of the thesis, and since the purpose is to investigate the Norwegian case.

Table 3: Interview sample - organization and stakeholder group

Organization	Stakeholder group
SAHR	Organizer/ initiator
TV2	Host broadcaster
DNB	Sponsor
ADNO	National anti-doping organization
NIF	Opponent
NSF	Responsible for skiing in Norway
NSBF	Responsible for snowboarding in Norway
Venstre	Public support
NRK	Media
TSK	Local sport club

Development of the interview guide

The interview guide (see Appendix A) was developed based on the theoretical framework of value co-creation and stakeholder theory, and the questions were formulated in order to help me answer my research question. All the questions in the interview guide were thoroughly discussed with both of my supervisors. The interview guides were customized to each participant based on the media analysis. Some of the participants were asked questions regarding their statements in the media. Most of the questions were open-ended, such as “What do you feel that your organization contribute with to the event?” and “What are your organizations relationship with the other stakeholders?”. The participants were not familiar with the questions beforehand. The first interview with one of the stakeholders was used as a test interview. My supervisor attended the interview and afterwards we discussed how the interview guide had worked out. The only change that was made was a formulation of one of the questions. The participant was informed that the interview was used as a test interview. I did not have a test interview before the interview with the respondent from focal organization. This is because questions in the interview guide were questions only the focal organization were able to answer such as “How did you become interested in X Games and what was the reason for bringing it to Norway?”.

Interviewing process

After doing a media analysis on each stakeholder I interviewed people from the different stakeholder groups. I started with the focal organization in order to identify the rest of the stakeholders as stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2010) suggests. All the interviews were conducted face to face and lasted about 40 minutes.

Some of my participants might have had more information than they were willing to tell me. They represent an organization and had to be careful not to reveal point of views that might make situations difficult for the organization in the future. In some cases I could probably have tried to ask more follow up questions. Still, I feel that my participants answered my questions in a clear way and I was able to gain the data I needed. After the interviews I asked my participants if I was able to ask follow-up questions later through e-mail or phone in case I discovered that I did not get all the answers I was looking for, which they all agreed to.

Document analysis

I also collected data through document analysis. Documents analysis is done by studying documents that were produced for other purposes than scientific research (Thagaard, 2013). The documents that were analyzed in my study were applications that included written agreements, budgets, and other appendices send to the Municipality of Oslo and the Ministry of Culture in the Government, by SAHR, TV2, and the NSOs, as well as their answers. An effect analysis done my Menon Economics AS for SAHR after the event in 2016 was also used in order to gain data such as tickets sold, the audience and the athletes' opinions, and numbers regarding exposure of the event. I had to apply to be able to receive the documents from the Ministry, and these can therefore not be found publicly. The documents from the Municipality are public and can be found on its webpage.

5.4.2 Data analysis

After each interview I transcribed the interview word by word. I did not transcribe in verbatim, but used a cleaned up method. In this way I avoided all utterances in my transcribed interviews (Markula & Silk, 2011). After transcribing I listened again, while reading, to make sure I had written down everything the way it was said. Then, I sent the transcribed, written interview to the participant so he/she could read through it and

make comments if something was understood in a wrong way. The participants that asked for it also received the result chapter in order to see if they had been quoted correctly.

After transcribing my interviews, I analyzed them through coding. “Data coding means extracting concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 159). I used the analyzing tool MaxQDA to help me analyze the interviews. I did two rounds of coding. The first round was an open coding where I marked everything I found interesting and relevant. The second round I looked for results specifically related to the theoretical framework. In this process, the interview guide was helpful as it was based on stakeholder theory and value co-creation. When coding different themes emerged, which I tried to fit into the pre-decided dimensions of the theoretical framework of Ranjan and Read (2016). I also discovered some themes that did not fit into the pre-decided dimensions, which enabled me to make new dimensions. Table 4 shows some example of coded segments. To make it easier to understand the coding process, I will provide an example. The quote “*Our relationship is good and I believe it will last for a long time*” comes from the interview with TV2. This was an answer when asked how the respondent felt the relationship with SAHR was. As SAHR is identified as the event organizer this quote says something about the relationship between the event organizer and a stakeholder. Relationship between the event organizer and the stakeholders fits under the pre-decided dimension ‘relationship’.

Table 4: Examples of dimensions, themes and coded segments.

Pre-decided dimension	Theme	Example of coded segment
Relationship	Relationship between the event organizer and the stakeholders	<i>Our relationship is good and I believe it will last for a long time (Interview TV2).</i>
Knowledge (sharing)	Knowledge regarding local community	<i>To share knowledge and competence, that is really valuable... It gives ambitions that I don't think a lot of the kids here experience at home (Interview TSK).</i>
Equity	Co-hosting	<i>We wouldn't have said no immediately, no. It had of course been of interest for us to look at how we could be a host in that kind of event. But SAHR has been pretty clear – the corporation does not want the organized sport as a host (Interview NSBF).</i>
Interaction	Dialog between event organizer and stakeholders	<i>The dialog is extremely important. Sometimes it's demanding because people have different goals, and maybe a different tribal language (Interview SAHR).</i>
Experience	Intrinsic value	<i>I was so proud to be present at the event and see stars in the eyes of the kids. When you come from Mogadishu it is not given that you know who Tiril who won the X Games is, but I have a picture of a child with Norwegian flags in his cheek who is so proud to be held by Tiril. It is incredible to have those kinds of memories (Interview TSK).</i>
Personalization	Entertainment and festival aspect	<i>I think it is the mix between sport, entertainment, lifestyle and music which makes X Games very special. And that it is an event made for TV (Interview NSBF).</i>

The coding process was time consuming as I went thoroughly through each interview several times. I believe that using this much time was beneficial and it helped me to really process the data. All the interviews were held in Norwegian which means that quotes had to be translated to English. I had to be thorough with the translation to make sure that the meanings were as accurate as possible. After translating quotes, I translated back to Norwegian to make sure it still had the same meaning.

5.5 Trustworthiness of the data

This section will explain the trustworthiness of the data through credibility and transferability.

5.5.1 Credibility

A study can be said to possess high credibility if another researcher would find the same result using the same methods and theoretical framework (Thagaard, 2013). However, in a qualitative study the researcher's impact can affect the result, and it is therefore highly unlikely that another researcher would get the exact same result. From a constructionist point of view credibility can be accounted for by the quality of the data collection process (Thagaard, 2013). One can therefore discuss the research's credibility through a critical assessment of the reliability and trustworthiness of the way the data was collected. In order for my data collection process to be trustworthy I took several considerations. The interview guide was built up around the theoretical framework and I thoroughly went through it with my supervisors. During the interviews, I tried to be as neutral as possible and not affect the participants' answers. After the interviews I transcribed them, and sent the documents to my participants. This way they could read through it and make sure I had gotten the right answers. Crotty (1998) argued that the analysis affects the data in a significant way. When analyzing the data, I tried to remain open and think about the fact that another research should be able to find the same result as I did. I also discussed the analysis with my supervisors which provided me with guidance.

Triangulation

To increase high credibility multiple methods and theories in one study can be used, called triangulation (Thagaard, 2013). Triangulation means that "an issue of research is constituted from at least two points" (Flick, 2007, p. 40). In my research I used several

methods; interviews, media analysis, and document analysis. The different methods handed me with different views on the same topic, which helped increase the quality of my research (Flick, 2007). The goal of triangulation is to produce knowledge at different levels (Flick, 2007).

5.5.2 Transferability

One cannot generalize the findings in a qualitative study equal to what you would do in a quantitative study; however, this is not the purpose with a case study. Case studies are often conducted by people that are interested in the case, and the goal is to describe the case so that readers can draw their own conclusions (Stake, 2005). Even though case studies are not generalized to populations, they can still be generalized to theoretical propositions (Yin, 2014). In qualitative studies it is more common to discuss the transferability, which means the opportunity that interpretations in a study can be relevant in other contexts (Thagaard, 2013). The findings in a study can help understand a phenomenon. The interpretations in a study can be tested in a similar research (Thagaard, 2013). Transferability can also contribute to develop new research (Thagaard, 2013). This study can be considered as transferable as the case of X Games Norway can help understand the phenomenon of commercial sport events in Norway.

5.6 Ethical consideration

As a researcher, you have to be aware of several ethical considerations. Ensuring that people participate voluntarily, making people's statements confidential, and ensuring mutual trust between researcher and participants are some of them (Silverman, 2014). To ensure voluntarily participation I specified this on the consent form that all my participants had to sign (see Appendix B). They were told that it was voluntarily to participate and that they could back out at any time without any specific reason. In order to make people's statement confidential only I and my supervisors had access to the data. Information concerning the participants were saved on a memory stick in another place than my transcribed interviews and sound files. No names are used in the research, however all the participants agreed that I could use the names of their organizations. In some of the organizations there are few employees and other people can be familiar with whom handling different topics. People that are familiar with the topic might therefore be able to recognize some participants. My participants were on the other hand

aware of this issue. I got my research approved by the “Data protection Official for Research in Norway” before starting the data collection (see Appendix C).

When conducting qualitative data one has to be careful not to allow bias influence the findings (Flick, 2007). Since I am not that familiar with the event and the sports involved are not that close to my heart, I feel that I was able to handle my findings objective. Even though the event did not stand that close to me I was truly interested in my research question, but did not have any expectations of what my data would look like. On the other hand, before I started my research I had some thoughts on what I might find, however I do not believe I let this influence my findings.

There are some ethical issues that need to be taking into consideration when using interview as the method. Some interviews require personal, and maybe sensitive, information from the respondent, but I did not feel that this was a problem in my case (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All the respondents were positive and answered my questions without hesitating. I did my best in order to avoid bias regarding facial expression and body language, but it was difficult to not have any reaction to my participant’s answers at all. Still, the kind of questions I asked was mostly about their experience and about their organization and I do not think I had a chance to influence their answers in a great deal.

6. Results

I will in this chapter present the results of the media analysis, the interviews, and the document analysis. The data is presented based on the theoretical frameworks of stakeholder theory and value co-creation. First, the stakeholder and their roles will be described. Afterwards, the results on how they co-created value will be presented. The aim of the result section is to present findings in order to answer the research question: *How do the stakeholders of a commercial sport event co-create value?* The first part (6.1) is more descriptive, while the second part (6.2) is more analytical as the results are analyzed based on a theoretical framework.

6.1 Stakeholders and their roles

As mentioned in Chapter 5 the media analysis was used as a tool to detect stakeholders. The media analysis revealed three periods of media attention towards the X Games Norway. From the Planning phase (period 1) I found articles from when the planning of the event started. Here I discovered articles concerning public support to the event and articles stating that NIF was concerned. The Games phase (period 2) started about a month before the event and lasted until the event was over. As well as coverage of results from the event a lot of the articles focused on the anti-doping debate and the fact that NSF and NSBF backed out of the event. The Post event/ planning two phase (period 3) included articles on the planning of the event in 2017, when it was made clear that the event would not get support from the Municipality of Oslo and it had to move to Hafjell.

I will now explain the different stakeholders' roles in the X Games Norway, focusing on the stakeholders that are part of this study. Their role is being explained based on the data collected through the different interviews and the document analysis.

