

INTEGRITY AND THE CORRUPTION DEBATE IN SPORT: WHERE IS THE INTEGRITY?

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All authors:

Simon Gardiner, Jim Parry, Simon Robinson

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Abstract:

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AIM OF PAPER

A series of high profile cases focused on extreme forms of gamesmanship, doping or financial impropriety, have recently reignited the debate about integrity in sport, not least in cricket, football, tennis and cycling. This paper argues that there are different views of integrity at play, focusing on sport itself but also on the governance of sport, in the debate. It argues for a development of the concept of integrity, such that the many different stakeholders involved in the management of sport can develop more effective dialogue, engaging both the concept and practice of integrity and effective regulation.

THE ENFORCEMENT OF INTEGRITY

The first part of the paper will examine the ways in which integrity has been approached in recent years. In recent years major International Sports Federations have developed monitoring and compliance bodies, such as the Tennis Integrity Unit or UEFA's 'Early Warning System' managed by the commercial company Sportradar; industry trade bodies have emerged such as the European Sports Security Association (ESSA); new bodies such as the Qatari state-funded, International Centre for Sports Security; NGOs such as 'Play the Game' and Transparency International; law enforcement agencies such as Interpol; governmental bodies such as the Council of Europe and the UK's Sports Betting Integrity Unit of the Gambling Commission. These bodies comprise what can be termed the 'sports integrity industry'.

A brief examination will be made of what views of integrity are expressed in

these different approaches to regulation and monitoring; how this relates to the different stakeholders in sport and their different descriptions of their responsibilities; how the core value narratives are engaged.

CONCEPTUAL CLARITY

The second part of the paper will clear the conceptual ground, examining the different philosophical and psychological views of integrity. Different actors within and without the sports industry use the term 'integrity of sport' in different ways. Sometimes it means simply 'honesty', and sometimes it is used as a catch-all phrase for an amalgam of a range of sports-related values including unpredictability of outcome and a level playing field. Further, distinctions can be made between forms of personal, sporting, organisational and commercial integrity.

This analysis will primarily focus on organisational integrity. It will initially distinguish moral and behavioural integrity. The first of these will focus on integrity as: congruence of moral purpose and practice; the focus of moral identity; a single virtue or collection of virtues. It will argue that all three play some part in an understanding of moral integrity, but that the concept needs to be developed in the light of the complex social environment exemplified in the governance of sport. This requires greater attention: to underlying meaning and worth; to critical and transparent dialogue as a key aspect of integrity; to the relationship of responsibility to integrity- including agency, accountability, and liability; and inter-organizational integrity and governance. The paper will argue that these form part of the integrative nature of integrity.

Behavioural integrity has in the recent literature on management and leadership tried to distinguish itself from moral integrity, focusing on consistency rather than value, and the role this has in creating trust. The paper will critique this view, arguing against a value neutral concept. It will argue rather that moral and psychological values are key to relationships inside and outside the organisation, and that dialogical identity which addresses these is more important for their development.

A NEW VIEW OF SPORTING INTEGRITY

The 'integrity industry' in sport reveals: different narratives about integrity amongst the different groups; a lack of integration between the different views of integrity in sport; and the danger of imposing a corporate model of (behavioural-based) integrity. The paper argues that as far as effective engagement with corruption, sport needs to look beyond its own experience and be conscious of the wider debate concerning integrity and governance.

References: