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A one-off event and the construction of organisational identity: the case of the 2016 Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Committee

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we investigate the organisational identity (OI) of the 2016 Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (LYOGOC). Using OI theory, we scrutinised how the youth focus of the winter edition of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) and the institutional environment of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) shaped LYOGOC's identity. We conducted an interview with five leaders in a focus group after the games, as well as observations and interviews before, during, and after the games. We identified four core values in LOYGOC's identity, which pair and balance each other: raw/awesome versus humble, and playful versus determined. These values were lived by internally and expressed externally to make the LYOGOC work within the institutional environment of the IOC and 'the Olympic family', local sport organisations, and communities, and to get the work done within LYOGOC. Moreover, doing things 'the Norwegian way' combined with the 'local Olympic identity' was important for LYOGOC's leaders, for their work, and for the organisation's identity.

Introduction

In this article, we investigate the organisational identity (OI) of the 2016 Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (LYOGOC). The present study departs from and merges two origins of academic work: sport event research, and research into organisational identity. First, the steadily increasing research into sport events covers a variety of topics including governance (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008; Kübler & Chappelet, 2007), management (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013), legacy (Chappelet, 2008; Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Preuss, 2007), risk management (Chappelet,

2001), volunteers (Doherty, 2009), branding (Séguin, Ferrand, & Chappelet, 2014), and event governance (Withford, Thi Phi, & Dredge, 2014). However, to our knowledge, no sport event studies have explored the self-understanding of local organising committees. Second, the study of organisations usually refers to conventional or long-term organisations where employees can make a career including promotions over time (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Despite throughput of volunteers, even the Scandinavian sport system is stable for an identity to develop over time (Stenling, 2013). Thus, one-off event organisations challenge this understanding of organisations a one-off event is a so-called 'pulsating organisation'. '[T]hey start with a very small number of staff to build to a large number of staff and volunteers at the time of the event'. Consequently, management of 'major events [is] much more difficult than is the case of conventional organisations' (Jago & Meir, 2009, p. 71).

Combining the two approaches, this paper scrutinises the organisational identity (OI) of a one-off organisation, namely the Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (LYOGOC) of 2016. Put simply, identifying OI answers the question 'Wwho are we as an organisation?' On the surface it may appear that LYOGOC's only goal is to implement the event, i.e. a set of sport competitions. However, to generate something beyond the sport competitions, there was an extended focus on youth (Strittmatter & Skille, 2017). The bidding document emphasised the 'goal to develop an event that is led by youth, where youth takes active part in the planning, staging and follow-up of the YOG 2016' (NIF, 2011, p. 6). To give young people responsibility was in line with the idea of YOG (IOC).

The Lillehammer 2016 YOG was intended to work in three ways: (1) to be a motivational boost for youth and increase the number of youth athletes; (2) to increase the number of adolescent coaches; and (3) to increase the number of young leaders and volunteers in Norwegian sport (NIF, 2011). Given the one-off or pulsating attribute of LYOGOC, it had a rapid growth, first established in the fall of 2011. The administration was established with just four employees in August 2012. When the Games commenced in February 2016, the number of employees was 131 (LYOGOC, 2016a, 2016b). Thus, a number of potential questions arise: Is it possible to develop an OI? What are the prerequisites? Which characteristics develop? In sum, our main research question is: How was the OI of LYOGOC constructed and reconstructed?[1] The research question calls for qualitative answers, and a theoretical framework of organisational identity.

Theory

For a framework to analyse what LYOGOC is as an organisation, we turn to organisational identity theory. There are various understandings and definitions of OI (see Balmer, 2008, for an overview). We apply an institutional approach (Glynn, 2008) because we consider organisational identities to be both internally negotiated and externally influenced (Gioia, Patvardhan, Hamilton, & Corley, 2013). The institutional context offers 'possible and legitimated meanings and symbols that constitute the "raw material" that organisations appropriate to construct their identities' (Glynn, 2008, p. 414). Moreover, 'much of what an organisation becomes is imprinted at founding'

(King, Clemens, & Fry, 2011, p. 556), indicating that an organisation's identity depends on both the founder's vision and the interplay between this vision and the institutional environment. Due to continuously changing institutional environments, organisational identities must adapt continually. In the case of LYOGOC, also internal changes – especially related to the rapid growth of the organisation – led to continuous adaptions.

