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Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr

Sport governance encounters: Insights from lived experiences

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 October 2011

Received in revised form 7 December 2012

Accepted 7 December 2012

Keywords:

Sport governance

Collaborative governance theory

Agency theory

Stewardship theory

Sport governance structures

Hermeneutic phenomenology

ABSTRACT

This study explored sport governance practice from the lived experience of one informant spanning a 30-year period in the governance of two sport organisations (basketball and cricket). Hermeneutic phenomenology, the methodological framework used for this study, seeks to grasp the everyday world, and draw insight and meaning from it. The method involves a series of in-depth interviews with one research participant, supplemented by document analysis. Interviews were analysed using an interpretative process which blended the world views of both the participant and researchers. The participant lived through an era of increasing professionalisation within sport. His narrative, which tapped into his governance expertise at state, national and international levels, provides insights into the transition from an amateur to a commercial culture, referred to in this paper as ‘two worlds colliding’. From this narrative, three related themes were identified and labelled, ‘volunteer and cultural encounters’; ‘structural encounters’; and ‘adversarial encounters’. In drawing on hermeneutic philosophy, and highlighting that which has been hidden from view, direction for future research and practice within the sport governance domain is offered. These directions invite scholars to think about future sport governance research as it relates to federated structures and how collaborative governance theory can sharpen the focus in this domain.

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1. Introduction

To govern is to steer an organisation, and to make decisions that are consequential, strategic, and impactful, usually on behalf of others. In sport, scholars and practitioners have not yet fully grasped the significance of the governing role. With a growing, but still limited focus on the topic, research and theoretical attention to date have not yet resorted to fully deciphering the complexities of governance within sport organisations (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). As an emerging field of inquiry, research in this domain has appropriately drawn on more mature bodies of knowledge from within the commercial, public and non-profit governance domain to position and advance theoretical notions of sport governance (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010). Agency, stewardship, institutional, resource dependence, stakeholder, and managerial hegemony theory are some of the major constructs that have been employed by scholars seeking to investigate the governance of sport (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Soares, Correia, & Rosado, 2010).

In encompassing governance within the commercial, public and non-profit sectors, across which the legal entities of sport transgress, Rhodes (1996) and Rosenau (1995) noted that governance is the process in which an organisation, network of organisations, or a society steers itself, allocates resources, and exercises control and co-ordination. This description signals a

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distinction between the governance of an organisation (i.e., organisational governance, also referred to as corporate governance) and governance *between* organisations (i.e., systemic governance, also referred to as network or federated governance). To date, scholarly attention in relation to the governance of sport has tended to concentrate on organisational governance and, more specifically, governance of non-profit sport organisations (Hoye & Doherty, 2011).

In research on sport governance to date, scholars have sought to establish the role of the board in sport organisations (Inglis, 1997; Shilbury, 2001; Yeh & Taylor, 2008; Yeh, Taylor, & Hoye, 2009); volunteer motivations for serving in the governing role (Cuskelly & Boag, 2001; Inglis, 1994); executive committee cohesion and decision-making (Doherty & Carron, 2003; Soares et al., 2010); board performance and structure (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003a; Hoye & Doherty, 2011; Kikulis, 2000; Papadimitriou, 1999; Shilbury, 2001; Taylor & O'Sullivan, 2009); the shared leadership dynamic between the board and CEO (Auld & Godbey, 1998; De Barros, Barros, & Correia, 2007; Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009; Hoye, 2004, 2006; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003b; Inglis, 1997; Schulz & Auld, 2006); and board strategic capability (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2005; Ferkins et al., 2009; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011). These empirically derived themes evident within the literature have tended to emerge from countries such as Canada, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, UK, Australia, and New Zealand where the sporting system is dominated by non-profit sport organisations.

A common ingredient of a sport system dominated by non-profit sport organisations is the systemic or federated nature of the governance structures. Using the description noted above (Rosenau, 1995), systemic governance structures might, therefore, be defined as a network of organisations which seek to allocate resources, and exercise control and co-ordination. Cricket Australia (the peak governing body for cricket in Australia), for example, governs not only within a network of state and regional associations, but also local level clubs. Each entity within the network is a legally autonomous body, but, as noted above by Rosenau, there exists interplay between Cricket Australia and state associations in relation to resource allocation and the control of those resources. As also noted above, while studies in sport have focussed on organisational governance, there is an acknowledgement that the federated nature of many national sport systems significantly impacts on the governing role, at whatever level the organisation exists within the system (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Soares et al., 2010; Taylor & O'Sullivan, 2009).

A second component of the federated sport system that has an important bearing on the governing role has been the delegate representative model of board composition (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). Historically, the boards of sport governing bodies have comprised member representatives whose role has been to represent the interests of their 'home' entity. Again, using Cricket Australia as an example, its board has historically comprised state representatives who have been elected by members of their respective state body (i.e., state cricket associations). Governing within a federated network of organisations and the composition of the board, as a consequence of the federated system, are considered within this study to be aspects of 'systemic governance' (Henry & Lee, 2004).

As Ferkins and Shilbury (2010) stated, in essence, sport governance "is the responsibility for the functioning and overall direction of the organisation and is a necessary and institutionalised component of all sport codes from club level to national bodies, government agencies, sport service organisations and professional teams around the world" (p. 235). None of these sport organisations, however, can act independently of other agencies in the sporting system. To date, there have been few studies in sport governance that have explored to any depth the impact of federated governance structures on the governing role.

The purpose of this present study was to explore governance practice from the lived experience of one informant, Malcolm Speed. Speed's expertise spanned 30 years of involvement in the governance of sport at state, national and international levels in federated structures. A lawyer by profession, Speed witnessed first-hand (and contributed to) the professionalisation of sport which commenced in the 1980s. Speed's experiences include roles as a volunteer board member with the Victorian Amateur Basketball Federation and the Australian Basketball Federation (later known as Basketball Australia), paid roles as Chairman of the National Basketball League, CEO of the Australian Cricket Board (now known as Cricket Australia) and the International Cricket Council. In exploring the lived experiences of Speed in the sport governance domain, systemic and collaborative governance structures emerged as a key influence on the governing role. Implications of systemic governance structures are, therefore, examined in order to develop a deeper understanding of sport governance practice.

The methodological framework used for this study is hermeneutic phenomenology. Situated within the interpretative paradigm, this approach seeks to grasp the everyday world, and draw insight and meaning from it. Despite the potential insights of hermeneutics, this approach is rare in sport management research (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). The method involved a series of in-depth interviews with one research participant, supplemented by Speed's book entitled *Sticky Wicket* released in 2011. Interviews were analysed using an interpretative process which blended the world views of both the participant and researchers. It is through this process that insights for sport governance, in relation to the impact of the federated sport system, are offered.

This paper first establishes the scholarly location of the research in briefly reviewing governance and, specifically, sport governance literature that relates to the outcomes of this study. Consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology, the background to the problem is established rather than constructing a theoretical framework. Typically, in hermeneutics, theoretical issues will follow the story (Smythe & Norton, 2011). This paper, in essence, is a story about the lived experiences of one individual.

