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Analysing Sport Development Policy

A Barrie Houlihan Compilation

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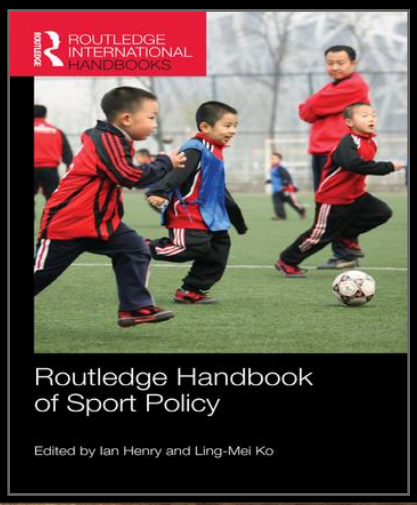

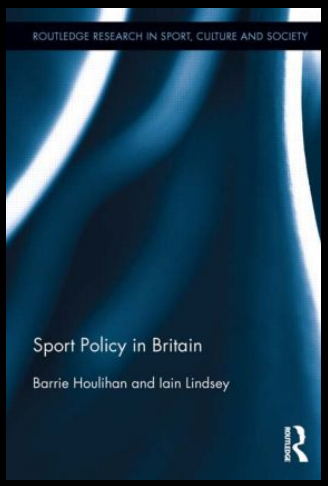

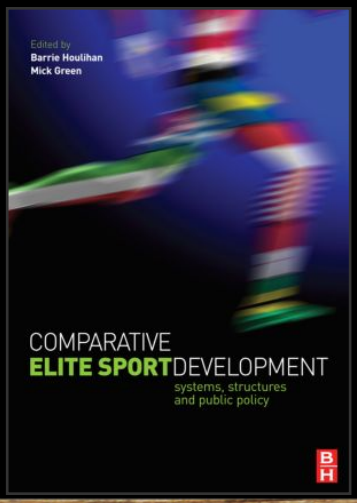

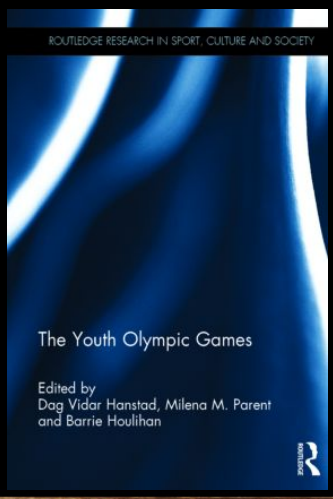

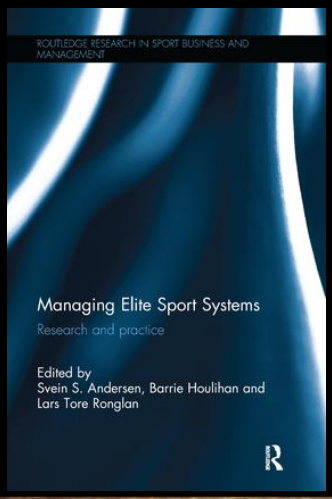

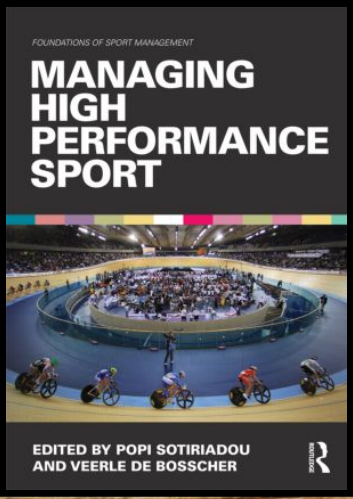

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Introduction

This Routledge free book draws together ten key readings on the topic of sport development policy, all written by Professor Barrie Houlihan, Loughborough University, UK. For several decades Barrie has been a central figure in the study of sport development and sport policy, enriching the literature in this field with numerous books, book chapters and journal articles, and through his highly successful editorship of the *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*.

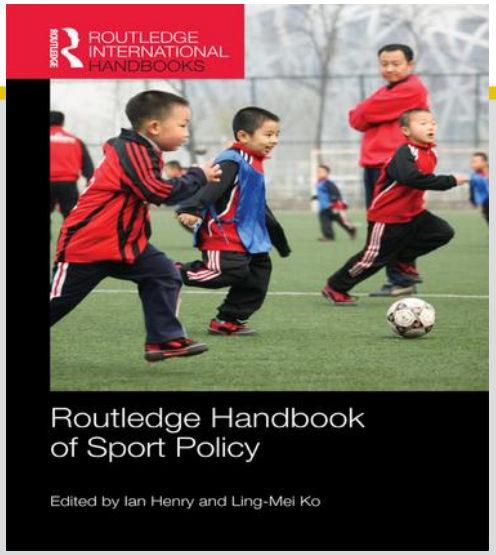
As well as being a fascinating retrospective of Barrie's work, we hope that this free book will provide a useful starting point for any student, researcher or practitioner looking to develop their understanding of sport development policy and process.

*As you read through this FreeBook, you will notice that some excerpts reference previous chapters —please note that these are references to the original text and not the FreeBook.

CHAPTER

1

THEORISING THE ANALYSIS OF SPORT POLICY



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Routledge Handbook of Sport Policy

Edited by Ian Henry, Ling-Mei Ko.

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Theory and theorising

At its worst, theory obscures and confuses, often due to multiple definitions, cryptic application and an approach to theorising that values complexity over parsimony: at its best, theory guides research, constructively challenges research findings and helps to make sense of social phenomena. Whether one's engagement with theory has been positive or negative, it is not possible to investigate and make sense of the sport policy process without theorising. Theory may be broadly defined as general statements that describe and explain the relationship between variables: such statements are often concerned to identify causes and effects arising from the relationship. Examples of such relationships would include that between age or gender and levels of sport participation, or the relationship between particular sports and the generation of personal social capital.

The criteria for determining 'good' theory vary according to one's ontological and epistemological assumptions. For those researching from within a positivist paradigm a good theory is generally one that: allows for categorisation; enables explanation of relationships between variables; facilitates prediction; and generates testable, ideally falsifiable, hypotheses. One example would be the application of rational (or public) choice theory (Niskanen, 1971) to government sport agencies (such as the Australian Institute of Sport, UK Anti-Doping and the Irish Sports Council), which would suggest that the members of these organisations would be more concerned with the pursuit of their rational self-interest (e.g. larger organisational budgets and staffing which give greater opportunity for personal benefit) than with the pursuit of public policy objectives. A second example would be the testing of Robert Michels' 'iron law of oligarchy' (Michels, 1911; Tolbert and Hiatt, 2009) in relation to the development of national governing bodies (NGBs) or international federations. The 'law' suggests that as organisations grow in membership the greater organisational complexity results in a concentration of power in the hands of a small leadership group.

Those working within an interpretivist paradigm are more likely to see theory as emerging from the analysis of data, that is, an inductive process often referred to as 'grounded theory'. Here the concern is less with predicting the course of future events than in explaining social complexity. Analyses of the way in which social discourse shapes perceptions of gender and of the body and, by implication, public policy are illustrative of this type of theorising (Markula and Pringle, 2006). A good theory for the interpretivist is one that explains a case satisfactorily and a good theorist is one who is sensitive in his/her 'reading' of data such that s/he is able to identify important variables in the explanation of the case.

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Critical realists operate in territory between the two previous paradigms. On the one hand they accept the possibility of causal explanations (e.g. the causal relationship between social class and patterns of sport participation) while also accepting that we cannot see the world as it really is and thus need to employ theory 'as a sensitising device to reveal the structured reality beneath the surface' (Hay, 2002, p. 122). For Danermark *et al.* (2002), 'good' critical realist methodology moves through a number of stages that begin and end in the more concrete. The stages of analysis move through: description of the focal event or situation; identifying key aspects of the event/situation; abduction/drawing inferences; development of potential explanatory theories; resolution between theories and data.

Types of theory

Ontological and epistemological assumptions provide the context within which theorising takes place. However, theory, particularly in relation to its application to the analysis of policy, can take a number of different forms. Abend (2008) distinguishes between seven meanings of theory, four of which are particularly relevant to our present discussion. The first is what Abend (2008, p. 179) refers to as 'a Weltanschauung … an overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world'. Feminism, Marxism and neo-Marxism, pluralism and neo-pluralism and rational choice theory are all examples of this type of theory. Each of these macro-level theories provides a conceptual language and usually a set of propositions about the world which informs and structures social investigation. At times macro-level theories can become so dominant in a branch of social science (for example the realist perspective in international relations) that they assume paradigmatic status in the Kuhnian sense (Kuhn, 1996). However, such paradigmatic dominance is rare outside the natural sciences; within the social sciences theoretical pluralism is much more common. In the practice of policy analysis it is not uncommon for researchers to choose to operate within a particular macro-level theory such as feminism (Orloff and Palier, 2009), neo-pluralism (Lindblom, 1977) or neo-Marxism (Hill, M., 2009), or to eschew a commitment to a particular perspective and to use them as competing worldviews that sensitise empirical research and inform research design. An important variant on this first meaning of theory is that view of the world that rejects the aspiration to detachment and disinterestedness and embraces a fundamental normativity. Such theories would include critical theory, post- colonial theory and feminist theory.

The second meaning of theory that Abend identifies and that is relevant to sport policy analysis, although in a slightly modified form, is theory as 'an explanation of a particular social phenomenon' (2008, p. 178). While Abend would restrict this definition to specific

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cases, such as explaining the decision by China to support the establishment of the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) as a rival to the Olympic Games in the early 1960s, the definition could be expanded to refer to the explanation of a particular class of social phenomena and would thus, for example, apply to theories specifically designed to explain the (sport) policy- making process. Such meso-level theories would include the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993), multiple streams (Kingdon, 1984), punctuated equilibrium (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993) and policy network theory (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992). Each of these theories is concerned to explain how policy is made although each tends to emphasise particular aspects of the policy process such as agenda-setting, the role of individuals or specific catalysts for change.

The third meaning of theory of especial relevance to the study of policy concerns the analysis of specific problems or aspects of the policy process such as the relationship between structure and agency, path dependency, or the significance of policy learning and transfer. This type of theory is an element within a number of macro theories such as the variants of Marxism and pluralism as well as some meso-level theories. For example, in Marxist theories of capitalist policy making there is a long-standing debate about whether the policies produced by governments within capitalist economies are *structured* to benefit capital or whether policy is more the outcome of the interplay of class interests with the possibility that policy that benefits the working class might, on occasion, be produced. A second example would be the discussion of path dependency (the idea that previous policy decisions narrow future policy choices) which is relevant to the advocacy coalition framework, network theory and neo-institutionalism.

The final meaning of theory relevant to our discussions is 'a general proposition, or logically connected system of propositions, which establish a relationship between two or more variables' (Abend, 2008, p. 177). For example Robert Michels's 'iron law of oligarchy', discussed above, suggests a relationship between the variable 'organisational complexity and size' and the variable 'concentration of power in the hands of an oligarchy'. Similarly, Anthony Downs in his 'issue attention cycle' argued, *inter alia*, that recognition by the public of the cost and complexity of an issue often leads to the gradual downgrading of an issue and its move down the policy agenda.

In undertaking an analysis of sport policy it is likely that the researcher will be using some or all of the four types of theory discussed above. However, the particular combination of theory adopted will depend primarily on the research question under consideration, but will also be influenced by the researcher's own ontological and epistemological assumptions. Most analyses of sport policy tend to utilise middle-range or meso-level theory as the focus tends to be on the interaction between state agencies

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and other national-level organisations and on specific issues such as elite athlete success, gender inequity in the leadership of sport organisations, the bidding process for major sports events or the impact of lottery funding on sports club development. However, even when the focus is on a substantive and clearly defined policy issue, many researchers find reference to macro-level theory (*Weltanschauung*) useful in sensitising the researcher to broader explanatory themes that might have shaped the behaviour of organisations involved in the policy process within the substantive area of interest. Indeed it is possible to argue that there is an under-utilisation of macro-level theorising in relation to sport policy and that by focusing on the meso- level we run the risk of downplaying or even ignoring the deeply rooted societal forces that discretely, but effectively, shape day-to-day policy decisions.

The discussion thus continues by looking more closely at some examples of macro-level theory and how they might be used to analyse sport policy and also how they might inform analysis at the meso-level.

Using macro-level theory in the analysis of sport policy

The range of macro-level theories is extensive and only a selection will be reviewed here to illustrate the contribution that this level of theory can make to the analysis of sport policy. The macro-level theories of particular interest are those that deal more explicitly with the distribution of power in society and/or the relationship between the state and society. Although the two categories overlap significantly in the former category, one would include Marxism and neo- Marxism, globalisation, pluralism and neo-pluralism, feminism, and in the latter category one would include governance and public choice theory. There are a number of excellent reviews of this body of theory (see for example Dryzek and Dunleavy, 2009) and also a number of reviews that examine individual theories or selections of theories in relation to sport, though not explicitly in relation to sport policy (see for example Hargreaves, 1986; Sage, 1990; Morgan, 1994; Jarvie and Maguire, 1994; Giulianotti, 2004; Carrington and McDonald, 2009).

Table 2.1 summarises four theories that are either among the more commonly adopted or are among those considered to have the greatest potential to inform analysis. Each theory is described and evaluated in terms of their unit of analysis, their conceptualisation of the role of the state, their view on the dynamic for public policy, the meso-level theories/frameworks with which they are particularly compatible and their primary focus in relation to sport. As can be seen, each directs the researcher to

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give emphasis to different analytic variables (for example, social class, interest groups, networks or markets) and each directs attention to a different set of key research questions, such as social control and commodification for the Marxist and the regulatory significance of the state for the market liberals.

It is certainly not impossible to address questions relating to particular substantive policy issues utilising macro-level theory. Using feminist theory to examine the policy outcomes of NGBs of sport, governments and international federations or using neo-pluralism to examine the application of competition (anti-trust) policy to the sale of broadcasting rights would undoubtedly be insightful. However, I would argue that while macro-level theory can account for particular policy outcomes they are less useful in understanding the process by which those outcomes were generated or, in other words, the way in which macro-level systemic orientations or biases were articulated in the day-to-day operation of organisations. In order to achieve this finer level of understanding it is argued that it is necessary to augment macro-level theory with analytic frameworks and theories specifically designed to provide insights at the meso-level and, as is indicated in Table 2.1, there are a number of meso-level theories that have a strong compatibility with theories that are intended to provide the researcher with a *Weltanschauung*.

Using meso-level theory in the analysis of sport policy

As was the case with macro-level theory, there is a wide range of theories available at the meso level. Sabatier (1999) identified eleven frameworks for analysis and explored seven in detail which included the stages heuristic, institutional rational choice, multiple streams, punctuated- equilibrium and advocacy coalition. John (1998), in a similar review of the field, identified five broad theoretical approaches to policy analysis – institutional, group and network, socio- economic, rational choice and ideas-based. Three meso-level theories will be discussed in this section – punctuated equilibrium, the advocacy coalition framework and multiple streams. These theories have been selected because they fulfill the following criteria:

- a capacity to explain both policy stability and policy change;
- a capacity to illuminate a range of aspects of the policy process such as agenda setting, policy selection and policy implementation;
- an applicability across a range of issues within the sport policy sub-sector;
- a capacity to provide a longitudinal perspective on policy change

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(Houlihan,2005a).

Punctuated equilibrium

Developed by Baumgartner and Jones (1993), the punctuated equilibrium theory of the policy process emphasises the simultaneous presence of pressures for change and stability where long periods of stability are followed by periods of, often rapid, change. They argue that the forces that create stability (i.e. the interaction of ideas, institutions, interests and socio-economic factors) are also those that are responsible for the rupture in policy stability and the onset of a period of policy change. The model shares many common characteristics with Lindblom's (1959; see also Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963) theory of incremental policy making and its emphasis on political compromise and satisficing rather than optimising and gradualism. It also shares common ground with the literature on policy communities (Heclo and Wildavsky, 1974; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992), which emphasises the role of communities in dealing with 'normal' issues, the maintenance of boundaries between insider organisations and outsiders, the role of ideas in maintaining community cohesion and the collective interest of community members in maintaining the broad status quo. In the punctuated equilibrium theory ideas (for example, about what constitutes a problem and what constitutes a solution to a problem) that reinforce the interests of power elites become institutionalised in the policy sub-sector.

However, the stability within a policy sub-sector can be undermined by a number of forces. First, there can be the steady accumulation of pressures for change which might come from changing patterns of behaviour (for example the accumulation of evidence in the 1960s and 1970s in the UK that the rules regarding amateurism in sports such as rugby union, tennis and athletics were being ignored) or from changes in values and ideas (for example, regarding the importance of success at the Olympic Games). A second source of destabilising pressures can come from the actions of policy entrepreneurs who are looking for opportunities to promote their (or their client's) interests which are currently not being met by the existing policy community. An example of this type of pressure might be the lobbying (largely unsuccessful so far) by football supporters' groups within the European Union for a greater voice regarding the governance of clubs. A third force for change is the media which, when for example it picks up on the ideas of policy entrepreneurs or 'whistle-blowers', can add considerable momentum to forces undermining policy stability, creating a bandwagon effect. One such example is the debate about the governance of some of the major international federations, FIFA in particular, which has received considerable media attention and forced the organisation to modify, if only marginally, its governance procedures. A second example would be the way in which child protection issues related to sport, and especially the sexual abuse of young athletes, were initially a concern limited to

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Table 1.1 Selected major macro-level theories and sport policy

Dimension	*Neo-Marxism*	*Governance*	*Neo-pluralism*	*Market liberalism*
Unit of analysis	Social classes	Policy networks and sub-systems	Interest groups	Markets and individuals
Role of the state	Under Marxism the state is an instrument of the ruling capitalist class: under neo-Marxism the position and role of the state is less clear with some arguing that the state's role is to manage capitalism which might involve short term actions which go against the interests of capital accumulation (e.g. provide welfare services through taxation to enhance legitimation).	Due to increasing complexity of social issues, governments seek to act in partnership with civil society organisations. Rhodes (1994) sees this as a loss of power (the hollowing out of the state) whereas Rose (1999) argues that we are witnessing an extension of state power (i.e. a 'rolling out' of state power).	The state is an active participant in making policy, partly mediating between rival groups, but also protecting and promoting its own interests (especially in relation to problem definition and preferred solutions). The state has a bias towards business interests.	Argued that markets maximise social welfare and that individuals are rational utility maximisers. The role of the state is to enable markets to operate effectively (with as little regulation as possible). Market liberals, especially rational (public) choice theorists, have a deep suspicion of state action and argue that politicians and state officials will act rationally and consequently seek to maximise their budgets (through taxation) to secure organisational growth and therefore larger personal rewards. The role of the state should be limited to activities such as protecting property rights, defence, providing basic infrastructure and services (in cases of market failure) and regulating monopolies.
Dynamic for policy-making	Class conflict and/or the inherent instability of capitalism (e.g. the 2008 global banking crisis).	Accumulation of evidence and/or external event (e.g. financial crisis).	Interaction between groups with unequal influence.	Market competition and the pursuit, by individuals, of personal interest.

Continued

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Dimension	*Neo-Marxism*	*Governance*	*Neo-pluralism*	*Market liberalism*
Associated meso-level frameworks and approaches	None clearly, but elements of network theory in which business dominated or business oriented networks would manage policy sub-systems; and institutionalism in which dominant power relations become institutionalised in the state.	Policy communities; institutionalism.	Advocacy coalition framework; punctuated equilibrium theory; institutionalism.	Multiple streams.
Primary focus for the study of sport policy	Sport as a form of social control (i.e. diverting attention from the ills of capitalism) or sport as a source of profit (e.g. through broadcasting and commodification).	Sport policy networks/ community and their membership, values and decision processes.	Existence and influence of advocacy coalitions for interests such as elite, women, youth and community sport.	The regulatory role of the state. The relationship between the state, the market and the not-for-profit sector.
Orientation/key questions	How is the tension between sport as a 'new industry' and as an element of welfare provision managed?	What are the dominant values in the community? How is the membership of the community decided? How insulated is the community from other policy sub-sectors?	To what extent do advocacy coalitions exist in sport? If they do, what is their relative strength and what is their relationship to government?	Is the state competing with the commercial sector by providing sports facilities? Is the expansion of state involvement in sport evidence in support of the public choice critique of public officials (seeking personal benefits – increased salaries – rather social welfare)?
References	Offe 1984; Brohm 1978; Jessop 1990; Morgan 1994; Girginov & Sandanski 2011	Pierre & Peters 2000; Houlihan & Groeneveld 2011; Rose 1999	Lindblom 1977; van den Berg & Janoski 2005; Green & Houlihan 2004	Friedman and Friedman 1962; Niskanen 1971

Source: Houlihan and Lindsey (2013)

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discussion among a small number of academics, but when adopted by the media became major issues that NGBs were forced to address more urgently. In other words the media are important in turning a private concern into a public issue.

The coherence and intuitive appeal of the theory is acknowledged, but it is not without its critics. John (1998) points to its descriptive nature and its confidence in the effectiveness of grass-roots politics and opinion to challenge institutionalised policy communities, thus ignoring the capacity of those interests to manipulate public opinion. Perhaps of more significance when applying the model to sport policy is the fact that much sport policy is spillover from contiguous policy sub-sectors such as education, health and economic development. For example, in most countries it is unlikely that sports interests will have had significant influence over decisions about the status of physical education in the school curriculum, the decision to bid for the Olympic Games or the football World Cup, or the investment by public bodies in community sport. It is much more likely that these decisions were influenced by education, economic/diplomatic, and health/welfare sub-sectoral interests, respectively. Sport is arguably distinguished from many other policy sub-sectors by being characterised by policy taking rather than policy making (Dery, 1999; Houlihan, 2000).

These criticisms notwithstanding, the punctuated equilibrium theory has much to recommend it for the study of sport policy. Not only does it require the researcher to address questions relating to *both* policy stability and change, but it also foregrounds the issue of the relationship between structure and agency – the third meaning of theory outlined above. By drawing attention to the tendency for interests to institutionalise their power and also to the long term-fragility of that institutionalisation, the model allows for a more subtle analysis of the interaction between established interests, outsider interests and the role of policy entrepreneurs. Overall, the punctuated equilibrium theory provides substantial scope for the generation of hypotheses in the study of sport policy.

The advocacy coalition framework

The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) is, like the punctuated equilibrium theory, rooted in broadly pluralist macro-level assumptions about the distribution of power and the competitive nature of the policy process. It also shares assumptions about the capacity of ideas/evidence to influence the behaviour of decision makers and, at times, to prove more significant than organisational or sectoral self-interest. According to Sabatier and Weible (2007, pp. 191–2), the ACF is founded on three important assumptions:

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- the macro-level assumption that most policy making occurs among specialists within a policy subsystem but that their behaviour is affected by factors in the broader political and socio-economic system;
- a micro-level 'model of the individual' that is drawn heavily from social psychology; and
- a meso-level conviction that the best way to deal with the multiplicity of actors in a sub- system is to aggregate them into 'advocacy coalitions'.

The ACF rests on a number of operational assumptions, namely:

- The increasing complexity of the problems facing governments has resulted in increasing specialisation both within government (by public officials and by politicians) and also in civil society (i.e. specialist interest groups).
- Policy subsystem participants hold strong beliefs which they hope to translate into action.
- Policy beliefs are slow to change and consequently a time frame of ten years or more is required for the analysis of policy change.
- Subsystems involve actors from different levels of government and increasingly from international bodies and from other countries.

Within policy subsystems it is common to find between two and four coalitions competing for influence over policy although they are rarely of equal influence, with one coalition often clearly in a dominant position. As with much of the literature on policy communities (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992), shared beliefs and values give the coalition its coherence and continuity. Similar to work by Benson (1982) and Peffley and Hurwitz (1985), Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) argue that a hierarchy of beliefs can be identified as follows:

- Deep core beliefs that affect most policy subsystems and refer to normative assumptions (for example about the proper role of government in sport) and ontological assumptions about human nature (for example whether the propensity to cheat in sport is normal or aberrant). These beliefs are slow to change.
- At a more shallow level are policy core beliefs that refer to the operationalisation of deep core beliefs within specific subsystems. For example, at the deep core level a common belief was, and still is in some countries, that men and women should fulfill different roles in civil society. In sport this has often been interpreted to mean that women's participation in competitive sport should not be encouraged. A second example might be deep core beliefs about the use of the countryside and its romantic conceptualisation as a pastoral idyll which *Theorising the analysis of sport policy* is in stark contrast to urban life.

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The operationalisation of this deep core belief in relation to sport might be to limit the use of the countryside for non-traditional/noisy sports such as powerboat racing and motocross.

- The final, shallowest, level concerns secondary beliefs that tend to be narrow in scope and related to quite specific issues in the sub-sector. Examples from the sport policy sub-sector might include how participation strategies vary from one NGB or municipality to another. As these beliefs have a much narrower focus they tend to be much more amenable to change.

Policy change is driven by conflict between coalitions and often a policy broker will mediate between coalitions to generate policy outputs. However, the ACF assumes a high degree of rationality in the policy process as it is argued that policy change is also driven by policy-oriented learning which refers to the relatively slow accumulation of evidence and experience that can make the defence of the policy status quo increasingly difficult. Thus, while coalitions will be resistant to accepting the implications of evidence that challenges their core beliefs and consequent policy preferences, the accumulated weight of evidence will gradually undermine the status quo. The ACF is arguably more convincing when explaining the persistence of policy stability (through the dominance of particular coalitions possessing a coherent set of core beliefs) than in explaining policy change (the impact of a mix of exogeneous factors, rationality and policy learning). Perhaps most importantly, the framework under-theorises the nature of power and the extent to which protection of interests undermines the willingness to accept contrary evidence.

However, the ACF has been applied in a large number of policy analyses including some in sport (Parrish, 2003d; Green and Houlihan, 2004) and has proved a useful heuristic tool.

Multiple streams framework

Unlike the ACF and the punctuated equilibrium theory the multiple streams framework is more sharply focused on one aspect of the policy process, namely, agenda setting. In his review of the utility of the multiple streams framework, Zahariadis (2007, p. 65) argues that a good theory (focused on policy selection) will provide answers to three questions:

- How is attention rationed?
- How and where is the search for alternatives conducted?
- How is selection biased?

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John Kingdon (1984) argues that these questions can best be answered by conceptualising the policy process as comprising three conceptually distinct 'streams' (problems, policies and politics), each of which has its own dynamics and rules. Interconnection between streams occurs at critical points in time when policy windows open (due, for example, to crisis or to the regular cycle of policy review, such as the annual budget-setting process) and/or through the actions of policy entrepreneurs. It is on these occasions that the three streams are likely to intertwine and produce policy change. Four assumptions underpin the framework, the first of which is that decision makers operate in conditions of ambiguity. Ambiguity may be manifest in relation to the definition of problems. For example, is the low or declining levels of participation in organised sport a health problem, an educational problem or a sport problem? Similarly, is doping in sport primarily a health problem, a sport problem or a problem of law and order? The second assumption is that, unlike individuals for whom problem processing is serial, that is, individuals tend to focus on one problem at a time, organisations, such as governments, are parallel processors, that is, they deal with many issues, some of which overlap. In governments, not only do problems overlap and blur into one another, but solutions also overlap and can themselves create or be overtaken by new problems. The third assumption is that policy makers operate under significant time constraints, not simply because of the queue of other problems vying for their attention but also because of the public expectation that a policy response should follow quickly once a problem has been publicly acknowledged. The final assumption is that the three streams are relatively independent.