To reveal an organisation's identity initially requires comparison with other organisations. In other words, reference to others is crucial for the construction of an OI (Gioia et al., 2013; Strandgaard-Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006; see also Glynn, 2008). To develop an OI, there must be a shared understanding of the organisation's objectives or particular practices. This shared understanding is challenged when new people of various social backgrounds (i.e. gender, age, educational backgrounds, and work experience) come into the organisation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Moreover, an institutional approach implies a specific interpretation of actions where an organisational identity prescribes the appropriate action for an organisation to become a member of a specific category (Glynn, 2008; March, 1981).

Stenling (2013) showed how sport clubs that focussed on competition rationalised the inclusion of spontaneous sport activities as a means (for recruitment, fund raising, or image building) to their 'real' end: competitive sport. Representatives of organisations protect their core practices and avoid alternatives, with reproductive conceptions of the understanding of 'the type of organisation we are' (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Glynn, 2000). Mechanisms of resource allocation can influence an organisation, especially regarding possibilities and willingness for compliance with strong actors in the field (i.e. the IOC). In sum, several elements influence the OI of an organisation (Hall & Taylor, 1996). In contrast to organisational identity among ordinary sport organisations such as sport clubs (cf. Stenling, 2013), which develops and is sustained in a stable field of long-lasting peers, the OI for a sport event develops under temporary conditions (Jago & Meir, 2009).

Given the theoretical expectations of varied influence on the OI, and to explore this main research question more systematically, we added three sub-research questions. (a) How was LYOGOC's OI affected by the IOC?; (b) To what degree did the focus on youth shape LYOGOC's OI?; (c) To what degree did the local and regional contexts shape the OI of LYOGOC? We take the inner life of LYOGOC as our sample and data collection point of departure to explore what they do and to whom they relate.

Method

We investigated LYOGOC's organisational identity by following and interviewing leaders of the LYOGOC before, during, and after YOG. We focussed on how the leaders define and construct the identity of the organising committee. This approach illustrates the OI of the LYOGOC from the perspective of the leaders. We used several sources for our data: informal conversations and meetings with people in the LYOGOC before and during the event, observations and short video interviews with key persons during the event, and a focus group interview after the games. Overall, we applied a case study approach including several methods (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009).

One of the authors was involved in three workshops in November and December 2012 with the aim of developing a strategic platform, including LYOGOC's values. This provided us with an insight into the background for the vision and values of the games. Twenty-two representatives from different stakeholders (sport organisations, youth organisations, music festivals and the LYOGOC) took part. The outcome, the Strategy Platform, was a roadmap for work in the planning and implementing phases (LYOGOC, 2013). All authors were involved in informal and formal meetings with the CEO and other leaders of the LYOGOC between 2013 and 2016. Two of the authors observed the games from 12th to 21st of February 2016. We had access to restricted areas (accredited as researchers) and were able to observe and talk to people on different levels in the organisation.

Lastly, one of the authors followed the leader group throughout the event, had informal conversations with them, and conducted six short video interviews with key personnel including the CEO (three interviews), the arena manager and deputy CEO (two interviews), and the sport competitions manager (one interview). These small interviews – conducted in real time during the event – contained issues of leadership, volunteers, organisational culture, young leaders, and the relationship to the IOC. The importance of the video interviews and the observations before and during the Games was twofold. First, it offered insight into what really happens in an organising committee while people were under stressful conditions. Second, it gave us a better understanding in order to develop topics and questions for the interview guide for the focus group interview.