Following an explanation of the research approach, the story begins by presenting the main findings through three inter-related themes. The three themes include 'volunteer and cultural encounters'; 'structural encounters'; and 'adversarial

encounters'. Although separated for the purposes of analysis, in keeping with the nature of a story, each of the three themes is interconnected demonstrating interplay between encounters. As indicated, these were not the only findings to emerge from the data, and the emphasis, particularly on the adversarial theme, needs to be countered with the understanding that a broader context existed within boardroom debate, as recounted by Speed, which we are unable to report on within the confines of one paper. Other findings subject to future analysis included board involvement in strategy, CEO–Chair relationships, shared leadership, governing structures, board composition, board member coalitions, power and influence, and cultural diversity. Based on the findings articulated through each of the three themes, the discussion then maps out future research directions via a series of questions designed to draw other scholars into thinking about future research in sport governance.

2. Locating the study: scholarly conversations in sport governance

Agency theory has played a dominant role in the 'scholarly conversation' about governance over the course of the past 30 years. The ideas embedded within this theory posit that the purpose of the governing board is to monitor and control the actions of the CEO (Davis & Schoorman, 1997). Agency theory assumes that the owners of an organisation will have divergent interests from those who manage it (Fama & Jensen, 1983). Stewardship theory contrasts agency theory by encouraging broader responsibility on behalf of the board to act as guardians of the organisation and its future (Davis & Schoorman, 1997). It is a more collaborative or partnership-oriented approach to thinking about governance, considered useful within the non-profit and sport context (Cornforth, 2003; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010). While these two theories certainly consider the broader purpose of a board, they also focus on the CEO–board dynamic. As a consequence, agency and stewardship theory have primarily been employed for the purposes of advancing understanding of organisational governance as distinct from systemic governance.

In a search for theoretical perspectives that shed light on the federated nature of sport governance, constructs such as institutional theory (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007), resource dependence theory (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), stakeholder theory (Hung, 1998; Oliver, 1990), inter-organisational relationships (Dickson, Arnold, & Chalip, 2005), and network theory (Henry & Lee, 2004; Kooiman, 1993) have begun to emerge within the scholarly conversation about sport governance. Network theory and the construct of inter-organisational relationships were considered particularly insightful for the present study. "Network theory addresses the interactions between a group of collaborating organizations who recognize that their purposes cannot be achieved independently" (Babiak, 2007, p. 369).

Babiak, who studied the determinants of inter-organisational relationships within Canadian non-profit sport organisations, also asserted that a network is a means of collaboration that draws together the full array of stakeholders involved with a particular sport organisation. Network theory was also used by Henry and Lee (2004) to explain the complicated web of inter-relationships between stakeholders of commercial sport organisations (e.g., football) in the UK. Considered in this way, sport governance is, therefore, a system that does not rely on a specific organisation, but on the associations or inter-organisational relationships between organisations responsible for the shared governance of a sport.

Collaborative governance theory has gained some prominence within the public and government sector and the body of research which focuses on public administration (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Within this setting, it is recognised that a network of organisations (such as central and local government, charities, non-government organisations/non-profit organisations) are required to co-operate to achieve outcomes for a defined community. According to Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance is a governing arrangement between organisations where agencies engage in a "...collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-orientated, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets" (p. 544). As noted above, this inter-relationship between organisations for the purposes of governance is also found to be prevalent within the sport setting, yet the construct of collaborative governance theory has not yet entered the sport governance scholarly conversation. This study drew on the ideas embedded within collaborative governance theory to analyse the insights derived from the lived experience of the research participant, and as a lens through which to consider the vexed issue of systemic sport governance structures.

Finally, a common criticism of empirical work in governance is the lack of an insider's view of what boards actually do (Cornforth, 2003; Huse, 2009; Leblanc, 2004; Nicholson & Kiel, 2004; Parker, 2007). In this, our understanding is limited by a research approach that does not engage enough with those whose life-world involves the governance of organisations, and indeed governance between organisations. The predominant approach has involved a quantitative, outsider's view of the governing function (Dalton, Daily, Ellstrand, & Johnson, 1998). Cornforth (2003), in arguing the limitations of such an approach, considered that findings have oversimplified the problems of governance, and underestimated the "...conflicting demands and pressures that board members face..." (p. 1). A further criticism is the narrow use of theory and, in particular, the reliance on agency theory, with scholars of governance across settings encouraging greater use of a multi-theoretical approach (Cornforth, 2003; Hoye & Doherty, 2011; Pye & Pettigrew, 2005).

In employing hermeneutic phenomenology, the present study sought to gain an in-depth, insider's, and 'life-world' perspective of the practice of sport governance. This approach also drew on multiple theoretical perspectives, which were used as 'tools of interpretation' as well as aiding the design of interview questions. To begin, agency and stewardship theory were at the forefront of the interviewers' minds, but, as the stories emerged, a broader range of theory (especially collaborative governance theory), considered by the researchers to shed light on systemic governance, was drawn upon. The following interview topics were also pre-established: national and international governance structures, inter-organisational

relationships, board dynamics, Chair–CEO relationships, shared leadership between the board and the CEO, board involvement in strategy, professionalisation, power and politics. The interview process was informed by these theoretical concepts derived from the literature (considered pre-understandings, rather than a theoretical framework) and, in turn, the data interpretation process sought to inform current understanding of these concepts and theories. The next section sets out in more detail, how data were collected and analysed.

3. Method

Hermeneutics is about life experience and seeks to grasp the everyday, “inter-subjective world of the respondents and how that life-world is constituted” (Schmidt & Little, 2007, p. 227). In essence, it is an inductive and descriptive research approach that seeks to study phenomena as they are consciously experienced (Beck, 1994). Maslow (1966) described phenomenology as the use of subjective and first-person experience as a source of knowledge. The approach is advocated by interpretative social science researchers because it honours human experience (Smith, 1998).

In this study, the lived experience of one informant coincides with the transition from an amateur to a commercial culture in the governance of sport in Australia and internationally. This experience, spanning nearly 30 years between 1980 and 2008, represents a unique opportunity to explore governance practice in a way that has not previously been undertaken. Conrad (1990) stated that “While an N of 1 raises obvious problems of generalisability and potential idiosyncrasy, this strategy may be quite appropriate for some fine-textured case analysis” (p. 1258). The hermeneutic intent of this paper is not to identify generalisable truths but rather to draw on the participant’s reflections as a spring board to ‘thinking’ (Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, & Spence, 2008). One person whose involvement has spanned time and different sports brings the advantage of being able to appreciate the shapers of change and difference.

When one accumulates experiences one learns what works and what does not and takes those insights forward; one sees the advantage of progress and at the same time recognises strengths that have been lost. In other words, one has one’s own comparative basis, or as Gadamer (1982) would say, ‘historical horizon’ on which to make judgements and interpretations. The notion of the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, 1982) is that understanding is always in tension between parts and the whole. One participant brings a collection of parts from the whole of his considerable governance experience. The insights from such research has become but one part to connect to a much larger whole of sport governance experience, literature and research. The themes that have arisen represent foci that became apparent across the sixty-two pages of data and 30 years of experience elicited from the interviews. Their purpose is not to bring an assumption that all sport governance is ‘the same’ but rather to invite those involved in similar work to re-think their own experiences, to ponder anew meanings, tensions and complexity (Van Manen, 1990).