The three streams are summarised in Figure 2.1. The problem stream consists of a range of issues that the public and policy makers want tackled. Issues are brought to the attention of policy makers in a variety of ways including through indicators (e.g. surveys of levels of participation in sport or the prevalence of obesity among the young), focusing events (e.g. evidence of corruption in an international federation, an incident of doping involving a high profile event or athlete or a significant failure to win medals at an Olympic Games) and feedback (e.g. from existing programmes, indicating a lack of progress in raising the participation levels of a particular target group). The politics stream comprises a number of elements including party ideology where a change of government between social democrat and neoliberal parties can have a substantial impact on the willingness to recognise problems as legitimate business for government. Another element in the politics stream is the strength and activity of interest groups and would include NGBs of sport and national Olympic committees. A third element is the national mood (towards the quality of school sport opportunities or the adequacy of the performance of the team in a country's national sport) and is often reflected in the strength and activity of interest groups, but also

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refers to the reflection of the national mood in the media. The policy stream comprises a complex mix of ideas that are competing for acceptance within policy networks. Competition might be in relation to talent identification and development programmes such as the Long Term Athlete Development programme, ways of funding sports participation, coach training programmes, or the degree of autonomy to be granted to sports organisations. The criteria according to which policies are selected will include their compatibility with the values of the governing party and technical and financial feasibility.

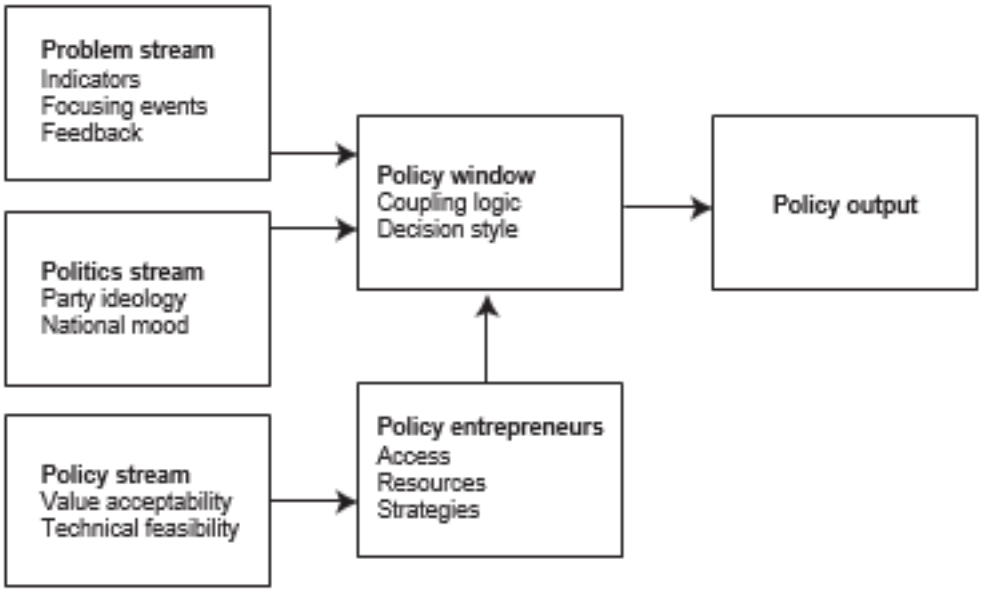

Figure 2.1 The multiple streams framework

Source: Adapted from Zahariadis (2007)

The multiple streams framework with its emphasis on ambiguity, complexity and messiness is in marked contrast to the analytic frameworks that emphasise an underlying rationality in the policy process. As well as being a thought-provoking challenge to the other frameworks such as the ACF and punctuated equilibrium, multiple streams is of interest because it can be combined or integrated with other theories. Not only does it clearly fit within a pluralist macro-level theory, but it also prompts an analysis of the relationship between structure and agency by the emphasis given to the role of policy entrepreneurs.

THEORISING THE ANALYSIS OF SPORT POLICY

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Excerpted from *Routledge Handbook of Sport Policy*

Using theory

It is rare in the social sciences for researchers to question the value of theory. However, far more open to discussion is what kind of theory and how much theory is appropriate to incorporate into a research design. Unless one is specifically concerned to test the utility of a specific theory then the primary purpose of theory is to guide the various stages of research from the generation or identification of research questions and the generation of hypotheses through the collection of data to the interpretation of data. The appropriate use of theories guides research (i.e. identifies what is important when undertaking fieldwork data collection) for, as Stoker observes, 'Theories are of value precisely because they structure all observations' (1995, p. 17, quoted in Grix, 2004). Without theory or some other means of discriminating and classifying empirical data it would be impossible to separate the trivial from the crucial observations. However, theory must be proportionate to the complexity of the research questions. Parsimony in theory is always preferable to, and more effective than, complexity: while the former should lead to clarity of data collection and its interpretation, the latter often leads to confusion in explanation if not paralysis. Furthermore, theory must be used with a degree of scepticism and especially in relation to research into (sport) public policy where the commitment to utilising one theory, such as Kingdon's multiple streams with its underlying pluralist assumptions about the relative openness of the policy agenda, might prevent the recognition of the extent to which particular interests are institutionalised. In this respect there is a case for seeing meso-, and indeed macro-level theories, providing the researcher with a repertoire of resources on which they can draw. In addition, it is important for the researcher to acknowledge the interconnection between macro- and meso-level theories.

As was made clear in Table 2.1, it is possible to nest meso-level theories within the broader macro-level theories of the state and society. More importantly, it should be stressed that all meso-level theories are the encapsulation of theoretical assumptions that have their origin in macro-level theorising. Just as the multiple streams framework resonates most clearly with the assumptions underpinning pluralist and neo-pluralist theorising, both the ACF and the punctuated equilibrium frameworks are based on a series of macro-level assumptions about the nature of power and particularly the distribution of power in society (both national and global), the relationship between civil society and the state, and the scope for agency. At the very least, analyses located at the meso-level should demonstrate a clear awareness of the macro-level assumptions that inform their adopted analytic frameworks. As Green (2005) demonstrated, a research strategy that aims to integrate macro- and meso-level theories offers the prospect of substantial insight into the sport policy process.

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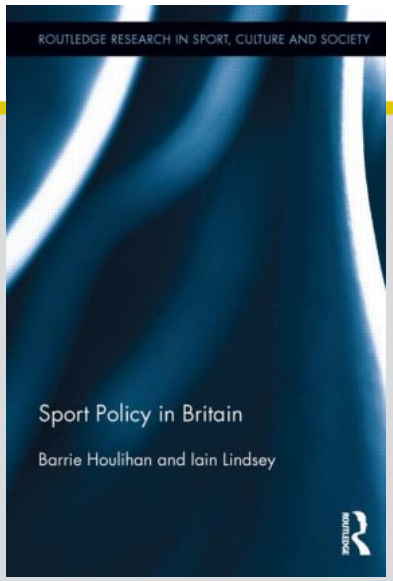
In summary, the analysts of sport policy have at their disposal a rich, challenging and diverse body of theory. Admittedly, almost all theory development in relation to policy analysis has been stimulated by research focused on other, usually more substantial policy sub-sectors. In general, the adaptation of these theoretical frameworks has not proved problematic, but there is certainly scope for theory development and refinement prompted by insights derived from the study of sport policy. The challenge for the coming years is to develop and publicise those insights, and thus to contribute to the refinement of theory.

CHAPTER

2

THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS



This chapter is excerpted from
Sport Policy in Britain
by Barrie Houlihan, Iain Lindsey.

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THE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

BARRIE HOULIHAN

Excerpted from *Sport Policy in Britain*

The period since 1990 has been one of the most significant for British sport since government began to take a sustained interest in the policy area in the mid-1960s. What was, in the late 1980s, a largely neglected backwater of public policy has experienced a rapid increase in political attention leading to a plethora of policy initiatives and a substantial increase in public funding. The purpose of this book is to provide an analysis of the nature and extent of change in the fortunes of British sport. It is argued that since the early 1990s there has been significant change across a range of dimensions of sport policy and especially in relation to: the salience of sport to government; the allocation of government resources associated with sport; the machinery of government concerned with sport; and the distribution of power in the policy sub-sector.

The analysis in this book is focused on developments in policy related to community, elite and school sport, but is concerned mainly with the non-commercial providers and aspects. While it is acknowledged that the government has a significant role in regulating elite sport within the commercial sector (professional football, rugby, tennis et cetera) and in shaping the business environment of the commercial fitness sector, the activities of the government or the state more broadly in these areas of sport provision are not the central concerns of this study. As regards the geographic focus of the book, it is acknowledged that much of the substantive focus is on sport policy which operates at the UK level (mainly elite athlete development) and at the England level (for example, in the chapters that deal with local government and with youth sport). However, the impact of devolution is a theme that runs through the study and is dealt with explicitly in Chapter 4.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 1990

Nineteen ninety was an important year in British politics in general and, as would soon become clear, for sport policy. Margaret Thatcher, who had been prime minister for over eleven years and who had resigned in November 1990, had had a profound impact on British politics and on the role of government. Her successor, John Major, shared many of her principles, especially in relation to the role of government and public expenditure (which should both be limited). However, where he differed significantly from his predecessor was in relation to his view of the relationship between the individual and society and in his attitude towards sport. Whereas Margaret Thatcher adopted an atomistic view of 'society' as comprising a collection of utility maximising rational actors, John Major took a view which was closer to 'one-nation' Conservatism and its acknowledgement of national and local community. More significantly for this study, he

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was passionate about sport and, although a reluctant interventionist, he successfully placed sport back on the public policy agenda.

In the early 1990s sport was a policy sub-sector which was underresourced, lacking in strategic leadership and on the margin of the government's agenda. When sport forced itself to the attention of government it was often through crisis. Yet by the end of the decade sport was being promoted by a number of senior politicians as a source of social capital and national pride. Given this history of relative neglect during Margaret Thatcher's time as prime minister, it is not surprising that there was a lack of clarity within public organisations, especially the Sports Council, about the public policy objectives of sport. Writing of the time, David Pickup, the Sports Council's director-general, commented that 'we were constantly vexed by the studied lack of any specific endorsement—or even rejection— by the government of those earlier strategies [*Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years*, published in 1982, and *Into the Nineties: A Strategy for Sport 1988–1993*, published in 1988] . . . It has regrettably to be added that the corporate plans were no more productive of a specific Departmental endorsement' (1996, p. 53). While the Sports Council was busy formulating policy (in relation to important issues such as equity of access to sport and the nature of the sport development continuum), their internal discussions were taking place in a public policy vacuum.

As regards the machinery of government associated with sport, the picture was one of competing agencies, overlapping jurisdictions and role confusion. Not only did the GB Sports Council have a confusing dual remit for UK-wide issues and for English issues, but also the division of responsibility between the GB Sports Council and the three 'home country' sports councils was very unclear. There was also a degree of role confusion insofar as the GB Sports Council, at times, acted as though it were an advocate on behalf of sport rather than an agent of government (albeit masked by the fiction of a Royal Charter). Pickup again captures accurately the lack of clarity within government in this period over the roles and responsibilities of the agencies:

> As far as functions are concerned, [Minister for Sport] Iain Sproat's statement of 8 July 1994 shed little light upon the matter [of reform of the GB Sports Council]; replete with ambiguities and confusion, it sought to present any future English Sport Council's involvement with 'mass participation' as unnecessary whilst encouraging it to promote 'grassroots' activity. He also envisaged both the planned UK Sports Council and all four Home Country Councils as having some responsibilities for promoting sporting excellence, but was impenetrably vague as to how the UKSC might, in practice, achieve any sensible coordination of effort (1996, pp. 209–210).

Other sport organisations operated within a broader sports landscape which was

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fragmented and resource-poor with the consequence that they were routinely excluded from policy debates. National governing bodies (NGBs) retained a high degree of autonomy from the state due in part to their preference, but also in part due to their lack of capacity to lobby effectively and to the state's lack of interest in hearing their opinions. Local authorities had proved ineffective in resisting privatisation of the management of sport and leisure centres and were generally considered to be an impediment to the ambitions of the Thatcherite wing of the Conservative party to reduce the size of the state. Schools were grappling with the implementation of the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) and still recovering from the damaging consequences of the introduction of local financial management of schools and the teachers' dispute with the government in the mid-1980s, both of which had significantly reduced the extent of extracurricular sport.

John Major's appointment as prime minister came at a time when the sport sub-sector was underresourced and fragmented, characterised by ineffective leadership and little sense of purpose and direction. The few indicators of effectiveness of sport policy that were available at the time painted a mixed picture. Somewhat ironically, 1990 marked the high point of sport participation (48 per cent of adults participated in sport—walking excluded—in the previous four weeks). However, this was more likely the result of the release of latent demand made possible by the building of facilities in the late 1970s and early 1980s than successful activity by sport development staff. Less positive were the differences in participation levels between genders (19 percentage point gap between men and women's participation), social classes (37 percentage point gap between professional and unskilled manual) and age groups (a 44 percentage point gap between the 20–24 years age group and the 60–69 years age group). As regards indicators of success at the high performance level, the British team at the summer Olympics in 1992 achieved a modest 13th place in the medal table before a disastrous 36th place in Atlanta four years later.

In the intervening period it would appear that this rather bleak picture of sport policy, provision and impact has been radically changed with sport having established ministerial representation in the Cabinet, having also benefited significantly from almost 15 years of national lottery funding, being able to point to a significant increase in participation among school- children and having achieved considerable success at the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2008. However, progress had not been uniformly positive as sport organisations still operated within a complex (and often fractious) organisational landscape and participation levels remained stubbornly static and variable by class, gender and age. Table 1.1 provides a summary of the contrast.

In the period since 1990 there has arguably been a significant transformation in the

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status and impact of sport policy. The primary aim of this book is to analyse the character and significance of the changes that have taken place in relation to the government's policy towards, and forms of intervention in, sport. A necessary complementary aim is to identify, assess and utilise a set of concepts and analytic frameworks which will help in fulfilling the book's primary aim. With these two aims in mind, this chapter continues with a review of concepts and frameworks which have proved to have the greatest utility in previous analyses of sport policy or which have been developed in the general discipline of policy analysis and which are considered to have the potential to make a contribution to the examination of sport policy. It is argued that effective analysis of policy is only possible through the application of concepts and analytic frameworks which offer not only the opportunity to recognise patterns and processes in policy development, but which also provide a rigorous challenge to the conventional wisdom and easy empiricism. With these concerns in mind, the final chapter will provide both conclusions regarding the nature, extent and process of policy change in sport and also an examination of the utility of the concepts and frameworks introduced in the remaining sections of this chapter and the degree to which they provided insights into the policy process.

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Table 1.1 Dimensions of Change

Dimension	*1980s*	*Mid-1990s*	*Early 2010s*
Salience of sport to government	Low	Increasing following John Major's appointment as PM	Consistently and significantly higher than in the 1980s
Public policy objectives for sport (direct and indirect)	Vague, except in response to specific problems (e.g. football hooliganism) when they were confused	Emerging strong focus on school and elite level sport	Reasonably firmly established around youth participation, elite success, event hosting and sport's contribution to health improvement and improved educational standards
Machinery of government concerned with sport	Neglected and with limited resources; confused overlapping remits	Reduction in overlapping remits (due to establishment of UK Sport); appointment of a Minister for Sport and establishment of a ministry responsible for sport. Still very complex	Still complex
Broader national landscape of sport	Fragmented and labyrinthine; only limited contact between public, not-for-profit and commercial sectors	Fragmented and labyrinthine; only limited contact between public, not-for-profit and commercial sectors	Much closer integration between the public and not-for-profit sectors
Distribution of power in the policy sub-sector	Lobbying capacity weak in both the not-for-profit and commercial sectors	Increasing lobbying activity by Central Council for Physical Recreation, national governing bodies of sport and BISL (Business in Sport and Leisure)	A more vigorous policy network with more effectively organised interests especially in relation to elite sport and youth/school sport.
Sport policy outcomes	Limited connection between public policy inputs and sport outcomes	Significant increase in resources available to central government to shape sport (via the national lottery)	Tighter integration between public and not-for-profit sectors; NGBs increasingly the agents of government policy; substantial success in increasing participation in school sport and also in winning Olympic and Paralympic medals

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ANALYSING CHANGE IN SPORT POLICY

The study of policy change involves the search for, and analysis of, pattern, trends, key events, continuities and breaks with the past with the aim of giving meaning to a collection of events and policy decisions in a particular time period: in other words, to move beyond the mere cataloguing of events through descriptive research to an understanding of the deployment of power and the protection and promotion of interests. In order to obtain an accurate perspective on the scale and nature of change in a particular policy area, it has been argued that a period of at least ten years is required (Sabatier 2007). However, even a period of ten years may not be sufficient to identify policy trends or watersheds that mark significant policy transitions. Uncertainty about the temporal parameters of policy analysis arises, in part, from uncertainty regarding the nature of policy itself and particularly what constitutes significant policy change. Policy may be defined in a number distinct ways, for example, as aspiration and symbolism or as action and process. Contemporary sport policy in the United Kingdom (UK) is replete with aspirational statements and symbolic flourishes. Recent examples of aspirational statements include that from UK Sport, which identified one of its three 'corporate themes' as being to promote 'UK Sport to win and maintain the respect, trust and engagement of everyone with whom we interact' (UK Sport 2010, p. 10). In Game Plan, one of the recommendations was 'To encourage a mass participation culture . . . A benchmark for this could be Finland' (DCMS/Strategy Unit 2002, p. 80). More recently, Sport England stated that it aspired to 'create a world-leading community sport environment, as part of the legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games [and to establish] a lifelong sporting culture in this country [which] will change sport from a minority to a majority pastime' (Sport England 2010, p. 9). Sport Northern Ireland's stated vision is to develop ' . . . a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport . . . ' (Sport Northern Ireland 2009b, p. 7). While many would question whether these aspirations were feasible, few would argue that they were not laudable. More importantly, in relation to all of these organisations a strong case could be made that even if their mission statements and goals were overambitious the sentiments that they incorporated have been supported, even if only modestly, by the commitment of resources—that is, policy as action and process.

Unfortunately, identifying action (the commitment of resources such as time, money, expertise, personnel and political support to the achievement of realistic objectives) is not always straightforward. The outputs of the political system can take a range of forms only some of which would meet this definition of action. Indeed, in sport there are many examples of policy outputs which are simply policy re-branding or organisational tinkering such as the establishment of the Sports Cabinet and the proposed merger of UK Sport and Sport England.

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In relation to policy change, the acceptance in the mid-1960s that sport fell legitimately within the remit of government was equivocal rather than wholehearted and policy interventions were sporadic and generally disconnected rather than continuous and strategic. In the period immediately prior to Major's appointment as prime minister, the governments of Margaret Thatcher displayed little interest in sport apart from the obligatory photo opportunities (being kissed by Kevin Keegan before the departure of the England team for the 1982 World Cup finals was probably the prime minister's most intense sporting experience). When sport did intrude into the consciousness of the prime minister, it was almost always in a negative context, as two of the most prominent sports issues of the 1980s were football spectator violence both at home and abroad involving the supporters of English football clubs and stadium safety (a fire at Bradford City FC stadium in 1985 and a crowd surge at Hillsborough stadium in 1989, both of which resulted in substantial loss of life). Apart from the attempt to tackle the issues of spectator violence and stadium safety, the government's most significant impact on sport was as a consequence of its general commitment to privatisation of public services which affected public sport facilities due to the requirement that local authorities should put the management of their facilities out to competitive tender.

The appointment of John Major as prime minister in November 1990 appeared to mark an important break with the past. In addition to very different levels of personal interest in sport, the period of John Major's premiership contrasted sharply with that of his predecessor most notably in terms of financial investment (which increased considerably due to the introduction of the national lottery), administrative reform (for example, the establishment of sportscoach UK, UK Sport and the Department of National Heritage) and strategy development (a significant policy document in 1995, the first in 20 years). However, the apparent clarity of the break with the past needs to be put in perspective. First, it is important to note that increased public investment, administrative reform and publication of strategy documents were evident across most areas of public policy, certainly from the mid-1990s. In education, for example, Chitty (2004) notes that between 1944 and 1979 there were only three significant education acts, but between 1979 and 2000 there were over 30 separate education acts. The last 20 years or so has not only witnessed an increase in legislative output by government but also an increase in administrative tinkering.

Caution in accepting 1990 as a watershed in sport policy is required for a second reason, which is the methodological problem in identifying specific periods. Debates concerning historical periodisation warn against the premature identification of periods and emphasise that period identification depends on the historical characteristics or variables that are considered significant. Attempts at periodisation invariably bear the

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imprint of their time of origin. More importantly, the erroneous imposition of a period on a series of events or policy developments can obscure analysis as the researcher attempts to make the data fit the defining characteristics. The historian Fernand Braudel warned against 'scholars who . . . first create these signs and then glue them on their precious bottles, to end by giving the signs authority over their content' (quoted in Gerhard 1956).

In this respect it is valuable to adopt a metaphor of levels of change in relation to sport policy, as this alerts the researcher to the danger of ascribing significance and 'period' status on the basis of relatively superficial or epiphenomenal events. For example, at the superficial level one might point to actions by the state which affect the distribution of resources, the establishment of new, or the reform of existing, administration structures, the change in the use of national lottery funding or change in the criteria for allowing national governing bodies of sport access to world class performance funding for their elite athletes. At a deeper level, change would be located in actions by the state which altered its long established relationships with civil society sport organisations such as national governing bodies or the place of physical education in the school curriculum. At a much more profound level are the changes in societal values which directly or indirectly impact on sport. Change at this deep societal level would include public acceptance that intervention in sport was a proper concern of government or that women or those with disabilities have the same right to participate in sport at the elite level as male able-bodied athletes. It would be possible to identify periods at each of these levels with the length of the period increasing with depth of change.

A number of writers have utilised a metaphor of levels in policy analysis with the work of Sabatier and colleagues being particularly useful. A central aspect of their advocacy coalition framework (ACF) is the role played by ideas in shaping the direction, nature and pace of policy change. The ACF conceptualises a three-tiered structure of beliefs: deep core beliefs; policy core beliefs; and secondary beliefs. Deep core beliefs are 'very general normative and ontological assumptions about human nature, the relative priority of fundamental values such as liberty and equality, the relative priority of welfare of different groups. The proper role of government versus markets in general, and about who should participate in governmental decision making' (Sabatier and Weible 2007, p. 194). At a slightly less profound level are a set of policy core beliefs which affect a whole subsystem and are the application or operationalisation of deep core beliefs. Policy core beliefs would indicate, for example, 'the priority of different policy- related values, whose welfare counts, the relative authority of government and markets, the proper roles of the general public, elected officials, civil servants, experts, and the relative seriousness and causes of policy problems in the subsystem' (Sabatier

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and Weible 2007, p. 195). At the final level are secondary beliefs which are 'relatively narrow in scope (less than subsystem wide) and address, for example, detailed rules and budgetary applications within a specific programme, the seriousness and causes of problems in a specific locale . . . ' (Sabatier and Weible 2007, p. 196). Secondary beliefs are more flexible and open to change. Table 1.2 provides examples of how the concept of a hierarchy of beliefs and levels of policy might be illustrated in relation to sport.

As the foregoing discussion indicates, it is important to take a sceptical approach to claims that a particular event or policy represents a watershed in the development of public policy in a specific subsystem. It is important to bear in mind that what might appear a profound shift in policy might, with the sharper perspective that temporal distance gives, appear as more incremental and part of a longer term pattern in policy development. For example, it is open to debate whether the sharp shift in sport policy following the resignation of Margaret Thatcher and the appointment of John Major marked the beginning of a new period in the history of government involvement or whether the Thatcher years should be seen as a relatively short break in the longer term trend of increasing government involvement in sport. Thus it could be argued that John Major's increasing interventionism picked up where the previous Labour government sports minister, Denis Howell, left off in 1979 rather than marking a break with the past. With regard to the related example of modernisation, one could argue that the strong association between the Blair government and the modernisation of the institutions of government and civil society was a distinctive New Labour policy and marked a break with the more ideologically driven reforms of the previous administration. Indeed, as will be discussed below, both UK Sport and Sport England were tasked with promoting the modernisation of national governing bodies of sport and their constituent clubs. However, a contrary interpretation would be that rather than modernisation being a New Labour innovation, a strong case can be made that New Labour was continuing a process championed by the previous Conservative governments under the banner of new public management. Indeed, it is also arguable that the modernisation of the civil service has a much longer history which can be traced back to the Northcote-Trevelyan report published in 1854 (Burnham and Pyper 2008).

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Table 1.2 Levels of Beliefs and Policy

Level	*Examples of beliefs related to sport*	*Examples of policy*
Secondary beliefs/ surface level policy	• Hosting major sports events reflects positively on a country • All Olympic gold medals are of equal value irrespective of the sport in which they were won	• Allocating responsibility and resources to a government department/agency • The identification of sports where a country has some relative advantage
Policy core beliefs/ substantive policy	• International sporting success projects a positive image of a country • Young people's participation in sport builds positive personal characteristics	• Allocation of resources in pursuit of Olympic medals • Investment by government in school sport provision and in competitive sport
Deep core beliefs/ profound policy underpinnings	• Sport participation is appropriate/ inappropriate for women • Sport is a frivolous/serious pastime/career	• Introduction of regulations/ processes to require funded sport organisations to increase sports opportunities for women • Regulations which determine the status (compulsory or optional) of sport/physical education in the school curriculum

In summary, while periodisation is attractive as a way of organising empirical data about a policy area, it is a concept that should be used with caution as continuity has the habit of breaking through the most determined attempts to change policy direction. With this admonition in mind, the time span which is the focus for this study should be treated at this point in the analysis as having no significance beyond the fact that it marked the end of the time as prime minister of a particularly dominant personality in twentieth-century British politics and also that 1991 was the date when one of the present authors published his previous analysis of British sport policy (Houlihan 1991). Whether the span covered by this study deserves the definition as a distinct policy period will be discussed in the conclusion.

A related approach to assessing policy change is through a closer analysis of the particular instruments or resources used to effect change. A number of authors have proposed either directly or indirectly typologies of policy instruments (Lowi 1964, 1972; Hogwood 1987; Hood and Margetts 2007). Many of them are variations or expansions

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of the basic trio of policy instruments, namely inducements, threats and marketing. Lowi, for example, although referring to types of policy issues, provides a typology of responses to issues, suggesting that governments respond to issues in one or more of the following ways: distribution, redistribution, regulation and changes to administrative arrangements. Hood and Margetts provide a different typology, but one that has substantial overlaps with that of Lowi insofar as it identifies the resources that underpin the selection and deployment of particular instruments or combination of instruments. For them there are four basic resources available to government: nodality (the fact that government tends to hold a central strategic position in terms of flow of information); authority (to make and enforce regulations and laws); treasure (money which can be distributed or exchanged for other resources); and organisation (administrative capacity and expertise).

In order to develop a clearer understanding of the significance of instrument design and deployment, it is important to relate them to the intended policy change. Hall (1986) provides a valuable typology identifying three levels or 'orders' of policy change. First-order changes are alterations to the intensity or scale of an existing policy instrument, an example of which in relation to funding would be the decision in March 2006 by the UK government to provide an additional £200m to help prepare athletes for the 2012 London Olympic Games. Second-order changes are those that introduce new policy instruments designed to achieve existing policy objectives: examples of which would include the designation of some secondary schools as specialist sports colleges as a way of improving the quality of physical education teaching and increasing opportunities for participation in sport. Finally, third-order changes are those that involve a change in policy goals of which the short-lived decision by the government in the early 2000s to prioritise increased physical activity rather than more narrowly defined sport would be an example.

Table 1.3 combines these typologies of resources and instruments and illustrates their potential application in relation to elite sport. The important aspect of the table is the dimension of depth derived from Hall's notion of orders of change. What Hall's conceptualisation suggests is that water- sheds in policy are far less likely to be defined by doing more of the same (that is, simply adjusting existing patterns of resources, regulation and administration intended to better achieve the same set of policy goals). The break with the previous period is more likely to be defined by a significant change in policy goals.

