

Global sports organisations and their governance

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Abstract

Purpose – To identify the organisations that provide global governance within the sports industry, to discuss their role, and to suggest that they have self-governance problems due to both their evolution and the massive commercialisation of sport of recent decades.

Design/methodology/approach – An empirical-based argument is conducted. Standing at the apex of a hierarchy of national governing bodies and playing organisations, global sports organisations (GSOs) are defined and classified in terms of their governance functions, their commonalities and differences and their interconnections described and analysed. The GSOs for soccer, the Olympics and athletics are used as illustrative cases. Deficiencies in the small sports governance literature are identified. It is argued how the GSOs have maintained their authority as governance organisations despite being private organisations. Hirschman's "Voice, exit and loyalty" model is offered as a partial theoretical interpretation of their situation.

Findings – Although one of the GSOs' original major functions of formalising international sport is now complete, they have retained not only their sport governance monopolies and authority but also the original structures designed for amateur sport. This creates problems when the governance monopoly can be used as a revenue device.

Originality/value – Sport is an important part of global culture and an industry worth hundreds of billions of dollars where accusations of corruption are common but global governance is little examined. The GSOs, present-day commercial roles and enormous revenues create unresolved governance problems and these are described.

Keywords Sports, Governance, Income, Organizations

Paper type General review

Sport and its global organisations

Sport is intermediated, controlled and contested by great numbers of organisations, headed by what can be termed global sports organisations (GSOs). The GSOs can be defined as the supreme organs of governance in sport whose authority is global. Pre-eminent among the GSOs are organisations such as The International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA), respectively the supreme governing bodies for soccer, the Olympic Games, athletics and anti-doping (see Appendix for details of all GSOs discussed). Equally GSOs but among the less prominent are the World Arm-Sport Federation (WAF – arm-wrestling), the International Federation of Sports Acrobatics (IFSA – acrobatics), the International Federation for Robo-Soccer (FIRA – robot soccer) and the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF – ice-hockey).

A systematic approach to sport governance has been lacking and is overdue. One reason is sufficient and that is the perception of corruption associated with several of the major GSOs. The IOC has been dogged by such accusations coming to a head with the Salt Lake City bid for the Winter Olympics. The then President of the IOC Juan Antonio Samaranch blamed individuals rather than any systemic fault in the organisation, saying, "My apology is for the

actions of those IOC members who violated the bidding process for the 2002 Winter Games.” At the same time he argued that those members recommended for expulsion – six IOC members were eventually expelled – had not broken “any laws” (Bowser, 1999). Accusations of corruption also attended the FIFA presidential election of 2002 (Darby, 2003). The International Rugby Board has been followed by such accusations, as have various elements of the administration of cricket (Rae, 2001). In professional boxing the perceived level of corruption is legendary, the governance function, especially the sanctioning of world title fights, becoming a commercial endeavour rather than a neutral regulatory activity. This has helped create numbers of professional boxing boards and organisations, especially in the USA, each claiming a global governance role on slender grounds (Bernath, 2004; Forster and Pope, 2004). In all these cases the problem lay with the administrators and governance elements of the sport rather than the athletes.

