

MEASURING THE GOVERNANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT ORGANISATIONS: DEMOCRACY, TRANSPARENCY AND RESPONSIBILITY AS KEY ATTRIBUTES

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Aim of abstract/paper – research question

Since the beginning of the 21st century, “good” governance is promoted by different sport actors to be applied to national and international sport organisations (ISOs). On the one hand, this contribution starts with the assumption that many of the recommendations are culturally oriented (e.g. Anglo-Saxon approaches stressing the importance of board performance, and “institutional European” approaches stressing the importance of democracy), often undefined (e.g. is transparency active, passive, organisational, financial, internal, external?), lack of reflection on their intrinsic and extrinsic causalities (e.g. can a board be democratically elected and competent at the same time? Is good governance normative or instrumental? Is it considered as an end in itself, or a means for other ends?), and mostly not operationalised. On the other hand, contrary to the public and the corporate sectors, measuring the governance of ISOs has only recently been added to the sport governance research agenda (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013). Therefore, this contribution aims at presenting a comprehensive set of indicators that can be used for measuring the governance of ISOs.

Theoretical background or literature review

The theoretical background is based on two assumptions. First, this contribution is rooted in prescriptive approaches of sport governance which can be defined as: “the accepted norms or values for the just means of allocation of resources and profits or losses (financial or other) and for the conduct of process involved in the management and direction of organisations in the sports business” (Henry & Lee, 2004, p. 26). The concept is understood in a normative sense since it relies on multiple stakeholder expectations. It is also understood in an instrumental sense, since it provides the tools for meeting such expectations. Second, this contribution considers ISOs as “hybrid” organisations (Bayle, 2007; Forster & Pope, 2004). They share characteristics from both the corporate sector and the public sector. ISOs can therefore be analysed under the lens of corporate governance (and its related codes of good corporate practices, such as the UK Corporate Governance Code) and democratic governance (and its related principles of good democratic governance, such as the Worldwide Governance Indicators). In line with Hoye & Cuskelly (2007), this contribution calls for a multi-paradigm approach.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

In an initial exploratory research, the author has identified more than 35 sets of principles of governance applicable to national and international sport organisations (e.g. the International Olympic Committee, the Council of Europe,

UK Sport, Transparency International). Subsequently, in order to cope with the complexity of the discourse on good governance in sport, the contribution runs a content (lexical) analysis (atlas.ti v.7) of 15 key documents produced by supranational public authorities and ISOs between 2000 and 2013. It extracts the attributes that have the widest distribution among the documents on the basis of a threshold of .50. The results show that the words *transparency* (.82), *responsibility/accountability* (.71) and *democracy* (.64) fulfil this criterion. This contribution deconstructs these three attributes into components (e.g. financial transparency, organisational transparency, or contestation) and indicators of different nature (inputs, processes and outcomes).

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

A list of indicators is produced and ready to be tested on different types of ISOs. This contribution is part of a wider PhD project on the governance of ISOs, and more specifically on European Sports Federations. It will provide a theoretical grounding to be empirically tested on 26 of these organisations.

References

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