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## **The sustainability of the Youth Olympic Games: Stakeholder networks and institutional perspectives**

### **Abstract**

This paper explored the Youth Olympic Games' (YOG) potential sustainability (survival and success) through an analysis of how actors exert various forms of pressure on the YOG. Given the impact of the Olympic Games and of the youth on society, it becomes important to study the newest member of the Olympic Family. Combining stakeholder, network and institutional literatures, a case study of the first Winter YOG in Innsbruck (Austria) was built by means of observations and interviews. The stakeholder network analysis revealed three central stakeholders for the YOG's sustainability: the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the media (press and broadcast), and the athletes' parents. The institutional context was challenged by stakeholders' changing levels of relative saliency, and notably by the parents' emerging saliency. Practically speaking, YOG managers need to be diplomats in balancing pressures originating from the international (IOC) and local (parents) institutional contexts.

### **Keywords**

Youth Olympic Games, institutional theory, network theory, stakeholder theory, parents, media, young athletes, institutional tensions, institutional challenges, salience

## Introduction

The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) and its YOG DNA branding have yet to be crystallized as concepts and have become the subjects of various debates. For example, Judge, Peterson, and Lydum (2009, p. 173) believed the YOG to be ‘the best kept secret in sports’ and asked whether the IOC’s good intentions would actually become a reality. They also suggested a number of potentially negative impacts of the event, such as overzealous coaching and overtraining that could put young athletes’ health in danger, cheating, and increased dropout rates. Krieger’s (2012) study of a group of (German) athletes showed that they were dissatisfied with what the IOC saw as one of the success stories of the first YOG in Singapore, the Culture and Education Program (CEP); yet, the athletes enjoyed the unplanned or unexpected experiences that come with being at an international multi-sport event and staying at the athletes’ village.

The YOG’s situation is akin to that of the Olympic Movement in the early 1900’s (Young, 2004). At the time, just like today for the YOG, the event’s concept and components were being determined, and questions surrounding their survival swirled. Given the impact of the Olympic Games on the sportscape as well as society at large, it becomes important to study the newest member of the Olympic Family. The purpose of this exploratory study is therefore to explore the YOG’s potential sustainability (taken here as *survival* and *success*) through an analysis of how actors exert various forms of institutional pressure on the YOG. According to stakeholder theory, successful organizations, including event organizing committees and their rights holders, must satisfice (satisfy + suffice) their key stakeholders (Parent, 2008; Parmar et al., 2010). According to institutional theory, engaging in isomorphic mechanisms leads to legitimacy – determined by society or, in effect, the stakeholders in the environment – which in turn leads to survival (Deephouse, 1996; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). However, the key stakeholders for the YOG remain unknown; hence, the need for an exploratory study. In addition, the relationship between stakeholders needs to be examined in order to understand which stakeholder is ‘more important’ and how the stakeholders interact and influence each other within the Olympic Movement institution.

Thus, to answer the purpose, this paper combines stakeholder theory, network theory, and institutional theory concepts. This theoretical framework is presented following a brief overview of the YOG. The methods are then described. Next, results are presented and discussed before conclusions, implications, limitations and future directions are offered.

## YOG context

The President of the IOC, Jacques Rogge, pushed for the creation of the YOG. The IOC members approved the YOG’s creation in 2007 (IOC, 2012a). The IOC’s vision for the YOG includes youths living by the Olympic values and ‘inspiring them to play an active role in their communities’ (IOC, 2012a, ¶1). The first editions of the YOG were held in Singapore in 2010 (summer) and Innsbruck, Austria, in 2012 (winter). The young athletes participate in all 28 summer and 7 winter sports, though in fewer disciplines, as well as being required to participate in the CEP, which focuses on five themes: ‘Olympism and Olympic values, skills development, well-being and healthy lifestyle, social responsibility and expression through digital media’ (IOC, 2012a, ¶3). There are also innovative events in the various sports, such as mixed-gender or mixed-NOC events. Alongside the young athletes are ‘non-athletes’ (young ambassadors, young reporters, etc.) who also participate in the CEP activities (IOC, 2012a).

This paper focuses on the most recent edition of the YOG, the 2012 Winter YOG in Innsbruck, which were held January 13-22, 2012. During the ten-day event, 1,059 athletes from

70 NOCs (as opposed to 82 for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games) representing seven IFs and 15 different sport disciplines competed in eight different venues (IYOGOC, 2012). There were 1,400 volunteers (as compared to 25,000 for the Vancouver Games, Vancouver 2010, 2010). 80% of volunteers were under 30 years old, and the average age of paid staff was 31 (Schnitzer, 2012). There were 800 accredited media for the Innsbruck Winter YOG – though less than that actually showed up – as compared to over 10,000 for Vancouver, with more showing up as unaccredited media (IOC, 2012b).

### **Theoretical framework**

This study combines stakeholder, network and institutional literatures. The rationale for this approach is to apply stakeholder theory as a point of departure when identifying the actors potentially influencing YOG, and to employ network analysis to explore the relationships between the actors. Finally, institutional theory, which includes the concepts of isomorphism, translation, entrepreneurialism and competing institutional logics, is utilized in order to examine the processes (such as pressures, resistance and negotiations) between network stakeholders and the YOG.

### ***Stakeholder theory***

Identifying and classifying stakeholders, those organizations, groups, individuals that have an impact or are affected by the focal organization (Freeman, 1984), based on their salience can be done in numerous ways. For example, Clarkson (1994, 1995) argued that the main generic stakeholders are the company, employees, shareholders, suppliers, and customers. He suggested classifying these stakeholders as primary or secondary according to whether or not they affected the organization's survival, and advanced the idea of risk and classifying stakeholders as voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary stakeholders were seen to be able to withdraw their resources if significant risk was perceived, which would significantly impact the focal organization.

