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The impact of governance and Leadership on the Reform of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

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Abstract

In the past few years, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international governing body for football, had to deal with a number of challenges related to FIFA governance and mainly to FIFA leadership. As a result, a number of changes to FIFA governance have occurred, including the resignation of its previous leader immediately after his fourth re-election. The present article discusses the role and nature of previous and current leadership to FIFA governance as evidence of FIFA 'modernization' in the framework of global sport governance. In order to do so, it first discusses the notions of governance and leadership as applied in the case of FIFA. Then, it gives evidence of FIFA internal reform and FIFA cooperation with other football related international organizations in order to show the impact of modern global sport governance in football in terms of participation and reform. In the end, it discusses the prospects of FIFA as a continuous leader of world football.

Keywords: sport globalization, global sport governance, football governance, football leadership, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), good governance, football reform

Introduction

Sport governance has been in the core of modern sport studies as globalization trends are evident in the governance of – mainly – elite sports. Given the emergence of various modern sport stakeholders and sport interests in the field of sport, football governance and its leadership have acquired a lot of attention in the light of financial irregularities, democratic concerns and political transparency and accountability. Furthermore, the case of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) requires special attention, as the global football governing body has gone through a period of ethical exposure and crisis of integrity, especially since the 2000s, which as Tomlinson notes (2014), has been the result of ethically unaccountable - and in many cases even corrupt - practices within the high levels of FIFA governance.

The present paper aims at contributing to the general discussion about good governance in the framework of international non-governmental sport organizations and specifically in the field of football and its global governing body, FIFA, as a consequence of the emergence of global governance. The focus of this paper is on the dual role of modern global sport governance in football governance and leadership; it is argued that modern global sport governance requires FIFA reform but participation in modern global sport governance is evidence of reform by itself. To do so, it demonstrates evidence of reform and change in FIFA as a result of its interaction and developing cooperation with a number of football related international organizations. It further aims to show evidence of the impact of this FIFA reform to the organization's governance and leadership. The research also intends to point out the increasing number of diverse international organizations that have in the past few years emerged as significant football stakeholders as a result of globalization and participate in the modern global football governance.

It must be noted that FIFA reform is a recent and ongoing process; therefore, any related research cannot reach final conclusions but can only contribute to the observation and discussion about this process.

Literature review

Governance, Leadership and sport

In the near past, football leadership has stirred many concerns in the aftermath of various scandals. Whether related to ethical or financial issues, these scandals have required the cooperation and action of the international community in order to be

addressed and properly regulated as the world football community was not efficiently equipped to deal with this kind of challenges. In many cases, due to the nature of traditional global sport governance, this need wasn't appropriately acknowledged.

Globalization calls for the increase of transparency and accountability of international organizations through the adoption of adequate policies and practices (Grigorescu, 2007). Furthermore, cooperation, exchanges of best practices and establishment of institutional relationships among various stakeholders in a given policy field play a significant role to the democratic accountability of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) (Szporluk, 2009). The present article suggests that legitimacy, accountability and credibility in the framework of modern global sport – and football - governance are currently enhanced and further promoted through interaction and cooperation with other global sport stakeholders, including other international organizations. In this framework, it aims at demonstrating evidence of FIFA globalization both internally and externally in the framework of modern global sport governance as a result of interaction and cooperation with other international organizations. While 'traditional global sport governance' is established on the structures of the Olympic Movement (Chatzigianni, 2017, 2018), 'modern global sport governance' is defined as the plethora of actors that participate in the international sport related policy-making and implementation system as a result of globalization (Chatzigianni, 2017, 2018).

Historically, as a human activity, sport is by essence 'global'; that means it is practiced and enjoyed as an activity by humans all over the world. Furthermore, sport governance is also global; given the nature and competence of global sport organizations (GSOs), traditionally, policy making and implementation have been primarily a responsibility of GSOs (Foster, 2006). These GSOs are International Non-Governmental organizations (INGOs) that enjoy international recognition and an established status quo. Furthermore, each GSO is the supreme governing authority of a sport at a global level (Forster, 2006).

