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## Editorial

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## 1 Introduction

Social and economic changes in the way that sport is organised and funded have led to radical shifts within sport provision over the last 20 or more years. These changes include the increasingly frenetic pursuit of gold medals at international sport events, the desire of organisations such as Sport Canada and Sport England to improve the governance of the sport organisations for which they are responsible, or a wish to regulate and control athletes' bodies and behaviours. These factors have led to an increase in the creation and implementation of policies at a variety of organisational levels. However objective such policies may seem (Baritz, 2005) there are a wealth of values, subjectivities and power relations that inform, and are integral to, policy creation. The implementation of policy leaves room for its subjective interpretation, valuing some powerful groups' views over 'others'. Policies may also be defined as part of the 'codes' that Deetz (2003) argued, make up the complexity of management that often serves managers' needs and wants over those stakeholders for whom policy is nominally created.

Based on these arguments, it is fair to say that policy creation and its associated political manoeuvrings need further analysis in order to enhance our understanding and inform its future development within sport management. As we noted in our call for papers, Slack (1997)'s plea for policy analysis has been only fitfully addressed within the sport management literature. Following Hassard (1993) we present this special issue in an attempt to generate interest in the examination, analysis and critique of policy and politics within sport organisations. The contributors have made this possible in the following ways.

Three papers in this special issue address gender related policies. Although each one examines gender from a different perspective, all serve to illustrate and highlight the central nature of gender to organisational policy and decision making. In their discussion of the Canadian Women in Sport Policy, Myers and Doherty utilise a multidimensional analysis, focusing on an integration of individual, structural and cultural explanations for gender inequities. Myers and Doherty's approach also enables them to track the changes to one NSO's adoption of the Canadian Women in Sport Policy over time, noting how the NSO shifted from examining individual characteristics as impeding women's progress to an acknowledgement and critique of structural constraints. Their multidimensional approach has also enabled Myers and Doherty to examine one particularly successful policy developed by the NSO from multiple perspectives. Myers and Doherty argue that the multidimensional approach may enable other organisations to examine gender equity from a variety of perspectives, thus adding strength and depth to their understanding of gender in organisations.

As Myers and Doherty focus on the potential for policy to evolve to enhance organisational change from within, so Adams and Stevens argue that the Ontario Women's Hockey Association (OWHA) could also change. In their radical position paper, Adams and Stevens suggest that the way forward for this organisation, long under the shadow of the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA), is to break away and form a separate, independent unit. Underpinned by one aspect of a feminist separatist philosophy, this call comes despite OWHA's valuing of relations with the Ontario (Men's) Hockey Association and a long-term commitment to remaining associated with that organisation. Nonetheless, Adams and Stevens forcefully and controversially argue that the way for OWHA to move forward is promoting independent community-based women's hockey programmes as a central feature of women's hockey development in Ontario.

Hoerber's paper continues this political theme, arguing that in practice, policy does not always live up to its potential for change. In her paper, Hoerber analyses gender equity as a value in a Canadian University athletic department that officially endorses the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (now Canadian Interuniversity Sport)'s gender equity policy. She found that despite official commitment to this policy, gender equity often takes a back seat in terms of decision making, with managers seeing gender equity as a 'zero-sum' situation in which resources will be lost from other areas such as revenue generation if gender equity is promoted within the organisation. Hoerber concludes by arguing forcefully for a change in organisational culture in which the pursuit of gender equity can be seen as a policy that will bring monetary and intangible benefits to organisations.

The remaining articles focus on broader policy developments: Denham's work spans nearly a decade of historical research on the subject of drugs and sport. Reflecting the US pluralist tradition, his article emphasises the interplay between various interest groups

and how these vie for influence in shaping the policy agenda. Several significant elements of this interaction soon become apparent. For instance, we are quickly made aware that the 'government' itself has its own interests in matters relating to drug testing in professional sport. Clearly, government needs to be seen as taking charge and members of Congress (more particularly) appear to be all too willing to act symbolically in this regard. But while Denham is critical of this kind of posturing, he is further dubious of the proposed solutions to curb drug use. In this light, he observes that sanctions against professional athletes are not necessarily selected because they are an effective instrument but rather they are simply more politically expedient than other alternatives, including internet and international postal regulation.

