

THE LONGEVITY OF SPORTS LEADERS IN GOVERNING BODIES

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Abstract

The objective is to contribute to the understanding of the determinants of the longevity of managers and to emphasize its particular relationship with the controls established and planned in the Senegalese context. To the question: What is the relationship between the longevity of sports leaders in Senegal and the controls exercised over them? It is appropriate to respond, in light of the theory of entrenchment of managers, that beyond the advantages that can be drawn from the longevity of leaders, this can be explained by inertia both internal and external controls. On one hand, networks forming between public authorities and the sports movement attenuate the capacities of internal organs to exercise their powers. On the other hand, the existence of various actors at the national level and an international network seems to put the leaders out of control. The originality of the article lies in the fact that the question of longevity is rarely linked to the question of control in the Senegalese context. However, this is often linked to the difficulties that control bodies have in monitoring sports leaders.

Keywords: Longevity; Sport's leaders; Control; Public authorities.

JEL Classification: H12

1. Introduction

The question of the longevity of sports leaders in their organizations falls within the framework of their management. This department guarantees the completion of action plans, the accomplishment of tasks, the exercise of activities and the implementation of projects. In this context, managers communicate with everyone and participate in achieving objectives. They must mobilize, train, guide, inspire and penalize, if necessary. They must ensure, according to Thietart (2019), that all individuals in sports organizations give their full performance and work together in harmony and efficiency. The longevity of such leaders is a subject of interest and has been the subject of several studies in Senegal. Diouf (2012) analyzes, in the Senegalese context, the relationships between the longevity and leadership of sports leaders, while Sarr (2012) returns to the challenges and opportunities that can be found in the longevity of the latter. Others emphasize the effect of longevity on the leadership of sports managers (Gueye, 2013; Faye, 2015). Ndiaye (2017) concludes that the role of longevity in improving the governance of sports organizations. These studies analyze the effects, advantages or limits of

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manager longevity on aspects of sports organizations. However, they do not put the relationship between the question of the longevity of leaders and their propensity to escape planned and established controls, whether internal or external.

As part of this study, the objective is to contribute to the understanding of the determinants of the longevity of managers and to emphasize its particular relationship with the controls established and planned in the Senegalese context, rendering the question: To what extent is the longevity of sports leaders in Senegal explained by the nature of controls planned and established for them?

The main hypothesis put forward allows us to consider that the longevity of sports leaders in Senegal is explained by the nature of conflicting controls planned and established for them. This is linked to the absence of evaluation of their activities at all levels and of corrective measures for their actions.

To achieve this, we have subscribed to an interpretivist epistemological positioning to understand the meaning of the speeches of sport actors and stakeholders on the issue; thus, a qualitative approach was used to collect the information given by the chosen respondents.

On a theoretical level, the theory of entrenchment was used within the framework of organizational governance. This covers all the organizational mechanisms having the effect of delimiting the powers and influencing the decisions of managers, in other words which govern their conduct and define their discretionary space (Charreaux, 1996). This theory assumes that these mechanisms are not always sufficient to force managers to manage the firm in accordance with the interests of shareholders (Alexandre & Paquerot, 2000).

2. Conceptual Background

Defining longevity, *Le Larousse* dictionary¹ (2025) emphasizes, among other things, that it is the “quality of what is maintained for a relatively long period; permanence, persistence, resistance.” Applied to sports, it refers to the sports leader’s propensity to remain in the management of sports bodies. Cochenec (2012) underlines that, in the absence of term limits, there is a tendency for Presidents of sports federations in France to remain in charge of such bodies beyond three or four mandates. In the African context,

...sports leaders who in reality are almost never elected but imposed by (political or financial) networks that are always corrupt, behave like real pugilists to position themselves at the head of delegations generally reduced to a few rare athletes to support during the international competitions, the ideologies of the ruling class. (Abalot et al., 2017, p.11)

¹ <https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/long%C3%A9vit%C3%A9/47754/> 21/07/2025 à 21 h 30 mn

However, it should be noted that the long-term presence of leaders at the head of sporting bodies cannot be considered negative in itself. Sherman (2016) considers that longevity is a power in leadership when the leader fully assumes his role.

