Governance in Sport: A Scoping Review

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Introduction
Governance in sport has become of central concern to sport management academics and practitioners in recent years evident from the number of keynotes (e.g., Shilbury, 2015), special issues (e.g., Dolles & Söderman, 2011), workshops (e.g., Chappelet, Pielke, & Taylor, 2012), and books (e.g., Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; King, 2016) dedicated to examining sport governance issues. This interest has emerged, in part, from broader societal concerns surrounding governance (e.g., Enron scandal and the global economic crisis) but also more specific, recent high profile failures within the context of sport (e.g., FIFA and Russian Doping scandal). Yet despite governance being recognized as a “paradigm-generating concept” (Bellamy & Palumbo, 2010, p. xii) that “has spawned a veritable cottage industry of its own” (Grix & Phillpots, 2011, p. 6), there has been no systematic attempt to capture the extent of this burgeoning literature base. Furthermore, definitional ambiguities surrounding the notion of governance remain, perhaps to the extent that the concept continues to be “analytically tired” (Bevir, 2012, p. 2) and “has too many meanings to be useful” (Rhodes, 1997, p. 15). These broader definitional ambiguities, we argue, are now reflected in the sport management literature with the concept of governance employed to discuss a plethora of sport management related issues.

Objectives
This investigation therefore seeks to ‘take stock’ of the progress of sport governance research to date and seeks further clarity surrounding the ways in which the notion of governance has been deployed in sport by answering the following research question: what is known from the existing literature about sport governance? More specifically, this scoping review had a threefold aim: to identify what is known about governance in sport; to map out the sport governance literature (i.e., how is the concept used in the literature); and to identify potential future directions of sport governance research.

Methods and Analysis
The study adopted a scoping review methodological approach to encapsulate the breadth of sport governance scholarship. Scoping reviews are a way of rapidly synthesizing knowledge in a given area, especially when that area is emergent and complex (Arskey & O’Malley, 2005). In addition, scoping reviews are increasingly popular in other domains such as medicine and health, but so far remain uncommon and underutilized within the sport management literature. The purpose of a scoping review is to examine the extent and range of research (i.e. breadth) in an area, determine the value of further systematic reviews, to summarize and disseminate research findings, and to identify research gaps in the existing literature (Arskey & O’Malley, 2005). Therefore, in contrast to a systematic review, scoping reviews do not claim to be exhaustive, nor do they make an assessment of research quality per se. Rather, they attempt to provide extensive (rather than intensive) coverage of a select topic area. In this manner, scoping reviews seek to ‘map the landscape’ of a research area in order to summarize research and convey the breadth of a field (Levac, Colquhoun, & O’Brien, 2010).

This study adopted Arskey and O’Malley’s (2005) scoping review methodological approach by proceeding through the following stages: identification of research question; identifying relevant studies; study selection; charting the data; collating, summarizing and reporting the results. In order to ensure comprehensive coverage of the sport governance literature, and consistent with Arskey and O’Malley’s (2005) approach, studies were identified through four sources: electronic databases (SPORTDiscus, Scopus, Web of Science and Science Direct). Search criteria were established and included (i) any study investigating sport governance (ii) peer-reviewed journal articles (in press articles were also included) and (iii) published in English language. All searches took place in October 2016 and used the search terms “sport” AND “Governance”. Two databases (SPORTDiscus and Web of Science) were searched using [All-Fields] parameters and two databases (SCOPUS and Science Direct) using [Title-Abstract-Keyw
refinement of the latter two databases was deemed necessary, in part, due to the differences in search processes but it also ensured greater accuracy of sport governance related articles.

The initial search process yielded [1155] journal articles. Identified journal articles are now in the process of being screened for duplicates and to ensure their relevance/appropriateness to sport governance. A second screening process will involve both researchers reading the abstract and discussing their relevance to sport governance. The final phase will include a manual search of all journal article reference lists and the three major sport management journals (Journal of Sport Management, Sport Management Review, and European Sport Management Quarterly) in addition to the International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics due to its relevance to sport governance. This manual hand-searching process will ensure that no articles have been missed from the electronic database search process and that article saturation had been reached.

Results and Discussion
More detailed findings of the scoping review of the sport governance literature will be reported at the conference and will include the publication frequency and source of sport governance studies (1980-2016), type of sport governance (based on Henry and Lee’s (2004) distinctions), and key sport governance-based themes. From the preliminary analysis, it was possible to note that research into sport governance related topics is quickly gaining traction within and beyond the field of sport management. More specifically, several overarching sport governance-based themes emerged from the early data analysis. These included research focusing on conceptual discussions (e.g., definitions, ‘good governance’), managerial issues (e.g., sport events, legacy, legal), jurisdictional governance (e.g., local governance and multi-level governance), social issues (e.g., doping, match-fixing), and partnerships and collaborative governance.

Conclusion
As the governance debate continues (Bevir & Rhodes, 2015; Grix, 2010) and issues of governance remain of central concern to academics and practitioners, it is important that we seek further clarity, order, and precision in regards to how the concept of sport governance is deployed. The presentation will conclude by offering general commentary on a number of potential future directions of research within the sport governance domain.