

# MANAGEMENT OF HYBRID ORGANIZATIONS IN THE 'VOLUNTARY' SPORTSSECTOR

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## Abstract

Hybrid organizations in sport  
Historically many organizations in the European sports sector have been established as voluntary associations and organizations. In the last decades the sports sector has transformed and many enterprises have entered the scene. Along this commercialisation a change in policy toward voluntary organizations can be observed in European sports. They are no longer viewed as autotelic, but more and more treated as implementing agents for national policies (Skille 2008, Houlihan 2002). Many of the originally voluntary organizations have developed connections with the commercial and public sector. Through sponsor relations, partnerships, cooperative projects with firms and public authorities or even separating parts of their activities in distinct foundations and enterprises. By these developments these organizations have become more complex. They combine elements from different organisation types (Gastelaars 1997) and have become organizations with mixed rationales (Koski & Heikalla 1998). In this paper different types of hybridization will be distinguished and described. The consequences of this process for the management of the organizations have recently been studied in voluntary sports clubs (Lucassen & Van der Roest 2011) and federations (Van t Verlaat 2010) and the results of this analysis are presented.

## Theoretical background

From an administrative point of view traditional sport organizations are characterised as part of the third or voluntary sector of society in distinction from the public and market sector. Voluntary sport clubs and federations have a distinct legal basis and operate in many respects different from public administration and from enterprises. State, market and civil sector operate through different principles and 'logics' (Braun 2003). As Van Bottenburg (2007) pointed out many traditional sport clubs and federations are making a shift from mutual support organization to service delivery organization. At the same time hybridization processes take place when these

associations start commercial activities or cooperate and join forces with public services and business enterprises. Essential for hybrid organizations is a combination of activities that are 'alien' to each other and represent conflicting values (profit – non-profit; public - private) (Brandesen 2006). The combining of these activities leads to a series of management issues for the boards and managers involved.

## Methodology

Findings from qualitative analysis are presented from studies of hybridization processes in voluntary sport clubs and federations. Course and consequences of hybridization have through interviews been analyzed in seven amateur soccer clubs (non-profit) that have recently started a soccer academy (profit) as part of their activities (Van der Roest 2011). Results will be compared with those from Van t Verlaats study (2010) of the introduction of marketing within national sport federations in the Netherlands. This research sheds light on the consequences of close cooperation between non-profit voluntary organizations and businesses for sponsoring and marketing. We will also draw on Hover & Breedveld's (2009) investigation of the sponsoring partnerships between sport organizations and businesses.

## Results

From the cases analysed an overview will be given from opportunities and threats concerned with mixing different organisational principles in a hybrid organisation. Management issues will be discussed and the solutions which have been chosen in practice will be presented. These issues include loss of volunteer motivation when others are paid for comparable work; conflicts of organisation cultures; problems in communication and decision making; tensions between members and 'customers'; distorted competition with commercial providers.

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