As Denham makes clear, the issue of drug testing resides within a tenuous policy environment. Indeed the issue of who should have the capacity to rule on the issue of drug testing in professional sport has implications for labour and historical antitrust laws, where reforms might constitute more substance than legislators may want to address.

Jackson and Ritchie's paper bridges the international-level context with the individual level. The question of athlete's rights in high performance sport is certainly not new but bears revisiting in light of the apparent realisation of Kidd's (1988) 'sweat-suited philanthropists' in Canada. Like Adams and Stevens' paper, Jackson and Ritchie's piece has normative implications with respect to issues of representation and participation in the making of policies. As the authors imply throughout, with any advance of expectations on athletes (as workers), it is reasonable to expect more demands for 'athlete centeredness' in the future. Perhaps as a result, we might predict that such demands will introduce as many tensions as they are meant to resolve, particularly in light of other representational cleavages based on ethnicity, gender or economic background.

Rose's paper also raises the prospect of more democratic influence in the development of policy. The focus here is significantly more 'macro' in that the author describes the changing context that has given rise to an important mediating institution – city sports councils. Unlike other works in this issue, Rose regards the organisation of the state as a primary impetus for changing sport policies in Canada. Through this analytical lens, we are alerted to the concurrent levels of organisation (federal, provincial and municipal) that mix to permit and constrain sport policy development. Irrespective of this focus, the author (like others in this special issue), is optimistic that structural change will alter the capacity for citizens to influence the policies that affect them.

If there is one observation we can draw from these works, it is that there are a range of approaches to the study of politics and policy in sport management. Some works, like Denham's and Jackson and Ritchie's, are reluctant to place theory at the forefront, preferring to let the 'data' speak. This is both refreshing and slightly frustrating. It is refreshing because the authors are not bound by arbitrary borders around a process that is fluid, complex and inherently 'messy.' The authors can therefore bring in elements and influences of microlevel politics along with those inherited from the international context. Yet as with any explanation that draws conclusions in this way, it raises the prospect for numerous other accounts. Jackson and Ritchie for example explain the current Canadian sport context in relation to the histories of Eastern Bloc countries however, there are equally compelling accounts that place domestic concerns about

Quebec separatism and national unity at the forefront (Zakus, 1996). In the end all macro accounts have to be selective but theory would no doubt help to acknowledge the limits of our causal explanations.

Green's work provides a significant departure since it is primarily aimed at testing the explanatory power of comparative theory. Interestingly, Green's work suggests quite different interpretations of the above historical events. While Jackson and Ritchie explain Canadian policies as heavily influenced by Eastern Bloc Germany, Green is less forthright maintaining instead that policy transfer is likely much more nuanced when examined at the level of politicians, bureaucrats and coaches. Appropriately then, he suggests a degree of caution in describing the evolution of policy programmes not least because policy makers can just as easily be inclined to learn from others' mistakes as their successes. In either case, Green's analysis illustrates the usefulness of lesson drawing as a theoretical lens for examining sport systems.

At its broadest, the works in this special issue suggest that 'sport management' might have much to gain by an infusion of political perspectives. Partly this is because sport management now appears as one of the largest subdisciplines in sports studies programmes and expanding its 'horizons' all the time. But it is also because, with a few notable exceptions, scholars still seem reluctant to acknowledge that managing people and resources involves political decision-making. Here it is worth noting Anderson's (1977) assertion that:

we act politically whenever we make decisions on behalf of other people and not for ourselves alone. Politics means planning and organising common projects, setting rules and standards that define the relationships of people to one another, and allocating resources among rival human needs and purposes (p.vii).

In light of the traditional management functions (e.g. planning, leading and controlling) it seems appropriate that more analysis of this type should be carried out. Indeed we hope that the works presented here encourage scholars to advance and extend on our knowledge of politics, policy and sport management.

Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to the guest reviewers who contributed their time to this special issue. Whether compelled by their love of discovery, learning or simply by the promise of our impending reciprocation, we appreciate their dialogue and professionalism.

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