Despite this the growing body of international sports law is concerned more with the governance of athletes’ behaviour, and their relationships with their organisations and rules than with the organisations themselves (for examples see the International Association of Sports Law, 2004). Partly this is unavoidable as corrupt financial practice is a matter for criminal or corporate law within national jurisdictions. In addition the corruption is often political rather than directly financial. Thus the President of a GSO can use financial patronage to poorer national associations to secure votes their in presidential elections. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), founded by the IOC, does not cover such practices but is concerned with the governance of athletes. It examines athletes and hears their appeals, often against the rulings of competition judges or against exclusion from competition for performance enhancing drugs offences rather than to deal with organisations (as an example case see Court of Arbitration for Sport, 2002). CAS was formally separated from the IOC in 1993/1994 and given its own formally autonomous governing council, ICAS (see Appendix), although the President of both ICAS and CAS is K. Mbaye, formerly a vice-president of the IOC. Similarly the global sports anti-doping agency (WADA) was founded as an agency of the IOC. WADA is also now formally independent of the IOC but has IOC members on its governing board and is headed by R. Pound, who remains a long-serving IOC member. Both WADA and CAS are accepted by other GSOs and national sport federations, as well as by increasing numbers of national governments. At the same time some athletes have questioned the impartiality of CAS, because of its association with the IOC. This has been explicitly rejected by the legal system of Switzerland (Swiss Federal Tribunal, 2003) where CAS and ICAS are domiciled and headquartered, demonstrating an interesting interplay between private global bodies and nation-states. Partly because of this and the commercial importance of sport the present concern is with the GSOs as a group and especially their self-governance.

The GSOs individually claim a variety of governance and other functions. GSOs make public their objectives, goals and other functions statements with varying degrees of explicitness in their documentation, obtained through accessing GSO web sites (see Appendix). Lists of GSOs for specific sports and their websites can be gleaned from a variety of sources including the GAISF web site, while those concerned with global events can be found at the World Games site (see Appendix) and at the International Games Archive (Bell, 2004). Their functions usually comprise some subset of the composite list below:

- the creation and maintenance of the laws and rules of a sport and its competitions;
- the global development of a sport at all levels;
- the development and governance of the athletes within a sport;
- arbitration and/or resolution of disputes within a sport;
- holding of global events, such as world championships, within the sport;
- maintenance of relationships with sporting bodies within a sport especially affiliated national associations within the sport;
- maintenance of relationships with governments, regulatory authorities and those sporting bodies outside the sport; and
- maintenance of relationships with commercial entities such as sponsors.

Given numerous functions the GSOs do not form a homogeneous group but each GSO primarily serves one of three main functions taken from those above, allow groupings to be made. These are:

1. Governance of a sport at the global level, such as FIFA. GSOs in this group include the ICC, IRB, IIHF, FIA and the FIH (see Appendix).
2. Governance of a global sporting event, such as the IOC and the IOC affiliated International World Games Association (IWGA, see Appendix). It is suggested that the increasing numbers of specialised amateur global sports events listed in Bell (2004), represent a new amateur movement in sport and are expressions of specific global communities such as police and fire-fighters and transplant recipients.
3. Governance through performance of a specialist function. The most important are almost certainly ICAS and CAAS (sport arbitration), WADA (anti-doping) and FIMS (sports medicine).

Other than the Olympics belonging to the second group the major commercial areas lie in the first group. For this first group of GSOs the global governance monopolies they each have provides legitimacy for holding world championship events. This blurs functions by providing commercial opportunities for the GSO while providing a sporting outlet for elite athletes.

Standing apart from these groups are several solo sports such as tennis and golf, where the players are independent enterprises rather than employees as in team sports. In these areas the governance functions often appears to be shared among several organisations, and within this framework the players' associations play an important global role. The primary example is the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals). Yet it can face a challenge to its governance role, notably from the new International Men's Tennis Association, (IMTA) (<http://sport.guardian.co.uk/tennis/story/>). The ATP was founded in 1972 but from 1988 took a much more important role in the commercial tennis circuit. The IMTA intends a return to an exclusively players' association role. Sharing the governance role in tennis there are other world bodies such as the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

The specifically global role of the GSOs means that some important international sporting bodies that are continental in scope rather than global are excluded from consideration here. Thus UEFA, the governing organisation for soccer in Europe is excluded despite its importance as it comes under the umbrella of FIFA. In addition organisations such as the NBA (National basketball Association) are excluded, which has claims to be global at least as far as its markets are concerned. Under David Stern, who became league commissioner in early 1984, the privately owned NBA was transformed from a largely administrative-governance model for North American basketball to a more commercial-enterprise model. Stern created "more than 20 departments within three major divisions: the NBA League Office; NBA Properties, and NBA Entertainment". (Andrews, 1999, p. 506). Within this framework NBA International was created to spread the NBA as a global brand. And while organisations such as the NBA and NHL (national Hockey League) are not global governing bodies for their sport but are more powerful than their corresponding GSOs, FIBA and the IIHF.

