New modes of collaborate governance in sports
The case of the Dutch Martial Arts and Combat Sports Authority (VA)

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Agenda

1. The transition in the governance of sports
2. New forms of the governance of sports and the role of Network supportive Organizations
3. Characteristics and challenges for Network supportive Organizations
4. Case Dutch Full Contact Martial Arts and Combat Sports Authority (VA)
5. Conclusions and agenda for further research
Major issues in sport

That not can be solved by traditional sport organizations alone
Transition in the governance of sports

Commission
Platforms
Agencies
Partnerships
Networks

IOC
NOCs

ISFs
NSFs

Network
Supportive organizations

Governmental organizations

Commercial organizations
New types of organizations emerge, for example:

- **Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions**
- **Group of Copenhagen – Network of National Platforms**
- **National Integrity of Sport Unit Australia**
- **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
- **CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**
New types of network supportive organizations that govern sports

Organizations set up to fight threats sport faces now
(often one issue network organizations, doping, match-fixing)

In general they have a key role in:
- Setting up, coordinating and sustaining a network of stakeholders
- Mediating differences to reach agreements about standards (national or international/global standards setters)
- Showing decisiveness
- Regulation (implement and control regulations)
Network supporting organizations have a challenging task…

- they are set up to solve **very complex problems** in sport
- managing multiple **stakeholders** in the regulation of sport
- multiple **perceptions** of what the problem is and what the solution should be done
- multiple **norms and values**, particularly in an international setting
- various, often **conflicting interests** of government, sports and commercial organizations
little coercive power by themselves.…. 

Instruments: 
Agreements, Conventions, Recommendations, Codes etc.

Decentralized power 
Power must be exercised through other organizations such as:  
- the government (prosecution, no license) or  
- IOC and / or Sports federations (exclusion from competition) or  
- Commercial organizations (stop financing events, stop sponsoring)

It challenges the independency of the organization
That raises questions….

How do these new types of network supportive organization organize work and can become effective?

What works when and why?

What can we learn from existing network supportive organizations?
An example

The Dutch martial arts and combat sports authority (VA)

National organization for the regulation of all full contact martial arts and combat sports in the Netherlands
The Dutch quest for the regulation of martial arts

- sport self-regulation by many small federations (lots of conflict)
- no sport legislation by the government

Issues in martial arts and combat sports:
- shootings and fights incidents during events
- accusations of involvement with criminal organizations
- media attention on children in the ring where strikes to the head are allowed (knock-out)

Martial arts became a topic on the political agenda
Establishment of Martial Arts authority
Nieuwsbericht | 05-03-2015 | 07:30

Minister Edith Schippers (Sport) has presented this plan of NOC * NSF and the martial arts sector today to the parliament. She will spend 500,000 euros in the next 4 years to enable the implementation of the plan.

25 April 2017:
start of the Dutch Martial Arts Authority
(organization between federations and government)
Government

National government

Local government

Police and RIEC

NOC* NSF

Martial arts sector

fighters
coaches
Promoters
Managers
referees
federations

Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance
Government

- National government
- Local government
- Police and RIEC

Martial arts sector

- fighters
- coaches
- Promotors
- Managers
- referees
- federations

NOC*NSF
VA is a foundation

Consists of:
- supervisory board (Mayor and Lawyer)
- board (6 members)
- One fulltime manager (the only paid employee)
- five committees
  Events, Medical and health, Quality and licenses, Technical commission and Organization and communication
- Audit team consisting of approximately 15 independent auditors
The implementation of five measures

- One guideline for the organization of martial arts events
- Introduction of an age limit for kicks and punches to the head
- Introducing one uniform digital competition booklet
- One licensing system
- Monitoring the quality of the martial arts gyms

within 2 years the VA succeeded in fully or partially implementing most of the measures
How they worked….

• Seven federations signed an agreement

• Clear vision and network-goals and communication
  ‘we do it together and we do it in the interest of martial arts’

• Created legitimacy by:
  ‘right people on the right place’, independent, ‘same rules for everyone’

• Top down (authority) and bottom up approach (dialogues)

• They were able to organize power for the implementation of measures

• Monitoring and control by own people, transparency, protocols
Why effective or may be not..

VA worked effective because they took a role as:
• organizer/broker of the network of stakeholders
• mediator to reach agreements
• showing decisiveness (5 measures)
• regulator (policy diffusion, implementation, monitoring and control)
• the manager has excellent networking skills
• Because of what VA does, trust increases (everyone treated equally, independent)

But also fragile:
• martial arts is primarily a commercial sport (lost of income)
• legitimacy (strict-flexible)
• Independency (they need others to be successful)
Conclusion: Agenda for the future:

We want to know more about:

• the effectiveness of collaborate forms of governance in sport.
• what can we learn from existing network supportive organizations?
• the future role of network supportive organizations in the governance of sport

This knowledge can help to:

• start a critical discussion about the transition in the governance of sport
• improve collaborative governance in sport
• To know better what the conditions are for the functioning of network supportive organizations
Comments and questions

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