

Sport Management Ethics and Integrity

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Introduction

In my first piece as the new editor of the Sport Management Ethics and Integrity section, I would firstly like to thank my predecessor, Lisa Kihl, for setting such a high standard in previous editions. Nine papers are included in this review. Six papers have been organised under a heading of equalities, with two papers each examining race relations and gender discrimination. One article studies LGBT+ inclusion policies and further paper investigates the inclusion of athletes with Differences in Sexual Development (DSD) in sport. Outside of equalities, one paper examines the ways in which sports mega events can promote human rights and further articles advance the study of event manipulation and anti-doping policies in new countries and contexts.

In this review, three articles are drawn from *Communication and Sport*, and two each from the *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, the *Journal of Sport Management*, and *Sport Management Review*.

Equalities

Research and scholarship on sport and equalities continues to expand in the sports management literature. Perhaps, one of the most pressing and controversial topics for governing bodies and competition organisers is how, or even whether, to include athletes who do not fit easily into the binary categories of male or female. Brömdal and Rasmussen (2022) argue that powerful sport medical discourses that serve to produce some bodies as non-normative are enmeshed in wider societal discourses (notably historical, religious, scientific, and cultural) that regulate sexed and gendered bodies. The authors conclude that *somatechnics* offers a way to understand how material bodies and discourses about them are mutually constitutive and that an analysis of the discourses of sport medical officers can help to uncover the broader societal assumptions that produce some bodies as problematic and others as 'normal'.

LGBT+ participation in sport has been the subject of a considerable literature since the 1980s. Spurdens and Bloyce (2022) turn their attention to the inclusion of gender and sexual minorities by examining the equality policies of 188 English National Governing Bodies (NGB) and 67 policies from other relevant organisations. Using a Foucauldian theoretical framework, the authors argue that many NGBs appear to engage in equalities initiatives as part of wider commercial activities within a capitalist epistemic framework. Such work might also be driven as a way to 'equality-

proof' the NGB through a tick boxing exercise that would help to maintain grant funding but with little evidence of sustainable action. Overall, they argue that NGBs produce visible 'signalling' on equality rather than concrete plans to deliver it.

Piggott and Matthews (2021) also found that NGBs may be engaging in a tick boxing exercise to satisfy funding regulations in their study of gender, leadership and governance. The authors conducted research within two long-established English national governing bodies (NGBs) – England Golf and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). Deploying a theoretical framework developed from the sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu, the study found male-dominated leadership teams, governance structures and practices that led to the exclusion of women from strategically important roles, thus preserving the long-standing position of men within the organisations. The authors concluded that the initiatives taken to increase gender diversity within governing bodies had only a limited impact on gender power relations within England Golf and the LTA.

Gender relations in media representation of sport were examined by Johnson *et al* (2022) in a quantitative study, demonstrating the breadth of research methodologies in this area of policy. Utilizing media framing theory, the authors examined 1064 visual images posted on the Instagram accounts of North American Olympic Games rights holders, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). The study revealed that posted images broke from previous stereotypes of representations of femininity in sport, with images of the strength and power of women athletes making up a large percentage of posts.

Racial equalities in sport also feature in two articles for this Digest in radically diverse forms, showing that this field of research attracts vibrant international scholarship. Critical Race Theory (CRT) continues to be a popular choice for a theoretical framework, underlining its powerful capacity to uncover structural causes for inequalities. In an article on protests by Indigenous rugby league players of the Australian national anthem, Cleland *et al* (2022) found, in contrast to the norm, that Indigenous voices were given a prominent platform and that their views and opinions were actively sought by media outlets in press conferences and interviews (see also Skinner's analysis of the methodology used in this study in this issue of the Digest).

Also contributing to research on sport, race and the media, van Lienden and van Sterkenburg (2022) examined Polish televised football as a cultural text on which racial and ethnic categorisations are constructed. Using a CRT framework, the researchers found that, despite largely positive discourses about players of all races/ethnicities, stereotypes about the physicality

of Black players and the psychological inferiority of southern European players were a feature of the commentaries. The findings help to construct a hierarchy of race and ethnicity through football commentary that has resonance within wider Polish society where a national Whiteness is privileged.