Another example of stakeholder classification is Mitchell, Agle and Wood's (1997) power-legitimacy-urgency framework, where the more stakeholders possess these characteristics, the more salient they become. Mitchell and colleagues defined the characteristics in the following way: 1) power could be coercive, utilitarian or normative; 2) legitimacy would be found when a stakeholder's claim is perceived as being appropriate, socially acceptable, expected based on individual, organizational or social norms; and 3) urgency would be felt when the stakeholder's claim is perceived as time sensitive and critical or highly important. In contrast, Phillips (2003) believed that stakeholders should be classified according to whether the focal organization had a moral obligation to attend to the stakeholder's well-being or not; and Post, Preston and Sachs (2002) suggested classifying stakeholders according to whether they are resource-based (depicted as closest to the focal organization), industry structure-based, or socio-political arena-based (depicted as furthest from the focal organization).

Examining the Olympic context more closely, there is a variety of internal and external stakeholders for the Olympic Games. Internal stakeholders refer to the organizing committee's paid staff and volunteers. External stakeholders are actors such as governments, international delegations (including athletes and their mission staff), media, sport organizations (e.g., other sports events, international/national sport federations), sponsors, and the community which includes residents, local businesses, activists, community groups, and schools (Parent, 2008). Parent and Deephouse (2007) used the Mitchell et al. (1997) framework to classify the

stakeholders of two large-scale sports events. They found that the various stakeholders were heterogeneous between and within each group, and that stakeholder classification and salience notably depended on the queried managers' level.

Parent and Deephouse's (2007) study was based on prior knowledge of the events' stakeholders. However, the YOG's stakeholder map is currently unknown. Nevertheless, the YOG will have a number of stakeholders that are likely to be similar to other large-scale multi-sport events, with certain stakeholders being more important than others, which needs to be considered when examining the event's survival potential. Moreover, stakeholder analysis is usually dyadic in nature. It is logical to believe that stakeholders have relationships amongst themselves, and not just with the focal organization. This web of relationships refers to the stakeholder network. Although stakeholder theory focuses more on dyadic ties, it is the interaction between stakeholders that provides a more complete picture of the system in order to examine the survival of the YOG that is of interest in the present article. This paper follows Rowley's (1997) argument that stakeholder theory needs to move beyond dyadic ties towards an analysis of the multiple stakeholder ties that form the network in order to examine stakeholder influences, in this case, on a major sports event's survival.

### *Network theory*

The concept of networks is applied as an analytical tool because of its value and utility for describing the social reality in which the YOG exist. Hirsh and Lounsbury (1997) suggested that network theory (see Burt, 2000; Quatman and Chelladurai, 2008; Rowley, 1997; Stuart, 1998, 2000) enables examination of changes in the interconnections between the actors involved. Exploring the YOG using a network approach can help explain how various actors execute various forms of pressure on the YOG. Network analyses allow researchers to determine the relative importance of a stakeholder in a network, how dense the network is, who communicates with whom, who controls information, who reaches out to others and who receives the most requests for information. The location of an actor in a network (e.g., central or peripheral) can explain relative power, which can be done visually (e.g., in a network graph). The more central a stakeholder, the more power it may hold. Central stakeholders may also influence or be influenced by a greater number of forces, whereas pressures may be weaker on the periphery. Goodrick and Salancik (1996) found that in the network's boundaries where pressures are weak, under conditions of uncertainty, there may still be agency on the part of stakeholders; however, under high pressures to conform, the organization conforms.

Network analyses of interest in this particular paper include: density (i.e., number of ties divided by total possible number of ties); closeness centrality (i.e., how close each stakeholder is to others, with the understanding that being closer to a greater number of actors allows for greater monitoring of information); betweenness centrality (i.e., the location of an actor in relation to others, with the understanding that higher betweenness means greater information control and power as the stakeholder acts as a broker); and eigenvector centrality (i.e., the degree of importance or power of a stakeholder) (see Bonacich, 1972; Borgatti et al., 2002; Knoke and Yang, 2008; Krebs, 2011; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Thus, the YOG's network configuration can foster understanding of certain processes and activities associated with the YOG's sustainability potential.

### ***Institutional theory***

While stakeholder theory and network analysis help identify and classify the actors, as well as label the relationships between them, institutional theory offers a vocabulary to grasp the more qualitative processes taking part between these actors. This is highly relevant in terms of analyzing the pressures, tensions and changes occurring (cf. Hirsh and Lounsbury, 1997; Parent and Slack, 2008). Standardization and isomorphism, tensions between institutional logics, and institutional change are the institutional concepts of interest for this paper; they are described below.

***Standardization and isomorphism.*** The ‘old’ institutional theory examines actor preferences, as they are ‘shaped by socialization processes involving the internalization of norms and values’ (Hirsh and Lounsbury, 1997, p. 411); this version is action oriented. By way of contrast, neo-institutional theory adopts cognitive language like ‘taken-for-granted scripts, rules and classifications’ (Hirsh and Lounsbury, 1997, p. 411); this version is structure oriented. Here, old and new forms of institutionalism are viewed as complementary and are brought together to study an institutional phenomenon (Hirsh and Lounsbury, 1997).

One of the central tenets of the neo-institutional theory is that organizations are embedded in a social system of shared norms. Adopting institutionalized myths, or in essence conforming, leads to legitimacy (Deephouse, 1996), which in turn leads to survival (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Conformity is thought to provide homogeneity, stability, and order (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 1991). Neo-institutionalism emphasizes the taken-for-granted, the mythic, as a defining force for acceptable behavior, which leads to homogenization of practice within a field. Expanding activity within a field requires standardization to obtain centralized control (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). The legitimation of such actions is rationalization, whereas the ‘real’ goals might be monopolization, or, more simply, survival (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In this respect, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) proposed that rationalized myths spread through three forms of institutional processes (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Edwards et al., 2009): 1) coercive isomorphism occurs when formal or informal pressure is exerted on an organization by organizations upon which they are dependent, usually based on resource dependency in the case of non-profit organizations; 2) mimetic isomorphism can emerge as a response to uncertainty, when organizations follow other actors in the field that are perceived as successful in order to be perceived as legitimate, which can be linked to the stakeholder networks developed (Galaskiewicz and Wasserman, 1989); and 3) normative isomorphism might develop through the mechanisms of disseminating personnel and professionals in the network. All these processes lead to conformity (Dobbin and Dowd, 1997). These three isomorphic processes interact with each other and can be difficult to separate (Edwards, et al., 2009; Mizruchi and Fein, 1999).

