

Trends and Advances in Sport and Leisure Management

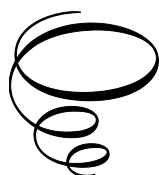
Trends and Advances in Sport and Leisure Management:

Expanding the Frontiers

Edited by

Vassilios Ziakas

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PREFACE

The sport and leisure industry is inherently complex, dynamic, volatile and fragmented characterized by a plethora of providers, activities, pursuits and products/services that strive to meet the varying needs of shifting market segments. So it is erratically adapting to pressing environmental forces and resultant new trends. Evidently, with increasing globalization, technology progression and digital mediaization, but also with emerging challenges such as financial downturn and fierce market competition, the landscape of sport and leisure industry is being transformed widening its relationship with allied sectors (health, tourism, social and economic development, culture, heritage, etc.) and the need to forge cross-sectoral alliances. Consequently, the purpose of this edited collection is to better understand from an interdisciplinary perspective, the surfacing dynamics of sport and leisure provision, alongside the responses of key organizations and stakeholders. Given the breadth of this industry, an exhaustive account of issues, sectors, suppliers and markets would be very arduous and time-consuming – if not unrealistic – to complete. For this reason, instead, chapters in the volume provide examples and cases that shed light on indicative developments and emergent issue areas across the industry. Critical analysis of these dynamics can help us understand how sport and leisure is reshaped and remodeled, thereby pinpointing advances for theory and practice that can ultimately expand the frontiers of sport and leisure management.

Specifically, chapters include a range of topics about (1) the changing environment and priorities of regional grassroots sport development providers, (2) the integration of leadership values in sport governing bodies, (3) the emergence of sport ecology as a sub-discipline to better appreciate the intersection of sport and the natural environment, (4) the growing significance and challenges of sport volunteering in the case of golf, (5) parents' support for junior competitive tennis as sense-making and life-course vision, (6) the role of gender in gymnastics and how to increase male participation, and (7) the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the recreational experiences of international second home tourists. In addition, the volume thematics encompass changes in sport events and particularly (8) understanding the trend of major event and mega-event bid

withdrawals by city candidates, followed by (9) the subsequent paradigm shift to create portfolios of periodic events instead of staging one-off mega-events.

Overall, the above chapters provide important insights into quintessential dynamics, exigencies and adapting conditions in the organization, governance, provision, and delivery of sport and leisure. They do so by converging perspectives on policy and management, which can be used to set out parameters and priorities of program provision, and enable optimal design, promotion, implementation and leveraging of services and events. Thus, they are pushing the boundaries by inviting us to view in fresh, critical ways the highly heterogeneous and rapidly changing landscape of sport and leisure. This line of inquiry points to the need for cross-fertilizing policy and management more tenaciously and creatively in the composite realm of sport and leisure.

MANAGING GRASSROOTS SPORT DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF UK ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

AARON BEACOM & VASSILIOS ZIAKAS

Introduction

Sport development is undergoing significant change internationally, in particular across Global North societies grappling with similar fiscal, structural, health and wellbeing challenges (Ziakas & Beacom, 2018, 2019). Tensions in the local/national policy interface and implications for the activities of Local Sport Managers (LSMs) are indicative of these wider factors (Hoekman et al., 2019). The rate and extent of transition presents a multiplicity of challenges for those engaged in delivery. Similar tensions between rapidly shifting policy and the limited resourcing and perspectives of local delivery agents, is reflected for example, in regional implementation of New Zealand sport policy (Keat & Sam, 2013) and in the UK sport policy environment – the focus of this chapter. The tension between, on the one hand a recognition of the need for increasing the autonomy of regional organizations to respond to local need while on the other, an enhanced national framework of control and accountability, finds echoes in formulation of policy priorities, delivery models, and strategic scope of sport development providers, which entails implications for resourcing, programming, operations and performance evaluation.

The case of UK is illustrative of how the landscape of sport development is changing. The UK Government's public policy change, outlined in the 'Sporting Future' policy document (DCMS, 2015) and described through Sport England's strategic response 'Toward an Active Nation' (2016), marked a fundamental shift in methods adopted to foster physically active lifestyles. It envisioned cross-sectoral synergies emphasizing the importance of building partnerships outside the traditional sporting

community as a means of promoting behavioral change amongst those alienated by the mainstream sporting culture (Dobbin, 2015; Wheaton & O’Loughlin, 2017). As in any policy change, the management of funding streams has been key to the pursuit of these new priorities (Chen, 2018). In responding to this increased emphasis on physical activity (PA), the role of Active Partnerships is pivotal as they are the major local coordinators of grassroots sport provision. To fulfil this role, Active Partnerships have been re-imagining their mission and re-calibrating their objectives.