SAHR is a corporation with people with a lot of experience with action sport, hosting events, and producing TV. The organization was given permission from ESPN to host X Games in Norway, and have done this the last two years (2016 and 2017) (Interview SAHR). SAHR is in this study seen as the focal organization, and it is SAHR's stakeholders that are detected and examined (Parent, 2008).

ESPN is not a part of this study because of the extend of the thesis. I chose one stakeholder from each stakeholder group, and chose to interview SAHR instead of ESPN because it is the Norwegian owner and has more knowledge of the X Games Norway than ESPN. As well, ESPN is located in the U.S. and I would not have been able to have a personal interview with someone from the company if ESPN had agreed to be part of the study. However, even though ESPN was not interviewed, its role is important as ESPN is the owners of the X Games concept and therefore has influence on the event. It is a television network owned by Disney. ESPN hosts all of the X Games, except the one in Norway. Still it is the owners of the X Games Norway and has influence on the event (Interview SAHR and TV2).

TV2 is a Norwegian commercial TV company. It was the official host for the X Games Norway in 2016 and the host broadcaster in 2017, which makes TV2 an important stakeholder (Freeman, 1984). SAHR was dependent of TV2 in order to televise the event, and TV2 affected the event greatly. Even though TV2 was the official host SAHR acted as the practical host, while TV2 took the financial risk (Interview SAHR and TV2).

NSBF and NSF are in charge of respectively snowboarding and skiing (hereunder free ski) in Norway. They had a written agreement with TV2 in 2016 which had the purpose to “increase the events value through involvement from the active Norwegian ski- and snowboard environment in the planning of the sport event and the implementation of the event” (Keul, O. 2015, Keul to the Municipality of Oslo, April 27th 2015). They backed out of this agreement before the 2016 event. The NSOs did not have an official agreement in 2017, but they still collaborated with SAHR, which means that they both affected and was affected by the event, and is therefore considered as stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). Their athletes have participated in several of the international X Games events (Interview NSBF and NSF). The athletes are also an important stakeholder group, but are not included in this study due to the purpose and the extent of the thesis.

NRK is the national state-owned broadcaster in Norway. It is one of the media that follows the X Games, and therefore contributes to the event, which makes NRK a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984). The media company also has the ability to influence other

stakeholders regarding the event. NRK has previously had TV rights to broadcast X Games outside Norway, but has not been directly involved in the X Games Norway. NRK has, however, covered several stories of the event and has had journalists present (Interview NRK).

TSK is a local sport club located at Tøyen, where the big air competition was held in 2016. The club started up in 2015 after concerns regarding the missing offer of activities among the local children. In cooperation with SAHR, TSK started a project called “Ø på Snø”, where kids from the local community could learn to ski or snowboard free of charge. Tøyen is an area in Oslo with a lot of child poverty, and TSK wanted to do something for the kids that they did not have to pay for (Interview TSK). TSK represents the local community, who were affected by the event since it was hosted at Tøyen. The fact that the club was affected by the event makes TSK a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984).

ADNO is the national anti-doping agency in Norway. It is responsible for doping tests during sport events. ADNO was not involved in the event in 2016, but had an official cooperation agreement with SAHR in 2017. ADNO performed doping tests at the event and also tried to educate the participants regarding anti-doping work, which shows that ADNO contributed to the event and is therefore a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984; Interview ADNO).

NIF has been the biggest opponent to the event. As previously explained it is the umbrella organization for organized sport in Norway (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). When referring to NIF I am talking about the central administration, not the entire umbrella organization. Even though NIF is not directly involved in the X Games the organization is being affected by it, and NIF has gotten involved regarding discussions towards the event, which makes the organization a stakeholder for SAHR (Freeman, 1984; Interviews NIF and SAHR).

Venstre is a political party in Norway. The party has been supportive of the X Games, both at local and national level. The Municipality of Oslo funded the event in 2016, while the Government was the funders in 2017. Venstre was active in both of the negotiations, and is by this considered a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984). The party's

politic support both traditional organized, as well as self-organized sport (Interviews Venstre and SAHR).

DNB is a Norwegian bank. DNB sponsored the event in both 2016 and 2017, and is also a sponsor of NSBF and NSF. In 2017 the sponsor brought 200 costumers to the event and had activities in the hill (Interview DNB). Sponsors contribute with funding which is necessary in order to host the event, hence an important stakeholder (Freeman, 1984).

6.2 Value co-creation

My analyses are based on the dimensions of value co-creation as proposed by Ranjan and Read (2016). They divided value co-creation into the categories of ‘relationship’ ‘knowledge (sharing)’, ‘equity’, ‘interaction’, ‘experience’, and ‘personalization’. Additional to these categories I discovered some new themes in my data: towards a mutual goal, cultural understanding, and exposure. While these new dimensions could alternatively have been categorized as “personalization”, they were found to be of such outstanding importance for this event – and might be equally important for other events - that it seemed to be more appropriate to establish them as new categories of value co-creation. The results will therefore be presented through Ranjan and Read’s (2016) categories, as well as the new categories discovered in my data.

6.2.1 Relationship

Active communication and engagement can result in empowerment to develop solutions and create value. Through a dynamic exchange between stakeholders value is co-created (Ranjan & Read, 2016). In this section the relationships between the event organizer and the stakeholders, and the relationships between different stakeholders, and how this contribute to value co-creation, are analyzed.

Relationships between the event organizer and the stakeholders

In this section, I will present the stakeholders’ relationships with SAHR and show how the different relationships contribute to co-create value.

Relationship between the event organizer and the broadcaster

SAHR and TV2 have worked together with the X Games since the planning started. SAHR asked if TV2 would be interested in a collaboration regarding the X Games in

order to televise the event, which TV2 immediately said yes to. Together they sent an application for funding to the Municipality of Oslo, and they have been working together with the event since then.

Our relationship is good and I believe it will last for a long time (Interview TV2).

The interview with the TV2 representative revealed that TV2 is pleased that SAHR has given TV2 a lot of trust, which the representative believes is important in a new project. There have been some ups and downs, but with a good relationship it is easier to get through issues that might occur. The relationship between SAHR and TV2 creates value for both parts. SAHR gets the event broadcasted in a great way through TV2, while TV2 gets to play with an interesting concept and reach a different crowd of viewers than the TV channel normally does.

The X Games is interesting because it is commercial, it hits a young crowd, and it is inclusive (Interview TV2).

At the time of data collection it was unsure if TV2 would continue as the host broadcaster, due to economic reasons. After the data collection process it was however made clear that NRK had gotten the TV rights for the X Games Norway 2018 (Friberg, 2018).

Relationship between the event organizer and NIF

The relationship between SAHR and NIF has been turbulent. NIF is under the impression that events such as the X Games are not that concerned about NIF's rules and principles. NIF is under the impression that the event creates challenges since it has private owners and cooperates with a political party. The first event got financial support from the Municipality of Oslo without having a plan for anti-doping. NIF is also concerned that since the host is a corporation, the surplus does not benefit the athletes or sport federations that facilitates for new athletes. NIF's opinion is that it is a bit messy when a commercial international organization, who does not need to follow Norwegian law, owns an event in Norway. NIF believes the organizers are here to earn money, not to highlight the sports (Interview NIF).

SAHR on the other hand is under the impression that NIF is trying to stop the event.

NIF works against it; call people, send out letters, go to the media, and use its political network – especially the first year. The anti-doping discussion was kind of a tactic, or a strategy, to make it impossible for the politicians to give us money (Interview SAHR).

SAHR sees NIF as an opponent to the event. The representative from SAHR also feels that NIF has talked about the event in the media, rather than talking directly to the people organizing the event.

The X Games got negative media attention and lost some of its collaborators due to the troubled relationship with NIF. The troubled relationships also affect the relationships SAHR have with NSF, NSBF, and TSK, which are all organizations under NIF's umbrella.

Relationship between the event organizer and the NSOs

For NSBF, the X Games is the most important event throughout the year (Interview NSBF). Having the X Games in Norway means a great deal for the NSO and its athletes. X Games in Norway brings a lot of value to NSBF, however the NSO contributes with a great deal as well. NSBF backs up athletes that do well in X Games, contribute with communication of the event, and has a good relationship with its own sponsors which have made several of them sponsor the X Games event as well.

Even though SAHR and NSBF benefit from each other, their relationship is a bit turbulent. When asked if NSBF is under the impression that SAHR is supportive to NSBF, the representative answered:

I would like to say both yes and no. Yes because we understand each other's roles, eventually. We are in an interdependent relationship where we economically surrender up on each other. If the X Games go well it is a success for us. And if we do well, bring sponsors to the event, is that something that benefits the X Games. And then I want to say no, because we still have a long way to go in order to understand each other even better, and the work that we do. And I believe this has to do with involvement from both of us and a better dialog (Interview NSBF).

For NSBF, it is important to have a role in the X Games even though the organization is not wanted as a host for the event. In order to have a role in the X Games the NSO has to follow SAHR's premises, which can create some challenges.

It is several people in our organization, without me saying that's right or wrong, but that say that they experience that we give and give to X Games without getting much back (Interview NSBF).

Among others, the people in NSBF felt it was unfair that they had to buy tickets for about 10 000-15 000 NOK, when they had given so much to the event organizers. SAHR says that the relationship with NSBF is good, but agrees that it can be challenging. Since NIF has been sceptic to SAHR and the X Games, the cooperation between SAHR and NSBF can create some challenges. NSBF and NSF are members of NIF, and have to follow NIF's rules and values.

They are as much on the other side of the fence regarding the structure. They are NIF members, even though they are not opponents to the event such as NIF (Interview SAHR).

Even though there have been some disagreements, like the amount of involvement, they are aware that cooperation among each other is needed. NSBF has dialog with the athletes and hosts qualifications to the event, and is an important stakeholder for SAHR.

In many ways, NSF is in the same position as NSBF. NSF is also a member of NIF and need to follow its instructions. Still, its relationship with SAHR has not been as complicated as NSBF's. NSF is under the impression that the relationship with SAHR is good.

It has been a good cooperation. I feel that we have, every actors have been heard. We did it, it has been great quality of the sport in both of the events (Interview NSF).

Also SAHR agrees to this:

We have very good relations with people in both the ski- and snowboard federation, and we work closely with them (Interview SAHR).

The representative from NSF does not seem to hold grudge to the fact that NSF had to back out of the written contract with SAHR because of NIF's rules. Still, NSF did not have a problem with continue contributing to the event.

The agreement kind of ended, but we contributed, we had already contributed with our competence. So it was really just to be there and do the job (Interview NSF).

Having a good fundament for a relationship can be crucial in order to continue cooperating when an issue occurs.

Relationship between the event organizer and the media

The media has covered stories about the X Games Norway since it became public news that it was going to be hosted in Norway (e.g. "Oslo vil ha X- Games neste år," 2015; Røberg-Larsen, 2015). SAHR is aware that it is important to have a good relationship with the media.

It is important to have positive media coverage. That is our focus (Interview SAHR).

One of the media covering the X Games is NRK. NRK has followed the X Games for many years, however, has not had the TV rights of the X Games Norway (Interview NRK). The media company still covers the event with journalists present at the events, as well as covers stories before and after the event. NRK has also been in dialog with SAHR when it comes to TV rights for future events, and in 2018 NRK got the TV rights to the X Games Norway.