The philosophy of hermeneutics also recognises that “...one can only understand the experience of others through the lens of one’s own historical being in the world” (Smythe, 2007, p. 20). Thus, researchers engaged an interpretative lens to present interview findings in relation to current theory, mindful that their own experiences influence understanding. This thinking, in turn, is influenced by key theoretical concepts derived from the literature in relation to sport governance. Gadamer (2004) urged that pre-understandings are the very conditions by which we understand. “The challenge is not to set them aside but rather to work with them in the quest towards understanding” (Smythe, 2007, p. 20). The researchers’ understanding of sport governance arises from their own educational and research journey in sport management, and as members of sport boards. From this, the researchers drew on major governance concepts that, for them, informed the theoretical foundations of sport governance practice.

3.1. Research participant

Our single research participant, Malcolm Speed, granted ethics permission to use his name in our written and oral work. As noted earlier, Speed’s experience of sport governance spans three decades and encompasses the experience of governance from a number of perspectives. These perspectives include roles as a board member, chairperson, and CEO of sport organisations at a state (regional), national and international level. This paper draws on his experiences as a board member in the 1970s and later as President of the Victorian Amateur Basketball Association (VABA) from 1980 to 1990; chairperson of the National Basketball League (NBL) from 1987 to 1997; chairperson of the Australian Basketball Federation from 1993 to 1997; CEO of the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) from 1997 to 2001; and, finally, CEO of the International Cricket Council (ICC) from 2001 to 2008.

Malcolm Speed was chosen because of his experience of the governance of sport at multiple levels, and for his perspectives across an extended period of time. We also knew of his ability to recount his experience in an insightful yet non-controversial way, and of his ability to reflect and make sense of his experience. In selecting participants for a phenomenological study, the key criterion is that they have experienced the particular phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998). The ability to recount and reflect in the way Speed was able to do, was an added bonus for the researchers.

3.2. The interviews

The methods used to collect data were a series of three, 2-h, in-depth interviews with the one research participant. All three interviews were conducted by the same two researchers’ and took place over a period of three months, allowing time

for each interview to be transcribed and partially analysed. The partial analysis of each interview was conducted by the lead interviewer and was helpful in identifying emerging themes as well as preparing for the forthcoming interview. It also allowed for the opportunity to commence each subsequent interview with reflections on the interview recently completed. Interviews were organised chronologically or, in other words, in the order of sport involvement by Speed. Speed's encounters in basketball were the focus of interview one, followed by his time at the ACB (interview two) and the third interview focused on his experiences at the ICC. Consequently, the sport-by-sport experiences described were discrete, but the emerging themes traversed all phases of his sport governance experiences.

Document analysis, including the use of the participant's recently released book *Sticky Wicket* (2011) as a secondary resource, was also used to support the interviews. At the time of the interviews, Speed was in the process of writing this book. Consequently, he had been researching and reflecting on his experiences prior to and during this research process. The clarity of his recall during the interviews was obviously assisted by the process associated with writing *Sticky Wicket*. Phenomenological interviewing encourages open dialogue and a questioning process which maintains a focus on the experience (Smith, 1998). The participant was, therefore, interviewed in a conversational manner (Smythe & Norton, 2007) with questions commencing with a focus on Speed's early board experiences. As he began recounting his experiences, prompts around the interview topics noted earlier were provided by the researchers.

Each interview was recorded and transcribed for the purposes of analysis by the researchers. In total, there were 62 pages of text (single spaced, 10 point). Due to the nature of the interview process, the transcripts fell into chronological order beginning with the participant's earliest experiences in the 1970s. Hermeneutics is often described as a systematic approach to interpreting a text (Benner, 1985; Smith, 1998; Vickers & Parris, 2006), whereby the whole text is analysed first, then parts of the text, then returns to the whole. Benner (1985) explained that "comparing the two interpretations for conflicts and for understanding the whole in relation to the parts and vice versa" (p. 9) is how the participant, the researcher, and even the readers come to an understanding of the experience.

Also involved in this analysis of text was the act of writing. Van Manen (1990) explained the nature of interpretation as a process of writing and rewriting, whereby 'research is the work of writing'. Data were dealt with in this way by two researchers, first reading the transcripts, considering the experience in totality as well as seeking individual themes and stories that would support the themes, and relating them back to the experience as a whole. Constant comparison of individual themes and supporting stories was undertaken by the two researchers. We also consciously allowed for insights to emerge that we may not have previously considered (Benner, 1985). In staying oriented to the aim of this study, we were seeking stories that had 'something to say' about the nature of sport governance practice. The next section presents our interpretation of what emerged, structured into themes, and supported by stories crafted from Speed's experience.

4. Findings

The findings are organised around three related themes that emerged from data analysis. The first two themes presented include: volunteer and cultural encounters, and structural encounters. Both of these themes contain findings commonly referred to in the literature when examining the implications of structure, and the barriers to governance and decision-making within national, state or provincial sport organisations (Amis & Slack, 1996; Auld, 1997; Hoye, 2007; Inglis, 1997). Most of this research in relation to state, national or provincial sport organisations has been driven by the commercialisation of sport, including the role of government funding and increased accountability in return for this support (Enjolras, 2002; Slack, 1985; Slack & Hinings, 1992). The pressure of increasing commercialisation and accountability reveals the tensions evident in two different worlds and cultures as they collide during sport's transition from volunteer-delivered amateur sport to professionally managed and delivered sport supported by volunteers.

The third theme identified was labelled adversarial encounters and it presents a number of new encounters with implications for sport governance. The use of the word 'encounters' attached to each theme arose naturally as a reflection of the tensions evident in the collisions between these two worlds and cultures during the transition period. It also captured the clarity with which Speed was able to detail specific encounters as examples of sport governance during his 30-year involvement in both basketball and cricket.

4.1. Volunteer and cultural encounters

Volunteer and cultural encounters describe Speed's experiences as he moved into a sport system that was predominantly based on volunteer labour and an amateur culture, and how the transition from this system impacted the governance of sport. Speed's transition from player to administrator occurred through the sport of basketball where, in his mid 20s, he found himself volunteering to attend a Victorian Amateur Basketball Association (VABA) meeting. As Speed noted:

I'd just finished playing for Melbourne and went to coach Melbourne University. At one stage or another someone said: Does someone want to go to the VABA meetings? I said, 'I'll go'. I was a young lawyer. I was interested in that sort of thing and meetings were very informal. (22 March, 2010)

With this informal, but typical entry to sport governance in the 1970s, Speed entered a domain that was largely unstructured, often dominated by one or two strong personalities, and was not always concerned about longer-term

strategic development. Early signs of a cultural mismatch between Speed and the leisure-oriented culture he ventured into are captured in the following extract.