The purpose of the chapter is to enhance our understanding of this transition and shed light on the role of Active Partnerships in enabling a metamorphic process of grassroots sport development. Based on a previous study that examined the senior management perspectives of different Active Partnerships in the south-west of England (Ziakas & Beacom, 2017), we offer a number of insights and reflections. Our discussion takes into account Active Partnership strategic and operational responses to the changing influence of key partners and the shift in policy emphasis from ‘sporting’ to ‘physical’ cultures. In this regard, we view senior Active Partnership personnel as policy entrepreneurs who are focusing on their potential to maximize leverage at critical junctures in the process of policy change (Paredis & Block, 2013). This endeavor takes place alongside the daily pattern of activity whereby Active Partnership managers and practitioners engage as street-level bureaucrats interpreting sport development policy of the government in ways which align with their organizational capacity, available resources, individual interpretations of professional responsibility, and operational limitations (Belabas & Gerrits, 2017; Lipski, 1969; Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). We thus shed light on the evolving role of Active Partnerships and their engagement with a new constellation of stakeholders brought into the sport development landscape. Based on this analysis, we consider the implications of these changes on regional provision of grassroots sport development programs and services.

UK Context of Sport Development and Active Partnerships

To understand the role of Active Partnerships in the changing landscape of sport development, it is useful to consider the wider policy context within which actors engaged with UK sport and leisure policy, operate. A deteriorating fiscal environment reflected in the sport sector (Berry & Manoli, 2018; Mori, Morgan, Parker, & Mackintosh, 2021; Parnell,

Spracklen, & Millward, 2017; Parnell et al., 2018) and with for example, the removal of funding for School Sports Partnerships, unfulfilled expectations relating to London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Legacy (Davies, 2012; Girginov & Hills, 2009), responses to the plateauing of PA levels (Active Lives), enhanced expectations concerning the capacity of activity-based interventions to deliver social, health and educational benefits (Coalter, 2013), Brexit and the impending decline of supra-national policy-making, a number of sport governance concerns (Walters & Tacon, 2018) and emergency public health policy and funding responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, have all played their part in shaping the policy environment within which priorities are determined and decisions are made.

At the same time, there have been significant changes to the relative influence of a range of actors engaged in sport and active leisure provision. Local Government operates in a turbulent environment trying to meet growing public expectations with diminished resources. Governing Bodies of sport are limited in their responses to a focus on core markets in order to secure funding. Home Country Sports Councils room for maneuver has been increasingly restrained through resource limitations and a tighter brief from government, including the requirement to demonstrate effective return on investment. Notwithstanding these uncertainties and the resourcing challenges which they face (including the impact of the decision by Sport England to adopt a funding neutral approach in relation to funding allocation), Active Partnerships have maintained, and in some cases expanded, their remit as facilitators and enablers of sport and active leisure opportunities. The networking associated with such action is indicative of the significance of policy interpretation as integral to the policy process and the potential for Active Partnerships to have agency through that process.

The policy and strategic context within which Active Partnerships are now operating can be clearly mapped through key government policy documents. These include the December 2015 policy document *Sporting Future* – and subsequent Annual Reports outlining progress (*Sporting Future First* and *Second Annual Reports 2017* and *2018*) – closely followed by Sport England’s strategic response: *Toward an Active Nation* (Sport England, 2016) and Andy Reed’s Independent review of the role of Active Partnerships – known as County Sports Partnerships at the time of Reed’s review (Reed, 2016). Active Partnership responses to such strategic developments are reflected to varying degrees in their strategic

planning. It should however, be noted that a wider reading of Active Partnership strategic plans indicates a focus on generic themes with, in some cases, surprisingly little contextualization. This is significant, given the link between these plans and continued Active Partnership dependency on central funding.

Generally, public policies and strategies for sport development are characterized by a variety of distinctions between sport (narrowly) defined as organized/structured and PA (broadly) defined as unstructured recreation including different forms of physical expression. The division is evident within the UK institutional landscape, which shapes the provision of sport and PA and hinders the development of integrative and comprehensive approaches. Change in regional sport and PA priorities, impedes the development of stable collaborations between agencies involved in sport and PA provision (Lindsey, 2009), while the activities of various stakeholders operating locally against the backdrop of a rapidly changing policy and funding environment, creates further challenges. For example, the delivery of sport services in UK by Local Authorities (LAs) causes a range of issues such as accountability, equity, service quality and sustainability (King, 2014).