The main data source was an in-depth focus group interview with five leaders in LYOGOC (all authors took part), as we were interested 'in the ways in which individuals discuss a certain issue *as members of a group*, rather than simply as individuals' (Bryman, 2008, p. 473, original italics). The interviewees were selected for their responsibility for creating and managing the LYOGOC OI. The CEO was a 35-year-old male with a graduate degree in economics and engineering, and with experience in private organisations such as banking. The head of arena management (and deputy CEO) and the head of sports competitions were middle-aged men with long experience in sport organisations and sport venues management. Prior to employment in the LYOGOC organisation, one of the interviewees worked in a sport club while the other worked in operations and maintenance of the Olympic facilities (after the 1994 Winter Games). The two last leaders interviewed, one male and one female, had recently completed an educational degree in sport management. The female was the head of marketing in LYOGOC, and the male was responsible for the torch relay and the youth leaders. In sum, the sample included people with diverse roles in the LYOGOC who could speak about and express concerns about OI (research question 1), specifically the youth focus (research question 2) and its regional/local environment (research question 3).

The interview guide for the focus group had two parts in addition to the introductory questions about the interviewees' education, experience, recruitment to LYOGOC, and expectations regarding their contribution to the LYOGOC. The main topics covered were leadership, organisational culture, and OI. The latter built on the aforementioned theory, resulting in questions such as: Who are you (as an organisation)? What are your values? How are they cultivated internally and externally? What is appropriate

to say and do? To what degree were you influenced by policy (the youth focus)? How were you influenced by the environment, internationally (IOC), nationally (The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports, NIF), and regionally/locally? The focus group had a relaxed atmosphere, and the interviewees talked freely. However, we prompted a response for specific questions. In many respects, the interview revolved around self-reflection. As Table 1 indicates, leaders were hired at various times, challenging us to capture the stability of and change in OI leading up to and beyond the games. We were interested in the interviewees' responses to each other and expressions of common understandings – or disagreements – regarding LYOGOC's organisational identity. Our focus group approach enabled us 'to study the processes whereby meaning is collectively constructed' (Bryman, 2008, p. 476) during mutual reflection.

The interview lasted two-and-a-half hours with a 20-minute break and was transcribed verbatim. The interview data were analysed with use of a combination of emerging (a 'let the data talk' strategy) and quasi pre-defined codes (based on theoretical concepts). We followed the proposal of Miles and Huberman (1994) for a two-step (or cycle) operation of analysis. In the first cycle of coding, the categorisation of emerging themes created patterns of three main findings (of which the result section below is based). These patterns – or more specifically the categories building up the main finding (see Results section) – are brought into the second cycle of coding, where we explicitly look for patterns that fit the concepts of the theoretical framework presented above. The result of this second cycle is evident in the discussion section below, where our empirical findings engage with theoretical concepts. Since it was important for us to let the members of LYOGOC speak freely, we analysed the strategy document (LYOGOC, 2013) and reports (LYOGOC, 2016a, 2016b) *after* the interview and during the write-up of this article. At this point, we also went back to notes from before and during event data, to broaden descriptions and increase validation (Yin, 2009).

A critical note on the sample and our interpretation and application of data is needed before we move on. The five participants in the focus group represent a strategic sample (Charmaz, 2006) who were responsible for key functions in the LYOGOC. Two sets of critics to the sample are first, that leaders are not able to capture everything that happened in the whole organisation; hence, the organisational identity of LYOGOC as we present it here is the OI as experienced and expressed by the

Table 1. Interviewees representing leaders of the Lillehammer Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee.

Reference	Title	Age	Started in LYOGOG	Group interview	Individual interview
A	CEO	35	August 2012, CEO since 2014	X	X
B	Project leader torch tour and young leaders	26	June 2014	X	
C	Project leader marketing	27	April14	X	
D	Arena manager and deputy CEO	51	January 2014	X	x
E	Sport competitions manager	42	September 2013	X	x

Notes: The focus group interview was conducted after the games and the individual interviews during the event.

interviewed leaders. That leads secondly to a situation where key persons in an organisation tend to view their organisation and work more favourably than the rest of the organisation (Payne & Pugh, 1976). Nevertheless, in light of the insight acquired during the observation at game-time, the participants in our sample come across as self-critical with nuanced pictures of their role and the organisation. Wrapping up with reference to classic evaluation criteria of research (Yin, 2009), we admit the limitations – at least uncertainty – of external validity (even if extended only to more peripheral parts of the LYOGOC). On the contrary, we are very confident in claiming a high level of internal validity of the leaders' experiences of the LYOGOC's OI.

