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The Introduction of Drive-in Sport in Community Sport Organizations As an Example of Organizational Non-Change — [Source link](#)

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Article Title: The Introduction of Drive-in Sport in Community Sport Organizations As an Example of Organizational (Non-) Change

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to understand change in community sport organizations (CSOs) by examining the introduction of spontaneous sport activities labeled drive-in sport in six Swedish CSOs. Drawing on the theoretical concepts of translation and organizational identity, data from 10 interviews were analyzed to answer how, why, and with what consequences, in terms of organizational change, the focal CSOs interpreted and acted upon the idea of drive-in sport. The findings show that while drive-in sport initially may seem to have changed the CSOs, a closer examination reveals a reproduction of their organizational identities. The findings are discussed in relation to the alignment of the drive-in sport idea with the CSOs' core purpose and practices and with wider processes of change in the CSOs' institutional context.

Keywords: Institutional Theory, Organizational Identity, Voluntary Sport Organizations, Sport Clubs, Non-traditional Sport Programs, Non-profit Sport

Change is one of the most recurrent themes in research on sport organizations. However, although frequent as a topic, the study of organizational change has seldom focused on voluntary organizations operating at a grassroots level - community sport organizations (CSOs) (Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011). Instead, the current body of knowledge has been produced almost exclusively through studies of national or regional sport federations (e.g., Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2004; Girginov & Sandanski, 2008; Hanstad, 2008; Kikulis & Slack, 1995; Skinner, Stewart, & Edwards, 1999, 2004; Slack & Hinings, 1992, 1994; Steen-Johnsen & Hanstad, 2008; Stevens, 2006; Stevens & Slack, 1998; Zakus & Skinner, 2008), intercollegiate athletic sport organizations (e.g., Washington, 2004), and professional sport organizations (e.g., Cousens, 1997; Cousens & Slack, 2005; O'Brien & Slack, 1999).

The deficit in the body of knowledge about change in CSOs is unfortunate, considering that the millions of CSOs worldwide constitute the arena where most people are directly engaged in organized sports as participants, parents, volunteers, and elected representatives. Sweden, the country in focus here, is no exception; about one-third of the 9.5 million population is a member of one of the 20,000 CSOs which form the basis of the Swedish sports movement (Riksidrottsförbundet [RF], 2010). In addition to being an important arena for direct engagement in sports, CSOs are often the would-be implementers of various policy initiatives originating from within and/or outside their respective sports systems. CSOs are expected to contribute to, for example, public health (Kokko, Kannas, & Villberg, 2009; Skille, 2010), crime-reduction, integration (Skille, 2004), and social capital (Coalter, 2007a). This great confidence in the ability of sports to contribute to such disparate goals, termed the *mythopoeic status* of sports by Coalter (2007b), is often accompanied by an expectation of sport organizations to change/develop in a direction that is beneficial for the achievement of these goals. Examples of this are the UK

government’s inclusion of British CSOs in their modernization agenda, expressed in the English Football Association’s reform program the Charter Standard Scheme (O’Gorman, 2011), and the Norwegian government’s launch of the Sports City Program (Skille, 2009). Sweden is not an exception in this respect, either. For example, there have been two consecutive government initiatives issued to entice Swedish CSOs to develop/change in order to better live up to their expected role as educators of democratic citizens (Kulturdepartementet, 2008).

Using these observations as a point of departure, this article follows Czarniawska and Sevón (1996a) who argue that organizational change is best studied in instances where new ideas on organizing are confronted with existing ones. In doing so, the article reports on a study of what indeed appears to provide examples of organizational change; namely, the introduction of so called *drive-in sport* activities in six Swedish CSOs. Paradoxical as it may seem, drive-in sport refers to the delivery of spontaneous sport activities by CSOs. A typical drive-in sport session takes place in a pre-booked sports hall during a weekend night. During the session, youth are allowed to come and go as they wish and participate in activities (often soccer) which focus on having fun and not on improving the skill of the participants (c.f., Skille [2009] for a treatment of similar activities in Norway). The paradox of drive-in sport lies not in the character of the activities, but in the fact that they are to be organized by CSOs. A comparison between the three basic principles of drive-in sport and regular CSO activities makes this paradox visible.¹

First, drive-in sport activities are free of charge and open to, or even targeted at, children and youth who are not affiliated with a CSO. This stands in sharp contrast to the strong principle of membership, which is said to hold the Swedish sports movement together and which constitutes the basis for membership fees and government funds; two important sources of

revenue for Swedish CSOs (Pallin, 2004; RF, 2006). Second, the activities are led by paid staff. This contradicts another important principle of Swedish sports—that of voluntarism. With approximately 600,000 Swedes holding one or several leadership positions in organized sports, the majority of them without any financial compensation, voluntarism is said to be the driving force of Swedish sports (Norberg, 2011). Third, the activities focus on the intrinsic “fun” value of sport, are based on the needs and wishes of the participants, and allow for spontaneous participation. Although often stated in official policy (e.g., RF, 2009), these principles are in contrast to regular CSO activities which have been found to be performance oriented, characterized by an adult perspective and demanding regular participation (e.g., Eliasson, 2009; Karp, 2010).

