

CHANGING POLICY IN PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR OPERATIONS IN SPORT IN CHOSEN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

The question of the legitimacy of exercising public authority, or more precisely, the legitimacy of governance or government, has been discussed since ancient times. There is a formidable host of literature on the topic, written by philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, and – last but not least – legal scholars. Not surprisingly, the debate over the meaning and the theoretical foundation of the concept of legitimacy has been, and still is, quite controversial. In recent years the role of the state (on different levels of government) in respect of social policy more broadly and thus of sport more specifically has been subject to question as well. This is the result of a number of interrelated factors including the following:

- The development of transnational governmental pressures which have tended to mediate the role of the nation-state, if not in some ways to displace it (Henry, 2003);
- The structural readjustment to a post-Cold War reality with the demise of communism and the rise of neo-liberalism (Migdal, 2005);
- The emergence of the European policy with its main principle – principle of subsidiarity and its vertical dimension;
- The decline of welfarism as a set of policy practices and an ideology, and increased emphasis on the market as an appropriate allocation mechanism (Heinemann, 2005);
- Changes in collective consumption preferences associated with cultural change encapsulated in descriptions of postmodernisation as a process (McNeill, 1999);
- Changes in the ideology of service delivery with claims that the rise of new managerialism introducing commercial like qualities to public and voluntary sector management and hybrid type organisations (Bayle, 2000; Lane, 1995; Lowndes, 1997).

Local reactions to global pressures are thus reflected in the reshaping of sectoral divisions between the state, the market and the voluntary sector in sport. The precise nature of local responses represents what Robertson (Robertson, 1992) terms a ‘glocal’ reaction, the product of local actions in a globally and locally constrained and enabling context.

METHODS

The paper compares the local policy responses in sports policy in Poland, Italy, Germany, France and the UK, to the changing economic, political and cultural context. Specifically it analyses the changing relationships between the sector in sport, based on content analysis of the interviews. The critical realist approach was used in this study

RESULTS

During the study some common changes were recognized and some specific changes to the country as well. The key common changes include: privatisation and commercialisation of the public and voluntary sectors; the emergence of hybrid forms of governance in sports organisations; and an increasingly centralised control of elite sport development, as government and Non-governmental but publicly funded bodies use public funds to generate an institutional isomorphism.

Key features of change in the county context are: the emergence and the growth of private sector in sport for all industry (especially fitness clubs); the legalisation of the professional clubs as a sport joint stock companies; the changes of the governance of sport organisation in general, but in voluntary and public sector in particular (new managerialism). The paper analyses the reasons for the similarities and specificities evident in these changing sectoral divisions.

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