

## Identifying and Prioritize the Multiple Roles of Government in the Process of Sports Industry Privatization

Received: 2022-06-07

Accepted: 2022-09-20

Vol. 3, No.3. Summer .2022, 61-70

Hassan Gharekhani<sup>1</sup> \*  
Hojat Mohammadi  
Moghani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hassan Gharekhani ,  
Assistant Professor in Sport  
Management, Faculty of  
Humanities, University of  
Zanjan, Zanjan, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D. Sport Management,  
Lecturer at Farhangian  
University , Zanjan , Iran

\*Correspondence:  
Hassan Gharekhani ,  
Assistant Professor in Sport  
Management, Faculty of  
Humanities, University of  
Zanjan, Zanjan, Iran.

Email: [gharekhani@znu.ac.ir](mailto:gharekhani@znu.ac.ir)  
Orcid: 0000-0001-7007-031X

### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research was to identify and prioritize the multiple roles of the government in the process of privatization of sports.

**Methods:** The current research is of mixed type (qualitative and quantitative) and in terms of practical purpose and data collection method, it was field. The data collection tool in the qualitative part of the research was a semi-structured interview, and in the quantitative part, a researcher-made questionnaire (taken from the qualitative results, Reliability  $\alpha=0.794$  ). The research sample was selected from experts in sports management, economics, politics, management and people familiar with privatization issues in a targeted way (N=220). Friedman's test was used to rank the roles of the government in the privatization of sports. All statistical analyzes were performed by Excel and SPSS 23.

**Results:** In general, 74 components, 18 dimensions and 5 variables were identified. Among the five identified roles, the role of drafting regulations with an average of 3.38 in the first priority, the political role with an average of 3.17 in the second priority, the managerial-executive role with an average of 3.05 in the third priority, the economic role with an average of 2.76 in the fourth priority and the cultural role ranked fifth with an average of 2.63.

**Conclusion:** According to the results, it is suggested that the government take into account the multiple roles identified and the priority level of each of them by creating a specialized department for the privatization of sports within the structure of the Ministry of Sports.

**Keywords:** Sports Industry , Privatization , Ministry of sport and youth, Regulation Regulatory, Political role.

## Introduction

Privatization is implemented in developing countries for various reasons (Mohammadi Moghani et al, 2017). Privatization is a tool for development and one of the factors of establishing the free market mechanism in the economy. Economic liberalization and private sector participation is one of the most important factors of economic empowerment of countries (Shojaadin, 2012). Therefore, the successful and effective implementation of the privatization program should be the main concern of governments, and with the support of the highest government officials, the goals and duties of the involved organizations should be clearly defined (Welsh, 2011). According to the results of the studies, success in the implementation of the privatization policy requires the creation of a suitable environment for the presence and activity of the private sector. Providing such conditions requires macroeconomic reforms, improving the legal structure and deregulation of service and goods markets, strengthening the financial system and removing competition barriers (Cloud wei, 2007).

In order to deal with the unfavorable financial conditions that surround various economic sectors of the society, including the sports industry, economy scientists consider privatization as a suitable solution (Michichek, 2004). Privatization of the sports industry will allow the government to invest financial resources in other infrastructure sectors of this industry while reducing the huge implementation costs of this field (Elahi, 2008).

Today, the added value of the sports industry in developed countries includes a significant part of the gross domestic product and plays an important role in generating income, employment and recreation (Holt, 2007). The share of this industry in the GDP of developed countries is between 0.75% and 4.4%, while this number in our country is significantly lower than the global index and below 1% (Kianmarz, 2008).

Previous researches show that the privatization of sports has many advantages, so this policy can play an effective role in the development of public, championship, professional sports and job creation (Ahmadi et al, 2010). Yousefi and Karimi

reported that in the field of job creation, on average, each private club creates 3 jobs and for every 5 jobs in sports clubs, 1 job related to sports is also created (Yosefi, 2006). The results of Amiri et al research show that the country's sports were privately managed in the past, so that all matters related to planning, organizing, coordinating, leading and directing, and implementing sports activities were done by people and social groups. But after the establishment of the Physical Education Organization (as a subset of the government), over time the role of the people in planning and implementing sports affairs faded, and the government's dominance over sports affairs increased (Amiri et al, 2012).