Results

The analysis led to three overall findings. First, there was a strong and shared consciousness among the leaders that LYOGOC's identity was established on YOG values and that these values were actively pursued. For example, every time a new person was hired – which was relatively frequent, especially during the four months prior to the Games – the CEO held a welcome speech where he specifically addressed YOG values. Welcome speeches for newcomers functioned also as a reminder for others. Moreover, according to the leaders, there was a daily check for compliance with LYOGOC's values. A concept used by the CEO to explain this idea, was 'inspowering', used to both inspire and to empower the younger members of the LYOGOC. Of course, 'inspowering' has defined values as point of departure.

Second, there were the values *per se*. Before we discuss these, we note a third point that emerged from our data, namely that there are several relationships to other organisations which shaped the identity of the LYOGOC. IOC is one such actor, NIF is another; local sport clubs are others as well as the regional Olympic park (which represents a legacy from the Lillehammer 1994 Winter Olympics, on several levels: physical/structural, social/cultural, and organisational). All-in-all, organisational identity, as it emerged thus far, was developed and fostered by a combination of internal leadership (first finding) and external partners or stakeholders (third finding). A set of defined values link these internal and the external influences.

The simplest answer to the question 'What is the LYOGOC as an organisation?' according to the CEO is 'Awesome, humble, playful, and determined' (LYOGOC, A). This is in line with an internal strategy document launched three years before the Games. In this Norwegian document, 'awesome' was translated as 'rå' which is more accurately translated as 'raw' than 'awesome'. In the strategic document, 'rå' was explained as 'strong willed, wholehearted effort and force', and a 'young way to embrace being brave, innovative, and ambitious' (LYOGOC, 2013, p. 16). In the report to the Ministry of Culture after the Games, LYOGOC states that 'the values "Awesome and Humble" and "Playful and Determined" were important elements of our leadership philosophy. We used these as a guide when decisions were made, and [the values] were also visible in a number of physical ways' (LYOGOC, 2016b, p. 45).

In the document, it is emphasised that the values employed to guide the work of the LYOGOC were selected to establish both tension and balance. According to a member of the LYOGOC, one should always have these in the back of one's head, and

ask whether one is both raw and humble For example: 'Am I playful and determined now, when doing this task?' (LYOGOC, C). Especially being awesome influenced the LYOGOC, when employing young leaders, giving them responsibility, and supporting their practical solutions for the Games. According to the leaders, being determined, raw, and awesome also permeated the relationship with external actors. Let us elaborate on each of the values, treating them pairwise.

Raw/awesome and humble

While awesome means approximately 'fantastic,' raw in its original and etymological meaning[2] refers to something uncooked. Following the mentioned report (in Norwegian language), 'rå' is about doing things in a youthful way, meaning brave, innovative, and ambitious (LYOGOC, 2013). 'Raw' means fresh, and connotes 'young', 'tender', 'sore,', 'in a rudimentary condition', or 'unfinished.' Most relevant for organisations, raw may mean 'inexperienced', 'harsh', and 'able to dare'. LYOGOC's focus on raw relates to having young people on board both as employees and volunteers. That means people who were inexperienced and less influenced by organisational experiences. Employing young people was considered a raw action; the leaders considered themselves 'raw and [they] just pushed people' (LYOGOC, A); and applauded to 'not employ too many like [himself], who are a bit older, but from the beginning have a number of young people with much responsibility, to be able to dare' (LYOGOC, D). On the contrary, he (LYOGOC, D) said at day five of the event – facing the realities of many young people in the organisation: 'Young and inexperienced people … may feel a stronger sense of crisis than more experienced people may feel' when things are not going as planned.

'Raw' and 'awesome' are complementary. On the one hand, it is presumed that the IOC box is closed and that raw actions are needed to break out of it. On the other hand, when making tough decisions, the results must be better than good: they must be awesome. When the LYOGOC paired young and unexperienced people with experienced people, it is a combination of awesome and humble. Consequently, LYOGOC had to soften the goal to be raw; it was more important be successful (field notes). When one of the leaders explained how values were carried out in practice, she exemplified this with how one spoke during meetings about specific tasks. 'Is this raw/awesome? Is this humble? Do we break boundaries now? Or have people seen it before? We often used those [questions] as a check list, actually' (LYOGOC, C).