***Tension between institutional logics.*** The concept of myths is akin to the concept of institutional logics, which are ‘social products, subjecting the actor to the identity of an institutionalized group, movement, organization, or community’ (Gammelsaeter, 2010, p. 574; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). There can be institutional logics in the focal organization’s environment which foster ‘different understandings of its meaning and how to fulfill it’ (Gammelsaeter, 2010, p. 574). It is, in essence, a shared interpretive scheme, which determines what is acceptable, how to implement and evaluate strategies and routines, and even ‘create precedent for further innovation’ as it allows actors to elaborate on the organizing principles

found within the institutional logic (Southall et al., 2008, p. 679; Duncan and Brummett, 1991; Friedland and Alford, 1991; Washington and Ventresca, 2004). Dominant logics can emerge from contestations between institutional logics (Southall, et al., 2008); however, shifts away from dominant logics are also possible (Cousens and Slack, 2005; O'Brien and Slack, 2003, 2004). Broadbent, Jacobs, and Laughlin (2001) suggested that conflicts within normative (associated with taken-for-granted norms/assumptions of a given society), regulative (associated with forces from regulatory bodies), and cognitive (associated with institutional logics that lead to mimetic isomorphism) contexts can explain resistance points to institutionalizing pressures. Broadbent and colleagues argued that resistance, would more likely be seen if two different contexts (e.g., normative and regulatory) come into conflict.

The Olympic Games may be seen to have a primarily elite sport institutional logic; however, they also have a culture institutional logic with their Cultural Olympiad. Regarding the YOG, there could be a third competing institutional logic, namely that of youth education / development. Thus, how the three institutional logics are contested, determines what the dominant logic is, and whether the entrenched elite sport logic dominating the Olympic Games also dominates the YOG.

Proponents of the 'old' institutional theory, are interested in institutions' change dynamics (e.g., Greenwood et al., 2002; Tolbert and Zucker, 1983; Zucker, 1987). Oliver (1991) suggested five possible responses to institutional processes: 1) acquiescence (through habit, imitation or compliance), 2) compromise (through balance, pacification or bargaining), 3) avoidance (through concealment, buffering or escaping), 4) defiance (through dismissal, challenging or attack), and 5) manipulation (through cooptation, influence or control). In addition, Tolbert and Zucker (1996) saw the process of institutionalization as having three stages: 1) pre-institutionalization (habitualization) where one adopts an activity/form/process because it works (rational reason); 2) semi-institutionalization (objectification) where there is an increase in adoption levels that leads to consensus and increased legitimation; and 3) full institutionalization (sedimentation) where the phenomenon is taken-for-granted, embedded, and, arguably, where an institutional logic dominates. Agency is seen to decrease as one moves through these stages. Initially, there is strong agency in initiating change, and those who initiate change usually have higher levels of status (Scherer and Lee, 2002).

***Institutional change.*** Campbell (2004) criticized former paradigms of institutionalism for not clarifying the underlying mechanisms of institutional change, and suggested two mechanisms which do so: bricolage and translation (Campbell, 2004). Bricolage refers to the recombination of existing institutional elements within a field or an organization: 'actors often craft new institutional solutions by recombining elements in their repertoire through an innovative process of bricolage whereby new institutions differ from but resemble old ones' (Campbell, 2004, p. 69). Translation refers to the importation of new institutional elements from outside the investigated field or organization. The difference from bricolage is that translation involves the combination of new externally-obtained elements with old locally given ones (Campbell, 2004). Translation implies that the new element is actively imported and, when imported, actively treated to fit into the receiving context. It involves an important translation step, which has serious implications for users of neo-institutionalism who claim that diffusion leads to homogenous outcomes after processes of isomorphism (Campbell, 2004). 'It [translation] comprises what exists and what is created; the relationship between humans and ideas, ideas and objects, and humans and objects – all needed in order to understand what in shorthand we call

“organizational change” (Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996, p. 24). Thus, translation implies local agency in people’s everyday behavior, which includes the regulation by culture (e.g., in the local organizing committee where the implementation of a sports event takes place).

Whereas the translation perspective, including bricolage, is about recombining existing internal and/or external institutional elements, entrepreneurship is about creating completely new institutional solutions (Hardy and Maguire, 2008). Institutional entrepreneurship is often defined as ‘activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones’ (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657). As with translation, the concept of institutional entrepreneurship can be seen as a response to critics of the focus on static and reproductive elements of organizational fields seen in neo-institutionalism. A main aspect of this solution is thus to reintroduce ‘considerations of agency, power and interests into analyses of institutional fields’ (Hardy and Maguire, 2008, p. 198).

### **Summary of theoretical framework**

In summary, stakeholder, network and institutional literatures (notably isomorphism, translation, entrepreneurialism and competing institutional logics), serve as the theoretical basis when identifying actors, relationships and processes between actors, respectively, when exploring the YOG’s sustainability potential. Stakeholder theory serves as the theoretical umbrella as it is still a framework (as opposed to a theory), ‘a set of ideas from which a number of theories can be derived’ (Parmar et al., 2010, p. 406). The ensuing analysis is inspired by concepts presented in the stakeholder literature such as risk and survival (Clarkson, 1994; 1995), as well as power and legitimacy (Mitchell, et al., 1997). In turn, network theory is used to help describe the relative importance of and depict the interrelationships between the key stakeholders. Finally, institutional theory provides a vocabulary to more richly describe the pressures, tensions, and changes occurring between the stakeholders.

### **Methodology**

The Innsbruck 2012 Winter YOG exploratory case study was built by means of observations and interviews, gathered/conducted by the researchers during and after the event. The following provides an overview of the data collection and analysis techniques.

