Integrity governance: A new reform agenda for sport?

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Abstract
Globally, "integrity" has emerged as a critical concept for sport, with scholars, government agencies and NGOs proposing the establishment of "integrity systems", comprising measures such as new policy units, ombudsmen and mediation services. The purpose of this study is to assess the coherence of this reform agenda, to determine its core features and gauge whether it constitutes a new governing paradigm and departure from "professionalisation". Drawing on case material from Australia and New Zealand, we trace the sport integrity agenda and its adoption into each country's government policies and programmes. The emerging agenda focuses on diverse risks at the periphery of "old" professionalised management, while demanding a sector-wide response and universal adherence. Coordination and regulation are emphasised (at national, state/regional and local levels), supported by central government policy frameworks and grievance detection regimes. While the integrity agenda has distinctive elements of a reform movement, preliminary evidence suggests it may become integrated under the existing logics of performance, audits and risk management. It nevertheless signals substantive changes to the conduct of sport organisations at multiple levels of the system.

Keywords
integrity, professionalisation, modernisation, sport policy, politics, reforms, Australia, New Zealand

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Introduction

Globally, scholars and policy-makers are increasingly attending to the subject of 'sport integrity', a term addressing a broad array of issues including doping, match-fixing, harassment, bullying, exploitation and abuse. Much of this attention stems from a proliferation of conventions, resolutions, charters and declarations from non-governmental organisations and think tanks, recommending that government (or umbrella sport organisations) update their policy frameworks to attend to these issues (Lang, 2021). Academics have likewise called for 'coherent integrity systems' (Cleret et al., 2015: 3; Kihl, 2020), 'modern integrity management frameworks and policies' (Vanden Auweele, 2015: 23), and intergovernmental treaties and legal frameworks to oversee this 'new form of sport governance' (Chappelet, 2018: 732; see also Kerr and Kerr, 2020).

Taken together, these prescriptions support Gardiner et al.'s (2017) observations regarding the emergence of a 'sports integrity industry' that operates predominantly at the international level but that is increasingly seen in the mandates of central sport agencies (e.g., McNamee and Fleming, 2007). The lead government sport organisations in Australia and New Zealand for example, have each issued formal declarations on integrity, raising the question as to whether these signal a substantive shift in the way sport is to be steered/governed in the future (Department of Health, 2019; Sport New Zealand, 2018). Indeed, the policy frameworks emanating from these deliberations are significant insofar as they include the activities of organisations across multiple boundaries – public, private and nonprofit organisations at national, state/territorial, regional and local levels.

In light of the above international and national developments, we propose that while integrity is evolving as a concept, it is perhaps also becoming an *agenda* (cf. van Dooren et al., 2010). That is, beyond the importance of the issue itself, integrity appears increasingly linked with reforms – i.e., the proposal or enactment of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of sport organisations. It is therefore important to locate the integrity agenda within current governance/policy structures since it potentially signals substantive changes to the conduct of sport organisations at multiple levels of the system.

Policy and governance reforms in sport have long been a subject of sociological analysis (Kikulis et al., 1992; McKay, 1986; Slack et al., 1994; Thibault et al., 1991). In a neoliberal environment, the demand to make sport more professional and 'business-like' has been an important fulcrum to problematise governmental influence in the conduct of civil society organisations and citizens (Green and Houlihan, 2006; Phillpots et al., 2011; Piggin et al., 2009; Sam and Jackson, 2004). Indeed, this 'New Public Management' (NPM) agenda (Connell et al., 2009) – i.e., the application of private sector ideas, techniques and organisational structures towards the delivery of public services – has had profound effects in 'disciplining' non-state sport organisations, arguably to the detriment of their autonomy and democratic outlooks (Fahlén et al., 2015; Sam and Macris, 2014). In this light, if the integrity agenda is anything like the NPM reform movement, the formers' significance lies in its potential to advance (or disrupt) existing organisational practices, responsibilities and power relations.

Purpose

While integrity 'systems' have been described and prescribed, they remain under-theorised, particularly in regard to understanding domestic policy change. Thus, the purpose of this study is to assess the coherence of this reform agenda, to determine its core features and gauge whether it constitutes a new governing agenda and departure from NPM/professionalisation'. Drawing from research on public sector reforms (such as 'New Public Management'), we ask: to what extent is integrity governance (IG) 'new'? Does it challenge the 'old' paradigm and cultivate a new logic or does it redeploy existing institutions for new purposes (Streeck and Thelen, 2005)? For example, is IG a response to the problems of NPM/professionalisation or does it represent a further institutionalisation of accountability and 'checking mechanisms' that correspond with previous iterations of sport's modernisation?

To address these questions, we trace the integrity agenda in two South Pacific countries (Australia and New Zealand) and compare its core features with those of the previous organisational reform wave in sport, known as modernisation or professionalisation (Dowling et al., 2014; Nagel et al., 2015; Ruoranen et al., 2016). From the outset, we accept that 'newness' is rarely without precedent and thus acknowledge the existence of transitional reform agendas (Torfing et al., 2020). As we discuss below, 'good governance' reforms (focusing on anti-corruption) for instance, have appeared at sport's international levels since the early 2000s, though with arguably a mixed/marginal influence on contemporary domestic-level sport policy. Nevertheless, in comparing and contrasting the features of NPM/professionalisation with the integrity agenda, it is understood that recent changes could variously signal a shift, an accretion/layering or departure from the previous governing paradigm for sport (Streeck and Thelen, 2005).