If I go back to those early committee meetings that I went to, it was very much in the style of the old committee. The secretary was a man called Ken who had been coach of the Australian Olympic team in 1956 and 1968. He'd been my coach. He ran it. The president was a man called Jack. It was an amazing organisation actually. When I became president in 1980, I was 31 years of age. I was the fourth president in 50 years. The first president had been the president for 18 years, I think, and then the next one for, he might have only done 12, and then the next one had done 20. I was the shortest serving president at that stage. I only did ten years and there have been a few since. So Jack was the president. He was very low-key. Ken ran it. (22 March, 2010)

Speed was immersed in his sport because he loved his sport, so 'fun' was an important motivation. As Speed noted:

There wasn't any sophistication or subtlety to the meetings in those days. It was good fun and I look back on those early basketball years, they were the years when we actually started to build basketball stadiums in Melbourne, the stadiums that are all around the place, that are full. (22 March, 2010)

Part of the fun was crafting direction from an unstructured context, and the challenge for Speed was in bringing structure to this unstructured setting. The reference to building stadia was a metaphor for Speed's own personal experiences and credentials in a field in which he was clearly motivated. Forging direction in response to building sustainable commercial models was a consistent approach across the two sports and various organisations for which he worked, either as a volunteer or paid professional. To achieve this goal meant working within systems largely reliant on volunteers, or adeptly working with volunteer board members who did not necessarily share his aspirations and vision for future sports systems and operations.

An agenda of cultural change was evident early. As a 30-year-old working in a committee environment largely created for retired men, there was early recognition by Speed of the need for sustainable business models, and a willingness to test tradition. The actions of challenging the incumbent to be elected as President of the VABA and, subsequently, the Australian Basketball Federation, and executive chairman of the National Basketball League, were all portents of preparation for a career in sport management. Culturally, there was no more significant act than one of the first things he did, on his election as President of the VABA, which was to do away with the word 'amateur' from the title of the Association.

After nearly two decades of involvement with basketball at all levels, Speed was offered the job as CEO of the ACB. His experience in sport to that point had largely been as a volunteer committee member, chair of the VABA, the Australian Basketball Federation, and executive chairman of the NBL. He had not previously held a paid appointment as an employee in a sporting organisation. His appointment to the ACB in 1997 was his first as a CEO and, significantly, the first in which he was responsible to a board rather than presiding over the board. Although cricket was already functioning with paid staff, and revenues were growing through television rights, sponsorship and ticket sales, the governance of the ACB was still founded on a delegate model where representatives of the states formed the board, based on a formula which gave more voting power to the three foundation member states of the 1905 Australian Board of Control (Vamplew, Moore, O'Hara, Cashman, & Jobling, 1992). Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia were the three foundation members and each was vested three delegates, whereas Western Australia and Queensland were represented by two delegates, and Tasmania one.

Change was a consistent theme in cricket in 1997, and Speed joined the ACB following a falling-out between the previous CEO and the board, in itself a governance issue of significance. His insights now, from the perspective of the office of the CEO, capture the cultural contradictions inherent in a traditional delegate form of board:

Some of the old timers on that board thought in the past the treasurer had dealt directly with the senior accountant. One of the directors would often ring the marketing manager and give him direction whether he liked it or not. So it was a very hands-on board and there was a commitment at that early stage to have the board operating more on strategic issues. Bear in mind, most of these directors, they were all male, were generally elderly, they lived and breathed cricket through their state associations and their clubs for many, many years. But there's a system that promoted longevity but to get there you had to be generally a cricketer who became a club administrator, who became a state administrator, you waited for someone to die and then you got onto the Australian Cricket Board and, generally, they tried to stay there as long as they could – many of them succeeded. There was no limit to their term. So it was a fairly crusty, elderly, experienced, parochial board with a couple of exceptions. (11 May, 2010)

An important characteristic of sport governance is the sport itself and the social facilitation created by the event for players, spectators and administrators. Traditionally, a Test Match between Australia and England is a major sporting and social event for many people. For ACB Board directors, and to a lesser extent ACB staff, this was no exception. From a governance perspective, the social facilitation afforded by the event had the potential to blur the boundaries between rational decision-making and the emotion of on-field outcomes, yet it also had the potential to lubricate relationships between volunteer board members and senior staff. One of Speed's most important tasks was to build rapport with the board, particularly given the need to convert the board from being hands-on and operationally focussed to a more strategically oriented board.

As described by Speed, a Test Match in each Australian city offered the opportunity to develop rapport with individual board members.

The way that worked with cricket is well suited to that, in that if there was a cricket match, a Test Match in Brisbane, I'd go to the Test Match in Brisbane, the two directors from Queensland would be there. If I stayed at the Test Match for three days, I would have dinner with those two directors, their wives, or I would go to their home for dinner, the other one would come. Sometimes they would bring members of their state association along so it was very collegial. In Perth it became, and probably still is, a sort of annual event that the chairman and the chief executive go to Western Australia for the Test Match and they go to a particular director's home, whoever else was involved in Western Australian cricket at that time comes to dinner that night, have a few drinks and get to know them. And you also spend a lot of time at the cricket with these people, so you're usually sitting with them at their table, so there were plenty of opportunities there and generally that worked well. (11 May, 2010)

This leisure-oriented culture explains the tensions associated with a focus on commercial and strategic imperatives. Such tensions tested Speed's main goal at the ACB which was to build a sustainable commercial model, while at the same time grappling with a governance model not well-suited to that task. His appointment as CEO to the International Cricket Council (ICC) in July 2001 brought more diversity to the concept of culture, as Speed was not only required to deal with the traditional structural issues associated with the governance of the ICC, but also had to manage diversity "in terms of cricket experience, business experience, different cultures, languages, religions, understanding of corporate governance..." (16 August, 2010).

Speed's arrival at the ICC coincided with a recently reached broadcast rights agreement with a subsidiary of News Corporation which would deliver \$US550 million over seven years. As Speed noted, one of the things he was asked to do on arrival at the ICC "was to turn it from being an under-resourced, poorly-regarded organisation into a properly-resourced, well-regarded organisation. I was told there was a commitment from the board that they wanted that to happen" (16 August, 2010). This deal also meant that the ICC had to deliver one well-resourced event each year. Given the recently signed News Corporation deal, Speed's inclination for building sustainable business models, and the cultural heritage of the ICC board, both in volunteer and ethnic terms, it was inevitable that the two worlds of sport would collide. The structure of the ICC did not help.

4.2. Structural encounters

Structural encounters describe the reliance on delegate representation and a federal form of governance and how behaviour is shaped accordingly. It also illustrates the various ways in which Speed sought to 'manage' or change governance models. Speed's experiences and insights about the ICC provide a rich example of behaviour in this form of governance. The ICC structure is largely representative of the Test-playing countries, with some representation from the associate members, of which there are 30. There are 13 directors, 10 of whom come from the full member countries, with a further three elected by the 30 associate countries. In addition to the 13 directors, a President and Deputy President are elected by a Council which consists of all member countries, but they do not have voting rights. The Deputy President is elected two years in advance, although during Speed's tenure the Deputy President was appointed one year in advance of assuming office as President. The CEO does not have voting rights, and as Speed noted:

There would be 13 Directors sitting around the table with a vote, three of us sitting around the table that had the same duties and obligations as directors but didn't have a vote. There was another strange requirement that for a resolution to pass at a board meeting, seven of the full members had to vote in favour of it, so any four could block any resolution. So there was an immediate filter, a barrier to straight forward decision-making and it needed a large majority for relatively simple matters to be approved by the board. (16 August, 2010)

How the directors were appointed in each of their respective countries varied, with Speed reflecting on another unusual feature of the ICC's governance structure:

Perhaps one other feature of that board that is unusual is that each of those ten directors from the Test-playing countries was usually the chairman of the cricket board in that country. So in some countries they would go through a process where they would come up through a club to a state, to the national body and then the international body, while others would be new to cricket, appointed by the government. So Pakistan, Sri Lanka, from time to time Bangladesh, they were appointed by the government, so you could find someone coming to one of those meetings who had no background in cricket whatsoever. In other cases they would be dyed in the wool cricket administrators who'd been there for forty years and this was the high point of their career, to have graduated from the national body to the international body as chairman of their country. So there was diversity. (16 August, 2010)

The experience of board members also was variable, as Speed noted:

I think it changed from time to time. When I first started there were a number of quite experienced directors who had been board members in commercial life, a couple of high-powered lawyers, chief executive of a major international multi-national company. They certainly knew how to handle themselves in a board meeting. As time passed, they

departed and were replaced by people who were less experienced. The culture of the board varied from time to time. I don't think there was ever a sort of overriding characteristic of it. (16 August, 2010)

The ICC structure is largely a reflection of governance models used in some member countries and this was the case with the ACB. As previously noted, the ACB's board was organised according to the delegate model and representation from the states. Consistent with Speed's inclination for developing sustainable business models, he set up opportunities for ACB directors to review the governance model which is described below, as well as providing some perspectives on how the delegate system worked:

Some of them were better at it than others. The default position usually was that, in times of difficulty, go back and represent the state. It's the classic dilemma of the delegate system when you are appointed by the state. In many cases the state will give you direction as to how you are to vote on a key issue, irrespective of the debate, and the fact that you might have been convinced otherwise by listening to the debate. Over time we actually challenged that system. We brought in a governance consultant, who one way or another has worked with most of the sports in Australia and New Zealand. We had a very good one-day seminar where there was a great deal of support for a new model that would see a hybrid system of some state directors and some independent directors until it went to the vote. When it went to the vote it had no support whatsoever, which happens in a lot of sports so it's very hard to get the status quo to change and to get people to vote themselves out of office. (11 May, 2010)

By contrast, Speed was involved in successfully moving basketball from a delegate model to a hybrid board. In 1987 he was elected Chairman of the NBL, and in 1993 President of Basketball Australia. Although Basketball Australia was confronted by many similar cultural and structural issues to cricket, the NBL itself was a separate entity, and was governed by the team owners ostensibly outside the traditional Basketball Australia structure. When Speed assumed the role of chair of both entities, he noted that some of the tensions between the organisations subsided somewhat, although, as Speed stated, "in other ways the battles went on behind the scenes" (22 March, 2010). In the second half of the 1980s, by which time Speed was Chair of the NBL, he observed, "we started to become aware of things like governance and strategy and probity and conflict of interest" (22 March, 2010). Some of this was driven by the success of the NBL and the mounting commercial opportunities through television rights and sponsorship, which saw the NBL change from a model where the clubs supported the central administration to one where the central administration paid money back to the clubs.

The need to capitalise on commercial opportunity, coupled with team owners' approaches to governance, led the NBL to introduce a hybrid model of governance. Largely, this was the result of the additional pressures confronted by NBL team owners in terms of their own money being on the line and the need for some objectivity. On reflecting on NBL governance, Speed (2011) observed:

Chairing the NBL Board was a great experience. At the age of 38, I was running meetings of the owners of the teams – up to 17 of them at the high point of expansion. The owners were aggressive, parochial and opinionated, despite several of them being new to the game. Several were financially stretched or going broke, and many of them did not like each other – or me, for that matter. Despite that, they were very successful in taking the game to a point where the NBL was regarded as one of the best professional basketball leagues in the world. I enjoyed the parry and thrust of running difficult meetings at a time when the sport was booming. I learnt the importance of preparation, patience and when to attack and defend. (pp. 49–50)

Just prior to Speed concluding his term as chairman of the NBL, a hybrid structure was introduced, which sought to add some independent board members to the existing group of team owners or their representatives. Interestingly, the private team owner model created more scope for adversarial encounters – encounters that Speed had prepared himself for through his largely unstructured basketball experiences with the VABA and the Australian Basketball Federation in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

4.3. Adversarial encounters

Adversarial encounters largely capture the inherent tensions of a system confronting increasing commercial pressures. They also signify the inherent tensions in the collision of the former amateur-oriented approach to sport administration and the move to professionalise sport, characterised by commercial forces. These tensions were typically manifest through decisions relating to financial allocations, policy development, key personnel appointments and control via leadership. Speed's insights during this transition capture the parry and thrust of the times, hence the theme adversarial encounters.

Speed's background as a lawyer had obviously helped prepare him for the 'parry and thrust' of legal argument. This clearly assisted him with his role in shaping basketball's largely unstructured context, influencing cricket's traditional domestic delegate context, and managing diverse cultures in addition to historical governance structures, all so much a part of the ICC. One common element ranged across all three environments – commercial influences on sport began to gather pace in the 1980s, and the pace increased rapidly in the second half of the 1990s through until Speed's departure from the ICC in 2008. These commercial pressures created the scope for the two worlds of sport (i.e., amateur and professional) to collide, largely because governance structures, cultures and personnel were not originally designed to accommodate sport in the

commercial sense. Collisions between volunteerism, culture, structure and commerce were evident in the range of adversarial encounters throughout the Speed transcripts and in his book *Sticky Wicket* (2011).

Whether these encounters were a product of the tensions embedded in the collision between volunteerism, traditional structures and commerce, or the approach adopted by Speed, is an interesting narrative to emerge from the transcripts. Equally, there was a sense of preparation throughout the interviews, in which Speed was preparing and steeling himself for the robust cut and thrust of sport politics. The following extract is a good example:

I can remember having some vigorous arguments over funding with the treasurer. I can remember having a vigorous argument over funding where the Australian Basketball Federation was seeking to put up money and the states were going to have to pay to fund it. Victoria was opposed to it. We argued about it all morning. It looked as though we'd lost. It went to the vote and two states abstained and our position prevailed. The treasurer was furious. He was yelling at me and I was yelling at him and we had to adjourn the meeting. There were a few incidents like that. That was, looking back on it, all good experience for what was to come. (22 March, 2010)

As already indicated, what was to come were leadership positions in basketball and cricket. A confrontational approach was also evident in securing his first leadership roles in basketball. He noted:

It wasn't a coup, it was more about time for a change. There was general recognition of that. As a brash 31-year-old, I actually pushed my way into the position as president, there was a process, but there hadn't been an election for many years and my predecessor would have been president for 18 years, and I don't think he'd ever been opposed, so I announced I was going to oppose him and he'd had enough. We had a conversation about it. He suggested I wait a couple of years. Looking back on it that might have been a good thing if I'd done that, but I said I wasn't prepared to wait a couple of years. I was prepared to take it to an election and test it. I hope I did it politely but I'd formed the view that there were people there that were supporting me or pushing me to do that, and the time had come for change within the organisation. (22 March, 2010)

The adversarial nature of the federal system was imbued in Speed from his early days in basketball governance:

In those early years I was aggressively standing for election and seeking election in a very federal system, where everything was state-based and you were there to represent your state. There was no sense of going to Basketball Australia meetings or ABF meetings and representing Australia, you were there to fight for your state. (22 March, 2010)