#### ***Data collection***

To understand the institutional setting, to contextualize interviewee responses, to provide descriptions of stakeholder interactions in situ, and for the researchers to generally familiarize themselves with the YOG, observations were undertaken. These therefore served as the background, secondary source of data. The observations were limited to accessible areas based on the research team’s accreditation level (competition sites, ceremonies sites, and the Congress center, which included the CEP area). This provided access to the general or spectator areas for these venues. Three of the five competition sites (i.e., Seefeld, Exhibition Centre and Olympia World) were visited by the team. In all, the team experienced/observed seven sports competitions (i.e., curling, biathlon, cross-country skiing, Nordic combined, ice hockey, short track, and figure skating); multiple medals ceremonies; the opening ceremony; the CEP activities; the shuttle transportation system shared among the athletes, the media, and other members of the Olympic Family; and various food service areas. The team also experienced the general Olympic spirit present in Innsbruck. In addition, two of the authors were observers at the city-to-city debrief

between the first and second hosts of the Winter YOG, Innsbruck and Lillehammer, on 20 June 2012. Field notes were written daily. These notes were important when preparing the interview guide, as questions were added based on observations made during the YOG in order to explore, explain and/or verify observations.

As this was an exploratory study, interviews were the primary source to obtain in-depth information from a variety of stakeholder perspectives (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). Altogether, 72 individuals were recruited for interviews through convenience and purposeful sampling procedures in order to cover the main stakeholders present (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Table 1 provides an overview of the participants interviewed. In addition to these interviews, the last author also had an informal conversation about the YOG with IOC President Jacques Rogge on 19 June 2012. The face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted during the event at different locations (e.g., venues, cafés, restaurants) in Innsbruck, wherever was convenient for the participants. The athletes were interviewed after finishing their last competition. Hence, some were interviewed in Innsbruck whereas others were interviewed by phone post event. Table 1 notes which individuals were interviewed post-Games. Interviews lasted between 20 and 75 minutes. The interviews were developed and conducted according to ethical guidelines and criteria stated by Patton (2002) and as per institutional ethical guidelines of both research institutions. The interview guide was tailored to the different participants. Most included a general introduction about expectations for the YOG and how they perceived being there; questions on organizational aspects; queries about the CEP and the YOG's learning aspect; perceptions of each other's roles; and perceptions about the YOG as a youth competition and learning arena. The interviews ended with the open process-feedback question: 'do you have anything else to add?' Probes and follow-up questions were used to further explore responses. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, which resulted in 292 pages singled-spaced raw text. In order to protect the confidentiality of interviewees, nationality, sport and gender are not included; only their stakeholder grouping is mentioned.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

### *Data analysis*

The data was first organized according to each stakeholder group. Two analyses were then undertaken: a stakeholder network analysis and deductive content analysis of the interviews. First, each stakeholder's relationships were determined by reading through all the data. This information was inputted into an Excel matrix, which was then inputted into the UCINET 6.0 network analysis software (Borgatti, et al., 2002). Degree (number of ties), closeness centrality (how close others are), betweenness (ability to control information), and eigenvector (degree of importance) normalized centrality measures were computed, as was density (see Bonacich, 1972; Wasserman and Faust, 1994). For the eigenvector measure to be robust, Borgatti et al. (2002) recommend that the ratio of the highest eigenvalue to the next highest must be at least 1.5, if not 2.0; the eigenvalue ratio was calculated to be 3.310, which is therefore robust. The network was limited to those identified stakeholder relationships in the data. The NetDraw 2 (Borgatti, 2002) network analysis software program was used to visually represent the network using the software's algorithm for the eigenvector centrality measurement. The resulting graph and centrality measures allowed for an inductive determination of the most important (salient) stakeholders for the YOG.

Second, interviews were analyzed, building on ideas drawn from the theoretical framework presented above. During the analysis, deductive coding occurred to highlight signs of

institutionalization and isomorphism, for example whether YOG organizers felt obliged to follow the IOC and the ‘real’ Olympic Games when making decisions (cf. Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 1991). Passages indicating aspects of institutional logic challenging, innovation, and entrepreneurialism were highlighted, for example whether YOG organizers ‘overruled’ IOC suggestions and found their own solutions when needs were identified (cf. Hirsch and Lounsbury, 1997; Hardy and Maguire, 2008; Maguire et al., 2004). Distinguishing between translation and innovation also occurred (e.g., whether YOG solutions could be seen as something in between pure copies of IOC/Olympic Games and new inventions, and thus being a form of translation, cf. Campbell, 2004; Czarniawska and Joerges, 1996). The data categorized as each of the above deductive themes constitute the basis of the results described below.

## Results

Based on the density algorithm in UCINET, our network is comprised of 23 actors and 214 ties, for a density of 0.4229. Scott (2000) noted that a density of 1, where each actor is connected to every other actor, is extremely rare. As well, the larger the network, the lower the density because, mathematically, the number of possible ties increases exponentially, whereas the actual number of ties one actor can maintain with other actors remains limited (see also de Nooy et al., 2005). Scott (2000) suggested that a network density greater than 0.5 is unlikely for a large network. Thus, the YOG network could be considered relatively dense.

Table 2 provides an overview of the centrality measures computed. The main findings are that, unsurprisingly, the YOG organizing committee (YOGOG) and the IOC had the highest number of ties (degree), were closest to all other stakeholders (closeness), were more influential in information control (betweenness), and were generally most important (eigenvector). Interestingly, Table 2 indicates that the media (press and broadcast) and parents had a higher number of ties, were close to a high number of stakeholders, and were generally perceived as important. The residents also had a significant level of betweenness centrality. In addition, the athletes and mission staff had important levels of degree and closeness centrality. We therefore find some common stakeholders (media) but also less common stakeholders (parents) as important YOG stakeholders when compared to the Olympic Games. Other common stakeholders (e.g., The Olympic Partners (TOP) sponsors) are much lower in importance as they have lower overall centrality values. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the network using the eigenvector (degree of importance) measure, with size visually demonstrating importance. The larger the square and label, the more important was the stakeholder. It is clear that the central position and size, based on the various measures of centrality, of the IOC, media, and parents highlight their importance/salience, in contrast, for example, to the sponsors, who find themselves on the periphery of the network. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that TOP sponsors were not as visually dominant during the YOG, as compared to the Olympic Games.

