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Governance of Non Governmental Organisations : analysis framework for the governance of international sporting federations

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SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT

Reference *For EASM scientific committee*

Title

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Research question

The world of sport and its organisations is a complex system because of the multiplicity of the elements which compose it, and also because of the ambiguity of the relationships between themselves and their environment. The International Sporting Federations (IFs) are federated by the Olympic system which rules them and yet the governance of the international sporting federations is often challenged due to a lack of respect for the “principles of governance” (Henry et Lee, 2004). In the early 2000, this was illustrated by the review on the running of the International Olympic Committee (Chappelet, 2002), of the « Fédération Internationale de Volley-Ball”, of the FIFA, and many other IFs.

The governance of these Non-Profit Organisations (NPO) is often called into question in many respects, at the systemic, political and organisational levels (Henry, 2001). Moreover, their functioning is often difficult to grasp.

What is the type of governance of these three IFs and how can their governance system be simply explained?

In order to analyse the governance of IFs, a qualitative research was carried out. Pérez’s analysis framework (2003) was applied. It includes the five governance levels which were previously amended by the current author. Thus, this study now includes 12 dimensions (i.e. two dimensions at least per governance level).

Theoretical background

Since the beginning of the early 2000, significant changes in the governance modes have sometimes been adopted or envisaged, for instance the IOC (Chappelet in Bayle et Chantelat, 2007). There are similarities in the approaches to « corporate governance » by (Charreaux, 1997, 2000, 2003; Gomez, 1996, 2001; Pesqueux, 2000; Le Joly & Moingeon, 2001; Pérez, 2003 ; Mintzberg, 2004 ; Finet, 2005). However, this analytical grid is irrelevant to understand the running of these non-profit organisations.

Concerning professionalisation the various aspects of governance, the approaches by Theodoraki and Henry (1994) as well as The Peter principle are relevant. In the domain of management Boncler (1995), Conforth (2003) Gomez (1996) and Daily (2003) are noteworthy. From the point of view of identity, we based our theory on Pérez and, concerning values our reference was Cadbury (1992). As to flexibility and the configuration of power, we consulted Zintz (2006), Bayle (1999), Mayaux (1996), Pérez (2003), Carver (2001) as well as Paquerot's theory (1996) extrapolating about the entrenchment of managers. For the theories on control, Bouquin (2000), Pérez (2003) and Dedman were the reference for us (2002) and also for communication and imputability concerning the new standards (Sarbanes-Oxley, AA1000, SA 8000, SD 21000 ...). Gaudin (2002), Chappelet (1991, 2001, 2002) provided insight into partnership and the theories related to stakeholders. In the jurisdiction part, we used Attali's and Pérez's (2003) approaches. Finally, sustainable development was based on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Agenda 21, etc.

In order to understand the governance methods of IFs, we used the analysis framework by Pérez (2003) amending it using the approaches by Arcioni (2007) and also Arcioni and Bayle's communication (2009).

Methodology

Our study was based on qualitative methodology, conducting interviews, using an exploratory questionnaire and three case studies. The research study on the Olympic federations included three steps (i.e. the federations with one or more disciplines on the Summer and Winter Olympic programmes):

First step : from the end of September to mid-December 2004, an exploratory survey based on a questionnaire, interviews and observations at the headquarters (Switzerland) of six IFs in order to identify the first key elements of governance modes and test the analysis framework by Pérez (2003) as described in the previous paragraph ;

Second step: depending on the results obtained during the first step, we have adapted and amended Pérez's analysis framework.

Third step: a qualitative analysis was carried out on the « Fédération Internationale de Football Association » (FIFA), the « Fédération Internationale de Volley-ball » (FIVB) and the International Skating Union (ISU), during a favourable period i.e. from 1999 to 2006, which corresponds to a longer cycle than an Olympiad. But above all it took place during the change in the IOC presidency from J.A. Samaranch to J. Rogge with the « Réforme CIO 2000 » programme and its impacts on all the IFs ; The period also meant two terms of presidency in the IFs including the election time.

Results

The result given is the origin of the dimension which was proposed, what is characteristic about it and its four models. There is also a reference to our empirical study, to the outcome of the exploratory analysis and of the case study with the relevant literature on the opposite side. Moreover, for each term (for the dimension and the model alike), a definition (explanation) of the term chosen, as well as a justification is provided. The terminology for the dimensions and models was provided by the author, except for the one by Pérez.

For each organisation which was analysed, the main result consisted in choosing a term out of four from the literature or empirically after the results of the exploratory analysis. The term qualified the governance observed for each of the 12 dimensions. The interest of this approach lies in the reading of the overall explanation of the governance of the organisation i.e. in the juxtaposition of the 12 explanatory terms found in relation to the dimensions integrated in the governance model by Pérez.

No conflict of interest