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Table 1.3 Policy Change and Policy Instruments

Underpinning resources which	Nodality—Authority—Treasure—Organisation			
enable the selection from clusters of instruments . . .	Inducement/ rewards—Sanctions—Information/education/social marketing			
. . . which engineer change through . . .	Distribution of resources	Redistribution of resources	Regulation	Administrative (re)design
. . . and thus deliver different orders of change, for example, in relation to elite sport				
Change to existing instruments	Increasing the level of Exchequer funding or increasing the share of national lottery funding	Diverting resources from other government budgets, such as school sport or community sport, to the elite sport budget	Relaxing the tax regulations to make corporate donations to elite sport projects more attractive	Establishing a committee to coordinate the activities of the agencies concerned with elite sport development
Introduction of new instruments	Introducing new sources of funding such as new lottery games	Decision to import excellent coaches rather than develop home-grown coaches	Introduce criteria (regulations) which determine access to elite sport funding	Establishing a specialist administrative agency to oversee elite sport investment
Adoption of new policy goals	Direct funding to a country's best medal prospects	Diverting funds to a country's best medal prospects and away from a country's best athletes (if the latter are competing in sports where the quality of competition is especially high)	Relaxing the tax regulations to make corporate donations to specific summer Olympic sports more attractive	Establishing a specialist unit/agency to pursue new policy objectives such as improved elite level coaching, talent identification or children's play

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FRAMEWORKS FOR ANALYSING POLICY CHANGE

Although this study utilises frameworks developed for meso-level analysis, that is, frameworks intended to analyse policy at the sectoral or subsystem level, it is important to bear in mind that each meso-level framework or approach has its roots in assumptions at the macro level, which include, interalia, those about the distribution of power at the societal level, the significance of the pursuit and protection of sectional interests, the significance of ideas (whether as myths, evidence or ideology, for example) and the relationship between the state and civil society. In addition, each of the major macro-level theories sensitises the researcher to different aspects of the policy process as illustrated in Table 1.4.

While it is not within the scope of the present study to articulate and explore in detail the implications for policy analysis of macro-level theories, it is important to bear in mind that meso-level analytical frameworks are not value free and are derived from the often highly contentious and ideological theorisations at the societal level. There are a number of excellent summaries and examinations of macro-level theory which can be consulted for a more detailed engagement with this level of analysis. Parsons (1995) and Howlett and Ramesh (2003) provide valuable reviews of the main elements of a selection of the major theories, while Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009) and Hay, Lister and Marsh (2006) provide more sustained explorations of contemporary macro-level theorising. There is also a substantial body of work which explores the application of macro-level theorising to sport, including Giulianotti (2004), Morgan (1994), Carrington and McDonald (2009), Hargreaves (1986a), Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel (1999) and Jarvie and Maguire (1994).

The number of studies which have explicitly utilised meso-level frameworks to inform the analysis of aspects of UK sport policy is growing, but is still small. For example, Parrish (2003) and Green and Houlihan (2004, 2005) have drawn upon the advocacy coalition framework in their studies of the emergence of European Union sports law and elite sport policy change, respectively; Houlihan and Green (2006) have utilised the multiple-streams framework in relation to the development of school sport in England; and Houlihan (1991) drew on network theory in his study of British sport. The volume of applications of meso-level frameworks is certainly too small to suggest that one framework provides the most accurate description of the sport policy process or is the most effective tool of analysis. It is also still not clear whether particular frameworks provide insights only into specific issues within the sport subsystem (whether defined geographically, by scope or by pattern of activity) or whether it is possible to refer to the sport policy subsystem exhibiting a set of policymaking characteristics which are not only stable over time, but which also correspond reasonably closely to one

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particular framework. Due to the relative paucity of theoretically informed empirical studies, four meso-level analytical frameworks, which have the greatest potential explanatory value, will be examined briefly. The basis for selecting analytical frameworks has been discussed elsewhere (Houlihan 2005), but in summary the criteria are as follows: They should be internally consistent; have been applied empirically to sport; they should offer a reasonably comprehensive analysis of the policy process that is not over- focused on one aspect of the policy process such as implementation; and are intellectually robust, having been subject to sustained critical evaluation. More specifically, a useful framework should have the capacity to explain both policy stability and change (John 1998; Sabatier 1999); have the capacity to illuminate a range of aspects of the policy process; and facilitate at least a medium-term (five- to ten-year) analysis of policy change. The four frameworks reviewed are punctuated equilibrium, institutional analysis, multiple streams and advocacy coalitions.

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Table 1.4 Selected Major Macro-Level Theories and Sport Policy

Dimension	*Neo-Marxism*	*Governance*	*Neo-pluralism*	*Market liberalism*
Unit of analysis	Social classes	Policy networks and subsystems	Interest groups	Markets and individuals
Role of the state	Under Marxism the state is an instrument of the ruling capitalist class: Under neo-Marxism the position and role of the state is less clear with some arguing that the state's role is to manage capitalism which might involve short-term actions which go against the interests of capital accumulation, e.g. provide welfare services through taxation to enhance legitimation.	Due to increasing complexity of social issues, governments seek to act in partnership with civil society organisations. Rhodes (1994) sees this as a loss of power (the hollowing out of the state), whereas Rose (1999) argues that we are witnessing an extension of state power, i.e. a 'rolling out' of state power.	The state is an active participant in making policy, partly mediating between rival groups, but also protecting and promoting its own interests (especially in relation to problem definition and preferred solutions). The state has a bias towards business interests.	Argued that markets maximise social welfare and that individuals are rational utility maximisers. The role of the state is to enable markets to operate effectively (with as little regulation as possible). Market liberals, especially rational-choice theorists, have a deep suspicion of state action and argue that politicians and state officials will act rationally and consequently seek to maximise their budgets (through taxation) to secure organisational growth and therefore larger personal rewards. The role of the state should be limited to activities such as protecting property rights, defence, providing basic infrastructure and services (in cases of market failure) and regulating monopolies.

(continued)

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Table 1.4 (continued)

Dimension	*Neo-Marxism*	*Governance*	*Neo-pluralism*	*Market liberalism*
Dynamic for policymaking	Class conflict and/or the inherent instability of capitalism (e.g. the 2008 European and North American banking crisis).	Accumulation of evidence and/or external events (e.g. financial crisis).	Interaction between groups with unequal influence.	Market competition and the pursuit, by individuals, of personal interest.
Associated meso-level frameworks and approaches	None clearly, but elements of network theory in which business-dominated or business-oriented networks would manage policy subsystems; and institutionalism in which dominant power relations become institutionalised in the state.	Policy communities; institutionalism.	Advocacy coalition framework; punctuated-equilibrium theory; institutionalism.	Multiple streams.
Primary focus for the study of sport policy	Sport as a form of social control (i.e. diverting attention from the ills of capitalism) or sport as a source of profit (e.g. through broadcasting and commodification).	Sport policy networks/community and their membership, values and decision processes.	Existence and influence of advocacy coalitions for interests such as elite, women, youth and community sport.	The regulatory role of the state. The relationship between the state, the market and the not-for-profit sector.
Orientation/key questions	How is the tension between sport as a 'new industry' and as an element of welfare provision managed?	What are the dominant values in the community? How is the membership of the community decided? How insulated is the community from other policy subsectors?	To what extent do advocacy coalitions exist in sport? If they do, what is their relative strength and what is their relationship to government?	Is the state competing with the commercial sector by providing sports facilities? Is the expansion of state involvement in sport evidence in support of the public choice critique of public officials (seeking personal benefits, such as increased salaries, rather than social welfare)?
References	Offe (1984), Brohm (1978), Jessop (1990), Morgan (1994), Girginov and Sandanski (2011)	Pierre and Peters (2000), Houlihan and Groeneveld (2011), Rose (1999)	Lindblom (1977), van den Berg and Janoski (2005), Green and Houlihan (2004)	Friedman and Friedman (1962), Niskanen (1971)

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Punctuated Equilibrium

One significant criticism of a number of meso-level frameworks is that they tend to be better at explaining stability *or* change, but rarely stability *and* change. One exception to this criticism is Baumgartner and Jones's punctuated-equilibrium model, which suggests that policy sectors are characterised by long periods of relative policy stability typified by conservative incremental movement in policy which are then punctuated by intense periods of policy instability and change (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 2002; True et al. 2007). The punctuated-equilibrium model is concerned to explain the factors that cause a shift in the rate of policy change. Periods of relative policy stability are explained by the institutionalisation of a dominant set of ideas (about the nature of the policy area and the acceptable responses to issues) which are reinforced by powerful interests, the media and public opinion. Instability and rapid policy change are the result of the emergence of new issues, the accumulation of evidence challenging the status quo through feedback and changes in the broader government agenda which spill over into the macro-politics subsystem. 'Macropolitics is the politics of punctuation—the politics of large-scale change, competing policy images, political manipulation, and positive feedback. Positive feedback exacerbates impulses for change; it overcomes inertia and produces explosions or implosions from former states' (True et al. 2007, p. 162). Baumgartner and Jones (1993) explained that these intense bursts of change—punctuations—are caused by the interaction of image (the way in which a policy is characterised and understood by the public and the media, for example) and institutions (the institutional context of issues/the arenas in which policy is discussed). 'Institutions . . . freeze a set of political participants into the policy process and exclude others. Institutions help ensure that problems are defined in a particular manner and not in another. They set the agenda' (John 1998, p. 179).

The punctuated-equilibrium model is firmly located within a set of pluralist assumptions which views policy subsystems as fragile and vulnerable rather than institutionalising, on a long-term basis, bias towards particular interests on a semi-permanent basis. While Baumgartner and Jones do acknowledge that 'middle class interests' do seem to fare better in the American political system than those of the economically and politically weak, they nonetheless concluded that 'Rather than being controlled by any single group, institutions, or individual these forces are the result of complex interconnection of many institutions in society' (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, p. 237).

In some respects the model has potential utility in analysing sport policy in the UK, but there are elements of the model which might be difficult to support with evidence. On the positive side there are a number of occasions when macro politics has conflicted

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with the institutionalisation of a particular definition of sport policy priorities—for example, the large-scale government-wide priorities such as privatisation under Margaret Thatcher, social inclusion under the Blair government and, potentially at least, 'Big Society' under the coalition administration. Each of these government- wide initiatives disrupted the settled pattern of the sport policy agenda, the institutional arrangements, the allocation of responsibility and funding arrangements. However, it is debatable whether sport has experienced sustained periods of equilibrium which are then available for punctuation. Some areas of sport policy, such as community sport, experienced periods of sustained instability with any periods of equilibrium arguably being the consequence of neglect. However, other areas such as youth/school sport and elite sport can be characterised as having periods of equilibrium and evidence of incremental policy change during those periods.

Institutional Analysis

Overlapping with the punctuated-equilibrium model is a group of policy analysts who give even greater emphasis to the role of institutions in shaping policy. According to Thelen and Steinmo, institutions 'shape how political actors define their interests and . . . structure their relations of power to other groups' (1992, p. 2) and are seen as significant constraints and mediating factors in politics. Although the institutionalist literature is diverse, there are two broad orientations, one emphasising the significance of institutions as organisational entities (local authorities, national semi-autonomous agencies, departments et cetera) and the other, cultural institutionalism, which highlights shared values, norms and beliefs and can be seen as the routinisation of individual agency. Institutions constrain choice through their capacity to shape actors' perception of both problems and acceptable solutions. As such, the emphasis on institutions is a valuable corrective to the tendency of much pluralist theory to treat organisations (Sport England, the Sports Council for Wales and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, for example) as arenas in which politics takes place rather than as independent or intervening variables in the process. Cultural institutionalism, with its emphasis on values, norms and beliefs, draws attention to the social construction of meaning and 'how interest groups, politicians, and administrators decide their policy preferences' (Fischer 2003, p. 29). It is also at odds with the rhetoric of 'evidence-based policy' so frequently used by the Blair government and thus adds weight to Coalter's argument regarding the mythopoeic nature of sport (Coalter 2007). Coalter (2011) sees mythopoeic concepts as based on popular and often idealistic beliefs which are generated and maintained largely independent of a robust evidence base and which consequently 'isolate a particular relationship between variables to the

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exclusion of others and without a sound basis for doing so' (Glasner 1977, pp. 2–3, quoted in Coalter 2011). However, the relevance of institutionalism for sport policy analysis extends beyond the support it provides for the capacity of sport to shroud itself in a supportive mythology. Houlihan and White (2002), Pickup (1996), Roche (1993), and Henry (2001) all identify the organisational infrastructure of UK sport as a significant variable in shaping policy. Allocation of functional responsibility for sport among central government departments, the role of devolved assemblies, the use of 'arm's-length' agencies, and the presence of a minister for sport are all seen as having a noticeable impact on sport policy and its implementation.

One of the key strengths of institutionalism (as it relates to organisational arrangements and structures) is that it is a powerful corrective to those who are too ready to ignore the significance of state institutions in the policy process. However, this insight, that state institutions matter, is in many ways self-evident and leaves largely unanswered the more important questions such as 'To what extent and in what circumstances do institutions matter?' In many respects the distinctive contribution of institutionalism lies in the attention that it gives to ideas in the policy process and the extent to which ideas (whether based on evidence or on myth) can become an institutionalised constraint on policy choice. As such, institutional theorising resonates with the concept of path dependency, which suggests that 'the trajectory of change up to a certain point constrains the trajectory after that point' (Kay 2005, p. 553), and the notion that institutions 'leave their own imprint' (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, p. 8) by being significant mediating factors in the policy process. Whether the emphasis is on institutions as organisations or as sets of values and beliefs (culture), they constitute 'unique patterns of historical development and [impose] constraints . . . on future choices' (Howlett and Ramesh 1995, p. 27). Past decisions need to be seen as institutions in relation to subsequent policy choices with path dependency capturing the insight that 'policy decisions accumulate over time; a process of accretion can occur in a policy area that restricts options for future policy-makers' (Kay 2005, p. 558). In a narrow application of the concept of path dependency one would argue that early decisions in a policy area result in current policy being locked on to a particular policy trajectory. A broader application of the concept would suggest that rather than the next policy choice being inevitable it is more accurate to suggest that early decisions significantly constrain subsequent policy options and make policy reversal or termination progressively more difficult.

In relation to the broader conceptualisation of path dependency it has been argued very persuasively that the welfare regimes in countries in Western and Northern Europe can be divided according to historic political traditions associated with Christian conservatism, social democracy and neoliberalism (Esping-Andersen 1990). The

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strength of these traditions explains, partly at least, the persistence of distinct approaches to welfare at a time of intense global pressures to reduce the tax burden on business. However, recent comparative research by Bergsgard et al. (2007) suggests that caution is needed in assuming that welfare regime type imposes significant constraints on policy choice and the role of the state in relation to sport. Based on a study of countries considered to be exemplars of Esping- Andersen's three welfare types, the authors found only a loose association, with the anomalies being more striking than the indicators of consistency.

The overall impression with regard to welfare state regimes and variations is that our assumptions need to be modified. In all four countries voluntary sports organisations . . . still play prominent roles as organisers of sports activities. However, in all four cases we also find that government is strongly involved with sport. This is not only the case in the "state friendly" social democratic welfare state of Norway. Public policies are important for sport in the conservative welfare regime of Germany and the liberal welfare regimes of Canada and England (Bergsgard et al. 2007, pp. 244–245).

Attractive though the literature on the broad version of path dependency is, the relationship between regime type and policy outputs is apparently far from consistent in relation to sport and suggests that sport policy is not and should not be defined solely in terms of those elements that are associated with welfare. The case can be made that, more than other aspects of welfare provision (such as personal social services, education, health and housing), the dominant rationale for government intervention is as much business as it is welfare and that the commercial elements of the sector (sports broadcasting, sponsorship, sports events et cetera) are much more influential in shaping policy direction than the private schools or hospitals are in shaping policy in their respective fields. In addition, one could argue that broad sport policy is also influenced by international-relations objectives (Olympic medal success and increased UK influence in key international sports organisations) than other welfare sectors.

The links between institutional theory and macro-level analyses are far less direct than with the other three frameworks that are considered. Apart from market liberalism, institutional analysis could fit comfortably within any of the other three macro-level theories. Neo-pluralism, for example, is distinguished from pluralism by the acceptance of the institutionalised influence of business in the policy process. Marxism and neo-Marxism similarly argue that the state is, to a greater or lesser extent, subordinated to the interests of capital, while one version of governance theory assumes governance

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structures to reflect the institutionalisation of particular interests.

The Multiple-Streams Framework

At first sight the multiple-streams framework (Kingdon 1984) would seem inappropriate for the study of sport policy in a country which has a relatively centralised policy system and where points of entry to the decision process, for example, at regional or local government levels, are limited. Yet Houlihan and Green (2006, p. 89) in their study of the school sport policy process concluded that 'while the evidence from this study provides some support for the ACF [advocacy coalition framework] it is the multiple-streams framework that offers a more plausible explanation of policy change'. The framework takes as its organising metaphor for policy choice the 'garbage can' where 'various kinds of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated' (Cohen et al. 1972, p. 2). Giving stress to the extent of ambiguity, complexity and residual randomness in the policymaking process, Kingdon identifies three distinct streams: problems, policies and politics. Problems are 'conditions that come to be defined as problems, depending on who is paying attention at the time, the values and beliefs of the individuals concerned, and the magnitude of the change in the conditions' (Zahariadis 2003, p. 7). Governments are often prompted to 'recognise' a problem as a result of crisis (sexual abuse of children by sports coaches [Brackenridge and Telfer, 2011], declining standards of fitness among the young [Green, 2006]) or the accumulation of evidence, regarding sport participation, for example, from the routine collection of information such as the School Sport Survey, the Active People Survey or the General Household Survey. The second stream comprises policies or ideas which are normally developed within specialist policy communities and which relate to specific problems or classes of problems and are thus distinct from macro-level ideological orientations such as market liberalism. Policies which are deemed easier to implement and which are able to attract a higher level of support within a policy community from key actors, such as public officials and pressure groups, are more likely to be adopted. The third stream is politics, which is independent of the other two streams and comprises a number of elements including the national mood (sentiment towards issues among voters), organised political forces (political parties and interest groups, for example), and turnover within government (for example, a change of sports or education minister).

A central aspect of the multiple-streams framework is the notion of 'coupling', which refers to the process by which issues achieve political recognition and attract policies (solutions). The coincidence of the three streams, for example, as a result of a crisis and/or the activities of policy entrepreneurs, can provide a 'launch window' where 'a

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problem is recognized, a solution is developed and available in the policy community, a political change makes the time right for policy change, and potential constraints are not severe' (Kingdon 1984, p. 174). However, windows of opportunity might also be the result of routine aspects of policy cycles such as the annual budget-setting process or an election. To some degree Kingdon's framework is a significant challenge to rational models of decision making, but as Zahariadis points, out multiple streams does not suggest randomness in policy selection, but rather highlights 'the importance of context and politics' (2003, p. 9).

There is much in the multiple-streams framework that is attractive in addition to it being a corrective to the rationalist assumptions of other frameworks. The capacity of the framework to be integrated with the more firmly established and empirically founded literature on policy communities provides a rich conceptual language for analysis. Furthermore, the concept of spillover is valuable, as it suggests that the successful implementation of a policy in one area (for example, marketisation, privatisation, 'naming and shaming') 'may spill over to another, facilitating the adoption of the same solution in a seemingly unrelated area' (Zahariadis 2003, p. 154).

However, while the framework does not neglect the significance of context, it plays down too strongly the importance of structural factors and institutionalised power, perhaps due to its roots in pluralist macro-level theory. The weakness in the framework's underlying theory of power is especially important due to the prominence given to ideas in the policy process, where the significance of ideas in relation to interests and power is under-theorised.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework

It is in the light of the inadequacies of the frameworks reviewed so far that consideration is now given to the advocacy coalition framework (ACF), which, in recent years, has emerged as a highly regarded basis for policy analysis, both in its own right and in combination with other frameworks. According to Sabatier and Weible (2007, pp. 191–192), there are three 'foundation stones' to the framework: '(1) a macro-level assumption that most policymaking occurs among specialists within a policy subsystem but that their behaviour is affected by factors in the broader political and socio-economic system; (2) a micro-level "model of the individual" that is drawn heavily from social psychology; and (3) a meso-level conviction that the best way to deal with the multiplicity of actors in a policy subsystem is to aggregate them into "advocacy coalitions" '. The dynamic of policy change is based on policy-oriented learning and

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external perturbations.

The ACF suggests that policy subsystems normally comprise between two and five coalitions each united by shared normative and causal beliefs and competing for influence. As mentioned above, belief systems are hierarchically structured with the first level being 'deep core' beliefs, which cover fundamental norms and values and which span a number of policy subsystems. Second-level values comprise 'policy core' beliefs, which are the basic normative commitments that span the whole policy subsystem. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) identify eleven categories of policy core belief including perceptions of the causes and severity of system-wide problems, the effectiveness of policy instruments, and the appropriate division of responsibility between the market and the public sector. At the third level are secondary policy beliefs, which are narrower beliefs related, for example, to the seriousness of particular issues or to geographically specific issues, and are much more susceptible to change.

Exogenous factors, such as conflict between coalitions or external shocks such as scandal (e.g. a doping violation by a leading UK athlete) or crisis (the fire at Bradford City FC in 1985), often mediated by a 'policy broker', are sources of policy outputs and policy change, although change can occur as a result of 'policy-oriented learning' (Sabatier 1998, p. 104). Policy-oriented learning describes relatively long-term changes in beliefs that result from 'experience and/or new information' (Sabatier 1998, p. 104) and reflects the underlying assumption of rational behaviour in decision making, at least in the long term. However, learning may take some time to affect policy as 'individuals face cognitive constraints and filter or avoid belief-conflicting information' (Weible 2007, p. 7).

The ACF is an attractive analytical framework not least because it has been so widely tested empirically. The framework also addresses the challenge of explaining both stability and change, although it is more persuasive in explaining the persistence of stability than in explaining the dynamics of policy change which rely on the combination of rational learning and external perturbations. Perhaps of greater concern is the lack of a sustained discussion of power and how institutionalised power (mobilisation of bias) affects individual behaviour with regard to problem perception and policy choice.

The foregoing discussion of policy theory and concepts is an essential exercise prior to the analysis of UK sport policy. Kurt Lewin's (1951, p. 169) often quoted remark that there is 'nothing so practical as a good theory' is a succinct reminder that making sense of the policy process requires not only robust empirical data but also an equally robust set of concepts and theoretical frameworks for their interpretation.

Meso-level frameworks such as the four discussed above fulfill two important functions

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for the researcher. The first is that they offer a framework for the conduct of research insofar as they direct the researcher's attention (or sensitise the researcher) to particular aspects of the policy process (for example, agenda-setting or policy learning and transfer) and particular relationships (such as the role of policy brokers) and themes (such as the influence of business or other organised interests). The use of a particular meso-level framework works best when the testing of its appropriateness is the central research question or when the previous research in the field suggests strongly that one framework is more appropriate than the alternatives. Testing a particular framework is not the central concern of this study and, as mentioned previously, there is no consensus on the most appropriate framework for the analysis of sport policy. Hence, the four frameworks will be used to sensitise the researchers to aspects of the policy process and the relationships and patterns of influence that underpin the process.

The second function of meso-level frameworks is as tools for the analysis of empirical data—a guide to the interpretation of research findings. This function is best fulfilled through an iterative process by which, during the conduct of the research and particularly at the conclusion of the research, there is reflection on the data collected and how it can be illuminated and refined by reference to particular analytic frameworks. This second function of the frameworks is one that will be adopted for this study.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSIS

An understanding of the developments in sport since 1990 requires analysis across a range of dimensions which include changes in government motives for involvement in sport, changes in the range of instruments used to effect the implementation of sport policy, shifts in the pattern of power relations between policy actors, changes in the organisational landscape and the implications for the configuration of networks and the balance between policymaking and policy taking. These five dimensions provide the thematic structure for the subsequent analysis.

First we need to explore the motives for government involvement in sport not only in terms of the breadth of motivating factors but also in terms of shifts in the salience of sport to government. At this stage it would appear that over the last 20 years or so the salience of sport, particularly elite sport and to an extent school sport, to government has increased while that of community sport has remained largely on the margins of political agendas. As regards changes to the range of instruments available to the government to effect policy implementation, such changes would include the

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introduction of the national lottery and the expansion (though recent contraction) of specialist agencies such as UK Sport, the English Institute of Sport and School Sport Partnerships. The analysis of power relations is always a challenge as the voluminous literature on the concept attests, but an assessment of the nature, deployment and impact of power is at the heart of policy analysis, as is a theme that runs through all the meso-level frameworks discussed above.

The fourth dimension concerns changes in the configuration of networks and whether the nascent policy community identified by Houlihan in 1991 has materialised or whether other metaphors such as coalitions or loose issue networks are more apt descriptions. The final dimension recognises that in many policy sectors interests and policy actors are forced to adopt a reactive stance in relation to policy initiatives. Dery provides a useful distinction between policymaking and policy taking. Policymaking 'implicitly presumes control over key variables that shape policy in a given area' whereas policy taking 'denotes the pursuit of a given set of policy objectives, which is primarily or entirely shaped by the pursuit of other objectives . . . the resulting policy . . . [is] . . . the by-product of policies that are made and implemented to pursue objectives other than those of the policy in question' (Dery 1999, pp. 165–166). The conceptualisation of policy taking would seem to have considerable relevance to the study of sport, given the long history of the instrumental use of sport to achieve a wide range of non-sport policy objectives.

In order to explore these dimensions, the research relied heavily on two sources of data—documents and a series of semi-structured interviews. The analysis included documents produced by a wide range of national and subnational-level policy actors, for example, central and local government, national governmental sports agencies and national interest/lobbying organisations. Documents were collected and selected through systematic searches of the published output of organisations either available in paper copy or available on official Web sites. Access was also provided by some interviewees to internal documents. Documentary sources were augmented by the conduct of a series of semi-structured interviews with policy actors who were selected on the basis that they had been or were still involved in policy at a strategic level; they were, in broad terms, representative of a particular group of policy actors; and that they had been involved, either directly or indirectly, in the sports policy sub-sector for at least five years.

The book is divided into eight chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 provide an analysis of the change in national government policy from the late 1980s through to the early phase of the coalition government elected in 2010. Chapter 4 explores the impact of devolution

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on the development of sport policy in the four home countries. While a detailed analysis of the policy process for sport in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is beyond the scope of this study, the chapter will focus on the significance of devolution for two aspects of sport policy: first the extent to which home-country policies in relation to youth/school sport and community sport have diverged and second the impact of devolution on UK-wide policy for elite athlete development.

Chapter 5 explores the relationship between community sport and elite athlete development. The chapter will examine the tension between these two sets of objectives and the problems that the governments have had and continue to experience in establishing consistent and stable objectives in both these areas, but especially in relation to community sport. Chapter 6 develops some of the issues and themes identified in Chapter 5 and focuses on the role and significance of local government for the delivery of sport policy objectives. The chapter traces the reintegration of local government into the delivery framework for Labour's sport policy which followed the long period of neglect by the governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. Chapter 7 focuses on school and youth sport and examines the changing salience of school sport to governments, the particular role of national organisations, such as the Youth Sport Trust, and the way in which school sport policy frameworks such as the PE and Sport Strategy for Young People integrated school sport into a broader youth sport development programme. The final chapter explores the pattern and nature of policy continuity and change through the application of the various concepts and analytical frameworks introduced in this chapter.

CHAPTER

3

COMPARATIVE ELITE SPORT DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is excerpted from

Comparative Elite Sport Development: systems, structures and public policy

Edited by Barrie Houlihan, Mick Green.