The 'raw' concept relates to other words, such as courage and even 'defiance, that is for me the rawness' (LYOGOC, A). The word defiance is associated with Defence and resistance: 'Overall, I think the defiance actually was about defending one's own culture. It dealt with that we conducted it in a Norwegian way' (LYOGOC, D). Connecting raw and awesome with defiance indicates that the LYOGOC wants to do something that others may not have done. These values relate to the importance for the LYOGOC to create a distinct organisational identity, and to be conscious about their local and national organisational environment.

The value of raw and awesome is seen in relation to its counter value – humility. Rather than being mutually exclusive and choosing one over the other, both values

must always be present. In addition to balancing humble with raw/awesome, there was a need to balance humility inward, outward, and upward. To be humble internally refers to how peers interact within the organisation and create a shared identity. It specifically refers to how the top leaders transmit signals of symbolic value internally. For example, the CEO adopted a down-to-earth attitude and approachability by, for example, not having a separate office. He wanted to show humbleness in his leadership; 'I did not have a permanent desk. I sat in different places in the office … to sit within all departments to be present in a humble and listening way' (LYOGOC, A).

To be humble externally refers to how to approach partners: 'When you meet stakeholders, you must do so with much humbleness and a wish to get on board and create something together' (LYOGOC, A). Rather than approaching partners with 'listen to me, one can start with come with me/us in a more pleasant way' (LYOGOC, A) to build a common ground for future collaboration. A third element of the value humility refers to being humble upward. That is about how a new, local, and temporary organisation in the Olympic family positioned itself towards the IOC. For example, the representatives of LYOGOC 'tried to be humble towards input from the IOC' (LYOGOC, A). The humble relationship with the IOC had exceptions. For example, LYOGOC was developing an app for the event, but the IOC wanted to be involved. The CEO gave IOC a choice to do it themselves (and cover the costs) or give LYOGOC the full responsibility and freedom. This is an example of the LYOGOC's determination.

Playful and determined

Playfulness refers to an atmosphere within the everyday work of LYOGOC, and is (as humility) nurtured by a flat organisational structure. One consequence of the playful attitude was – again according to core leaders – no 'huge personal conflicts which is perhaps usual in some organisations' (LYOGOC, D). There was an ambivalence about the importance of being playful. It was, on the one hand, often mentioned and highly valued by the interviewees. However, it is difficult to narrow down what playfulness looks like in practice. An example stems from a discussion in the focus group, about how LYOGOC was conceived by partner organisations. Representatives of LYOGOC indicated that partner organisations needed some time before they joined in their playfulness, and that they had 'met some other partners who did not completely dare to lay out that playfulness until at the end of the project' (LYOGOC, D).

Determination couples internal elements (above) of the LYOGOC' organisational identity with external aspects (presented in the following). Two main external aspects of being determined were identified. First, it is associated with partnerships with local sport clubs in and around Lillehammer. Second, determined combined with raw/awesome is what really challenges the IOC. This, according to the LYOGOC leaders, is the 'Norwegian way'. At first sight, this might seem the opposite of humble; however, being determined relates to achieving LYOGOC's mission. That was to deliver the Youth Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer in 2016.[3] To do so, local expertise was utilised, including sport clubs in and around the city of Lillehammer. The clubs know the sport and are everyday users of the venues used in the YOG. They know, for example, about weather conditions on the ski-jumping slope, snow conditions in the

cross-country skiing arena, and the logistics of roads and parking lots. The head of sports in LYOGOC had huge faith in local sport clubs.

> It was the existing event milieus that did it. We could not have done it if the local event milieus did not have the competence we [LYOGOC] needed. But that too, as I see it, built a really strong ownership [to the Games] in almost every home, at least in Lillehammer. There were not many households in Lillehammer that were not engaged in the event in one way or another. I think that was an important success criterion. They have had it since 1994, much of it, but with a crazy power for renewal. To take on such a large and heavy event, and hand it out to all local organizations, and say: 'Lillehammer Curling Club, now you will organize the Youth Olympics, you can do it.' (LYOGOC, E)

The value of the engagement of the local sport clubs, according to the LYOGOC leaders, cannot be overestimated. For one thing, there is an economic element: 'If it hadn't been for the sport clubs, we would have needed 100 more employees' (LYOGOC, E). Moreover, utilising existing and needed competence, creating ownership, sustaining legacy, and bringing surrounding communities together.