Despite this and despite being non-profit organisations, one reason for the significance of the GSOs is their commercial importance, given the revenues that some generate and their impacts on the commercial sports industry. In this direct revenue raising ability, as opposed to operating as charities, they differ appreciably from other international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). Sport has been estimated to comprise just under 2 per cent of the UK's gross domestic product (Gratton, 2000) and to drive an extraordinary number of industry sectors (British Library, 2004). Intimately related to their commercial significance is the suggestion sport embodies cultural values with which individuals, communities and even nations identify. This was seen in the jubilant reaction of South Korea to its unexpected level of success in the 2002 Soccer World Cup and of England to its win in the 2003 Rugby Union World Cup. In audience terms the World Cup, the Olympic Games and other sporting events

lay claim to being the world's most important cultural events. In many ways it is a global sport culture that creates the GSOs' economic significance. Soccer's 2002 World Cup "reached 213 countries, virtually every country in the world, with over 41,100 hours of dedicated programming." with a "cumulative audience" of 28.8 billion (www.fifa.com/en/marketing/facts/key.html). Over one billion people saw the final. These figures alone indicate that the governance of sports organisations requires attention.

The sport governance literature

Notwithstanding that the sport governance literature is very small it is also splintered, with different concerns to the mainstream corporate governance literature. It has already been indicated that the sports law literature does not deal well with the organisational governance issues. The first text to claim to treat sports governance was not concerned with governance but sport event management and marketing (Thoma and Chalip, 1996). Most attention that has governance implications has been paid to individual GSOs. These include work by journalists such as Jennings (2000), concerned with the actions and ethics of IOC members and by implication with internal governance. Among important academic works concerned with individual GSOs are those by Sugden and Tomlinson (1998) and Giulianotti (1999), both dealing with FIFA. The emphasis on individual GSOs has led to the commonalities of the GSOs being ignored. It is these commonalities that are a major concern here. The international relations literature has only slightly more concern with the GSOs, noting the significance of international sporting organisations and then ignoring them. Examples are Boli and Thomas (1999, 2001) and Strange (1996). Boli and Thomas (2001, p. 85) analyse the growth and development of INGOs dismiss sport organisations in a single paragraph. Strange (1996, p. 96) emphasises their importance gave the reason for her lack of analysis as her lack of expertise in sports. Ronit and Schneider (2000, p. 20) refer to "private organisations in the area of sports." to illustrate the concept of self-regulation, but then refer only to the IOC. This is unfortunate as the GSOs operate as a network of organisations, creating and maintaining a mutual legitimation and authority. In a rather different vein, Millet *et al.* (1999, pp. 496–497) note that:

...the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) are immensely powerful civil associations of cultural elites from across the world that frequently dictate terms to governments and business through a complex relationship of interdependency with nationalism and corporate funding.

They go much further, pointing out that:

The IOC has operated a Court of Arbitration for Sport since 1984, to which many sovereign legal systems have deferred, albeit with Third World opposition to its undemocratic ways. IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, a politician in fascist Spain, announced in 1998, "We function as a state." (Millet *et al.*, 1999, p. 497).

While no evidence is presented that Third World nations have objected to either CAS or the IOC, the significance of the GSOs in global civil society is highlighted.

Katwala (2001) argues that the present supreme governing bodies are inadequate for the present structure of the sport industry as they were developed in a different, i.e. amateur, world. Forster and Pope (2004) have similar concerns. Brewer (2001) and Katwala (2001) first indicated the lack of published audited accounts by these organisations and this is echoed by Forster (2004). A conference on sport governance organized by the industry itself did little to either analyse or change the situation (Governance in Sport Committee, 2001). Hums and Maclean (2004) appear to be the first teaching text with respect to sports governance. Other works, such as Michie (2000), while explicitly concerned with sport governance are restricted to national level analysis and to soccer in Britain in particular.

