

## **Dynamics of Professionalization in International Sport Federations**

Josephine Clausen, Emmanuel Bayle, David Giaouque, Torsten Schlesinger, Kaisa Ruoranen, Christoffer Klenk, Grazia Lang, Siegfried Nagel

### **Josephine Clausen (corresponding author)**

Email: [josephine.clausen@unil.ch](mailto:josephine.clausen@unil.ch)  
Géopolis, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 21 692 32 49

### **Emmanuel Bayle**

Email: [emmanuel.bayle@unil.ch](mailto:emmanuel.bayle@unil.ch)  
Géopolis, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 21 692 37 26

### **David Giaouque**

Email: [david.giaouque@unil.ch](mailto:david.giaouque@unil.ch)  
Géopolis, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 021 692 36 37

### **Torsten Schlesinger**

Email: [torsten.schlesinger@hsw.tu-chemnitz.de](mailto:torsten.schlesinger@hsw.tu-chemnitz.de)  
Thüringer Weg 11, 09126 Chemnitz, Germany  
Phone: +49 371 531-32936

### **Kaisa Ruoranen**

Email: [kaisa.ruoranen@ispw.unibe.ch](mailto:kaisa.ruoranen@ispw.unibe.ch)  
Bremgartenstrasse 145, 3012 Bern, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 31 631 56 66

### **Christopher Klenk**

Email: [christoffer.klenk@ispw.unibe.ch](mailto:christoffer.klenk@ispw.unibe.ch)  
Bremgartenstrasse 145, 3012 Bern, Switzerland  
Phone: +41 31 631 56 54

### **Grazia Lang**

Email: [grazia.lang@ispw.unibe.ch](mailto:grazia.lang@ispw.unibe.ch)  
Bremgartenstrasse 145, 3012 Bern  
Phone: +41 31 631 56 56

### **Siegfried Nagel**

Email: [siegfried.nagel@ispw.unibe.ch](mailto:siegfried.nagel@ispw.unibe.ch)  
Bremgartenstrasse 145, 3012 Bern  
Phone: +41 31 631 51 53

Over the last decades, international sport federations (IFs) have become global key actors not only from a sporting but also from a social, economic and geopolitical point of view. As a result of profound organisational changes towards a more rationalised, performance-oriented and business-like functioning, the original volunteer-structure and logic of many IFs gradually yields new forms modelled after business enterprises. Numerous studies exist that broach the issue of change processes in national sport organisations, often referred to as professionalization (Chantelat, 2001; Dowling et al., 2014). Meanwhile, research on IFs' professionalisation is fairly sparse and studies are limited to either finger pointing following the revelation of governance shortcomings (e.g. MacAloon, 2011; Pielke, 2013), or those suggesting solutions to these shortcomings (e.g. Chappelet, 2011). Moreover, little is known about factors and dynamics of change influencing IFs' professionalization. We hypothesise that (1) dynamics of professionalization are related to whether drivers entail radical or incremental change, and (2) the intensity of dynamics depends on IFs' capacity to reduce or adapt to barriers hindering professionalization. Our focus is therefore on dynamics, drivers of and barriers to IFs' professionalization.

Results are based on case studies in six summer Olympic IFs of different size and reveal three tendencies: (1) dynamic phases of professionalization observed in small IFs (<50 staff members) differ from big IFs (>50 staff members); (2) phases of isomorphic change oscillate between external (e.g. coercive) and internal (e.g. mimetic, normative) pressures; and (3) IFs increasingly pursue business objectives (e.g. profit generation through commercialisation, notably of events) in parallel to mission-related objectives (e.g. service to members, promotion and development of their sport).

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