As mentioned, 'determined' combined with 'raw/awesome'; challenged the IOC by 'doing things the Norwegian way' – simple, straightforward and easily understood.[4]

> One of the things we tried to cultivate with being determined was not creating documents just to please the IOC. We created what we needed and had a very 'final product culture.' We agreed that to lead an arena, you need these documents. Then we made a process to make these documents, not all sorts of silly documents that the IOC wanted. (LYOGOC, A)

The YOG concept is IOC property and 'the baby' of former IOC president Jacque Rogge. As such, YOG will always be subject to power dynamics in which the IOC has the upper hand. Interviewees also expressed this. The LYOGOC leaders perceived that the IOC wanted control, even over local banalities (such as traffic, infrastructure, and facilities). However, things changed as time went by. 'We were in Lillehammer; they were in Lausanne' so 'they had to trust us' (LYOGOC, C). After getting to know each other, trust was developed. During the Games, the CEO found that not every representative from the IOC were pleased with the 'Norwegian way.' On day three, the CEO expressed:

> IOC has close to 200 people, including members and administrators. On an overall level, the relationship was really good because we created a close relationship over the three years prior [to the Games]. However, in some areas it did not work very well because the relationship was not in place when the Games started. Some people from the IOC expressed dissatisfaction and that created a negative mood among my people. They were exhausting for my staff. It is important to not be too concerned of controlling compared to creating. (LYOGOG A)

Overall, LYOGOC's organisational identity comprised a complex mix of values and practices. Most important were all the managers and functionaries carrying out the work in real-time. One day before the opening ceremony the CEO said: 'My most important task is to take care of the people around me and ensure that they are happy because they are the ones who have to do the job now.' Three days into the Games, he followed up with this reflection:

> It is about empowering them to do the job they need to do because I can't control them and don't have information to control them. … So people-management is very much to ensure that you see people, give them some hugs and 'high-five' and let them celebrate

the feeling of success because it gives them energy. The biggest risk is that people get tired.

Summing up the empirical material primarily based on LYOGOC's core leaders own experiences and expressions, LYOGOC's organisational identity was created and cultivated in relation to the standing power source of the IOC, and in relation to the local environment for both need of practitioners and for supporting values. Most importantly, the OI was created inside the LYOGOC. 'We are like this and we do like this.'

Discussion

The organisational identity of LYOGOC was created through a complex process that involved several internal logics and external expectations. LYOGOC's mission was to organise a Winter Olympic event with several sport disciplines and venues. This mission included the task to develop the YOG as a concept. Second, there were multiple expectations from Norwegian sport organisations regarding legacy, specifically regarding young leaders and volunteers (Strittmatter & Skille, 2017). Third, there were expectations of the region around and the local community in Lillehammer, which was particularly relevant for local sport clubs. In this context, LYOGOC developed its identity, strongly influenced by the values presented above. Based on the strategy document, notes from game time, and what the leaders of LYOGOC shared, there appeared to have been an overlap between core practices and core values.

Regarding the relationship between identity and practice, the answer to 'who are we?' includes answers to how the organisation should act in various situations and conditions. The members of the organisation's understanding of it implies what is natural, logical, and rational (Czarniawska & Sevon, 1996). Paraphrasing Czarniawska and Sevon: LYOGOC's identity steers its practice, and LYOGOC's practice creates its identity. Comparison with research into LYOGOC's stakeholder relationships (Holthe & Skille, 2016) and internal volunteers' report (Hanstad, Kristiansen, Sand, Skirstad, & Strittmatter, 2016) indicates coherence between values and practice, as well as between image and identity. The LYOGOC leaders wanted to create a unique OI, *and* delivering according to expectations in its institutional contexts. LYOGOC's thus constructed its identity in relation to IOC and to Norwegian culture, including local sport clubs. However, while LYOGOC tried to merge the best from the 'Olympic family' with the best of Norwegian and regional/local culture, some cultural clashes with the IOC occurred.