Therefore, globalization has not changed the nature of sport or sport governance. What has changed in the recent years under the influence of globalization is the number of interests and stakeholders involved in the governing process and the consequences of this involvement; or, as Chatzigianni (2017, 2018) has claimed, the transition from the 'globalized sport' to 'sport globalization'.

This transition has had significant consequences to the governance of global sport as global governance in general, and governance of international sport organizations in particular, are accompanied by social demands for transparency, accountability and democracy commonly expressed with the term good governance. With the term 'global governance' one refers to "the interaction of myriad collective or individual entities emanating from various societal and professional orientations, which form networks that engage to address issues that threaten local and global communities" (Jng et. al, 2016). International institutions such as the European Commission (2001), the World Bank (2005) and the International Monetary fund (2007), have published checklists with Indicators of good governance for both the public and the private sector which include the principles of accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, democracy, transparency, fighting corruption, sound financial management, and participation (Geeraert et al. 2014).

The notion of leadership is key to the exert of good governance. Nowadays, good governance and effective and ethical leadership are required for a governmental or non-governmental organization to be considered as successful (Seijts et al., 2013) by the diverse stakeholders at global, regional and national level in a given policy area.

As Lucarelli (2014) notes, scholarship on leadership is wide and ranges from leadership in business to leadership in politics and it focuses more on the role of individuals as leaders and less on the role of international organizations as leaders. Given this, there are various approaches and perspectives in leadership theory and research which may be classified according to one of the three types of variables that is mostly emphasized and discussed in relation to leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2013): characteristics of leaders, characteristics of individuals and characteristics of the situation. Regarding the role of individuals as leaders, in management leadership, one definition of leadership is given by Byers et al. (2012): "Leadership is a complex notion that generally refers to an individual's ability to direct, motivate and 'lead' other individuals and groups in a desired direction or behavioural pattern" (p. 85). Similarly, Northouse (2012) defines leadership as a "process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5) while Rue and Byars (2009) suggest leadership is "the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's guidance or adhere to one's decisions" (p. 465). Furthermore, Russel connects leadership with the communication process and defines it as "the interpersonal influence exercised by a person or process through the process of communication, toward the attainment of

an organization's goals" (p. 16). Deriving from these definitions about individual leadership, and with reference to the elements of influence, goal setting, communication and the relationship between the leader and the group, Kane (2015) suggests that leadership is "an influence relationship aimed at moving organizations or groups of people toward an imagined future that depends upon alignment of values and establishment of mutual purposes (p. 4).¹

The concept of leadership is also linked to the terms of power, authority and influence (Yukl, 2013). The term power can refer to the ability of the 'agent', whether person or organization, to exert influence on another party, 'the target' while 'legitimate power' is associated with one's title or position (Borland et al., 2015); the term authority is linked to the obligations, rights, prerogatives and duties of an organization in a social system; and, finally, influence involves the motives and perceptions of the target regarding the actions of the agent and the environment where the interaction occurs.

Regarding the influence relationship between the leader and the follower, Lewin et al. (1939) have discussed three types of leadership, applicable to all organizations and not only sport organizations: autocratic – also authoritarian – leadership which implies the exert of control by the leader with little opportunity for participatory decision-making; democratic – also participatory – where the direction and policy of the organization is formulated and implemented through cooperation and two-way communication between the leader and the followers, and laissez-faire, characterized by an absence of leadership. Given that the last one cannot generally be implemented in the framework of sport organizations², it can be assumed that the discussion about sport leadership in global sport organizations can be limited to the first two styles of leadership.

Furthermore, leaders are critical for the success of all organizations, including sport organizations, especially in terms of organizational change. Transformational change in sport organizations is commonly associated with three types of leadership styles (Borland et al., 2015): transformational and transactional leadership, which pursues the transformation of aspirations, values and beliefs of the organization; participative leadership, which aims to stimulate the participation of employees in

¹ French and Raven (1959) connect leadership to the exercise of power and identify five sources of leadership power, reward, coercive, legitimate, referent and expert with the source of informational power identified later after their work (Kane, 2015).