The role of Active Partnerships as key stakeholders of regional grassroots sport development is interpreted in a number of contrasting ways by partner agencies, creating the potential for misunderstanding over the shifting priorities for sport development (Mackintosh, 2011). Grix and Phillpots (2011) observe the paradox that while the previously called County Sport Partnerships were established to facilitate the delivery of sport policy at regional/local level by responding and adapting to local conditions, this has resulted in a hierarchical mode of partnership that rests on resource dependency and asymmetrical network governance between the Government and stakeholders in the sport policy network. Overall, this makes a rather complex environment fraught with restraints and challenges that Active Partnerships face in their attempt to implement the government policy at the local level.

Finally, The Covid-19 pandemic has set the terms of reference for public policy across a range of competencies, including sport, globally since early 2020 and is likely to continue to do so for some time (Sanderson & Brown, 2020). The fall-out from the pandemic – both in terms of the virus and the strains resulting from successive lock-downs and limits to personal freedom, has led to a range of government interventions to support

grassroots sport. The UK government for example, provided financial support for low-tier spectator sports in November 2020 (UK Government, 2020) and provided additional funding through Sport England, to promote a return to participation in PA programs (Sport England, 2020). Sport England has been involved in the articulation of protocols relating to how actors across the sport development community should respond to Covid-19 (Sport England, 2020), while at the same time, Active Partnerships have, individually and through their collective body, been highlighting need and lobbying for additional support for sports organizations most profoundly impacted by the pandemic (Active Partnerships, 2020a).

While it will be some time before the full impact of the pandemic on the characteristics of PA and sport participation is understood, the restriction of opportunities to engage with formalized sport and PA has aided the shift toward more informal modes of activity. In this way, it could be argued that the pandemic has promoted wider shifts already underway, since the launch of Sporting Future (Active Partnerships, 2020b). This has been promoted further by, for example, concerns over the relationship between obesity and mortality rates resulting from Covid-19 – and the need to encourage interventions from a wider range of organizations and agencies (Mitchell, 2020). Such developments have the potential to expand the ‘policy window’ for Active Partnerships who have a history of engagement with the obesity agenda.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Multiple Streams Framework

Of the range of heuristic devices available to interrogate policy developments, the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) provides perhaps the most appropriate model for investigating the complexities surrounding recent sport policy developments. MSF presents the policy process as essentially a spontaneous, ‘messy’ and at times apparently irrational process. Its popularity stems from its capacity to accommodate and provide structure for a study concerned with changing configurations of interest groups and attempts by these groups to influence the policy process through focusing on junctures where three ‘streams’ intersect. Kingdon (1984), the originator of MSF identified these streams as: 1) *The problem stream*: the emergence of a particular issue (where conditions become interpreted as ‘problems’ that need to be addressed). 2) *The Policy Stream*: ideas, proposals and alternatives to tackling the ‘problem’ begin

to ‘float around’ in what Kingdon refers to as a ‘primeval soup’. 3) *The Political Stream*: interest group activity, swings in the public mood and governmental change interact in different ways with the ‘problem’ and possible solutions. The intersection or ‘coupling’ of these streams create what Kingdon referred to as a ‘policy window’ within which actors have the opportunity to effect significant change (Paredis & Block, 2013) – including lobbying by pro-active individuals with particular interest in policy outcomes referred to as ‘policy entrepreneurs’. Notwithstanding criticism of the model on the grounds that it pays insufficient attention to power relations and that it evolved on the basis of the North American model of political lobbying (Beland & Howlett, 2016), it remains in widespread use across a number of disciplines.

Active Partnerships’ Senior Management as Sport Development Policy Entrepreneurs

The notion of policy entrepreneur is useful to help explain how Active Partnerships senior personnel attempt to resolve adversity and take advantage of opportunities in order to improve grassroots sport development provision. Paredis and Block (2013), for instance, focus on their role as individuals and organizations best placed to maximize leverage from a policy window as well as bringing together so-called *policy*, *politics* and *problem* streams. In the sport realm, policy entrepreneurs have recently been evidenced at critical junctures where policy change has threatened perceived gains in the sport development process. Efforts to reduce support for School Sport infrastructure, considered by many senior practitioners as contributing positively to a coordinated approach to the development process, led to well-documented interventions by a number of high profile individuals. For example, Sue Campbell (Chair of the Youth Sports Trust, an influential UK third sector organization) drew together policy, political and problem streams, helping to engineer an opening whereby perceived gains in resourcing were protected for a period of time. This enabled alternative strategies to be worked through and operationalized by key providers – at least in the short term (Parnell et al., 2016).