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COMPARATIVE ELITE SPORT DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

In the 4 years prior to the Athens Olympic Games in 2004, the UK government allocated around £70 million in direct financial support to UK athletes. At the Games, the Great Britain and Northern Ireland team obtained a total of 30 medals, 9 of which were gold – an approximate cost of £2.3 million per medal. In the run up to the Beijing Games in 2008, the government has allocated a sum of £75 million in direct financial support. The United Kingdom is far from being alone in providing substantial support for its elite, and especially, Olympic athletes. The poor performance by the Australian team at the 1976 Montreal Olympics prompted a government enquiry which led to sustained and substantial investment of public funds in elite training facilities such as the Australian Institute of Sport and in direct support to athletes and domestic Olympic sports federations. At around the same time, the government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR; former East Germany) was reputed to be spending about 1 per cent of its gross domestic product on elite sport. As Bergsgard et al. (2007, p. 170) note, government resources 'were very much concentrated in high performance training centres in Berlin where there was a substantial "over-employment" of support personnel'. A DSB official reported, following reunification, that 'when we took over, in East Berlin in track and field, we took over 65 physiotherapists. Each individual athlete had his own ...'. Even in free market, non-interventionist and decentralised political systems, such as the United States, draconian government intervention in sport was not unusual if it was deemed necessary to protect elite sport success. For example, in 1978 the US Congress legislated to resolve the long-standing dispute between the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) for control over elite track and field athletes (cf. Hunt, 2007). The Amateur Sports Act marginalised the AAU and gave the US Olympic Committee primary responsibility for the preparation of teams to represent the United States.

There are a variety of explanations why such a diverse range of governments should be so concerned with elite sport success which include international prestige and diplomatic recognition, ideological competition and a belief that international sporting success generates domestic political benefits ranging from the rather nebulous 'feel good factor' to more concrete economic impacts associated with the hosting of elite competitions. In recent years hosting major sports events has been, for a number of countries, an important element in various forms of economic development including tourism promotion (Sydney 2000 Olympic Games) and urban regeneration (Barcelona 1992 and London 2012 Olympic Games). The economic benefits of hosting major sports events are increasingly significant in post- industrial countries where the sports-related service sector is an important engine for growth and employment (Gratton and Taylor,

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2000). However, if countries are to be in a position to use sport as a resource, whether for diplomatic, economic or social objectives, they are in a much better position to exploit sport's potential if they possess assets in the form of recognised world- class elite athletes. There are few governments who have not recognised the value of sport as a high-visibility, low-cost and extremely malleable resource which can be adapted to achieve, or at least give the impression to the public/electorate of achieving, a wide variety of domestic and international goals. Such is the flexibility of sport as a policy instrument that it is increasingly difficult for governments, providing of course that they possess the necessary financial resources, not to espouse a commitment to elite sport and competition as illustrated by Canada's agonising over the place of elite sport in public policy following the Ben Johnson doping scandal at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. Despite many statements decrying the distortion of values resulting from a commitment to the pursuit of Olympic medals, Canada is now investing heavily in elite sport in advance of its hosting of the 2010 winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Developing elite athletes

There have been a number of attempts to identify the ingredients of successful elite athlete development such as those by Fisher and Borms (1990), Abbott et al. (2002), Digel (2002a, b), Green and Oakley (2001a, b), Oakley and Green (2001), UK Sport (2006). Although the various authors identify a different number of key elements in a successful elite development system, there is considerable overlap between the analyses (see Table 1.1). In particular, it is possible to organise the elements or characteristics into three reasonably distinct clusters: contextual, for example, the availability of funding/wealth; processual, for example, a system for identifying talent, determining the basis on which particular sports will be offered support; and specific, for example, bespoke training facilities.

For Oakley and Green (2001; see also Green and Oakley, 2001a) the 10 characteristics listed in Table 1.1 represent 'common approaches to the problem of enhancing elite sport rather than responses to the social, political and economic elements in each country' (2001, p. 91). Moreover, they suggest 'that there is a growing trend towards a homogeneous model of elite sport development' (2001, p. 91). Digel's analysis (2002a, b) focuses more on the context within which an effective elite sport system can develop, but there is a clear overlap with the analysis of Oakley and Green insofar as he stresses the importance of a culture supportive of elite achievement, adequate financial support, and processes through which talent can be identified and developed.

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Table 1.1 Factors contributing to elite success

Factors	Oakley and Green	Digel	UK Sport (SPLISS Consortium)	Green and Houlihan
Contextual	An excellence culture	Support, especially financial, of the state	Financial support	Support for 'full-time' athletes
	Appropriate funding	Economic success and business sponsorship	Participation in sport	
		A media supported positive sports culture	Scientific research	
Processual	Clear understanding of the role of different agencies	Talent development through the education system	Talent identification and development system	
	Simplicity of administration	Talent development through the armed forces	Athletic and post-career support	
	Effective system for monitoring athlete progress		Integrated approach to policy development	
	Talent identification and targeting of resources		Coaching provision and coach development	
	Comprehensive planning system for each sport			
	Lifestyle support			
Specific	Well-structured competitive programmes	Sports science support services	International competition	A hierarchy of competition opportunities centered on preparation for international events
	Well-developed specific facilities		Training facilities	Elite facility development
				The provision of coaching, sports science and sports medicine support services

Sources: Digel (2002a, b); Green and Houlihan (2005); Oakley and Green (2001); and UK Sport (2006).

The joint report by UK Sport, Vrije Univeriteit Brussel, WJH Mulier Institut (The Netherlands) and Sheffield Hallam University, UK (known as the SPLISS Consortium) compared elite development systems in six countries (United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Norway, The Netherlands and Belgium) in relation to the nine factors (pillars) listed in Table 1.1. The findings were 'inconclusive' insofar as there was no clear relationship between particular factors and elite success. However, the authors did note that the three most successful countries at the Athens Olympic Games, Italy, United Kingdom and The Netherlands, all scored well in relation to the following four factors: funding for national governing bodies (NGBs); coaching provision and coaching development; athletic and post-career support and training facilities. The report also suggested that

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the similar high scores for the United Kingdom and The Netherlands in relation to 'athletic and post-career support' and 'international competition' might be due to both countries benefiting 'from the learning curve of other nations which might be described as "early adopters" such as Australia' (UK Sport, 2006, p. 15). Finally, the report noted the paradox of increasing global competition … encouraging nations to adopt … more strategic elite sport policy in order to differentiate themselves from other nations. The net result is an increasingly homogeneous elite sport development system which is ostensibly based around a near uniform model of elite sport development with subtle local variations (2006, p. 16).

However, in an article also published in 2006, by many of the same authors of the UK Sport report they qualify their initial conclusion by stating that

It is impossible to create one single model for explaining international success. A system leading to success in one nation may be doomed to fail in another. Therefore it needs to be emphasised that the combination of the nine pillars may be specific to a given nation's context and that different systems may all be successful'.

(De Bosscher et al., 2006, p. 209)

Although there are some differences in emphasis between the foregoing analyses they have much in common, at least at the general level of specification if not in the detail. The centrality of dedicated training facilities, public sector financial support, an integration of training preparation programmes with competition opportunities and an entourage of specialist support staff was evident across nearly all analyses and received further confirmation by Green and Houlihan (2005) in their review of the Soviet and East German sports systems and their more detailed analysis of the elite sport systems in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom. Green and Houlihan suggested that there were four common themes: elite facility development; support for 'full-time' athletes; the provision of coaching, sports science and sports medicine support services; and a hierarchy of competition opportunities centered on preparation for international events.

Elite facility development referred to the provision of, and priority access to, specialised facilities for training. While the importance of access to specialised training facilities is widely acknowledged, provision is rarely considered satisfactory. In Australia, for example, elite swimmers complained not about the number of competition size swimming pools, but about constraints on access arising from the lack of ownership and control of pools by the swimming governing body. Attempts to develop a national strategy for the location of pools, crucial in such a vast country, were undermined by the insistence of states in establishing their own priorities regarding elite sport and facility provision. Facility provision for sailing was similarly affected by the state–federal

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relations, although provision was improved in preparation for the Sydney Olympic Games. Elite facility provision problems were even greater in Canada where the relationship between provinces and the federal government was more fractious thus making the implementation of a national facility strategy extremely challenging. Provincial–federal rivalry was compounded by a pattern of funding which was determined by success in bidding to host major sports events. Thus funding for elite level facilities was allocated to the cities that had been successful in bidding to host events rather than to those that had the greatest need or the greatest long-term commitment to supporting elite athletes. Even in the United Kingdom, which has a much more centralised political system, problems persist with the provision of suitable training facilities although the establishment of the UK Sport Institute (UKSI) network of specialist centres has greatly improved availability and access. However, for many sports there remains an unresolved tension between the facility needs of elite athletes and those of non-elite/club athletes.

With regard to elite facilities, Green and Houlihan (2005) argued that in all three countries swimming and athletics, both heavily dependent on public resources for facility development, found it hard to resolve the tension between support for elite achievement and support for the wider membership of their clubs. With substantial state political and financial support both sports sought to overcome this value conflict by isolating elite facilities from mass access, for example, through the establishment of elite sports centres in Canada and the network of elite sport institutes (UKSI) in the United Kingdom, thus creating separate administrative and financial arrangements to ensure that no elite level funding could be siphoned off for grassroots use. Sailing was an exception largely because its well-established club structure and the financial independence of its membership left it insulated from the competition for scarce resources that featured so significantly in the other two sports. The attempts to meet the acknowledged facility needs of elite competitors were affected by two key factors: first, the resource dependency relationship between the advocates of elite sport and the state; and second, the jurisdictional complexity at both the governmental level and also within their own organisations that most national sports organisations or national governing bodies (NSOs/NGBs) had to cope with.

The standard of competition in most sports makes it extremely difficult for an athlete to compete for medals if they do not treat training as a full-time commitment. Green and Houlihan (2005) found that while the Soviet Union and the GDR funded their athletes indirectly through their armed forces or universities, Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom provided direct financial support to their elite athletes. However, in none of these countries was the subsidy sufficient to enable athletes to be financially independent, even in the United Kingdom where the world-class performance

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programme is supported by the national lottery. As a result many athletes had to seek additional funding from part-time work or from commercial sponsorship. However, corporate sponsorship of individual athletes, especially in swimming and athletics, encouraged elite swimmers and athletes to compete abroad for prize monies often to the detriment of their long-term development and consequently to their country's medal-winning potential at the Olympic Games. As Slack observed, these athletes 'no longer represent their club, their country, or themselves, they represent the corporations who provide the money for their sport' (1998, p. 3).

The provision of high-quality coaching, science and medical support services also emerged as an important element in the elite development systems in each of the three countries. However, Green and Houlihan noted that

In [athletics, sailing and swimming] across all three countries acceptance of coaching as an important, if not essential, ingredient in elite success ... was slow in developing. Until the advent of substantial public subsidy of both swimming and athletics investment in coaching was not possible in the volume that would encourage talented amateur coaches to see the occupation as a full-time career. However, even when public funds became available ... [investment in] the supporting services of coaching, sports science and medicine [was] generally an after-thought (2005, p. 175).

Up until the mid-1990s, public sector investment in elite sport was directed towards facility development and direct financial support for athletes. Consequently, with the notable exceptions of the European communist countries, coaching was highly variable in both quantity and quality. Much the same can also be said of the availability of sports science and sports medicine services as, according to Green and Houlihan, 'all sports have been fairly slow to explore the potential of sports science in relation to competitors' (2005, pp. 176–177). Early engagement with sports science tended to focus on equipment rather than the athlete, primarily because the application of science to equipment and apparel design has greater potential to generate profits than research into nutrition, psychological preparation and training regimes.

The final element of the elite sport system identified by Green and Houlihan was the structuring of domestic competition schedules to meet the needs of elite athletes who were preparing for international events. Green and Houlihan concluded that 'the establishment of a competition calendar that met the needs of elite athletes was surprisingly hard to achieve' (2005, p. 177). Part of the explanation lay in the conflict of interests between clubs/grassroots members and elite performers with the interests of the latter providing a poor justification for altering the pattern of competition for the overwhelming majority of club members. A second factor was the frequency with which elite athletes put their own financial interests (or those of their sponsor) ahead of those

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of their country. In athletics and swimming in particular, it was often the case that athletes would prefer to compete on the commercial Grand Prix circuit rather than in domestic club competitions or international representative events. Third, some NSOs/NGBs have put their need to generate income, for example, through sponsored events, ahead of the needs of their elite athletes to prepare systematically for major international competitions. Fourthly, some countries, Australia and Canada for example, had to overcome the problems associated with the size of their countries and the consequent problems of arranging national events and competitions. Australia faced the further problem of its relative isolation from the main international competition circuits in all three sports. Finally, athletes who rely on scholarships from American universities, such as those from Canada, were regularly required to put the interests of their college ahead of those of their country and their international ambitions.

Pressures for convergence

The extent of similarity and variation between the countries analysed by Green and Houlihan suggests a degree of tension between pressures towards convergence in elite sport systems and factors militating against a uniform approach to developing elite success. Among the pressures towards convergence in elite sport systems are globalisation, commercialisation and governmentalisation.

The assumption that the major determinants of public policy are confined within sovereign state boundaries has, in recent years, become progressively less persuasive as an increasing number of formerly domestic policy issues are now embedded in a series of supranational policy networks. Indeed so significant have supranational actors become that some observers, for example Andersen and Eliassen (1993), argue that the proper focus for analysis should be the global or regional policy arena. In his analysis of welfare policy, Deacon (1997) argues that globalisation has necessitated a revision of the traditional approach to welfare policy analysis. Supranational policy actors, such as the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the World Bank, who have for many years influenced the domestic policy of poorer countries, are now shaping the discourse about the future of welfare programmes in the richer countries of Western Europe. Deacon also suggests that greater account needs to be taken of the 'globalisation of social policy instruments, policy and provision' (1997, p. 20) which takes three distinct forms – supranational regulation, supranational redistribution and supranational provision. Supranational regulation refers to 'those mechanisms, instruments and policies at the global level that seek to regulate the terms of trade and operation of firms in the interests of social

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protection and welfare objectives' (1997, p. 2). Examples from within the area of sport would include the regulation by international sports federations and the European Union of the transfer market, the role of the World Anti-Doping Agency in shaping national anti-doping policy and the growing importance of the Court for Arbitration for Sport in settling sports-related disputes. Welfare-related supranational redistribution policies already operate within the European Union and at a much lower level of effectiveness through the United Nations and key agencies such as UNESCO. In sport the closest examples would be the operation of sports development aid bodies such as Olympic Solidarity and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) sports development programme where the spread of the Olympic diet of international sport is supported with some very modest redistribution of resources. Supranational provision refers, according to Deacon, 'to the embryonic measures ... whereby people gain an entitlement to a service or are empowered in the field of social citizenship rights by an agency acting at the supra- national level' (1997, p. 3). The UN High Commission for Refugees and the Council of Europe Court of Human Rights provide two examples, while in the area of sport the Court of Arbitration for Sport is beginning to fulfill a similar role for athletes. At the very least the wealth of research on globalisation requires that any comparative analysis of elite sport development systems is sensitive to the increasing significance of supranational organisations for domestic policy.

Operationalising the concept of globalisation has proved difficult once consideration moves from a simple cataloguing of effects to an analysis of forms (Houlihan, 1997; Hirst and Thompson, 1999; Scholte, 2000), causes (Wallerstein, 1974; Robertson, 1992; Boli and Thomas, 1997) and trajectories of globalisation (Robertson, 1995; Hirst and Thompson, 1999; Houlihan, 2007). Despite the eclectic nature of much of the literature on globalisation, there is broad agreement that (1) globalisation should not be conceptualised as a coherent and uni-directional process, (2) the analysis of the significance of cultural change must acknowledge the varying depth of social embeddedness and that there is a need to be wary of granting too much importance to shifts in the popularity of particular sports or events, (3) the impact of globalisation on policy within individual countries will vary due to the differential 'reach' of global influences and the variability in 'response' in different countries and (4) while the political and cultural dimensions have a degree of autonomy from economic processes, it is economic interests that have become much more prominent in sport in the last 25 years as major sports, and sports events have become increasingly a focus for private profit rather than state subsidy (see Hirst and Thompson, 1999; Held and McGrew, 2002; Houlihan, 2003; Scholte, 2000).

The second pressure making for convergence, commercialisation, has three dimensions:

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first, the transformation of many sports events, clubs and athletes into valuable brands and commodities; second, the growth of sport as a source of profit for non-sports businesses through, for example, sponsorship and broadcasting; and third, the growth of sports-related businesses such as sportswear and equipment manufacture (Amis and Cornwell, 2005; Slack, 2005). Particularly important is the attitude of government to the sports sector and the extent to which it perceives sport, not for example as an element of welfare provision, but as a sector of the service economy. The change in the perception of sport from being a consumer of public subsidy to a part of the cultural industrial sector (the productive economy) has been slow especially among some neo-liberal governments. The commercial potential of sport was recognised most clearly in relation to bids to host major sports events. For Germany (World Cup hosts in 2006), Canada (winter Olympic hosts in Vancouver in 2010), and the United Kingdom (hosts of the 2002 Commonwealth Games and of the 2012 Olympic Games), the economic benefits to the national balance of payments and to the local and regional economy have featured prominently in the rationales for government support of bids.

Commercialisation has also affected the way in which athletes relate to their sport with the most obvious impact being the increasing numbers who see sport as a significant source of income. The rapid decline in elite level amateur sport in track and field, tennis and, most recently, in rugby union, and the steady increase in the number of national Olympic committees which routinely give financial rewards to their medallists are both indicative of this trend. Countries, especially in Scandinavia, and organisations, such as the European Union, in which there is a lobby to retain, what the European Union refers to as, the 'European model of sport' in contrast to the commercial model typified by the United States, face an uphill struggle to hold back the neo-liberal commercialisation of sport. Finally, commercialisation has affected the management values and practices in sport and, in this respect, overlaps with governmentalisation.

NSOs in a number of countries including Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom have experienced rapid change in their internal organisation, the relationship between professional management staff and volunteer officers and general management practices often as a result of encouragement or pressure from government to modernise (become more business-like). In order to access commercial sponsorship and often public funding to develop their sports, events and teams as brands and marketable commodities, NSOs have increasingly been required to adopt business practices and expertise of the corporate sector. Thus the strong pressures of mimetic isomorphism in relation to commercial corporations are reinforced by some governments through the imposition of targets and performance indicators. Audit and inspection regimes now proliferate, and are supported by sanctions imposed on those organisations that 'fail' to meet these centrally imposed targets (Green and Houlihan,

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2006). This form of governmentalisation clearly reinforces and legitimises the value system of commercialisation in privileging the 'the values of self-sufficiency, competitiveness and entrepreneurial dynamism' (Hall, 1998, p. 11).

Although it is clear that governmentalisation reinforces many of the pressures exerted through commercialisation, the most important aspect of governmentalisation is the development of a state apparatus for the delivery and management of sport. In many countries government involvement in sport, particularly elite sport, is a significant and, in some cases, a dominant feature of the sports system and infrastructure. Not only are there many examples of governments working closely with voluntary/not-for-profit sports associations to deliver sports services, but there is also evidence of the steady accumulation of functions by government and the consequent development of specialist administrative departments and agencies, and the allocation of responsibility for sport policy at ministerial level. By the early part of the twenty-first century, concern with elite sport has become so well established within the machinery of government and within the portfolio of ministerial responsibilities that many governments are able to influence significantly the elite sport system.

While the three pressures are evident in many industrialised countries, their impact differs considerably as does the domestic response. Moreover, the response to these pressures will, to varying extents, become institutionalised and form part of the fabric of constraints within which elite sport policy is made. However, it is particularly important to acknowledge the degree to which global pressures are mediated by history. For example, the pressures of globalisation, commercialisation and governmentalisation have been and continue to be mediated in the United Kingdom by a history of sport in which social class and sports participation were intimately intertwined (Mason, 1980; Holt, 1992; Birley, 1995) and a long-standing non-interventionist attitude towards sport. In many respects the initial reluctance of governments, whether Conservative or Labour, up to the 1990s to intervene in order to influence the development of sport gave commercial interests the opportunity to shape substantially the development of elite sport. However, the relatively recent enthusiasm of the government of John Major and those of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown was stimulated less by a desire to temper the excesses of commercialisation than by a desire to harness what was increasingly recognised as a significant political resource that could be deployed to aid the achievement of a series of non-sporting policy objectives such as improved behaviour among the young, community integration, urban regeneration and strengthened national morale. An instrumental perception of sport dominates within government which sees sport as a relatively cheap, yet high-profile tool for contributing to the achievement of a broad range of social policy objectives.

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Other countries have similar distinctive histories that affect the impact of global pressures. It would be surprising if the abrupt ruptures that marked German history in the twentieth century had not created a distinctive response to globalisation, commercialisation and governmentalisation. The rise and fall of the Nazi regime and the reunification of East and West Germany were dramatic breaks with the past, both of which have left strong imprints on subsequent developments. Indeed the dominant motif in the history of German sport is the depth of political involvement in sport. In Poland, the 50 years of communist control and the general level of poverty in the country have produced a legacy that cannot be brushed aside, but which will continue to mediate current elite sport policy. In a similar fashion, the geo-political location of Singapore, its colonial history and current prosperity affect how its elite sport policy has been developed just as Protestantism, oil wealth and an intense historical rivalry with Sweden and Denmark have mediated Norway's embrace of elite sport development.

In summary, it is essential to acknowledge the significance of transnational pressures and trends such as globalisation, commercialisation and governmentalisation, but it is equally essential to recognise the significance of national history and the institutional constraints on policy development. With this caveat in mind it is important to examine the attempts to operationalise the concept of globalisation at the level of specific policy. Given that apart from the former communist countries of central and Eastern Europe, most governments have only had an elite sport policy since the early 1990s it is reasonable to assume that policy traditions and institutions have not yet been firmly established and that considerable fluidity remains in the development of policy. It is therefore valuable to explore analytical frameworks and concepts which operate at the meso-level within particular policy areas as a way of understanding the interaction between global pressures and domestic contexts.

Explaining elite sport policy development

Policy learning, lesson-drawing and policy transfer

Implicit in much of the discussion of the development of elite sport systems in the work of Oakley and Green, Digel, De Bosscher et al. and Green and Houlihan discussed above is the assumption that countries learn from each other and that a process of policy transfer is in operation. At a commonsense level, policy learning and policy transfer are attractive. For example, the United Kingdom's main comparators in relation to elite sport success include France, Italy, Australia and Germany and it would be unrealistic and surprising not to expect policy-makers to find out what these countries do and at

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least ask the question whether their practices could be adapted to the UK context.

The cluster of related concepts of 'policy learning', 'lesson- drawing' and 'policy transfer' has featured prominently in much recent analysis of policy change. Policy learning is rooted in an Eastonian systems model of the policy process where the policy-making cycle is regularly energised by feedback on the impact of existing policy, that is policy learning. While the process of policy learning can therefore be largely domestic and insulated from experience in other countries or even other policy areas in the same country, it is increasingly accepted that policy learning can and often does involve analyses of similar policy areas and issues in other countries.

More recent conceptualisations of policy learning have emphasised the intentional aspect of the process which moves beyond feedback on existing policy and involves the systematic scanning of the environment for policy ideas thus, in part at least, answering the critics of policy learning (e.g., Blyth, 1997; Gorges, 2001) who highlight the lack of clarity regarding the process by which ideas impact upon policy. Often this systematic scanning is undertaken as a routine activity by public officials and is a technical process rather than a political one. Heclo (1972), for example, argues that policy change is often not about the exercise of power but is a more consensual process involving a variety of actors (state, interest groups and political parties) concerned with a particular issue. In contrast, Hall (1986) argues that the impact of an idea is directly related to the strength of the organisation that acts as its sponsor thus challenging the rationalist assumption that ideas are an independent variable in the policy process.

Hall (1986) provides a valuable typology of policy change identifying three levels or 'orders' of policy change which result, potentially at least, from policy learning. First-order changes are alterations to the intensity or scale of an existing policy instrument, such as an increase in an existing funding stream for elite athlete development. Second-order changes are those that introduce new policy instruments designed to achieve existing policy objectives: examples of which would include the introduction of payments to athletes for gold medals where none had previously been given or the psychological and physiological assessment of young athletes as part of a talent identification process. Finally, third-order changes are those that involve a change in policy goals and would include the decision to adopt an elite development strategy where previously the public policy priority had been on mass participation or where the state had previously left elite sport development to the voluntary or commercial sector. However, it is important to bear in mind Pemberton's (2004, p. 189) comment that it is essential to distinguish conceptually between learning and change, and to recognise that 'learning … does not necessarily lead to change'. The lack of a necessary connection between policy learning and policy change is a theme developed

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by Rose who distinguished lesson-drawing from policy learning. Rose (2005, p. 16) suggests that 'A lesson is the outcome of learning: it specifies a programme drawing on knowledge of programmes in other countries dealing with much the same problem'. As Rose notes 'Lesson-drawing expands the scope for choice in the national political agenda, for it adds to proposals generated by domestic experience the stimulus of examples drawn from foreign experience' (2005, p. 23). However, lesson-drawing 'accepts the contingency of public policy' and that what might work in one country might not work in another. In addition, lesson-drawing has the capacity to produce innovative policies only insofar as they are new to the importing country. As Rose notes, lesson-drawing 'presupposes that even though a programme may be new to a government considering it, something very much like it will be in effect elsewhere' (2005, p. 24).

As a result the concept of lesson-drawing avoids, according to Rose, 'the bias inherent in analyses of policy transfer, since the term focuses attention on programmes that can or should be imported from abroad at the expense of giving attention to the obstacles to applying lessons at home' (2005, p. 24). However, lesson-drawing is not a technical or neutral activity as the determination of what constitutes a lesson is a political process. Moreover, it is not always the case that the outcome of policy learning and lesson-drawing is positive as policy-makers may learn the 'wrong' lesson as a result of, for example, lack of analytical capacity or a restrictive ideology.

Green (2007, p. 429) distinguishes policy transfer from lesson- drawing by noting that 'policy transfer is generally conceived of as a broader concept than lesson drawing as it takes account of ideas of diffusion and coercion rather than just the voluntaristic activity of the latter'. In particular policy transfer refers to the process by which lessons learnt are transferred: how lessons are internalised, how lessons are recorded and described and how they are incorporated into a different organisational infrastructure and value system in the receiving country or policy sector. Policy transfer is, in Rose's (2005, p. 16) words, 'action-oriented intentional activity'. An awareness of the extent to which the transfer mechanism facilitates or constrains transfer is crucial. For example, the important role of the armed forces in South Korea in developing elite athletes for the Olympic Games or the role of the high school and especially the university sector in the United States in talent identification and development may be lessons that are clearly understood and learnt but which are difficult to transfer to a country such as the United Kingdom which does not have the institution of conscription and where the cultural values of the higher education system preclude such a heavy emphasis on sporting success at the expense of educational attainment.

The concept of policy transfer needs to be understood as reflecting the degree of

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ambiguity that surrounds the concept of policy. As a number of analysts have noted policy may be defined in a variety of ways: as government aspiration (Hogwood, 1987, p. 4), government action (Jenkins, 1978, p. 15) or government inaction (Heclo, 1972, p. 85). Consequently, what may be transferred may be an aspiration to achieve elite success without any subsequent commitment of resources or development of programmes. For example, many countries are signatories to the World Anti- Doping Code but have allocated only token resources to support implementation. However, policy transfer might refer to the transfer of a commitment to act supported by the resources necessary for effective action, for example, strategy development, investment in training facilities, the establishment of coach development programmes, and rescheduling of national competitions to better suit the build-up to international competition. Finally, the policy that is transferred might be much more difficult to identify as it is a policy to do nothing, or at least, not to alter current policy perhaps because it is considered to be equivalent to those available elsewhere. As should be clear the analysis of the transfer process is as important as an understanding of the process of policy learning and lesson-drawing. Lessons may well be accurately learned but be imperfectly transferred or transferred to an unsupportive organisational infrastructure.

