

Steering Performance of International Sport Federations

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Aim

Unlike national sports organizations, the governance and management of international sports federations (ISFs), despite the public attention they attract, are still paradoxically little studied in the literature. The few existing studies have, in fact, focused on the governance of international sports organizations (Arcioni & Bayle, 2012; Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013; Forster, 2006; Mittag & Putzmann, 2009, Pieth, 2014, Geeraert, 2015; ASOIF, 2016), their involvement in scandals of corruption (Bayle & Rayner, 2016; Chappelet, 2015, Kihl et al.; Mason et al, 2006; Transparency International, 2011 & 2015), accountability issues (Chappelet, 2009 & 2015; Pielke, 2013) or even control by the public authorities (Geeraert, 2015) to deal with it, as well as social responsibility (Bayle, 2015). In response to this research gap, this study aims to analyse how ISFs are steered (i.e. management), what kind of organizational performance they obtained and the relationship between governance, management and performance obtained.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Various work on performance monitoring has been conducted on national sport organizations, highlighting characteristics such as measurement of organizational performance (Winand et al., 2013) strategic and / or organizational capacity - (Misener & Doherty, 2009; Robinson & Minikin, 2011) and key success factors (Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Scelles et al 2011). Even if these approaches make it possible to understand the potential and the conditions of success in the steering of sports organizations' performance, they have never been applied to ISFs. In addition, these works are often normative and fail to take into account the reality of ISFs' very "political" functioning and the games of internal and external actors, though these have a strong impact on their performance management.

Research Design and Data Analysis

This study of the management of the performance of ISFs, via longitudinal case studies, is carried out with regard to the six key factors of success (governance framework, quality of the federal network, the place of the ISF in its economic sector, the management delegated to "professionals", partnerships and services to members, organizational culture) and four failure factors (information systems deficiency, complexity of incentive mechanisms, lack of effective control of particularly elected actors and political sclerosis) updated by Bayle & Robinson (2007) for national federations, which take into account the political functioning of the headquarters as well as the federal system. The framework is inspired by configurational theory and seeks to understand how specific characteristics of an organization (strategy, management, structures, culture...) interact with each other under varying environmental influences and constraints.

The communication proposes first to define the performance of ISFs and to measure it for eighteen Olympic summer FSIs from which we arrived to collect the data based on three specific types of organizational performance: economic and financial performance, sports development and media. Societal performance (Bayle, 2014) is also mentioned but not measured due to lack of available data. These four areas of performance may have different

weight depending on the project of the federation. From this first overview, four cases of ISFs have been selected regarding their different size, level of professionalisation and differences regarding global performance profiles: FIFA (2000-2016), the International Federation of Field Hockey (FIH-2010-2016), the International Rowing Federation (FISA-2008-2016) - and finally the International Cycling Union (UCI - 1991-2016). Study periods correspond to major changes (i.e., new president, increased Olympic endowment, development of a new economic model, etc.) that have led to one or more new performance management policies. The study focuses on the international headquarters but tries to take into account relations with the federal network (continental confederations and national federations). The communication presents the application of the framework to the four selected ISFs and proposes to highlight the peculiarities specific to ISFs. The data have been collected through interviews and managerial documents from the FSIs (strategic plan, reports...) in relation with the key factors of success and four failure factors identified by Bayle and Robinson (2007) for the period of study for each of the 4 FSIs.

Results and Discussion

The results obtained for the six key factors of success and four failure factors are presented and discussed. We notably found and illustrate four types of organizational governance, three models of networks regarding confederations, four economic models around the event strategy and different stages of organizational professionalisation with various consequences. We then discuss the balance between professionalisation / performance / political games as well as the ability of ISFs to adapt to societal changes and changes in the consumption of sport (in particular with regard to the IOC criteria). Depending on size, life cycle and circumstances, ISFs do not need the same style of leadership and governance.

Conclusion and Implications

In conclusion, theoretical and managerial recommendations are outlined. We show notably the differences and the paradoxes between professionalization of the administrative structure, political games and strategic priorities.

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