Similarly, in the context of Active Partnerships, key individuals attempt to influence policy development through their engagement in consultative processes, and through their capacity to utilize networks at critical junctures, through for example, the Partnership Network. More importantly, however, practitioners in Active Partnerships appear to be

engaging as street-level bureaucrats. Hupe and Hill (2007) indicate how the notion of the street-level bureaucrat helps engender an appreciation of how front line operators can, through the professional judgement and organizational imperatives, determine policy outcomes at the point of delivery through exercising discretion ‘over the dispensation of benefits or the allocation of public sanctions’ (2007, p. 280). This means that on multiple occasions, practitioners within Active Partnerships influence outcomes through exercising their discretion and professional judgement. Indeed, the multifaceted nature of sport policy and the blurring with other policy areas enhanced the number of opportunities to do this – not just in terms of implementation but also in terms of Active Partnerships interpretation of policy priorities in the local context (Ziakas & Beacom, 2017).

Finally, setting the parameters on any single area of policy presents a number of key challenges. While it may be important to engage in this process in order to create tangible areas of activity that can be delineated for the purpose of strategic planning and resource allocation, spillover from one policy area to another, defines the lived experience of practitioners on the ground. Recent shifts in sport policy, in response primarily to increasing public health concerns, articulate this very clearly. Attempts to adopt a more inclusive approach to promoting a physical culture that ‘draws in’ historically relatively sedentary groups, has dominated the sport policy domain. The policy document, set out in *Sporting Future* articulates this clearly, with the much-vaunted key outcomes of individual wellbeing as well as community and economic development. This has implications for actors charged with delivering on policy objectives (Activity Alliance, 2016). While ideas of ‘harnessing the potential of sport for social good’ have been central to the sporting narrative for many years, what changed at this juncture in sport policy, was a decisive shift in planning and resourcing for groups characterized by relatively low participation rates. This included engagement with what could be considered non-traditional physical activities delivered by a wider range of stakeholders.

Active Partnerships: State of Play

In this section, we encapsulate findings from a previous study we conducted on how senior managers of Active Partnerships respond to policy change (Ziakas & Beacom, 2017), which was complemented with follow-up interviews around the time (March 2019) of their renaming from

County Sport Partnerships to Active Partnerships. Our intention was to capture the dynamics of change and its implications for the running of Active partnerships, service provision and future trajectory. Findings are concisely described below in the following six categories.

1. *Roles and responsibilities of Active Partnerships*

- There were varied responses to current Active Partnership operational priorities.
- There was general consensus about understanding wider roles and responsibilities of Active Partnerships.
- There were very different responses to what role Active Partnerships should have in delivering strategy.
- There was broad agreement regarding the need to have different structural arrangements for Active Partnerships – dependent on location and demographics.
- Concerns were voiced regarding limited development of partnerships with schools.
- Anxiety was conveyed regarding frameworks for evaluating Active Partnership performance.

2. *Perspectives on public policy change*

- Respondents were generally in agreement about the nature of policy change; however differed regarding the significance of the change.
- Concerns voiced about the impact of the change on management of their operation did reflect some differences.

3. *Engagement with the Sport Development policy process*

- There was general acknowledgement of the need for the CSPN as a representative body.
- Respondents generally saw lobbying for policy change as falling into two categories: formal engagement with consultative processes and informal networking across a range of stakeholders.

4. *Relationship with key stakeholders*

- Views about the links with NGBs contrasted sharply across the Active Partnerships.
- There was a consensus on scope to develop relationships with NGBs when interests are aligned (i.e., the promotion of adaptive forms of sport which related to shared interests in the inclusion and active lifestyle agendas).

- School Games were viewed as a central focus for Active Partnerships in their sport development role.
- Potential for developing relationships with the public health sector was expressed; but with a surprising degree of difference across Active Partnerships, regarding how this potential could be realized.
- Opportunities were identified for developing relations with other sectors (i.e., outdoor recreation).

5. *Funding and policy change*

- Respondents anticipated significant shifts in funding streams accessible to Active Partnerships, resulting from policy change.
- Respondents expressed the view that there is a critical need for Active Partnerships to diversify their funding.