Among the GSOs the IOC and FIFA individually have by far the strongest literatures and it is FIFA that is considered here. Unfortunately little of it is explicitly concerned with governance. While the IOC is atypical in being an event GSO, FIFA is a crucial GSO as soccer is the most global of commercial team sports, as well as having enormous formal and informal participation at the grass roots level.

Sugden and Tomlinson (1998, pp. vii-viii) in common with most studies of individual GSOs take a political-sociological approach to FIFA. Nearest to a governance approach is the third chapter, "FIFA: an organisational and institutional analysis". Sugden and Tomlinson (1998, p. 48) note that Swiss law grants incorporated bodies that have broad social objectives the status of a person, apparently unaware that it is a common legal fiction. Consequently their claim that "It seems to be that an organisation having 'the status of a person' will be less vulnerable to constraints upon companies or industrial enterprises." (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 48) is a misunderstanding. They are nevertheless right in pointing to the significance of Article 58 of FIFA's statutes:

National associations, clubs or club members shall not be permitted to refer disputes with the federation or other associations, clubs or club members to a court of law and they shall agree to submit each one of such disputes to an arbitration tribunal appointed by common consent. (Article 58/1) (Quoted in Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 49).

This is a common approach among the GSOs and is facilitated by the existence of CAS.

Sugden and Tomlinson (1998, pp. 53-58) nevertheless see individuals as the root of FIFA's problems rather than such structures. They state:

In formal terms FIFA is a democratic institution accountable to its members and to its congress. In reality, it was operated more like a fiefdom or a medieval court. . . (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998, p. 71).

Arguably they come to this conclusion because they consider FIFA in isolation from other GSOs and the commonalities of structures they possess – as well as the same governance problems – are not as visible.

Giulianotti (1999, p. 28) takes another perspective with respect to FIFA's structures. He points to a crucial role for the nation in soccer, with FIFA as a one nation-one vote congress – "the political framework of football, in which the nation-state represents the fundamental unit". Moreover Giulianotti (1999, p. 32) claims that, "the nation has become the principal administrative unit within football through the twentieth century". Clearly this is a view with which the present argument is profoundly at odds, the governance and administration of soccer (and sport in general) being global rather than national. It is for this reason that the GSO, FIFA, is dominant. The Bosman case of 1995, the consequent interaction between the EC, FIFA and UEFA is another different indication of such a shift (McCardle, 2000; Barani, 2003). Nevertheless it may be the rich clubs that will come to dominate, as have directly commercial organisations in North American sport. In soccer the herald of this may be the formation of the G14 group of super clubs (Chaudhary and Fifield, 2003; Scott, 2003; White, 2002). Giulianotti (1999, pp. 93-94) himself cites examples showing that TV increasingly rewards supra-national competition rather than national competition. With the increasing financial success of the World Cup this suggests revenues are polarising to the professional club and global level at the expense of national associations. It also provides a potential for challenges to FIFA's and other GSOs' authority. As yet clubs do not receive any monies from the World Cup while having to provide their players for free to national teams. Yet, as Giulianotti (1999, p. 87).points out:

Since Italia '90, world football has experienced unprecedented financial growth. In late 1994, the President of FIFA Joao Havelange boasted that football generated \$225 billion annually.

So while for FIFA there is global advantage in presenting World Cups in non-traditional areas, i.e. USA, 1998; South Korea/Japan, 2002, rather than in strongholds such as Brazil or England, there is no such direct advantage to clubs. The ground is shifting remarkably in soccer and its governance and control, even though the rules of the game have been stable for over a century.

