Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005

A thesis presented for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Business and Administration

at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

David J. Harris
2008
A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005
Abstract

Why do carefully considered and reasoned decisions in organisational settings so often produce unintended and sub-optimal outcomes? This is an on-going and vexing question for those charged with the governance of organisations. This research focuses on one potential contributory factor – the institutionalised logics of a particular field. Taking an historical perspective, the research examines the nature of taken-for-granted ideas and understandings that might be seen to have existed amongst the communities involved in New Zealand rugby in 1985 and 2005. It is proposed that these taken-for-granted ideas and understandings might have an impact upon the success, or failure, of initiatives and decisions made by those charged with the governance of the game.

Utilising ideas emerging from institutional theory (Freidland & Alford, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Oliver, 1992; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999), and following the work of Phillips, Lawrence and Hardy (2004), these ideas and understandings are offered, conceptually, as institutionalised logics, simultaneously facilitating and constraining action in the field. Given that these understandings might be inchoate and hidden, an interpretive model of discourse analysis is employed to examine their nature. The data comes from texts created in 1985 and 2005, and from 32 in-depth interviews that were used to develop an insider’s interpretation of the context.

The analysis uses data from the interviews and the texts to build an interpretation of the nature of twenty such logics that might be seen to have existed in the chosen years. The results are presented as discrete understandings, explained in the context of the environment at the time. Examples of the institutionalised logics uncovered include, ‘The clubs are history’, ‘Central control is the way to go!’ and ‘The coach is king’. The research presents an interpretation of evolving institutionalised logics which might impact on the way decisions of the New Zealand Rugby Union are interpreted by the communities affected. The discussion highlights the implications that these understandings might have for decisions made about the game in New Zealand.

It is argued that these taken-for-granted ideas and understandings, and their changing and contradictory nature, should be explicitly considered by those charged with governance of New Zealand rugby. An analysis of the institutionalised logics might contribute towards improved organisational performance, by providing another piece in the puzzle of governance.
A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005
A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my thanks to my supervisors Dr. James Lockhart and Dr. Sarah Leberman, for providing just the ‘right’ amount of support and encouragement throughout this process. They have allowed me the freedom to experiment whilst at the same time bringing me back to the rigours of doctoral study in a kind and patient manner. The quality of the research is considerably enhanced by their contribution.

I would also to thank my wife, Lesley, and the kids, Jenny, Mattea and rugby-mad Robert for putting up with a rather grumpy dad, who might have seemed a little preoccupied at times.

I would like to acknowledge Greg McGee who provided the inspiration, through his 1981 play script Foreskin’s Lament, to view the environment of New Zealand rugby through an unconventional lens.

And finally I would like to thank all those who generously gave their time to contribute to this research. These are your words. I hope I have reflected them adequately.
A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005
Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. v
List of figures ............................................................................................................................ ix
List of tables ............................................................................................................................... ix
List of abbreviations .................................................................................................................. x

Chapter One: Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1
  1.1. The inspiration behind the research .............................................................................. 1
  1.2. The research question and report outline .................................................................... 10
  1.3. Context .......................................................................................................................... 14
  1.4. Contributions of the research ..................................................................................... 35

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework .................................................................................... 37
  2.1. Institutionalisation: The language to view the problem area ...................................... 37
  2.1.1. Philosophy ............................................................................................................... 37
  2.1.2. Institutionalisation and institutional logics ............................................................... 39
  2.1.3. Institutional theory: History .................................................................................... 42
  2.1.4. Institutional theory: A link to performance .............................................................. 47
  2.1.5. Institutionalisation: Conclusions ............................................................................. 49
  2.2. Governance: The broad problem area ......................................................................... 50
  2.2.1. What is governance? ............................................................................................... 51
  2.2.2. Those charged with governance ............................................................................. 56
  2.2.3. The puzzle of governance ....................................................................................... 60
  2.2.4. Contributions to the puzzle ..................................................................................... 62
  2.2.5. The institutionalised logics of governance ............................................................... 69
  2.3. Summary ....................................................................................................................... 70

Chapter Three: Methodology ................................................................................................ 73
  3.1. Discourse Analysis ........................................................................................................ 73
  3.2. Where has the data come from?.................................................................................... 82
  3.3. Procedures .................................................................................................................... 91
  3.4. Limitations of the methodology .................................................................................. 101
  3.5. Ethical Issues ............................................................................................................... 104
  3.6. Summary ...................................................................................................................... 105

Chapter Four: Introducing the Results ............................................................................... 107

Chapter Five: The Business of Rugby .................................................................................. 125
  5.1. Institutionalised logic 1: ‘It’s only a game’ .................................................................. 125
  5.2. Institutionalised logic 2: ‘It’s a business now’ ............................................................... 133
  5.3. Institutionalised logic 3: ‘TV runs the game’ ............................................................... 140
  5.4. Institutionalised logic 4: ‘Central control is the way to go!’ ...................................... 147
  5.5. Institutionalised logic 5: ‘What the sponsors say goes’ .............................................. 157
  5.6. An interpretation of the strength of the logics .......................................................... 164