Khosravizadeh et al showed that investment and participation of the private sector in sports is faced with numerous economic, structural, managerial, legal, cultural and social, supportive and political obstacles (Khosravizadeh et al, 2015). Soleimani et al also concluded that financial issues and government investment in other economic affairs have a positive effect on the implementation of privatization in sports (Soleimani et al, 2015).

Farahani et al. identified the insufficient necessary financial facilities, including low-interest loans with long repayment periods, as the most important problem of sports clubs (Farahani et al., 2015). Gharekhani et al, in a research while designing model of the obstacles to the privatization of Iranian football clubs, introduced financial and economic issues as the most important obstacle to realizing the privatization of sports (Gharekhani, 2015). Jadi & Van emphasized the role of the government structure and shareholders' rights in an article titled "Privatization of Malaysian sports leagues" and concluded that presenting a comprehensive model of privatization of professional sports leagues can balance the government structure and ensure the rights of shareholders (Jadi et al, 2015). Hematinejad et al identified the most important prerequisites for the privatization of Iranian football clubs as combating corruption and rent-seeking, reforming public attitudes towards privatization, increasing revenue, ticket sales, transparency of laws and the government's regulatory role (Hematinejad et

al, 2017).

As it was determined in the privatization of sport background the government's role in the privatization of sports has been neglected. Undoubtedly, the government as the main implementer of the privatization policy in sports will have various duties and roles. Therefore, it is necessary to know these roles and to be aware of the importance and priority of each one in the successful implementation of this policy. Achieving such goals clarifies the importance and necessity of the current research. Therefore, in this research, the researchers sought to identify and categorize the multiple roles of the government in the process of privatization of the sports industry, and further investigated the importance and prioritization of each of these roles.

### **Material and Methods**

The current research is of mixed type (qualitative and quantitative) and in terms of practical purpose and data collection method, it was field. According to the topic of the research, the statistical population included experts in the fields of sports management, economics, politics, management and privatization. Lack of access to all the people of the statistical population, the statistical sample was selected in a targeted manner from executive managers (sports managers) and academic people (university professors) in the number of 220 people.

The data collection tool was used in the qualitative part of the semi-structured interview, which was identified in three stages of coding the variables and dimensions of the multiple roles of the

government in the process of privatization of the sports industry, and in the quantitative part, the researcher made a questionnaire (taken from the qualitative part) with The Likert scale was five degrees. Which included regulatory regulations (9 questions), political (14 questions), economic (20 questions), cultural (15 questions) and managerial and executive regulations (16 questions). The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by 15 experts in this field and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha (regulatory regulations 0.837; political 0.813; economic 0.920; cultural 0.932; managerial and executive 0.924).

In order to measure the validity of the questionnaire, 15 experts and experts in this field were consulted and the content and components of the research were approved. Then, in order to calculate the reliability of the research tool, 50 questionnaires were distributed among people who were not included in the main study. Using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, the reliability of  $\alpha=0.794$  was obtained. Finally, Friedman's test was used to rank the role of government privatization. All hypotheses have been tested at  $\alpha=0.05$  level. All statistical analyzes were performed by Excel and SPSS 23.

### **Results**

In order to identify the multiple roles of the government in privatization in sports, a semi-structured interview was used, the results of which are shown in Table 1.