The purpose of this article is to contribute to the understanding of organizational change in sport organizations by analyzing the introduction of drive-in sport activities in six Swedish CSOs. Theoretically, the article draws on the translation perspective (e.g., Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996b; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008) and the concept of organizational identity (OI) (e.g., Glynn, 2008), understood here as the core purpose and practices of the CSOs (Navis & Glynn, 2011; Wry et al., 2011). These concepts were employed to collect and analyze data in order to answer two research questions. The first regards how and why the idea of drive-in sport is interpreted and acted upon in relation to existing activities. Of particular interest is how the engagement in drive-in sport is rationalized in the CSOs and how drive-in sport is integrated with regular CSO activities. The second addresses the outcome of drive-in sport with a particular focus on whether the CSOs’ core purpose and practices (i.e., OIs) have changed as a result of the introduction of drive-in sport. To this end, the following sections are provided: an outline of the conceptual

framework guiding the study, a brief description of the Swedish sports system, an account of the research methods employed, the findings and, finally, a discussion.

Conceptual Background

Institutional theory (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and design archetypes (e.g., Hinings & Greenwood, 1988) are the most frequent theoretical perspectives used in studies on organizational change in a sports context. This article builds on two main findings produced by these studies. First, a number of studies have found organizational change to be caused by pressures emanating from changes in the institutional context of organizations.² Early studies reported a shift to a professional bureaucratic form with formalized, standardized and specialized structures, as an effect of pressures emanating mainly from increased governmental and professional involvement (e.g., Slack & Hinings, 1992, 1994; Stevens & Slack, 1998). Later work found a move towards a corporate model of organizing, as an effect of the development of commercial values, systems and structures in the institutional context (e.g., Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011; Stevens, 2006). These findings are also connected to studies that have focused on changes of the institutional context itself. For example, Cousens and Slack (2005) documented the transformation in the field of North American major league professional sport related to the shift from sport specific qualities to qualities of entertainment and its value to corporate and broadcasting buyers. Similarly, O’Brien and Slack (2003, 2004a) analyzed how an amateur logic was replaced by a professional logic in the field of English rugby, and how this new logic was diffused in the field.

The second main finding produced by previous studies of change in sport organizations is that while institutional contexts change, and the organizations they impact change as well, these changes are not uniform. Some organizations and some parts of organizations resist institutional

pressure for change, or reshape the ideas exposed to them. This has been shown to be related to a conflict between the existing core values and practices of the organizations and the content of the institutional pressure to which they are subjected. For example, a series of articles by Slack and colleagues (e.g., Kikulis, 2000; Kikulis, Slack, & Hinings, 1992; Kikulis & Slack, 1995; Slack & Hinings, 1994) emphasized the tight coupling between organizational structures and systems and organizational values, and the importance of both these aspects changing in order for organizational change to be achieved. Specifically, Slack and Hinings (1994) and Kikulis and Slack (1995) showed that decision making as an organizational practice is a so-called high-impact system which has the capacity to both resist and drive organizational change. On a similar note, Kikulis (2000) argued that when new ideas on organizing are adopted by organizations, they are shaped by existing institutional ideas about governance and decision making that are sedimented in the adopting organization. Furthermore, Cousens (1997) and O’Brien and Slack (2003) showed that a decisive factor in achieving organizational change is generating congruence between existing values, beliefs and structures and the set of values, beliefs and structures within the new organizational form intended. Finally, O’Brien and Slack (2004b) found that the interests and values of key constituents of an organization might steer a change process in a different direction than what is institutionally prescribed.

An alternative way of understanding these findings is that in order for organizational change to occur, the values, beliefs, and structures of an old organizational form must be delegitimized, unlearned and forgone (Cousens, 1997; O’Brien & Slack, 1999; 2003). However, slightly at odds with these arguments, more recent studies by Stevens (2006) and Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) suggest that the introduction of new ideas on organizing do not require the removal of existing values. Instead, organizational change can represent the layering of different

and opposing values and practices upon one another, allowing for multiple prescribed institutional ideas to coexist within an organization.

These studies have made great contributions to the understanding of organizational change, and the findings form the justification for the two theoretical concepts used in the current study. Specifically, as described above, it has been shown that while institutionally prescribed (new) ideas on organizing are adopted by organizations as an effect of institutional pressures, they are often reformulated in the adoption process or resisted by parts of the organization. This circumstance motivates the need for a theoretical lens which can accommodate the transformable character of ideas on organizing. In this article, the translation perspective (e.g., Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996b; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008) is used for this purpose. Growing out of what has been termed Scandinavian institutionalism, the basic assumption of the translation perspective is that ideas on organizing are not ostensive but performative, meaning they are open to reformulation (Sévon, 1996). Therefore, organizational change from this perspective is a process driven by people who, by thinking and acting, reformulate (i.e., translate) new ideas on organizing, based on existing organizational practices and the purpose of the organization.

By highlighting the individuals' active involvement in a process of change, the translation perspective meets the often voiced critique of institutional theory for being deterministic and assuming organizational passivity (e.g., Christensen, Karnø, Strandgaard Pedersen, & Dobbin, 1997; Hirsch, 1997; Hirsch & Lounsbury, 1997; Oliver, 1991). However, despite the translation perspective's focus on the adopting organization (e.g., Johnson & Hagström, 2005), it lacks a detailed theoretical treatment of what influences the translation process; that is, what makes certain organizations translate in certain ways. Due to this perceived shortcoming, the translation perspective needs to be complemented with a theoretical

conceptualization of the adopting organization. This is especially warranted given that previous studies on sport organizations point to the character of the adopting organization as key in the process of change. This line of reasoning is also supported by Oliver (1991), who hypothesized that acquiescence to institutional pressures for conformity is dependent on a high consistency between organizational goals and the requirements to which the organization is pressured to conform. Conversely, Oliver argued that the lower the degree of consistency the greater the likelihood of organizational resistance to institutional pressures. However, Oliver’s work focused on how institutional antecedents predict organizational behavior. It did not include any elaborated conceptualization of how the character of the receiving organization has impact on the process wherein new ideas on organizing are adopted.

Therefore, the translation perspective is complemented here with the OI concept (e.g., Glynn, 2008). OI traces back to the work of Albert and Whetten (1985), who defined the concept as the answer to the question *who are we as an organization?* This answer, in turn, serves as basis for organizational action (Ashforth, Rogers, & Corley, 2011). Since then, OI has developed into a versatile research field that accommodates many treatments of the concept on different levels of analysis (e.g., individual, group and organization). Of interest in this article is the part of the OI research field that intersects with organizational institutionalism by viewing OIs as constructed in relation to the organization’s institutional environment (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2011; Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998; Glynn, 2008; Glynn & Abzug, 2002; King, Clemens, & Fry, 2011; Sahlin-Andersson, 1996; Wry, Lounsbury, & Glynn, 2011). Here, the question *who are we as an organization* is answered not “in terms of an organization’s essence, but rather, in terms of an organization’s membership in a social category” (Glynn, 2008, p. 419). This self-identification simultaneously places the organization in one category, but not in others (Sahlin & Wedlin,

2008; Sevón, 1996). In this way, the organization is located within classification structures (Corley et al., 2006). Since OIs are contextually defined, the basis for action provided by such self-identification is shaped by a judgment of appropriate action (March, 1981; March & Olsen, 2004). However, as Glynn (2008) argues, this process is recursive, and the actions of organizations work to reproduce or alter the social categories which shape organizational identities. As new ideas on organizing are increasingly adopted in a field, the practices associated with these ideas become legitimate and appropriate, thereby inducing change in organizations in the field (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999). It should also be noted that organizational environments are pluralist, meaning they are constituted by multiple, sometimes conflicting sets of social categories (e.g., Kraatz & Block, 2008). Therefore, self-identification might be performed in relation to more than one of these categories (Sevón, 1996). This is in line with previous findings of sport organizations as reflecting multiple logics in their institutional contexts (e.g., Skirstad & Chellarudai, 2011).

OI research based on institutional arguments has used many aspects of organizational life as an indicator of OI; for example, organizational names (Glynn & Abzug, 2002) or organizational form (King et al., 2011). For the purpose of this article, OI is understood as the core purpose and practices of the organization (Navis & Glynn, 2011; Wry et al., 2011).

When the translation perspective is merged with the OI concept, the focal CSOs' interpretations and actions in relation to the idea of drive-in sport are viewed as based on, and part of, OI construction processes of the CSOs. Furthermore, organizational change is viewed as a potential change in the CSOs' core purpose and practices (i.e., OI), a change which in turn either reproduces or alters the OI categories that shape Swedish CSOs.

Contextual Background

The Swedish sports system is, on all levels, comprised of voluntary democratic associations, and the membership—the individuals in the CSO and the CSOs in the 69 NSOs forming the umbrella organization Swedish Sports Confederation (RF)—aligns the system’s different parts into one organizational complex. In the absence of legislation for voluntary associations in Sweden, the Swedish sports movement’s rules and regulations have become standard for its activities (Pallin, 2004). These rules and regulations prohibit members from participating in rival activities, giving the movement a monopoly on competitive sports. Also contributing to this monopoly is the movement’s privileged status in relation to the Swedish government (national as well as local), enjoyed thanks to its official focus on the contribution of organized sport to public welfare and the creation of a democratic society (Carlsson, Norberg, & Persson, 2011). This official focus is expressed, for example, in the overarching policy document *Idrotten Vill* [What Sports Want] (RF, 2009), which is well aligned with the government’s sport policy. Extensive tax funds (accounting for about one third of the movement’s revenues, (Wijkström & Lundström, 2002), are contributed to Swedish sports in return for the assumed societal benefits.

Method

Sampling of CSOs

The focal CSOs were purposefully sampled (Bryman, 2008), based on the criterion of being engaged in activities labeled drive-in sport. Drive-in sport was deemed to be such a specific label that it can be argued that all six organizations interpreted and acted upon the same idea, and therefore can be subsumed under the same example (i.e., drive-in sport) used in the article to investigate organizational change. A snowball method was used to determine that the

focal CSOs were offering drive-in sport. RFs regional extensions, the Regional Sport Federations (RSFs), were asked whether they knew of any drive-in sport activities being arranged in any of the CSOs in their district.

Some basic contextual information and characteristics of the CSOs are displayed in Table 1. All six CSOs have between 200 and 1000 members. Two of the CSOs (1, 2) organize several sports, whereas the others are single-sport CSOs, with either soccer (4, 5, and 6) or basketball (3) in their repertoire. CSO 2 operates in a small municipality with less than 10,000 inhabitants, and the others in municipalities with between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, with three of them (3-5) in the same municipality. The CSOs are affiliated with three RSFs, numbered 1-3 in the table.

Data Collection

The methodological approach applied in the study fits Suddaby and Greenwood’s (2011) description of an interpretative approach to research on institutional change, as well as Skille’s (2008) call to investigate CSOs from their own perspective. Following this approach, the main focus in the study was on organizational actors’ subjective experiences of organizational reality (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2011). In order to access such information, interviews are a useful tool and were used for data collection (Kvale, 1997).

