

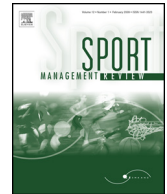


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## Sport Management Review

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



# International cross-sector social partnerships between sport and governments: The World Anti-Doping Agency

Kristine Toohey<sup>a,\*</sup>, Anthony Beaton<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Tourism, Sport and Hotel Management, Griffith University, Gold Coast 4222, Queensland, Australia

<sup>b</sup> Department of Sport & Exercise Science, University of Canberra, University Drive, Bruce, ACT 2617, Australia

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 10 February 2016

Received in revised form 13 December 2016

Accepted 14 December 2016

Available online xxx

#### Keywords:

Anti-doping

Legitimacy

Cross-sector social partnerships

Organisational theory

### ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of an in-depth case study of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), a global cross-sector social partnership (CSSP) through which governments and sport collaborate to address the social issue of doping in sport. The authors specifically explore how WADA has managed two key issues (securing financial contributions and the 2007 presidential election) using institutional and resource-dependence theories to better understand the question of why and how a sport CSSP responds strategically to its environmental and resource constraints in its precursory, establishment, and continuance phases. In doing so, the authors contribute to the sport management literature by providing new theoretical insights in the context of an international CSSP whose governance model challenges traditional management theories (Selsky & Parker, 2005) and is increasingly relevant in the current era of global management of social issues (Scherer & Palazzo, 2010). Findings suggest that for global CSSPs internal and external legitimacy is imperative through securing moral and geopolitical legitimacy, and there is value in considering resource-dependence and institutional theories as complementary rather than competing frameworks.

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## 1. Introduction

The growth of transnational organizations has given rise to increasingly complex organizational forms (Parmigianni & Rivera-Santos, 2011). One of these new forms is the cross-sector social partnership (CSSP), in which governments, business, and non-government organizations (NGOs) collaborate to address social issues (Googins & Rochlin, 2002). Because of their increasing prevalence, CSSPs have been called “the new organizational zeitgeist in dealing with societal issues” (Vurro, Dacin, & Perrini, 2010, p. 40) and “one of the most exciting and dynamic areas of research and practice within business and society relations” (van Tulder, Seitanidi, Crane, & Brammer, 2016, p. 1). Accordingly, a burgeoning literature focuses on CSSPs in mainstream business (Dentoni, Bitzer, & Pascucci, 2016), non-profit (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012), and public administration (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015) publications. However, this literature base is overwhelmingly focused on relatively temporary partnerships and, with two exceptions (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010), the sport management literature reports little research on CSSPs of any form.

\* Corresponding Author.

E-mail addresses: [k.toohey@griffith.edu.au](mailto:k.toohey@griffith.edu.au) (K. Toohey), [anthony.beaton@canberra.edu.au](mailto:anthony.beaton@canberra.edu.au) (A. Beaton).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.12.004>

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In this study, we seek to understand why and how such an international sport CSSP responds strategically to its environmental and resource constraints. We investigate three chronological phases (precursory, establishment, and continuance) in the evolution of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), an independent agency composed and funded equally by sport and governments. WADA conducts research and education programs, develops anti-doping practices, and monitors the World Anti-Doping Code, the document that standardizes sports' anti-doping policies in all nations (WADA, 2015).

All CSSPs, including WADA, face a number of issues that affect and threaten their successful management (Le Ber & Branzei, 2010). As a case study of a CSSP, WADA exemplifies how governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders have collaborated to address a pressing social issue, but have at times advanced their own agendas, resulting in conflict. Given the ongoing problems that have occurred with sport's independent peak bodies, such as The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), WADA's CSSP model provides an alternative organizational form for sport that warrants analysis.

We specifically explore how WADA has managed two key issues: securing financial contributions and overseeing its 2007 presidential election. In doing so, we contribute to the sport management literature by providing new theoretical insights in the context of an international CSSP whose governance model challenges traditional management theories (Bryson et al., 2015) and is increasingly relevant in the current era of global management of social issues (Scherer & Palazzo, 2010). By adopting institutional and resource-dependence theories to achieve these research aims, we follow advice to use multiple theories to yield the greatest theoretical insights when examining CSSPs (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011)—a suggestion corroborated by sport management researchers (e.g., Cunningham & Ashley, 2001; Phelps & Kent, 2010).

Our paper takes the following form. We provide the contextual background of WADA and subsequently present a literature review that explores current understanding of CSSPs and sets out the theoretical underpinnings of our research. We then describe our research methodology before presenting and discussing our findings and drawing conclusions from our study.

## 2. The WADA context

Despite the introduction of anti-doping rules and drug testing in the 1960s, doping had become an increasing problem in elite sport. While a few countries enacted their own sport anti-doping legislation, inter-governmental cooperation had essentially been restricted to members of the Council of Europe. More substantial collaboration had occurred between international sports governing bodies, although this cooperation created a range of doping definitions, policies, and sanctions rather than one universal standard. An unintended consequence of this inconsistency was that athletes and organizations could dispute sanctions, and civil courts could overrule sport's decisions. The 1998 Tour de France doping scandal led governments, media, and the public to lose confidence in the ability and/or willingness of the IOC to effectively manage a problem that was taking on the dimensions of a moral panic. The scandal also highlighted the need for an independent international agency to set unified standards for anti-doping work and coordinate the efforts of sports organizations and public authorities (Hanstad, Smith, & Waddington, 2008; Toohey & Veal, 2007).

In February 1999, the IOC convened the First World Conference on Doping in Sport in Lausanne (WADA, 2012a). While a hidden agenda of the IOC may have been to retain control of anti-doping actions in the face of increasing criticism of its efforts, the conference had repercussions far beyond the IOC's intent, and "the outcome of the conference actually represented in many respects the very opposite of what the IOC had intended" (Hanstad et al., 2008, p. 246). The IOC's role as the primary overseer of anti-doping in sport has been diluted ever since. The conference produced the Lausanne Declaration on Doping in Sport, which included a provision for the creation of an independent organization to promote and coordinate the fight against doping in sport. As a result, WADA was established on November 10, 1999, with the support and participation of intergovernmental organizations, governments, public authorities, and other public and private bodies (WADA, 2012b).

WADA's mission is to lead a collaborative worldwide campaign for doping-free sport and monitoring of the Code (WADA, 2012c). As some nations are not legally bound by non-governmental documents such as the Code, governments collaborated to draft the Copenhagen Declaration on Anti-Doping in Sport to formally implement the Code through an international treaty. The Copenhagen Declaration was passed in 2003, and was subsequently signed by 193 nations (WADA, 2012b). Currently, a 38-member Foundation Board, a 12-member Executive Committee, and various advisory committees govern WADA. The Foundation Board is WADA's supreme decision-making body and, like the Executive Committee, is composed equally of representatives from sport and governments (WADA, 2015).

## 3. Literature review

To varying extents, all organizations rely on other organizations for their survival and thus the study of inter-organizational relationships has long interested scholars (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). One recently emerging form of inter-organizational relationship is the cross-sector social partnership, or CSSP, a collaborative partnership between organizations from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to address complex social problems (Googins & Rochlin, 2002). CSSPs operate in four relational modes (public-private; public-non-profit; private-non-profit; and tripartite collaborations), with the mode affecting their formation, implementation, and outcomes (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Another important dimension of CSSPs is the governance structure they adopt, which generally takes one of three forms (Kenis & Provan, 2009). In a shared

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