6. *Targeting specific groups and future trajectory*

- Most respondents recognized the need for establishing direct links with inactive and disabled groups.
- Mixed feelings expressed as to what constitutes priorities in the context of current and future developments.
- A strong case was articulated to develop further the role of the Active Partnership as a delivery body alongside its primary role as co-ordinator and facilitator.
- There was a general consensus across the respondents that the funding regime is likely to become tougher.

Taken as a whole, findings suggest that Active Partnerships can be described as a group of agencies differently constituted, operating significantly different management styles and delivering in very different geographic/demographic contexts. They are responding opportunistically to local developments, displaying varying degrees of misgivings about the evolving role of Sport England and demonstrating a range of concerns relating to centralized monitoring and evaluation regimes and the future of funding. Senior management responding to the volatility of the environment are decoding policy in line with organizational interests and attempting to engage in implementation accordingly. In some cases this is leading to ‘mission creep’ with Active Partnerships engaging in activities not considered part of their core mission particularly in relation to the management and delivery of services that were otherwise under threat.

On a more general note, stakeholders engaged with the sport development process are operating in a rapidly changing policy environment that is

testing the skills of practitioners throughout the sector. The rate and nature of this change is impacting on Active Partnerships as key co-ordinators and facilitators within the sector. It is clear that the way in which individual Active Partnerships respond to change is shaped by a range of factors, including the geographic/demographic characteristics of their location, the way in which the organization is constituted and the management style of the Active Partnership leadership. This explains the emergence of sharply contrasting worldviews of senior managers that reveals their heterodoxy of perspectives and ideas. In particular, while the dominant discourse underpinning the recent policy change has clearly been a move away from competitive sport as the cornerstone of physical culture and toward a focus on alternative forms of PA, the extent to which senior management of Active Partnerships embrace this differs across each partnership. This reflects how they perceive their own role in relation to the sport development process, maximizing their leverage by embracing the public health agenda, or acting as advocates given their wider responsibilities as predominantly voluntary organizations with contingent civic responsibilities.

As Mackintosh (2011, p. 50) observes: “CSPs are not merely the administrative and operational agencies, but also fulfil a representative function in relation to the wider sub-regional network of agencies in each geographical area”. This is significant in light of Active Partnership employees’ advocacy activities. Nevertheless, competing agendas across a range of partners and ongoing misunderstanding concerning the role of Active Partnerships and the nature of relationships, is likely to impede the efficacy of their work in this area.

The key concerns of personnel are clearly anxiety around resource dependency, (including the willingness to embrace mission creep as part of a strategy to respond to fiscal and program constraints) and misgivings regarding the emergence of a command approach to monitoring and evaluation, with its link to outcomes-based policy. The problem is not so much the monitoring and evaluation process itself but that Active Partnerships feel disempowered in terms of influencing the development of the framework. Given the implementation of the Performance Management and Improvement Framework (PMIF) in October 2018, it is important that an assessment is made of the impact of its roll-out, not just in terms of the measurement of specific aspects of service provision, but also in terms of the perception of Active Partnerships regarding their location within the sector and their operational reach.

The activities of organizations as they work to secure a foothold against this transient, frequently unstable backdrop can be viewed through engagement of key personnel operating through windows of opportunity. These constitute a metamorphic platform of policy entrepreneurship, which elucidates the increasingly erratic trajectory of sport development service providers. Defining characteristics of the platform are the following: fluidity (transitory), uncertainty, ambiguity, opportunism, heterodoxy (interpretations at variance with the central/government policy), and new (formal and informal) channels of communication. At present, Active Partnerships' policy entrepreneurship is dominated by the transformative effect of the policy change from sport to PA. This metamorphic platform has provided the catalyst for a series of strategic shifts and corresponding organizational re-alignments.

As a whole, the above characteristics exemplify the nature of what we coin as metamorphic policy entrepreneurship. Our conceptualization drawing upon MSF defines metamorphic policy entrepreneurship as a developing and adaptive route for action, in response to environmental instability and policy change, which attempts to maximize leverage of regional sport development service providers at critical junctures in the policy process in order to secure outcomes conducive to their objectives. This conceptualization situates regional actors' decision-making and attendant organizational re-alignments in the context of a transition that impacts on the characteristics of grassroots sport development, requiring them to re-adjust their priorities as well as learn how to operate, interact and cooperate within a transformative environment. This may not only uncover emerging gaps and tensions across the sport development policy process, but may also help bring to light opportunities for convergence and partnership-building. It therefore provides the groundwork for better understanding the evolving role of service providers and their personnel in the changing landscape. The rebranding of CSPs as Active Partnerships can be seen as part of this metamorphic shift. At the same time, this illustrates that the environment within which the organizations operate is itself metamorphosing – through for example, demographic shifts, changing features of local economies and alterations to the structures of Local Government and governance.