The study of reforms is significant because it helps identify the trajectories, disturbances and continuities of existing practices. Different structures and administrative doctrines invariably shape subsequent strategies, management techniques and tools. Indeed one of the proposed remedies for addressing integrity has been the development of a new *cadré* of professional administrators in sports organisations consisting of 'sports ethics and integrity officers' (Cleret et al., 2015: 4; Kihl, 2021). New institutional roles like these are important to consider because they can generate inertia and 'path dependence' (Pierson, 2000), rendering some policies and practices more likely than others over time. And since reforms are context-specific, they are invariably more comparable across different contexts when their features are more clearly conceptualised.

The article comprises four sections. In the first section, we trace governance reforms in sport, focusing on professionalisation, 'good governance' and the contemporary integrity movement. We then present the theoretical approach for the research, connecting the institutional features of ideas and instruments, with the study of reform movements in the public sector. In the third section we explain the rationale and comparative basis for the two cases and provide the key elements underpinning data analysis and interpretation. Under the fourth section, we identify and describe the key institutional features of the integrity agenda in each country. We then compare and contrast the integrity agenda with the sport-specific reform movement towards NPM/professionalisation. We contend

that while integrity governance marks a substantive shift in the sport sector and it meets the criteria of a new reform movement, it is likely to be layered overtop of the existing NPM logics of performance management.

Tracing governance reforms in sport

Understanding the nature and trajectory of new reforms first requires an overview of understanding the contemporary model of sport administration, management and governance. To this end, scholars have described and analysed 'professionalisation', broadly referring to the process through which sport has become more bureaucratic, standardised, formalised and commercialised (Dowling et al., 2014; Nagel et al., 2015). The changes from the 'kitchen table' to the 'boardroom' have been variously characterised in scholarly works as *professionalisation* (Nagel et al., 2015), *modernisation* (Houlihan and Green, 2006), *managerialism* (Grix, 2009) and *NPM* (Honta and Julhe, 2013; McSweeney and Safai, 2020). Each of these concepts has its own disciplinary origins and nuances but together, their meanings largely converge around the observation that making sport organisations more 'business-like' has become a key part of the sector's operating orthodoxy (Chantelat, 2001; Fahlén et al., 2015; Ruoranen et al., 2016; Stenling and Sam, 2019).

Such changes in sport over the last three decades, have not taken place in a vacuum. Globally and since the 1980s, changes in the public and non-profit sectors have been predicated on the idea that organisations should emulate corporate practices. This *New Public Management* (NPM) advanced private sector doctrines into government, resulting in the adoption of market principles (e.g., competition) and a greater emphasis on efficiency and outputs (Hood, 1995). Sport organisations in Anglo Saxon countries, subject to pressures from within and outside the state, subsequently adopted contracts, performance-based funding schemes and corporate governance designs (Grix, 2009; Houlihan and Green, 2009; Sam, 2009).

In the last decade, a closely related wave of reforms dovetailed with the NPM/professionalisation movement, this time aimed at 'good governance'. In sport, this movement stemmed from incidents of bribery within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Federation Internationale de Football (FIFA). Corruption at this international level signalled a lack of accountability and transparency in sport, as well as falling levels of public legitimacy (Geeraert, 2015). While states were initially ambivalent to corruption scandals within international sports organisations, match-fixing emerged as an additional concern during this period, and came to be recognised as the new 'doping' (Chappelet, 2015). The 'good governance' movement in sport thus stemmed from a proliferation of recommendations, advanced by scholars as well as NGOs and sport organisations (Chappelet and Mrkionjic, 2019), all mainly aimed at improving internal organisational processes (van Bottenburg, 2021). These prescriptions resulted in the creation of benchmarks and indicators designed to promote transparency, accountability and democracy (Geeraert, 2021). Importantly, the differentiation between good governance and NPM/professionalisation is difficult to disentangle; in recent works for example, good governance is largely viewed as a continuation of Western-biased modernisation and professionalisation in sport (cf. Henry, 2021; Tacon and Walters, 2021).

Most recently, and with the confluence of the 'Me-too' movement and high-profile cases of athlete abuse/maltreatment, another wave of reforms appears to be surfacing, coalescing around the concept of 'integrity' (Kavanagh et al., 2020; Kihl, 2021; Loyens et al., 2021). Notably, the range of issues under contemporary integrity has expanded beyond doping, match-fixing and financial corruption. In addition to these threats, sport 'integrity' now includes matters of athlete welfare, child protection, sexual harassment/violence, and side-line behaviour (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016; UNESCO Working Group, 2020; UNODC, 2021). While the latter issues themselves are not new, the concept of integrity has enabled an apparent 'joining-up' of these previously distinct policy problems. Indeed, integrity is emerging in countries as a central platform for the development of new prescriptions and domestic state policies.