Table1. Multiple roles of the government in privatization in sports

Variable	Dimensions	Component	
Regulation regulatory	Supportive	Development of protective regulations with the necessary executive guarantee	
		Tax, insurance and labor laws and regulations	
		Pre-investment mechanisms	
		Specific regulations to attract foreign investors	
		Review and remove legal obstacles	
		Amendment of laws in the field of assignments	
	Deterrent	Reduction of state ownership	
		Abolition of many monopolies	
		Preventing the adoption of laws against the privatization of sports	
		Preventing impersonation in some assignments	
Political	social & political solidarity	Mutual trust between the nation and the government and the private sector	
		Stability in government policies	
		National determination and political economic conviction	
		Existence of specific policies and programs	
	government sovereignty	Non-interference of political factors in the dismissal and installation of officials	
		Prohibition of transfers to governmental and quasi-governmental institutions	
		Coordination of regulations with privatization policy	
		Failure to stop the program of privatization of sports due to the change of governments	
	Political participation	The government not using sports as a political tool	
		Necessary flexibility of government and related law	
		Use of political-economic consultants	
	government's power	Preventing the entry of non-specialists and political currents into the private sector of sports	
		Designing policies based on creating a competitive environment	
		Political support of the government for the safety of investors	
	Economic	level of economic development	Creating conditions for foreign direct investment
			Investment economic studies
			Creating equal opportunities for economic and social activities
			Privatization as part of the country's economic policy
economic stability		Safe economic environment	
		Stability in monetary and financial policies of the country	
		Establishment of support funds	
welfare system		Low interest rates for long-term facilities	
		Giving subsidies and tax exemptions	
		Restoring the legal rights of sports clubs and institutions	
		Strengthening sports entrepreneurs	
Economic power		Reducing government spending	
		Clarify financial information	

		Ensuring economic growth
		Creating a strong economic database
	market structure	Encouraging foreign investors
		Lack of competition between the government and the private sector
		Creating an open economic system and market competitiveness
		Preventing monopolization of the private sector
Cultural	assumptions and beliefs	Acceptance of the private sector by the people and the government
		Basic attention to sports in the household budget
		Belief in the effectiveness and efficiency of the private sector
		Belief in outsourcing policy and thinking
	Artifacts	Giving awareness and motivation to the producer
		Encouraging the private sector in the field of sports
		Help to improve the position of the private sector
		Introduction of successful private sectors
		Promotion and culture through press and radio
		Attracting the trust of the private sector in sports
	values and norms	Promoting the culture of spending on sports
		Convincing opponents of privatization
		Non-prevalence of privatization instead of privatization
		Lack of resistance of managers and officials to the reduction of government tenure
		Providing the basis for the participation of all interested groups
Managerial	Planning	Developing and implementing a comprehensive program and using appropriate methods in privatization
		A long-term and specialized look at the privatization process
		Modifying methods and patterns of assignment
		Planning to provide infrastructure
	Organize	Reducing the delay and complexity and redundant administrative procedures in handovers
		Determining the roles, duties and powers of officials
		Modifying the existing structure of sports clubs in the country
		Establishment of the General Directorate of Privatization
	Decision making	Reduction of decision centers
		Making the right decisions in the use of income
		Not paying too much attention to specific disciplines
		Not canceling the decisions of previous governments
	Monitoring	Creation of single, expert and neutral institutions
		Continuous monitoring of the sports industry market to ensure the flow of competition
		Monitor the sports industry market to ensure the appropriate delivery of products and services
		The commitment of the government to implement and monitor policies, guidelines and laws

The qualitative findings of the research, which were extracted from the statistical sample of the

qualitative section using the tools, were arranged in the form of a conceptual framework and model after the three-stage coding process (Table 1). In general, 74 components, 18 dimensions and 5 variables were framed.

The ranking of the government's role in privatization of Iran's sport according to the results of Friedman ranking test, are shown in table 3 respectively. The results of the test showed that there is a significant difference between the importance of components in the frame of regulation regulatory role, political role, economic role and managerial role ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). but there is no significant difference in the components of social-cultural role ( $P > 0.05$ ). In the role of regulation regulatory the average ranking of supportive component has the highest importance (1.57) and

the deterrent component has the lowest importance (1.43). In the political role the social and political solidarity component has the highest importance (2.98) and the government's power component has the lowest importance (2.15). In the economic role the level of economic development component has the highest importance (3.42) and the market structure component has the lowest importance (2.55). In the cultural role the assumptions and beliefs component has the highest importance (2.10) and the values and norms component has the lowest importance (1.94). In the managerial role the planning component has the highest importance (2.81) and the decision making and Planning and monitoring component has the lowest importance (2.27).