² Incidents of laissez-faire leadership are unique to certain game situations (Borland et al., 2015: 94).

leadership goals through positive outcome stimulation; and, autocratic leadership where the leader makes a decision without the, or little, participation of the followers (Chelladurai, 1999).

The leadership and governance of modern sport is based on the establishment of the first INGOs that took place at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The creation of INGOs those days was based on the principle of the freedom of association (Szymanski, 2006) as well as the separation of sport and the state so as to avoid the violation of the integrity of sport by the politicians (Tomlinson, 2000, Chappelet, 2010). Throughout the years and until today, this unique, deeply rooted autonomy of world sport has been preserved as a result of carefully constructed argumentation by its leaders, reluctance by political leaders and governments to interfere in sport governance issues, the globally favorable environment for sport as a cultural and leisure – not business - activity and the careful operational choices made by its leadership in terms of headquarters, regulatory context and international activities (Geeraert et al., 2014).

Methodology

Football governance and leadership

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), was created in Paris in 1904. It is considered the only international sport federation with the sufficient political power and influence to compete the International Olympic Committee (Chatzianni, 2018). In 1904 the federation had 7 members, today it has 209 federations as members. Having overcome significant obstacles to its operation and developed a mega-event - the men's football World Cup in the first half of the twentieth century - it was in the post-colonial period that FIFA established its politically significant identity as a world body when the newly independent nations looked for recognition by an international federation as means to safeguard and promote their recently acquired independent status (Tomlinson, 2014).

According to its statutes, FIFA is an Association registered the Commercial Register of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland, where it has its headquarters. FIFA is an International Governmental Organization (INGO) with exceptional power and recognition, deriving from the global popularity of football as well as FIFA's 'definitional monopoly' for international champions; in other words, as a result of historical trends

and various socioeconomic needs around the world, FIFA enjoys monopoly privileges in organizing champions and defining the world's football rules (Garcia & Meier, 2014).

For many, the combination of these monopoly privileges and FIFA status as an INGO is to be blamed for the majority of FIFA scandals. As the General Secretary of the Global Civil Society Alliance (CIVICUS) notes (Sriskandaraajh, 2015), in the case of FIFA, there are a number of issues that have gone wrong and derive from its original nature and purpose as an International Non-Governmental Organization. These are linked to an INGOs relationship with the for-profit sector, the nature of its leadership and the INGO accountability to the public. Examples of sport INGOs include, but are not limited to, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF). To further explain this, in the framework of this paper, these characteristics are addressed in relation to FIFA governance and its transition from the traditional to the modern³.

First, the way that civil society organizations work, they are heavily dependent on the private sector for financial income. And the private sector looks for opportunities for sponsorship and advertisement deals within the civil society world that provide corporations with the maximum global visibility. In this framework, sport related INGOs have been in the center of attention of the for-profit sector for undeniable, financial reasons: corporations make huge profit out of sport and sport competitions. And in the case of football, this is even more the case as undoubtedly football is the 'king of sport' due to its appeal, recognition and practice at global level. Given this, FIFA has lost one of its characteristics as a civil society organization and has become part of the for-profit world.

Regarding the second characteristic, the type of INGO leadership, the CIVICUS Secretary General notes that civil society leadership requires regular changes and transparent continuation of leadership which enhance democracy and accountability in the framework of the organization. Evidently, this has not been the case of FIFA. Since its creation in 1904, there have been fifteen FIFA Presidents, three of which have served only as Acting Presidents for a short period of time. Among the rest, the fourth President, French Jules Rimet served as acting and elected president for almost thirty-four (34) years (1921-1954), the eight president, British Stanley Rous for almost

³ In the framework of this article, the definition of 'traditional and modern global football governance' follows the definition of 'traditional and modern global sport governance' as provided by Chatzigianni, 2017, 2018.