Reform agendas: two key institutional elements

Reform agendas are concerned with *the proposal or enactment of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of organisations* (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). As such, our theoretical approach is broadly institutionalist, conceptualising reforms as configurations of rules, organisational arrangements and structures of meaning (March and Olsen, 2006). Such an approach is a structural explanation of development/change that places institutions (and their configurations) as the central focus (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). In this light, the global integrity 'industry' described above can be conceived as an institution (consisting of conventions, reporting mechanisms, etc.), to explain the development of domestic integrity policy agendas. However, in relation to the domestic reforms themselves, our research interest lies in their institutional features such as their policy foundations, organisational architecture, or design 'logics' that together, might shape the relationship between state and non-state actors in the future (through subsequent rules, operating procedures, routines and norms). The significance of this approach thus lies with treating institutional reforms as past, present and future influences on future societal practices (North, 1990). Attention to these elements moreover, can explain how changes become layered, hardened or 'institutionalised' over time (Pierson, 2000).

There are two principal institutional features in studies of public sector reforms, comprising ideational and organisational elements (Dunleavy et al., 2006; Hood, 1991; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). With respect to the ideas/discourses underpinning reforms, this element refers to both constructed values as well as the goals the reforms are intended to address (Boston et al., 1996). Managerial *efficiency* and entrepreneurialism, for example, have been dominant ideas underpinning NPM in general and part of sport's professionalisation more particularly (Ruoranen et al., 2016). At the level of ideas, Hood (1995) and others also draw attention to doctrinal principles, referring to shared beliefs around for example, the benefits of specialisation or performance outputs (Saeki, 1994; Sam and Ronglan, 2018). If reforms influence organisational or governance practices over time, a notable question thus relates to the ideological coherence of the integrity movement. At its most basic, NPM suggested the adoption of private sector practices as an antidote to 'old' administration in general and the amateurish practices of sport organisations more particularly. However, within this larger movement, lay other more specific doctrines around the (self-interested) motivations of agents, and the primacy of citizen/customer choice. In a similar way, sport integrity contains a broad and

explicit ethical component but in regard to the reforms advanced by proponents and policy-makers, key doctrinal components appear to convey the appropriateness of *regulation* and *coordination* across multiple levels of sport (recreational, developmental and elite)(see Kihl, 2021).

A second institutional feature of reforms thus surrounds the organisational structures, policy instruments and procedures that constitute the basis of prescriptions. Under NPM for example, governments established quasi-markets and used competitive tendering throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as a way to increase efficiency. By extension, markets and contracts led to performance management regimes that have since become a key instrument/mechanism in changing the state's influence over sport governing bodies (Fahlén, 2017; Sam and Macris, 2014). In relation to sport integrity, new regimes appear to be forming, with an array of specific instruments that variously include ombudsmen, whistleblower mechanisms, helplines, reviews/audits and education programmes (De Waegeneer et al., 2016; Kihl, 2021; Verschuuren, 2020, 2021; Vertommen et al., 2015; Tak et al., 2018).

Taken together, reform agendas contain an identifiable set of 'ideas' as well as 'rules/measures' that are analytically distinguishable but inherently coupled together (Christensen and Lægreid, 2016). Institutional theory thus provides a coherent analytical basis for understanding how organisational models and systems are established, both at an ideational/doctrinal level and in relation to the rules/policies they advance (Reiter and Klenk, 2019). The importance of these doctrines and their associated policy measures, lies in the ways in which they gain acceptance across international and sectoral boundaries, as well as under what conditions they might find acceptance (or resistance). Furthermore, the study of institutional change helps to identify and understand how public problems come to be interpreted and constructed over time. In this way, it is worth examining the extent to which reforms are reactionary to the effects of previous reform waves. For example, NPM was meant to address the growth of bureaucracy (derided most often as 'red tape') and thus cast entrepreneurial management behaviours as preferable to traditional administration with its focus on due process (Kolthoff et al., 2006). An important consideration in the present study is thus whether the integrity reform agenda casts any critique of professionalisation and modernisation (as a perceived cause for integrity breaches). This in turn offers some insight into whether the legitimacy of 'old' practices might be waning.

Methods

To assess the institutional features of an emerging integrity agenda, we purposefully selected two countries for comparison and theory construction, based on the following rationale. As Commonwealth nations located in the South Pacific, the sport systems of Australia and New Zealand have been compared in previous works (Coakley et al., 2009; Kerr and Barker-Ruchti, 2015; Nicholson et al., 2011; Sam and Schoenberg, 2020). Despite substantial differences in size, population and constitutional divisions of power, NZ and Australia share a number of important elements in relation to their policies and systems around sport. In regards to our research question, we suggest that the following elements may allow for comparable case results (Yin, 2009). Firstly, sport in both Australia and New Zealand is predominantly 'federated' – that is, delivered through a system of linked volunteer-based clubs, regional associations and national