This is why the question of their control arises. Control, being “the means used to obtain the performance that we propose to achieve and to verify whether the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this performance agree with the specific characteristics of the organization” (Etzioni, 1965, p.650). This classic definition allows us to consider both from a political and cybernetic point of view, that is to say by the obligation for sports managers to be accountable but also by the need to put in place a control system based on self-correction (Gortner *et al.*, 1993). In all cases, meeting such objectives requires modalities linked to control systems based on quantitative measurements of outputs, quantitative and qualitative reports on activities and behaviors, active participation of the various stakeholders in project monitoring, and their identification with the mission of the organization.

To analyze the question of the longevity of sports leaders under the prism of the control exercised over them, the theory of the entrenchment of leaders is put forward. This is part of the governance of organizations which covers all the organizational mechanisms having the effect of delimiting the powers and influencing the decisions of managers, governing their conduct and defining their discretionary space (Charreaux, 1996). This theory assumes that these mechanisms are not always sufficient to force managers to manage the firm in accordance with the interests of shareholders (Alexandre & Paquerot, 2000).

The entrenchment of leaders is therefore a reaction to the different control mechanisms submitted to leaders. It becomes a question of an attempt to avoid internal and/or external control mechanisms imposed on managers. There are numerous external control mechanisms for managers. However, relying on Bienaymé (1998), it is possible to note

a competition of ubiquity, a competition driven certainly by the multiplication of actors and markets but also by the mobility of decision-makers and by the assets that the most attentive and the most agile forge there... the competition for ubiquity accelerates and multiplies performance comparisons. (p. 434)

In the context of sport, it must be remembered that sports organizations within the framework of the national and international sports movement are subject to the same comparisons. As part of the co-management of sport with public authorities, they also remain subject to the same comparisons, which naturally reflects on their leaders. From this perspective, it is possible to invoke Caby and Hirigoyen (2001) for the failure to achieve the strategic objectives chosen by managers becomes a source of conflict of interest; and this can only be resolved through a coercive instrument: an external takeover which can lead

to their revocation. In the context of the co-management of sport, the legal and regulatory environment imposes limitations on the behavior of the leaders; sanctions are provided for in the event of non-compliance with such legal and contractual rules (Prowse, 1994).

Internal control mechanisms in sport are mainly General Assemblies, Steering Committees, internal ethics commissions, etc. The general assemblies of the federations, in principle, exercise control over sports leaders. However, in the context of sport, some members of the general assembly can be more influential than others; and therefore, more capable of limiting the risk of discretionary management by the manager (Nabet, 2000).

Steering committees are also levers of control through which members ensure the good management of their organization. Within the framework of transaction cost theory (Williamson, 1985), steering committees constitute internal control mechanisms. The same applies to internal committees. With these internal control mechanisms, it is possible to mitigate information asymmetries that could put sports managers out of control.

Reaction to control mechanisms:

Alexandre and Paquerot (2000) define the entrenchment strategies of managers as having the objective of increasing their discretionary space by using the means at their disposal, that is to say their human capital but also the assets of the organization to neutralize control systems and increase the dependence of all the organization's partners on the resources they control (specific human capital, information asymmetry).

Entrenchment strategies aim to counter key internal control mechanisms

Rooting via the board of directors.

The control exercised by the steering committees has limits. Like the Board of Directors, this is linked to the accumulation of mandates of chairman of the board of directors and general director (Fama and Jensen, 1983), but also that linked to the very nature of the directors. The “duality” of functions broadens the powers of managers within the board of directors, calls into question the impartiality of the board and particularly the independence of the directors. In the case of sport, this is the Steering Committee. This duality allows leaders to increase their power in the organization. They have information asymmetry compared to the other stakeholders of the Steering Committee and have easier access to financial resources. They can also rely on the dependence of the members of this Committee to initiate decisions that benefit them.