Although organisational identity is dynamic and prone to tensions (Strandgaard-Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006), as in the case of LYOGOC, OI encompasses contradictory and complementary values. LYOGOC followed a well-known pattern of OI creation (King et al., 2011). The for us as researchers, observable self-understanding of LYOGOC's OI was defined already at the time of the organisation's foundation. The values were literally printed in the strategy platform three years before the Games and before our focus group (LYOGOC, 2013), and were imprinted in the organisation when the CEO continuously repeated the values for colleagues. This may explain how and why the organisation could, for example, be playful and determined at the same time. Having said that, the LYOGOC

could not just play. They had a job to do. In that respect, there was an implicit hierarchy of values with 'determined' at the top, and with others of secondary importance.

To prevent 'ceremonial conformity' (Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2002, p. 462), the LYOGOC was aware of and did not want to be seen as an organisation where 'the design and operation of the organisation will revert back to being more reflective of the values' (Amis et al., 2002, p. 462) of the superior IOC. Following Amis et al. (2002), members of an organisation must share some values to be able to implement its policy. In other words, relative to IOC, LYOGOC wanted to be humble and playful – hence still determined in its unique way: i.e. 'Norwegian' and 'young'. LYOGOC was also influenced by different institutional logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). For example, LYOGOC exploited the institutional competence of local sport clubs. This is an example of how LYOGOC's utilised 'raw material' (Glynn, 2008) in the community to create its organisational identity. Prerequisites for doing so include first, having the knowledge about the institutional environment and second, being able to adapt to both find the needed skills and exploit them to satisfy the stakeholders with expectations. In that respect, the leaders of LYOGOC conducted institutional work that was aimed at creating and maintaining OI (cf. Lawrence, Suddaby, & Leca, 2009).

The LYOGOC's organisational identity includes values that are seemingly contradictory and structured in hierarchies; this is negotiated with the external stakeholders and institutional environment. Whilst values were established mainly for internal use in LYOGOC, they grew in importance, they continuously changed group dynamics, and the shaped and reshaped the feeling that 'this is us as an organisation'. Feeling safe and secure about OI internally, makes it easier to stand up to other organisations or stakeholders (Garsten & Salzer-Mörling, 2004). Here, the ways in which the CEO, for example, was playful, internally as well as externally, may have played a role. OI was communicated internally and externally, or in the words of Strandgaard-Pedersen and Dobbin (2006, p. 897): 'Formation of identity through uniqueness and construction of legitimacy through uniformity are two sides of the same coin.'

Before concluding, let us reflect upon the limitations of this study. First, organisational identity is complex and relatively ungraspable. It is complex because there are so many elements that may affect the concept, and because the experience of the concept may vary with positions in – or outside – an organisation, levels of the organisation including leaders versus subordinates, volunteers versus employees, stakeholders, etc. It is relatively ungraspable because organisational identity must be shared between individuals (how can we 'measure' the common?). In that respect, our analysis basis on a biased sample, namely the leaders who probably will present their own organisation more favourably than others (Payne & Pugh, 1976). Having said that, the results we have discussed are the face value of the documents, observations and interviews we indeed have conducted.

An explanation of the apparently coherent expression of LYOGOC's OI probably relates to the processes of self-selection of the representatives including the leaders. In addition to the CEO, the leaders in the focus group were either local middle-aged men already in the business (the Olympic park and a local sport club), or newly educated sport and event managers. All these have – for slightly different reasons – an interest in a successful event, and in the impression of a successful event. This

'objective' analysis correlates with the 'subjective' idea of the representatives' submission and confession to the written values.[5] The opportunities for leaders to apply long-term tools such as discipline, control and rewards through internal promotions (Scott, 2003), are limited in short-term sport event organisations (Jago & Meir, 2009). The construction of organisational identity in a one-off event requires explicit effort from leaders as carriers of organisational identity (Selznick, 1957). This institutional work fits with a demography of LYOGOC representatives; self-selection explains the coherent story of the organisational identity.