Table 2. The comparison of the importance of government's role in sport privatization

Variable	Component	Average	Standard variation	Average ranking	Chi-square	Df	Sig
Regulation regulatory	Supportive	4.0793	.77764	1.57	5.312	1	0.023
	Deterrent	4.0372	.59173	1.43			
Political	social & political solidarity	4.3029	.64324	2.98	53.371	3	0.001
	government sovereignty	4.0282	.61793	2.46			
	Political participation	3.9219	.69539	2.41			
	government's power	3.9535	.61597	2.15			
Economic	level of economic development	4.0304	.76802	3.42	44.187	4	0.001
	economic stability	4.0180	.63711	3.15			
	welfare system	3.9167	.87145	3.09			
	Economic power	3.8941	.69829	2.78			
	market structure	3.8081	.64079	2.55			
Cultural	assumptions and beliefs	3.9595	.77913	2.10	4.155	2	0.125
	Artifacts	3.9187	.72195	1.96			
	values and norms	3.8724	.80782	1.94			
Managerial	Planning	4.1182	.79651	2.81	33.222	3	0.000
	Organize	4.0081	.75659	2.65			
	Decision making	3.8423	.77458	2.27			
	Monitoring	3.8784	.84912	2.27			

Because the research data were non-normal and rank-type and had interdependent groups, Friedman's method was used to investigate the existence of a significant difference between 5 groups of different but dependent roles of the government. The results of the Friedman test for

prioritizing the multiple roles of the government in the privatization of Iranian sports in Table 3 showed that the role of regulation regulatory with average rating of 3.38 places at the first priority; the political role with average rating of 3.17 places at the second priority; the managerial role with



average rating of 3.05 places at the third priority; the economic role with average rating of 2.76 places at the fourth priority and the cultural role

with average rating of 2.63 places at the fifth priority.

Table3. Prioritizing the multiple roles of the government in the privatization of Iranian sports

Variable	Average ranking	Chi-square	Df	Sig
<b>Regulation regulatory</b>	3.38	33.827	4	0.001
<b>Political</b>	3.17			
<b>Managerial</b>	3.05			
<b>Economic</b>	2.76			
<b>Cultural</b>	2.63			

### Discussion

According to the results, the role of government regulation includes two components of support and deterrence. In line with this finding, Padash (2010) emphasized the lack of coordinated and required rules for the transfer process and the existence of disturbing tax laws and regulations. Alidoost Qahfarokhi (2011) also pointed out the lack of comprehensive laws in the field of privatization and frequent changes of laws, weakness in some regulations such as labor law, tax laws. Also, Khosrovizadeh et al (2015), Salimi (2014), Karimzadeh (2014) state in their studies that there are no suitable conditions in the field of regulation, or they are annoying, vague and weak (Khosrovizadeh et al 2015, Salimi, 2014, Karimzadeh, 2014). Considering that facilities and incentives are one of the most effective factors in improving the participation of the private sector in the country's sports industry, it is suggested that the country's sports planners create appropriate policy and legal framework. For example, laws and regulations should be fully compatible with the activities of private sectors and special facilities should be considered as a motivating factor for investors.

The four elements were identified as the parameters of the political role of the government. The most important parameter was political-social cohesion. This finding is in line with the results of Padash (2010), which showed that there is no specific policy and plan to guide the private sector,

and Alidoost Qahfarokhi (2011), who showed that there is no mutual trust between the government and the private sector (Padash, 2010, Alidoost Qahfarokhi, 2011). The results of this research show that the mutual trust of society and the government and the private sector, stability in government policies, national determination and the alignment of political and economic opinions, determined programs and policies are parameters that can have a great impact on the privatization of sports. The results of this research indicate that one of the most important parameters of the privatization of sports in Iran is the political role by creating coherence and competition by using the power of law. The results of various studies, including Alidoost Qahfarokhi (2010), Amiri et al. (2012), Khosravizadeh et al. (2015), also emphasizing the existing obstacles and political issues that hinder the achievement of the goals of privatization of sports, are in line with the recent findings (Alidoost Qahfarokhi, 2010) Amiri et al, 2012, Khosravizadeh et al, 2015).