As for external directors, they are recruited for their skills. Co-optation in sport makes it possible to use it. Their freedom from leaders allows them to theoretically oppose the most questionable decisions (Caby & Hirigoyen, 1997). However, like internal directors, they are not more inclined to control

the managers, because in the majority of cases, they are appointed on the recommendation of the managers (Charreaux & Pitol-Belin, 1990). On the other hand, in the sports context those co-opted by the State have more freedom and can go against the positions of sports leaders. Generally speaking, the entrenchment of managers is due to the limits of the control exercised by the board of directors (Paquerot, 1997), in the specific case of steering committees.

Entrenchment as a reaction to shareholder control

Shareholder control is strongly linked to the very nature of shareholders and capital structure. On the one hand, the majority shareholder holds a privileged position which allows them to counter the entrenchment of managers. On the other hand, institutional shareholders (banks, insurance companies) can exercise effective control thanks to their independence from managers (Brickley et al., 1988). However, the manager can, faced with this type of shareholder, invest in specific assets (Castanis & Helfat, 1992) which make their replacement costly. He can increase his remuneration and benefit from greater managerial latitude. The manager also has informational asymmetry. Information is an essential resource for organizations, and its possession constitutes an important source of power for actors (Pfeffer, 1981). In addition, in sport, it can develop networks between the State and the sports movement which puts them in an advantageous position (Diouf & Tine, 2023). The conflicts in sport analyzed in the light of theories linked to the school of proximity (Talbot, 2018) show that the actors do not seem to have the same representations, the same beliefs and knowledge (Torre & Rallet, 2005). On the organizational level, the state model, which adapts to a system of control or co-management, is not necessarily in line with the autonomy of the sports movement. With regard to material resources, and relying on Bouba-Olga and Grosseti (2008), it is possible to note the weakness of the means allocated by the State to the federations and the desire to control them. Differences could also be noted in the networks and at the cognitive level. However, relying on Bouba-Olga and Grosseti (2008), it should be emphasized that the actors of the conflict are in the same networks. The knowledge bases at the cognitive level, which a priori seem different, are getting closer. Finally, the institutional arrangement is presented as a trans-organizational arrangement, in the form of networks, between public authorities and leaders of the sports movement.

Rooting as a reaction to takeover attempts

Takeovers are the last tool shareholders have to tame managers. However, leaders, thanks to mechanisms, avoid these takeovers. They then put in place anti-takeover measures by positioning their action over the long term (Sundaramurthy, 2000). In the context of sport, the long-term objectives set by the leaders fit into this framework.

In summary, managers seem to take advantage of the limits and ineffectiveness of internal and external control mechanisms to take root in the

organization. And this entrenchment of leaders, perceived in the sense of ruse by Williamson (1985), would be against the interests of sports organizations even if, according to Paquerot (1997), it is not without advantages.

3. Methodology

The epistemological posture of the study is constructivist, more precisely interpretivist. Indeed, the question of the longevity of sports leaders is discussed through the prism of the control exercised over them. Such questioning calls for an analysis of the discourse of the different stakeholders to grasp the desired reality through their intentional, meaningful and symbolic dimensions as indicated by Lyotard (1995). The intentional dimension underlines that human activity is the fruit of the consciousness, reflexivity and intentions of the actors (Avenier & Gavard-Perret, 2012). The signifying and symbolic dimensions come back to language and representations in the process of constructing meanings (Thietart *et al.*, 2019). In this interpretivist framework “social reality is above all constructed through the play of intentions and interactions of actors who construct the meaning of this reality through the confrontation and sharing of their representations” (Thietart *et al.*, 2019, p. 26). These interactions in particular contexts result in interpretations which can be the subject of intersubjective consensus within the social group. Bergman and Luckman (1966) refer to this process as the construction of social reality.

The research criteria relate to three aspects which make it possible to understand the relationship between the longevity of sports leaders and the question of control exercised over them. These are:

- ✓ The acceptance or not of the various stakeholders of the normality of the longevity of sports leaders;
- ✓ Apprehension of the effect of evaluation on the longevity of sports leaders;
- ✓ Determining the effect of the existence or coercive measures on the longevity of sports leaders.

Obviously, it appears that these criteria call for a collection of the discourse of all parties concerned to grasp social reality through intentions, representations and interactions in particular contexts, as Thietart *et al.* (2019).

