
SPORT AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF GERMAN SPORT FOUNDATIONS

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Abstract

RESEARCH QUESTION & THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In recent years foundations have experienced a renaissance throughout Europe. This is based on a number of reasons such as their social importance. It is assumed that foundations are complementary to public and private institutions as they supply special demands and/or compensate for shortages (Anheier & Appel 2004, 8.). Being mainly incorporated foundations under civil law they are traditional instruments for donating money for public purposes. According to the Association of German Foundations, representing the interests of foundations vis-à-vis the public, governmental bodies and administration, in Germany an average number of 891 foundations have been newly founded between 2001 and 2010 (BDS 2011). Notwithstanding the dynamic development of the field as well as the high and rising social pertinence of foundations, the state of research still has to be described as deficient. Particularly regarding the structure and the objectives of sport foundations in Germany no studies are available. The paper therefore seeks to describe the sports related foundations-scene in Germany. It aims to understand their programs and present acting as well as to explore the prospects of their future development. Socio-economic and political science theories, i.a. Market- and Government Failure (Hansman 1987), Third-party Government (Salamon 2002), Symbolical Politics (Edelman 1964), have been used as a theoretical framework; hypotheses regarding aims and objectives as well as current acting have been derived and empirically been tested.

METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

To answer the research questions first a structure analysis has been conducted, based on the 23.685 foundations which are officially registered at the Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen (BDS, Association of German Foundations). By analyzing the statutes and

mission statements of those 18.700 foundations who published their data sets in the directory of foundations 256 could be identified which primarily promote sport and/or use sport as their basic field of activity. Second, referring particularly to the identified sport foundations, additional data has been collected and evaluated (background, programs, specific spheres of action a.s.o.). Finally a quantitative survey has been carried out. A questionnaire was sent to all identified sport foundations (including 55 identified soccer foundations, N=256, response rate: 39,4%).

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

The study clearly indicates the high and rising importance of sport as a scope of German foundations. The structure analysis allowed the researchers to gain even deeper insights into their programs and the reasons for their relevant activities. Especially soccer plays an important role: the more foundations aim to reach wider circles of the population the more they focus on soccer as an area of operation. The results are of great social and practical relevance as they allow both the transfer of knowledge and as well as the development of recommendations for action concerning the strategic alignment of foundations. In the course of further strategic development of German sport foundations it is suggested to draw specific attention on the special potential of synergetic campaigns (sport/culture) as well as on the European Commission's campaign "Creative Europe", a unique instrument that enables arts and culture to strengthen solidarity and experiment with innovative social and economic models.

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