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**WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE PUBLIC DEFENCE OF THE DOCTORAL
DISSERTATION IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF:
DOCTOR IN MOVEMENT AND SPORT SCIENCES**

OF MISTER ANDREAS CH. WEBER

**CREATING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN
THE WINTER OLYMPICS: STRATEGIC
POSITIONING IN SPORTS DISCIPLINES**

PROMOTORS

Prof. dr. Veerle De Bosscher
Dr. Hippolyt Kempf

Prof. dr. E. Zinzen
Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy

Monday, January 21, 2019 at 16:30

**in room "AULA" located on the campus of the Swiss Federal Institute of
Sport Magglingen, Switzerland.**

**Please confirm your presence by January 18th to
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PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Few studies have referred to the strategic management of business firms as a means to analyse the competitive advantage of nations in international sports. These studies tend to adopt the resource-based view (RBV), which is commonly applied in mainstream management studies when investigating the specific resources and capabilities that create a competitive advantage of a business firm. Researchers in mainstream economics have recently argued that managers should combine the internal RBV with an external analysis from the market-based view (MBV) when competing in dynamic economic environments to build a sustainable superior performance. The model of Hooley, Piercy, Nicoulaud, and Rudd (2017), which combines the RBV and the MBV, considers how firms position themselves in identified markets by prioritizing their resources accordingly (i.e. strategic positioning).

This research perspective on business firms creating a sustainable competitive advantage is adopted to analyse the prioritisation approaches of National Sport Agencies (NSAs), when allocating national-level resources to target specific sports disciplines at the Winter Olympics. The applied model is transferred to the Olympic Winter Games, as in comparison with the Summer Olympics, they are characterized by a particular dynamic in terms of an increasing number of events and competing nations since 1988. The overall research objective is to examine, if and how NSAs position their nations in sports disciplines (i.e. markets) at the Winter Olympics (i.e. industry).

This study demonstrates a number of similarities between the targeting approach of sports disciplines by NSAs and the positioning approach of firms in markets. The resulting conceptual framework includes the internal and external factors analysed by medal-winning nations at the 2014 Sochi Games to take targeting decisions of sports disciplines. Three main themes of the internal analysis were identified: (I) performance of athletes per sport, (II) elite sport systems of supported NGBs, and (III) cultural importance and economic value of a sport. Furthermore, three higher-level themes of the external analysis emerged: (I) sport's market size, (II) intensity of sport's competition at the Olympic Games, and (III) particularities of the competition setting at upcoming Games. Additionally, the findings of this study draw attention to certain peculiarities involved in 'producing' international sporting success (e.g., time constraint, involvement of various public and non-profit stakeholders), which limit the application of mainstream business theories to examine the positioning approaches of nations in multi-sports competitions like the Winter Olympics.

Finally, the practical contribution of this study delivers the means to empower decision-makers in NSAs to improve their nation's prioritisation strategy in the context of the Winter Olympics. Adaptations of the targeting approach that combines the RBV with market orientation and continuously evaluates and adjusts the target disciplines might be challenging due to the peculiarities of the NSAs' governing role in some national contexts. However, it is submitted that such an adaptation of the management processes is valid, primarily because it provides the means for successful winter sports nations to create a more sustainable advantage over their rivals.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Andreas Ch. Weber studied history, sports science and economics at the University of Bern from where he graduated in 2010. Since 2011, he has been working in the Division of Sports Economic at the Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen (SFISM). The SFISM is an applied University located near Biel, Switzerland, which is under the umbrella of the Federal Office of Sport (FOSPO). In 2013, he enrolled at the VUB as a PhD student.