federations. Secondly, in terms of governmental responsibility, both countries have developed highly professionalised and bureaucratic delivery systems to meet their dual aims of sport-for-all and elite performance. Both countries have structurally separated organisations to attend to each aim, operating at arm's length but with accountability to their respective Ministries. Thirdly, while national sport organisations (NSOs) retain autonomy and independence from the state, the governments in both countries have demonstrated an increasing appetite for steering their activities (Hoye, 2003; Sam and Jackson, 2004). Indeed both central government agencies (Sport Australia and Sport NZ) have used targeted, performance-based funding to shape or otherwise 'rule' the operations of NSOs (Kerr and Barker-Ruchti, 2015). According to Sam and Schoenberg (2020: 73), a trend evident in both countries is that government agencies are becoming 'increasingly bold' in introducing reforms (such as diversity and gender equity initiatives) to alter the internal governance practices of sport organisation at national and sub-national levels. Equally important for this study, both government agencies have initiated sector-wide reforms towards integrity, via the use of taskforces, reviews and other 'soft tools' such as discussion papers and consultant reports. These are significant means of demonstrating government leadership and advancing organisational 'best practice' and both countries have utilised a mixture of internal and external policy advice to formulate their respective sport integrity frameworks (see below).

The primary data for the comparison comprises the independent reviews, government responses, policies and associated frameworks, programmes and initiatives surrounding integrity. This data relied on publicly available texts including the following:

- Cabinet Committee minutes
- Discussion documents and commissioned independent reports
- Online media (e.g., 'Play by Rules' online magazines, agency produced videos, press releases, etc.)
- Central agency statements of intent, plans and published initiatives/programmes

To organise and interpret the data, we relied on works examining 'waves' of public sector reform to ascertain the breaks and continuities between existing practices and those proposed under the integrity agenda. In line with our theoretical approach, we located the data against two broad categories that could help compare/contrast the reform movements of professionalisation and integrity: These categories were related to each reform movement and specifically:

1. its ideas and doctrinal principles
2. its instruments and reform measures

The subsequent analysis followed an iterative process (Gabrielian et al., 2007) through which data were explored backwards and forwards alongside the concepts described above. In this process, inductive categories were extracted from the case data and interpreted (Patton, 2002) alongside the extant literature surrounding professionalisation and integrity reviewed above. Subordinate categories thus appear in Table 1 as the specific

doctrines (e.g., coordination) and reform measures (e.g., grievance regimes) identified from the data and form the basis of the subsequent discussion. However before interpreting and discussing the reforms, the next section traces the origins and development of each country's sport integrity policies and programmes.

Integrity reforms in Australia and New Zealand

Australia

In 2017, the Australian Government commissioned a review of the country's sports integrity arrangements, as part of its development of a wider National Sport Plan. The *Report of the Review of Australia's Sports Integrity Arrangements* (2018), now known as the 'Wood report' (after its chairperson), offered a detailed analysis of integrity threats and the existing institutional arrangements surrounding those issues (Wood et al., 2018). The Panel outlined the broad scope of activities under an 'integrity' framework, ranging from those deemed to be both criminal (e.g., match-fixing, sexual abuse) as well as ethical (e.g., supplement use in youth sport). Among its numerous recommendations, it endorsed the establishment of a **National Sports Integrity Commission (NSIC)** with the aim of developing a 'coordinated response to current and future threats across the entire sports integrity continuum' (Wood et al., 2018: 10).

While the Panel adopted a broad definition of 'sports integrity', its main area of focus was on the criminal spectrum of corruption, particularly match-fixing/illegal wagering and doping. The principal rationales for this emphasis were financial and reputational (e.g., a loss in public trust, with its accompanying negative outcomes for sport). Despite the focus on match-fixing and doping, the Panel's prescience was notable insofar as it identified the need for structural arrangements to attend to 'new and emerging issues' including the 'protection of children, health and safety, harassment, discrimination, abuse, etc.' (Wood et al., 2018: 184). The Panel suggested that a new agency – the NSIC – would 'address further policy development in this area' (54).

In early 2019, the Government issued a response to the Wood report, entitled 'Safeguarding the Integrity of Sport' (Department of Health, 2019). Its view of integrity centred on the reputational damage potentially brought upon a 'public loss of confidence' that could undermine the government's significant investment (Department of Health, 2019: 4). As a basis for its response, the Government highlighted the 'immense commercialisation of sport' (Department of Health, 2019: 4) and its complexity as key catalysts for reforms. It stated:

> Sports integrity matters are now beyond the control of any single stakeholder. They are complex, globalised and connected, forming a complicated threat matrix exposing vulnerabilities that require a robust and nationally-coordinated response across sports, governments, regulators, the wagering industry, law enforcement and other stakeholders (4).

The Government thus supported the Wood review's recommendation to develop a 'comprehensive, effective and nationally coordinated response' via the amalgamation of work performed by the National Integrity of Sport Unit (NISU), the Australian Sports Anti-doping Authority (ASADA) and Australian Sport Commission (ASC). In

2019, the Government appointed a *Sports Integrity Taskforce* to further consult with stakeholders towards advancing the proposed reforms. From there, the government agreed to pilot a new **National Sports Tribunal** to consolidate hearings around anti-doping and member protection issues. Also in that period, the federal government signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sport Competitions (known as the Macolin Convention). By 2020, the federal government's response and subsequent consultations culminated in the establishment of a new body: ***Sport Integrity Australia*** (SIA), a non-corporate Commonwealth entity operating under the *Sport Integrity Act 2020*.