[Insert Table 2 and Figure 1 about here]

## Analysis and discussion

The inductive network analysis resulted in three stakeholders being identified as the most important (re: centrality measures): the IOC, the media, and the parents. Each is now described beginning with the stakeholder/network analysis and followed by an analysis using an institutional theory lens (i.e., standardization and isomorphism, tensions between institutional

logics, and institutional change concepts) in order to qualify the pressures and tensions between the stakeholders in the network.

### ***The IOC***

The YOG were not created to copy the Olympic Games. Being a new event, the IOC hopes they will develop somewhat differently from the Olympic Games through the YOG DNA, which is thought to be the spirit of the Games (see IOC, 2012c). Nevertheless, the IOC, as the rights holder of both the Olympic Games and the YOG, is critical for the YOG. From a stakeholder perspective, the IOC holds power, arguably coercive, normative and utilitarian through the Olympic Movement norms and rules it makes the YOGOC follow and the resources it has; legitimacy, as the rights holder; and urgency – it can press its claims urgently on the organizing committee (cf. Mitchell, et al., 1997). It is a primary, voluntary stakeholder (Clarkson, 1994, 1995).

***Standardization and isomorphism.*** It can be hypothesized that the YOG organizers, as an actor embedded in a larger social system, felt pressure to adopt the established, taken-for-granted Olympic myths in the field (Deephouse, 1996; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Considering the YOG as part of ‘the Olympic field,’ the YOG are expected to conform to IOC, as the head of the ‘Olympic Family,’ through isomorphic processes (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). In the words of an IOC representative: ‘The YOG were created using the same objectives as the Olympic Games (when they were created); and if the YOG have a place today, it is perhaps, unfortunately, because the Olympic Games have strayed from the initial objective.’ It is timely to underscore the various degrees of institutionalization that the Olympic Games versus the YOG have undergone (Krieger, 2012). The quotation above can be interpreted as though the IOC wanted the YOG to be a magnet for the Olympic Games, to bring them back to the Olympic ideals (e.g., away from commercialism), in addition to displaying the original ideals of joy and sportpersonship to attract younger athletes.

Moreover, the YOG host cities need to sign host city agreements and conform to IF standards. These would be considered formal elements of coercive pressure (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983); in effect, the YOGOC would have no choice but to meet these requirements. Informally, the ‘Olympic’ moniker brings with it certain expectations (e.g., the look through the use of the five rings and expectations of high quality services). The standardization of the YOG into an Olympic concept or phenomenon is reinforced by the ‘infiltration’ of IOC representatives in the organization of the YOG (IOC as utilitarian/resource provider). One IOC representative shared that their ‘involvement in the YOG is slightly different [than for the Olympic Games]. For example, the IOC is very involved in the CEP, managing the content, making sure that everything runs.’ Thus, these coercive pressures result in the YOGOC complying (cf. Oliver, 1991) with IOC demands.

***Tension between institutional logics.*** Following Tolbert and Zucker’s (1996) process of institutionalization, the YOG are likely in the pre-institutionalization phase, as the YOG adopted institutional forms from the IOC because it was perceived as a rational decision (e.g., continuing with the CEP and the innovative events from Singapore 2010) to gain legitimacy. But the YOG representatives could also negotiate many aspects (e.g., using one common shuttle bus system for all Olympic Family members, offering free tickets for many events to promote attendance for youth sport, having fewer designated seats for the Olympic Family, and having the CEP and

dining outside the Olympic Village), as the YOG concept is still being formed. There is a degree of agency still possible given the uncertainty surrounding the YOG concept. The IOC appears still open to different solutions for meeting its requirements. This may be partly intentional on the part of the IOC, so as to make it possible for more cities to apply for, and organize, the YOG, compared to the relatively limited number of cities that are able to organize the Olympic Games due to specific requirements related to venues, logistics, security, etc. Nevertheless, it is also a function of the pre-institutionalization phase (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996) of the YOG.

Although this has been a debated issue (see Krieger, 2012 for more information), the IOC stated that the CEP was to be as important as the sport competitions, an example of a supposed difference between the YOG and the Olympic Games. Thus, the IOC itself is challenging its own elite sport dominant logic in favor of the culture and youth education/development logics, thereby creating possible tensions and conflicts, and resulting in increased uncertainty for the YOG organizers as it becomes unclear as to what should be the central focus: sport, culture, or youth education/development.

***Institutional change.*** The YOG's development follows the idea that early adopters of an institutional form can customize institutional elements to increase efficiency, for example, in combination with other institutional elements. This is further aided by the air of uncertainty surrounding the nature of the YOG. The arrangement of institutional elements takes place through the recombination of existing institutional elements within an organization or through the importation of institutional elements from external organizations (Campbell, 2004). Another possibility is to create new institutional elements (through entrepreneurship, Hardy and Maguire, 2008). Conceiving the IOC as a main provider of elements to be imported into the YOG, there are many examples of imported elements such as the main 'look' of the Olympic Games: the general logo; the clean venues; the types of venues; the presence of transportation, security and accreditation (though at a lower level than the Olympic Games); the anti-doping procedures; the IF sanctioning, etc.

Moreover, YOG medals ceremonies were similar to those seen during the Olympic Games. This might be a contributor to both youth's and parents' conception that the athletes are Olympians. These were proudly expressed in the interviews and would help foster the domination of the elite sport institutional logic, perhaps to the detriment of the other logics, in the eyes of the youths, parents, and spectators. A representative mother expressed, in a group interview, that: 'my kid is an Olympian; of course we are here to cheer' while another mother tempered the sentiment with her comment: 'though it is important to remember that this is a *Youth* Olympic Games, not an Olympic Games.' This is an example of how organizational solutions influence cognitive understandings, which in turn will institutionalize the YOG to become 'something Olympic' in people's minds and in everyday language. Following institutional theory, this combination of organizational and cognitive coherence should push the YOG into being a part in the Olympic, elite sport field (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, 1991). Nevertheless, the latter mother's emphasis on the 'youth' part of the YOG exemplifies the ambiguity of the YOG phenomenon, one whose nature is still being negotiated, and the recognition of the youth institutional logic (Gammelsaeter, 2010; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008).