Relationship between the event organizer and the sponsors

Sponsors are crucial in order for the event to be possible, so having a good relationship with them is essential in the value co-creation process. SAHR is interested in maintaining the relationship towards its sponsors.

We try to maintain a good relationship with our existing sponsors, we use more time on that than finding new ones. It cost so much more time and money to learn new ones. That is something that we work a lot with, which takes up a lot of time (Interview SAHR).

DNB sponsor both NSBF and free ski in NSF, and became involved in the X Games through this. NSBF and NSF's sponsors had first priority to sponsor the event if they were interested (Keul, O. 2015, Keul to the Municipality of Oslo, April 27th 2015). DNB is pleased with the relationship with SAHR and is under the impression that they have a good dialog. DNB was also able to develop the amount of involvement at the event from the first to the second event, which was valuable (Interview DNB).

Relationship between the event organizer and ADNO

The relationship between SAHR and ADNO has developed a great deal the past years. In 2016 ADNO was not involved in the event. ADNO contacted SAHR and TV2 before the first event, but did not succeed in order to come up with an agreement that satisfied both parts. Before the event in 2017 they, however, managed to find a solution (Interview SAHR and ADNO). SAHR is now under the impression that the relationship with ADNO is good.

We have unbelievably managed to, we crashed really in the media, but now we meet regularly. So had it not been for [person in ADNO] we would not have found a, we found a satisfying model (Interview SAHR).

Also ADNO agrees to this:

We have a good relationship with SAHR, and we have also had dialog with ESPN. So I believe it has been a positive experience (Interview ADNO).

Relationship between the event organizer and the public authorities

There has been a lot of disagreement regarding the X Games by the public authorities (Christiansen, 2016b). One of the parties that have been supportive the whole way is Venstre. The party was involved both when the Municipality of Oslo provided funding in 2016 and when the Government funded the event in 2017. Some of the politicians have had contact with the people in SAHR for many years and developed a good relationship (Interview Venstre). Venstre as a political party is in general supportive of sport outside the traditional organization:

We don't really see the difference. It's the way it's organized of course, but this is elite sport and the traditional is elite sport. The traditional sport has its structure with clubs and has to run a mass movement. This is different, but it motivates self-organized youths that is active, but without the structure. So the

effect seems to be the same, but with a different crowd. Together they reach broader (Interview Venstre).

SAHR says that the public authorities are among the most crucial stakeholders to sport events.

Norway is a small country so it is very different here than in the U.S. Public support is crucial for us, so the political Norway is an essential stakeholder group... Without public support we would not have been able to host the event (Interview SAHR).

SAHR is dependent on public support and it is therefore important with a good relationship to public authorities.

Relationship between the event organizer and a local sport club

As mentioned, SAHR and NIFs bad relationship can also affect TSK, hence it is a club in the NIF system.

X Games and NIF have had their feuds, and we have been placed a little in the middle. And that is a bit of an uncomfortable setting (Interview TSK).

Even though the club is a part of NIF, the representative from TSK pointed out that he/she does not always feel like the club fit into NIFs model. With SAHR on the other hand, TSK has met a great deal of understanding and support.

SAHR has been super engaged in our work! (Interview TSK).

SAHR contacted TSK before the club was even founded. The relationship among them is good and they have helped with each other's projects. As the event moved in 2017, they have not had official collaboration afterwards. However TSK says that if the X Games ever comes back to Oslo, TSK will welcome SAHR back to Tøyen (Interview TSK).

Stakeholder and stakeholder relationships

Even though stakeholder theory first of all refers to one organization's relations, my analysis revealed that also relationships between the stakeholders were important in the

value co-creation process. I will in this section present the relationships between the stakeholders that are most relevant for the value co-creation process.

Relationship between the sponsors and the NSOs

Some of the X Games' sponsors are also sponsoring NSBF and NSF free ski (Interview NSBF and NSF). This means that they have a relationship outside the X Games as well, and both parts are interested in a good relationship both regarding the X Games and the rest of the year.

We work closely with X Games' stakeholders, because they are also our stakeholders (Interview NSBF).

One of the organizations sponsoring the X Games as well as the NSOs is DNB. DNB benefits from its relationship with the NSOs during the event because the sponsor is able to use the athletes to promote itself and hereby create popularity at its stand (Interview DNB).

Relationship between media and the NSOs

For the NSOs it is important to get exposure for their athletes during the event, and it is therefore beneficial with a positive relationship with the media (Interview NSF and NSBF). Media covers stories before, during, and after the event, both regarding the event itself and stories about the athletes (e.g. Haugsvær, 2016; Jarlsbo, 2016; Trygslund, 2016). NRK is one of the media that covers the X Games. NRK works with the NSOs regarding making stories on their athletes.

The NSOs have their own photographers that follow them and document what they do, post stuff on social media and so on. And these are people we collaborate with. They have pictures and videos we can spice up our stories with (Interview NRK).

This shows that a good relationship among each other can benefit both parts, the NSOs get exposure, while the media gets interesting stories and pictures.

6.2.2 Knowledge (sharing)

'Knowledge (sharing)' is "the basic operant resource that comprises sharing consumers' knowledge, ideas, and creativity" (Ranjan & Read, 2016, p. 292). When knowledge is

shared competence gets build and value is created. Different stakeholders contribute with different knowledge to the event which means that the value is co-created. Data revealed that value was created through knowledge (sharing) concerning a) sport aspects, b) broadcasting/media coverage, c) anti-doping work, and d) the local community at Tøyen.

Sport aspect

Especially concerning the actual sport aspect of the event, knowledge was shared among the stakeholders, in order to make the competition as best as possible. SAHR had a lot of knowledge of the sports prior to the event, but still saw knowledge sharing as an important value. The NSOs and the organizers met regularly prior to the event to discuss the competition and qualification.

It was a group of people with different knowledge in order to increase the quality of the sport aspect (Interview NSF).

The NSOs also benefit from SAHR's knowledge. The owners of SAHR have worked with action sport for several years, and are convinced that they contribute with knowledge to the NSOs as well. When SAHR proposed to ESPN to host the X Games in Norway ESPN were immediately positive, because of all the knowledge the people in SAHR possess.

Because of our background and knowledge our request to the chief of the X Games was credible, because the people there know us. So they really wanted us to do it (Interview SAHR).

Working together on events like these can therefore seem to benefit both parts, due to the fact that they learn from each other. Both the federations and SAHR are interested in making the competition as best as possible and sharing knowledge is important in this process.

Broadcasting/media coverage

Also TV2 benefits from sharing knowledge. TV2 has learned a lot about action sport through this cooperation. Not only does TV2 learn from others, but the media company also has to create new knowledge on how to produce an event like this. Being that

SAHR also has competence in TV production SAHR and TV2 could exchange knowledge.

It is not that many other concepts where you have the opportunity to explore technology, communication, marketing, and implementation. So, on several areas with the X Games project we have had to, and have been forced to, challenge our self (Interview TV2).

This shows that cooperation between actors that possess some of the same knowledge still can learn from each other in order to further develop. Even though TV2 has a lot of experience with broadcasting, TV2 was not that familiar with action sport before collaborating with SAHR.

Not only TV2, but other media as well learn through the X Games. In order to convey the events to readers and viewers they have to possess enough knowledge themselves. Through their coverage of the events, viewers also learn about the sports.

We have to create and understanding for this. No one cares about stuff they don't understand (Interview NRK).

This way the knowledge sharing process goes all the way to the viewers of the event. Through the way media present the sport and the athletes, the viewers have the ability to learn. That is a value for them, as well as it is a value back to other stakeholders because it can increase the interest of the sport.

Anti-doping work

After the event in 2016 SAHR was critiqued for not facilitating for anti-doping work at its event. Even though the actors blamed each other, it seems like ESPN was the one most negative to facilitate for this (Interview ADNO, NIF, and SAHR). After discussions between the organizers and ADNO they, however, solved this issue before the event in 2017. ADNO here provided knowledge and together they found a solution for anti-doping facilitations that satisfied the owners, the host, and the anti-doping agency.

We have of course been positive to doping tests from the beginning, but we had to do it in a way that protected our independent organizer role. So I just think that we needed some time and some knowledge (Interview SAHR).

When asking if SAHR will continue with this on future events the answer was clear:

Yes! Now we know how to do it. It has become part of our, call it fair play system (Interview SAHR).

SAHR keeps its independence by not being part of the FIS calendar, but all the athletes still have to have a FIS license in order to compete. In this way, they are connected to the international anti-doping rules and can be tested in competitions, as well as out of competitions.

Possessing the knowledge that anti-doping is possible in commercial events, ADNO hope that this can be transferred to other X Games events.

I believe the X Games Norway can be a promoter in this issue. Show that it is possible, and that the athletes and the environment can live with it (Interview ADNO).

Neither SAHR nor ADNO is in the position that they can implement anti-doping work in other X Games events, however, they can share their knowledge and show that it is possible for others.

Knowledge regarding the local community at Tøyen

The knowledge exchange between SAHR and TSK was also valuable. While SAHR provided TSK with contacts and network to help with its project, TSK provided SAHR with information regarding the local community.

It is a bit special to be involved with Tøyen as a place, where there is a lot of child poverty... And I think SAHR is proud to have been part of making Tøyen 'the place to be' in that period (Interview TSK).

TSK felt that compared to other events located at Tøyen, the X Games was the one that cared the most about the local community. A big event takes up a lot of place, which takes away a big area for the residents. SAHR was willing to share its knowledge about events and the sport with the community.

To share knowledge and competence, that is really valuable... It gives ambitions that I don't think a lot of the kids here experience at home (Interview TSK).

This knowledge sharing seems to have benefited SAHR, as well as TSK and the rest of the local community.

6.2.3 Equity

Equity is a firm's willingness to share control, as well as actors' desire to contribute in the co-creation process (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Within the X Games Norway the value co-creation of equity exist in some degree.

Co-hosting

In 2016, SAHR and TV2 were both hosts of the event. While SAHR functioned as the host in operational matters, TV2 was the official host and had the economic and political risk (Interview TV2). It was, however, the Municipality of Oslo that demanded that TV2 should be the host in 2016 (Interview SAHR). In 2017 the roles changed and SAHR took over the risk, while TV2 was the host broadcaster.

The second year we said that we did not want to take the risk connected to host an event, neither do we possess that competence that SAHR has on the field. It is not our core competence, we produce pictures... So we agreed that SAHR should be the host, and we the host broadcaster. Maybe a more correct model (Interview TV2).

The second year it was the Government that funded the event, and not the Municipality. SAHR is willing to share control by co-hosting with TV2, however TV2 sees its limitation and rather wants to contribute in the area where TV2 has the most competence. This shows that TV2 has the desire to contribute as best as possible in order to co-create value.

The value of equity towards the NSOs is present, but to some extent. Both the NSOs were eager to be involved in the event. At first SAHR had a cooperation agreement with both NSF and NSBF. As a result of pressure from NIF, they both had to back out of the agreement right before the event in 2016. After this, and towards the event in 2017, they did not have an official agreement, however, they had an understanding of a cooperation concerning tasks done by the NSOs. This shows that the NSOs still wanted to contribute, even though there was no official agreement.