Sport Integrity Australia was launched 1st July 2020. The agency claimed that its establishment heralds a 'new era' for sports integrity in Australia (Sport Integrity Australia, 2020). Its goals are to achieve fair and positive sporting outcomes, positive conduct by coaches, officials, supporters, administrators, as well as ensuring a safe fair and inclusive environment at all levels. To this end, SIA has introduced the ***National Sport Integrity Framework***, to address prohibited conduct in relation to child safeguarding, member protection, competition manipulation and doping/illicit drug use. At its release, the framework was presented as a 'fully independent' strategy designed to 'deal with issues of abuse, intimidation and other safeguarding issues in Australian sport' (Commonwealth Games Australia, 2021). While the NIF remains in its infancy, SIA recognises its daunting task, stating throughout its documents that it has a 'broad remit' and will be combatting a 'broad range of integrity threats' (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021a: 12).

One of the main purposes of the framework is to streamline measures to mitigate integrity threats and 'ease the administrative burden on sports' (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021c). This is rendered possible if an NSO adopts the NIF 'in its entirety' insofar as a sport is relieved of its responsibility to manage complaints, disputes and disciplinary processes (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021c). However, the NIF still requires NSOs to appoint an Integrity Unit or Integrity Manager, as well as a Complaints Manager. Perhaps contradicting the framework's claim of 'easing of administrative burden', is the expectation that NSOs will 'work with their State/Territory bodies to ensure the policy flows down to the community level' (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021c). The framework also prescribes:

> requirements and responsibilities of the National Sporting Organisation in relation to binding members, volunteers and contractors to the framework, the recruitment of employees, contractors and volunteers, education and promotion of the framework, and reporting policy breaches to Sport Integrity Australia and other agencies (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021b).

To promote this sector wide approach, Sports Integrity Australia launched a series of podcasts to raise awareness of its mandate and the breadth of issues facing the sector. Also related to its mandate, SIA has committed to developing resources and education (such as online learning modules and webinars) to help sport organisations implement the National Integrity Framework.

To summarise, Australia has taken up the sport integrity agenda in earnest since 2018. With each policy iteration, it appears that the imperative to safeguard members is growing and becoming institutionalised, while still emphasising doping and match-fixing as key concerns. Indeed, cultural change towards wellbeing and welfare, are understood to be

as important as performance and efficiency within the sector (see Sport Integrity Australia, 2021d). The main structural reforms in this case surround aspects of coordination: (1) the consolidation of the ASDA and Sport Australia's National Integrity Unit, into a new agency: *Sport Integrity Australia*, (2) the creation of a *disputes tribunal* and, (3) the establishment of a *National Integrity Framework*.

New Zealand

According to NZ sports journalists, 2018 was the 'year of the review', owing to a number of high-profile NSOs launching investigations into bullying and inappropriate conduct within their respective elite programmes (Cleaver, 2018; Dawbin et al., 2021; Johannsen, 2018). On the heels of these reports, Sport New Zealand (SNZ) commissioned its own independent investigation into the subject of elite athletes' rights and welfare (Cottrell, 2018).

Also in that year, SNZ and the Minister of Sport and Recreation released a discussion document (the *Sport Integrity Review*) with the aim of soliciting submissions on the nation's sport integrity arrangements (Sport New Zealand, 2018). While it defined a similar brief as Australia's Wood review (i.e., a stocktake of issues and institutional arrangements), the NZ version was central agency-led and focused considerably more attention on issues *outside* doping, corruption and match-fixing. Reflecting the NSO investigations above and citing the highly-publicised abuse scandal in USA Gymnastics, Sport NZ emphasised the importance of member protection and child safeguarding (against bullying, harassment, abuse, unsafe practices), as well as athlete rights and welfare. Sport NZ acknowledged that some fundamental organisational elements of the sport sector (such as its hierarchical nature and traditional autonomy from state regulation) rendered it vulnerable to integrity breaches. Further, the report devoted much discussion to sport's culture, pointing to instances of abuse and harassment with respect to coaching practices, side-line behaviour and the interplay between social media and sport organisations.

At the conclusion of its consultation period, the agency published 22 recommendations, many of these appearing as future-focused, stating the need to further 'investigate', 'explore', 'evaluate' or 'consider' options. In this regard, Sport NZ noted that recommendations needed to be further 'prioritised, costed and phased for successful implementation' (Sport New Zealand, 2019). Characterising the impetus for further investigations, Sport NZ commissioned a separate report to examine the feasibility of a *Complaints Management and Dispute Resolution System* (CMDRS), a mediation service that had been recommended in an earlier review (Muir and Rooney, 2020). Sport NZ instructed the commissioned law firm's investigators to *not* address issues of match-fixing, doping and corruption, and to *not* propose a stand-alone entity, requiring legislative change. On the heels of these investigations, Sport NZ established an independent *Play, Active Recreation and Sport Integrity Working Group*, consisting of lawyers, sports administrators, former athletes and the board chairs of various organisations. In contrast to the CMDRS analysis, the working group's main mandate was to consider the creation of new organisational structures including a 'Sport Integrity Unit' and Ombudsman for sport.