In total, 10 interviews were conducted with representatives of the six CSOs between April 2010 and December 2011. All interviews took place within one year of the introduction of drive-in sport in the CSOs. Each respondent’s gender, organizational affiliation, function, and time of interview are displayed in Table 2. The sampling of respondents was purposeful, meaning they were chosen based on their assumed insight into and influence on the topic under study (Bryman, 2008). The aim was to interview at least two representatives of each CSO, where one of them had responsibility for integrating drive-in sport activities into the organization. If

this person was a board representative, an administrator was also interviewed, and the other way around. This sampling was based on the argument that administrators and board representatives determine the orientation and organizing of the CSOs’ activities (Hinings, Thibault, Slack, & Kikulis, 1996; Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011). Unfortunately, in two of the CSOs, only one respondent who fulfilled the sampling criteria was available for an interview.

The interview guide was designed to identify: (1) the CSOs’ core purpose and practices (i.e., OI) prior to drive-in sport, operationalized as the content, target group, purpose and organizing of regular CSO activities; (2) the initiation and rationalization of drive-in sport in the CSOs; and, (3) the integration of drive-in sport with regular CSO activities. A sample interview question within the first theme was “How would you describe the core activities of your organization?”; within the second was “How would you describe the introduction of drive-in sport in your organization?”; and within the third was “How would you describe your organization’s involvement in the organizing of drive-in sport?”

The interviews ranged from 60 to 120 minutes and were all conducted face-to-face, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim by the author. The format for the interviews was semi-structured, which allowed for both follow-up questions and elaborations on particular topics by the respondent, while at the same time ensuring that all topics were covered in all interviews. Following Kvale’s (1997) quality criteria for interviews, summaries and follow-ups during the interviews were used in order to clarify the meaning of relevant aspects and verify the interpretation of the respondents’ answers.

One possible limitation of the study is the use of interviews as the only data source. Indeed, other sources such as documents would have been resourceful in providing qualitative data, and would also have been an opportunity to triangulate the data (Bryman, 2008). However,

since the production of documents relating to both the CSOs’ core purposes and practices and the introduction of drive-in sport was very scarce and unevenly distributed among the CSOs, documents were not assessed in the analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were coded using a mixture of predetermined and emergent codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Predetermined codes were the three *a priori* themes of the interview guide (i.e., OI, initiation/rationalization and integration). Within these themes a number of emergent subthemes were identified. Regarding the CSOs’ OIs, two categories with two corresponding sets of core purposes and practices were constructed: *competitive sports CSOs* and *social CSOs*. These categories denote the CSOs’ OIs prior to drive-in sport.

The analysis relating to the first research question – how and why drive-in sport is interpreted and acted upon – generated the following subthemes: two types of initiations (external and internal), two types of rationalizations (instrumental and non-instrumental) and three types of integrations (superficial, integrated and conformed). When combined, three patterns of the initiation, rationalization and integration of drive-in sport emerged. In the analysis related to the second research question the focal CSOs’ OIs prior to drive-in sport was set against these three patterns in order to answer whether the CSOs’ interpretations and actions in relation to the idea of drive-in sport changed the organizations’ core purpose and practices (i.e., OI). This analysis showed that none of the CSOs’ OIs have changed as a result of drive-in sport.

Findings

The findings are presented in the following manner. First, the two OI categories, as well as the focal CSOs distribution between the categories, are presented. Second, the findings

concerning the first research question are presented in the form of the three patterns of initiation, rationalization and integration of drive-in sport in the focal CSOs. The findings related to the second research question are interwoven in the presentation of each of the patterns.

Organizational Identity Prior to Drive-in Sport

Competitive sports CSOs. CSOs 1-5 were determined to belong to the OI category competitive sports CSOs. The representatives of these CSOs described their respective organization’s core purpose and practices (i.e., OI) prior to the introduction of drive-in sport as the organizing of member-directed competitive sport activities. Respondents in these CSOs answer the question of core activities rather straightforwardly: “...when we practice and compete in basketball, these are our core activities” (CSO 3/adm.). Similarly, the board representative of CSO 4 stated, “Playing soccer is our core activity.”

Social CSOs. The remaining CSO (6) was the only organization to be determined to belong to the OI category social CSOs. Unlike the competitive sports CSOs, the core purpose and practices of CSO 6 were described as comprising both the organizing of member-directed competitive sport activities and the organizing of social activities aimed at school youth in general. It is this latter description that makes this CSO a social CSO. This set of core purpose and practices was described as connected to the organization’s running of a youth recreation center with school youth in general as clientele.³ According to the respondent from CSO 6, “Taking care of the city’s youth is the core activity of the youth recreation center.” In the operation of the youth recreation center, sports is one of the activities organized at the request of the visitors. However, these sport activities were described as having a social (as opposed to competitive) character.

Drive-in Sport and the CSOs

An overview of the three patterns of initiation, rationalization and integration and their relation to each CSO/OI is given in Table 3. The first two patterns account for the introduction of drive-in sport in the competitive sports CSOs, whereas the third pattern accounts for the introduction in the social CSO. In the first pattern, drive-in sport was externally initiated and designed, instrumentally rationalized and separated from regular CSO activities. In the second pattern, drive-in sport was CSO-initiated and designed, instrumentally rationalized and integrated with regular CSO activities. In the third pattern, drive-in sport was CSO-initiated and designed. However, unlike in the first two patterns, drive-in sport was not instrumentally rationalized. In addition, drive-in sport *is* a core activity in this pattern, as opposed to being separated from, or integrated with, core activities. In none of the CSOs has drive-in sport changed the core purpose and practices (i.e., OIs) of the organizations.