Based on the results, four parameters were identified and ranked in the economic role of the government. The most important parameter in this role was the level of economic-social development. As same as this finding, Elahi (2008) pointed out the lack of attention paid by researchers to the economic issues of sports and Padash (2010) pointed out the low importance of sports in the 5-year economic-social development programs of the country (Elahi, 2008, Padash,

2010). Alidoost Qahfarkhi (2011) also pointed out the low domestic and foreign investment in the field of sports. Moradi Chaleshtari et al. (2013) also introduced economic shortages as the most important obstacles to the privatization of sports in Iran (Alidoost Qahfarkhi, 2011, Chalontari et al., 2013).

It seems that due to the various obstacles in the path of domestic and foreign investment in the field of sports and the need to reform the economic structure, the government should create suitable infrastructure for private sector investors in sports through economic studies in order to compete in businesses. Sports will flourish. It is also necessary to include the privatization of sports as a part of the country's economic policy in economic-social development programs. Undoubtedly, by applying economic policies in order to create an open space to access new markets, foreign investment and technologies and efforts to increase economic stability, the risk of domestic and foreign investment will be reduced.

Based on the research results, three factors in the cultural role of the government were identified and ranked. The most important parameter in this role is assumptions and beliefs. Ahmadi (2010) people's pessimistic attitude towards the private sector and Alidoost Ghahfarokhi (2011) consider the lack of serious attention of families to sports and the lack of belief and trust of some officials in the effectiveness of the private sector in the field of sports as obstacles to privatization (Ahmadi et al. , 2010, Alidoost Qahfarkhi, 2011). In order to remove the cultural barriers of sports privatization, it is necessary to change misconceptions. Sports administrators have not yet reached a correct understanding of privatization and are afraid that they will lose their power with the privatization of sports. Therefore, they are interested in maintaining the current situation and do not initiate fundamental reforms. Therefore, it is recommended that the government, while trusting the effectiveness of the private sector, advertises a positive view of the private sector with the help of the media.

Based on the results, among the four parameters in the government's managerial role, planning was the most important. According to the research results of Elahi (2008), the lack of required program and support, Alidoost Qahfarkhi (2011) the lack of executive guidelines for privatization and Afsai (2012) introduced the limited short-term and result-oriented attitude as the main management obstacles of privatization (Elahi, 2008, Alidoost Qahfarkhi, 2011, Afsai, 2012). The basis of planning is knowing the opportunities and risks and how to use them. Therefore, it is recommended to the government and the Ministry of Sports and Youth to learn from the successful experiences of privatization of sports in leading countries (of course not through imitation) and the appropriate methods of delegation and expert planning.

### Conclusion

According to the results of the present research, it can be concluded that the government should specify the responsibilities and duties of the decision-making authorities in the privatization process in order to speed up the work and avoid delays and unnecessary bureaucracy. Handing over sports to the private sector should make more efforts and prevent the interference of political movements in this sector. Of course, stability in the implementation of important policies such as privatization in such a way that these policies do not change or remain silent with the change of governments is also essential because in this situation private investors will invest with more confidence. The government should give up its dominance and monopoly in sports affairs as soon as possible and seek to create a competitive environment in the sports industry. Also, planning and efforts to change public misconceptions about private sector activity and investment are also important. However, organizing and reforming the structure of the country's sports clubs (which are mostly owned by government organizations, politicians and people unfamiliar with sports) is also necessary because it is necessary for the successful implementation of the sports



privatization policy. Finally, the main recommendation of the researchers is to create a specialized office to plan, implement and monitor the process of privatization of sports within the structure of the Ministry of Sports and Youth with the presence of economists, lawyers, politicians and sports managers and other experts familiar with this field.

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