No doubt, Active Partnerships take on different instrumental roles as facilitators, networkers, partnership-builders and service providers that all stand at the frontline of a sport development sector undergoing systemic

change. Absorbing and internalizing the full extent of that change and its operational implications is an ongoing process. In this regard, Reed's (2016) position about capacity that has "been taken out of the sport development network" over the past decade is as important in terms of reformulating goals and strategies as the policy shift outlined in *Sporting Future*. It is thus critical to bear this in mind when attempting to map the possible future trajectories for Active Partnerships as key stakeholders in grassroots sport development.

Active Partnerships and UK Sport Development: Future Challenges

Notwithstanding efforts to minimize resource dependency on public subsidies and find alternative funding streams, it appears that Active Partnerships will remain essentially government-funded organizations. Given this reliance on public funding, government policy for sport development in the UK will continue to be vital to the strategies of Active Partnerships. Although senior managers are confronting significant challenges, they have expressed confidence that some degree of stability is likely to continue at national policy level. This concerns the primary commitment to maximize a return through health and wellbeing benefits on the investment in sport and PA. In this sense, the health and wellbeing agenda determines the terms of reference for networking and advocacy activities of Active Partnerships. That said, when considering future challenges, the following issues are of particular note.

Contending Perspectives on Development

Research (Ziakas & Beacom, 2017) suggests that there remains a divergence of opinion among practitioners concerning the role of traditional sporting forms in favor of PA. Proponents of traditional sport emphasize its capacity to promote a range of social, educational and lifestyle related benefits that may not necessarily emerge from less structured forms of PA and leisure pursuits. On the other hand, PA may reach broader populations with sedentary lifestyle that are turned away from traditional sport and its competitive character inducing more active behavioral changes. This contrast is reflected in the differing perspectives and worldviews of Active Partnerships senior managers.

Considering the parameters of sport policy, change is important not only for understanding how different priorities evolve, but also identifying any

missed opportunities. For instance, some senior managers express concerns that partnership with the education sector is a ‘missed opportunity’ and that in terms of cross-sectoral policy developments there is considerable scope to foster these connections. Furthermore, the changing scope of operational requirements is influenced by the policy environment that stresses particular approaches to the evaluation of Active Partnership operations. In this respect, we can identify tensions and pressure points which are likely to cause future challenges. This reflects in part, the tension between recommendations for adoption of generic Active Partnership and Sport England logics to reflect the common tenets of Active Partnership operations and the recognition of systemic differences due to operational, demographic, political and economic realities framing the activities of Active Partnerships. Inevitably, the choice of evaluative methods will reframe operations, resourcing, program provision and service delivery, which are already moving towards entrepreneurial models of management.

Environmental Factors

As shown in the chapter, the future of Active Partnerships cannot be considered separately from the metamorphosis of the sector in terms of its make-up and functioning, specifically concerning the characteristics of Local Government engagement in coordination and provision of sport and PA. In this sense, the relationship of Active Partnerships to neighboring and host LAs is likely to remain a crucial factor in the development of partnership-working. Here, the challenge around facility management, driven partly by increasing numbers of charitable trusts surfacing as alternatives to Local Authority and commercial sector management, is already described in instances of ‘mission creep’ where Active Partnerships begin to engage directly with facility and program provision. The tension thus between the principal goals of Active Partnerships and their organizational responses to local issues and demand is likely to be an enduring environmental characteristic that will continue reshaping their mission and operations.

From Street-level Bureaucrats to Policy Entrepreneurs

On the whole, it is clear that while centralized control of sport policy and funding sets out the terms of reference for grassroots sport development, the increasingly fluctuating operational setting provides opportunities for flexibility regarding how stakeholders formulate strategies to achieve goals. Our findings demonstrate that the way Active Partnership personnel,

both as practitioners individually and collectively, respond to this operational setting reflects the classic features of the street-level bureaucrat (Lipsky, 1969). This behavior takes account of policy from the perspective of the interface between client and official, where ambiguities leave room for officials to construe policy and allocate scarce resources, in a manner that aligns with their perceived understanding of priorities and client need. At the same time however, their understanding of advocacy roles, capacity to function collectively, engagement in consultative processes and connection with wider networks, indicate a sense of Active Partnerships reaching beyond operational influence and engaging in activities more characteristic of policy entrepreneurs. In this context, the policy entrepreneurship of senior Active Partnership managers coincides with the behavior of practitioners who adopt more substantive strategies designed to influence policy design (Lavee & Cohen, 2017).