thirteen years (1961-1974), the ninth president, Brazilian João de Havelange had the second longest tenure in FIFA history and served for 24 years (1974-1998) and the tenth President, Swiss Sepp Blatter served for more than seventeen years (1998-2015) until his suspension on October, 8, 2015. Twelve of its leaders were from European Countries, one from Brazil, and an Acting one, Issa Hayatou was from Cameroon (October 2015-October 3016). The current President, Giovanni Vincenzo “Gianni” Infantino, also from Europe, is a Swiss-Italian football administrator who had been the General Secretary of the Union des Associations Européennes (UEFA) since 2009. Given the ‘leadership tenure’ of most FIFA presidents, one may assume that FIFA leadership until now has been autocratic/authoritarian with limited active participation in leadership initiatives from other FIFA members; the latter had attributed to FIFA and its leaders the legitimate power to lead with – in many aspects – what Lewin, Lippitt and White called a ‘dictator-like style’ (Lewin et. al, 1939).

The third issue, also related to FIFA governance, is linked to the INGO accountability to the public. Accountability is defined as the “.. way for organizations and individuals to take responsibility for developing policies and procedures, for shaping missions and values, and for assessing performance in relation to goals (Burall & Neligan, 2006: 6). A lot has been argued and written about the topic of organizational transparency and accountability of international organizations in the framework of global governance, whether International governmental organizations (IGOs), Transnational Corporations (TNCs) or INGOs (see among other, Lewin, 2007, Kopell, 2010, Lavdas, 2012, Lavdas & Chrysochoou, 2011,); yet, in the framework of global football governance this became a major issue after 2010 and in relation to the organization of the FIFA World Cup.

Results

FIFA new leadership and reform: evidence of good governance

As it has been pointed out and will be further discussed, all the above are linked to governance exerted by FIFA leadership. The current FIFA leadership has shown evidence of sincere reform as means to maintain FIFA’s unique governance status and monopoly privileges. The first step to the direction of reform has been the adoption by FIFA in October 2006 of the new FIFA 2.0 roadmap for the future of world football under the leadership of the ninth FIFA President elected on February 26, 2016.

Internal reform

In the past few years, FIFA had to deal mainly with two major scandals. The first one which took place in 2012 was related to corruption allegations regarding Russia's and Qatar's World Cup hosting bids (for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups respectively); it resulted to the dismissal or suspension of several FIFA members as well as the hire by the FIFA Ethics' Committee of Michael Garcia, a former US attorney for the southern district of New York, to lead an investigation of these allegations⁴. The second, even more significant one, occurred in 2015 when federal racketeering charges were unveiled by the US Attorney General against fourteen people including seven former and (then) current FIFA officials. This led not only to a number of arrests of FIFA members and the eventual resignation of the FIFA President, Sepp Blatter, despite its May 29, 2015 re-election, but also a significant reform of FIFA Statutes.

According to the current FIFA Statutes (in force as of April 27, 2016), the FIFA President is elected for four years and can be re-elected for a maximum period of twelve years. The president, who represents FIFA in general, is responsible, among other, for the maintenance and development of good relations among FIFA, its members, political bodies and other international organizations. Member Associations that belong to the same continent have formed six confederations that are recognized by FIFA: the Union de associations Européennes de Football (UEFA), the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), the Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol (CONMEBOL), the Confederation Africaine de Football (CAF), Oceania Football Federation (OFC) and the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF). All confederations are allocated places to the Council as follows: CONMEBOL, one vice-president and four members, AFC, one vice-president and six members, UEFA, three vice-presidents and six members, CAF, one vice-president and six members, CONCACAF, one vice-president and four members, OFC, one vice-president and two members. As an example of gender equality in terms of FIFA representation, each confederation must ensure the election

⁴ In November 2014, the President of the FIFA Ethics Committee declared that wrongdoings related to the bidding process were not sufficient to provoke a reopening of the process. He also published a short version of the Garcia report, which Garcia himself called "erroneous". Los Angeles Times, June 02, 2015. Retrieved on 05 June 2018 from <http://www.latimes.com/sports/soccer/la-sp-fifa-scandal-timeline-20150603-story.html>.

of at least one female member to the Council; in case they fail to do so, the position remains vacant until the next Council election.