***Institutional processes working simultaneously.*** The Innsbruck organizers, and those from the future editions in Nanjing (2014) and Lillehammer (2016), observed Singapore in order

to improve on the event, as well as to ‘copy’ or follow Singapore’s lead (e.g., the use of innovative events in the different sports). The showcasing of athletes at medals ceremonies, as well as the presence of opening and closing ceremonies, demonstrates mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) in relation to the Olympic Games. The uncertainty surrounding the nature of the YOG is a likely reason for these mimetic behaviors copying the successful Olympic Games and the only other YOG edition.

Although the Olympic Games ‘benefit’ from the knowledge brought in, and normative pressures exerted, by individuals forming the Olympic Caravan (i.e., those individuals who move from one Olympic Games to another; see Cashman, 2006 for more details), the YOG are still relatively new and may not have been able to ‘benefit’ yet from this source of normative pressure. As future YOG editions occur, individuals will be able to move between YOGs or between the YOG and the Olympic Games, thereby increasing the level of normative pressures. Contrary to the focus of the Innsbruck organizers on young volunteers and staff could also negate the potential for normative pressures, as the organizers fostered a youth education/development institutional logic by preferring to train young leaders and volunteers instead of using experienced, older managers and volunteers. Still, the fact that the IOC was directly involved in the planning and implementation of the CEP program provides some normative pressure so that the CEP portion eventually becomes institutionalized. This IOC involvement in the CEP demonstrates a desire to emphasize the culture and youth education/development institutional logics.

As indicated, there were examples of institutional challenges, negotiations, and innovation in the data. In the present case, there is an example of how institutional negotiation and entrepreneurship worked together as institutional processes, thus leading to a unique solution in the Olympic field. More precisely, there was observed defiance (Oliver, 1991) by the YOG regarding the IOC’s desire to have individualized transportation for IOC members. The YOGOC, on the contrary, chose to use a single shuttle transportation system. The YOGOC also emphasized the use of young leaders and volunteers in order to foster skills development in these individuals. These can be seen as organizational innovations and defiance, challenging the established Olympic Games model and dominant institutional logic. As early adopters (cf. Westphal et al., 1997) in a pre-institutionalization environment, the YOG had a degree of freedom or agency to challenge or defy the dominant logic and customize the institutional elements to fit their situation.

### ***The media***

For an Olympic Games, the media are a critical stakeholder, as they provide financial resources (e.g., through buying the rights to broadcast the Games) and visibility for the event, its athletes and sponsors. The media are therefore usually powerful, they are seen as legitimate, and they can press their claims urgently to get the results they want. Should they not take part in the Olympic Games, the lack of media would significantly affect the IOC and its Olympic Movement, thereby making the media primary, voluntary stakeholders (Clarkson, 1994, 1995). This is not entirely the case for the YOG. At the YOG, the media were on the receiving end of resources. As one IOC representative noted:

We have a news service which is distributed to all the agencies. At the Olympics, all the agencies are knocking at our door asking how much they have to pay to be allowed to do that; here, we are asking would you please...be so kind to do this?

The YOG and IOC are almost forcing the legitimacy and urgency status on the media, a group that is not necessarily interested in attending, or being a stakeholder (e.g., no media representatives from Canada, one of the main winter Olympic sport countries, attended the 2012 Winter YOG). The YOG therefore skew the usual power balance in the relationship between the IOC and the media. Whereas the IOC is used to asking a high price from a broadcasting company for the rights to cover the Olympic Games, they had to beg the media to cover the YOG. This puts the media in a somewhat new position, where only the future can tell which isomorphic pressure and institutional logic will dominate the relationship. It can be hypothesized that if the YOG gain increased popularity, the media will have to (and want to) pay for broadcasting rights, and the IOC will be in a coercive position, probably leading the YOG in the current direction of the Olympic Games. On the contrary, if the YOG continue to solicit the involvement of the media, the various media houses will be in powerful positions to invent, recombine, or import elements that they feel are more cost efficient for them. From the media's standpoint, it seems that the YOG will not be seen as a world class competition with much attention. For the next winter YOG in Lillehammer 2016, the Norwegian journalist interviewed after the Innsbruck Games had the following prediction:

There will be local and some national interest, but no international media coverage [...] I will say the only similarity between the YOG and the Olympic Games is the name 'Olympic.' For a journalist like me, it is impossible to compare the two events.

*Standardization and isomorphism.* Still, regarding the organization and hosting of the media at the YOG, there were some similarities with the Olympic Games, which can be seen as a result of isomorphic processes (primarily mimetic and normative, DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). At the YOG, just as at Olympic Games and other mega/major sports events, one could find a main media center, mixed zones (for athlete interviews) and press conferences, demonstrating mimetic behavior. Traditional media expectations (see Parent, 2008) of proper transportation, timely information, and effective/efficient technology exemplify perceived normative pressures from the media by the YOG organizers.

*Institutional change.* There were also some elements associated with the media, which can be interpreted as translation processes (Campbell, 2004). For example, there were 'young reporters' who were youth training to be media under the tutelage, and therefore normative influence, of the IOC.

*Tensions between institutional logics.* We did not find evidence of coercive pressures associated with the media, likely due to the media's lack of interest in the YOG. Thus, there were mimetic and normative processes, imitating the Olympic Games, and thereby demonstrating the IOC and YOG promoting the elite sport institutional logic (Gammelsaeter, 2010; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). However, the fact that very few media attended, or were interested in the event, demonstrates a challenge on the media's part pertaining to the dominant elite sport institutional logic, in favor of the 'less interesting' youth institutional logic. More precisely, the regulative context, set mainly by the IOC, came into conflict with the media's cognitive context because of their legitimacy concerns/uncertainty regarding the YOG (cf. Broadbent, et al., 2001). We

therefore find resistance or defiance (Oliver, 1991) based on a lack of media interest in young athletes who are seen to have essentially no power or influence in the international sports world.