Despite the attractiveness of the concepts of policy learning and policy transfer, there are some problems, the most obvious of which are the difficulty of explaining how policy-makers learn (Oliver, 1997), what constitutes learning (Bennett and Howlett, 1992) and how learning might be quantified (Pierson, 1993). In addition there are substantial concerns relating to the process by which lessons are communicated and transferred policies recreated in the receiving country (see Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, 2000).

Path dependency

Underlying much of the discussion about policy learning is the assumption that policy will change as a result of past experience or new information. As Greener notes policy learning 'considers policy legacies to be one of the most significant elements in determining present and future policy' (2002, p. 162). As such, policy learning has much in common with the concept of path dependency which suggests that initial policy decisions can determine future policy choices: that 'the trajectory of change up to a certain point constrains the trajectory after that point' (Kay, 2005, p. 553). Path dependency is also connected to the broader policy analysis literature on the importance of institutions which, for Thelen and Steinmo, are seen as significant constraints and mediating factors in politics, which 'leave their own imprint' (1992, p. 8). Whether the emphasis is on institutions as organisations or as sets of values and

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Excerpted from *Comparative Elite Sport Development: systems, structures and public policy*

beliefs (culture), there is a strong historical dimension which emphasises the 'relative autonomy of political institutions from the society in which they exist; ... and the unique patterns of historical development and the constraints they impose on future choices' (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p. 27).

As was argued above the relevance of institutionalism within sport policy analysis is clear. A number of authors have identified the organisational infrastructure of UK sport as a significant variable in shaping policy (cf. Roche, 1993; Pickup, 1996; Henry, 2001; Houlihan and White, 2002; Green, 2004) while Krauss (1990) and Wilson (1994) draw similar conclusions with regard to the United States as do Macintosh (1991) and Macintosh and Whitson (1990) in relation to Canada. Allocation of functional responsibility for sport, federalism, the use of 'arms length' agencies, and the presence of a minister for sport are all seen as having a discernible impact on sport policy and its implementation. Similar claims for the significance of cultural institutions are also widespread. Beliefs, norms and values associated with social class (Birley, 1995), gender (Hargreaves, 1994), disability (Thomas, 2007), and ethnicity (Carrington and Macdonald, 2000) have all been demonstrated to have had, and indeed to continue to have, a marked impact on the character of UK sport policy.

Perhaps more significant is the work of Esping-Andersen and his analysis of welfare states which is based on the hypothesis that the socio-economic and cultural foundations of a country will shape policy. Esping-Andersen (1990) identified three types of welfare regime: liberal, conservative and social democratic, using the private–public mix in welfare provision, the degree of de-commodification and modes of stratification or solidarities as dependent variables. Liberal welfare regimes, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, 'reflect a political commitment to minimise the state, to individualise risks, and to promote market solutions' and adopt a 'narrow conception of what risks should be considered "social" ' (Esping-Andersen, 1999, pp. 74ff). By contrast the social democratic welfare regime is 'virtually synonymous with the Nordic countries' and is 'committed to comprehensive risk coverage, generous benefit levels, and egalitarianism', the decommodification of welfare and the 'fusion of universalism with generosity' (Esping-Andersen, 1999, pp. 78ff). Conservative welfare regimes, such as Germany and Austria, are characterised by their blend of 'status segmentation and familialism'. Social security systems are based on occupational schemes and corporatist status divisions. The 'accent on compulsory social insurance' means that 'purely private market provision of welfare remains marginal' with the family and non-profit, 'voluntary' associations, frequently affiliated with the Church playing an important role (Esping-Andersen, 1999, pp. 81ff).

Although the tripartite categorisation of welfare regimes has been criticised on a

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number of grounds (see, for example, Castles and Mitchell, 1990; Liebfried, 1990; Siaroff, 1994), debate has tended to be around methodology and categorisation rather than challenges to the underlying assumption that socio-economic and cultural historical factors constrain contemporary policy development. If it is accepted that socio-economic and cultural history creates policy predispositions, then it is likely that these will be reinforced and compounded by the accretion of policy decisions. Past decisions consequently need to be seen as institutions in relation to current policy choices with path dependency capturing the insight that 'policy decisions accumulate over time; a process of accretion can occur in a policy area that restricts options for future policy-makers (Kay, 2005, p. 558).

In a hard application of the concept of path dependency, one would argue that early decisions in a policy area result in a policy trajectory that is locked on to a set course although one that might, in Esping-Andersen's terms, be particular to a certain type of policy regime. A hard application of the concept in relation to elite sport would lead one to suggest that a prior commitment to a social democratic model of welfare and/or a commitment to mass participation in sport would make the adoption of an elite development sport policy difficult as it would require a break with established values of universalism and non-commodification. A softer application of the concept would suggest that early decisions do not lock a policy on a specific trajectory, but do constrain significantly subsequent policy options (Kay, 2005). As regards elite sport development, it might be argued that while it may be possible to adopt an elite-focused policy the range of policy instruments that could be adopted to achieve its implementation might be path dependent. For example, it might be acceptable to support elite athletes as long as elite development is seen as a by-product of a vigorous commitment to mass participation: by contrast an elite development policy that was disconnected from mass participation, relying for example on early selection of potential high-performance athletes, would be less acceptable.

Does policy determine politics?

In direct contrast to the discussion in the previous section, one of the most significant insights from some, often large *n*, comparative policy studies was that nationally distinct political characteristics were only very weakly correlated with particular policies and that the dominant developmental process in advanced industrial countries was one of convergence. Freeman (1985, p. 469) summarised the challenge as follows:

The idea that distinctive and durable national policymaking styles are causally linked to the policies of states asserts that 'politics determines policy'. The policy sector

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approach argues, in contrast, that the nature of the problem is fundamentally connected to the kind of politics that emerges as well as the policy outcomes that result. The policy sector approach shifts our attention away from political inputs to categories of issues and outputs of the political system; it suggests that 'policy deter- mines politics'.

It can be argued that some policy sectors and policy issues within them are less susceptible to domestic politics than others. For example, core welfare services that Esping-Andersen focused on might be much more deeply rooted in the culture of a political system than other services such as sport. Thus while there might be general pressures making for convergence, their impact varies across policy sectors. However, it is not just the relationship of a policy sector or problem in relation to core cultural value that explains the differential impact of convergence pressures, it might also be the intrinsic characteristics of the problem or issue insofar as the particular properties (constraints and pressures) of the problem 'will override whatever tendencies exist toward nation- ally specific policies' (Freeman, 1985, p. 486). To quote Heinelt, 'the thesis "policies determines politics" would imply – given that a policy sector would be seen as the only relevant variable for explaining politics – that institutions, parties, forms of interest mediation, political culture etc. do not matter, only the policy sec- tor does' (2005, p. 7).

One important, and possibly crucial, indicator of convergence is the extent to which a broad range of countries with different political, socio-economic and cultural profiles adopt similar policy goals. As has already been suggested the proportion of, admittedly more wealthy, countries whose governments have accepted elite sport success as a sport policy goal is high and growing. If it is accepted that there is convergence in policy goals, then the next area for investigation is in relation to the policy instruments that have been selected to achieve that goal and crucially whether the choice of policy instruments is constrained by the nature of the policy objective. In other words it can be hypothesised that there is little scope for variation in instrument selection if a country wants to win Olympic gold medals: either some policy instruments are so much more effective than others that they are selected even though they may jar with deeper cultural values or the repertoire of policy instruments is so limited that there is little scope for variation in policy selection.

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Conclusion

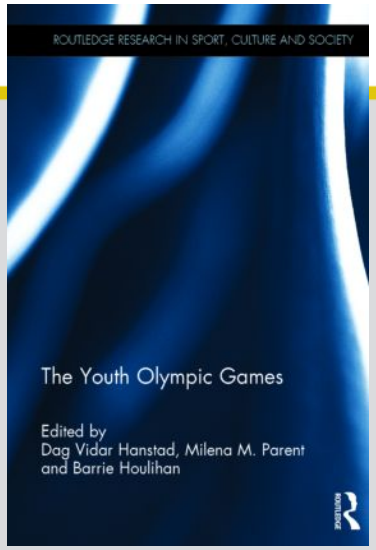
The chapters that follow are a response to the conclusions drawn by Green and Houlihan in their 2005 study of elite sport development and summarised above. Each contributor was asked to review the conclusions drawn from the study of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom and either work within Green and Houlihan's analytical framework or to take it as their point of departure if they considered that their particular country was sufficiently distinct. Each chapter provides an insight into the history and current political and organisational context of elite development policy and will allow firmer conclusions to be drawn about the relationship of elite development to broader sport policy and the extent to which each country's distinctive history and socio-economic and cultural profile affects the intensity with which elite success is pursued and the particular policy instruments that have been selected to achieve policy goals. In particular the nine country studies will enable a fuller debate about the relationships between politics and policy in relation to elite sport goals.

One concern in selecting the countries for inclusion in this analysis was to move beyond the group of English speaking countries often selected for comparison. Other criteria included the concern to select countries that have a history of success in international sport in general, and the Olympic Games in particular, such as the United States and Germany, as well as countries, such as Singapore, which aspire to international sporting success. However, there was also a desire to include examples of countries which had particular characteristics such as Poland (former communist government), Singapore (small and relatively rich country), and New Zealand (small population and strong sporting culture). It is not claimed that the nine countries are representative, but it is suggested that they have been drawn from a sufficiently broad range of institutional, historical and political contexts to allow, at least tentative, conclusions to be drawn regarding trends in elite sport development systems.

CHAPTER

4

THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF ELITE YOUTH SPORT



This chapter is excerpted from

The Youth Olympic Games

Edited by Dag Vidar Hanstad, Milena M. Parent, Barrie Houlihan.

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THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF ELITE YOUTH SPORT

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SPORT ORGANISATIONS IN THE UK AND NORWAY

Excerpted from *The Youth Olympic Games*

Introduction

What is the purpose of elite youth sport? One response to this question would be to argue that elite level sport is simply one manifestation of the widely acknowledged natural inclination of children to play. However, it is hard to accept that the elaborate and expensive youth sport systems evident in many countries are simply the outcome of a response to the preferences of the young for opportunities for elite level competitive play. While youth elite sport systems vary greatly in the extent to which they respect the rights of children they are based on strategic objectives (elite sport success) determined by adults. Nevertheless, one might still argue that just as the educational system is an opportunity structure designed by adults to enable young people to achieve across a range of academic and vocational disciplines the elite youth sport system offers parallel opportunities in relation to a sporting career. However, a less positive assessment is that rather than elite youth sport systems providing an opportunity for talented young people to realise their potential it treats them as factors of production in an increasingly profit-oriented industry with the consequence that young people are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse of their rights as children (David 2005).

The concern with the increasing prominence of elite youth sport is heightened by the central role that governments play in the funding, organisation and general support of elite sport systems. Drawing on research in Norway and the UK the aim of this chapter is to examine the contemporary context of elite youth sport with an emphasis on the identification and analysis of interests of selected stakeholders that shape the development of elite youth sport systems. The underlying hypothesis of the analysis is that elite youth sport occupies a contested policy space. The concept of 'policy space' is defined in terms of the mix of institutional infrastructure (such as government departments and agencies, non- governmental organisations – including businesses and not-for-profit bodies), interests and existing policies (Houlihan 2000). As noted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1987: 26) 'Public policy has become a crowded field, with complex, overlapping and even competing programmes addressing increasingly closely specified or targeted categories of client'. The nature of the policy space for elite youth sport is examined in more detail in the next section. For most major sports youth competitions are a relatively recent innovation. For example, the FIFA under 17 World Cup dates from 1985, the IAAF World Youth Championships in Athletics from 1999 and the FINA World Junior Championships (for under 18s) from 2006. However, it should be borne in mind that there are some sports, gymnastics being the best example, where the highest levels of competition often involve very young athletes. The world age group for acrobatic gymnastics starts at 11 years, women's artistic gymnastics from 16 years and men's junior artistic gymnastics from 14 years (FIG 2013).

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The data on which the analysis is based were collected partly through the analysis of documents produced by national sports organisations, but primarily through a series of interviews with senior officers within national sports organisations with a direct responsibility for elite youth sport. In Norway interview data were gathered from the sports of gymnastics, swimming and cross-country skiing and also from a senior officer in the elite sport department (Olympiatoppen, OLT) of the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NOC). The UK data were gathered from interviews with senior development staff in the sports of cycling, gymnastics and swimming, plus an interview with a senior officer in the British Olympic Association (BOA).

Theoretical framework

Much recent theorising of the policy process has demonstrated two trends, the first of which is a scepticism towards the capacity of government to determine independently domestic policy not only in areas such as the economy, but increasingly in areas previously considered to be more clearly under the control of national governments such as welfare, culture and sport. Analyses of policy- making strongly suggest that government should be conceptualised as one of a number of policy actors, albeit often a powerful one, that negotiates policy outputs and outcomes. The nature of this change is captured in the discussions of a shift from 'government', a top-down process with a dominant authoritative role for government, to 'governance', which conceptualises government as part of a network of policy actors with whom power is shared. The second and related trend is to question the extent to which domestic policy is shaped only or even primarily by domestic interests and policy actors. Just as institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the OECD and the World Bank are acknowledged to exert substantial influence on domestic economic policy, it is argued that international sport organisations such as the major international sport federations, the IOC, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the Common- wealth Games Federation strongly influence domestic sport policy particularly at the elite level. This trend has led to greater interest in the concept of the policy regime, which is seen as an independent policy actor explicitly concerned to influence domestic policy, and in the concept of multi-level governance. The most obvious example in relation to sport is the policy regime that has formed around the campaign against doping in sport where WADA has played a significant role in shaping domestic policy towards doping by, for example, requiring ratification of the UNESCO Convention Against Doping in Sport, encouraging the establishment of national anti-doping organisations and the introduction of legislation to outlaw trafficking in performance enhancing drugs. A second example, and one which has little direct government involvement, is the regime which influences the strategic priorities of national (and largely state- funded) elite sport systems. The decisions by the IOC in relation to the sports included in the summer and winter Games significantly affect funding decisions within the domestic elite sport system. Multi-level governance, according to Kooiman (2003: 3) describes a situation in which 'Governing issues generally are not just public or private, they are frequently

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shared, and governing activity at all levels (from local to supra-national) is becoming diffused over various societal actors whose relationships with each other are constantly changing'.

In examining the phenomenon of elite youth sport, the de-centring of the domestic state and the acknowledgement of the possibility of substantial diffusion of power to non-state international actors are important considerations. However, it would be unwise to assume that the extension of domestic elite sport systems to incorporate ever younger age groups is simply the consequence of external (non-domestic) pressure. It is equally plausible that, in the pursuit of competitive advantage by the leading and aspiring sporting nations they have moved independently down the route of focusing on identifying and developing talent at ever younger ages. Elite development systems can rapidly become institutionalised and once the ambition of elite sporting success has been embedded in a policy sector it is not only difficult to retreat, but it is also difficult to avoid moving in a direction which involves incorporating ever younger people into the elite system. Institutionalisation constrains policy options and resonates with the concept of path dependency, which suggests that 'the trajectory of change up to a certain point constrains the trajectory after that point' (Kay 2005: 553). According to Howlett and Ramesh (1995: 27) institutions, whether defined as cultural processes and values or as organisational arrangements, constitute 'unique patterns of historical development and [impose] constraints . . . on future choices'. Past decisions need to be seen as institutions in relation to subsequent policy choices with path dependency capturing the insight that 'policy decisions accumulate over time; a process of accretion can occur in a policy area that restricts options for future policy-makers' (Kay 2005: 558).

While the concept of path dependency may be a useful explanatory concept at the domestic level it needs to be complemented by explanations which acknowledge the rapidly changing nature of the global sport industry. There are numerous attempts to measure the pace of expansion of the global sport industry in terms of: the number of countries participating in the summer Olympic Games which increased from 59 in 1948 to 204 in 2012; the value of broadcasting rights which increased from US$636 million for the 1992 Olympics to US$1739 million (current prices) for the 2008 Games; and the number of international competitions which increased from an estimate of 315 in 1977 to 700 by 1996 (Westerbeek and Smith 2003). Part of the explanation for the growth of an industry currently valued at between US$480 and US$620 billion per year is the market development strategies of the major federations and multi-sport event organising bodies (Kearney 2011). For example FIFA organises nine men's and five women's global competitions over a four year cycle, the IAAF organised around 17 international competitions in 2013 and the International Rugby Board organise seven

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competitions over a four year cycle. FIS, the international ski federation, organises world championships every second year, in seven different disciplines, for both seniors and juniors. Six of the disciplines are also part of the Olympic programme, and in addition there are world cups every year. Much of the proliferation of competitions is due, in many cases, to market development beyond the adult male versions of sports to introduce women's competitions, regional/continental competitions and age- related competitions. With regard to elite youth sport it is plausible to suggest that the recent expansion in youth competitions has reinforced the path dependency within the domestic elite sport policy in many countries.

It is argued that in order to understand the development of elite youth sport and the contemporary policy context within which it is located, it is important to acknowledge the involvement of multiple interests many of which will consider elite youth sport as marginal to their primary concerns. Furthermore, interests will vary in their attitude towards systems designed to develop talented young athletes and to the competitive environment to which young people are introduced. An initial mapping of the policy area suggests a complex pattern of policy actors which vary in terms of their unity, level of policy activism, primary concerns and their level of interest in elite youth sport (see Figure 3.1). The different borders of the boxes in Figure 3.1 indicate different sets of interests in elite youth sport. Actors in the boxes with the broken dash border are seen as having the general welfare of youth as their primary concern. Actors located within the boxes with a dotted border are considered to have primarily commercial interests in elite youth sport. Those actors in the boxes with a solid border are interpreted as having a primary concern with the successful development of the sport in its broadest understanding, related to the organisation of sport as such and of sport events. National governments and host countries/cities (in the two boxes with the solid lines) often exhibit a greater diversity of interests including diplomatic, economic and welfare. While most of the actors in the figure can be associated with a distinctive primary interest this is an over-simplification of a complex policy landscape. The reality is that all actors will have a hierarchy of interests and the picture is therefore more complex

than we are able to present in such a figure. Schools, for example, can be conceived as both concerned with general development of youth, and at the same time sport high schools are of course concerned with the development of their pupils as athletes.

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Excerpted from *The Youth Olympic Games*

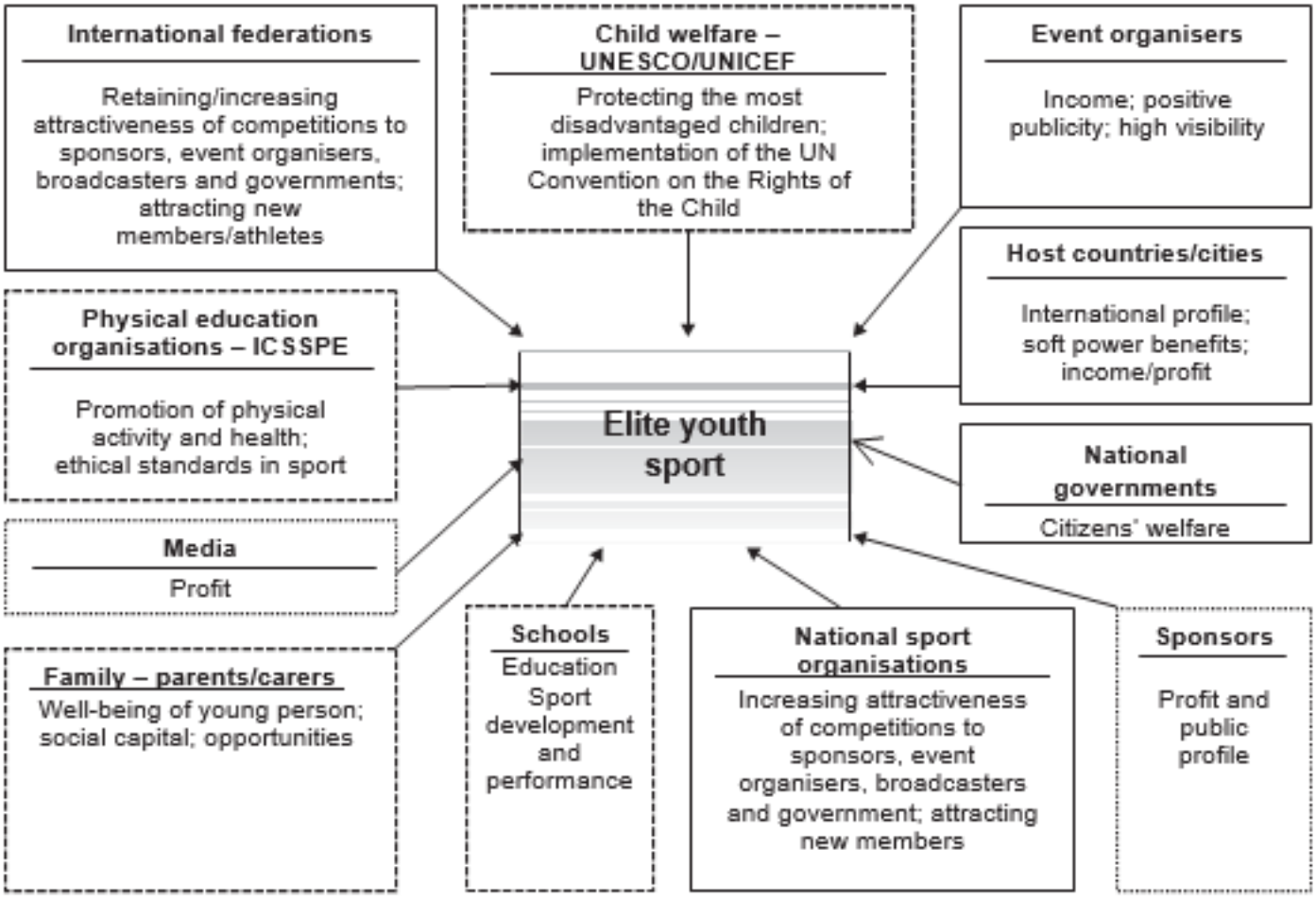

Figure 3.1 Elite youth sport: actors and primary interests.

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Excerpted from *The Youth Olympic Games*

Just as the actors associated with elite youth sport will vary in their concern with, and awareness of, elite youth sport, it is also possible that tensions regarding the role and development of elite youth sport are reflections of deeper tensions between actors. For example, a number of international federations see the expansion of IOC-sanctioned events as a direct challenge to their various world championships. Market expansion by the IOC (and to a lesser extent by the Commonwealth Games Federation) into elite youth, veterans and regional events can be seen as direct competition with IF-organised events.

Elite youth sport occupies a policy space which can be described as both complex and contested. The complexity arises from the range of policy actors with a stake in the sector and the contestation comes from the varying objectives in relation to elite youth sport and varying degrees of interest in the issues held by actors. Established meso-level analytical frameworks, such as advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier 1998) or the multiple streams (Kingdon 1995), may be useful in explaining the way in which particular sub-sectors with an interest in elite sport, such as event hosting, talent development and sport marketing, have developed their policy and thus contributed to the contemporary context for elite youth sport. However, the contemporary context needs to be seen as a compromise between the range of interests reflected in Figure 3.1 and also to be seen as fluid. The discussion that follows identifies the policies of selected actors identified in Figure 3.1 and, in particular, examines the attitudes of a group of national level sports policy actors towards the expansion of elite youth sport competition opportunities such as the Youth Olympic Games (YOG).

Actors and interests

When Jacque Rogge announced the proposal for the YOG, he argued that the YOG was an opportunity for the Olympic movement to reassert the values of the Olympic Charter, especially those associated with education, cooperation and friendship. However, it may plausibly be argued that he was also acknowledging that elite youth competition was ubiquitous within the summer and winter federations and the IOC risked losing market share in this expanding sector. More- over, as discussed in Chapter 1, it is likely that the IOC was aware that the introduction of the YOG enabled the Olympic Movement to establish closer relations with a group of countries and cities which would not be viable as hosts of the summer Games.

Some of the same motives would, arguably at least, be applicable to international federations who are also major organisers of events. In addition, IFs are also in an increasingly competitive business environment for talented young athletes and an

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Excerpted from *The Youth Olympic Games*

exciting international youth competition calendar provides not only a developmental opportunity for young athletes, but also helps to strengthen the commitment of these young athletes to the sport. The Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF), held biennially since 2001, is a good example of the factors that motivate individual countries to host international multi-sport events. While the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) cites the AYOF as evidence that 'the legacy of the 2000 Games continues to live on' (AOC 2013) it is also clear that the primary motive for hosting the youth event is to prepare its own athletes for future Olympic Games. Sports are included in the AYOF pro- gramme, and countries are primarily invited on the basis of the developmental needs of Australian sport.

Most national level policy actors such as federations or NOCs are far more likely to be in the position of reacting to developments in the international elite youth sport context than driving those changes. Some, the major sports powers, might be in a position to influence the character of the emerging context, but even in relation to this group policy-taking is more likely than policy-making (Dery 1999). The role and significance of selected national level actors is the point of departure for this chapter. The attitude of national Olympic committees (NOCs) and national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) towards elite youth sport competition and the capacity of those actors to influence the emerging context is assessed through the study of three national governing bodies of sport and the NOCs in Norway and the UK. The rationale for the choice of national sport organisations in each of the two countries is twofold: for enabling comparison between the countries, we chose two sports which we investigated in both countries (swimming and gymnastics); and one sport from each country was chosen as it represents a major sport for that country (cycling in the UK and cross- country skiing in Norway).

Norway

The Norwegian or Scandinavian context for sport, as with other areas of society, is underpinned by social democratic ideology and politics (Bairner 2010). One organisational outcome of this ideology is that there is one umbrella sport con- federation for all national sport organisations in Norway (Skille and Säfvenbom 2011). Building on a social democratic value system of equity/equality and the idea of sport as being so worthy that everybody should take part across their life- span, youth sport in Norway is somewhat unique and has led the sports confederation to implement regulations in order to protect children against the dangers associated with competitive pressures, overspecialisation and burnout (Skirstad *et al*. 2012).

In that respect, the very expression of 'elite youth sport' contains a contradiction, as the

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word 'elite' for many Norwegians – laypersons and policy-makers alike – does not have a positive connotation when used in association with youth sport. Historically, sport policy has distinguished between child, youth and mass sport on one hand and elite sport on the other. This distinction has been maintained for decades, in White Papers from the government (e.g. Meld. St. 26, 2011–2012) as well as in policy documents from the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (e.g. NOC 2011). However, while this distinction is still recognised, it is perhaps less clear than it has been in previous years.

The tensions involved in attempting to maintain the distinction are evident in the most recent report into Norwegian elite sport (NOC 2013), which treats the relationship between youth sport and elite sport as more closely intertwined and even interdependent. The revised conceptualisation of the relationship has its roots in the strongly held, but empirically fragile, belief among policy-makers – in the public sector as well as in sport organisations – that elite sport success generates mass sport participation. For example, Hanstad and Skille investigated the campaign which surrounded the Olympic Winter Games held in Lilleham- mer, Norway in 1994 and identified the same assertion of the value of the Games in relation to motivating people to increase their level of physical activity. While several reports published before and in the same year that the games were held (Skjæveland 1993, NIF 1994) showed that there had been an increase in participation which implied that the campaign had been a success, later reports (from the same survey) showed a decrease in the years immediately prior to the Games and in the year following the Games with participation falling to 51.3 per cent in 1993 (down from 52.9 per cent two years earlier) and to 48.9 per cent by 1995 (Breivik 2003, Krange and Strandbu 2004).

Hanstad and Skille (2010) concluded, in line with Green and Houlihan's (2005) comparative study of several sports across several countries, that elite sports development as well as mass sports development is about prioritisation. In all the cases studied in this chapter, the sport federations are responsible for elite sport development and responsible for the development of mass participation; thus prioritisation is an issue. The point which is new with regard to discourse about elite sport and mass sport is that elite youth sport is now considered to be a positive factor in increasing mass participation among youth: the assumption being that if some youth achieve high levels of success in sport, many youth will be encouraged to play sport.