As a response to the scandals, FIFA published on 26 February 2016, under its new leadership, a set of reforms proposed by the 2016 FIFA Reform Committee and approved by the Extraordinary FIFA Congress (FIFA, 2016). These reforms are a proof of FIFA determination to improve its governance and further were incorporated into the amended version of FIFA Statutes. The key aspects of the reforms are related to: the adoption of codes of conduct and ethics, the creation of an independent Audit and Compliance Committee, the adoption of the term limit of twelve years for its President, Council members and members of the Audit and Compliance Committee and of the judicial bodies; the separation between the political and the management functions as performed by FIFA bodies (the Council is responsible for the organization's overall strategy and the General Secretariat oversees the management and commercial actions for the implementation of this strategy); the election of FIFA members after the adequate integrity and eligibility tests executed by an Independent Review Committee; greater recognition and promotion of women in football; adoption of universally accepted governance principles; the democratization of the World Cup host countries selection process as the new regulation requires the submission of the choice to a vote to all 209 FIFA national associations instead of just the executive committee, the establishment of the Football Stakeholders' Committee; FIFA's further commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights; and disclosure of individual compensations and intensified control of money flows by FIFA. It must be noted that on 07 April 2017, FIFA published its 2016 Financial, Governance and Activity Annual Reports for 2016 as a result of its 2016 governance reform. The reports, which from 2017 on, will be published annually, aim to prove FIFA'S commitment to transparency and accountability and, among other, include details about the compensation of all FIFA committee members and key management personnel (FIFA, 7 April 2017).

In addition, on October 3rd 2016, FIFA President Gianni Infantino, unveiled the new FIFA roadmap for the future of world football, FIFA 2.0. This document establishes the guidelines for the future FIFA operation and sets a number of FIFA principles and objectives in the framework of the new vision of the organization, which is "to promote the game of football, protect its integrity and bring the game to all" (FIFA, 2016).

Specifically, in an effort to establish and promote new ethical standards for the organization and overcome the previous ethical scandals, the roadmap adopts the principles of transparency, accountability, inclusivity and cooperation as the guiding principles for the organization with the aim to construct a stronger institution both at its home and in the football ecosystem (FIFA, 2016). Throughout the roadmap, considerable attention is given, among other, to the significance of improvements in governance in the framework of FIFA, its national member associations and other related football stakeholders, through restructuring and transparency, the respect of human rights, and the promotion of inclusion and diversity within the football world. Furthermore, FIFA intends, to optimize the structure of world cup, expand its presence in eSports and develop an interaction management system with its fans as means to actively globalize and modernize the game (FIFA, 2016).

FIFA has also adopted the FIFA Forward Development Program with the aim to grow the game and introduce it to new regions with the help of all of its members.

Also, since 2015, FIFA has established the FIFA Conference for Equality and Inclusion as evidence of reform of the organization. This Conference which takes place annually since 2015 is part of the embodiment of the pillars of FIFA 2.0 to 'bring the game to all' (FIFA, 2016). Apart from FIFA and its member associations, the conference brings together at the same table of discussion representatives of the majority of stakeholders of modern global football governance including the United Nations, Media channels, representatives of civil society organizations such as the Amnesty International, academia, scientific experts, athletes, national government executives and the private sector.

Furthermore, the appointment of a woman to the position of FIFA Secretary General, Fatma Samoura, a senegalese senior executive who had worked in the United Nations since 1995 in various positions, and the inclusion of six women – instead of one - in FIFA Council is evidence of democratization of its governance in terms of equality and inclusion.

Interaction and cooperation with international organizations

In its pursue of further legitimization, the current FIFA president has, since his election, enlarged FIFA network and strengthened the organization's cooperation with other international sport related stakeholders. This cooperation includes, but it is not limited to, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and its affiliated agencies, and

the Fédération internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels (FifPro).