Pattern 1: Externally initiated and designed, instrumental rationalization and superficial integration.

Initiation. When asked how drive-in sport was introduced in the organization, the representatives of CSOs 1, 3-5 (competitive sports CSOs) described their organization as the recipient of a request to participate in an externally initiated and designed initiative. This request originated from a collaboration between the local authorities (LAs) in the municipality in which the CSOs operate and the RSF to which they are affiliated: “The local authorities asked us whether we would be interested in arranging drive-in sports activities” (CSO 5/board rep.). However, the representatives of the CSOs believe that this request was not based on their qualities as a CSO, but on the grounds of the CSO being active in a geographical area targeted as problematic and in need of crime-preventing measures:

I think [we were approached by the local authorities regarding drive-in sport because] they first of all looked into what areas were in need of this help. I mean, I don't think they would approach a CSO in the nicer parts of town where there are hardly any youth out in the streets during the evenings... it wouldn't have any effect. (CSO 4/adm.)

The representatives of these CSOs consider drive-in sport to be a readymade “package” containing principles about what drive-in sport activities should entail, a package which implies activities very far from the CSOs' core purpose and practices. In addition to being arranged in problem areas, this package included that the activities should have a distinct crime-preventive purpose, take place on Friday nights, target non-affiliated youth in their upper teens, and be led by a paid leader. The predetermined character of these principles is illustrated by the administrator of CSO 4 who stated that the remuneration of drive-in sport leaders was not “[. . .] an idea we came up with, it was not. It was decided by the local authorities and the RSF. We have only... joined the ranks to receive funds.” Hence, while the representatives of the CSOs were asked to write an application to the local authorities and the RSF, they were given directions on what should be in the application in order for it to be granted: “[The application] was a formality. The local authorities gave us the information on how it was to be formulated” (CSO 5/board rep.).

Rationalization. In none of the CSOs in this pattern is drive-in sport considered as even having the potential to be a *new* core activity. This is evident from how drive-in sport is rationalized in the CSOs. Indeed, the representatives of CSOs 1, 3-5 all view drive-in sport as an instrument to boost competitive sport activities (i.e., core activities). For example, the board representative of CSO 5 said that drive-in sport is an opportunity to recruit talented teenagers to

their elite teams (i.e., their core practices): “So you see why we want to do this? We know that there are a lot of talented youth out there, and there’s no rule stating that you have to have played [organized sport] since you were a child [to perform well].” In a similar vein the administrator of CSO 3 stated that “Drive-in sport is outside our core activities [. . .] we’re not the type of CSO that engages in these kinds of activities [without a clear benefit for core activities].” He went on to say that, given the type of his CSO, the reason for the organization’s engagement in drive-in sport is “that it generates money, much-needed money, and an opportunity to recruit members.” When asked how the board would rationalize the CSO’s engagement, he said that it would argue that the involvement in drive-in sport “generates resources [to core activities] without them having to do anything. It’s easy money.”

Yet another example of an instrumental rationalization was expressed by the board representative of CSO 4 who stated that being part of drive-in sport is a way to build the image of the CSO as a socially responsible organization. Such an image is believed to increase sponsorship revenues, and to make the CSO “the first hand choice among parents who are about to place their children in regular CSO activities” (CSO 4/board rep.).

Integration. That drive-in sport is not considered a new core activity in the CSOs in this pattern is also demonstrated by the separation of drive-in sport from regular activities. The extreme example of this is CSO 1, in which the engagement is limited to the CSO being a formal recipient of external funds. This arrangement was agreed upon as a favor to the RSF to which the organization is affiliated. According to the CSO’s administrator, drive-in sport was always meant to be run by the local authorities and the RSF: “That’s the deal we had. That we need to be formally connected to drive-in sport in order for project funds to be distributed doesn’t mean that we have any responsibility in the project.”

While not as extreme as in CSO 1, the integration between drive-in sport and regular CSO activities in CSOs 3–5 is superficial. The representatives of these CSOs described their organizations as operational performers of drive-in sport activities on behalf of the LAs and the RSF, and only a small fraction of the CSO are responsible for the organizations’ engagement in drive-in sport. This reluctance to integrate drive-in sport with regular activities was expressed by the administrator of CSO 3 in the following manner:

The board was thrilled since the project generates money, but I don’t think the rest of the CSO is very pleased [. . .] they feel they’re doing enough for the CSO; they manage their teams and are not interested in any further engagement.

The separation of drive-in sport from the CSOs’ core activities is also visible in that none of the CSOs contribute financially to the organizing of drive-in sport. In fact, the very idea of using the organizations’ resources to cover the costs of drive-in sport is unthinkable for the representatives of the organizations who believe that “We have to gain financially on our engagement in drive-in sport” (CSO 3/adm.). This view is based on the consideration of drive-in sport as being too different from the organizations’ core activities. As illustrated by the board representative of CSO 4:

I mean, drive-in sport participants as a group are lost from organized sports, and that’s what we do, organized sport. So we have to invest our resources in activities aimed at younger children where we can actually lure them to become members. Recruit a six-year old which plays for the CSO for 8, 9, 10 years... that’s a real return on investment, in contrast to investing in a 16-, 17-

year old who probably is not going to join the CSO, so it’s investment in relation to the return, and from a CSO perspective it would be hard to motivate allocation of resources [to the activities]. (CSO 4/board rep.)