In 1985, Speed stood for the role of President of the Australian Basketball Federation and lost. He described it as a 'good learning experience' in which he and the other main candidate alienated everyone, and the third candidate was elected. In 1986 he unsuccessfully stood for election as the Chairman of the NBL, but one year later was elected Chairman by the barest of margins. As Speed stated, "I then had ten years as Chairman of the NBL but it was a very tenuous start" (22 March, 2010). Further evidence of Speed's propensity to accept a challenge was apparent in the way he articulated his reasons for accepting the CEO position with the ICC. He stated:

I certainly wasn't finished at the ACB, I thought there was more to do there but the challenge of being chief executive of an international governing body was a great challenge. The ICC was everyone's punching bag. It was under-resourced, poorly-regarded and it was the ultimate challenge. (16 August, 2010)

In effect, the ICC structure was also a delegate model. As noted by Speed, some of the ICC directors wore 'their country hat at all times'. This structure created a 'them and us' approach producing the perfect formula for an adversarial approach to governance. This is a distant view of the notion of an umbrella body created to encompass the interests of cricket globally. Good governance was obviously a poor second cousin to a country's need to control the ICC. Countries aggressively argued their own agenda, often viewing the international body as the opposition, if not certainly a punching bag. As it is illustrated in this extract, each country was intent on 'pulling the ICC into line'.

There was never a 'we are your branch office in this country' mentality, they were very independent and valued their independence. I don't expect that [breakdown of independence] will ever happen. It doesn't happen in many sporting organisations anywhere where you break down that sort of 'them and us' mentality. We certainly didn't do it. One of the unusual features of an international sporting body is that everyone plays to their own media. So we'd often find the president of a country announcing before he came to the meeting how and why he was going to vote on a particular issue and that he was going to pull the ICC into line on this particular issue where we'd been penalising his country. Or, you'd often see that play out in the media announcing the decision before we'd had the debate. (16 August, 2010)

The parry and thrust of the delegate system is also illustrated in the following extract at a domestic level through the ACB. The complexities of race, ethnicity and cultural differences were minimal compared to those in the ICC, but a parochial approach and the need to 'fight the enemy' was just as obvious, with Speed observing that, "It was good every now and then for the directors to be able to go back and report that we'd actually had a victory over New South Wales or South Australia or whoever the enemy of the moment was. It was very parochial" (11 May, 2010).

Although the delegate system pervaded all organisations in basketball and cricket, interview data from his time at the ACB did not convey the same adversarial themes gleaned from the basketball and ICC interviews. As demonstrated in these

results, there was evidence of the same issues associated with the delegate model and federal system, but, in general, Speed's approach appeared more assuaging. The ACB appointment was his first as a CEO, and this may have influenced his approach, which appeared more oriented to working with the current system than fighting it. When speaking about the delegate system, Speed stated that:

I had a preconception that it was ingrained, it was part of cricket and it wasn't going to change. Where there was room for change, I thought, and chairman Rogers had the same view, was that maybe we could get the state directors to, or the ACB directors, to think more with a national hat rather than a state hat. From time to time they did. (11 May, 2010)

There was evidence presented in the previous section demonstrating that he worked with the directors to consider changing the governance arrangements, but, "When it went to the vote it had no support whatsoever".

The formulation of cricket's first strategic plan was one mechanism used by Speed in an effort to align cricket strategies across the country. He needed the support of ACB directors, but, given the federal governance model, the support of state associations and directors was equally important. Speed described a process that included visiting each state and running workshops and meetings with the boards of each association. Stakeholder input was wide and clearly designed to encourage an inclusive environment. As he noted, "We worked out we needed to be very inclusive if it were to have any traction. We were trying to convince the states that they should then tie their strategic plans in under this" (11 May, 2010).

Despite a measured approach, the ACB was not short on issues when Speed arrived as CEO. A major industrial relations dispute with players over player payments was in full flight, followed by other player scandals requiring his full attention. In *Sticky Wicket*, Speed (2011) stated, "My first season as CEO of the ACB, in 1997, was all about industrial relations. It was punctuated by anger, intrigue, threats, frustration, and several fractured friendships" (p. 64). This dispute was to run for a full 12 months during which time Speed and two directors were charged with the responsibility of managing the dispute, and keeping the Board informed. In reflecting on the eventual outcome, Speed (2011) said:

The dispute was painful and distracting for both parties but, remarkably, considering the rancour with which it was conducted, both could look back on the outcomes with satisfaction and without bitterness. Perhaps it was a process that had to be undergone in order to take the Board-player relationship into the modern era. (p. 79)

Adversarial encounters, in this instance, were divided along team lines: the ACB Board and senior staff versus the players. There was little time, initially at least, to be overly concerned with the imperfections of a governance system, or the desire to fight unnecessary battles. Significantly, reflecting on the need for the dispute to move the relationship into the modern era places the role of commercial pressures and the associated tensions into sharp focus.

5. Discussion

Slack (1985), one of the first authors to examine the bureaucratisation of voluntary sporting organisations, stated that:

In most western industrialized societies amateur sport at the local, regional and national levels is organized and delivered by a vast network of voluntary organizations. At the highest levels, examples of this type of organization characteristic are to be found in many national associations that govern the activities of a particular sport. (p. 145)

In his work examining the Alberta section of the Canadian Amateur Swimming Association, Slack demonstrated how a voluntary sport organisation was beginning to evolve to adopt what Weber (1947) described as a legal-rational bureaucracy. As Slack observed:

Manifestations of this tendency are clearly found in such areas as the increased number of certification programs and qualification requirements for those staff who hold office in voluntary organizations, the tendency to appoint paid professional staff 'to run' the affairs of these groups, and an increasing standardization and formalization of the systems that constitute this type of organization. (p. 146)

This work became the forerunner to a volume of research by Slack and many other scholars examining the changing structure and culture of sport. Typically, this work focussed on the impact of the transition from volunteer delivered sport systems to more professional systems in response to commercial pressures and increasing accountabilities.

Slack's 1985 analysis, described above, coincides with the administrative entry to the sport system of Malcolm Speed whose lived experiences of sport in Australia and overseas describes two worlds colliding, or, more specifically, two culturally different sports worlds colliding during his 30-year involvement in sport governance and management. Three themes which formed the focus of this paper were identified from the interview transcripts, with two of the themes consistent with Slack's work in 1985. These themes, volunteer and cultural encounters, and structural encounters, together with a third theme unique to this study labelled as adversarial encounters, summarise the main findings to emerge from this study. From those findings a series of research directions (expressed as questions) have been identified relevant to guiding future sport governance research. These research directions are shown in Fig. 1 which summarises the outcomes of the ensuing discussion. Moreover, Fig. 1 illustrates the flow of research in this study including the type of governance model investigated, the three emergent themes forming the focus of this paper, key findings, and future research directions. The