It is an irony that the formalisation of the rules that made sport governable and helped create the global sports culture and economy was a national development. In the case of soccer it flowed almost entirely from the formation of the (English) Football Association in 1863. Prior to this date both using the hands and tackling was allowed but "The peculiarity of football as it evolved into something we might now recognise was the increasing restriction on the use

of the hands” (Hodgson, 1998, p. 22). Allowing only the feet does not privilege size above skill and athleticism, requires minimal equipment, creates a sport that is flexible in player numbers and the space required, and makes an exciting game for players and spectators. It turned out to be suited to television and, perhaps more than any other game, it can be played on almost equal terms by poor and rich nations. The decisions of 1863 and their reinforcement and global development by FIFA created a global game and industry.

GSO evolution and authority

The implication of the previous section is that history is important to the GSOs, yet most international sport bodies stretch back little more than 100 years. The IOC can claim to be among the first GSOs formed in 1894, the first probably being the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) in 1881. The predecessor of the current International Rugby Board (IRB) was founded in 1883, a growing number being formed in the early 1890s. The IOC and the Olympic Movement had a profound effect on sport and established for it a global hegemony and role in sport governance as a whole that continues to the present. That the status of the IOC is enshrined in legislation in some nations, particularly in its strongest market the USA (Hollis, 1995), points to the Olympic movement stretching into all corners of sport. And despite its global nature the Olympic Games remains euro-centric in its membership. Inclusion of a Winter Games in 1924 helped ensure a continuing Europe-North America dominance in its governance, but this does not explain why well over 40 per cent of the 125 active members of the IOC are European (www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/ioc/members/index_uk.asp). In this context it is important that the IOC has a different history to other GSOs. Flowing from de Coubertin’s conception it was a top-down creation whereas most other GSOs were the creations of groups of national associations that gave up their own autonomy in the process. Reversing this order it was the IOC that created and sanctions the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), and they act as the agents or ambassadors of the IOC. As such the NOCs have no vote as opposed to the individuals who are members of the IOC.

Compared to other GSOs this increases a potential for self-perpetuating oligarchies at the centre of the Olympic Movement. This tendency is magnified by the IOC’s self-electing framework, the IOC determining its own membership. This can help explain the IOC’s euro-centrism. Conversely most other GSOs have congresses composed of national association representatives. In addition, Swiss corporate law, which could have provided some oversight role with respect to the IOC governance, has been inactive. The IOC has, therefore, been able to perceive itself as a law unto itself. This tendency is nevertheless sometimes exhibited in ways, such as the creation of quasi-judicial bodies in the areas of sports arbitration (CAS) and drugs use (WADA). In preserving its hegemony the IOC has also helped create organisations of global sports organisations that owe allegiance to the IOC (e.g. ASOIF, GAISF; see Appendix). Croci (2004) indicates the importance that GSOs can attach to recognition by the IOC.

While the IAAF is the GSO most closely associated with the IOC it represents a more typical development of a GSO. A total of 17 national amateur athletics associations founded the International Amateur Athletic Federation in 1912, its more recent history illustrating some of the organisational-cum-governance dilemmas involved in a reorientation to commercial sport. Increasing numbers of events and increasing media revenues to both the IAAF and the IOC meant payment to the athletes was inevitable. This sounded the death-knell for their mutual promotion of the amateur athlete. In 1982 the International Amateur Athletics federation began to discard the amateur ideal, followed by allowing trust funds for athletes in 1985 as a partial solution to its amateur/professional dilemma. By 1997 IAAF competitions explicitly awarded prize money. The IOC has not yet had to do so. This implied changes in its avowed philosophy and objectives, also reflected in its recent name change to the International Association of Athletics Federations, claiming authority even over the professional athletics that it once condemned. The erstwhile International Amateur Athletic Federation’s web site stated, “The IAAF, under the leadership of its President Lamine Diack (SEN) who heads a 26 member Council, is the highest authority for athletics in the world”. (Note: SEN = Senegal). This is an explicit claim to authority but by implication the 17 national

athletics associations were created before the IAAF. The Amateur Athletics Association in England, for example, was formed in 1880. So on what basis does the IAAF claim legitimacy? That basis lies in the statement:

The International Amateur Athletic Federation was founded in 1912 by 17 national athletic federations who saw the need for a governing authority, for an athletic programme, for standardised technical equipment and world records.

