

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATION OF ELITE WOMEN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL TEAMS: TOWARDS A NEW FUTURE WITH TOP “MIXED CLUBS”

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Abstract

1. Aim of abstract/paper

In the last few years, Women football elite is become a growing sector in the industry of football business in Europe. UEFA and national federations consider women football as a new strategic orientation to increase their membership, to organize new competitions and promote new values (“a more responsible football”). Now, most popular and best women elite teams are integrated in men professional clubs. It is even an obligation in certain countries (notably in England, France and for the Beneleague¹⁰). The aim of this study is to understand how governance and organization of the collaboration between men’s and women’s teams in the big top “mixt clubs” in Europe.

2. Theoretical background

We use theoretical framework on professionaliation process in sport clubs (Bayle, 2000) and also some studies focused on governance and organization of professionnall clubs. The historical and professionalization process of women elite football in Europe (Prudhomme-Poncet, 2003; Breuil, 2011; Williams, 2011) help us to understand better the context of the collaboration between men’s and women’s teams and staffs. We focused also our study on researches on governance, strategy and organization of the firm to answer to our problematic.

3. Methodology, research design and data analysis

To study governance and organization’s synergies, we build a specific framework of six domains (club’s corporate governance ; sport and medical staff ; headquarters and stadiums ; financial resources ; administration ; marketing/communication). Data collection has been operated on 14 top european mixed clubs (from Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Netherland, Norway, Switzerland) through interviews with managers of the women top team/club, club’s key documents (strategic, legal, financial, organizational chart...) and from internet club sites. This research benefitted from the help of the UEFA’s department of women football (data and link with the clubs).

4. Results, discussion and implications/conclusion

Three models of governance and organization with inside different degrees and forms of professionnallisation have been identified: fully integrated (Stabaecck), globally integrated (Arsenal, Olympique Lyonnais, Standard de Liège, Paris Saint-Germain, Slavia and Sparta Prague, Wolfsburg) and partially integrated (Ado Den Haag, Brondby, FC Zurich). To finish, we propose some hypothesis to explain current governance and organization models of collaboration between men and women sections.

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