With the Council of Europe

The Parliamentary Assembly of the of the 47-nation Council of Europe published on 4 December 2017, the Report on modern sports governance of its Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media with the title “Working towards a framework for modern sports governance” (Council of Europe, 2017). The report states that, “never before have sports faced such unprecedented loss of trust” and proposes the establishment of common governance criteria for all sport organizations whether sport clubs or umbrella sport organizations. This report acknowledges that while in the case of the IOC “...The International Olympic Committee (IOC) needs to demonstrate bolder leadership and make headway in speeding up reforms” as means to regain public trust, reform efforts have been made by some international sport governing bodies such as FIFA, UEFA, the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) and the International Cycling Union (UCI). According to the report, the new sport governance criteria require the coordination and cooperation of all stakeholders involved in modern sport governance some of the governance criteria to be established by sport organizations in order to regain public trust are the following:

The above document is based on the report of Ms. Anne Brasseur (Luxembourg, ALDE) on Good football governance (Council of Europe, 15 December, 2017). This report suggests that a “radical change in the culture of football governance at all levels is needed so that it is firmly based on respect for human rights and the rule of law, internal democracy and participation, transparency and responsibility, compliance with the highest ethical values, solidarity and concern for the common good”. Underlying the significance of a closer cooperation between sports organizations and international organizations in the field of the promotion of human rights, and particularly in the areas of minor protection, gender equality and athlete development, the report further proposes the set-up of a “joint working table of discussion” between FIFA, UEFA, the European Commission, the Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport, and other interested stakeholders for football financial related issues, such as fair play, the status of agents, and player ownership. The report additionally suggests the creation of an independent observatory to assess the governance of football with the participation of the European Union, the IOC, FIFA, UEFA and the Council of Europe. Even if Brasseur’s report has been criticized by FIFA that “it falls short of the

expectations global citizens have from an organization such as the Council of Europe” (AP News, December, 7, 2017), it consists a significant evidence of a) the scrutiny that FIFA encounters nowadays from other international organizations b) the cooperation that exists between FIFA and other international sport stakeholders and c) the international demands and need for FIFA accountability, democracy and reform in a variety of governance areas.

Soon after the publication of the report, FIFA and the Council of Europe started working on a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the aim to strengthen their cooperation in the field of human rights and specifically in the areas of good governance, anti-doping, anti-match fixing, and anti-violence as well as the promotion of safety, service and security at football matches worldwide. This cooperation was announced after a meeting between the current FIFA president and the secretary general of the Council of Europe. The two organizations aim at signing an agreement before the end of 2018 (SportBusiness International, 2018). This work towards an MoU between the two organizations is evidence of international cooperation between international public governmental and sport non-governmental organizations, which is crucial factor of modern global sport governance. It further demonstrates evidence of FIFA reform.

With the United Nations

In the framework of cooperation with international governmental organizations, FIFA President has reaffirmed the organization’s intention to participate in the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in a meeting with the UN Secretary general, Antonio Guterres, on March 9, 2018 in New York. At this meeting, among other, the UN Secretary General acknowledged FIFA’s efforts to reform, and the FIFA President presented the FIFA football for schools’ project as means for development through sport (FIFA, 12 March 2018). Infantino is not the first FIFA President to meet with a UN Secretary General; the 1999 meeting of the then FIFA President, Sepp Blatter, with the then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and the then IOC president Dr. Jacques Rogge in Lausanne had signaled the beginning of cooperation between FIFA and the UN and its affiliated organizations in a number of initiatives related to the use of sport as means to promote peace, education and development around the globe. Examples include the 1999 cooperation between FIFA, UEFA, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in the area of improving the living conditions

for refugee children through football in the Kosovo crisis area, the 2001 launch of the global alliance between FIFA and UNICEF, the support of the 'Marches Against Poverty' which is organized since 2003 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the FIFA-UNICEF joint campaign for the 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany™ under the banner 'Unite for Children, Unite for Peace' in May 2006 (FIFA, 2011).

Still, the difference is that in the past FIFA has participated in THE UN initiatives which aimed at the use of sport as a tool for peace, education and development from a position of power; it is the first time that the UN officially acknowledges the need for reform in the framework of FIFA governance when launching a cooperation with FIFA, as a result of the scandals of its previous leadership.

