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# CONSIDERING AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR COLLABORATIVE SPORT GOVERNANCE TO GUIDE FUTURE RESREACH

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## Abstract

AIM

The purpose of this paper is to conceptually examine the utility of Emerson, Nabatchi, and Balogh's (2012) collaborative governance regime (CGR) in relation to sport governance. Specifically, this paper examines the potential for the application of collaborative governance to sport organisations and it identifies future research initiatives in this domain.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In recent years an emphasis on improved governance has been supported by scholars investigating sport governance (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Hoye & Doherty, 2011). This empirical work has highlighted the challenge of governance structures across multiple organisations in, for example, a federal sport structure (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010). Few solutions have, as yet, been offered to address the vexed issue of how separate legal entities in the same sport might work together in terms of effective and cohesive governance. Moreover, few scholars have directed their empirical or theoretical attention to role of collaborative governance in sport organisations, and in particular to those sport organisations that exist within a federal structure.

Ansell and Gash (2008) define collaborative governance as a "governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets" (p. 544). Collaborative governance theory has its origins in public administration and the need for government to work with multiple stakeholders to deliver major projects and services to communities (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

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Although grounded in public administration, collaborative governance has wider application beyond this sphere. Application of collaborative governance holds some promise for national and regional sport organisations embedded in a federal system, where each association is a separate legal entity, yet collectively the regional associations form the national governing body.

#### FRAMEWORK

Emerson et al.'s (2012) development of the CGR was the result of an attempt to “develop a useful framework for collaborative governance with which to better understand, develop, and test theory, as well as improve practice...” (p. 4). The framework consists of three nested boxes or dimensions including the system context, collaborative governance regime and collaboration dynamics. Each nested box represents a series of influences or processes important to governance.

The system context (outermost box) represents the surrounding systems as they relate to the political, legal, socioeconomic and other environmental influences. This box depicts the enablers and constraints influencing a national sport organisation (NSO). The second nested box is labelled collaborative governance regimes and is central to the model. Within this box is a third nested box entitled collaborative dynamics and contains three interrelated components: principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action. These three interactive components are used to map the collaborative actions required to implement shared purpose through collaborative governance.

#### IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the CGR and its utility in respect of NSOs embedded in federal structures will be examined. For example, the system context allows for a review of the environmental conditions in which an NSO exists. Such a review would include NSO government relations in terms of policy and funding, profile, economic characteristics and resourcing. However, specific starting conditions which enable or constrain collaboration according to Emerson et al., are measured through an assessment of leadership, consequential incentives and interdependence. An NSO, for instance, requires the presence of an individual in a position to initiate and secure collaboration. In a federal model, as reported by Shilbury, Ferkins, and Smythe (2013), this is not so easy to achieve. This extends to the incentives for collaboration and the degree to which member associations view the need to work together to achieve broader goals they cannot achieve on their own.

It is self-evident, that NSOs and member associations of the same sport need to share the same goal in respect of developing the sport. What appears as self-evident, is not easily achieved by many sports, and consequently, the CGR proposed by Emerson et al. has the potential to guide a deeper analysis for why and how a sport could institute

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collaborative governance arrangements, and as a consequence develop a coherent and untied strategic vision across a sport. NSO board leadership, is in particular, important in shaping governance behaviour of member associations and will be examined more deeply.

This presentation will review the elements of this model, analyse the implications for sport governance as it relates to NSOs grounded in a federal model of governance, as well as consider future research themes to emerge from this analysis, such as the role of collective board leadership

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