In traditional sport events in Norway events are hosted by, or in cooperation with, a club or an NSO (NIF, 2015). When asked if the NSO would have been interested in being a co-host NSBF answered as follow:

We wouldn't have said no immediately, no. It had of course been of interest for us to look at how we could be a host in that kind of event. But SAHR has been pretty clear – the corporation does not want the organized sport as a host (Interview NSBF).

Here it is the focal organization that is not willing to share its entire control. SAHR has its own event organizer model, which means that SAHR is a private company that has no formal contact with the organized Norwegian sport system. NIF is not pleased with this system and did not want the NSOs, which are organized under the NIF umbrella, to cooperate with this company when it was not done on NIF's premises. NIF's representative said that NIF wanted its NSOs to become partners in the event, but it had to be based on NIF's values.

It is important for us, especially since it is our athletes that are participating, that the money is going to the athletes or the organization that facilitates for athletes (Interview NIF).

It was a challenge for us that it was private owners... That are not necessarily concerned for the sports' rules and principles (Interview NIF).

This shows that NIF either wants to be fully involved or not involved at all. It seems like NIF wants to contribute, but not when the values of its organization are not taken into account.

Involvement by sponsors

Something else that changed from 2016 to 2017 was the involvement by the sponsors. The first year, few of them were particularly involved at the actual event. In 2017, however, DNB took initiative in order to contribute at the arena.

I do not think we would have participated another year by just standing on the side and giving money. We hadn't done that, it is not our strategy (Interview DNB).

This shows a stakeholders willingness to contribute to co-creation of value. By having activities at the event DNB can reach potential customers, as well as the sponsor contributes to a good atmosphere at the arena. Even though people can have trouble connecting the relevance between the X Games and DNB, their collaboration seems to have worked out pretty well.

It is extreme sport. So it is a little weird that DNB, an A4 traditional bank is a part of it. So I can see why someone just says "What? Why sponsor that?"
(Interview DNB).

A reason why this collaboration works well can be a result of DNB's desire to contribute at the actual event. DNB is not just concerned about its brand, but to create experiences for its customers as well.

6.2.4 Interaction

Value can be co-created through interaction. Interaction gives "opportunity to understand, share, and serve needs" (Ranjan & Read, 2016, p. 293). Participation, dialog, and engagement are key components in the value of interaction. Praise, criticism, and suggestions exchanged through interaction help develop the service (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Interaction is also a value itself due to the fact that it generates social practice.

Dialog between the event organizer and the stakeholders

SAHR is aware that dialog with their stakeholders contribute to co-create value.

The dialog is extremely important. Sometimes it is demanding because people have different goals, and maybe a different tribal language (Interview SAHR).

This is something SAHR take very seriously. When going into negotiations the people in SAHR have an open mind and try to really understand what the other part is trying to communicate. In this way it makes it easier to work together to achieve a goal. Still, SAHR admit that it can be difficult to understand what the different stakeholders are looking for. To put yourself in someone else's head is not easy. Through experience, participation, and a healthy dialog understanding each other's needs get easier (Interview SAHR).

Participation by stakeholders

The NSOs were part of a sport group in order to make the sport aspect as best as possible.

We gave guidance and input... We handed the organizers with information and they kept us updated throughout the process (Interview NSBF).

Here, all the actors involved could share their competence and opinion, and try to understand each other's needs. By participating in meetings like this the NSOs had the opportunity to get involved and come with suggestions and in this way participate in the value co-creation process.

The stakeholders involved also interacted with each other, even though they might have had different tasks. Since some of the sponsors also are NSF and NSBF's sponsors they collaborated during the event. DNB had its own stand in Hafjell where athletes from NSF and NSBF came to visit so that DNB would get more attention (Interview DNB). This shows that different stakeholders participated in each other tasks during the event, which contributes to co-creation of value. For DNB it was a value having the athletes participating at its stand.

Engagement by stakeholders

The X Games in Norway has been categorized as pioneering work by several stakeholders (Interviews ADNO, TV2, and NRK). In this type of work interaction is important in order to develop further. Several of the stakeholders have been engaged in the work in able to make the event great.

NSBF have been really engaged in the X Games, both by contributing directly in the planning and implementation, and by promoting the event. Especially towards NIF, NSBF has tried to speak positively about the X Games.

We have contributed with information towards NIF around what X Games is. It can be discussed if we succeeded or not, but we have at least tried to inform NIF about the X Games from our point of view (Interview NSBF).

This illustrates some of NSBF's engagement towards the event, which shows that the NSO wants the X Games to succeed. NSBF also show engagement, together with NSF,

by hosting qualifications and by showing support to the event in the media and towards the Government (Interview NSBF and NSF; Røste, E. & Keul, O. 2015, Røste & Keul to the committee of Transportation and Environment, March 26th 2015). NSBF and NSF sent a letter to the Municipality of Oslo prior to the first event, where they expressed their positive attitude towards the event and highlighted the value such an event would contribute with (Røste, E. & Keul, O. 2015, Røste & Keul to the committee of Transportation and Environment, March 26th 2015).

Venstre has also been engaged in the event and to sport outside the traditional organization (Byrådsak 46, 2015, [15/00568-2] March 12th 2015; Interview Venstre). The party is under the impression that events such as the X Games bring a lot of value to several actors.

[X Games] is a step in the direction towards a broader sport focus. It is different, considering you reach another crowd. It gives a great international attention. And you are left with venues, it is shown that there are venues you can use afterwards. So very good, it has been very good (Interview Venstre).

Venstre's representative underlines that the party is positive to the event and that Venstre has supported it the whole way. The party does not see why some other political parties are sceptic to the event (Interview Venstre).

6.2.5 Experience

Ranjan and Read (2016) explained experience as “an emphatic, emotional, and memorable interaction that has intrinsic value” (p. 293). Value is co-created through every stakeholder's experience.

The overall feedback from the stakeholder gives an indicator that the actors involved had positive experiences.

It was a really successful event, a lot of people, and a fantastic result for everyone involved (Interview NSF)

Also the feedback from the audience shows that their experience of the event was very good:

We did some measurements in Oslo among the audience in how satisfied they were with the event, it was extremely good results. It was almost as we did not believe it, and no one had any negative experience (Interview SAHR).

Intrinsic value

TSK and a part of the local community had a positive experience with the event which provided intrinsic value.

I was so proud to be present at the event and see stars in the eyes of the kids. When you come from Mogadishu it is not given that you know who Tiril who won the X Games is, but I have a picture of a child with Norwegian flags in his cheeks who is so proud to be held by Tiril. It is incredible to have those kinds of memories (Interview TSK).

For the children in TSK, this event was a highlight that they probably will remember for a long time. Also for the athletes, the X Games provides an intrinsic value. The feedback from the participating athletes have been great (Iversen et al., 2016). The Norwegian free ski athlete Tiril Sjåstad Christiansen cried tears of joy when she won the Big Air competition in 2016, right in front of her teammate Johanne Killi. “I don’t think people understand how special this is” (Jarlsbo & Sævig, 2016). The athletes that are used to compete still see value with the event, and competing in the X Games really means something to them. For the Norwegian athletes competing in the X Games in their own country are some of the biggest experiences in their career (Interview NSBF and NSF).

Long-lasting value

Even though the event only lasted a couple of days the people involved still have memories afterwards. The representative from NRK has been to several X Games events and had this to say about the X Games Norway:

I feel like they have managed to create something good with the X Games Norway. And I have to honor the X Games in Skur 13, the skating competition. What they managed to build there was something that not only has value for a sport event, but it has additional value afterword that is positive (Interview NRK).

Skur 13, where the skateboarding competitions were held, is now open for public and it has become a popular skating and activity venue (Interview TV2; Iversen et al., 2016).

SAHR pointed out that the skateboarding sale increased a great deal after the X Games in Oslo, which shows that experiences that people have with the event can create value afterwards (Interview SAHR).

Also Venstre agrees that the event can give long-lasting value:

As an event nothing beats the big air at Tøyen in 2016. I believe it is important to have unique events, and that something unique happens. Even though what happened at Tøyen was only there for a couple of days, the pictures will last forever (Interview Venstre).

Good experiences with the event can create long-lasting value. That people are happy with the event can also increase the opportunity for it to become an annual event, which will further provide more value.

6.2.6 Personalization

Value can be created through personalization, which is “the uniqueness of the actual or perceives use process, the value being contingent on individual characteristics” (Ranjan & Read, 2016, pp. 293–294). As well as personal experience by the actors, this section will also present what is unique with this event, as experienced by the stakeholders, in order to create value. What the stakeholders experience as unique with the X Games compared to more traditional events were repeatedly found in the analyses.

The organizing model

Unlike traditional organized sport events in Norway the X Games is hosted by a private corporation that theoretically has the ability to take out dividend. This might be the most obvious difference toward traditional sport events in Norway. This is also something NIF has expressed its concern about. Due to the fact that the X Games is a private event, the organizers are not obligated to follow NIF values. NIF was worried that with private owners the money would not benefit the sport. The fact that SAHR and ESPN are private companies with commercial motives does not please NIF (Interview NIF).

We feel that it is a bit untidy when commercial actors from abroad that is not subject to Norwegian law is there to promote its own commercial interest. It is a demanding situation, and for us it is demanding that the public cooperate with private actors. The X Games is a bit to commercial to satisfy our demands (Interview NIF).

SAHR points out that even though it is a corporation, a lot of the money SAHR manage is public and the corporation has to show where the money is being used.

Regarding the debate about openness and things like that, it is not an issue for us. It is a discussion that is over many years ago. All our financial expenditures are open to the Ministry and the media and so on. So we have to deliver what we have promised, and if we do that we get the agreed amount of money. That is how the model works (Interview SAHR).

SAHR argued that its model is financially beneficial due to the fact that the organization is self economically responsible, which makes the focus on cost benefit big. An evaluation of the 2016 event shows that the event went with surplus, which backs up this saying (Iversen et al., 2016). Making surplus is unusual for large sport events, which show that the way the event is organized can have a positive economic value (Iversen et al., 2016).

Entertainment and festival aspect

A theme that appeared frequently in the interviews was that the X Games is more than a sport event, with its festival and entertainment contribution. Compared to some of the more traditional sport events the X Games is made to be shown on TV.

I think it is the mix between sport, entertainment, lifestyle, and music which makes the X Games very special. And that it is an event made for TV (Interview NSBF).

The fact that it is something more than “just” a sport event increase the entertainment value of the event. Also DNB points out the festival part of the event:

It is as much a festival as it is a sport event, with concerts, light shows, it is an insane rig (Interview DNB).

The fact that it is so much focus on the entertainment part leads to the fact that the media and broadcaster stakeholder groups have to do things a bit different than they would do in a “normal” event.

The entertainment and cultural aspect is almost as big as the sport aspect. And it is this mix where things become complex and that is why we handle it different (Interview TV2).

TV 2 said that the people involved in the broadcasting had to put a lot of time and effort into the event, but that they also were able to play and explore with the concept in a much greater deal than with other projects (Interview TV2).

Young crowd

Another theme that appeared was the fact that the X Games managed to attract a young crowd. Over 80 % of the audience at the venue in 2016 was 35 years old and younger (Iversen et al., 2016). Also the volunteers at the event were young. In Hafjell in 2017 around 90 % of the volunteers were 29 years old or younger (Interview SAHR). SAHR sees value by attracting this young crowd.

It is a young, attractive target group that both politicians and sponsors care about, and that is hard to reach (Interview SAHR)

TV2 supports the fact that the X Games is interesting to the media because it reach a young crowd (Interview TV2). Also NRK agrees to this:

It catches youths...NRK has an ambition to become better towards younger viewers (Interview NRK).

NIF also agrees that the X Games managed to attract a young audience which NIF is aware that is hard to reach.

The X Games is very outgoing. It is the sport that is like that I think. They have focus on youths, they dress as youths, and the way they speak and act. I think it is a conscious profile. You can't say these things about the Norwegian cross-country skiing championship for example (Interview NIF).

Sponsors, media, and politicians want to reach out to several groups in the community, but admit that the youths are challenging (Interviews DNB, NRK, TV2, and Venstre). Reaching a young crowd, both spectators at the event and TV-viewers, brings value to several of the stakeholders. The stakeholders' effort to facilitate for a young crowd resulted in co-created value. The event itself can be said to have value for youths, as well as the fact that attracting young adults is a value for other stakeholders.

6.2.7 Towards a mutual goal: Success

A theme that appeared in the analyses was that the stakeholders were working towards something together. Even though the stakeholders have different purposes to participate they are all working towards a goal of making the event as best as possible. They all have their own goals and gain different value, but they still work towards the same main goal and want to succeed together. While ADNO worked in order to make the anti-doping part as best as possible, NSF and NSBF were more concerned around the sport aspect, and TV2 wanted to broadcast it perfectly (Interviews ADNO, NSBF, NSF, and SAHR). Separately, they made sure each part was as good as possible, which means that they together were able to create a successful event.

SAHR is also concerned about contributing to create value for its stakeholders.

We try to think this way for all stakeholder groups, what would be a success for them after the event? (Interview SAHR).

This way of thinking is an important step towards value co-creation. If the stakeholders help each other reaching their goals with the event they create value together. DNB points out the fact that the actors were willing to help each other:

You experience in this how you actually, it is a big event, but when you're in the middle of it, it is pretty down to earth. And you experience that everyone is there to lift everything. If we need help we get it. If someone needs help from us they get it. I experienced this pretty clearly in this project with all the actors, we were eager to succeed together! So I feel that the collaboration with everyone was really good, to be honest (Interview DNB).

As shown the athletes backed up other stakeholders, which create value. In exchange several of the stakeholders expressed the importance of backing up the athletes, which was mentioned as maybe the most important stakeholder by most of the representatives (Interviews NRK, NSBF, NSF, and SAHR).

During the interviews the representatives often bragged about the other organizations and people working in the organizations. Being able to trust each other and focusing on good work bring value to the stakeholders.

A lot of people and a lot of companies know what they are doing, which makes us able to deliver in an extremely high level (Interview SAHR).

He is a guy that has a strong political competence, knows the sport, and has an ethical compass that we really appreciate (Interview TV2).

The stakeholders are also impressed over what SAHR has managed to create.

SAHR is a little organization with few people, but with an extreme ability to make things happen (Interview TV2).

6.2.8 Cultural understanding

Another theme that appeared in addition to Ranjan and Read's (2016) classification was the cultural understanding. This was an important aspect for value co-creation in the data analysis.

The culture and the history are totally different than the traditional sport that has been bound to national organization (Interview SAHR).

The sports that are being competed in, in the X Games, are all classified as action sport. As Thorpe and Wheaton (2017) stated the development of most action sports differs from the traditional rule-bound culture. Most action sports developed from playing and having fun with friends, before structured forms were introduced in a much later phase than most of the traditional sport (Interviews NRK and SAHR). The X Games has been part of this action sport culture for many years (Interview SAHR; Strittmatter et al., 2018). Because of this development the culture in these sports differs from traditional sports which affect the event and value creation in several ways.

It is a much more flat and free structure and it represent a culture and a target group that is much more interesting than a lot of other sports within the organized structure (Interview TV2).

The culture aspect is one of the reasons TV2 wanted to host the event. It brings value in reaching another target group and it was valuable for TV2 to be able to play with the concept. NRK points out that due to this cultural understanding the athletes have the ability to affect the event in a great extent.

The athletes voices are strong in the X Games, both in Norway and abroad, than other similar sports where big, heavy federations just tell you this is the deal, be in or out. So that's clear, and I guess that is a part of how the sports have developed. It started with playing in the hills and then into structured forms and eventually World cup and Olympic sports (Interview NRK).

SAHR backs up the fact that there is a dialog with the athletes regarding the competitions (Interview SAHR). This has value for the athletes, however it can be more challenging for the organizers having to consider several people's opinions.

The majority of the stakeholders involved understand this culture and build the event around it, which contribute to value co-creation. However, when the NSOs had to back out of the event there raised a cultural clash for NSBF. The culture in the snowboard environment is especially strong (Strittmatter et al., 2018).

For the snowboard federation it was a huge risk, being experienced as, well that the organization got unpopular in the environment, by going against what is the most popular. It is a very strong culture you know, where people are very engaged and define their self from the activity. They are snowboarders. So it will always be a move that showed that the snowboard federation did not stand on the snowboarders' side (Interview SAHR).

In an interview with the newspaper Klassekampen in 2016 the president of NSBF explained the NSO's side of the story:

NIF made it clear for us which consequences NSBF would face if we chose to stay in the agreement with TV2. We got the understanding that the secretary general in NIF would take it to his board and evaluate which sanctions they might use. The consequences could for example be of economic art, we could lose our economic support from NIF (Tilseth, 2016).

Further he points out the cultural aspect. "On one side we are an Olympic discipline, and on the other side we do unorganized freeriding and summit hikes with good friends. But they are both snowboarding" (Tilseth, 2016). NSBF points out that NIF has something to learn from the X Games when it comes to engaging youths, and that NIF lacks understanding of the snowboarding culture (Tilseth, 2016). This also gets backed up from SAHR:

It is really just two ways to do it that is anchored in different history and different cultures, and I believe that NIF could have won a lot to just go in dialog and try to understand it, instead of just trying to end it (Interview SAHR).

This shows that culture can have a huge effect on an event, and when different cultures meet it can create challenges for those involved. In the X Games Norway, most of the stakeholders respected the action sport culture and found the culture valuable. SAHR

and NSBF felt that NIF, however, did not respect this culture in the same way, which led to some conflicts.

6.2.9 Exposure

Another theme that appeared in the analysis was the exposure of the event. All the stakeholders agree that the event got a lot of exposure and it has been visible in the media, both from positive and negative aspects.

Brand

The X Games as a brand was much bigger than SAHR was aware of. SAHR has hosted events before, but this time a lot more people cared what the organization was doing.

We sold much more tickets, got a lot more sponsors, and all kinds of interest actually. Also from the athletes (Interview SAHR).

After the first event SAHR was more aware of the big interest, but was a bit sceptic since the event had been moved away from the city. However, the interest was still huge. Now, SAHR is even more confident towards the interest and the brand of the event.

It seems like it is a lot of positive associations towards the X Games (Interview SAHR).

SAHR gets backed up from NSF regarding the brand.

X Games is the “household” competition in our sport (Interview NSF).

This also means that the athletes are interested in the event, which brings a great value. When the best athletes are participating the interest from the spectators, media, and sponsors also increase (Interview SAHR).

Also NIF agrees that the event has some spectacular sides and is good at marketing, which creates interest.

It is first and foremost the design and the happening, they manage to create an atmosphere, it is music, it’s typical, what should I say, idols are made visible. I have to say that they are good at marketing the event (Interview NIF).

NIF admits that the traditional organized sport has something to learn from the X Games regarding brand marketing and making events more audience friendly.

Much of the sport can sometimes be a bit boring and introvert. The X Games is very outgoing in everything it does (Interview NIF).

TV2 thought it was fun working with ESPN and SAHR because they are experts when it comes to dissemination and implementation.

It gave us the opportunity to test, learn, and play with a well-known brand, together with some of the best people in the world (Interview TV2).

NRK also agrees that the X Games has managed to create a brand. NRK is under the impression that the event is really spectacular and that the sport is being recognized by the audience (Interview NRK).

Venstre is under the impression that the X Games helped develop Oslo as a brand as well. The party believes that Oslo should be a winter capital, and that events hosted there should reflect that. The X Games together with other kinds of events and attractions should form Oslo as a unique brand that has something to offer for a great variety of people, both for the people living there and for those visiting (Interview Venstre).

TSK got to co-brand the project “Ø på Snø” with the X Games brand.

I thought it was really nice that we could share, we kind of leached on the X Games brand, we were nobody when we started. And because we were able to co-brand ourselves with the X Games we were recognized by the market. We got a lot of media coverage and a lot of focus on our issues that were really beneficial for us and what we have achieved. And X Games was not familiar in our local community, so we kind of helped each other (Interview TSK).

This co-branding brought value both to TSK and to SAHR. That TSK could use the X Games' brand gave the club a lot of benefits, while TSK helped X Games create awareness and enthusiasm in the local community.

Increased interest for sport and athletes

For the Norwegian athletes, X Games in their own country is indeed valuable.

It is really attractive to the athletes. Both regarding the prize, but also due to the value they get through exposure (Interview NSF).

During the event the athletes usually get more press attention than they normally do.

The media is the ones that mainly ensure the exposure the athletes receive through this kind of event. If you think about the X Games Norway specifically, you can say that a lot of these athletes are more famous outside Norway than they are in Norway. So it may be through X Games Norway that the media actually take part in the exposure of the Norwegian athletes and put them in the spotlight, in a greater way than they are used to (Interview NRK).

The interviews revealed that one of the goals with the event for several of the stakeholders were to increase the interest towards the sport (Interviews NSBF, NSF, SAHR, and TV2).

For us it is important that our national athletes gets exposure, but also that our sport is referred to in a positive way in the media (Interviews NSBF).

As the interviews and the media analysis show this seems to have been a goal the stakeholders managed to reach, which showed to be valuable for several stakeholders.

The X Games has increased the interest towards snowboarding (Interview NSBF).

The X Games contribute to increased attention towards the events we organize our self (Interview NSBF).

Also NIF sees a value with this kind of exposure towards the sport.

As long as the values are there and what is being communicated is okay, it is brilliant that the sports get to showcase themselves (Interview NIF).

International awareness

The event also got a lot of international exposure. Both through traditional media, and a great deal through the athletes own social media, the X Games reach a huge international crowd (Iversen et al., 2016). Together, the athletes that competed in the X Games Norway 2016 had 31 million followers from around the world on social media

(Iversen et al., 2016). A lot of these athletes are active on social media which leads to showcasing of the X Games, the cities, and of Norway.

Oslo's ambition is to be the world leading winter capital and host for great international championships and sport events (Byrådsak 46, 2015, [15/00568-2] March 12th 2015). Hosting big, international events, such as the X Games contributes to this goal.

That you get to showcase Norway outside the traditional picture with fjords and stave churches is positive. Fjords and churches are nice, but here you get something totally different that has a huge distribution in social media (Interview Venstre).

Not only is X Games and Norway showcased through media, but when hosting this event it brings a lot of people from around the world together.

What is nice is when you have an event as the X Games is that you get the entire international snowboard world at your place, which I believe was really positive (Interview NSBF).

When people are brought together at events like this, previously presented value co-creation such as relationship, interaction, and knowledge (sharing) can be further developed.

7. Discussion

I will in this chapter discuss the findings from the results, in light of theory and previous research. The overall question - *Are commercial sport events a problem for traditional organized sport in Norway?* - will be discussed in light of the findings from the research question: *How do the stakeholders of a commercial sport event co-create value?* In the first section (7.1) I will discuss the differences and similarities between stakeholders in traditional sport events in comparison to the stakeholders of the X Games Norway. To be able to know if commercial sport events are a problem for the traditional sport it is necessary to know who these stakeholders are. In order to see if the value co-created in X Games affect the traditional stakeholders, which is the discussion point in Section 7.2, it is essential to be aware of their roles and to know where there are differences. To be able to contribute to the overall question, I will in section two of this chapter discuss if the way value was co-created in the X Games Norway is a problem to the traditional organized sport.

7.1 Commercial vs. traditional sport events stakeholders – is it really a difference?

I will in this section discuss if, and how, the roles of the stakeholders in the X Games differ from the roles of stakeholders in traditional events and how this contributes to create value. It is necessary to be aware of differences due to the fact that the value is co-created because of the stakeholder roles. Different stakeholder roles might not lead to the same value co-creation. In order to answer the overall question, it is necessary to compare stakeholder roles. Comparing stakeholder roles provides a foundation for discussing if commercial sport events are a problem to traditional organized sport. How the similarity or differentiation makes the stakeholders co-create value is the main discussion point. The discussion is based on previous research and the results presented in this study. Table 5 shows a comparison between Chappelet & Parent's (2015) stakeholder classification and the stakeholders detected in this study.

Table 5: Traditional sport event stakeholders vs. X Games' stakeholders.

Stakeholder group	Chappelet and Parent's (2015) classification	X Games Norway
The organizers	Bidding and hosting organizers	Hosting organizers (ESPN, SAHR)
The sport organizations	Event owner and the sport federations	The sport federations (NSF, NSBF)
The participants	Athletes and the spectators	Athletes, spectators, and fans
The support	Parents/entourage and the delegation mission staff	<i>Not investigated</i>
The community	The residents, community groups, and local tourism organizations	The residents, community groups (TSK), and local tourism organizations
The funders	Local, regional, and national host government, and the sponsors	Local and national government, and the sponsors
The media	The broadcaster, written press, and social media	The broadcaster, written press, and social media
Other stakeholders	Security agencies and non- governmental organizations	Suppliers, NIF, and ADNO

7.1.1 The organizers

Regarding the organizers there are some differences between the X Games Norway and traditional sport events. The X Games Norway has been hosted by a corporation and a media channel, while an organizing committee in a traditional event is normally created by governments or event rights holders (Parent, 2015). Traditional events therefore often have more guidelines and regulations they have to follow. This can have both positive and negative aspects. As presented in the results, NIF was worried that a potential profit would not benefit the sports and the athletes in a commercial event. As a corporation SAHR has the ability to take out dividend. However, since the corporation is self economically responsible SAHR has a focus towards cost-benefit. This focus resulted in the fact the first X Games Norway made a profit, which is not common for large-scale sport events (Iversen et al., 2016). Compared to the Biathlon World Championship and the Youth Olympic Games (YOG), both hosted in Norway in 2016, the X Games received a lot less governmental money per spectator than the other two. Still, it was the only event that made a profit. Iversen et al. (2016) argued that private event organizers can be beneficial for the Government, due to the fact that events hosted by private companies are often cheaper and to the fact that private companies are self economically responsible. Most international sport events, such as the Olympics and World Championships, have a bidding process where the organizers usually use a lot of time and money without a guarantee that they will win the bid (Parent, 2015). The X Games Norway did not have to go through a bidding process, which is a value since it probably saved the organizers a great deal of time and money.

7.1.2 The sport organizations

The sport organizations are often owners of sport events, however, this was not the case of the X Games Norway. Sport organizations' roles as described by Parent (2015) is to provide rules and regulations, oversee the functioning, and approve the fields of play. In the X Games Norway, NSBF and NSF did not have any official power to affect the event, however, they were involved regarding the competitions. The NSOs had a written agreement with TV2 for the 2016 event which stated their roles. This agreement said that in every decision making meeting the host has the majority, which make it impossible for the NSOs to decide anything without the host's will (Keul, O. 2015, Keul to the Municipality of Oslo, April 27th 2015). Still, the agreement stated that the event should follow NSF and NSBF's competition rules as far as it did not break with ESPNs

regulations. Based on the results the NSOs were important stakeholders, which contributed to value co-creation in several ways. In private, commercial events it is not given that cooperation between the host and sport organizations is present. In the case of the X Games the NSOs have contributed with value on several levels, and their role have been beneficial to several stakeholders. It is difficult to know if even more collaboration, for example with the NSOs as co-hosts, would increase value, however based on the findings one can assume that it would at least not decrease the co-creation.

7.1.3 The participants

Several of my informants agreed with MacIntosh and Dill (2015) that the athletes are one of the main stakeholder groups. No matter what kind of event, the athletes' job is to compete. Without any athletes there would not be any competition. How the athletes behave in and outside the competition also contribute to value co-creation. The athletes have not been represented in this study, but it is unlikely that their behavior would change based on an event. All athletes are different, and also behave differently. The athletes' behavior in media can reflect positively or negatively on the event. Based on the media analysis, most athletes were positive towards the event in the media. There were no known incidents of athletes behaving poorly, like doping or fights, which would have affected the sport and the event negatively. Several of the athletes competing in the X Games were active in social media, and in this way contributed with exposure of the event. This is, however, not just the case in the X Games. A lot of athletes are active in social media, no matter which events they compete in.

Spectators contribute with atmosphere at the arena. At events with ticket sale, and sale of merchandise and food/beverage, they also contribute with economic value. Both of the X Games Norway events have had a huge amount of spectators at the venues, which have contributed to value co-creation. Special with the X Games' spectators is that it is a young crowd. Young people are often hard to reach at sport events, and several stakeholders see value in attracting this group. The media, sponsors, and public authorities are interested in collaborating with actors that manage to attract youths because that is one of the hardest groups to reach. As well as spectators, SAHR pointed out that the X Games has a lot of fans. These fans are engaged also ahead of the event, and contribute to value co-creation by spreading positive views towards the event first and foremost in social media. By engagement from the fans, the Government also

becomes more interested, which can make the politicians more willing to provide funding.

7.1.4 The community

The role of the community differs based on the event, and how willing the organizers are in including the community. As Derom et al. (2015) stated, community groups are often interested in the leverage after the event. There are several examples of so called white elephants, where venues are not taking care of and are not being used after a sport event (Alm, Solberg, Storm, & Jakobsen, 2016). As pointed out in the results, the skating venue from 2016 is now open for public and is a popular venue for skateboarding and other activities. The other venues from 2016 and 2017 were either build as a one-time venue, or already existing venues were used. TSK's project connected to the X Games, "Ø på Snø", continued also after the event and therefore continued to bring value to the local kids. The amount of contact with the community differs from event to event probably independent if is a traditional or commercial event. However, research points out that the Olympics often struggle with leveraging social and community benefits (Derom et al., 2015).

7.1.5 The funders

Both governments and sponsors are usually funders of sport events, which is also the case with the X Games Norway (Chappelet & Parent, 2015). Traditional events where bidding is involved usually needs governmental support in this phase as well, but except for that, the Governments role is relatively similar in traditional and commercial events. In a small country like Norway, the private market is not big enough that it would be possible to host big events without public support (Interview SAHR). Based on previous research and the results in this study the motives for the Government and the sponsors seem to be relatively similar in traditional events and in the X Games. They also contribute with about the same value to different events. The representative from Venstre does not see the difference between commercial and traditional events, and does not see any problems with the X Games. The representative from DNB also pointed out that DNB's role is no different in the X Games than in other sport events the organization sponsors. Based on this, I conclude that the roles of the funders are relatively similar in traditional and commercial sport events.

7.1.6 The media

The medias role in traditional and commercial events is also quite similar. The broadcaster should televise, while other media report from events through newspapers, webpages, and TV/radio (Boyle, 2015; Silk & Morgan, 2015). In the case of the X Games Norway 2016 the broadcaster was also the host, which is not common for sport events. TV2 was then economically responsible for the event. The fact that TV2 functioned as a host probably affected the event. When a TV channel host a sport event the organization is likely to get more involved in the sport aspect than a normal broadcaster would have power to do. As previously mentioned the agreement between TV2 and the NSOs stated that TV2 always had the majority of the votes (Keul, O. 2015, Keul to the Municipality of Oslo, April 27th 2015). When a TV channel that has slightly different goals than a normal sport event host has, this authority can affect the sport aspect of the event. A broadcaster is interested in attracting viewers and presenting pictures in a great way and is not necessarily concerned with the athletes' wishes. On the other hand, the result shows that the athletes' voice in the X Games is strong, which mean that the organizers take their opinion into consideration.

Most of the Norwegian media companies cover the X Games Norway. Both positive and negative aspects have been in focus. All of the bad press regarding the anti-doping debate, the discussion regarding public funding, and disagreement with NIF can contribute as a hinder towards value co-creation. Media has the ability to influence people's opinions. When media write negative stories of the event this can influence other stakeholders.

The results showed that social media contributed to a great deal of the exposure of the X Games Norway. Boyle (2015) argued that it has been a development in the impact social media has on sport events, but that it has to be research further. It is therefore hard to compare social medias impact in the X Games with traditional event.

7.1.7 Other stakeholders

There are several other stakeholders that can affect or be affected by the X Games Norway. In this section I will discuss ADNO's and NIF's role. They are stakeholder that are involved in traditional sport events, and also became involved in the X Games Norway.

ADNO

ADNO is under the impression that every sport event that is being hosted in Norway and receive public support should follow WADA's doping regulations. ADNO pointed out that the same principals are followed in the X Games, as all other events ADNO is involved in. All events are different, and therefore have to be approached differently. Even though ADNO perform the same tasks in the X Games as in traditional events, the representative from ADNO admitted that working with the X Games was pioneer work. The biggest problem was to actually be allowed to perform tests at the event following the in-competition regulations, which was not found a solution to the first year. Based on the results it seems like ESPN as the owner was the one that was the least willing to facilitate for anti-doping. Having a commercial, international owner can therefore create some challenges for events hosted in Norway. ESPN is not obligated to follow Norwegian rules and values. SAHR and TV2 in comparison have to follow regulations set by the Government. It is this fact that can make implementing anti-doping and similar topics more challenging in commercial events than in traditional event. Powerful, international organizations are not always easy to influence. On the other hand, when it was made clear that the X Games would not get public support without a proper anti-doping regulation approved by ADNO, ESPN respected this demand (Andersen H. 2017, Andersen to the Ministry of Culture, June 14th 2017; Aasmundstad, P. K. 2016, the Ministry of Culture to SAHR Production AS, grant letter, July 8th 2016).

NIF

NIF is normally considered as a supportive stakeholder in large-scale sport events in Norway, as an NSO is usually part of the event. In the X Games Norway NIF's stakeholder role was in contrast considered as an opponent. As the results point out, NIF was not satisfied with the event and wanted to stop it. SAHR points out that traditional events normally does not have such a strong opponent, and that this was challenging. Having an actor wanting to stop the event contributes to hinder value co-creation. Instead of focusing on preparing for the event, the organizers had to spend time arguing with NIF. That NIF made its NSOs back out of the agreement with SAHR and TV2 also hindered value co-creation. Even though it did not have that many practical consequences, the NSOs trustworthiness was jeopardized. Especially NSBF's integrity towards the snowboard culture was questioned when the NSO backed out of the event that means the most to the athletes.

This section shows that the stakeholders' involved in the X Games is much the same as in traditional events, however some have slightly different roles. The different roles explain part of the value co-created in a commercial sport event in Norway

7.2 Does the co-created value in a commercial sport event contribute to sport in Norway or is it a problem?

The results show how the stakeholders of the X Games Norway co-create value. I will in this section discuss if the value co-created contributes to sport in Norway in any way, or if it is a problem to Norwegian sport, hence the overall question. NIF is afraid that events such as the X Games threaten NIF's organizational values and as written in the introduction Enjolras (2002a) argued that commercialization can reduce value. This section will discuss to which extent this is applicable for the X Games Norway. Several questions regarding value co-creation as a problem to the traditional sport appeared when analyzing the findings, which will now be discussed. These questions will help answer the overall question in light of the research question.

7.2.1 The private organizational model – economically beneficial or just threatening for NIF?

As the results show, there have been disagreements toward the X Games Norway's organizing model. One of the characteristics with this model is that the organizer is self economically responsible. If the event ends with financial deficit the organizers themselves have to cover this cost. As presented in the result chapter this model makes the organizers particularly aware of the cost-benefit aspect. When a host knows that it has to cover a potential deficit one can assume the organization would be more economically careful than those who have financial backup.

Events with this kind of organizational model can be a value for sport in Norway due to the fact that the Government might be more willing to provide money for events they do not have to cover the deficit for. This can in so matter contribute to increase the number of sport events in Norway. As written in Chapter 2, sport events bring value to several actors, and are important for the development of sport. Sport events also increase the volunteer culture, which is one of NIF's values. Yet, it can be discussed if a possible increase of sport events with a private organizational model can decrease the number of traditional sport events hosted by organizations under the NIF umbrella. NIF is afraid that if the Government starts investing in these kinds of events, NIF's activities will be

threatened (Interview NIF). SAHR does not try to challenge the traditional sport in any way, but understands that people in NIF feel like they lose control (Andersen, 2016; Interview SAHR). For many years, NIF has had monopoly on sport events in Norway. However, this monopoly is not ruled bound.

NIF points out that its organization and sub organizations are built around democratic principles, and that openness and information are central aspects hereunder (NIF, 2015). As presented in the result chapter, SAHR pointed out that when the corporation manage public money there is no secret regarding what the money is spend on. The organizational model can therefore be said to promote openness and information. Leaders in NIF have in the last years been critiqued for lack of openness regarding travel expenses, and as a consequence the owner of SAHR willingly showed all of his travel expenses to the public (Hernes & Jarlsbo, 2016).

7.2.2 X Games reaching the youths – a threat to NIF?

A repeatedly finding in my analyses was the successful goal of reaching a young crowd, both as fans, spectators, and volunteers. Media, public authorities, and sponsors all admitted that this is a target group that is usually hard to reach, and therefore makes it particularly valuable when one manages to do so.

At the X Games event in Hafjell in 2017 there were almost 400 volunteers, 90 % of these were 29 years old or younger (Interview SAHR). Comparing with the YOG in Lillehammer in 2016, 51 % were 29 years old or younger (Hanstad, Kristiansen, Strand, Skirstad, & Strittmatter, 2016). This shows that the X Games managed to involve a higher percentages of young volunteers than a NIF event that had a goal to attract young volunteers (Hanstad et al., 2016). Also Strittmatter and Parent (in press) found that the X Games is a youth-driven event. They argued that events like the X Games attracts youths by focusing on social aspects and new experiences, as well as it represents a freedom from the dominant sport culture.

Volunteers are essential for all sport event organizers and they bring value to several actors. The Government sees value in volunteer work among the population, and especially young people volunteering is valuable. Engaging young people as volunteers helps carry on the Norwegian voluntary culture. Youths that volunteer at sport events

might increase their sport interest. If they have a positive experience volunteering at a sport event their chance of wanting to do it again increases, either at a private or at a NIF event. A questionnaire SAHR did after the event, showed that almost all their volunteers had a good experience and wanted to come back. If the X Games can help develop the volunteer culture in Norway it would be a benefit for the society and for the traditional organized sport.

The X Games also has a lot of young fans and spectators. Getting youths interested in sport is beneficial for more actors than the X Games hosts. If youths see value in participating in sport, either as spectators or as athletes, this can also have a positive effect on traditional sport. In 2017 it was decided that skateboarding should become part of NSBF, which makes all sports competed in, in the X Games Norway members of NIF (Fredheim, 2017). SAHR's opinion is that the organization of skateboarding can be a result of cooperation, among other in connection to the X Games (Interview SAHR). Skateboarding, snowboarding, and free skiing are all sports that attracts youths. When NSF (free ski) and NSBF host events, they can reach the same crowd as the X Games, which brings youths to events hosted by NIF members.

As the representative from Venstre pointed out, the X Games does not steal the spectators from the traditional sport, but together they manage to reach broader. A great deal of the X Games crowd are people who would not necessarily attend other sport events, and the event is therefore not challenging the traditional sport regarding spectators.

7.2.3 Increased knowledge among the stakeholders – beneficial or threatening?

Both SAHR and its stakeholders have learned a lot through the X Games Norway. Increased knowledge of hosting sport events can be threatening to NIF. The NSOs contributed with knowledge towards TV2 and SAHR regarding the sport and competition. If several actors outside NIF possess knowledge of hosting sport events this can in the long run challenge the traditional sport organizations role in sport events. On the other hand, the NSOs showed to be extremely valuable for the event and were important stakeholders. Based on the analyses, the X Games would not have been the same without cooperation between the organizers and the NSOs. The NSOs also learned

from the other stakeholder, which is value they can bring with them when hosting their own events under NIF's umbrella.

Other actors have also increased knowledge through X Games which could benefit sport in Norway. The media, with TV2 in front as the broadcaster, learned a lot about action sport through the cooperation. This knowledge can be forwarded in future televising of sport events, either at a private, or at a NIF event.

After the feud with the X Games regarding the anti-doping debate the Government will not likely give financial support to any sport event that do not have a plan for anti-doping. ADNO learned how to handle different cases which can be a value for future events. Likewise, this can open up for more commercial events when it is show that ADNO is willing to cooperate with actors outside NIF's organization.

7.2.4 Inclusive or exclusive?

The X Games Norway was by the stakeholders characterized as an inclusive event, where everyone felt welcome. That people feel welcome at sport events in Norway is definitely a value for Norwegian sport. Equality is one of NIF's organizational values, which says that everyone is worth the same. This has not been a focus in this study. However, based on the results there is no reason to think that anyone is being excluded from the event based on beliefs, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability. NIF has however questioned the inclusion criteria for the athletes participating. As described in Chapter 2 athletes are, in addition to official qualifications, invited to participate at the event. This can lead to the fact that the once on the start line not necessarily are the once that have performed best throughout the season. In most of the traditional sport the NSOs picks the athletes that are allowed to compete. It is not certain that the best athletes are the once competing following this model either, however, the NSOs choose the once they believe will perform the best.

The agreement between TV2 and the NSOs from 2016 stated that if the athletes that won the YOG, which was hosted in Norway right before the X Games, were good enough they should be invited to participate in the X Games Norway (Keul, O. 2015, Keul to the Municipality of Oslo, April 27th 2015). This show signs that the X Games is inclusive toward younger athletes and want to give them the opportunity to compete

with more experienced athletes. In light of previous research, the fact that young athletes get the opportunity to compete at international events can help their development, which means that they later can compete for their country in e.g. the Olympics (MacIntosh, 2017).

7.2.5 The X Games Norway brand – a value for sport in Norway?

As described in the context, international events are important for international distribution and they create engagement for the population (Meld. St. 26 (2011-2012)). The results show that Norway and the host cities gets exposure through TV pictures, international press, and the participants' activity on social media. This exposure has value for several stakeholders due to increased exposure and interest towards them as well. Interest towards the X Games Norway can contribute to increase interest to sport and other sport events in Norway as well. As NSBF stated, the X Games has contributed to increase interest towards snowboarding and the events NSBF hosts. As NIF also admitted, NIF can learn from the X Games' marketing, which is a value for NIF if the organization chooses to follow X Games' examples regarding marketing. However, a lot of exposure on the X Games can decrease the attention towards traditional events.

Marketing of Norway and Norwegian cities can also bring value to sport in Norway. In bidding processes for events like the Olympics or world championships, it is beneficial if international organizations have a positive impression of the country. Seeing that successful events have been hosted in Norway can also be a positive factor.

7.2.6 Good relationship between the stakeholders in the X Games – challenging for NIF?

As the results showed, most of the relationships between the stakeholders and the focal organization, as well as the relationships between the stakeholders, were good. Good relationships increase value co-creation, while bad relationship can hinder the process. SAHR wants to maintain its already existing relationships and help its stakeholders reach their goal with the event. This shows signs of loyalty – one of NIF's organizational values. On the other hand, SAHR did not make sure that the anti-doping issue was resolved so that the NSOs could stay in the agreement. It is likely to believe that the owner's (ESPN) opinion was strong in this case. However, the organizers

managed to solve the issue when it was clear that they would not get public support without anti-doping facilitation.

That actors involved in sport build relationships outside the traditional sport can be challenging for NIF. If they manage to create events or other sport activities without NIF, this can threaten NIF's position. Conversely, the NSOs relationship building can be seen as positive to NIF. The NSOs positive relationship to sponsors, governments, and media can be beneficial when hosting their own events.

7.2.7 Culture clash – the reason for the disagreement?

The action sport culture has developed in thread with increased commercialization. Strittmatter et al.'s (2018) findings show that the culture is strong in action sport, and that the X Games is part of this culture. They pointed out that this strong culture clashes with the traditional organization of sport, which my study also confirms. This strong culture might be why the athletes' voices are so strong in the X Games, compared to other more traditional events where the NSOs makes the rules. For the event organizers this is an extra consideration they have to take, but for the athletes they secure that they do not lose their identity in a mainstream business.

SAHR and NSBF were under the impression that NIF did not respect this culture as NIF believe sport should be organized according to its rules and values. As discussed, NIF's values are present in the X Games Norway. An event hosted outside NIF can still not be demanded to follow NIF's rules. The problem occurs when the NSOs collaborate with commercial actors. It cannot be expected that actors outside NIF follow its values. However, it is reasonable to expect that the NSOs cannot be involved with actors breaking with NIF's values. After the anti-doping issue was solved this should in fact not be a problem. NIF could benefit from learning and respecting the culture of all the sports organized under NIF's umbrella. Public arguments between NIF and NSOs or events the NSOs are a part of, are unfortunate for both parts. It is also unfortunate for SAHR and other actors involved in the X Games Norway to have negative exposure about the organization or the event.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the stakeholders of a commercial sport event co-create value, and discuss these findings towards the overall question if commercial sport events are a problem for traditional organized sport in Norway. The X Games Norway was used as a case to investigate the subject. In order to answer the research question the stakeholders of the X Games Norway had to be identified.