In sum, the integration of drive-in sport with regular CSO activities is superficial in CSOs 1 and 3-5.

Pattern 2: CSO initiated and designed, instrumental rationalization and integrated organizing.

Initiation. The representatives of CSO 2 described their organization as the initiator and designer of drive-in sport. Other organizations (LAs and the RSF) acted only as sounding boards and approvers of financial support during the initiation. As stated by the board representative of CSO 2: “We contacted the RSF with a draft application, and then we had a dialogue with them and... let me put it like this: they didn’t change a comma [before approving the application].” Although the CSO was the initiator of drive-in sport, the principles of the activities are pretty much identical to those implied in the “package” presented to CSOs 1, 3-5, a design that was believed to appeal to external fund providers.

Rationalization. Like in the other competitive sports CSOs (1, 3-5), CSO 2’s engagement in drive-in sport is rationalized as an instrument to boost core activities. Thus, drive-in sport is not considered a *new* core activity in this CSO either. The administrator of CSO 2 made this visible when stating that, apart from the opportunity to contribute to keeping youth off the streets during weekend nights, the CSO’s purpose for arranging drive-in sport is to establish a channel through which the CSO has the potential to “recruit participants to regular CSO activities and to enhance the image of the CSO as a contributor in the local community” (CSO 2/adm.).

Integration. CSO 2 does not contribute financially to the organizing of drive-in sport, either. As in CSOs 1, 3-5, this idea is practically unthinkable: “It would be unreasonable to use resources generated to cover costs of core activities to pay for drive-in sport” (CSO 2/board rep.).

However, financing aside, drive-in sport is much more integrated with the organizing of regular activities in CSO 2, than in CSOs 1, 3-5. The CSO is described as the “owner” of drive-in sport, meaning that the board and the administration have a strategic and supportive function in the organizing, while the project manager and the different sport divisions are used in the operational performance of the activities. Being the initiator of drive-in sport, the CSO has had the possibility to adjust drive-in sport to the organization, thereby assuring that the “gains” of drive-in sport exceed the efforts put into the activities. As expressed by the administrator of CSO 2: “We have tried our way forward with drive-in sport [. . .] a process which has involved a great deal of learning as well.” Adjusting drive-in sport to the organization has also meant resisting outside pressure to expand drive-in sport:

We presented the idea for the municipality’s culture and recreation committee, and they liked the idea so much that they wanted us to make it bigger. But we didn’t because we felt that we shouldn’t take on more than we feel it’s reasonable we can handle in the organization. (CSO 2/board rep.)

However, despite drive-in sport being initiated, designed and run by the organization, drive-in sport has not resulted in organizational change in this CSO either. This is evident from the observation that drive-in sport is considered a recruitment channel to core activities and that the activities have no designated place in the organization’s structures or resource allocation. In

essence, drive-in sport was not initiated to change core activities, but rather as way to get more youth to participate in existing core activities.

Pattern 3: CSO initiated and designed, non-instrumental rationalization and overlapping organizing.

Initiation. The representative of the only social CSO, CSO 6, described the organization as the initiator and designer of drive-in sport, while other organizations (LAs and the RSF) had minimal influence over the introduction. The activities were modeled from a presentation of drive-in sport (conveying practically the same principles as in the other CSOs), given during a lecture that the representative had visited.

Rationalization. As with the other CSOs in the study, drive-in sport is not considered as a *new* core activity in CSO 6. However, in this CSO, it is the perceived *conformity* between the core purpose and practices of CSO 6 and the principles of drive-in sport which forms the legitimacy for the introduction of drive-in sport. Hence, unlike in the competitive sports CSOs, in which drive-in sport is viewed as an instrument to boost core activities, within CSO 6 it is rationalized *as* a core activity (i.e., an end, instead of a means). As an illustration of this, when asked whether the respondent thought that the CSO would be organizing drive-in sport activities if it did not run the youth recreation center, he replied:

No. I don't think so. [. . .] It is related to the activities we arrange in the youth recreation center and to me having this function [as head of the center], where I see various ways to develop the youth recreation centers' activities, but in the name of sport. (CSO 6/adm./board rep.)

Integration. Like CSO 2, the representative of CSO 6 described the CSO as the strategic, organizational and operational “owner” of drive-in sport, and drive-in sport is viewed as one activity among many organized within the scope of the CSO’s youth recreation center. The purpose and target group of drive-in sport is the same as that of the other youth recreation center activities, all of which originates from an idea of what is popular among the target group: “I mean...if lacemaking was popular [among youth], I would organize such activities instead [of drive-in sport activities]” (CSO 6/adm./board rep.).

That drive-in sport *is* (as opposed to being separated from or integrated with) a core activity is also shown in that CSO 6, unlike all of the other CSOs in the study, invests financial as well as human resources in the organizing of drive-in sport. For example, drive-in sport activities are led by the youth recreation center’s staff, an arrangement which is viewed as natural since “It’s part of their job, it’s what they’re paid for” (CSO 6/adm./board rep.).

Discussion

This study focused on (1) how and why drive-in sport was initiated, rationalized and integrated in six Swedish CSOs, and (2) the outcome of the introduction of drive-in sport in terms of the potential change in the core purpose and practices (i.e., OI) of the CSOs. From the perspective of the conceptual background of the study, the interpretations and actions in relation to drive-in sport presented in the findings are based on and part of OI construction processes of the CSOs.