Human Rights

McGillivray *et al* (2022) investigate how sport can contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights. They examine how mega sports events (MSEs) can be leveraged for the advancement of human rights and the role of advocacy organisations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, in the process. The authors find that including human rights objectives within the bidding and development stages of the MSE life cycle was likely to result in favourable outcomes. The researchers interviewed seven high ranking individuals from advocacy organisations, MSE event holders and intermediary organisations. Using an interpretivist methodology, they analysed the data using a thematic analysis approach. Four broad themes were found – i) a growing acceptance of responsibility by MSE awarding bodies of their human rights obligations; ii) a recognition that MSEs can be leveraged as a vehicle to promote human rights; iii) the emergence of a more balanced and constructive relationship between MSE award bodies and advocacy groups; iv) implementation of good governance and structural change.

Event manipulation

Tanking, or the deliberate underperformance by a team or individual, usually with a view to obtaining longer term competitive advantage, such as a better draft preference, has been a specific topic for research within the wider event manipulation literature. Gong *et al* (2021) adopt a big data methodological approach, investigating the effect of team tanking in the National Basketball Association (NBA) on supporter sentiment and, by extension, consumer demand for sports teams that engage in the practice. The results of the study were nuanced, with differences found between perceptions of tanking by away and home teams. Overall, the research showed a complex picture that can contribute to policymaking on the development of draft systems that will limit the incentive for underperformance.

Anti-doping

Anti-doping research is advanced by Yang *et al* (2022) as they investigate how China, one of the leading sports' nations, has developed and implemented policy in the twenty-first century, and particularly in the years immediately leading up to and since the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The authors aim 'to understand the process of this policy implementation, to assess strengths and weaknesses, and to identify implementation challenges' (361). The theoretical framework deployed is Van Meter and Van Horn's top-down model that is applicable to a country with a highly centralised state system for anti-doping control. The research found that China has implemented a robust anti-doping programme for elite sports but that issues of resources for poorer provinces remained and that there was little evidence of a strategy for student and non-elite sports (see also Chen's analysis of this study in the governance and policy section of the Digest).

Conclusions

The review underlines the breadth of topics that continue to be studied under a rubric of ethics and integrity as well as the geographical diversity of researchers engaged in this work. The use of critical theories, initially developed in sociology, law and philosophy, demonstrate an eagerness by scholars to deploy powerful interpretive tools to understand their data and to engage in efforts at social transformation in sport and wider society. While thematic analysis remains popular as an analytic technique, there is also evidence of researchers using newer methodologies, such as big data and AI, as well.

Annotated Bibliography

Brömdal, A., & Rasmussen, M.L. (2022). 'Eligibility regulations for the female classification': somatechnics, women's bodies, and elite sport. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 14(2), 239-254.

Deploying and developing Sullivan's concept of *somatechnics*, Brömdal and Rasmussen argue that discourses around athletes with Differences in Sexual Development (DSD) are themselves technologies that help shape corporeal practices and our understanding of athletes' bodies. Using a Foucauldian discourse analysis methodology, the article aims to uncover the ways in which the official and unofficial statements by two leading sport medical officers help to support 'regimes of eligibility regulations/testing for the female classification, thereby sustaining such regulations' (242).

Cleland J., Adair D., & Parry K. (2022). Fair Go? Indigenous rugby league players and the racial exclusion of the Australian national anthem. *Communication & Sport*, 10(1), 74-96.

The article deploys a Critical Race Theory framework to analyse the voices, silences and (lack of) gestures of Indigenous rugby league players and officials in relation to the playing of the Australian national anthem at matches. Data was collected from 74 online media articles featuring verbatim testimonies of players and officials as well as the responses to protests by politicians and other commentators. Using thematic analysis to interpret the data, two dominant themes were identified – i) that the current Australian national anthem is racially exclusive, and ii) responses to protests by players against the anthem were diverse, ranging from supportive to strongly opposed.