Findings show that, overall, the same stakeholder groups as those identified for large-scale traditional sport events (Chappelet & Parent, 2015) are involved in creating the X Games Norway. However, some of these have different roles, for example the sport organizations, who are not the event owners. Furthermore, the general dimensions and elements of value co-creation (Ranjan & Read, 2016) are reflected in the data and specific manifestations of the context can be found. For example, knowledge sharing between the co-creating stakeholders mainly included aspects of the sport itself, broadcasting and media coverage, as well as anti-doping issues and measures.

An answer to the research question - *How do the stakeholders of a commercial sport event co-create value?*: Value was found to be co-created in all of Ranjan and Read's (2016) pre-decided dimensions: relationship, knowledge (sharing), equity, interaction, experience, and personalization. Special for the X Games Norway was that value also was found co-created through the fact that most of the stakeholders had an understanding of a mutual goal, there was an understanding for the sport culture that differs from the traditional sport, and the event got a lot of exposure. All of this contributed in order to create benefits for the stakeholders involved.

Some of the value co-created was beneficial for traditional sport in Norway as well. Exposure of the event can in general bring exposure to sport in Norway. The event attracted both young spectators and volunteers who can have gained interest for sport. On the contrary, some of this value can also be threatening and create problems for the traditional sport. If the Government sees that a private event can be more economically beneficial, it can in the long run threaten the funding towards traditional events. Also, when stakeholders outside the traditional sport cooperate and create sport events this can become a problem for the traditional organized sport if it means these organizations is longer necessary in order to host sport events. Still, the NSOs, who are a part of the

traditional sport, were important stakeholders which contributed to co-create a lot of the value, and cooperation with them seems beneficial.

To answer the overall question: No, commercial sport events are not a problem to traditional organized sport in Norway, at least not yet. Nevertheless, this study shows that commercial events challenge the traditional organization in Norway and can therefore be experienced as threatening. If there will be an increase of commercial sport events, this can eventually be a problem to the traditional organized sport, due to the aspects discussed in Chapter 7. The organized sport can although learn from commercial events in several ways, which can make these commercial events less threatening. I can, however, only conclude based on the findings in this study. In order to be able to answer the overall question completely, several aspects of commercial sport events needs to be studied.

8.1 Contribution to research and practical implications

Overall, this research contributes to the literature by being the first to provide an in-depth understanding of value co-creation among stakeholders of a commercial sport event. In particular, the results indicate many similarities of stakeholder roles, contributions, and benefits. However, there are also some unique stakeholder relationships with specific value co-creation outcomes that characterize commercial sport events. These findings thus contribute to a better informed debate around the effects of commercial sport events on traditional sport and events. As the Government just provided 18 million NOK to develop and expand the X Games Norway, the event is here to stay and NIF has to be able to deal with the X Games in the upcoming years (Lote & Snare, 2018).

The study is useful for the stakeholders involved in order to see what they contribute with, comparatively with what benefits they are left with. This way they can see if there are aspects they would like to change or develop further. NIF can benefit from this study in order to see what the organization can learn and what NIF has to be aware of regarding commercial events.

As being a case study, this research cannot be generalizable, however it is reasonable to believe that familiar cases would consist of several of the same elements. The

theoretical framework and methodology in this study can be used to study other sport events, both traditional and other commercial events. By using this framework in other studies one has the ability to compare events. This study is a contribution to the theory of value co-creation because it investigated the X Games Norway at the meso level, which the theory suggests in order to cover the full idea of value co-creation. The study is also a contribution to stakeholder theory, as it has identified stakeholders in a commercial sport event.

8.2 Limitations and further research

A limitation with this study is that some stakeholders like ESPN, the athletes, and the volunteers are not included. More interviews could have been done in order to gain insight from every stakeholder group. Still, the purpose of this study was to investigate stakeholders on an organizational level as I am shedding light to the theme based on organizational theories. Athletes' and volunteers' opinions were not necessary in order to do so. It could also have been beneficial to include several stakeholders from each stakeholder group, due to the fact that people from each stakeholder group might not have the same opinions. Due to space and time limitations this was however not possible in this study.

A second limitation is that I in some aspects had more information on the 2016 event than the 2017 event and vice versa. Discussions in those aspects might be based on only one of the events, instead of seeing if it was a development between the first and second X Games Norway.

Another limitation with this study is that the interviews were done in Norwegian, while the thesis is written in English. This has caused some language barriers, and in some quotes I had to change the wording in order to not lose its original meaning. Not everything can be translated directly, and it is sometimes difficult to get the proper meaning when translating from one language to another.

As this study has looked at one aspect of the overall question, further research should be done in order to be able to answer the overall question *if commercial sport events are a problem to traditional organized sport in Norway?*

As this study has identified the stakeholders of the X Games Norway a suggestion to future research could be to investigate each stakeholder group further. By looking at one stakeholder group at the time one can investigate more in depth and get more insight of the stakeholder group as a whole. Another suggestion would be to compare a stakeholder group from a commercial event to a stakeholder group in a traditional event in a greater extent than done in this study. The stakeholders not included in this study could also be studied.

A study of value co-creation in traditional sport events should be done in order to be able to compare value co-creation in a traditional and commercial sport event. Further research should also see if the new value co-creation dimensions discovered in this study (understanding of a mutual goal, an understanding for the sport culture, and exposure), are part of the value co-creation in other events.

Comparing the X Games Norway with an X Games in another country could also be interesting in order to see if the same value would occur there, and if this brings value or is a problem for the traditional sport in that particular country.

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Appendices

Appendix A: General interview guide: Stakeholder

Generell intervjuguide (stakeholdere)

Innledende spørsmål

1. Alder?
2. Hva er din rolle i organisasjonen du jobber i?
3. Hvordan ble din organisasjon involvert i X Games?

Din organisasjons rolle

4. Hva er din organisasjons rolle i forbindelse med X Games i Norge?
 - a. Før, under og etter arrangementet
5. Hva er din organisasjons forhold til X Games?
6. Hva føler du at din organisasjon bidrar med til arrangementet?

Dine erfaringer

7. Hva er dine erfaringer med X Games?
8. Hva er din rolle i forbindelse med X Games i Norge?
 - a. Før, under og etter arrangementet

Andre interesser

9. Hvilke interesser mener du er de mest sentrale i X Games?
 - a. Generelt for arrangementet?
 - b. For din organisasjon? Hvem dere samarbeider mest med?
 - c. På hvilken måte er disse sentrale?
 - d. Direkte involvert/ blir påvirket av arrangementet?

10. Hva føler du de sentrale interessenter bidrar med?
 - a. For arrangementet, generelt, din organisasjon?
11. Hva er din organisasjons forhold til de andre interessentene?
12. Hvordan samarbeider dere med de andre interessentene?
 - a. Hvorfor?

X Games sin rolle

13. Opptrer din organisasjon annerledes rundt X Games enn andre idrettsarrangement?
 - a. På hvilken måte?
 - b. Hvorfor tror du det er sånn?
14. Føler du at andre interessenter opptrer annerledes rundt X Games enn andre idrettsarrangement?
 - a. På hvilken måte?
 - b. Hvorfor tror du det er sånn?

Utfordringer/muligheter

15. Hva mener du, som interessent, er spesielt med X Games sammenliknet med andre arrangement?
16. Hvilke utfordringer ser du med arrangementet?
 - a. For din organisasjon?
 - b. Generelt for norsk idrett?
17. Hvilke muligheter ser du med arrangementet?
 - a. For din organisasjon?
 - b. Generelt for norsk idrett?)

Utvikling

18. Har din organisasjons opptreden endret seg etter at arrangementet ble flyttet fra Oslo til Hafjell?
 - a. Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
 - b. På hvilken måte?
19. Hvordan ser din organisasjons for seg et videre samarbeid med X Games?
 - a. Hvorfor fortsetter dere? Hvorfor ikke?

Appendix B: Written informed consent form

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskingsprosjekt

“Value co-creation: The case of X Games in Norway”

Bakgrunn og formål

Formålet med denne studien er å undersøke hvordan de ulike interessentene til X Games i Norge sammen bidrar til å skape et arrangement. Både utfordringer og muligheter for de ulike interessentene skal belyses. Ulike aspekter ved arrangementet og interessentenes bidrag vil bli undersøkt.

Studien er et masterprosjekt ved Norges idrettshøgskole (NIH) ved seksjonen for kultur og samfunn.

Utvalget er valgt på bakgrunn av sin posisjon i en organisasjon som er identifisert som en av X Games sine interessenter.

Innhenting av data

Semi-strukturerte intervjuer vil bli benyttet for å innhente informasjon. Spørsmålene vil omhandle hvordan interessentene ser på X Games og hva de bidrar med i forbindelse med arrangementet. Intervjuene vil bli gjennomført ansikt til ansikt, og det vil bli tatt lydopptak samt notater underveis. Det vil i forkant av intervjuene bli gjennomført en medieanalyse. Informantene vil bli gjort kjent med studien i forkant av intervjuet.

Hva skjer med informasjon om deg

Det er kun masterstudenten (Linn Baarlid) og veilederen (Anna-Maria Strittmatter) som vil ha tilgang til deltakernes personopplysninger. Lydopptakene fra intervjuene vil bli transkribert i etterkant av intervjuene og deretter slettet. Lydfilene vil bli midlertidig oppbevart i et låst skap på NIH. De transkriberte intervjuene vil bli lagret på en minnepenn som skal være innelåst i et skap på låste kontorer på NIH. Deltakerne i studien vil ikke bli referert til med navn, kun ved stilling og arbeidsplass. All data vil bli slettet etter studiens slutt.

Frivillig deltakelse

Deltakelse i studien er frivillig og du kan når som helst velge å trekke deg uten begrunnelse eller konsekvenser. Dersom du ønsker å delta vennligst signer på neste side.

Dersom du har spørsmål til studien ta kontakt med Linn Baarlid, tlf. 941 34 749;

e-post: linn.baarlid@nih.no

Samtykke til deltakelse

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien og ønsker å delta

(underskrift og dato)

Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju

Appendix C: Data protection Official for Research' acceptance for collecting and keeping personal data



Anna-Maria Strittmatter
Postboks 4014 Ullevål stadion
0806 OSLO

Vår dato: 08.08.2017

Vår ref: 54863 / 3 / AMS

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

Tilbakemelding på melding om behandling av personopplysninger

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 23.06.2017.

Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

54863	<i>Value co-creation: The case of X Games in Norway</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Norges idretthøgskole, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Anna-Maria Strittmatter</i>
Student	<i>Linn Baarliid</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en [offentlig database](#).

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.06.2020, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Marianne Høgetveit Myhren

Anne-Mette Somby

Kontaktperson: Anne-Mette Somby tlf: 55 58 24 10 / anne-mette.somby@nsd.no

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Kopi: Linn Baarlid, linnb1993@hotmail.com

Personvernombudet for forskning



Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr. 54863

Utvalget informeres skriftlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forskere og studenter følger Norges idrettshøgskole sine rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på mobile enheter, bør opplysningene krypteres.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 01.06.2020. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette digitale lydopptak