Regarding the first research question, the competitive sports CSOs (1-5) focus on delivering competitive sports activities. As such, they rationalized the adoption of drive-in sport as instrumental to their core activities, for example, by perceiving drive-in sport as a talent recruitment pool (CSO 5) or as a way to make money to finance core activities (CSO 3). By

contrast, the social CSO (6) focuses on delivering social activities to school youth in general. As such they rationalized the adoption of drive-in sport *as* a core activity.

The difference in rationalization between the CSOs in these two OI categories makes visible the intractable paradox of CSOs as deliverers of spontaneous sports activities referred to in the introduction. Drive-in sport was simply too different from the core purpose and practices (i.e., OI) of the competitive sports CSOs in order for it to be considered as a potentially new direction for the organizations. This does not, however, make drive-in sport unattractive for the CSOs. The relatively low stakes of the engagement in drive-in sport, combined with the potential benefits of this engagement makes drive-in sport an appropriate instrument for these CSOs. For the social CSO, on the other hand, the target group and social character of drive-in sport was a perfect match to the activities delivered within the scope of the CSO’s youth recreation center.

The findings of this study also show that the circumstances of the introduction (i.e., externally initiated and designed versus CSO-initiated and designed) affected the level and character of the integration of drive-in sport in the CSOs. In the CSOs that were faced with a pre-designed package, drive-in sport was decoupled (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) in what appears as an attempt to protect core activities from any strain that the engagement in drive-in sport might create. On the other hand, in one of the CSOs which initiated drive-in sport (CSO 6) the idea was adopted wholesale as an additional ingredient on the CSO’s repertoire of core practices. This can be understood as a result of the fit between drive-in sport and the core purpose and practices (i.e., OI) of the organization. However, in the competitive sports CSO which initiated drive-in sport (CSO 2), what might be termed a *space for translation* allowed the organization to reformulate/adjust (i.e., translate) the idea to the organization. This shows that, when circumstances allow them to be so, ideas on organizing are not ostensive but performative

(Sévon, 1996). This analysis is also supported by previous research showing that in the event of a conflict between existing core values and practices and the content of the idea to which the organization is exposed, the new idea is often resisted or reshaped, based on the organization's existing core values and practices (e.g., Cousens, 1997; Kikulis, 2000; Kikulis et al., 1992; Kikulis & Slack, 1995; O'Brien & Slack, 2003, 2004b; Slack & Hinings, 1994).

Regarding the second research question, when the CSOs' OIs prior to the introduction of drive-in sport is set against the findings on the initiation, rationalization and integration of the idea, it becomes visible that none of the organization's core purpose and practices (i.e., OI) have changed as a result of drive-in sport. As viewed from the conceptual background of the study, drive-in sport was approached through an understanding of the CSOs' core purpose and practices, an understanding that was established prior to the introduction of drive-in sport. The findings show that this understanding was not transformed but rather reproduced as a result of drive-in sport; none of the CSOs' interpretations and actions deviated from what was prescribed by the two OI categories. As noted by Glynn (2008), while the perceived belonging to an institutional category shapes organizational identities, and in turn organizational actions, actions reproduce or alter such institutional categories. From this perspective, the processes documented in this article are clear examples of reproduction.

An important question arises from the preceding analysis: how is change at all possible? How are CSOs not just caught in an endless circle of reproduction? This is especially pertinent as the literature is rife with examples documenting organizational change, and research on sport organizations is no exception. As conveyed in the conceptual framework, previous research shows that changes in the institutional context of sport organizations *do* cause organizations to change (e.g., Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011; Slack & Hinings, 1992; 1994; Stevens & Slack,

1998; Stevens, 2006). In the light of this insight, perhaps the processes reported in this article would have been different if the idea of drive-in sport had been more tightly coupled to a wider and more powerful change in the institutional context of the CSOs, a change which advocates for the emergence of a new OI category. For example, an idea aligned with processes of professionalization and commercialization might have been received differently, since these are processes which have been noted as under way in Swedish sports (e.g., Fahlén, 2006; Fahlén, Stenling, & Vestin, 2008; Stenling & Fahlén, 2009). However, the findings of this study indicate that even if a wider pressure to change the identity of CSOs is in effect, it is far weaker than the institutional expectations shaping what they already are. Indeed, viewed from the conceptual framework of the study, it was these expectations that produced an interpretation of drive-in sport as something completely different than core activities by the competitive sports CSOs.

However, pressures advocating for the emergence of a new OI category might also be built up from below. While the introduction and organizing of drive-in sport cannot be said to have resulted in any change in the CSOs' OIs, it has produced a supply of activities which previously had not been available. Other CSOs might learn about these activities, for example, by the highlighting of one of the CSOs as a “good” or “successful” example. What are presented in such instances are not practices per se, but presentations of practices in terms of rationalizations and stories of success (Sahlin-Andersson, 1996). Such stories might be very well aligned with the OI category social CSOs, according to which drive-in sport is to be considered as a core activity (as in CSO 6). Therefore, over time, such a development might lead to an institutional pressure of the kind discussed in the preceding paragraph. Through such a development, more CSOs might come to consider this OI category as legitimate, begin to construct their OI in relation to it, and in turn start to consider activities such as drive-in sport as

a core activity. Such isomorphic behavior could require the de-legitimization of the OI category competitive sports CSOs and the values and practices associated with it, as argued by Cousins (1997) and O’Brien and Slack (1999, 2003). However, considering the dominance of competitive sports CSOs in the findings of this study, a more likely scenario is either that this OI category will continue to be regarded as legitimate by relatively few CSOs or that CSOs construct multiple identities (Sevón, 1996), as in the case of CSO 6. This latter scenario is supported by Stevens (2006) and Skirstad and Chelladurai (2011) who found that organizational change can represent the layering of several institutionally prescribed ideas upon one another.