With the Fédération internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels (FiFPro)

Another evidence of FIFA governance reform is related to its recent cooperation with the Fédération internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels (FiFPro). Created in 1965, FiFPro is one of the most prominent football lobbies at European and global level that represents the rights of professional football players and as such participates, among other, in the Committee for the European social dialogue in the football sector (Chatzigianni, 2014). On November 6, 2017, FIFA and FiFPro signed a six-year cooperation agreement aiming at the promotion of cooperation between the two organizations and the improvement of football governance at a global level. Furthermore, an accord of cooperation was signed by the European Club Association, the World Leagues Forum and FiFPro under the umbrella of FIFA's Football Stakeholders Committee. The FIFA Stakeholders' Committee includes confederations, member associations and professional football stakeholders and was formed in 2017 as means to improve cooperation between all football stakeholders in a broad spectrum of issues such as the international transfer of players, club licensing, minimum contract requirements, dispute resolution among clubs and players etc (FIFA, 23 March 2017).

As a result of this cooperation agreement, FiFPro withdrew its complaint against FIFA that had lodged with the European Commission in September 2015 (FIFA, 6 November 2017).

With multinational companies (MNCs)

Multinational companies play a major role in global sport governance (Chatzigianni, 2017), including global football governance. Whether as sponsors of big football clubs, organizations and/or football events, or as partners for football related not-for-profit programs for the less privileged communities, the MNCs contribute significantly to football-related activity around the world. Following the 2012 and 2015 scandals, a number of FIFA sponsors changed their way they expressed their dissatisfaction to FIFA leadership and governance from attempting to influence strategy through the vocal raise of concern to direct action and refusal to renew FIFA sponsorship - Emirates and Sony didn't renew their sponsorship contracts in 2014- or threat to do so (Morrow, 2015). In the end, Blatter had to resign from the position of FIFA leader not because he was rejected by the FIFA members [he was re-elected to the position] but because, following the investigation of the US Justice Department he was an undesirable leader to several FIFA sponsors such as ADIDAS, MacDonalds' and Coca Cola (Saporoti, 2015).

Discussion

FIFA leadership, FIFA as a leader and the globalization process of global football governance

Upon its foundation, FIFA has been a voluntary organization representing civil society, membership-based, generating global standards for football and football games and responsible for the creation and coordination of a global football network. Similarly, to other international sport organizations, such as the IOC, FIFA has operated as a transnational organization since its creation and has succeeded in safeguarding the autonomy of football versus interferences from national governments and other governing factors, such as the European Union (Chatzigianni, 2014, Meier & Garcia, 2015) despite a challenging – even corrupted – path followed by its previous authoritarian leadership.

FIFA leadership has been taking advantage of the changing economy and the advances in technology in order to build the FIFA into the global enterprise it is capable of being through the help of corporate investors. For example, under Sepp Blatter, FIFA had seen its revenues proliferate. For 2011-2014, FIFA stated receipts of \$5.7 billion, for the most part obtained from sponsorship deals (\$1.6 billion) and the sale of 20th FIFA Brazil World Cup television rights (\$2.45 billion in 2014, a 200-fold increase compared with 1998); in the same period (2011-2014), one billion dollars from this

money was redistributed to FIFA national associations for – often questionable – ‘development projects’ (Bayle, 2015). Furthermore, despite the major 2015 scandals, FIFA has witnessed a ‘decent’ revenue decrease from \$1.6 billion in 2014 to \$1.4 in 2018 (year of the 21th Moscow World Cup) with the federation having switched its sponsorship focus from Europe and Northern America to the Middle East, Asia and Russia. While some sponsors such as Johnson & Johnson are no more in the FIFA sponsorship list, VISA and Coca Cola have remained while Qatar Airways, Gazprom and Wanda Group are among the new major sponsors of the FIFA World Cup (Fima, 2018)⁵.

Undoubtedly, FIFA leadership, despite its weaknesses, has developed the organization into a major political and economic force globally. Nowadays it has become an association that even though in essence it is an INGO, it largely operates as a Transnational Corporation (TNC). Its partnership with a sport marketing agency, the International Sports and Leisure Marketing (ISL) invented by the Adidas’s boss, Hars Dassler, in the beginning of 1980s was a landmark to the significant commercialization of the organization⁶. FIFA transformation from an INGO to a BINGO, a business oriented non-governmental organization, without the adequate changes and reform in governance structures has resulted to mismanagement, lack of integrity and corrupted leadership.

