**Introduction: Ethical concerns in sport governance**

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Sport governance no longer stirs public opinion only when scandals surface; it has become a persistent concern for a number of stakeholders. A combination of the inexorable presence of the media, people’s scepticism of those who run their favourite sports, and vagaries of the moral economy of global sport capitalism since the late 20th century has made governance a newsworthy, momentous, and meaningful aspect of elite sports. The media has been attentive to the financial irregularities, the struggles for recognition, and the political and exploitative aspects of sport governance that have come to light rather frequently since the beginning of the 21st century. It has played a critical role in shaping sport governance too, especially after the advent of televised sport, sponsorship and marketing. Television forms the economic backbone of modern sport, and digital platforms are set to revolutionise sport coverage. Secondly, sport followers, who double as consumers of media content, understand the challenges of governing what has transformed in the 20th century from local leisure cultures to highly capitalised industries with a global reach. Depending on their level of interest, they track governance of local clubs, national teams, international federations, and similar entities. They are usually aware of the structures of power and ownership, policy-making at various levels, and violation of accountability. Finally, sport administrators, who are drawn from state representatives and the commercial elite operating in both national and transnational contexts, reportedly understand their obligations to running the show, maximising profit, and connecting with supporters. With the exception of the Middle Eastern monarchies and a few other authoritarian states, sport administrators often subject themselves to self-regulatory measures in order to be legitimised as custodians of the game. Ethical practice is probably one of the most important catechism they encounter at a quotidian level, as transparency and incorruptibility are widely considered necessary attributes of sport governance. The media and sport followers are no exception to the rule of ethics as stakeholders of governance.

This simplified account of the contemporary landscape of sport governance illustrates the tension between the characterisations of sport as a commercial activity and as a mechanism for moral education and social development. The perceived incompatibility of these two aspects has led to intense conversations in the media, administrative circles, and the public sphere about the need for ethical concerns to be the key element of governance. The co-presence of a number of systems of ethics, and the diversification of sport governance from the 19th century tasks of organising matches to the contemporary structure which involves activities ranging from hosting 10,000 athletes and 500,000 tourists during a mega event to determining gender of athletes, have complicated the connotations of administration. Governance, as Hassan and Hamil acknowledge (2010, 343), has overgrown the pattern of club owners hiring athletes and rewarding them for delivering success with little concern for profit maximisation. The ‘relatively benign business approach’ has dramatically changed into an industry-oriented model that contends with problems of racism, doping, match-fixing and money laundering to name a few. The undoing of sport’s amateur connections is now a foregone conclusion. The dynamics of revenue generation and redistribution, labour market sustainment, social responsibility, and outreach programmes constantly transform the practice of governance. The reception of Western sports in non-Western regions, and the emergence of new sporting endeavours such as e-sports, have appeared to rework the understanding of participation and organisation. New expectations and liabilities pose fundamental challenges to the balance of politics and ethics.

The history of FIFA exhibits the complexity of contemporary sport governance like no other entity. As Tomlinson (2014) remarked, it would be incorrect to think of the early presidents as unequivocally idealist and the latter ones as dictatorial and unaccountable. However, allegations of corruption have escalated, the lack of ethical considerations exposed, and the crisis of integrity heightened to an unprecedented level since the 2000s, making malpractices from half a century before look like innocuous mistakes. So how does one make sense of the shifting underpinnings of ethics in sport governance by inter- and supranational institutions? A plethora of researchers have addressed the governance question in recent times, pondering social capital (Groeneveld, Houlihan and Ohl 2010), club football (Hassan and Hamil 2011), corporate responsibility (Segaert et al 2012), national contexts (O’Boyle and Bradbury 2013), and finally concepts and practices, global order, body enhancement, and sport for development (Auwele, Cook and Parry 2016). A conference was organised in Oxford in June 2016 to discuss the inclinations of stakeholders as borne out by current tendencies in policy-making, out of which materialised this collection. The participants deliberated the new forms of governance emerging from the aggregation of transnational networks, the shifting metonymies of ethical concern, and new stakeholder identification. The two major directions of contemporary sport governance identified were the growing significance of the non-West, especially in relation to event hosting, and the need for controlling the behaviour of emergent interest groups. The latter is a complex constellation of athletes, officials, supporters, lawyers, politicians who share power and collectively determine corporate and non-profit governance, legal aspects, and regulatory mechanisms from within their subjective locations.

The collection opens with Jean-Loup Chappelet’s article that ponders the need for administrators to embrace the relevant characteristics of both corporate and democratic governance, and develop international cooperation between state and private actors. David Hassan analyses the fissures between sport’s democratising rhetoric and its increasing appropriation by authoritarian regimes in their quest for respectability. Susan Dowse and Thomas Fletcher complicate the politics of event hosting and power relations between the traditional arbiters and the developing nations. James Dorsey explores the influence of non-Western actors in global sport governance with reference to the Gulf States. While this set of articles interrogate the ethics of decision-making and hierarchy of governance in international sport, the next set examines specific issues that require greater regulation. Bruce Kidd discusses the disputed scientific and ethical substructures of the ‘gender eligibility’ tests determined by the IOC and IAAF’s medical commission. Carrie Dunn reviews the fan experience of the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup, identifying the nature of sexism at various levels of football governance. Seamus Kelly and Dikaia Chatziefstathiou look into the alleged unethical behaviour of sport agents and the consequences of their growing influence on club football. Finally, David Hassan and Chris Harding use social contract theory to examine the strategies of recruiting and retaining volunteers for motorsport. The articles recognise that involvement of heterogeneous actors has reformed the ethical standards of governance, which entails fresh challenges and the need for administrators to take up new priorities and responsibilities.

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