Another sense in which change might still be the result of the processes under study is related to the internal dynamics of the organizations. As Sahlin-Andersson (1996) argues, once a new idea on organizing has been adopted by an organization, it triggers the ascription of new expectations and new meanings to organizational activities. Hence, as a result of the connection that has been made between the idea of drive-in sport and the CSOs under study, the core purpose and practices of the CSOs might come to be reevaluated, using drive-in sport as the new yardstick. This line of argument also points to a limitation in the design of this study. Unlike the snapshot of organizational life that has been given here, a longitudinal design might produce a completely different analysis. Such a design could include the following of the idea of drive-in sport as it diffuses through the field of Swedish sports, detecting either an institutionalization or a fading away of the idea. A longitudinal design could also include returning to the CSOs under study in order to identify long-term effects of their engagement in the organizing of drive-in sport.

Another limitation of this study is related to the small number of CSOs examined. The findings show that there are nuances in how drive-in sport was approached by the CSOs in the

same OI category, for example in the rationalization of the engagement in drive-in sport (i.e., an opportunity to recruit talented youth versus a way to make easy money). These nuances do not undermine the conclusion that none of the organizations have changed. On the contrary, it could be argued that the way in which new ideas on organizing is approached is even more tightly connected to the self-identifications of the CSOs. However, the self-identification is narrower than shown in the present study. An analysis drawing on a larger number of respondents, in regard to the number of CSOs examined, might generate such narrower OI categories. For example, the organizing of member-directed competitive sports activities is the core purpose and practices of competitive sports CSOs. However, a differentiation of this definition could possibly be made according to size, sport/s, level of competition (e.g., elite versus mass) and gender. Two possible self-identifications would then be *we are a large CSO which organizes competitive soccer for talented boys*, and *we are a small CSO which organizes competitive boule for elderly women*. The CSOs in both examples have competitive sports as their core activity, but there is a difference in how this is narrowed down. Arguably, this difference in self-identification might then produce different ways of approaching new ideas on organizing.

Some implications for practice can be given based on the findings of this study. As stated in the introduction, the sports policy context in Sweden (as well as in other western countries) advocates for CSOs to change in order to conform to expectations of organized sports to make contributions that benefit the society in various ways. However, from a policy making-perspective, it needs to be recognized that CSOs interpret and act upon new ideas on organizing based on their existing activities. Therefore, policies must be formulated in such a way that they are not in complete conflict with the self-identification of CSOs, or they have to be aligned with wider processes of change which are underway in the institutional context. Policy makers could

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also benefit from creating a (at least perceived) space for translation in the policy implementation process, in order to allow for CSOs to reformulate the policy to make it fit the organization. Otherwise, policies run the risk of not producing any profound organizational change. Similar advice can be directed to the leaders of CSOs who wish to engage their organization in processes of change. New ideas on organizing need to align with either existing activities or mounting institutional pressure. Otherwise, these new ideas run the risk of being considered illegitimate.

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Table 1 – Overview of Basic Characteristics and Contextual Conditions of the CSOs

CSO	Sports supply	Number of members	Municipality/ population^a	Regional Sports Federation
1	Several sports	> 200	1 / 50’– 200’	1
2	Several sports	> 200	2 / 1’– 10’	1
3	Basketball only	> 200	3 / 50’– 200’	2
4	Soccer only	> 200	3 / 50’– 200’	2
5	Soccer only	> 200	3 / 50’– 200’	2
6	Soccer only	> 200	4/ 50’– 200’	3

^a Figures for municipality population are provided in thousands.

Table 2 – Respondents According to Organizational Affiliation and Function

Respondent	Organization	Function	Time of interview
1 (male)	CSO 1	Board representative	June 2010
2 (male)	CSO 1	Paid administrator	April 2010
3 (male)	CSO 2	Board representative	April 2010
4 (female)	CSO 2	Paid administrator	April 2010
5 (male)	CSO 3	Paid administrator	December 2011
6 (male)	CSO 4	Board representative	December 2011
7 (male)	CSO 4	Paid administrator	December 2011
8 (female)	CSO 5	Board representative	December 2011
9 (male)	CSO 5	Paid administrator	December 2011
10 (male)	CSO 6	Board rep./ Paid adm.	December 2011

Table 3 – The initiation, rationalization and integration of drive-in sport

Pattern	CSO	OI	Initiation	Rationalization	Integration
1	1, 3-5	Competitive	External	Instrumental	Superficial
2	2	Competitive	Internal	Instrumental	Integrated
3	6	Social	Internal	Non-instrumental	<i>Is</i> core activity

Footnotes

¹ The description of drive-in sport activities is based on the interview material generated in the present study.

² As noted by Greenwood, Oliver, Sahlin and Suddaby (2008), the concept of institutional context has been used in institutional research to denote both widespread social conceptions of appropriate organizational form and behavior and the regulatory framework of state and professional agencies.

³ Regarding organizations with multiple identities, Sevón (1996) argues that context determines which of these identities becomes salient during a process of change. For CSO 6 in this study, it was its social CSO-identity which became salient during the introduction of drive-in sports.