Governance Type	Theoretical 'Location' of the Study	Research Themes	Conceptual Outcomes	Future Research Directions
Federated Model	Institutional Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Inter-Organisational Theory, Network Theory, Collaborative Governance, Stewardship Theory	Volunteer & Cultural Encounters	Adversarial/ Collaborative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent does a federated model based on delegate representation create an adversarial versus collaborative approach to governance? 2. What are the factors that contribute to an adversarial or collaborative governance approach? 3. To what extent is political governance used as a means to 'control' autonomous organisations to make them comply with broader strategic directions for a sport? 4. What political governance 'techniques' are used to control members of a network of sporting organisations and is it possible to measure the effectiveness of these techniques? 5. What techniques and approaches are used to forge a collaborative approach to governance? 6. Are there formal and informal approaches used, and what is the role of leadership, or the chair, in promoting a collaborative approach to governance? 7. Is it possible for a federated model based on delegate representation to enact collaborative governance practices? 8. How effective is the hybrid governance model, and how well does it relate to network theory in terms of collaborative governance? 9. What skills, qualifications and background are required to work in sport governance? 10. Do these skill-sets vary according to the governance model used? 11. Is there a clear 'personality' type, or 'style' (as is implied by Henry & Lee, 2004) better suited to collaborative governance and working in a network than an adversarial approach to governance? 12. Is the crystallisation of these skill-sets clouded by the ambiguity of governance models used in sport?
		Structural Encounters	Structure/ Control	
		Structural Encounters	Networks/ Political	
		Adversarial Encounters	Leadership/ Skills	

Fig. 1. Study summary.

questions shown in Fig. 1 are shown (and numbered accordingly) in the order that they are introduced in this section of the paper.

The key focus of this study – the description and analysis of changing sport structures and governance – fits well with previous accounts of the bureaucratisation of sport, but less well with how governance structures, such as a federal model based on a delegate system, impede the functions of governance. Despite ample anecdotal debate regarding this model's weaknesses (Hoye, Smith, Westerbeek, Stewart, & Nicholson, 2006; SCORS, 1997), there has been a dearth of empirically based evidence to support these claims. One of the dominant narratives embedded in the interviews, and highlighted in Fig. 1, was the adversarial approach to governance. It is not clear whether this is an unavoidable and unfortunate outcome of the delegate system of governance, or whether Speed himself was predisposed to this approach. Based on the insights provided by Speed, the first two questions to emerge in relation to future research directions relate to adversarial and collaborative governance and are articulated as follows:

1. To what extent does a federated model based on delegate representation create an adversarial versus collaborative approach to governance?
2. What are the factors that contribute to an adversarial or collaborative governance approach?

Previous research has focussed on the role of volunteer board members and the bureaucratisation of organisations (e.g., Auld & Godbey, 1998; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Ferkins et al., 2009; Kikulis, 2000; Yeh & Taylor, 2008), but none to date has specifically focussed on the dynamics associated with adversarial and collaborative approaches to sport governance. Structure is also a unique attribute of this research question.

In relation to structure, Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill (2000) contend that governance "generally refers to the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination of wholly or partially autonomous individuals or organisations on behalf of interests to which they jointly contribute" (p. 255). This definition captures the structural challenges confronted by the VABA, Basketball Australia, the NBL, ACB and the ICC. They were all characterised by the need to 'control' wholly or partially autonomous organisations, which tends to be manifested through strong individuals and personalities who seek to resist any form of control by the governing body. This was evident through Speed's descriptions of his early involvement in the

VABA, chairing the NBL owners' meetings, and in the desire of country Presidents to control the ICC, rather than be controlled by the ICC.

Ironically, while the push for control was exerted from below, increasing commercial pressures evident in basketball and cricket dictated the need for greater, rather than less control, by the governing body. This was necessary to ensure efficient and reliable decision-making when working with commercial partners. For example, News Corporation's \$US550 million investment through broadcast rights required the ICC to deliver one event each year. This required the co-operation of most of the major cricket playing countries, without undue political turbulence. However, the presence of multiple stakeholders, organisations, cultures and agendas almost guarantees some level of political turbulence. Consequently, structure and control emerged as important variables, or key outcomes, as shown in Fig. 1, with both obviously related to political and network governance.

This political turbulence, or the desire to avoid turbulence, is referred to as political governance by Henry and Lee (2004). The authors stated that political governance refers to the "processes by which governments or governing bodies seek to steer the sports system to achieve desired outcomes by moral pressure, use of financial resources or other incentives, or by licensing, regulations and control to influence other parties to act in ways consistent with desired outcomes" (pp. 26–27). This raises the second area of inquiry to emerge from this paper and is shown in Fig. 1 as questions three and four.

3. To what extent is political governance used as a means to 'control' autonomous organisations to make them comply with broader strategic directions for a sport?
4. What political governance 'techniques' are used to control members of a network of sporting organisations and is it possible to measure the effectiveness of these techniques?

An important implication in the framing of these questions is the recognition of a group of autonomous same-sport organisations (e.g., country members of the ICC) as a network. Henry and Lee (2004) describe the network approach as systemic governance, which has been used to help explain the complexities of multiple stakeholders and their role in the governance of sport.

When examining governance systems within high performance commercial sport, Henry and Lee (2004) argued that, "the top-down system has given way to a complex web of inter-relationships between stakeholders in which different groups exert power in different ways and in different contexts by drawing on alliances with other stakeholders" (p. 28). In this form of network, governance can be viewed as "the pattern or structure that emerges . . . as a 'common' result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors" (Kooiman, 1993, p. 258). As it is clear in all the organisations in which Speed was involved, the patterns and structures that emerged were convoluted, with complexity increasing at each level up in the system. In other words, the group of actors was smaller and more localised in the VABA, but through Basketball Australia and the NBL the number of actors increased, as did the web of locations. This was also the case at the ACB, which was less complicated again than the network of actors and structures involved with the ICC.

The implications of these complex networks of governance are summarised by Henry and Lee (2004) when reviewing systemic governance structures:

First, it is clear that in such a context, a significant policy change can only be achieved by negotiation and/or trade-off between various parties in the network. Second, governing bodies of sport in such contexts no longer govern, or wholly control, their sport, or at least if they do, they do so by virtue of their ability to negotiate outcomes rather than dictating those outcomes to passive recipients of their message. Third, this has implications not only for the organisations but also for the skills required of the people who work within them. The skills are much more those of negotiation and mutual adjustment than of rational, ordered planning and control. (p. 29)

The irony in the need for negotiated trade-offs and mutual adjustments, as described by Henry and Lee, is that there was some evidence presented in this paper of punctuated outbursts of robust debate characterised by yelling, anger, furious argument, frustration, parochial attitudes and aggravation. Speed himself enjoyed the parry and thrust of this environment, which was ingrained from his early experiences in the VABA. Equally, he was intent on adopting rational, ordered planning to exert control, which in the case of the ACB appeared very effective. As it was noted previously, this was almost certainly achieved due to a collaborative, inclusive approach, yet in an ordered fashion. There was also evidence of success in the early days of the VABA where Speed relished the opportunity to craft a vision for basketball by leading a board and staff intent on negotiating agreements with councils to build basketball stadia in Melbourne, which formed the basis of a solid business model for the sport. This raises the third series of questions (questions five to seven in Fig. 1) to emerge from this paper:

5. What techniques and approaches are used to forge a collaborative approach to governance?
6. Are there formal and informal approaches used, and what is the role of leadership, or the chair, in promoting a collaborative approach to governance?
7. Is it possible for a federated model based on delegate representation to enact collaborative governance practices?