Yet signs of reform and integration in global governance are evident even though the transition has not been smooth. Despite resistance from the traditional football governance factors and leadership, according to Tomaž Vesel, the chairperson of the Audit and Compliance Committee, FIFA put in 2016 ‘a new framework in place to set up the mechanisms and processes that will safeguard its principles in the future’ (FIFA, 2017).

Conclusions

Until 2012, the elected FIFA presidents were volunteer idealists who performed their duty as FIFA leaders as a form of service to the public (Tomlinson, 2014). The following two leaders though, Havelange and Blatter, can be characterized as representatives of autocratic leadership, similarly to the previous IOC leadership.

⁵ The 21st FIFA World Cup in Moscow takes place at the time of the writing of the present article.

⁶ It was Dassler who has also encouraged the then IOC President, Juan Antonio de Samaranch to find ways to explore the Olympic logo (Wenn & Barney, 2017).

These two men significantly transformed FIFA leadership from a volunteer public service duty to a business-oriented profession. Football is not only a leisure activity; it is a multi-billion business that generates millions of jobs and is under the direct influence of media and technology industries. It is clear that, the current FIFA leadership, has to be able to keep up with the continuous globalization of football industry and at the same time adapt to new realities and contemporary demands for public scrutiny, good governance, integrity and openness.

As Tomlinson notes (2014), FIFA leaders were not just administrators of a sport organization; they were “significant figures/actors in international political and economic networks”. In accordance with Kane’s definition, FIFA authoritarian leadership has, since its creation, had the ability and power to lead world football. But, as global leadership requires changes over time and across situations in order to adapt to various and changing circumstances (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010), modern global governance requires from FIFA to change its style of governance into a more participatory one despite the challenges and dangers this might occur in terms of governance and reform.

That means that, due to the continuously changing landscape of sport in general, and football in particular, FIFA leadership has to be able to do both: regain the confidence of all football stakeholders and its public as well as maintain the organization’s viability and independence in the framework of modern global sport governance through the further implementation and follow up of reforms in the field of football governance and the adoption of good governance principles.

Two years ago FIFA was under major threat as a result of its poor ethical leadership status which has compromised its position in the modern sport world. Yet FIFA still has the power, authority and influence to lead. But If the organization wants to further lead world football, it has to follow the principle of international leadership stated by Lucarelli (2014) which is that “in order to lead, an international actor has to be recognized by the others as powerful, credible, capable and legitimate”. And it has to be able to respond to challenges associated with global governance and operationalize and implement accountability principles that reflect and respond to the nature and needs of the organization (Burall and Neligan, 2006). As evidence shows at present, FIFA is in an on-going process of ‘globalization’, that is of responding to the needs and requirements and being part of global governance.

Recommendations for further study

Globalization requires the introduction of new regulatory mechanisms to hold actors responsible and accountable (Newman, 2004). Undoubtedly, the management of FIFA, which is a huge international organization, is not an easy task, and problems can occur in the process (Zeidan & Fauser, 2015). The emergence of the modern global sport governance network can have a significant impact on the operation of all stakeholders within the network in terms of good governance. Given that old and new stakeholders can exert direct and indirect control as well as pressure within the network to FIFA to adapt and conform to universally acceptable ethical governing standards, it remains to be seen whether current FIFA leadership can use the opportunities it is given under the autonomous global modern sport governance status quo to establish the world football governing body as an organization totally engaged in the process and requirements of globalization or in other words, to lead the globalization process of the global football governing body and modern global football governance and in the end, 'to globalize' itself. Therefore, future studies should focus on a) the evaluation of FIFA leadership to the organization's performance in terms of reform, accountability and transparency as well as regain of public trust and, b) FIFA globalization and the role of FIFA to the emerging modern global football governance in particular, and global sport governance in general.

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