Conclusion

LYOGOC was a typical event organisation. It was a project organisation with a temporary existence and with a specific and time-scheduled goal: to organise the Youth Olympic Winter Games of 2016. In that respect, as an organisation connected to the Olympics, a Lillehammer 2016 legacy is anticipated. The OI related to youth – or 'youthfulness' – was of specific interest to us. We argue that the youth element in the LYOGOC is fundamental to the values that identify its OI. Especially the focus on being raw and awesome reflects the youthful part of the identity, both retrospectively and prospectively. There were many young employees and young volunteers at the YOG. Looking to the future, the experiences these young people gained throughout the planning and during the Games period may be crucial for their continuity in sports, events, and specifically in sports events. The key – or link between past and future – was the OI of LYOGOC.

We also argue that the various relationships to other organisations or the institutional environment to a large degree influenced the OI of LYOGOC. According to our analysis, the external elements related to the OI of LYOGOC are (1) the relationship with IOC as a mixture of authority and comradery, (2) the relationship with local sport clubs, and (3) that 'we re-lit the Olympic spark in the region.' The latter refers to the legacy of the 1994 Winter Games in the region. Regarding external elements, we should highlight the role of the local sport clubs. The LYOGOC depended on them, but through active and alive sport organisations, the sport clubs also represent legacy and competency in an Olympic context at a local grass root context, all at the same time. In other words, there was a mutual dependency between the sport clubs and the LYOGOC, which together connect the past with the present – and future – in the Olympic city of Lillehammer.

All in all, the OI of LYOGOC was first and foremost something people within the organisation used and shared. It was comprised by different and at times contradicting values, which were applied throughout its work, before, during, and likely post-Games. The belief in 'the Norwegian way' of doing things was important, and combining elements about youth, stakeholder expectation and – not least – own ideas into a 'local Olympic identity' was important for LYOGOC's work.

Our study of a sport event organisation's self-understanding of OI adds to the existing literature on how to govern (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbott, 2008; Kübler & Chappelet, 2007), also manage (Chappelet, 2001; Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013), and think about legacy of sport events (Chappelet, 2008; Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Preuss,

2007). In relation to sport organisation research more generally – of which sport event research is one branch – our contribution is to show how organisational identity in a temporary organisation develops and is sustained. It is not in relation to a field of similar organisations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), which in this case would have been other local organising committees of Olympic youth events. Organisational identity developed in the combination of the 'ultra-local' (i.e. sport clubs, schools, the town) and the 'extreme-international' (IOC).

In that respect, in the tension between the local sport milieus and the Olympic family, we identified two approaches for further research, with a local perspective and with a more global perspective, respectively. First, it would be interesting to follow up the sport clubs and sport venues in Lillehammer, to understand which long-lasting impact – if any – the YOG had on the local environment and organisations. That would broaden the knowledge base into legitimation used in the bid for such events. Second, especially based on the finding of the importance (for the LYOGOC's self-identity) of 'the Norwegian way' research into future events should consider how there is a local or national culture imprint on the organisation of the global event.

For practitioners, this study implies that the development of an OI is a responsibility for all people involved – not only the CEO (of course, he played a key role). It is important to point out the continuous construction and reconstruction of organisational identity through 'inspowering' – inspiration *and* empowerment. For temporary organisations, as for permanent organisations, it is important to guide paid staff and volunteers with guidelines/roadmap – including vision and values. The vision and values have no meaning if not in use for the whole organisation. An immediate or relatively rapid construction of an OI seems necessary for a one-off event organisation to function and deliver. Hence, more research is needed in that regard.

Notes

1. By adding reconstructed to constructed, we indicate that identity work is an ongoing process taking continuously new forms.
2. See http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=raw.
3. Regarding the YOUTH Olympic Games, there are also educational and cultural elements related to the goals of the organization. Nevertheless, YOG, like OG, is first and foremost a sporting event; that is at least what we get out of the interviewees.
4. http://etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame = 0&search = simple.
5. It will take too much space here to elaborate, but we mention that these speculations have support in stories of leaders actually leaving the organization after the games.

Disclosure statement

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