### Parents

Parents are not a primary stakeholder group for the Olympic Games, that is, they are not critical to the survival of the Olympic Games nor do they present significant risk if they choose to leave (cf. Chappelet and Kübler-Mabbott, 2008; Clarkson, 1995). However, the current network analysis revealed parents to be critical stakeholders for the YOG in terms of being spectators, visitors, and perhaps, more importantly, as part of their athlete's support team (e.g., to carry and care for equipment like skis or rifles which underage athletes cannot legally do). As one YOG athlete noted:

My parents are very important to me... My father is also my coach, so yeah, to have him here is vital. He was not accredited, but he has been everywhere in the venue. My mom does everything else – cook, clean, do my laundry – and is always there for me.

Results highlighted that parents had strong ties with the mission staff and the athletes, as well as communicated with the YOGOC and even their local media. As one parent noted, 'the local newspaper wanted information and pictures, they could not find anything.' Several parents mentioned that they sent pictures and updates to journalists back home. Furthermore, the research team also observed parents helping the few local journalists that showed up to get in touch with their sons and daughters. Thus, for the YOG, the parents become legitimate, powerful stakeholders (cf. Mitchell, et al., 1997). If parents became unhappy, they could withdraw their child from the event, and, as a result, risk the survival of the event if a significant number of parents chose to do so, thereby making them primary, voluntary stakeholders (cf. Clarkson, 1994, 1995).

*Standardization, isomorphism, and institutional change.* There may not be the obvious isomorphic pressures for parents, as can be seen with other stakeholders such as IOC or media, perhaps because they are essentially an emergent salient stakeholder. However, there was evidence of bricolage and translation (Campbell, 2004). More precisely, the parents had to gather information from a range of sources regarding accommodations, transportation, the host city, tickets, etc., as no single organization (e.g., NOC or IOC) provided this information in the language of their choice. One parent noted: 'we had a hard time getting tickets to the games; we could not get it from the organizers here in Innsbruck. In the end, the NOC helped out and we got the tickets.' A solution could be, as one parent suggested: 'Maybe the NOCs should have a [formal] link to parents for information.' Hence, this combination of information from various sources within the YOG system can be conceived as bricolage (cf. Campbell, 2004). Moreover, as they did not have a formalized place, normatively speaking, in the Olympic Games, the parents could create or carve out a role and importance for themselves based on their previous experiences at other smaller sports events. They were able to influence (Oliver, 1991) to a certain degree certain relations, such as with the media, the NOCs, and the IOC in order to be acknowledged as important stakeholders. In that respect, parents contribute to bringing in new institutional elements and adapting them to the focal context of the YOG (cf. Campbell, 2004).

*Tensions between institutional logics.* Although parents are at the YOG, first and foremost, as spectators and supporters of their children, data indicated that parents wanted to be involved. As such, they were influencing other stakeholders (e.g., the media) to respond, to act, thereby developing (institutional) norms for dealing with parents in the process. The IOC and the YOG have acknowledged the importance of parents. As one IOC representative admitted, they did not plan enough for the parents or understand their primary importance to the athletes. The IOC representative went on to say that ‘The parents make choices on athletes’ behalf and therefore should also be part of our [IOC/YOG] target regarding the education program.’ From this quote, the emerging power and legitimacy of parents is supported in the YOG context. Moreover, the IOC’s cognitive association of parents with the education aspect promotes the youth education/development institutional logic, thereby challenging the dominance of the elite sport logic.

Given their newfound salience, parents became instigators of innovation as their legitimacy and power as a stakeholder increased. For example, the Canadian NOC held a reception for parents in Innsbruck, which can be interpreted as a recognition of the parents’ importance and thus as an acknowledgement of their potential influence as stakeholders. Parents represent a visible group, as this analysis revealed; parents will be an important source of institutional pressure to analyze in future YOG.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

To summarize, the IOC, the media, and the parents were the three stakeholders with the most influence on the development of the YOG according to the network analysis. Two main points can be made in this regard. First, the network analysis showed that all three, independently and in relation to each other, are stakeholders to acknowledge and consider. The stakeholders’ relative salience levels also varied compared to the Olympic Games. Based on the network analysis and the subsequent qualitative analysis, the centrality, importance of these three stakeholders means that the YOG’s survival is dependent on them and they must be satisfied to a sufficient level (i.e., satisficing) – as determined by the stakeholders – in order for the YOG to gain legitimacy and survive, as well as be successful (cf. Clarkson 1994, 1995; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Post, et al., 2002). If parents were not satisfied, perceived a risk for their child, or perceived a disconnect between their perceived institutional logics, they have the power to withhold (cf. Frooman, 1999) athletes’ participation in the YOG, as parents still have legal authority over them. The YOG and other stakeholders therefore have a moral obligation (Phillips, 2003) to consider them. A look at Table 2 further indicates that the athletes/mission staff and residents cannot be discounted as relatively important stakeholders. However, they were not the most critical stakeholders; this is interesting considering that the YOG were created supposedly with the young athletes in mind.

Second, the institutional analysis demonstrated how each of the three principal stakeholders exerted institutional pressures on the YOG and/or shifted existing Olympic stakeholder network relationships. The IOC stands out as the most institutionalizing stakeholder, which influences the YOG to resemble the Olympic Games through coercive, normative and mimetic processes. The YOGOC also demonstrated power and agency, through challenging certain IOC processes, and by inventing new institutional solutions. In fact, a combination of challenge followed by invention was seen in the case of the single shuttle transportation system. The relationship between the IOC and the YOG was composed of various institutional

theoretical concepts, which demonstrates the complexity of the situation that is the establishment and survival of a new sports event.

In this respect, this study is in line with Parent and Slack's (2008) findings that differences with the established norms within the sport event field could be explained by examining the conflicts of isomorphic processes and resistance contexts coming from the focal organization's different stakeholders. This study found that competing institutional logics are an appropriate way to explain processes of resistance and challenge. The analysis illustrated the possible sources of translation, bricolage, entrepreneurship, and areas of institutional logic challenge.