Gong, H., Watanabe, N.M., Soebbing, B.P., Brown, M.T., & Nagel, M.S. (2021). Do consumer perceptions of tanking impact attendance at National Basketball Association games? A sentiment analysis approach. *Journal of Sport Management*, 35(3), 254-265.

By developing a unique algorithm that analysed millions of social media posts for evidence of consumer sentiment, the authors were able to understand changing consumer behaviours, specifically attendance at NBA matches, in relation to perceptions of tanking. In contrast to previous studies that questioned whether event manipulation had a negative impact on consumer demand, the study showed that perceptions of tanking led to lower fan attendance at games in both the short and longer term.

Johnson R.G., Romney M., Hull K., & Pegoraro A. (2022). Shared space: how North American Olympic Broadcasters framed gender on Instagram. *Communication & Sport*, 10(1), 6-29.

Using a quantitative analysis, the study found that the social media platforms of the official North American Olympic broadcasters 'demonstrate equitable framing (selection, emphasis, and exclusion) in their portrayal of gender—reciprocating the findings of recent studies on traditional Olympic media such as television or newspapers' (22).

McGillivray, D., Koenigstorfer, J., Bocarro, J.N., & Edwards, M.B. (2022). The role of advocacy organisations for ethical mega sport events, *Sport Management Review*, 25(2), 234-253.

The article considers how sport can contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights. With an assumption that sports events can be a vehicle for wider human rights goals the researchers investigated the role of advocacy organisations in influencing MSE's to embed

human rights. Overall, the authors found that advocacy organisations were shifting from outright criticism of MSE awarding bodies to adopting a more collaborative role to advance human rights through sports events.

Piggott, L.V., & Matthews, J.J. (2021). Gender, leadership and governance in English National Governing Bodies of sport: formal structures, rules, and processes. *Journal of Sport Management*, 35(4), 338-351.

The aim of the study was to investigate the extent to which the administrative and governance hierarchies, rules, and processes of England Golf and the LTA reproduce or resist gender segregation and male dominance within their leadership and governance. A theoretical framework, developed from the sociological work of Pierre Bourdieu was deployed. The concept of the “organizational subfield” was used ‘to understand how agents consciously and unconsciously reproduce and resist gendered sport administrative and governance hierarchies by following, resisting, or transforming formal organizational rules and practices’ (340).

Spurdens, B., & Bloyce, D. (2022). Beyond the rainbow: a discourse analysis of English sports organisations LGBT+ equality diversity and inclusion policies. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 14(3), 507-527.

The authors use a broad-based Foucauldian theoretical approach that deploys concepts of discourse, bio-power, discipline and governmentality to analyse and understand the sets of relations and contexts in which NGBs develop equality policies and the socio-cultural effects these may produce. Through a document analysis of equality policies, the authors discovered that NGB policymaking in this area was significantly related to resources, especially if those came from Sport England where funding may be at risk without such a policy. However, only 5 NGBs had a specific and tailored LGBT+ policy aimed at fostering the inclusion of the community in sport.

Van Lienden, A., & van Sterkenburg, J. (2022). Prejudice in the people’s game: A content analysis of race/ethnicity in Polish televised football. *Communication & Sport*, 10(2), 313–333.

By analysing the speech of Polish television football commentators over 12 games, the authors extend research into sport, race and ethnicity beyond the Anglophone world where it has been widely investigated. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is used as the framework through which

commentary discourses are analysed to gain greater insight into of their place in maintaining and/or challenging hegemonic understandings of race/ethnicity in wider Polish society.

Yang, K., Dimeo, P., & Winand, M., (2022). Anti-doping in China: an analysis of the policy implementation processes through stakeholders' perspectives, *Sport Management Review*, 25(2), 360-381.

The authors use Van Meter and Van Horn's top-down model to assess the development and implementation of anti-doping strategies in China as well as to understand practical issues around its implementation and effectiveness. The researchers interviewed 42 stakeholders and used a 'constructionist ontology interpretivist epistemology to understand reality' (363). Thematic analysis was used to code and interpret the interview data.