Thus legitimacy and authority is claimed from the original 17 national federations, reinforced by those national federations that have since joined. So now it is the IAAF that controls the national federations that both created it and gave it legitimacy.

During its amateur existence the IAAF had few sources of income, largely the membership dues paid by member federations, and this remains the case for most of the GSOs in smaller sports, or with small amounts of sponsorship monies. A further impediment for the IAAF was that it has never controlled the premier global athletics event, the Olympic Games. Thus the IAAF created its own global athletics event, The World Championships, implying further shift in the balance of power away from the national federations. This is an evolution towards global events that is similar to many other GSOs. And as with those GSOs, one implication is that the IAAF now legitimises the national federations, creating national governance monopolies by allowing only one federation from each nation. This award of a monopoly further ties the national federations to their GSO.

This represents a remarkable and rapid evolution. First, there is the evolution of the legitimacy and authority of the GSOs as governing bodies. Second, perhaps unique in industry structures, is the existence and non-profit nature of global governing bodies and, third, dramatic changes in organisational objectives and goals. In accomplishing the third the GSOs were perhaps facing the inevitable, but they not only changed their objectives but their underlying philosophies, so creating the "open era" in sport. This rapid evolution compares to the much longer evolution of the governance structures of private enterprise corporations. In particular private enterprise corporations have evolved to create, accumulate and distribute surpluses as profits. GSOs now create large sums but ownership rights are problematic as are mechanisms for distribution of surpluses (Forster, 2004). Arguably this lies at the root of understanding the present self-governance problems of the GSOs.

Their evolution is no longer being left to the GSOs alone. Previously content to leave amateur sport to amateur organisations, with the advent of commercialisation governments now intervene in sports governance. The EC has shown a continuing interest in the commercial area of sales to media by leagues – as opposed to sales by individual clubs. In pursuit of its competition policy the EC has made clear its distinction between leagues as a necessary component of sports competition as opposed to leagues operating as cartels. The GSO monopoly of governance also faces other challenges internal to the sport. Immediately below the GSOs in the more important sports stand continental organisations such as UEFA, the governing body of European soccer. These can be powerful counterbalances to the GSO, especially if in alliance with governments, and UEFA has neither identical interests nor identical constituents to FIFA. Part of the reason is the increasing regulatory interest taken in sport by the European Commission (EC) and the pressure it can put on the commercial sports industry (Monti, 2001). Europe is a major sports market and while North America may be the commercial heartland of sport, its sports leagues are restricted in their global reach. This strengthens the continuing role of Europe in the global governance of sport, especially as the preponderance of GSOs such as those cited in this paper are headquartered in Europe. The impact of the Bosman case is well known and has created a revolution in European soccer (Feess and Muhleuber, 2002) with implications for the global soccer labour market. Partly as a consequence the increasingly formal G14 group of major European soccer clubs (www.g14.com) is directly challenging the governance role of FIFA where it intrudes into the commercial arena (Scott, 2003).

Theoretical perspectives

Given their complexity and history any theoretical interpretation of the GSOs will necessarily be incomplete. Accordingly just one key question is tackled here. How do we explain the ability of the GSOs to maintain their highly contestable governance monopolies, especially given the massive revenue streams some generate?

The answer, in part, from the examples cited such as boxing, chess and tennis as well as others is that they have not always been able to do so.

For the vast majority that have maintained their governance monopolies, part of the answer is that the GSOs have been able legitimise themselves and their governance monopoly revenues. The issue of legitimation is one that has exercised those concerned with the role of INGOs in global governance (Nanz and Steffek, 2004). This legitimation has occurred at several points:

- within the specific sports, where they are legitimised by the recognition of their member national associations;
- with respect to other sports, as represented by mutual recognition between the GSOs; and
- their recognition by external bodies such as governments.