Chapter Six: Laws to be Obeyed .......................................................................................... 167
  6.1. Institutionalised logic 6: ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’ ................. 167
  6.2. Institutionalised logic 7: ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’ ........................................ 175
  6.3. Institutionalised logic 8: ‘You don’t argue with the referee’ ...................................... 185
  6.4. Institutionalised logic 9: ‘Don’t cross the ethos’ ......................................................... 194
  6.5. An interpretation of the strength of the logics .......................................................... 200
Chapter Seven: Conveyer to the Goal ........................................... 203
  7.1. Institutionalised logic 10: ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’ ............. 203
  7.2. Institutionalised logic 11: ‘It’s the top two inches that matters’ .......... 213
  7.3. Institutionalised logic 12: ‘The clubs are history’ ....................... 220
  7.4. Institutionalised logic 13: ‘The coach is king’ .......................... 229
  7.5. Institutionalised logic 14: ‘Every boy must want to be an All Black’ .. 238
  7.6. Institutionalised logic 15: ‘My boy isn’t playing that game’ ............ 247
  7.7. Institutionalised logic 16: ‘Beating the Springboks is everything’ ..... 254
  7.8. Institutionalised logic 17: ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ ......... 261
  7.9. An interpretation of the strength of the logics ........................... 272

Chapter Eight: Discussion .................................................... 275
  8.1. Links to the concepts derived from institutional theory .................. 276
  8.2. Links to governance .................................................................. 278
  8.3. What happens on the field can’t stay there anymore ...................... 281
  8.4. Rest in Peace Jimmy Plunkett… he did not a bad job .................... 293
  8.5. Tradition! All those old warthogs crying into their beer? .......... 308
  8.6. There’s a new dragon to slay and it bites ................................... 326
  8.7. Squeaky bum time ................................................................. 335
  8.8. Summary of the discussion .................................................... 349

Chapter Nine: Conclusions ..................................................... 351
  9.1. Introduction ............................................................................. 351
  9.2. Implications for the practice of research ..................................... 351
  9.3. Implications for theory ............................................................. 354
  9.4. Implications for practice ........................................................... 355
  9.5. Final thoughts ........................................................................... 358

References .................................................................................. 361
  Appendix I – The communities affected by governance reduced to eight .. 387
  Appendix II - Information sheet for participants ............................... 393
  Appendix III – Consent form ......................................................... 395
  Appendix IV – Rugby News O’Driscoll article .................................... 395
  Appendix IV – Rugby News O’Driscoll article .................................... 396
  Appendix V – Other Institutionalised Logics ..................................... 397
A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Background Summary ................................................................. 11
Figure 1.2: Research Summary ................................................................. 13
Figure 1.3: Schematic of key relationships in 1985 .................................. 33
Figure 1.4: Schematic of key relationships in 2005 .................................. 34
Figure 2.1: The process of institutionalisation ........................................... 45
Figure 3.1: The relationship between action and discourse ....................... 77
Figure 4.1: Ranking of nodes across both data sets .................................. 112
Figure 4.2: Data reduction through aggregation of nodes into themes .......... 113
Figure 4.3: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby found amongst a 'particular theme' ......................................................... 124
Figure 5.1: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics – The Business of Rugby .......................................................... 165
Figure 6.1: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics – Laws to be Obeyed ............................................................... 201
Figure 7.1: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics – Conveyor to the Goal ......................................................... 272
Figure 8.1: Institutionalised logics that might affect on field violence .......... 283
Figure 8.2: Institutionalised logics that might affect decisions on referees .... 295
Figure 8.3: Institutionalised logics that might affect decisions on the business of rugby .............................................................. 313
Figure 8.4: Institutionalised logics that might affect decisions on priorities for NZRU ............................................................ 327
Figure 8.5: Institutionalised logics that might affect decisions on developing players .......................................................... 338

List of tables

Table 4.1: Nodes emerging from interviews with 32 participants .................. 108
Table 4.4: Identification of the themes ....................................................... 114
## List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>All Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAQDA</td>
<td>Computer Aided Qualitative Design Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFDR</td>
<td>English First Division Rugby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESDR</td>
<td>English Second Division Rugby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Football Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIFA</td>
<td>Federation of International Football Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>International Rugby Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPC</td>
<td>National Provincial Championship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZRPA</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Players’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZRRA</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Referees’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZRFU</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Football Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZRU</td>
<td>New Zealand Rugby Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWC</td>
<td>Rugby World Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANZAR</td>
<td>South Africa, New Zealand, Australia Rugby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARB</td>
<td>South African Rugby Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPARC</td>
<td>Sport and Recreation New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVNZ</td>
<td>Television New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>World Rugby Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>