The changing attitude towards elite youth sport is also evident in recent discussions of the youth games. In the recent report on elite sport (NOC 2013) the forthcoming Youth Olympic Winter Games in 2016, which is to be organised in Lillehammer, is identified as an integral part of a general 'youth campaign' ('Ungdomsløftet'). In that respect, an

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event for adolescent athletes is seen as an opportunity to promote participation to a whole new generation of sports people in the widest understanding of the expression, as the report holds:

> The Youth Olympic Games at Lillehammer demonstrates the most important milestone in NOC's work with 'Ungdomsløftet' for Norwegian sport. . . . This event gives Norwegian sport a unique possibility to work purposefully to develop the young coaches, leaders, athletes and volunteers of tomorrow.
>
> (NOC 2013: 112, authors' translation)

Not unexpectedly, the national sports associations vary considerably in terms of their approach to the YOG, in the levels of resources they commit to the YOG and the prestige that they consider the Games possess. One indication of this variation is seen through the participation of various sports at the YOGs that have already taken place. To the first summer YOG, Norway sent five athletes between 16 and 18, two females and three males, in four different disciplines: one each in swimming, sailing and shooting and two in wrestling. To the first winter YOG, Norway sent 28 athletes (also between 16 and 18), 14 of each sex, in nine different disciplines: luge (two), alpine skiing (four), curling (four), free- style (two), ski cross, ski jumping (two), Nordic combined, cross-country skiing (four), biathlon (four) and speed skating (four). The discussion that follows provides an exploration of the views of the associations for swimming and (cross- country) skiing on the YOG and focuses particularly on the impact of the YOG on association policy. Data are also presented from interview with staff in the NOC (*Olympiatoppen*) with responsibility for the YOG.

All sport federations indicated that they have their own, sport specific plan for the development of talented young athletes. Thus they conceive the YOG as one out of a number of opportunities to increase event experience among their young athletes. Swimming and skiing are, however, very conscious of the relatively modest role and developmental value of the YOG, in that it should not be perceived by the young athletes as the goal of their career. According to the interviewees in both swimming and cross-country skiing, it is important to 'not be too satisfied too early'. The YOG is only one possible step on the path to excellence in the particular sport. For gymnastics, the problem of 'early satisfaction' is not an issue because 'in Norway, it is difficult to be good as a young athlete' (Head coach, male gymnastics, Norway) because of the regulations protecting children from heavy training in one sport at an early age. In that respect, Norwegian gymnasts are older when they peak compared to their international competitors where gymnastics and training have been fitted into their school and everyday lives from childhood. With specific regard to YOG, the challenge is somewhat different from swimming and cross-country skiing, and also different from British

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gymnastics (see next section) because Norwegian gymnasts, whose development has been delayed due to current age restrictions, do not meet the qualifying standard for YOG.

Norwegian swimming has experienced tremendous development in the last ten years, in respect of international success which has been achieved after long term planning and rigid and committed implementation of those plans. One consequence of the implementation of the plans has been an increased focus on youth and junior swimming in recent years. A central part of the plans has been a coordinated increase in full time and professional coaches at club levels (from under ten to over 100 in the last ten years) as well as at the national/association level. The Norwegian swimming federation's decision to send young swimmers to YOG and similar events must be seen within this context. The Norwegian swimming federation sent one young swimmer to the YOG in Singapore in 2010 (one more was planned, but he was injured just before the event), and seven young swimmers to the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 2013.

Although there is no mention of the YOG in the Federation's strategic plan, the YOG and other youth games or festivals are utilised as part of the development of young swimmers who want to be (future) elite athletes. According to the head coach of the national teams, for both seniors and juniors, the YOG and the EYOF are used as arenas for learning and development. 'In general, we see Youth Olympic Games as a good learning arena for swimmers who want a future elite sport career' (Head coach, swimming, Norway). He sees the increased number of young swimmers participating in international competitions as an explicit outcome of long term work with young people in the Norwegian swimming federation. 'The Norwegian Swimming Federation is concerned with age related training, and has a strong focus on having good coaches in children's and youth sport' (Head coach, swimming, Norway).

According to the head coach, a culture has been developed among the coaches where high status is attached to being a trainer of youth. This new culture is considered now to be producing results. In that respect, the YOG and similar events (such as EYOF) are considered as appropriate steps on the long road to becoming an elite swimmer. The head coach emphasised that representatives of the Norwegian Swimming Federation – very consciously – do not call the events 'Olympic'. They rather use the term festival, in order to emphasise that youth and learning are two sides of the same coin, and thus that the real goal in a swimmer's career is at a much later stage. The head coach of swimming is aware of the tension between elite sport and mass sport, and three times during the one- hour interview, the parallel to music was drawn, where number of hours practice required to achieve the highest standards is undisputed: 'why should that not be the case in sport then?'

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Excerpted from *The Youth Olympic Games*

Cross-country skiing is seen by most Norwegians as the national sport; it has a long tradition both in respect of participation by the Norwegian population, and with regard to international achievement. Since the first winter Olympics in Chamonix in 1924 (where Norway took 17 out of the 18 medals awarded in various ski disciplines, then primarily related to cross-country skiing and ski jumping), Norway has been among the dominating nations in cross-country skiing (Allen 2007). In that respect, the Norwegian Ski Association's (*Norges skiforbund*: NSF) approach to the YOG is ambivalent. On the one hand, Norwegian skiing has already proved that it has a well-functioning system for delivering (adult) elite athletes to the 'real' world championships and Olympic Games. On the other hand, given the introduction of the YOG the NSF sees two justifications for sending athletes to take part. First, similar to the view of the Norwegian Swimming Federation, the YOG is seen as an opportunity for the development of young athletes on their way to further goals and elite careers: it can be adapted to the path which already exists.

Second, it is important for the NSF to achieve success at the YOG in order to demonstrate and reinforce its status as the dominant cross-country ski nation. The latter point is twofold – or has two complementary sides. The NSF sends athletes to the YOG in order to show the other national ski associations, the IF and the IOC that they are aware of and supportive of developments in global competitions. Moreover, they conceive their participation as a contribution to the sport on a global level, that other countries can have the opportunity to compete with Norway. The YOG is one out of a list of events to which the NSF plans to send athletes during the current political period (defined as the validity of the current ski strategic plan).

Before ending the discussion of the attitude of Norwegian sports officials it is important to take account of the attitude of the elite sport department of NOC. First, there is a similar attitude towards the YOG (and EYOF) as there is in the national associations which is that YOG is one of a number of arenas in which to practise in order to achieve real (read: senior) excellence later in the career. Second, the elite sport department sees this training arena also as a possibility for (younger, less experienced) trainers and leaders to gain experience. In that respect, it is evident that the elite sport department has a responsibility, not only for developing athletes, but also for developing those who are part of the system supporting the athletes. Third, there is a perceived ambivalence in the message from the IOC, about what the YOG is. According to the representative for the YOG in the elite sport department (OLT) of the NOC:

> One of the things that can be provocative from the IOC, is that the athletes who prepare for this and participate [in the YOG], they do it because they focus on it [the sport], they mean something with it. They are, at their level, elite athletes, and then they sometimes are met with this: remember this is not the Olympic Games, and this is more than a sport event, and

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> they feel they are not taken seriously enough, they do not receive the attention they deserve. There is double communication.
>
> (OLT representative)

Sport leaders have recognised that Rogge said in his opening speech for YOG 2012 that the world's best athletes in the age frame had been gathered. At the same time, the IOC puts 'everything into the concept' (including sport competition, educational and cultural elements and promotion of Olympism) without succeeding in convincing the young athletes of the importance of the breadth of objectives identified for YOG. For them, the sport element is actually enough. The good athletes – already at an early age – are good at focusing on their tasks and screening everything else out, meaning that for example – or particularly – the cultural and educational programme (CEP) is considered a distraction and consequently out of the field of vision of the athletes.

The United Kingdom

In contrast to Norway the dominant ideological context for public policy in the UK is neo-liberalism manifest most clearly in a scepticism towards the role of the state as a service provider and regulator of civil society organisations and in a preference for decentralisation. Neo-liberalism has, to some extent, been less evident in sport policy, but since the election of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 the neo-liberal tenor of government has intensified and was reflected most clearly in the withdrawal of ring-fenced funding for school sport. However, the government's acceptance of elite sport competition for young people is not just a reflection of a non-interventionist ideology, but also a reflection of a positive endorsement of the perceived personal and community benefits of competitive sport for young people.

Although the tension between elite sport and mass sport is less visible and important than in Norway and despite the general political and public support for elite youth competitive sport, youth elite sport policy in the UK exhibits a number of paradoxes. One paradox is that UK-based agencies have been at the forefront of campaigns to tackle the abuse of young athletes by coaches and other adults involved in sport. The work of Celia Brackenridge and her colleagues did much to alert government to the need to protect children from abuse. The Child Protection in Sport Unit is supported by Britain's sports councils and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and has done much to raise awareness of the need to protect children within sport. However, the focus has remained rather narrow and has moved only slightly beyond the concern with sexual, physical and emotional abuse of children at the inter-personal level (e.g. athlete-coach): the questioning of systemic factors such as

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intensive competition structures for young athletes is only occasionally questioned. A second paradox is between inclusionary and exclusionary youth sport policies. On the one hand successive governments have extolled the value to the individual child of inclusion in sport while, on the other, promoting a narrow range of sport opportunities (traditional and competitive). These paradoxes receive little attention due to the dominance of a view of competitive sport as an unalloyed good for young people. Sceptical voices among politicians are rare due in large part to fear of a backlash from media interests and the general weakness of the sceptics' lobby.

Dissenting or sceptical voices are even more muted since the successful hosting of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games which defined legacy for young people largely in terms of increased opportunities to participate in competitive sport (DCMS 2012). More recently the Prime Minister voiced his support for Glasgow's bid to host the 2018 YOG in the following terms:

> I am convinced that if we can bring the Games to the UK, we will help even more young people develop a sporting habit for life. The tremendous legacy of the 2012 Games is not just about stadia and the economy, it is also about young people. All our great athletes started at a young age and I believe that the Youth Olympics is about opening young people's eyes to the possibility of sport and inspiring the next generation of Olympic heroes.
>
> (Prime Minister's office 2013)

The Prime Minister's enthusiasm for youth sport competition echoes that of most national governing bodies. The UK has been well represented at recent elite youth sport events taking 40 athletes from 16 sports to the 2010 Singapore YOG and over 100 athletes to each of the last three AYOFs. Even for the 2012 winter YOG the British Olympic Association (BOA) sent a team of 23 athletes to compete in sports where the country's record is modest to say the least – just one silver medal was won. A similar size team (17 athletes) was sent to the 2013 European Youth Olympic Winter Festival (EYOWF), targeted at 14 to 18 year olds.

With the strength and depth of commitment to competitive sport and to the assumed inspirational value of elite sport it is hardly surprising that the sport organisations covered by this research expressed no doubts about the benefits of young people being involved in high level competitive sport. However, participation in elite youth events such as the YOG and the EYOWF is determined primarily according to pragmatic developmental criteria. British Swimming, for example, reported that it only sent four athletes to the Singapore YOG because the Olympic events fell 'in the same year as the European Championships and the Commonwealth Games'. It was also noted that while Tom Daley (one of GB's most successful divers) was one of the four sent to Singapore, he was:

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> a last minute addition to the team after he fell foul of an injury at the European Championships and could not compete; the injury was only minor and the YOG were a c ouple of weeks later than the Europeans so we arranged for him to compete there.
>
> (British Swimming senior officer, personal correspondence 15 January 2013)

While British Swimming acknowledges the value of attending events such as YOG, it is argued that greater value for young athletes can be obtained from sending them to other, more intensively competitive, events such as the Commonwealth Games and FINA-organised European events. As one senior British Swimming officer commented:

> the Commonwealths allows us to send approximately 60 swimmers, when the [Youth] Olympic team is around 35 – this means that a number of junior/youth swimmers get the multi-sport experience, as well as a chance to learn from the senior/more experienced swimmers, as part of their development towards challenging for a place on the next Olympic team.

A similar perception of elite youth events is held by British Cycling (BC), the governing body of one of the UK's most successful Olympic sports. BC has a strong and successful development structure and is highly selective in the events to which it sends athletes. In general, events such as YOG, the Australian Youth Olympic Festival and the EYOWF, are considered to offer little to the NGB's development strategy. From British Cycling's point of view there are three main weaknesses in the YOG events. First, YOG is considered to have a 'weak competition structure' which is, in part, due to the focus on a younger age group than BC's development squads. Second, there is a lack of specialisation in the competition structure. Cyclists are expected to compete in more than one discipline, for example BMX and road racing when athletes are, according to BC, at the stage of their development (around 17 or 18 years of age) when they are specialists. Finally, the YOG are perceived as unattractive because BC operates a squad system in which all cyclists at a particular stage of their development train as part of a squad. The YOG format does not accommodate the squad system. The reasons for not attending other youth Olympic festivals vary, but with regard to the AYOF, one reason for not attending is the timing of the event which clashes with the examination period in GB schools and universities. The reasons for the lack of enthusiasm for participation in the EYOWF is that the event organisers are considered to be more concerned with the medals table than the promotion of the event as a developmental opportunity. The overall impression is that BC considers the more recent Olympic youth festivals as lacking the structure and eligibility criteria that complement the developmental strategy of the sport and, moreover, do not rival the existing developmental opportunities provided by the sport's international federation (UCI), such as the European championships and the junior world championships, or those organised by British Cycling itself. The reluctance of BC to become more closely involved in the youth

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Olympic events is despite some pressure from the BOA and also from the UCI to increase the British presence.

An interesting and somewhat contrasting perspective on the value of elite youth sport competitions including the YOG is offered by British Gymnastics (BG) who view such competitions more positively partly because the age at which gymnasts, especially female gymnasts, reach their peak of performance is relatively young and YOG provides an opportunity for gymnasts who may be expected to compete in the next Olympic Games to gain experience of a major multi-sport event. At the London Olympics, British Gymnastics had two female athletes for whom the 2012 Games was their first experience of a major event. However, BG sees the YOG and other youth events as important for the developmental opportunities they provide, not for the chance to win a gold medal. For example, BG sends a squad to the AYOF primarily because one of the strongest countries in the world in gymnastics, China, sends a squad. Similarly, BG is supportive of the EYOF because gymnasts from Germany, Italy and Russia compete. In contrast, BG is less enthusiastic about the Commonwealth Games and the YOG because the quality of competition and hence the developmental potential is lower. While the developmental value of an elite youth event is the primary criterion for participation, BG also suggests that participation in these events, including YOG, are opportunities to regularly remind gymnastic competition judges of the quality of British gymnasts. The assumption is that at future competitions judges will form a positive stereotype of British gymnasts – in other words they will 'expect' them to perform well.

The scepticism towards the youth Olympic events of British Cycling and British Swimming may not, however, be typical as other Olympic NGBs, such as those for track and field and snow sports, which are much more enthusiastic about participation especially when the events are in Europe. The various attractions of Olympic events include the low cost of participation as the BOA covers much of the expense, the improved relationship with the BOA that participation produces, the opportunity to expose young athletes to the 'big event atmosphere', the high quality of competition in some sports and the modest travel involved for European events.

For the BOA, participation in youth Olympic events are seen primarily as an opportunity to enable potential Olympic athletes to experience the atmosphere and organisation of a large multi-sport event – 'For most of Team GB's competitors . . . this will be their first experience of a multi-sport environment and their first taste of Olympic competition' (BOA 2013). This view is reflected in the comments of the young athletes who commonly cited the value of youth Olympic events as a learning experience and as preparation for the bigger stage of the Olympic Games.

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Excerpted from *The Youth Olympic Games*

Conclusion

In the opening section of this chapter, it was suggested that elite youth sport occupied a crowded policy space characterised by tension over the nature and future of elite youth sport. However, rather than the primary tension being between a concern with the development of young athletes for senior competition and a concern with their welfare, the most significant tension was between the developmental priorities of coaches, national sports federations and athletes on the one hand and the non-sport objectives of some event organisers, particularly the YOG, on the other. The concern to ensure that elite youth events, including the YOG, offered young athletes a significant multi-sport experience and a high quality developmental opportunity was most clear within UK sports, but was also evident in Norway where the attempt to maintain the traditional distinction between youth sport and elite sport is coming under pressure. Yet it was clear in both Norway and the UK that there remains a need to rationalise and legitimise the concentration on elite sport at both the adult and increasingly the youth level by arguing for a causal relationship between elite sport success and increased mass participation. However, once one moves beyond the policy statements of the sports confederation in Norway and the national sport agencies in the UK and focuses on the sport federations, there is no attempt to legitimise the focus on elite youth sport in terms other than the prospect of success in the senior Olympic competition. In none of the interviews was any significant mention made of the other non-elite sport objectives of the YOG such as tackling obesity, encouraging youth participation and developing greater inter- cultural awareness. In the UK, there is a significant complementarity between the current international elite youth sport context (or policy regime) and the interests of domestic policy actors. Indeed, it is not possible to identify dissenting voices except for those that criticise the youth events for not being sufficiently competitive. A number of respondents indicated that if the YOG is to establish itself on the elite youth sport competition calendar, then it, along with the other youth festivals, needs to become more like the youth events organised by the international federations or more like the Olympic Games.

The criticisms made of the YOG and other elite youth multi-sport events raise an interesting issue concerning the factors that shape domestic and international youth sport. In many countries, the development of domestic elite sport policy and elite youth sport policy provides strong evidence of the influence of non- domestic policy actors. In many, and probably most, countries investment of public resources in elite sport is determined primarily by the decisions of the IOC regarding the sports to be included in the summer and winter Games and also by the status of international federation world championships. However, in relation to elite youth sport, it may well be the case that

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the direction of influence is reversed with pressure from domestic policy actors (national sports federations) being put on the IOC to make the YOG more similar to the senior event. The message that the other important domestic policy actors, national Olympic committees, are sending to the IOC is less clear due in part to a concern on the one hand to support the IOC by promoting YOG within their countries and a concern at the pressure that financing attendance at YOG places on NOC budgets.

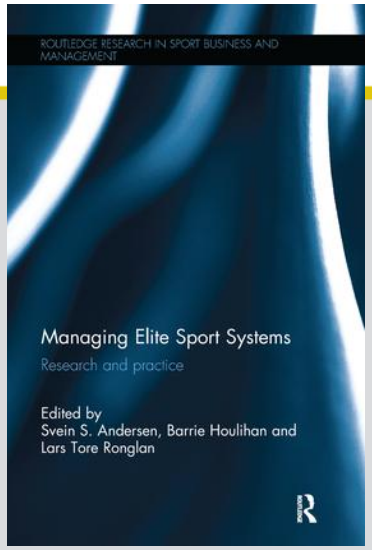
In relation to path dependency, it is arguable that the early history of YOG demonstrates the utility of the concept. As indicated in Chapter 1 Jacque Rogge intended that YOG should mark a return to basic Olympic values and also contribute positively to addressing the issue of youth obesity. The achievement of these aspirations would require a significant departure from the elite sport policy 'path'. At the very least, the evidence presented in this chapter shows the difficulty in changing, even modestly, the direction of elite sport. Ironically, it may eventually be the case that the YOG becomes not simply incorporated into the elite sport policy orthodoxy, but represents a further step along the path of extending elite competition to an ever younger age group.

CHAPTER

5

MODERNISATION AND ELITE SPORT DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND AND THE UK:

TALENT IDENTIFICATION AND COACH DEVELOPMENT



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Managing Elite Sport Systems

Edited by Svein A. Andersen, Lars Tore Ronglan, Barrie Houlihan.

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Excerpted from *Managing Elite Sport Systems*

The Context of Policy Change

The concept of punctuated equilibrium is well established in both organisational theory (for example Romanelli and Tushman 1994) and theories of policy change (Baumgartner and Jones 2009). The idea that organisations and public policies experience long periods of relative stability with only incremental change which are punctuated by periods of intense change, often stimulated by an exogenous shock, after which a new equilibrium is established, is an apt description of the evolution of UK elite sport policy over the last forty years. Up until the mid- 1990s public policy towards elite sport was largely non-interventionist, with the policy area dominated by a network of national governing bodies (NGBs), which received some financial support from government but which were largely left to manage their sports, at both the participation and elite levels, as they saw fit. This policy was reinforced both by the NGBs, who, protective of their autonomy, had developed a sense of entitlement towards public funding, and by governments, which, on the one hand, had a deep suspicion and disdain for the sport systems of European Communist countries and, on the other, had a degree of deference towards the long established NGBs.

The exogenous event which challenged the policy equilibrium was the poor performance by Great Britain's squad at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. The team won only one gold medal and was ranked in 36th position in the medals table. In the ten previous summer Olympics the ranking of the GB team had been remarkably stable, with its lowest ranking being 13th. There was certainly no evidence of a sustained downward trend, and it would have been possible to argue that 36th was disappointing but was an exception to the long established pattern of a consistent top 15 ranking. What made the punctuation possible was the change in the national mood, evident in the media and among politicians, which increasingly perceived elite sport success as a significant diplomatic and domestic political resource. Rather than punctuation leading to an intense burst of policy-making activity, the change to the new policy equilibrium took place in a number of related stages over a period of about five years from the late 1990s. Two of the most significant were the introduction of National Lottery funding to support elite athletes and the establishment of a specialist government agency, UK Sport (previously GB Sports Council), which was given the primary function of delivering elite sport success at the Olympic Games.

Providing reliable definitions of 'equilibrium' and of 'incremental', as opposed to quantum, change is far from easy. Whether a change in policy is incremental often depends on whether one is initiating the change (for example the decision by a government to reduce by one the number of Olympic sports that it funded) or on the receiving end of change (for example, the perception of the NGB and elite athletes no

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longer funded and now excluded from access to specialist support services). Hall's (1993) typology of levels, or 'orders', of policy change is a useful device to describe the scale of the punctuation achieved in UK elite sport in the mid-1990s. First order changes are alterations to the intensity or scale of an existing policy instrument, for example an increase in the allocation of public funding to NGBs to support elite athlete development. Second order changes are those that introduce new policy instruments designed to achieve existing policy objectives, for example the decision to invest in sport science or the acceptance of state-funded full-time athletes. Third order changes are those that involve a change in policy goals, for example the explicit acknowledgement of the political importance of Olympic medal success and position in the medals table.

The modernisation project and sport

The punctuation in the established relationship between government and sport organisations took place within the wider context of the governmental project of 'modernisation', arguably a second order change according to Hall's typology. The commitment to modernisation was the outcome of a critique by the Labour government, elected in 1997, which argued that the institutions of government and of many of its civil society partners were not 'fit for purpose' or at least were not fit for the government's purposes. Despite being dismissed by Midwinter (2001) as a 'suitably vacuous concept', modernisation has substance and it is possible to identify a set of principles and technologies which recurred consistently across a range of policy sectors. Recurrent principles included partnership, empowerment and stakeholding, and frequently employed technologies included public service agreements/contracts, inspection, 'naming and shaming' and audit. These principles and technologies were framed within a narrative which was critical of a Weberian model of professional-bureaucratic government, which privileged managerial knowledge and equated modernisation with social progress. The extent of consistency should, however, not be exaggerated, for as will become evident in the discussion of the attempts to modernise coaching, professionalisation was one strategy which was implicitly supported. In part it was the vagueness and mallebility of the concept of modernisation that has contributed to its longevity.

While much of the rhetoric around modernisation emphasises the empowerment of the partners of government, there is a strong element of 'centralist conditionality' (Game 1998, p. 26) in the granting of autonomy. Traditional government as 'command and control' is replaced, according to Rose (1999, p. 49) by a more subtle form of governance which allows 'government at a distance'.

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There are a number of examples of this pattern of modernisation in relation to elite sport. The development of a contractual relationship between UK Sport and the Olympic NGBs, strongly underpinned by substantial resource dependence and the attempts to devise a more systematic approach to the development of both athletes and coaches, resonates strongly with the principles and technologies of modernisation identified above. The emphasis on 'empowerment' and 'earned autonomy' is, according to Perri 6 *et al.* (2002), in large part a consequence of a significant degree of arrogance among the government's modernising zealots, who are frequently unsympathetic towards (and uncomprehending of) the context within which delivery agencies, such as national governing bodies of sport, operate. This leads them to assume that 'only the most relentless regime of inspection, incentive, sanction and discipline will produce effective action: this type of impatience results from a lack of trust' (6 *et al.* 2002, p. 99). There is a lack of trust, not only in public service officials, such as those in UK Sport, but also in civil society partners, such as NGBs, despite the long history of success that NGBs could point to in developing their sports. It is this erosion of trust that has created the cultural space for the modernisation discourse to take root. Trust, as the primary basis of the relationship between government and its civil society partners, has been replaced by supposedly neutral techniques and objective measures of progress such as audit, inspection and service agreements, which signal the substitution of '*confidence* in systems for *trust* in individuals' (O'Neill 2002, p. 481; emphasis in original).

The apparent paradox between the rhetoric of empowerment and autonomy voiced by successive governments, on the one hand, and the refinement and increasing subtlety of forms of influence, on the other, resonates strongly with Foucault's work on governmentality (Miller and Rose 2008). The most effective form of influence or power is that which shapes the beliefs and values of individuals and the organisations within which they operate in such a way that they complement the interests of government. As a consequence, attention is directed towards analysing the knowledge and technologies through which the social activity of elite sport is regulated, and through which actors – athletes, coaches, sport scientists, NGBs – are constituted as self-disciplining subjects. The comment by Rose and Miller (1992, p. 174) that 'Power is not so much a matter of imposing constraints upon citizens as of "making up" citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom' applies equally to NGBs and other sport organisations such as Sports Coach UK. The aim is to refashion civil society organisations so that they share the values and beliefs of government and are thus reliable partners. Modernisation in relation to elite sport has been operationalized through the application of technologies such as audit, public service agreements, target-setting and performance reviews and measurement. The net effect of the application of these technologies is to ensure that NGBs are instrumental in their own self-government and engaged in the reflexive

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monitoring of their organization's actions.

In summary, the modernisation of NGBs was prompted by two motives, one overt and the other rather less so. The overt motive was to encourage NGBs to reform their structures and organisation so as to be better placed to meet the demands of a more intense and professional competitive environment – mirroring, for example, the change that the IOC had gone through under Samaranch and Pound in the 1980s (MacAloon 2011). The less overt motive was to refashion NGBs organisationally and ideologically so that they could become reliable partners for government in pursuit of the latter's policy objectives. However, while the ambition of the government and UK Sport was the refashioning of NGBs as self-disciplining subjects, UK Sport also relied on a far more conventional array of techniques for achieving compliance and successful policy implementation. UK Sport adopted a policy summed up in the slogan *No Compromise*, which involved the setting of medal targets for each NGB and a financial reward and punishment system underpinned by substantial resource dependence.

Methodology

Data for this chapter were collected between 2012 and 2014 from a range of documentary sources and a series of semi-structured interviews. The documents that were analysed were selected according to the following criteria: concerned elite development strategy, coaching development, talent identification and/or development strategy and publication by the UK government, its agencies (UK Sport and Sport England) or NGBs. The document search was supplemented by searches of government and NGB websites, newspaper websites and online sport media websites. Interviews were conducted with senior officials from government and non-government national sport organisations. A thematic analysis of the data was conducted.