Nevertheless legitimacy only partially explains the quiescence of member associations, especially in the face of persistent corruption rumours. In this arena it is argued that Hirschman's concepts of voice, exit and loyalty can be usefully deployed (Hirschman, 1970). Voice is formally guaranteed to national associations through world congresses and voting for the President of a GSO, but we have suggested that these mechanisms can be nullified through corruption and, of course, political patronage. Many of the individuals are career sports administrators for whom the system rewards the organisations and individuals within them with places of executive power in the GSO. This can be a under a system of patronage that reduces individuals as voice. Patronage therefore reduces the voice of both national associations and individuals. While the alternative possibility of rebellion exists, especially in solo sports as recognised in some of the examples cited such as FIDE (Huntington, 2003) and IMTA, there is little possibility of exit from a GSO for a national sports association. For a national association to exit a GSO faces it with the sanction of having no international competition for its athletes. In addition the national associations may have been loyal to the GSO even when the exit option was open to them. That loyalty is partly generated by the perceived legitimacy of the GSOs, and partly by an attachment to the formal ideals of the GSO, if not the way it is actually run. So for national associations that require international recognition and competition, Hirschman (1970, p. 79) claims "...loyalist behaviour retains an enormous dose of reasoned calculation.". The lack of voice can also be because GSO members are themselves organisations, and as organisations they suffer an organisational inertia inhibiting voice as well as exit.

Possibilities for a national association to exit from a GSO without doing itself great damage are even smaller than the likelihood of voice. This relates closely to legitimacy. While the global body gains legitimacy from the national associations, they receive a mutual legitimacy from membership. In this mutuality the GSO has the monopolist's advantage of sanctioning force. This creates the GSO's ability to punish a national association by bans on international competition. Ironically global professional sport has made this sanction especially effective, the national associations not wishing to be seen hindering their own individual elite athletes.

The question of "Who guards the guardians?" when the financial rewards are so great is vital given a lack of both voice and exit. Many of the GSOs on their web sites (see Appendix) point to their formal democratic structures but there is an apparent lack of accountability towards member organisations and other stakeholders. The lack of accountability in turn is attributed to a problem of lack of "ownership", a problem primarily for the commercially successful GSOs. And while their tangible assets are negligible, their non-tangible commercial assets can be very large, flowing from the monopoly position of the GSO with respect to global control of the sport and its global events. Thus FIFA translates being the undisputed

governing body for world soccer into the non-tangible asset of the legitimacy of its World Cup. Similarly the IAAF holds athletics World Championships. Given no one owns the GSOs, even indirectly, and given their beneficial objectives concern a sport or sporting activity this makes for a very abstract beneficiary. This is common to many not-for-profit organisations, but the GSOs have the ability to make enormous financial surpluses reversing the dependency relationship with respect to their member organisations.

While the emphasis here is on “traditional” forms of sports, especially team sports, similar reasoning applies to virtually all sports. Nevertheless, newer, emerging forms of sports often have specific governance needs, as well as very different cultural histories to the earlier periods. So unlike the earlier period many of the new sports and events, such as eXtreme games, are more direct responses to commercial opportunities. Consequently the governing bodies of the new sports are creating new governance models often being in private hands. In computer gaming, for example, much of the control in the USA rests with the Cyberathletes Professional League (Wright, 2002). This may eventually become a new GSO. These new sports bodies do not constitute a threat to the control of existing GSOs, but they potentially affect future audiences. The rapidity of change under heightened commercial pressures suggests that first mover advantages enjoyed by many of the traditional GSOs may be waning. For some of the present GSOs the problem of non-exit may be of little relevance compared to a lack of entrant to both consumer and participant ranks.

Conclusions

A unique, overlooked and important set of governance organisations has been described. While governing sport at the global these autonomous organisations raise numerous self-governance issues.

Originally amateur they have been unable to avoid embracing commerce not the least for the potentially massive revenues they offer having few alternative sources of funds. Many of their governance issues existed before commercialisation but arise in an intensified form because of the embrace of commerce.

This is not to deny the need for the funds as being effective in negotiations with governments and commercial organisations especially media companies, sponsors, private leagues and other sports organisations such as the G14 requires substantive bargaining power. These negotiations may be increasingly fraught if private clubs and leagues increase their power relative to national sports federations. More optimistically for the GSOs as revenue opportunities become increasingly global they are well placed to exploit them given their legitimacy and monopoly positions. In many ways the sport or event has now become the means and the revenues as the end, rather than the reverse. For the GSOs this means-ends reversal creates a crucial juncture in their short history. The implication is that in order to maintain legitimacy and authority in the absence of voice and exit will require a greater openness and accountability to a global public that includes national and supra-national governments.

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Appendix. Global sports organisations discussed

ASOIF Association of Summer Olympics International Federations, Forum, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1983, www.asoif.com

ATP Association of Tennis Professionals, Men's World Tennis Circuit and Players, Ponte Vedra beach, FL. USA, 1972, www.atptennis.com

CAS Court of Arbitration for Sport, Sports Arbitration and Dispute Settlement, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1984, www.tas-cas.org

FIA International Automobile Federation, Motor Sports including F1, Geneva, Switzerland, 1904, www.fia.com

FIBA International Basketball Federation, Basketball, Munich, Germany, 1932, www.fiba.com

FIBT International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation, Bobsleigh and Tobogganing, St. Moritz, Switzerland, 1923, www.bobsleigh.com

FIDE World Chess Federation, Chess, Lucerne, Switzerland, 1924, www.fide.com

FIFA International Federation for Association Football, Soccer, Zurich, Switzerland, 1904, www.fifa.com

FIG International Gymnastics Federation, Gymnastics, Moutier, Switzerland, 1881, www.fig-gymnastics.com

FIH International Hockey Federation, (field) hockey, www.fihockey.org

FIRA International Federation for Robot-Soccer, Robot-Soccer, Daejeon, Korea, 1996, www.fira.net

GAISF General Association of International Sports Federations, Forum, Monaco City, Monaco, 1967, www.agfisonline.com

IAAF International Association of Athletics Federations (previously International Amateur Athletics Federation), Athletics, Monaco City, Monaco, 1912, www.iaaf.org

ICAS International Council for the Arbitration of Sport, Took over governance of CAS from the IOC, Lausanne, Switzerland, 1994, www.tas-cas.org

- ICC International Cricket Council, Cricket, London, UK, 1909, www.cricket.org
- IFSA International Federation of Sports Acrobatics, Acrobatics, Sofia, Bulgaria, 1973, www.fig-gymnastics.com (Note: IFSA no longer has a separate identity being incorporated into FIG in 1999). Another IFSA operates as The International Federation of Strength Athletes.
- IIHF International Ice Hockey Federation, Ice hockey and in-line hockey, Zurich, Switzerland, 1908, www.iihf.com
- IMTA International Men's Tennis Association, Male professional tennis players, 2003, no web address found.
- IOC International Olympic Committee, Olympic Games, Lausanne, Switzerland. 1894, www.olympic.org
- IRB International Rugby Board, Rugby Union, Dublin, Ireland, 1886, www.irb.com
- ITF International Tennis Federation, promotion and other aspects of tennis, London, UK, 1913, www.itftennis.com
- IWGA International World Games Association, World Games – Non-Olympic games Sports, Colorado Springs, USA, 1981, www.worldgames-iwga.org
- WADA World Anti-Doping Agency, Anti-doping and testing for banned drug use, Montreal Canada, 1999, www.wada-ama.org
- WAF World Armsport Federation, Arm-wrestling, Calcutta, India, 1967, www.armsport.com

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