Based on its consultations, Sport NZ determined that, 'there is demand for the government to be more active in monitoring the sector/providing oversight' (Sport New Zealand, 2019: 14). However, in its recommendations, the agency refrained from advancing the need for a dedicated 'sport integrity agency', noting that some functions (such as doping control) would be best handled through existing arrangements (Sport New Zealand, 2019: 20). Sport NZ has subsequently adopted the role of 'guardian' (*kaitiaki*) to lead reforms. It established its own ***Integrity Framework (IF)***, to 'guide work aimed at safeguarding and regulating the play, active recreation and sport system and promoting confidence and trust in the system at all levels' (Sport New Zealand, 2021b).

The IF is split into two core elements. The first – 'safeguarding' – focuses on four areas: organisational culture, member safeguarding, child safeguarding, and anti-discrimination. The second element – 'regulatory' – deals with anti-doping, match-fixing and anti-corruption. The Framework's main interventions 'across the system' are further divided into three substantive initiatives. The first initiative comprises the provision of ready-made policies and procedures for organisations to adopt and adapt as needed. Policy templates thus cover areas such as the 'transportation of children', the establishment of safeguarding 'representatives', the assessment of organisational 'risk' as well as policies related to team selection, intimate relationships and bullying/harassment. The materials on offer are extensive, with 11 policies under 'child safeguarding' and a further 21 policies under 'member protection' (Sport New Zealand, 2021a).

A second initiative under the IF is with respect to education and training. To this end, Sport NZ's Integrity Framework offers e-learning modules on topics covering match-fixing, discrimination and child protection. These modules are intended to help individuals 'identify areas of risk for children and young people, participants and members' and learn how to 'safeguard' them in their organisation's activities and events. Comprising the IF's third initiative, Sport NZ established the *Sport and Recreation Complaints and Mediation Service* (SRCMS), to enable anyone to lodge a complaint, issue or dispute. Of note, the service has been outsourced to a private sector provider -*Immediation New Zealand Ltd* – an online dispute resolution company, chaired by a lawyer and investigator of a prominent review into NZ Cycling integrity.

In sum, Sport NZ's integrity initiatives have followed a broadly similar, but distinguishable direction, beginning with a scoping review and culminating in a policy framework and new mechanism for disputes. Notably, and likely owing to the independent reviews in hockey, cycling and football, Sport NZ articulated a more explicit role with regards to non-criminal integrity risks (such as bullying and harassment). Since 2018, the 'safeguarding' elements of the integrity agenda have continued apace. In 2021, HPSNZ drafted a 2024 'Wellbeing Strategy' and commissioned an independent audit to address athlete wellbeing issues (Mackinnon, 2021). However, in keeping this broadening mandate 'in-house' and without the authority of a separate, independent entity, it remains to be seen whether Sport NZ's subsequent reforms of the sector will follow a substantially different path to Australia's. We comparatively analyse and discuss the doctrinal and structural components of integrity reforms below.

Analysis and discussion

Ideational elements: coordination and regulation

New reform agendas are typically associated with antagonism around the existing paradigm (Hood, 2005). In sport, the professionalisation reforms of the 1980s and 90s relied in part on a story of 'amateurish' NSOs/NGBs struggling to produce medals and/or gains in participation (Houlihan and Green, 2006; Slack et al., 1994). The primacy of efficient, business-like organisation (as against the 'amateur/traditional' administration), could thus be justified on the basis that sport organisations should be accountable for performance in these areas (Hoye, 2003; Shilbury and Ferkins, 2011).

The integrity agenda is much less clear in regard to its critique of past policies and institutional practices. While in NZ, the Cottrell Report (2018) and other independent reviews linked integrity risks with elite sport development systems (Sam and Dawbin, 2021), such specific criticisms are absent in the Australian context. Likewise while Sport NZ suggested sport's 'organisational culture' as both a cause for, and solution to integrity problems, no such observations appear in Australian documents. This may suggest that in Australia, integrity issues are simply *not* understood to be related to sport's professionalisation, akin to the way corruption in developing nations is seldom associated with market liberalisation (Head et al., 2008). More cynically perhaps, this may reflect the Australian federal government's reticence to lay criticism on the professionalised system it helped establish (see Hoye, 2003; Stewart et al., 2004).

This point notwithstanding, there are at least two identifiable differences between the ideational elements of professionalisation and the emerging integrity agenda. While the former was principally a remedy for *day-to-day* 'kitchen-table' administration, the integrity agenda is focused on future risk and *incidents* occurring at the periphery of managerial reach (Tak et al., 2021). Like match-fixing, the issues of bullying, harassment and intimidation have, until now, resided outside the contemporary purview of managerial functions (i.e., strategic planning, financial control, programme design, evaluation and budgeting). Indeed where risk management has featured under NPM/professionalisation, it has remained squarely tied to performance objectives and related aspects (such as clear contracting practices, financial controls, etc.). The emerging integrity agenda is less oriented towards risk around results accountability and efficiency (e.g., organisational growth, performance), but instead tied to risk across virtually all activities and processes (e.g., team selection, fan behaviour). This differentiation is muddied by 'good governance' principles that are also concerned with processes, however these are still with regards to internal administration: transparency/democracy in decision-making and prudence/accountability in financial management (King, 2016; van Bottenburg, 2021). Thus where the problems under integrity are behavioural risks to be prevented rather than political-administrative deficits to overcome, we can suggest that the integrity agenda has a substantially different institutional 'logic' (cf. Stenling, 2014; Tak et al., 2021).