The study focuses on the Senegalese sports movement. In addition to the Senegalese National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSS), this movement involves no less than 60 federations and sports groups organized at the national, regional and departmental level (Ministry in charge of sports of Senegal, 2022). The careers of sports managers are, in general, characterized by their longevity and allow us to understand the relationship between said longevity and the control exercised.

For example, it is possible to cite the case of the National Committee for Management of the Fight (CNGL) which saw President Alioune Sarr lead it for

26 years. This power play, without necessarily being a source of perspective, raises various questions in the relationship between sports leaders and public authorities, and sports leaders and internal stakeholders in sports organizations (Diouf, 2018). Indeed, on the governance of the arbitration of striking wrestling, the explanation of the conditions for developing the rules of striking wrestling and the determination of the rules which condition the recruitment into the body of referees, as well as the clarification of aspects relating to appeals against arbitration decisions have made it possible to note a marginalization of stakeholders essential to the control of sports leaders.

Based on the Stakeholder approach developed by Freeman (1984) and Clackson (1995), Diouf (2018) came to the conclusion that the governance of strike wrestling arbitration is strongly centered on Internal Stakeholders at the CNGL. The other Stakeholders, despite their status as associations recognized by the CNGL, play secondary roles. However, these associations (stables, wrestling schools, etc.) must occupy their place as is the case in all sporting association movements. The marginalization of grassroots associations is notable in their level of involvement, transmission and circulation of information, in the assessment of ethical conditions, as well as the consideration of their particular situation. This is why, from the point of view of the management of the arbitration of striking wrestling, it is appropriate to go beyond this governance model which ignores certain central Stakeholders in the sports association movement. The involvement of these Stakeholders could bring more legitimacy to the rules developed, to the determination of the rules governing the profile of referees and to arbitration decisions, and consequently to the controls exercised on sports managers.

For the concrete methods of data collection, in addition to the documentary elements, interviews were carried out. In this regard, nineteen (19) people, mainly executives in sport, were interviewed: seven (7) Inspectors of Popular Education of Youth and Sports (IEPJS), ten (9) members of the sports federation, and three (3) Physical and Sports Education Teachers (PEPS). The IEJPS and the members of federations are at the center of the problem of control and renewal of sports bodies, and therefore of the longevity of their leaders. The PEPS, as a player in Physical Education and sport, have a good knowledge of issues relating to the management of sports bodies. The interviews were semi-structured. The semi-structured interview is a data collection technique which contributes to the development of knowledge favoring qualitative and interpretative approaches relating in particular to constructivist paradigms (Quivy & Van Campenhoudt, 1995). The interviews were carried out and each respondent received a number for confidentiality purposes. The data were transcribed and the thematic content analysis method of Quivy and Van Campenhoudt (1995) was used. This made it possible to identify significant trends, relationships and conclusions. Finally, the results

obtained were discussed mainly based on the theories of the entrenchment of leaders.

4. Results

Longevity: between advantages and limits

Regarding the longevity of leaders in sporting bodies, respondents, for the most part, find that it is abnormal and does not respond to the democratic spirit. Respondent six notes: “I think not, because it does not respond to the democratic spirit and current practices around the world. I think that two mandates are enough for leaders who want to serve and not use sport.” For other respondents, longevity is linked to the texts of sports associations which can facilitate it. Respondent seven specifies:

The associative movement is governed by its own texts subject to compliance with state standards. The initiative of the association being most often private, it is up to each entity to set in its statutes the questions related to governance, in particular the conditions of eligibility, the duration of mandates, etc. Consequently, on a legal level the question of the longevity of sports leaders does not arise as long as the texts allow it and the actors have the right to choose the leaders.

However, this longevity must be correlated with results. In this sense, respondent 15 underlines:

Every structure needs results. Renewal helps nourish democracy in sporting bodies, but it must be accompanied by results. In other words, the normality of the longevity of sports leaders must be understood more from the angle of results. However, it proves essential to avoid clan and opaque management.

This may be linked to the advantages attached to the longevity of sports leaders. These are diverse; they are linked to the experience of managers, to the stability in the management of sports organizations, to the achievement of long-term objectives and the development of an international network. Respondent 14 states:

The longevity of sports leaders brings better stability in the governance of the structure and a gain for developing an international network: the federations are affiliated to international organizations and through this the sports leaders act on behalf of their State in these instances.