Modernisation and elite athlete production

The industrial production of elite athletes is a relatively new phenomenon. Up to the 1980s it was rare to find government-funded systematic approaches to elite athlete development outside Communist countries. However, from the late 1980s there has been a steady increase in the number of countries adopting more systematic approaches to elite athlete development, underpinned by public funding (Houlihan and Zheng 2013). Analysis of the characteristics of current approaches to elite athlete development indicates a substantial degree of uniformity (Bergsgard *et al.* 2007, De Bosscher *et al.* 2008, Houlihan and Green 2008). Although systems differ in the balance

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of characteristics and in the specific properties of each characteristic, there is broad agreement that the foundation of a successful system requires: funding to enable athletes to train full-time; a systematic approach to talent identification and development; sport science/medicine support; full- time coaches; and a competition structure designed to prepare athletes for the Olympic Games and possibly world championships. These specific requirements are normally supported by a specialist administrative structure (such as Norway's Olympiatoppen, the Australian Institute of Sport and UK Sport) as well as by long term cross-party political support and a popular culture that values success in competitive sport. According to De Bosscher (2007, p. 246), these characteristics indicate the emergence of an 'increasingly homogenous elite sport development system which is ostensibly based around a near uniform model of elite sport development with subtle local variations'.

As Houlihan and Zheng (2013) make clear, while increased public investment is a necessary condition for improved performance it is not a sufficient condition. A number of countries have increased their investment in elite sport but have either remained in a broadly similar position (for example Spain) or have even lost ground (for example Japan). For the UK government, working through UK Sport, two other necessary conditions were the modernisation of the structures and processes of NGBs and stronger governance arrangements. As regards modernisation, two processes which were seen as primary targets for reform were those associated with talent identification and development (TID) and those associated with coach development. It is these two elements which are explored in more detail in the following sections.

The concern to modernise the institutions of sport in the UK dates from the 1990s, but it was not until 2002 that the government allocated funding to UK Sport to support the modernisation of NGBs. According to a UK Sport senior officer, 'we decided actually that we'd have three levels and types of work on modernisation. One was about governance structures; one was about people development – because often it's the people that will drive the modernisation – and then the third one was about systems' (interview 06.03.2013). The same interviewee acknowledged that modernisation was also 'about credibility, we've had some spectacular bankruptcies … and [the government] wants sports to be more and more credible, more and more stable'.

Although funding to support specific projects ended in 2005, momentum was maintained by UK Sport through the provision of advice and the setting of expectations, the fulfilment of which was linked, indirectly, to funding. For UK Sport, modernisation was a permanent concern with a particular focus on talent development and coaching processes. As another senior UK Sport officer commented, 'for me, those three areas of R&I [sports science research and innovation], coaching and talent are still evolving but

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we've seen a massive evolution of all three in the last 10 years in terms of what we're doing, how we're doing it, so those three are big levers' (interview 02.05.2013). In written evidence to the House of Lords (2013, pp. 820–821), UK Sport identified the central elements of a modern elite sport system as follows: 'The long term nature of the strategic investment in the UK's high performance system has ensured that the UK has been able to recruit, retain and develop world class experts. Key factors include:

- clear and agreed outcome goals
- world class coaches
- a performance management system that tracks progress, identifies, prioritises and addresses challenges and encourages sharing and collaboration across sports
- the continued evolution of the use of performance intelligence
- greater focus on athlete profiling
- better and more aligned talent pathways
- better resourced Paralympic campaign
- improved standards of leadership, governance, financial management and administration in sports
- better World Class Coaching, and increased focus on the Elite Training environment for our athletes'.

While UK Sport officers were enthusiastic about the potential of modernisation to generate significant benefits for the elite sport system, others were less convinced, pointing to the variable impact of modernisation and governance reform as measured by Olympic medals. Noting that some of the UK's major NGBs have yet to deliver medal success in proportion to the investment (of money and expertise) they have received, one senior sports administrator commented, 'We bang on about governance and think it can solve everything, which is a nonsense' (interview 20.11.2013).

The attitude of NGBs towards modernisation was mixed with some seeing it as simply the consequence of increased financial dependence on government. According to the CEO of one small Olympic NGB, 'with that money comes a lot of new hoops to jump through and the hoops are getting more and more onerous' (interview 02.04.2012). He went on to note that meeting the governance requirements of government was a 'difficult transition' for the NGB board. The CEO of another NGB for a very successful Olympic sport noted the increase in government scrutiny of NGBs' use of grant income: 'increasingly they want value for money as well so we're starting to get more and more scrutiny now over, not only *what* the overall outcomes are and the return on investment measured by medals but also *how* we're using the money' (interview 01.03.2012). However, the same NGB CEO noted that the modernisation template developed by UK

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Sport was negotiable, particularly if the NGB was successfully delivering Olympic medals.

The extent to which UK Sport was willing to negotiate and compromise on its template for modernisation was illustrated in relation to the recommendation that NGBs should be split into British and English organisations, with the former being primarily responsible for elite sport. According to one CEO of a successful Olympic sport, 'They all split, we didn't. We didn't for couple of reasons: one is there was no pressure from the membership to do it … [and two is] it probably slows down the rollout of quite a lot of initiatives because of the friction that happens … between the home-country governing bodies' (interview 01.03.2012). For this NGB, Olympic medal success appeared to provide a basis on which to resist aspects of the modernisation prescription.

Non-Olympic sports in England also faced pressure from Sport England, the government organisation responsible for the funding and development of community sport and the England Talent Pathway in England, to modernise their organisations with support and funding available to achieve this. For a number of NGBs, even the commercially successful ones, it proved hard to resist these pressures. According to one interviewee in a senior position in a national sport organisation, 'You get others like [named sport] who quite openly say in these meetings that they would prefer to drop the £5million per year they were getting [from Sport England] and find one more big sponsor because they were spending probably 70–80% of their field staff time trying to deliver the Sport England target for the sake of £5million but if they found another O2 or another BMW sponsor with some stringent activation targets but not all the hoops they have had to jump through' (interview 08.04.2013). Not all NGBs perceived the pressure to modernise from Sport England as an unwanted intrusion. According to a senior officer of one commercially successful non-Olympic sport, the Sport England objectives reinforced internally generated objectives for reform. 'Back in the early part of the noughties we had some corporate governance reviews. One was by Sport England, and that was all about are you fit for purpose, are you an organisation we want to invest in and clearly [we] were because we've benefitted from a lot of money from them. But I think the main driver was from within the organisation' (interview 16.05.2012).

The modernisation of the talent identification and development system

The attempted modernisation of TID highlights the tensions within the process between the desire for rapid impact from modernisation and the challenge of

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overcoming the inertia in the traditional systems. The initial attempts to make the search for, and development of, talent more systematic date from 1990s, when the Sports Council published a series of documents between 1992 and 1996 under the collective heading of the Training of Young Athletes (TOYA). Far from outlining a system for talent identification, the TOYA documents were an attempt to set an agenda for NGBs around the topic of TID and the ways in which the development of young talent could most effectively be achieved. In relation to TID the research found that the process was haphazard, with parents playing a primary role and sports clubs and NGBs playing a clear secondary role. In general, the TID system was considered to be a closed system which excluded many children with athletic potential. The various studies challenged coaches' understanding of the physical, psychological, economic and social factors that affected the TID (Rowley and Baxter-Jones 1993a, 1993b).

The TOYA studies were conducted against a background of uncoordinated TID processes and of attempts to improve those processes which were tentative and short term and which exhibited little clarity regarding expectations of NGBs and clubs. According to one interviewee from an Olympic NGB, initiatives designed to improve the approach had been supported for only a short period so the opportunity was lost for consolidation and for enabling talented athletes to reach their full potential. However, by the early years of this century the TID system was certainly more coherent. In 1998 the World Class Start and World Class Potential programmes were introduced by Sport England and were intended to develop a more systematic approach to TID and thus provide a foundation for the World Class Performance Programme (WCPP) (Houlihan and White 2002, Sport England 2006). These programmes were absorbed into the WCPP and transferred to UK Sport to be managed in 2006 with the three levels of the WCPP now known as Talent, Development and Podium.

If the WCPP was to be successful it would require an effective TID system – a requirement acknowledged in a number of policy documents. In *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS 2000, p. 15), the government stated that 'As part of our modernising partnerships, we will ask governing bodies to create a national talent development plan identifying pathways from grassroots of their sport to the international stage'. The following year the Cunningham Report (2001, p. 5) identified that many sports were failing to support talented young people and stated, 'Developing talented youngsters should not be a matter of chance. It requires a well-structured sports specific plan which links grassroots participation to international excellence by defining critical steps along the way'. While there have been advances in TID in the period since 2000, Bloyce and Smith (2010) argue that there is still considerable scope for further improvement. In the period since 2000 there have been a number of attempts to improve the process by which talent capable of development is identified. Within education there have been

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various initiatives, including the *Gifted and Talented* programme managed by the Youth Sport Trust (Bailey *et al.* 2009), the School Games hierarchy of competitions (Chapman 2014) and the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) which was aimed at students in higher education. None of these initiatives was considered to have made a significant contribution to TID. The comment from one senior civil servant in relation to the TASS scheme is typical of the assessment of all three schemes: 'I think there's probably a question about the position of [the TASS] scheme in the overall performance pathway. To what extent is it really picking up people that are likely to go on to the top?' (interview 06.11.2012). Part of the problem with all these schemes was that they were not unequivocally about talent identification. The Gifted and Talented programme had a strong educational element, the School Games programme was about the promotion of competitive sport in schools and the TASS scheme was constrained by the requirements of the host universities.

To a limited extent the establishment by Sport England in 2008 of the England Talent Pathway (ETP) was an attempt to develop a scheme which gave priority to TID. Through the ETP, Sport England is seeking to implement a system for talent development whereby the NGBs are responsible for providing the connections and routes from grassroots participation to the World Class level of their sport and for identifying the resources in place or required for various levels to function successfully. Sport England

Table 3.1 Key elements of an effective England Talent Pathway

Fundamental elements	*Essential elements*	*Desirable elements*
England talent development pathway	Athlete profiles and talent development curriculum	Communication system
Pathway populations and connectivity	Coaching	Training environments
Evidence	Competition	GB alignment
Leadership and accountability	Pathway links	Athlete responsibility
	Pathway access at all levels	Continuous improvement
	Selection processes	Past performer autobiographies
	Transition programme	
	Talent recognition	

Source: Sport England

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has set out four 'Fundamental elements', eight 'Essential elements' and six 'Desirable elements' to guide the NGBs in designing their pathway (see Table 3.1).

However, even the ETP is compromised insofar as it has to be seen to complement the primary responsibility of Sport England, which is to promote participation. As a senior officer within Sport England commented, 'it [the ETP] occupies what I'll term "the middle ground". So it's kind of our investment … it's to under- pin and to feed the World Class Programme in Olympic and Paralympic sports or the senior elite programme in non-Olympic sports. But it also is connected with and interfaces with community sport and junior participation programmes' (interview 07.01.2013).

Within UK Sport the general assessment was that the development of a systematic approach to TID had been successful – at least in some sports. According to one senior UK Sport officer 'I think the talent pathway … is really good and get- ting stronger so I think as the Hoys and the Pendletons [Olympic medal winning cyclists] drop off, there's a couple more waiting underneath whereas that wouldn't have happened in the old days. They'd have gone and there would have been a big hole for a while. There will always be exceptional individuals but the system now is such that there are people sitting waiting to come through. So I think we're in a strong place' (interview 02.05.2013). This positive assessment was echoed by a senior officer of the Sport and Recreation Alliance who commented, 'I think because of the Olympic success … there is an assumption now that we have a production line. Sue [Campbell, former chair of UK Sport] would argue probably, and some of our members would, that there are systems in place within the existing structures so that the boards I sit on and a number of our [NGB] members, swimming and others, would say that they do have a robust system' (interview 08.04.2013).

This positive view of the reform of the TID system is broadly endorsed by a wide range of NGBs. British Cycling, one of the UK's most successful Olympic and Paralympic sports, has a pathway constructed around regional squads and is designed to accommodate the educational needs of their young athletes. Similarly, the competition structure is designed as far as possible to fit with their educational careers. Aspiring talented cyclists would move through a set of age-related programmes before reaching the Olympic Podium Programme (see Table 3.2).

However, not all sports suit the squad system devised by British Cycling. Athletics, for example, with its diverse range of disciplines, requires a more individually focused TID and coaching structure. British Athletics can point to a number of examples of successful Olympic athletes who have come through their system (such as long jumper

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Excerpted from *Managing Elite Sport Systems*

Table 3.2 Cycling development programmes

Programme	*Typical age group*	*Comments*
Olympic Podium	Any, but usually over 20	World class athletes with a track record of success; may be professionals; usually based near national training centre in Manchester
Olympic Academy	18–23	Athletes with clear potential to become world class; programme aims to add 'technical polish'; full-time training at National Cycling Centre
Olympic Development	15–17	Athletes still in education; take part in series of intensive training camps during school holidays
Olympic Development Apprentices	14–15	Focus on transition into junior competition; skills development on and off the bike
Regional Schools of Racing	14–16	Regional structure; cyclists selected from within club structures and regional competitions
Club Clusters of Training	12–16	Club-based training for young riders

Source: British Cycling (http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/performancepathway).

Greg Rutherford), but there are also examples of athletes who have been successful at the Olympic level and who have chosen to train outside the British Athletics system (such as sprinter Jodie Williams).

Due in part to the uneven success of the systematic approach to TID and in part to the pressure that UK Sport was under from the government to deliver medal success, especially at the London Olympic Games, it is not surprising that the organisation was willing to consider other ways of achieving its medal target (and ensuring its survival past the next Parliamentary election). While the *No Compromise* strategy, and especially the financial sanctions that gave it force, were powerful stimuli for NGBs to accept modernisation, it was also a threat to NGBs, as it has encouraged UK Sport to adopt short-cuts in TID for elite athletes, which has to an extent reduced the urgency of the

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longer term objective of the modernisation of NGB structures and processes.

One alternative TID strategy that proved particularly attractive and moderately successful was talent search and transfer, which offered the prospect of a quicker and richer return on the government's investment, which was tied to a four year cycle. Talent search programmes are designed to identify potential Olympians through regional 'talent shows' where basic physiological characteristics could be assessed. 'Talent transfer' refers to a series of schemes through which athletes who were unable to reach the highest levels of competition in one sport were offered the chance to transfer to a sport they might not have previously played. The programmes are managed by UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport: 'As part of UK Sport's strategic investment in high performance sport, the UK Talent Team (a collaboration between UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport) supports national governing bodies of targeted Olympic and Paralympic sports to identify, confirm and develop talented athletes' (UK Sport 2012, p. 34). Within UK Sport the various schemes (see Table 3.3) were considered a successful set of innovations.

Talent Transfer programmes do not suit all sports but have potential where the physical attributes required are similar. For example, a tall footballer might make a successful transfer to rowing, where power and stamina are important, or a good rugby forward might successfully transfer to bob skeleton, where power and speed are important. Some sports are more in need of support from the talent transfer programme to 'plug the gaps' because the percolation model is not serving the sport because of a lower participation base (for example, handball has little or no participation base in the UK), because of the technical nature of the skills required and/or because they are late development sports. According to Niels De Vos, CEO of UK Athletics, talent transfer was unlikely to be beneficial for athletics as 'We are quite a late development sport, so often people have already established themselves at a world level in another sport younger and are unlikely to switch [into athletics]... generally people have moved into athletics as their serious sporting passion by their late teens/early 20s, and still have five or six years to go before they make it at the global level' (House of Lords 2013, p. 62). The later age at which athletes reached their peak in athletics meant that there was a risk that talent transfer schemes might damage athletics, 'where someone may be at a good level [in athletics] but can move quickly to reach world level somewhere else' (House of Lords 2013, p. 62). However, de Vos accepted that the UK Sport talent search schemes were beneficial in relation to Paralympic athletics: 'It is slightly different in para-athletics. Paralympic sport, where the transference can be achieved more quickly – within a quad[rennium] is doable. We were able to demonstrate that; some of our medals in London were found through UK Sport talent identification schemes. They were not taken from other sports specifically, but just at almost "come and try" sessions

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Table 3.3 Selected UK Sport talent search and transfer programmes 2007–2013

Programme	*Year*	*Target sports*	*Criteria*
Girls 4 Gold	2008	Bob skeleton, canoeing, modern pentathlon, rowing and sailing	Age: 17–25 years Physical attributes: fit, powerful and strong, mentally tough and competitive Experience: Competing in any sport at county/regional level Other: Female
Tall and Talented	2009	Rowing, basketball	Age: 15–22 years • Physical attributes: Exceptionally tall (men over 190 cm and women over 180 cm). Quick, agile and skilful and/or fit, powerful and strong • Experience: Competing in any sport at a minimum of county/regional level • Other: Mentally tough and competitive
Paralympic Potential	2009 and 2013	Not specified	Age: 15–35 years Physical attributes: an impairment Experience: sporting background in any sport Other: Desire, commitment and determination to win
Girls 4 Gold: Canoeing	2013	Canoeing	Age: 15–17 and 18–25 years Physical attributes: fit, powerful and competitive Experience: Regional level for girls (15–17), national level for women (18–25) in any sport Other: Female; focus on 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo

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for people with passion, ability, strength and co-ordination, who were able to make the journey to Olympic champion in a relatively short period of time' (House of Lords 2013, p. 62).

Ian Drake, CEO of British Cycling, agreed with de Vos that talent transfer had greater potential in relation to Paralympic sport and accepted that in the early 2000s cycling had used talent search and transfer schemes to establish the critical mass for its performance pathway. According to Drake, 'We did lots and lots of talent ID between 2000 and 2005, and brought new people in on pure talent ID programmes from different sports', but he added, 'However, it is not sustainable in the long term. You need to get to the point where you have got a really healthy sport and the young people are naturally emerging from your clubs as talented athletes' (House of Lords 2013, p. 63). Volleyball, which is perhaps at a similar stage in developing its critical mass of players, relied heavily on talent search/ transfer schemes. According to CEO Richard Callicott, 'We benefitted from a very good programme initiated by UK Sport called Sporting Giants. We had three young players came through – in fact more than that at one point. We always said that we had to teach them the game – they had the athletic ability but they did not have the skills – and that they would feature for 2016' (House of Lords 2013, p. 63).

The rationale given at the time for the adoption of these schemes was the need for sports to be successful at the London Games. UK Sport suggested that they were doing NGBs a service by supplementing their emerging TID systems and reassured them that the schemes were temporary. 'The home Games have provided a unique opportunity to assist sports in filling identified gaps in their talent pipelines through bespoke recruitment and development projects' (UK Sport 2012, p. 34). However, such was the success of the schemes that they have been continued and are part of the preparations for the 2016 Olympics. According to one senior sports administrator, 'I think … it made a hell of a lot of sense for London because it [London] was such an opportunity'. However, the same administrator added, 'what those things have invariably done is compensate for the lack of clarity and competency within those sports. [Athletes] were being transferred in at a higher level because the sport itself wasn't bringing anyone in …. My point is that I'd be much happier in a scenario where you didn't need to do that because the vast majority of sports had good, effective development processes and pathways …. It's putting a sticky plaster over something …. If we're still doing it, it's because the case remains that we have real weaknesses in sports where we could and should be better' (interview 20.11.2013).

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Excerpted from *Managing Elite Sport Systems*

The modernisation of coaching

The development of a high quality coaching system outside the former Communist countries and outside the college sport system in the United States has been a long term challenge for many NGBs and governments. This problem has been largely due to the difficulty of establishing an attractive career structure for coaches. In the UK, until the advent of the National Lottery, there was insufficient funding in the non-commercial sports, which included most Olympic sports, to enable coaches to treat coaching as a viable career choice. The lack of financial resources was compounded in the UK by a long held antipathy towards coaching in general and 'professional' coaching in particular. Even highly commercially successful sports such as football persisted (and to an extent still persist) in treating success as a player as a better indication of coaching potential than actual coaching qualifications and proven experience.

The development of coaching in athletics is illustrative of the prevailing attitudes towards coaches and coaching (Green and Houlihan 2005). The first National Coaching Strategy for athletics was devised in the 1980s and paralleled the establishment of the National Coaching Foundation in 1983, which was the first acknowledgement by the UK government of the importance of coaching for elite level success. Frank Dick, who was instrumental in promoting the work of coaches and the importance of high quality coaching, noted in his review of the newly established national coaching strategy, 'The precept central to a National Coaching and Performance Plan is that a *national* scheme to provide a *local* service for the cutting edge of performance development – quality coach/athlete contact – is in pursuit of achievement in the *international* arena' (quoted in Sports Council 1987, p. 10; emphasis in the original). Despite Dick's work, coaching languished at the lower end of the agendas of both governments and the NGB for athletics. A subsequent report, *Coaching Matters* (Sports Council 1991), drew attention to the inertia that surrounded efforts to raise the profile of coaching as an element in talent development. The authors hoped that the report would be a 'catalyst not only to bring about changes in coaching but to create closer relationships between coaches and performers ... and [coaches and] administrators' (Sports Council 1991, p. 5). Little had changed by the mid-1990s, which led Peter Coe (1994, p. 9), father of Sebastian Coe and a senior athletics coach, to comment that the 'idea of actually sitting down and sharing experiences, training information and anything new in sport science – in short the very keys to success – was never mentioned'. Even by the turn of the century a UK Sport Report (1999) was still urging the prioritisation of the developmental needs of coaches and elite athletes. As is so often the case it was a crisis, in this instance the particularly poor performance by the GB athletes at the Edmonton World Athletics Championships in 2001 (19th in the medal table and only two medals), that proved to

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be the catalyst for action. Government endorsement of the need for reform was provided in *The coaching task force - final report* (DCMS 2002) which called for a 'modernisation programme of investment in NGBs' (p. 4) and 'the need for full time coaches working alongside full time athletes' (p. 10).

The vehicle for the reform of coaching in the UK was the newly established National Coaching Foundation (later titled Sports Coach UK) and the development of the UK Centre for Coaching Excellence in Leeds in 2008. The strategy, still largely current at the time of writing, is the UK Coaching Framework (National Coaching Foundation 2008) which 'All organisations involved in both development and delivery of coaching in the UK will be asked to use ... as a reference point' (NCF 2008, p. 5). Many of the early activities of Sports Coach UK and the UK Centre were focused on the education of coaches operating at the lower to middle end of the athlete ability spectrum and the coaching of young athletes rather than on the needs of elite athletes. However, integral to the NCF strategy and reflective of the concern with modernisation was the emphasis placed on professionalising coaching.

Sports Coach UK has made modest progress in systematising coaching largely through the introduction of the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC), which currently has four levels with the highest still some way short of the skills required for the mentoring of elite athletes. The UKCC is complemented by a licencing system managed by each NGB and supported by Sports Coach UK. However, Sports Coach UK appears more concerned about establishing coaching as a quasi-profession than about addressing the challenge of developing coaches who can be effective at the highest level – with Team GB athletes. In 2008 the organisation commissioned a study of the potential for achieving professional status for coaches (Taylor and Garratt 2008). Not only is the preoccupation with professional status an indication of under-confidence, but it is a major distraction from the general failure of the UK to produce high quality coaches to meet the needs of a very large Olympic squad. The concern with professionalisation is also out of step with the disdain towards many of the elements of professionalism, especially autonomy and self-regulation, found in much of the rhetoric around modernisation.

The UK was not alone in its failure to produce sufficient high quality coaches, as similar problems have been evident in other major sport powers, such as Japan, South Korea and China (Houlihan and Zheng 2013). The UK's response to this shortfall was to import coaching expertise. Following the award of the Olympic Games to London in 2005 the UK began to recruit heavily from abroad. Such was the scale of importation that Hubbard (2011) commented, 'At least 21 of the 26 sports in which Team GB compete in London will have performance directors or senior coaches who have been expensively head- hunted ... In all there are 52 foreigners working at various levels'. The cost of

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importing these coaches was substantial. In a comparative analysis of the earnings of coaches in Italy, the Netherlands, the Flanders region of Belgium and the UK, De Bosscher (2007) found that the coaches working in the UK were substantially better paid.

UK Sport justified the recruitment of foreign coaches as being a consequence of the intensity of elite sport competition; one of their senior officers said that 'this is an international business. You're competing against the best in the world so you need to recruit and retain the best in the world. So we will always have coaches from overseas within our system. The question is – are we using those coaches to support the development of our own coaches – and the answer is yes and we're doing that more effectively now' (interview 06.03.2013). The same senior officer added that 'we've worked hard at succession planning with sports to develop the competency of coaches and by engaging with the master coach to support a mentor coach and actually we provided them with an external mentor so you've got a master coach, mentor and the actual coach' (interview 06.03.2013). What is clear from these statements is the extent to which Sports Coach UK has been marginalised in the elite level coach development process. Indeed UK Sport makes it clear that it 'is the lead agency for high performance coach development within the UK, recognising that world class coaching is critical to Britain's future sporting success' (UK Sport 2012, p. 36). UK Sport operates its own coach development programmes – an Elite Programme and a Coaching Apprenticeship Programme. The aim of the former is to 'enhance and develop current world class coaches working in the British system' and the latter is aimed at 'emerging coaches already working in the high performance system'. It is notable that neither programme is aimed specifically at developing 'homegrown' coaching talent.

In contrast to the talent identification and development system, coaching is lagging behind in terms of the development of a systematic approach. Sports Coach UK has certainly strengthened the lower and middle levels of the coaching hierarchy but the systematic development of coaches capable of supporting the UK's most talented athletes is still a work in progress. Frustration with the present situation is summed up by the CEO of a major Olympic NGB as follows: 'We've got UK Sport tinkering with coach education, we've got Sport England tinkering with coach education and we've got Sports Coach UK tinkering, we've got Skills Active tinkering so there's four agencies tinkering and none of them understand it because they're bureaucrats, all of them. And governing bodies [are] trying to work within that environment' (interview 26.04.2012).

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Excerpted from *Managing Elite Sport Systems*

Conclusion

The primary conclusion of this analysis of change in relation to TID and coaching is the degree to which the direction and pace of change have been determined by government through its agency UK Sport. The most significant impact of the drive for modernisation (a drive which has been underpinned by lottery funding and the resource dependency that this has created) has been the substantial change in the relationship between UK Sport and NGBs. For many Olympic NGBs their role as membership organisations has been distorted by current responsibility as government contractors. Two further conclusions concern the ambiguity surrounding the concept of modernisation and the limits of modernisation and of resource dependency as instruments for achieving government objectives. Modernisation needs to be understood as functioning at two levels, that of the government and its agent UK Sport and that of the NGB. Furthermore, a distinction needs to be drawn between the end or purpose of modernisation and the means of its achievement. The assumption that modernisation of NGBs is both the means and the end is only partially correct. From the perspective of the government a modern elite sport system is one that delivers Olympic and Paralympic medals. The NGBs are considered an important means to achieving that end, but they are far from being the only means available. From the government's point of view an effective elite sport system is one that delivers medals and if that is achieved through the transfer of talented athletes between sports or the transfer of coaches (and athletes) from abroad there will be little concern that this strategy might be undermining the modernisation of NGBs. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the introduction of the various talent transfer initiatives indicated an acknowledgement on the part of UK Sport of the failure of modernisation to deliver within an acceptable time- scale efficient and effective partners (contractors) for government. At best the effectiveness of NGBs in producing elite athletes has been highly variable and seems to bear little relation to the amount of funding provided. While it is possible to argue that the timescale for achieving modernisation will vary depending on the NGB and that the perceived need for talent transfer will be gradually reduced as the 'slower' modernisers catch up it is also possible to argue that the attraction of talent transfer, at least as a supplement to NGB TID, will remain, given its success in the preparations for the 2012 Games. A similar argument can also be made in relation to elite coach development, where the importation of experienced coaches with proven track records from abroad is likely to continue to offer a lower risk, even if costly, strategy. The attraction of talent transfer strategies, however, whether of elite athletes of coaches, is not just a result of the limitations or slow pace of NGB modernisation but is also a result of the short term cycle of government funding decisions' being out of step with the longer cycle of elite

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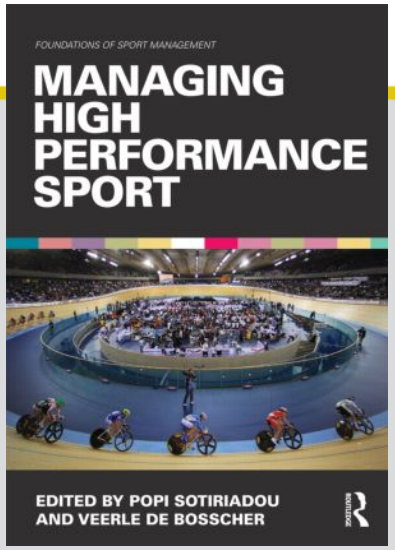
athlete development. Knowing the funding will be reviewed every four years (linked not only to the Olympic cycle but also to the cycle of government spending reviews) puts pressure on UK Sport and NGBs to take a short term view of system development. There is consequently a clear tension between modernisation as a path to long term NGB effectiveness and modernisation as a strategy for short term gains in efficient use of resources.