Another distinguishing doctrinal component of the integrity agenda surrounds the explicit acceptance of a more **coordinated** and **regulated** sport environment for all. Coordination in this way refers not only to alignment within elite, sub-elite and

community sport, but also to sport at (inter)national, state/territory, regional and local levels. Certainly, the aim to coordinate the sector is not new, as sport agencies have previously promoted integrative 'pathways' to align the development activities of schools, clubs, regional and national organisations (Stewart et al., 2004). However, in that instance, different sport codes have been encouraged to design their own coordinating mechanisms more or less autonomously (albeit for competitive advantage in regards to funding and on-field performances). Coordination in the integrity agenda by contrast, is explicitly for the purposes of **central regulation and control** – i.e., for 'prevention, monitoring and detection, investigation and enforcement' (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021a). Both the Australian and New Zealand cases demonstrate that the values (around welfare or safeguarding) should be adopted and acted **upon across all levels of sport**.

Thus characterising NPM and the integrity movement are ideas concerning the role of the government in civil society organisations. Sport organisations have long been advised by central agencies (and their private sector consultants) to be customer-focused, stakeholder oriented and responsive to market signals (Sam, 2009). This advice was, in the shorthand of NPM/professionalisation, aimed at enabling managers to be more entrepreneurial and strategic, though certainly these principles came with prescriptions of best practice (Corkery and Schoenberg, 2021). **In a similar way, the contemporary integrity agenda evokes a responsiveness to standardised, state-prescribed protocols and practices**. However, in both countries, the integrity frameworks arguably suggest a more direct government role in the conduct of sport organisations across national-local boundaries. While such government involvement can be interpreted as a continuation (or layering) of NPM/professionalisation (see for example, Verschuuren, 2020), the explicit intervention of central authorities into sub-national and local sport is viewed, under the integrity reform movement, as both necessary and legitimate. Significantly, national sport organisations appear supportive of this renewed state involvement into their activities as well as into those of their state/regional and club affiliates. In short, while professionalisation has long affected the autonomy of national-level organisations, the integrity agenda further legitimises the central agencies as the guardians and regulators of sport at all levels.

Structural components: instruments and reform measures

Reform waves are all normative and prescriptive; they advance a particular set of values (e.g., efficiency/effectiveness for NPM and ethics/appropriateness for integrity). Yet they also advance a particular set of techniques, couched in terms like 'best practice' (Gow and Dufour, 2000).

Given the appropriateness of *regulation* as a guiding principle behind integrity reforms, it is perhaps not surprising that the associated tools should be different from those under professionalisation. Unlike the latter's predilection for incentives, targets and rankings, all ultimately aimed at generating *competition* (cf. Dunleavy et al., 2006; Sam and Macris, 2014), integrity reforms are aimed at harmonisation and joined-up governance (cf. Misra et al., 2013). To this end, the deployment of **sector-wide policies** (including Australia's *National Sport Integrity Framework* and NZ's *Integrity*

Table 1. Ideational principles and reform measures under professionalisation and integrity

	Professionalisation, modernisation (NPM)	Integrity Governance (IG) in Australia/ New Zealand
Origins	• Principally a response to amateurism, 'kitchen-table' management *within* organisations) - E.g., lack of strategic planning, low levels of board expertise & specialisation	• Principally a response to incidents and future risk, but also to dysfunction at the periphery of 'front office' management. - Doping - Corruption, match-fixing - Coach bullying, abuse - Team culture change
Ideas and principles	• Performance and efficiency; • Primacy of outputs; • Business ethos	• Risk and appropriate conduct • Primacy of inputs and ethical process • Welfare and wellbeing
Basis of relations	• Investment and exchange • Market competition • Entrepreneurialism	• Guardianship • State regulation and coordination • Standardisation
Instruments and reform measures	• Human resource management regimes - Hiring full-time employees - Appointing independent board members with professional skillsets - Training and education programmes • Performance regimes - Markets - Contracts - Incentives • Training and education programmes • Promotion of 'good governance' via performance indicators, benchmarking, certifications, audits	• Policy regimes - Taskforces, independent reviews and inquiries - Legislation - National Integrity Frameworks - New independent agencies (e.g., Sport Integrity Australia) • Human resource management - Appointment of integrity managers/officers • Detection/Grievance regimes - Ombudsmen - Whistle-blowing mechanisms (e.g., telephone 'hotlines') - Mediation services • Training and Education programmes • Promotion of 'good integrity governance' via benchmarking, certifications and audits?