Solutions to these structural conflicts described in adversarial terms by Speed in his role as a leader or chair, were typically found in hybrid forms of governance. In the hybrid model, some representation of the key stakeholders is retained,

combined with the appointment of independent directors with no direct links to governance at the level below. This was the model introduced to basketball, and provided as an option for the ACB. Although the appointment of independent directors conveys a sense of genuine independence, rarely is this the case as those appointed to the roles are typically connected to the sport in some capacity. Such is the nature of sport. The hybrid model is designed to bring some objective strategic thinking to the debate, as opposed to merely debating entrenched state or regional positions. Little research exists, however, detailing the efficacy of the hybrid model, which is shown as question eight and represents the fourth key area for investigation:

8. How effective is the hybrid governance model, and how well does it relate to network theory in terms of collaborative governance?

Notwithstanding the implementation of a hybrid model, or a genuine independent board for that matter, a network of state associations or countries may still prevail, requiring deft skill to co-ordinate wholly or partially autonomous organisations on behalf of interests to which they jointly contribute. Leadership and the skill-sets of the personnel involved, therefore, are also important factors, as indicated in Fig. 1.

Henry and Lee (2004) highlight the importance of the skills required of those people who work within various governance structures. As noted above, they suggest that negotiation and mutual adjustment are more important than rational and ordered planning. This presents a conundrum as most of the generic management and sport management literature advocates rational planning and control by senior management, and, indeed, the importance of the role of the board in setting the strategic direction of the organisation (Brown & Chao, 2010; Ferkins et al., 2009; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). Although there is an apparent contradiction here, negotiating outcomes in the context of a broad strategy is not inconsistent with recognising the skills required in a collaborative governance approach. How an organisation implements the actions to achieve a desired strategy may vary from state to state, or country to country, but may remain consistent with the broad strategic direction. This raises the fifth research direction to arise from this study, which is captured in questions nine to twelve:

9. What skills, qualifications and background are required to work in sport governance?
10. Do these skill-sets vary according to the governance model used?
11. Is there a clear 'personality' type, or 'style' (as is implied by Henry & Lee, 2004) better suited to collaborative governance and working in a network than an adversarial approach to governance?
12. Is the crystallisation of these skill-sets clouded by the ambiguity of governance models used in sport?

It could be argued, for instance, that the federated delegate system of governance is, in theory, meant to be a collaborative approach to governance. However, the largely unsophisticated approach by sporting organisations to governance has created patterns of historically derived behaviours, or, in Kooiman's (1993) terms, a pattern of behaviours and structures has evolved impacting generations of actors.

Collaborative governance practice has emerged in this study as a useful theory against which to assess current sport governance practice. Little has been written in the sport governance literature about collaborative governance theory, yet, based on Lynn et al.'s (2000) definition of governance, it is clear that research directions in relation to sport governance have not considered the implications of structure closely enough, and, specifically, the means to co-ordinate and control wholly or partially autonomous organisations. Certainly, traditional top-down theories of governance common to the corporate world do not necessarily work well in sport, as it was evident from Speed's insights into the ICC.

Traditional governance theories have focussed on agency and stewardship as two contrasting approaches. Dalton et al. (1998) describe agency theory as "a control-based theory in that managers, by virtue of their firm-specific knowledge and managerial expertise, are believed to gain an advantage over firm owners who are largely removed from the operational aspects of the firm" (p. 270). Stewardship theory, by contrast, is grounded in organisational co-operation, where management wants to do a good job consistent with organisational goals. There is no underlying mistrust associated with stewardship, which is not the case in relation to agency theory. Speed's approach to his job as a CEO at the ACB demonstrated the need to seek and build organisational co-operation, which was embedded in his desire to build rapport with directors and state associations, and to work with, rather than against, prevailing governance structures and generally provide leadership. This is consistent with stewardship theory.

Given the vagueness of organisational ownership in sport, agency theory does not fit well in that context. Stewardship theory is a better match but its application and capacity to explain organisational behaviour is also limited, as it has been explicated in this analysis. This is reflected in Lynn et al.'s definition which recognises the autonomous entities that potentially can fragment a sport. Network or systemic governance theory best characterises current sport governance practice, as seen through the lived experiences described by Speed. These insights can add to our understanding of sport governance theory and practice and also assist in shaping future research directions.

6. Conclusion

The insights from this study also draw into question the nature of 'being-in-the-world' as described by Heidegger (1927/1995). Gadamer (1982) argued for the primacy of "play over the consciousness of the player" (p. 94). From this hermeneutic

perspective, governance itself can be viewed as a game, where each player is caught up in the play. The board is situated within its own playing field (sport), in a wider political (federated/nation states) and social context (leisure culture) of vested interests (each board member has his own passion, interests and concerns). Any player, such as the participant of this study, is caught up in the play. “Every game presents the man who plays it with a task” (Gadamer, 1982, p. 96), yet, in seeking to achieve that task, one is always caught up in the play.

Speed describes the ‘play’ in his experiences of board governance in terms of: different personalities who come to the table; how they bring a mix of personal, local, and state-dictated views; the tensions between the young board member and the older board member steeped in the ways of the past, all backgrounded by the conversations that occur away from the board table. When the board meeting arrives, all such dimensions come ‘into play’. Depending on the profile of the sport and the board, this play (and/or its outcomes) is under the watchful eye of the media who, prior to the meeting, also play a role in shaping the direction of play. Once at the table, any agenda item has the potential to be caught up in the thrust and parry of vigorous debate. The nature of governance is not to rubber stamp ready-made decisions but rather to allow the play of opinions, values and interests to shape the way forward. A board member and leader with the knowledge and experience such as Speed becomes a player more likely to be able to uphold the quest of good governance.

No theoretical model of governance will ever overcome the ‘play’ of the meeting itself as each member pushes, pulls, argues, supports, questions and accepts. The challenge for sport governance scholars is to use theory to predict and explain the ‘play’ of the meeting. In other words, scholars ‘play’ with the meanings and practitioners ‘play’ with the reality, and the interaction between the two sharpens our collective focus on the phenomenon under investigation. As Harman (2007) stated, “Human life is not something visible from the outside, but must be seen in the very act, performance, or execution of its own reality, which always exceeds any of the properties that we can list about it” (p. 25). Thus, while theoretical models are useful in guiding structure and process, ‘what happens’ is always something more, and often something different. Thus, our interactions with Speed have helped identify ‘something more’ and the opportunity to theorise about sport governance practice and its key players. Who the players are is a key determinant of quality governance. Governance systems to identify new board members need to be established with due consideration for the ability of board members to add value and influence to the ‘play’.

Fittingly, there are more questions than answers to emerge from this research. In employing a hermeneutic approach the ‘human experience’ has been honoured which has brought to light a number of issues and paradoxes. Described in this paper as ‘two worlds colliding’, and revealed through three themes represented as voluntary and cultural encounters, structural encounters, and adversarial encounters, there has been an attempt to synchronise the insights with ideas and theories from the sport governance literature. In so doing, it is also acknowledged that, from a hermeneutic perspective, such thinking is always ‘evolving’ and that, in themselves, theories and categorisations are not sufficient (Smythe & Norton, 2007) to fully understand the ‘play’ and ‘players’ involved with sport governance. The series of questions derived from this research are thus offered as ‘evolving’ directions for future investigation of the sport governance phenomenon.

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