On the other hand, limits are noted in the longevity of sports leaders. They move from inaction to suspicions of corruption. Respondent 13 specifies:

Certain limits can be detected. This concerns the monotonous and static management of the sporting entity, clan and clientelist management, the disinterest and despair of young leaders interested in the management of the entity, etc.

Respondent 16 adds:

A team needs new blood to be revitalized. So, after years of experience, leaders must be able to leave in order to create a new dynamic and position themselves as advisors to share more of their experience. Experience has shown that after several years of experimentation, we no longer have anything to prove. Hence, to bring in new blood, you have to change teams so as not to stay in routine. No one is indispensable on this earth or even in the functions he or she occupies. Especially when the objectives are not achieved. In other words when we fail in relation to the type of management put in place to win trophies.

The evaluation of sports leaders by public authorities

The means of control relate to instruments for evaluating public policies or to the evaluation of accompanying or support programs from public authorities. It is appropriate to cite annual activity reports, reports from state control bodies such as the Court of Auditors in Senegal. In this sense, respondent no. 10 notes:

The best-known means is the regulatory obligation of federations delegated powers to communicate to the Minister in charge of Sports, the administrative and financial results of the past year, the state of its statistics and the annual program. The State often uses the latter to measure the degree of achievement of results.

Respondent five adds:

I think that the real means of evaluation between these two entities is limited to the performance contracts signed between the federations and the State because, beyond that, it has no control over them. An audit can also be commissioned by the State to measure the impact of the use of its resources. » Which seems to contradict the general scheme put in place to evaluate the activity of sports managers even if public authorities have been able in the past to carry out an evaluation of sports campaigns.

Respondent eight specifies:

Following the Football World Cup campaign in 2002, where Senegal managed to reach the quarter-finals, a state audit led to the arrest of several sports leaders. The State had become more careful about the subsidies it granted.

Otherwise, it is only within the framework of performance contracts that public authorities are theoretically more inclined to carry out an evaluation of the activity of sports federations. Which is not often the case in practice since these so-called contracts seem to escape any control, in the opinion of Diouf *et al.* (2024).

The absence of evaluation, source of the longevity of sports leaders

For some respondents, evaluation can be a source of the longevity of sports leaders. In this hypothesis, it is that it gives satisfaction both with regard to compliance with aspects linked to the texts (such as the duration of the mandate, the method of election), the achievement of previously fixed results

and transparent management. of the sporting entity. Unfortunately, as respondent 14 points out:

In concrete terms, a correct assessment is almost never made by the supervisory authority. The conclusions drawn are always complacent. Therefore, since they are not worried, they linger at the station.

Also, longevity seems in certain cases linked to sporting results rather than to a serious evaluation. In this regard, respondent 12 underlines:

It turns out that the government's assessment has made almost no contribution to the longevity of sports leaders if recorded sporting achievements are taken into account. For example, in 2008, the minister of sports at the time initiated the elimination of recovery funds, which unfortunately was not accepted by sports stakeholders. Subsequently, it will implement the signing of objective agreements which will condition the obtaining of subsidies for the federations. But this did not prevent leaders from retaining their seats and taking advantage of their functions without achieving the set objectives.

With the exception of the years 2021 and 2022 which saw Senegal record prowess in the field of football, the absence of results from sports leaders is notable, despite the means deployed by the Senegalese state, which did not necessarily influence their longevity.

This lack of evaluation necessarily leads to neglect in terms of performance, the method of election, as well as the management of financial or other resources which has an effect on the longevity of sports leaders. Respondent 10 explains: "Every mission must be evaluated. The manager being certain that his financial, accounting and sporting balance sheet, whether positive or negative, would have no impact on his future, would seek to keep his position as long as possible." This manifests itself in behavior that is not in line with the rules of good management. Thus, respondent five underlines:

There is a lack of rigor in achieving the objectives assigned to them because, without monitoring and evaluation, managers are free to invent everything they can to justify their actions and continue in office. Otherwise, the absence of strong texts which provide a guideline to follow before, during and after the activities of the federations.