Policy Learning

Arguably, Active Partnership personnel can learn much from the experiences of other sectors who have an extended track-record of developing the skillsets of senior managers most subjected to the policy process. For instance, the field of international development has demonstrated an organizational adaptive capacity in terms of securing resources in an increasingly fraught policy environment, which may be partly attributed to an emphasis on developing a deep knowledge of the dynamics of policy making and appreciating the policy and funding processes across its practitioner base. Understanding processes of institutional and organizational change is essential in this regard. The notion of institutional entrepreneurship combining resources and power bases (across the public, private and third sectors) is particularly relevant here during a period when the capacity of traditional partnerships to contribute to stability and growth is being challenged. Therefore, policy entrepreneurship can be profitably cross-fertilized with institutional entrepreneurship processes and outcomes (Battilana et al., 2009).

Conclusion

This chapter explored the role of Active Partnerships in re-imagining regional sport development and adapting their mission and operations as a response to national policy change. The analysis is grounded in the notion of policy entrepreneurship, as a means of understanding how individuals

and collectives engage in the policy process in an effort to secure outcomes conducive to organizational objectives.

Key developments that concern Active Partnership managers include the emergence of a new paradigm of ‘sporting success’ based on health and wellbeing, a drastically altered funding landscape, a re-framing of key stakeholders’ mission and goals, as well as the relative decline of traditional delivery bodies as part of the realignment of stakeholder influence. Responding opportunistically to policy windows stemming from the fluidity, uncertainty, ambiguity and heterodoxy that re-shapes the policy environment necessitates particular skillsets not necessarily coinciding with the traditional qualities associated with the sector. Nevertheless, Active Partnerships senior personnel exhibit extensive networking and advocacy activities akin to behavior of policy entrepreneurs. This mirrors the experience of organizations in transition and consequent re-framing of relationships with Sport England as well as with other key actors. It also underscores the interface between national structures and agencies with the lived experience of individuals associated with policy implementation at the local level.

The chapter, overall, illustrates that the policy shift from sport to PA marks a period of transition transforming grassroots sport development. Accordingly, local sport development service providers attempt to adapt their priorities and learn how to operate, interact and cooperate within a transformative environment. This makes it important to further develop their agility, adaptive management capabilities and entrepreneurial skillsets that cross-over into the policy domain - facilitating their capacity to adapt in a policy environment experiencing metamorphic change.

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LEADERSHIP VALUES IN SCANDINAVIAN SPORT CONFEDERATIONS: AN ARCHIVAL ETHNOGRAPHY

HANS ERIK NÆSS

Introduction

Since the beginning of the new millennium there has been a growing interest in the preconditions of leadership in sport confederations in Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, and Denmark). Central topics include ethics, transparency and ‘bad governance’ in the past decade (Alvad & Bang, 2018; Broch & Skille, 2019; Fahlén, 2017). This chapter takes as a premise that these Scandinavian debates have created an increased *expectation* of sport leaders to act in accord with the values of the organization and the wider culture of sport (see for example, Kikulis, 2000; Takos, Murray, & O’Boyle, 2018).

For that reason, leader accountability is worth exploring (Ghanem & Castelli, 2019). While this approach generally refers to how leaders serve the well-being of the organization, one particular dimension of leader accountability is how decisions are justified (Wood & Winston, 2005, p. 84). Therefore, the research question in this chapter is: how do leader groups in Scandinavian sport confederations integrate values into justifications of their leadership work? To answer it, this chapter couples the concept of values-based leadership (VBL) with an archival ethnography. It thus fills a research gap because although several sport leadership studies that take value into consideration touch aspects of the VBL framework, these studies mostly view values as an addition to the key theoretical construct (authentic, servant, collaborative, ethical, authentic, or servant leadership) rather than an analytical premise (Hopkins & Scott, 2016).

