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**Corporate social responsibility implementation by professional sports organizations in Canada and France from 1995 to 2010 and evolutions factors**

*S. Piché<sup>1</sup>, E. Bayle<sup>2</sup>, F. Aurelien<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*University Lyon 1, Cris-Staps, Lyon, France*

<sup>2</sup>*University Lyon 3, IAE, Lyon, France*

<sup>3</sup>*Université de Bourgogne, France*

serge.piche@univ-lyon1.fr

Professional hockey organizations in Canada have been involved with charity and various civil society organizations (CSOs) for decades. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) evolved in society, hockey organizations like others businesses increased their investment in their communities (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Bradish & Cronin, 2009; Capron & Quairel-Lanoizelée, 2007; Godfrey, 2009) distributing millions of dollars in kinds, products and services to thousands of CSOs throughout Canada every year. In France, CSR strategies really started to be implemented by professional football organizations in the last decade, with amount of money and numbers of CSOs involved still quite limited (Piché, in press).

If CSR can be considered as an answer to the needs, whether requested or not, of an organization's stakeholders, looking more precisely at the means used to give that answer and comparing it throughout time and space help understand how the stakeholders' vision is integrated into sport organizational practices. Using a qualitative approach, ten interviews in Canada and ten in France were conducted between 2004 and 2010 with professional sports organizations and CSOs executives. Organizational documents were also analyzed. The description and the analysis of the means put in place to address stakeholders' needs included six components representing the organization's CSR strategy: the actions undertaken, the organization's and its lead managers' set CSR goals, the resources allowed for community involvement, which partners get involved with the organization, the CSR's management tools developed or used and the means of communication put in place.

The results of this work show an important increase in the means put in place by professional sports organizations from 1995 to 2010, both in Canada and in France. Major differences also appear between the two countries during the studied period. If one prominent French football organization seem to follow the Canadian model by 2010, the majority of it fellows do not invest much in CSR strategies while all six Canadian National Hockey League organizations have refined there CSR strategies, are highly organized and as a result distribute millions of Canadian dollars in kind, products and services to CSOs.

Furthermore, our international comparison allows to identify more easily the external (historical, cultural, economical, legal) and internal factors (will and resources) which explain the evolution of the means put in place and the differences between both countries. If a mimetic movement toward Anglo-Saxon models of sports organizations and of firms social involvements may

explain part of the French evolution, the social and political organization of France, and therefore the stakeholders, may not have put yet the necessary pressure to really change CSR strategies of French professional sports organizations (Bayle & Mercier, 2008).

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