This results in opaque and clannish management; a group alone holds, and for a long time, the management bodies of the structure through lobbying.

Respondent three supports:

Each structure needs an evaluation at the end of which sanctions will be noted. A lack of evaluation implies an absence of sanctions such as dismissal, criminal or financial sanctions in cases of management misconduct. This leads us today to see a group of people retaining their positions for more than a decade, despite management errors and without forgetting the lack of performance. This is to say that the lack of evaluation of the actions of sports leaders has greatly contributed to their longevity.

Consequently, the absence of evaluation is linked to a disorder which favors the longevity of sports leaders at the head of sports bodies.

The absence of corrective measures, a source of longevity for sports leaders

For respondents, there seems to be a sort of total impunity. Strictly speaking, there is no question of talking about corrective measures on the part of managers as long as the evaluation is not carried out rigorously. Respondent three underlines:

The question refers us to a certain extent to the previous one; in the sense that the absence of corrective measures makes managers think more about preserving their advantages than achieving results. Instead of boosting Senegalese sport, we are instead witnessing leaders who drag on in management bodies. This is the case of the President of the Senegalese Football Federation led by Augustin Senghor for fifteen years now.

Thus, this longevity is to be linked to the absence of evaluation and corrective measures of the action of sports leaders; even if some respondents think that it is the statutes of the federations which facilitate this longevity. Respondent No. 4 notes: "this longevity draws its source from the statutes which govern the said sports associations." Suffice to say that without evaluation and corrective measures, the texts do not force sports leaders to limit the number of their mandates. Respondent six specifies: "The Senegalese canoe federation lost its best technicians following a long conflict which started from the demands of Senegalese athletes during the African Games in Maputo. However, without evaluation or corrective measures, the leaders remained in their posts."

There are various reasons for the lack of corrective action. Some address lobbying, protection by political authorities, modification of texts in favor of the management team and co-optation. Respondent 18, for example, notes:

The blocking points seem to be linked to the non-firmness of the State in relation to the application of corrective measures, the status of associations, the influence of certain leaders and, increasingly, the right of scrutiny of the federation's international organizations such as FIFA on the relationship between the State and associative federations.

The absence of corrective measures must also be linked to the limited resources of the government authorities responsible for ensuring control. Respondent 13 explains:

Several points can be a source of blocking corrective measures. First, the lack of agents capable of proposing corrective measures. Then, the absence of effective measurement tools. Finally, the insufficient means to carry out a proper evaluation and propose corrective measures. For example, the Department of Physical and Sports Activities only has one manager. She has the weakest budget of the Ministry of Sports.

Furthermore, the principle of co-management reduces the control that the State can have over sporting bodies. Respondent five notes:

Sports organizations like federations are all private institutions which do not depend directly on the State but collaborate with it. So, taking certain measures can create a crisis between them. Therefore, donors limit themselves to an evaluation and partial measures to limit the conflicts that may arise when measures are taken that go against their expectations.

6. Discussions

The longevity of sports leaders can be explained by the existence of various actors who seem to influence the control exercised over them. As much as the development of an international network can have advantages, it can also put managers out of control. In addition, due to co-management between public authorities and the sports movement, the control of the former over the latter can prove delicate. The same is true of co-optation which is still present in certain sports federations and which brings out a diversity of external actors who exercise control over the sports movement. This seems to support Bienaymé (1998) for whom organizations are subject to external controls due to the multiplication of actors present. In the case of Senegalese sport, this concerns the public authorities, the local and international sports movement. From this multiplication of actors, external control mechanisms are observable. For the international sports movement, it will be a question of extending their powers by invoking the principle of autonomy of the sports movement. For the public authorities, it will be a question of getting their hands on the public sports service. These two opposing logics of control subject sports managers to external control mechanisms which increase their discretionary powers. This is not likely to discipline leaders in one direction or another, without risk of dismissal (Caby & Hirigoyen, 2001). This tension always puts sports leaders in a position that ensures them longevity. This does not always make it possible to sanction leaders who are not in phase with the public authorities, contrary to the assertions of Prowse (1994). The legal and regulatory limitations imposed on sports leaders by public authorities are attenuated by the affirmation of the principle of autonomy of the sports movement.