The particulars of VBL are therefore introduced in the next section to justify its utilization in the context of sport. Next, the use of documentary

data and the method of archival ethnography is explained. The primary rationale for this methodological approach and data sample is because documentation is a key tool ‘used to render institutions accountable in today’s skeptical age’ (Valverde & Moore 2019, p. 691). After that, the chapter discusses three types of justification of leadership practice. The chapter ends with a consideration of the implications of these findings, the limitations of this study, and suggestions for further research.

Theoretical Framework

The notion of leadership based on some underlying values serving both leaders and the organization is old wine in organizational sociology (Barnard, 1938; Schwartz, 2006). Interest in the relation between values and leadership in general has nevertheless been heightened because of the disclosure of unethical behaviour and organizational mismanagement on the one hand and doubts about public value creation on the other. In sum, these factors have reinvigorated demands from stakeholders, the public and authorities for leaders to demonstrate moral competence and ethical consciousness (Busch & Murdock, 2014; Dolan & Garcia, 2001; Ghanem & Castelli, 2019; Maak, 2007). Due to this growth in research interest, three views on leadership and values have recently been identified (Lašáková et al., 2019): The first view is that of a particular style of leadership exemplified through decisions and behaviour. For example, Brown and Treviño (2006, p. 595) defined VBL as ‘the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships’. The second view uses the combination of ‘values’ and ‘leadership’ as an umbrella term for several theories, such as those on authentic or ethical leadership. Demarcations between VBL and e.g., ethical leadership has been discussed (Brown & Treviño, 2003), although it seems like the conceptual difference is notable in cases where each construct is applied to a certain field or practice, such as in this chapter. The third approach, which is pursued in this chapter, is less leader-centric than the first two and explores the underlying processes of how values and leadership are paired, for example, ‘how ethics is actually conveyed by the values oriented leaders and what types of methods are involved in that’ (Lašáková et al., 2019, p. 260).

These discussions of values and leadership are also found in sport (Hamm et al., 2008, Kerwin, Maclean, & Bell-Laroche, 2014; Takos, Murray, & O’Boyle, 2018; O’Boyle, Shilbury, & Ferkins, 2019). Especially related to the transformation of sport federations towards ‘organizational rationalisation,

efficiency and business-like management' (Nagel et al., 2015, p. 408) leadership principles examined include transformative leadership (Arthur, Bastardo, & Eklund, 2017; Arthur & Tomsett, 2015), facilitative leadership (O'Boyle, 2015), authentic leadership (Takos, Murray, & O'Boyle, 2018) or servant leadership (Burton, Welty Peachey, & Wells, 2017). However, sport leadership researchers have focused on varieties of VBL while research on leadership and values in business has used the term 'values-based leadership' unsystematically for some time (Fernandes & Hogan 2002; Gagnon 2014; Sumanasiri, 2020). Hence, the *concept* of values-based leadership ('VBL') has only since the early 2000s been examined (Busch & Murdock, 2014; Busch & Wennes, 2012; Copeland, 2014) without reaching sport. According to Prilleltensky (2000), a key reason for emphasizing VBL as a separate framework was that models of organizational leadership did 'not always articulate the set of values underpinning practice or the complicated relation among values, interests, and power (VIP) across stakeholder groups' (Prilleltensky, 2000, p. 140). Numerous studies since the early 2000s have therefore tried to specify the contribution of VBL in contrast to similar approaches by emphasizing different cases and theorizations (Barrett, 2013, Copeland, 2014; Ghanem & Castelli, 2019; Graber & Kilpatrick, 2008; Viinamäki, 2012).

One outcome of this work, which got an academic home with the establishment of *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership* in 2008 (O'Toole, 2008), has been increased attention to collective aspects of leadership, especially those elements of leadership that concern the interaction between ethical perspectives, societal context and the predominance of values. This attention is also visible in sport leadership research (Ferkins, Skinner, & Swanson, 2018). But in contrast to those working within the VBL framework, Bell-Laroche et al. (2014) as well as Kerwin, Maclean and Bell-Laroche (2014), draw upon Dolan and Garcia (2001) where values are a strategic leadership tool as well as being the foundation for redesigning organizational culture along more humanistic lines. A second outcome has been the development of two strands in the VBL literature, one of which focuses on understanding your core values as leader and expressing them consistently, while the other prescribes certain values as being necessary for effective values-based leadership (Peregrin & Wolf, 2013, p. 3). A third outcome is the view of VBL as a premise for other theories of leadership instead of a new direction (Brown & Trevino, 2003; Hopkins & Scott, 2016; Stanley, 2019).