



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Sport Management Review

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/smr](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/smr)



### Review

# Leadership in governance: Exploring collective board leadership in sport governance systems

Lesley Ferkins<sup>a</sup>, David Shilbury<sup>b,\*</sup>, Ian O'Boyle<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> AUT University, New Zealand

<sup>b</sup> Deakin University, Australia

<sup>c</sup> University of South Australia, Australia

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article history:

Received 29 November 2016

Received in revised form 11 July 2017

Accepted 11 July 2017

Available online xxx

##### Keywords:

Sport governance

Non-profit

Collective leadership

#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and explore a working conceptualisation of collective board leadership in a federal sport network. In this paper, the authors examine the relationship between collective leadership and governance systems specifically within the non-profit sport organisation context, bringing together notions of collective board leadership and collaborative governance. Neither concept has yet been presented in tandem for the benefit of developing sport governance knowledge and practice. As an outcome of the conceptualising, the authors make explicit the multiple levels of the sport governance system and pose two broad research directions that will help advance theory and drive a better understanding of collective board leadership within these types of governance systems. A central premise of this paper is that the sport management field is lacking literature that brings together leadership and governance, and that collective leadership is a topic where the intersection of leadership and governance renders advancement for both bodies of work. The authors offer implications for future work in collective leadership for sport governance.

© 2017 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Leadership continues to be a heavily researched area permeating many academic fields. Governance, albeit to a lesser extent, has also received a significant amount of scholarly attention, most notably within the corporate environment where the structural and procedural aspects of governance have often been at the forefront of this body of research (Pye & Pettigrew, 2005). As governance research often involves exploring issues that influence the whole organisation as well as institutional structures beyond a single organisation, it is surprising that the fields of leadership and governance have developed with relatively limited interaction between the two academic areas (Erakovic & Jackson, 2012). Erakovic and Jackson (2012) observed that this outcome may be attributed to the foundations upon which each field has been established.

Leadership primarily has its roots within the field of psychology, where interpersonal dynamics are emphasised, whereas governance research has largely evolved from disciplines such as accounting, economics and commercial law which have favoured structural approaches and often quantitative research design (Erakovic & Jackson, 2012; Leblanc, 2004). Regardless

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [Shilbury@deakin.edu.au](mailto:Shilbury@deakin.edu.au) (D. Shilbury).

of the reasoning behind a lack of interaction between these two fields, researchers have rarely explored governance and leadership as complementary to each other, and little is known about the impact of one's theoretical frameworks on the other's field and what insights could be gained from exploring both areas concurrently (Pye, 2002). The existence of a theoretical rapprochement between these two fields would likely lead to new conceptual and empirical insights and, perhaps, advancement within governance practice in various contexts (Erakovic & Jackson, 2012; Pye, 2002).

The few scholars who have infused leadership and governance research (Davies, 2006; Gabrielsson, Huse, & Minichilli, 2007; Heracleous, 1999; Holloway & van Rhyn, 2005; Leblanc, 2005; Pye, 2002) have largely concentrated on the corporate governance context, while the non-profit setting has primarily been explored via foundational books (Carver, 2006; Chait, Ryan, & Taylor, 2005). In the sport governance domain, few authors have directly explored these two topics simultaneously, although leadership has often been cited as an important finding in a number of studies in this field (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2005, 2009; Hoye, 2006; Shilbury, O'Boyle, & Ferkins, 2016). Despite this, leadership in sport governance continues to receive global attention largely due to allegations of corruption at the uppermost echelons of global sporting bodies, such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and, in the past, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) (Jennings, 2014).

Leadership issues in sport governance are not only synonymous with global organisations. Other non-profit sporting organisations with responsibility for community sport and elite sport (e.g., national governing bodies) are grappling with leadership issues within the context of governance (e.g., Australian Sports Commission, 2013; UK Sport, 2016). In Australia, for example, the government agency for sport, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), has developed documents such as the Mandatory Sports Governance Principles (2013), which put the onus on non-profit national governing bodies (funded by the ASC) to improve their governing practices. Embedded within these publications are often both explicit and implicit calls for improving leadership at the governance level of these networks. In fact, the preface to the aforementioned ASC document states: "Confidence in the leadership capacity and capability of sports, particularly in relation to management, governance, internal controls, and business systems is acknowledged as being critical" (p. 1).

Indeed, the federal model of sport governance (where a national governing body of a sport code is owned by its state member bodies, which are in turn owned by the local regions and/or clubs), creates a fertile context within which to frame research that seeks to infuse leadership within and across governance systems. Little is known about how to overcome challenges often embedded in these networks, where each entity in the network is a separate legal entity. To date, issues such as the reliance on volunteer directors (Bayle & Robinson, 2007), the potential for pre-histories of conflict (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015; Schoenberg, Cuskelly, & Auld, 2016), a lack of trust between entities comprising these systems (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016), as well as a perceived emphasis on formal or positional leadership (O'Boyle, Murray, & Cummins, 2015) have been revealed but not yet fully explored using a leadership frame.

The context previously described presents as an opportunity to explore networked or collective approaches to leadership and governance – a new field of exploration for leadership scholars (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016), and, an emerging field of research for governance scholars (Cornforth, 2012). In addition, few researchers working in the sport governance space, or indeed corporate or non-profit governance fields, have focused on the notion of collective leadership at the board level (Shilbury et al., 2016).

Traditional leadership theories have often relied on a leader centric approach, where the notion of leadership resides within a single individual. As the leadership field has evolved, new ways of exploring the constructs have followed, including investigations of leadership as a process, role, position, or even outcome (Grint, 2005; Yukl, 2009). Central to this contemporary and refined approach to leadership is that leadership does not necessarily reside within one person; instead, it is a concept that can be shared, distributed, and indeed generated collectively. While terms such as shared leadership, distributed leadership, and collective leadership appear within various leadership studies, they often have varying definitions depending on the focus and context of the given research (Ansell & Gash, 2012; Cullen & Yammarino, 2014; Ferkins et al., 2009; Kramer & Crespy, 2011). As developed in the following sections, we draw from Cullen-Lester and Yammarino's (2016) exploration of collective and network approaches to leadership, which establishes leadership as a collective behaviour in organisations and other collectives, where it is considered to "reside in the interactions between people thereby constituting a network of relationships that emerges and shifts over time" (p. 173). We contend therefore that collective board leadership encapsulates how a board comes together to generate leadership and to progress key strategic initiatives within and across a network of affiliated bodies, such as in a federated model. This position contrasts with the more traditional and perhaps hierarchical notions of leadership that might assign the board Chair or CEO as the sole leader, thereby overlooking the group dynamic in generating leadership as a collective (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016).

Given the nature of the federal non-profit sport context, we argue that collective leadership warrants greater exploration within the context of a National Sport Organisation (NSO) board—an entity charged with not only leading its own organisation, but also mindfully governing a network that is attentive to the whole sport. Often the ability to enact collective leadership is impeded by some form of delegate representation, whether through election or voting rights, related to board member appointment at the national level. The need for a board to lead is potentially where notions of leadership as a formal position, versus notions of leadership residing collectively within the group and therefore generated by informal interactions, come into play. A central motivation for this paper is that boards operating within a federal network may benefit from embracing the notion of collective board leadership in order to build a collaborative governance model throughout a sport. We draw from and seek to contribute to a leadership discourse which values an underpinning philosophy of social

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6576077>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6576077>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)