Added to the inertia of external control is that of internal control. Internal control bodies (General Assembly, Steering Committees, commissions, etc.) are in principle controlled by the members of sports organizations and the various stakeholders (Nabet, 2000). However, in the Senegalese case, networks are being formed between public authorities and the sports movement. These networks, through the proximity of their members, attenuate the capacities of the bodies to actually exercise their role (Diouf & Tine, 2023). A proximity that promotes the longevity of leaders at the head of sports organizations.

The institutional marginalization of essential stakeholders in sports like wrestling, as recalled by Diouf (2018), seems to have been noted in the context of this study. The only difference is that the intended stakeholders, at the legal and institutional level, are unable to exercise their internal powers of control due to networks formed within sports federations.

Alexandre and Paquerot (2000) consider that managers' entrenchment strategies aim to increase their discretionary space by using the means at their disposal, mainly their human capital, to neutralize control systems and increase the dependence of all of the organization's partners on the resources they control. In this case, sports managers rely on their internal, national and international network to neutralize the different control systems. Indeed, the results show that they escape controls. They are rarely evaluated; or if they are evaluated, the corrective measures are not followed (Diouf et al., 2024). Objective agreements as a financing tool for such organizations is a response provided by the public authorities. They set the objectives to be achieved by the sports movement through public funding in terms of athlete performance, development of sports infrastructures, and promotion of sport at the national and international level.

In the Senegalese context, the question that arose is why they cannot contribute effectively to the development of sport, to the improvement of the performance of athletes, while ensuring effective management of resources. At the end, it is possible to say that the said conventions have random objectives, a non-compliance with the commitments made by different stakeholders and a monitoring-evaluation system that is little or poorly used. This demonstrates the difficulty in implementing public management tools in the Senegalese context and recalled by the theory of National Public Governance Systems (SNGP) in French-speaking African countries, on the one hand, and the question of the receptivity, even the reluctance of African public administrations to adopt said tools, on the other hand. In this context sport leaders are not controlled.

The entrenchment of leaders considered as a ruse, an opportunism by Williamson (1985) can go against the interests of organizations. In this regard, the disadvantages of the longevity of sports leaders have been noted. These manifest themselves in the risk of corruption and cronyism, etc. The causes seem to be linked to a breakdown of the internal, governmental and international control system. However, the entrenchment of managers, according to Paquerot (1997), can be advantageous, since it allows them to escape short-term control constraints. It facilitates the achievement of long-term objectives through long-term stability and the development of a national and international network. In the context of sport, these advantages are observable in the context of football.

Conclusion

To the question: What is the relationship between the longevity of sports leaders in Senegal and the controls exercised over them? It is appropriate to respond, in light of the theory of entrenchment of managers, that beyond the advantages that can be drawn from the longevity of leaders (Paquerot, 1997), this can be explained by inertia both internal and external controls.

On the one hand, networks forming between public authorities and the sports movement attenuate the capacities of internal organs to exercise their powers (Diouf & Tine, 2023). On the other hand, the existence of various actors at the national level and an international network seems to put the leaders out of control. This corroborates Bienaymé (1998) for whom organizations are subject to external controls due to the multiplication of actors present. This does not always facilitate sanctions against leaders who are not in phase with the public authorities, contrary to the assertions of Prowse (1994). The affirmation of the principle of autonomy of the sports movement attenuates the legal and regulatory limitations imposed on sports leaders by public authorities.

Finally, the results show that leaders are rarely evaluated and their entrenchment strategies seem to work in the face of controls; as a result, they broaden their discretionary powers (Alexandre & Paquerot, 2000). On a managerial level,

- Clarify the powers of the actors responsible for controlling sports managers. It is not easy to control these due to their attachment to the national and international sports movement;
- Strengthen the powers of internal bodies which are weakened by networks serving sports leaders;
- Establish the longevity of sports leaders in certain contexts since it always causes decline.

The limitations of the study are linked to the fact that it focused more on internal and governmental controls. Control by international sporting bodies was not addressed.

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