Framework) are explicitly intended to standardise and coordinate the conduct of organisations across the system. Likewise, the establishment of a new **coordinating body** (like *Sport Integrity Australia*) is expected since it is designed to provide stability and predictability in integrity services and advice across different states (e.g., Victoria, NSW). New Zealand's deliberate rejection of an independent, legislated entity like Australia's may thus be a function of the former's size and unitary system of government and not a rejection of a coordinated mechanisms per se.

What is evident across both countries, is the development of additional grievance detection mechanisms in the form of a disputes tribunal in Australia and a new

stand-alone mediation service in New Zealand (an independent sports tribunal exists there already). These structures closely reflect the judicial remedies within international sport such as the *Court of Arbitration of Sport* (CAS) and emphasise the importance of legal expertise over management *per se*. Certainly legal expertise had been valued prior to these reforms (e.g., via board member selections), but until recently, this has not been formally supplemented with institutionalised requirements for sport organisations to appoint integrity managers/officers. Insofar as NSOs are responsible for embedding the new integrity framework within their own networks, we might expect a further institutionalisation of these roles into regional and local/club levels. Importantly, this potentially marks an emerging influence of new actors, akin to the influence of marketing staff brought about by making sport more business-like (Thibault et al., 1991).

Where there is similarity between the professionalisation agenda and integrity reform, it is in the education programmes that seek to promote homogeneity and 'best practice' within organisations (cf. Sam and Schoenberg, 2020). There are early signs that the integrity policy frameworks of both countries will initiate a steady stream of consultant-led workshops, resulting in checklists of '*do's and don'ts*', similar to those programmes offering advice on managerial and organisational effectiveness (Seippel, 2019; Tacon and Walters, 2021). Training modules are currently available in New Zealand for club administrators, and this is expected to be followed by specific integrity training for coaches and team managers. Furthermore, there are early indications that these programmes will align with tools of certification, used as funding levers by the central bodies to induce sport organisations to adopt standardised procedures and protocols.

Significantly, Sports Integrity Australia eschewed performance measures and targets as an evaluative mechanism for *itself* for over the next three years. Instead, it suggests the importance of latitude in 'an ever-changing operating environment':

> In removing performance measure targets, we are seeking to mitigate the risk of narrow or uninformed targets adversely impacting reporting of the broader performance of the agency and the insightful performance story to be told.

Nevertheless, and within the same corporate plan, SIA outlines its performance measurement processes for the future, firmly suggesting that it will be compelled to engage in target setting and output measurement in its next phase of operations (Sport Integrity Australia, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d). Thus, what seems almost certain is that in establishing new measures for the rest of the sector (information campaigns, training seminars, and codes of conduct), new monitoring and reporting mechanisms will follow. In this regard, there is the potential for the integrity agenda to coalesce around the systems of performance management characterising the previous professionalisation/NPM paradigm.

Concluding remarks: 'New brooms rarely sweep clean'

This paper has attempted to conceptualise sport integrity as an emerging reform agenda in the domestic policies of Australia and New Zealand. Whereas previous governmental concerns for sport organisations surrounded financial sustainability, efficiency and performance outputs, there is an increasing concern for safeguarding sport against an expanding

list of ills. Indeed if any generalisation is possible, one could argue that the last 30 years have been about legitimising sport (to commercial sponsors and government Ministries) with the more recent trend towards protecting sport from market forces (and itself).

The demarcation between NPM/professionalisation and integrity governance is evident but not clear-cut. In terms of doctrinal principles, professionalisation's concern for organisations' managerial performance is distinguished by the integrity agenda's interest in welfare and appropriate conduct *everywhere* in sport (in all activities and at all levels). In terms of design, the integrity agenda favours more direct regulation, and a possible brake on autonomous, 'entrepreneurial' management. However when it comes to public sector reforms, 'new brooms hardly ever sweep entirely clean' (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011: 12). New developments 'accrete and accumulate while older strands are still playing out and apparently flourishing' (Dunleavy et al., 2006: 468). As such there remains some continuity, particularly as it relates to the tendency for integrity reforms to legitimise centralised (government) control. On this count, if one of the premises behind IG is the perceived threat of 'reputational damage' and stakeholder satisfaction (cf. Verschuuren, 2021; Wood et al., 2018) the integrity agenda may very well become colonised with 'risk managers' as well as integrity officers.

Our answer to the question of whether integrity marks a coherent reform agenda is thus necessarily incomplete. 'Fundamental change' as Streeck and Thelen (2005: 18) suggest, only 'ensues when a multitude of actors switch from one logic of action to another'. Can we anticipate integrity governance to play a pivotal role in reform initiatives in the same way NPM/professionalisation has? Given the 'newness' of integrity governance in domestic sport policy, more research is needed to trace its evolution and development, particularly in regards to the new programmes, protocols and practices it will elicit. As with previous reform agendas, the intended goals are beyond debate, particularly in the context of the near-hegemonic views around appropriate conduct, wellbeing, mental health, and safety. Yet regardless of their virtue, 'the devil is in the detail'. The view that reforms will *only* induce the positive outcomes they are designed for, may well reflect the 'triumph of hope over experience'. Just as researchers have now gathered a robust evidence base for the unintended consequences of NPM/professionalisation, we should not shy from robust analysis of this recent layer of reforms.

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