In regards to the media and parents, the theoretical framework was challenged because the YOG's relationships with each stakeholder were institutionally under-developed as compared to the relationship between the YOG and the IOC. Nevertheless, the parents are undoubtedly a positive factor in regards to the sustainability of the YOG. They perceived the YOG as a reward for their children's hard work, and they did not question the YOG's similarities to the Olympic Games. In fact, they were proud to say that their kids were 'Olympians.' Although parents pushed the elite sport logic, the IOC saw parents as fitting the youth education/development institutional logic. The positive forces can therefore be hindered if there is a continuing lack of communication between the IOC, NOC, YOG and the athletes (cf. Krieger, 2012), parents and media. Such lacuna could undermine satisficing efforts and thus the YOG's survival. To conclude this paper, implications and future directions are now provided.

### ***Practical and theoretical implications***

Practical implications can be drawn from this study's findings. Given the international and local institutional pressures from central and/or emergent stakeholders such as the IOC, the media, and the parents, YOG managers will need to be diplomats in balancing pressures and demands from these stakeholders, and not discount, for example, the parents because they are not an Olympic Games main stakeholder or client. The YOG as an event can survive and be sustainable, but it will depend on how the various institutional pressures are managed by the YOG, and how YOGOC managers respond to critical stakeholders' needs and wants. Flexibility by the YOG organizers and by the IOC is needed for this to occur. As Parent (2008) noted, the different stakeholders have varying needs and wants. The media may be more interested in selling their proverbial newspapers (i.e., making money), whereas the parents are more interested in obtaining information and ensuring the safety and success of their children. Thus, YOG sustainability becomes an exercise in compromise (cf. Oliver, 1991). Further inquiry into the varying stakeholders motivations, strategies, and means to satisfice these stakeholders is certainly warranted.

From a theoretical standpoint, this paper demonstrated how the old and new institutional theories can be combined through a stakeholder network lens. Stakeholder theory, network theory and institutional theory can work hand-in-glove to determine the key stakeholders, their interrelationships, and understand these interrelationships. To understand such a complex case as the YOG (or Olympic Games) requires both stability (e.g., isomorphic pressures) and change (e.g., translation and institutional logic challenge mechanisms) components, which need to be considered simultaneously to highlight where the tensions are found and explain why certain processes are occurring. As well, from a field or network perspective, it is important to look at the different stakeholders, as they provide different sources of pressures toward stability or change.

In addition, as with any network analysis, the choice of boundaries and when to stop collecting data can be somewhat arbitrary. As such, a given stakeholder's centrality measures should not be taken in absolute terms in relation to the other stakeholders' values. This paper contributes to the sport sociology literature by demonstrating the relative importance of the YOG's key stakeholders, which differ from the Olympic Games.

### ***Future research directions***

Thus, more in-depth research on the stakeholder map of different Olympic Movement events and activities is warranted. YOG stakeholders' salience and network structure also merit deeper scrutiny given our findings on the different levels of stakeholder salience (as compared to the Olympic Games) as well as the potential benefits that a network analysis can bring (in this case, identifying the central stakeholders for the event). As a stakeholder group, parents warrant further inquiry regarding their role in sport event management processes as there is a lack of understanding in this regard in the literature. Parents seem to provide bottom-up institutional pressure, which calls into question the traditional international (IOC) pressures on the organizing committee. This bottom-up vs. top-down tension requires further analysis, especially if the YOG grow and increase their impact on the global sportscape. Finally, it is interesting that the young athletes, for whom the YOG were thought to be created, are not the most important stakeholder, though this is not entirely surprising if one considers that the athletes are mostly under 18 years of age. Additional critical analysis building on this study and that of Krieger (2012) would be necessary to further understand the relative importance of the young athletes in the YOG and the broader Olympic Movement.

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**Table 1.** Stakeholder interviews and interview method

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Interview method</b>	<b>Number and sports covered</b>
Athletes	1 group interview (on site) Individual phone interviews conducted post-game	n=4 n=5 Athletes were from 6 sports
Parents	5 group interviews Email interviews	n=25 n=5 Parents were from 5 sports and 2 nations
Coaches	2 group interviews Individual interview	n=4 n=1 Coaches were from 3 sports and 2 nations
Secretary General in a national sports federation (NSF)	Individual interview conducted post-game	n=1
Chef de Mission	Individual interview conducted post-game	n=1
IOC Representative-staff IOC Representative-member	Individual interview (on site) Individual phone interview conducted post-game	n=1 n=1
Staff members of the IYOGC	Individual interviews	n=4
Volunteers	Individual interviewes	n=19
Media representative	Individual phone interview conducted post-game	n=1

**Table 2.** YOG network centrality measures

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Closeness</b>	<b>Betweenness</b>	<b>Eigenvector</b>
YOGOC	100.000	100.000	13.847	45.775
IOC	81.818	84.615	8.395	38.553
Municipal Gov't	59.091	70.968	2.562	29.635
State Gov't	40.909	62.857	0.257	23.410
National Gov't	40.909	62.857	0.257	23.410
Press	72.727	78.571	3.138	38.117
Broadcast	72.727	78.571	3.138	38.117
New media	45.455	64.706	0.333	26.183
IFs	59.091	70.968	1.382	31.855
NSFs	36.364	61.111	0.344	20.081
NOCs	50.000	66.667	0.553	28.829
Local clubs	36.364	61.111	0.453	19.569
Other events	50.000	66.667	1.698	24.960
Athletes	68.182	75.862	2.700	35.819
Mission staff	68.182	75.862	2.464	36.201
TOP sponsors	18.182	55.000	0.036	9.462
National sponsors	18.182	55.000	0.036	9.462
Residents	63.636	73.333	4.706	30.193
Community groups	31.818	59.459	0.087	18.261
Other stakeholders	45.455	64.706	0.561	26.298
Parents	72.727	78.571	2.869	37.996
Local businesses	40.909	62.857	0.210	23.667
Coaches	54.545	68.750	1.055	29.742

**Figure 1.** The YOG stakeholder network based on the eigenvector centrality measure

