

UK study: Fans in the boardroom good for football

June 23 2010



(PhysOrg.com) -- A study by University of Manchester economists has backed calls from supporters groups who argue that their representation in the boardroom is generally good for football.

Professor Paul Madden and Dr Terry Robinson found that supporter involvement and reduced emphasis on profit maximization should increase attendances, reduces ticket prices and reduces expenditure on players.

The research follows growth in boardroom representation of supporters trusts in UK [football](#) over the past few years, particularly in English Football Leagues 1 and 2.

The research also provides a [theoretical analysis](#) to supplement the limited data available.

Supporter involvement in football club governance has been championed by supporter organisations such as Supporters Direct in the UK, but also by UEFA and many commentators in the media.

Most recently the issue has appeared on the political agenda in the UK, in the run-up to the May 2010 general election.

Professor Madden, who is based at the University's School of Social Sciences, said: "There is nothing definite to say about the optimal level of supporter involvement in governance- whether that's one board member or a majority stake.

"But what is definite is governance mechanisms at lower league levels should not involve the profit motive, and should involve supporters interests in some way and to some extent.

"That will increase attendances, reduce ticket prices and reduce expenditure on players.

"We don't offer a blueprint for the detail of how to run a club - what is on offer is support from some serious economic analysis for the general movement in favour of increased emphasis on supporter interests."

Dr Terry Robinson, who is based at the University's Business school, said: "The analysis was based on Football Leagues one and two, but in effect, a natural experiment is in progress and supporter involvement in governance is expanding - maybe even reaching the highest Premier League level if you follow events at Manchester United.

"So further data will emerge to allow us to refine of our conclusions."

Provided by University of Manchester

Citation: UK study: Fans in the boardroom good for football (2010, June 23) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-06-uk-fans-boardroom-good-football.html>

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