Modernisation of the UK elite sport system still has some way to go, and two central foci for future research should be the management of the integration of talent transfer of both athletes and coaches and the development of capacity within NGBs to identify and develop systematically talent of Olympic and Paralympic quality. In Hall's terminology these are second order policy changes and concerns, as first order policy (investment of resources in elite sport) and third order policy (the objective of substantial medal success) remain in broad equilibrium. Ensuring that tension among second order policies does not undermine the achievement of third order policy objectives is a significant management challenge.

CHAPTER

6

COMMERCIAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT



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Learn more

COMMERCIAL, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT

BARRIE HOULIHAN

Excerpted from *Managing High Performance Sport*

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this chapter the reader should be able to:

1. identify the major commercial, political and socio-cultural factors that affect high performance sport;
2. understand the relative significance for high performance sport of commercial, political and socio-cultural factors; and
3. understand the interconnection between the three sets of factors.

OVERVIEW

In the widely varying definitions of management two aspects are commonly emphasized: the first is the setting of strategic goals and the coordination of resources to ensure the achievement of those goals while the second stresses the management of the organization's relationship with its environment. Commercial, political, social and cultural factors are closely intertwined with both these aspects of the management of high performance (HP) sport and affect the operation of all sport organizations whether they are in the public, not-for-profit or commercial sectors and whether they operate at the national or international levels. Figure 2.1 provides an indication of the broad range of organizations that populate the HP policy sub-sector. Not only are commercial, not-for-profit and public organizations strongly represented in the HP sub-sector, but the interests of those organizations span a broad range from those with a direct or primary interest in HP sport (sports clubs, specialist government agencies and international federations) to those whose concern is more instrumental and arguably simply exploitative. It should be stressed that each organization in Figure 2.1 is not only affected by the environment within which it functions, but also constitutes part of the environment of the other organizations. The management context of HP sport is consequently complex, densely populated and often far from benign.

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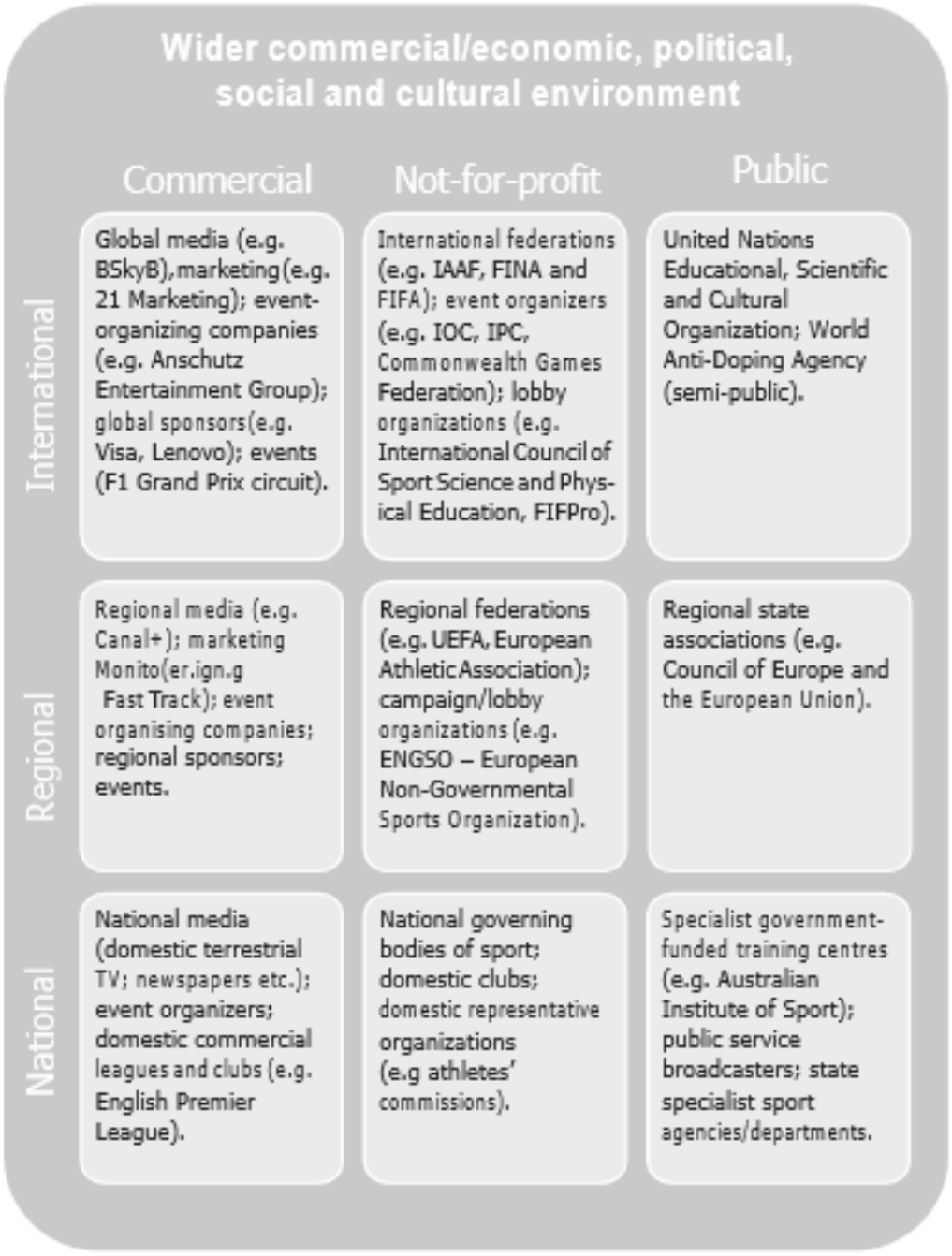

Figure 2.1 The organizational complexity of high performance sport

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Commercial factors

While it is debatable whether commercial influences or political influences are the more significant in shaping HP sport policies and determining success at the HP level, it is undeniable that these twin factors have had a profound impact on the development of sport and continue to shape contemporary global sport. It is often argued that politicians tend to view elite sport in instrumental terms – that is, as a means of achieving non-sport objectives. However, the same argument can also be made in relation to most commercial interests insofar as sport performance at the elite level is often a means to non-sport commercial objectives. Table 2.1 identifies five different types of commercial interests that impact on the management of HP sport. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, but is intended to illustrate the range of commercial interests that are associated with HP sport, their primary concerns and, more importantly, their likely impact on sport at that level.

The impact of commercialization on HP sport is neither inherently malign nor inherently benign. However, it is undeniable that the rapid growth in the 'business of sport' has had a significant impact on a series of power relationships, six of which are worthy of note.

The first relationship is that between players and their national governing bodies (NGBs) and international federations (IFs). The cumulative effect of increasingly valuable sponsorship deals and prize money, and the celebrity status of athletes in some sports, has been to strengthen the power of players in some sports, generally individual sports such as golf and tennis, at the expense of their NGBs and IFs. Professionals in both golf and tennis have formed competition circuits that have enabled them to retain a greater share of the income they generate. The development of the PGA Tour by the Professional Golfers Association in the late 1960s and the ATP Tour in 1990 by the Association of Tennis Professionals gave elite players in both sports considerable control, not only over their income, but also over where, when and how often they played. Similar, but less profound, shifts in power have occurred in a number of team sports through the formation of players' association such as the Professional Footballers Association in England and the Major League Baseball Players Association in the United States. While much of the activity of players' associations is concerned with maximizing their income, they have also addressed issues such as discrimination and poor medical treatment.

The second relationship is that between clubs and leagues on the one hand and NGBs and IFs on the other. In the United States power rests firmly with the various commercial organizations that own clubs and leagues in the major sports such as

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American football and baseball. The NGBs and IFs are weak and of peripheral importance to the development of the sport as illustrated by the slow pace of acceptance of the need to tackle doping. Outside the United States a similar, but less extreme, shift in the balance of power has taken place in football where the G-14 group of leading European football clubs forced concessions from FIFA regarding compensation for players injured while playing for their country.

The third relationship is that between sponsors and event organizers, leagues and clubs. While the income from sponsorship has had a number of beneficial consequences for players and spectators, those benefits, like the income from sponsorship, are unevenly spread. Estimating the total annual spend on sponsorship is difficult, but some idea of the skewed distribution of sponsorship income can be gained from Table 2.2. In 2009 football attracted almost ten times the value in sponsorship received by its nearest sport rival, rugby union, and in 2008 the sponsorship received by football almost equalled the combined sponsorship income for the next nine sports and events.

The fourth relationship is that between clubs and their fans. As the nature of sport businesses has changed, many sports have become less dependent on income from ticket sales and more reliant on income from sponsors and the sale of broadcasting rights. It is impossible to generalize the relationships between clubs (or individual athletes) and their fans. However, in a number of sports, such as football, rugby union, rugby league and cricket, fans see themselves, not simply as spectators or customers, but as having closer, and often highly emotional, relationships with their teams (Hamil *et al.*, 2010; Hassan and Hamil, 2010). In football, for example, some fan groups have become extremely assertive, often encouraged by governments or in Europe, by the European Union, and see themselves as primary stakeholders in the 'club business' rather than simply as purchasers of a sports product. However, fans generally remain confined to the margins of decision making in most commercial sports and, as some clubs attempt to develop a global fan base, traditional, locally based fans become even less significant to the club's business strategy.

The fifth relationship is that between event organizers and government. It is arguable that up until the 1990s the main aim of government involvement in elite sport was to ensure that the national squad for major events such as the Olympic or Paralympic Games performed up to or above national expectations. Since the early 1990s, governments have developed a parallel desire to host events, especially the Olympic/Paralympic Games and the football World Cup. Particularly with regard to the hosting of the Olympics and the football World Cup, there seems to be no limit to the extent to which governments will prostrate themselves before the hierarchy of the IOC and FIFA. Normal land-use planning processes are waived, streets are cleared of the

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Table 2.1 Selected types of commercial interests and their relationship to high performance sport

Commercial interest	*Examples*	*Suggested commercial priorities*	*Impact on high performance sport management*
Non-sport businesses	Olympic sponsors: VISA, Lenovo Skiing sponsor: Audi Quattro cars Football sponsor: Barclays Bank	General: 'clean image', exciting (i.e. attractive to the media), attractive personalities Specific: image of a particular sport which complements their product For gambling: non-corrupt sports; maintenance of uncertainty of outcome	In some sports (e.g. cycling) pressure to tackle doping Demand for exclusiveness in sponsorship increases dependence by sport Gambling: increases the risk of corruption
Sports media	Television (e.g. Sky, Canal+ and ESPN), but also print and internet	Satellite broadcasters require a steady supply of attractive products which have a global market appeal. Products can be events (e.g. American Superbowl, the Olympic Games and grand slam tennis tournaments) and sports (football, rugby union, golf and motor racing)	Tendency to prioritize men's over women's events in multi-sport competitions and to give preference to the dramatic over the complex or technical
Sports leagues, clubs and individual athletes	Leagues: American NFL; Japanese J League; Spanish La Lega and English Premier League. Clubs: Dallas Cowboys, Washington Redskins, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich. Athletes: Kobe Bryant, Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova.	Protect and expand asset value e.g. by engineering competitiveness of NFL league, attempting to turn a local football club into a global brand or an athlete launching clothing ranges	Concern by leagues and clubs to protect assets can reduce willingness to release players for national teams. Improved quality of medical care of elite athletes Greater investment in talent identification and development. Transfer trade in talented athletes, e.g. in football
Sports facility providers and event organizers	Tennis academies: Evert Tennis Academy and IMG Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy Training centres: La Manga, Spain Event organizers: Ironman triathlon series of the World Triathlon Corporation; World Series Cricket, Indian Cricket League, Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour	Profit/income maximization; increased market share	Complement (or undermine) international federation and NGB activities in talent identification and development programmes and events, e.g. in triathlon and cricket
Equipment and sportswear manufacturers	Golf: Ping, Callaway Tennis: Dunlop, Wilson, Slazenger Swimming: Speedo General: Adidas, Nike	Profit maximization; product innovation, increased market size and share	Provide sponsorship of clubs and individual athletes. Drive equipment innovation and obsolescence

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Table 2.2 Top sponsored sports, 2009 (2008 figures in brackets), value in US$m

Sport	*Value*	
Soccer (football)	2607	(2674)
Olympics	1797	(994)
Rugby Union	272	(335)
Tennis	258	(467)
Formula 1	256	(200)
Baseball	237	(214)
Cricket	227	(170)
Golf	205	(308)
American football	184	(297)
Basketball	173	(n/a)

Source: IFM Sport Marketing Surveys (2010)

homeless and laws are passed to protect the value of sponsors' investments from ambush marketing (Giulianotti and Klauser, 2009; Sugden, 2012). However, this general imbalance hides a governmental and, to a lesser extent, public resentment towards these organizations that rapidly emerges at any sign of weakness. This is exemplified by the reaction to the Salt Lake City voting scandal that engulfed the IOC in 2002 and to the allegations of corruption in voting for the 2018 and 2022 football World Cups.

The final power relationship is that within some of the major IFs and event-organizing bodies. As independent organizations, each federation can determine its own pattern of governance that reflects the balance between interests within the organization. For example, the two main multi-sport IFs for track and field (the International Association of Athletic Federations) and for swimming (Federation Internationale de Natation) both have to balance the competing interests of the various disciplines for which they are responsible, and this balancing act has often been problematic. As regards event-organizing bodies, within the IOC there has been constant concern, which was especially strong in the 1970s and 1980s, to avoid the formation of voting blocs of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) or of IFs. A number of strategies have been adopted to undermine such a development. One has been the counter- balancing of the growing influence of NOCs with an enhanced representation from the IFs. While NOC members are formally independent of the countries they represent, the IOC acknowledges that many, perhaps the majority, are either explicit state nominees or are so dependent on state support that their independence is nominal (Hill, 1992; Houlihan, 1994). A second strategy has been to increase the dependence of poorer IOC member

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countries on the IOC through the activities of Olympic Solidarity (formerly the Committee for International Olympic Aid established in 1961), which is the sport development agency of the IOC. The activities of Olympic Solidarity were intended to reduce the likelihood of the richer 'sports powers' creating voting blocs through the funding of sport development programmes in the poorer IOC member countries. According to Henry and Al Tauqi (2008, p. 367) 'It is clear to see that the introduction of Olympic Solidarity was intended to unify the Olympic movement by neutralizing the pressure exerted by the IFs and NOCs for a greater say in the running of the Olympic system' (see also Chatziefstathiou *et al.*, 2008).

Political factors

While much of HP sport is intensely commercialized, it is important to bear in mind that there are still many sports and events that rely heavily on government support. Moreover, even those sports that are commercially successful are rarely immune from politics. In analysing the significance of political factors it is important to consider both the ends and means adopted by governments in relation to HP sport. While many countries have a long history of controlling or attempting to control popular sports, intervention in relation to HP sport is much more recent and is often prompted by concerns related to gambling (Forrest and Simmons, 2003) and crowd disorder (Houlihan, 1991). However, the more recent expansion of government intervention in sport can be traced to three developments in the second half of the twentieth century, namely: the Cold War; the opposition to apartheid in South Africa; and the expansion of international sports competitions, particularly when they began to be broadcast live in the early 1960s.

The onset of the Cold War in the 1950s prompted the systematic intervention in HP sport by governments in order to achieve diplomatic objectives. From the 1950s to the late 1980s the communist bloc countries of Europe, following the lead given by the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), invested heavily in HP sport, at least in part to demonstrate the superiority of socialism over American capitalism (Riordan, 1978). The GDR, which refined the Soviet sports system, was also concerned to utilize sport to further its claims to be recognized as a separate country rather than simply the Russian zone of occupied Germany (Strenk, 1980). To this end the GDR established an elaborate and extremely well-funded HP sport system that involved the systematic search for talented young athletes, a network of specialist training facilities, heavy investment in sports coaching and systematic doping. As argued elsewhere, the Soviet system, as refined by the GDR, became the model for many other countries

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outside the communist bloc including Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom (Green and Houlihan, 2005). Even those countries, such as the United States, which did not seek to introduce their own diluted version of the communist state-centred sports systems, were not immune from the impact of Soviet and GDR success. For example, the United States intervened forcefully in the late 1970s to force American sport to restructure in order to be better able to compete effectively with the Soviet bloc countries. This was the motive behind the passing of the Amateur Sports Act 1978.

The campaign against apartheid in South Africa had an indirect impact on the role of governments in the management of HP sport. In part the impact of the campaigns to boycott various Olympic and Commonwealth Games was to make it clear to those governments who wished to take part in a boycott that in order for the threat of a boycott to have any leverage, the boycotting country had to have an elite athletic squad whose absence would clearly diminish the attractiveness of the event being boycotted. The boycott campaign also made many governments more acutely aware of the more general diplomatic benefits to be gained from attending (and being successful at) major international sports events.

A key factor that made major sports events attractive as an arena for diplomacy was their growing public profile due to the increase in live television broadcasting. The popularity of sporting boycotts, roughly from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, declined sharply in part because of the elimination in the late 1980s of the two main causes of boycotts – European communism and apartheid – and in part because of the rapid realization of the diplomatic benefits to be gained from being seen, and being successful, on the global stage offered by the Olympic Games and other major sports events. The need to qualify for, and succeed at, major sports events gave further encouragement to governments to intervene in the development of HP squads and teams. However, not all the motives for government intervention in HP sport were related to diplomatic objectives. Many countries including the Soviet Union, post-apartheid South Africa and Canada were keen to use sport to create a sense of national identity within culturally and/or ethnically diverse states or to construct a post-colonial identity as exemplified by Australia and many Caribbean countries (Keim, 2003; Macintosh and Whitson, 1990; Peppard and Riordan, 1993; Stoddert, 1988; Ward, 2010). As regards the form that government intervention takes, Hood and Margetts (2007) identify four basic resources available to government: nodality (the fact that government tends to hold a central strategic position in terms of the flow of information); authority (to make and enforce regulations and laws); treasure (money that can be distributed or exchanged for other resources); and organization (administrative capacity and expertise). These resources tend to be translated into instruments that are regulatory, distributive, re-distributive or organizational in

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character (see Lowi, 1964, 1972). Table 2.3 provides examples of the different forms that government intervention can take in relation to HP sport.

It is unlikely that there is any government in the economically developed world that does not regulate HP sport in some way. In China there is tight regulation of the movement of players to foreign teams and also of the ability of commercial sports teams, such as football and basketball teams, to remove their players from national training squads (Houlihan *et al.*, 2009). The instrument of distribution is also widely used with many countries, including the United Kingdom, Portugal, Norway and Japan, that have state-run lotteries which are used, at least in part, to fund HP sport. There are fewer examples of the redistribution of resources in relation to HP sport. However, in the United Kingdom there is an agreement between the government and the Premier League football clubs that the latter will pass 5 per cent of their income from broadcasting to support grassroots football, an element, albeit an increasingly minor element, in the development of future elite players (Conn, 2011). Finally, almost without exception economically developed countries have established specialist organizations either within a government department or, more commonly, as a semi- autonomous unit, to oversee HP sport. Examples include the Australian Institute of Sport, *Olympiatoppen* in Norway and the General Administration of Sport in China. In general, the growth in the cultural, diplomatic and economic significance of sport has, over the last fifty years or so, prompted a substantial increase in governmental intervention in HP sport with considerable increases in financial investment, administrative support and regulation. The only significant exception to this pattern is the United States where intervention is far less systematic, but nonetheless does occur even if only occasionally.

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Table 2.3 Policy instruments and high performance sport

	United Kingdom	*China*	*Germany*	*United States*
Regulate	1 Control over the sale of broadcasting rights for sports events of national importance, e.g. FA Cup Final, Wimbledon Championships 2 The application of the World Anti-Doping Code	1 Player transfer to foreign teams (e.g. in football and basketball) 2 Talent selection and development through a network of specialist sports schools	1 Law passed which exempted its football league from anti-cartel legislation (thus enabling the league to sell broadcasting rights collectively). There is also European Union legislation regulating the sale of broadcasting rights 2 Regulation of entry to the German lottery market	1 1961 Sports Broadcasting Act and the 1992 Cable Act regulate the sale of broadcasting rights 2 1978 Amateur Sports Act strengthened the role of the US Olympic Committee (USOC) and weakened the role of the American Athletic Union in relation to HP sport
Distribute	1 Determination of the proportion of National Lottery income to be allocated to sport 2 Select sports to be supported by lottery and exchequer funding	State funding, through the General Administration of Sport (GAS) is the key source of income for Olympic and Paralympic sports and athletes	Provision of federal funding to NGBs and the German Olympic Committee	Some indirect subsidy of the USOC through provision of training base at low rent
Redistribute	5% of Premier League broadcasting income to be allocated to grassroots football	A proportion of the earnings of elite players playing for teams outside China is redistributed to other areas of elite sport	Targeting of finance to the sports with the best medal chances	An inadvertent redistribution of funding for HP sport came as a result of the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments 1972. One impact of Title IX was to boost funding of women's college sport (with some redistribution from men's sport) and consequently an improvement in the standard of women's HP sport.
Establish administrative structures	1 UK Sport as government agency for HP sport 2 UK Anti-Doping 3 English Institute of Sport (HP training centres)	1 GAS is the government department responsible for HP sport 2 GAS operates through a network of management centres/NGBs, which are also government administrative units	There is no federal specialist ministry although sport is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, which has issued a number of policy statements related to HP sport	US Anti-Doping Agency

Sources: Cave and Crandell 2001; Bergsgard *et al.* 2007; Houlihan *et al.* 2010

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Socio-cultural factors

Earlier in this chapter there was a brief discussion of the interconnections between economic and political factors in shaping the development and management of HP sport. Both those factors are also closely intertwined with, and arguably the product of, deeper socio-cultural factors. To argue that the priority given to HP sport in a particular country, and the way in which that country responds to that prioritization, is simply the product of its socio-cultural history is obviously too glib, but to ignore the significance of the past would be a serious oversight. Socio-cultural factors may be divided into three very broad overlapping categories: current characteristics, long-standing values, and beliefs and recent transformative events. Current characteristics would include factors such as population size and structure, the degree of urbanization and the extent of female employment. Each of these characteristics is clearly significantly affected by the other two categories, but may also be affected by extraneous factors such as improvements in public health, labour shortages and topography. As De Bosscher (2007) noted, population size is one of the two most significant variables in influencing HP success. Together, population size and per capita Gross Domestic Product explain over 50 per cent of variation in elite sporting success. The degree of urbanization is also significant in so far as the more highly urbanized environments make access to high-quality coaches and training partners more probable.

The second category of factors refers to the long-standing values and beliefs found within communities. Acknowledging that 'socio-cultural history matters' is fairly uncontroversial. What is much more problematic is determining the extent to which history matters, and what history matters. Examples of deeply rooted values systems that have withstood wars, authoritarianism, economic collapse and invasion would include Confucianism in China, Taiwan and Japan, Protestantism in Denmark and Sweden, and Islam in the Arab world, all of which are profoundly entwined in the fabric of daily life and have been for many hundreds of years. All policy development, not just in relation to HP sport, is mediated by the historical context in which it takes place. At one level this self-evident proposition is a simple reminder that much of the explanation for such phenomena as the level of governmental enthusiasm for HP sport, the willingness of governments to intervene and the modes of intervention adopted lies in the socio-cultural history of a country and the long-established traditions and predispositions that this creates. While not denying the importance of the contemporary context (wealth, population and political party control of government, for example), it is important to investigate whether there are more deeply rooted norms, values and attitudes that are significant in shaping policy. For most countries the experience of the dominance of a particular religion, established patterns of family

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relations, the education system, invasion, empire and colonialism have all left their mark on broad societal values that not only influence the nature of HP policy goals, but also affect policy delivery mechanisms and management style and practices. For example, the marginal presence of women in most international and domestic sport federations is a reflection of deeply ingrained patterns of patriarchy rather than the outcome of analysis of abilities. Deep structural policy predispositions and styles of management often manifest themselves as 'storylines' (Fischer, 2003) where historical 'facts' become embroidered and take on an ideological (or mythological) status that engenders a strong commitment to particular policies and management practices irrespective of the strength of the evidence available.

The strength of these deeply rooted socio-cultural values not only helps explain current HP policy and management practice but more importantly imposes significant restrictions on future policy and management practice. Howlett and Ramesh, commenting on the significance of the institutionalization of values, emphasize 'the unique patterns of historical development and the constraints they impose on future choices' (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995, p. 27). Perhaps the most important elaboration of this view is provided by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) who, in his analysis of welfare regimes in Europe, provided strong support for the lasting impact of culture on policy. He argued that in many countries distinctive types of welfare regimes (liberal, conservative and social democratic) have emerged over time and generated sets of values and practices that not only influence the identification of issues as public problems, but also set the parameters of the policy response. Although he was not referring specifically to sport, his identification of distinct welfare regimes prompts consideration of whether a similar phenomenon may be evident in relation to HP sport. Thus it may be hypothesized that the extent to which HP sport and sporting success are prioritized, the treatment of HP athletes, the extent and nature of state involvement and the amount of public funding can be explained in large part by deeply rooted orientations such as those to community and the place of the individual, significant other countries and the role of the state. Cultural history, reflected in the attitudes of institutions such as religions, the military, high status groups and the education system towards sport, creates policy predispositions that are likely to be reinforced and compounded by the slow accumulation of policy decisions.

The final category of factors refers to relatively recent 'transformative' events whose origin is often external to the social system but which nonetheless leaves a profound and lasting socio-cultural legacy. The traumatic experience of Nazi occupation in Denmark and the Nazi domination of sport in Germany have led both countries to safeguard the autonomy of the sports system and made governments reluctant to become directly involved in sport, although this reluctance has clearly weakened in relation to HP sport.

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SUMMARY

Although some of the bolder assertions about the homogenizing impact of globalization (see for example Korten, 1995; Ohmae, 1995) have been discredited, it is perhaps still surprising that the high level of variation found in the management of HP sport persists. The existence of monopolistic IFs, the ubiquity of a relatively small set of sports and events in the global sports media and the concentration of commercial sponsorship in a handful of mega-sports events are all powerful homogenizing forces, yet as illustrated in the foregoing discussion, politics and culture are still important mediating variables. However, it is also clear that sustaining national distinctiveness in relation to HP sport is becoming more difficult and, as De Bosscher *et al*. (2007) have shown, there has been a steady convergence in approaches to HP sport management in recent years.

The factors that are most likely to maintain a degree of heterogeneity in approaches to HP sport are culture and the attitude of government. While the former has mediated homogenizing pressures, it has not been able to withstand them to any appreciable degree. As regards the latter, with the cost of winning a gold medal at the summer Olympics approaching 40 million euros (Forrest *et al.*, 2010; Wilson, 2011) it is relevant to ask which government will be the first to declare that the return on the investment is simply not sufficient and withdraw from the sporting 'arms race'. However, it would be a brave government that would admit to its electorate that it was prepared deliberately to let the country's position in the medals table decline significantly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do you think socio-cultural factors can be altered to facilitate a higher policy priority for HP sport?
2. To what extent does HP sport benefit from increased commercialization?
3. Do you agree that HP sport attracts the interest and support of government primarily because it is a useful diplomatic resource?