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**A discourse analysis of institutionalised logics in the field
of New Zealand rugby 1985 and 2005**

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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 in 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.

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List of abbreviations

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

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. The inspiration behind the research

The All Blacks. The most successful international sporting team of the last 100 years. On 15 August, 1903, New Zealand's national rugby union¹ team played their first full-scale international test. They won the game against Australia, 22-3. Since then they have played 444² further test matches. They have won 331 times, giving them a success rate of 74.5%. No national sporting team anywhere in the world can match this win record over such a long period of time. The Brazilian soccer team might be closest with a win record of 62% stretching back to 1914. The Brazilian win record in the soccer's FIFA World Cup rises to 71%. It is the link with performances in World Cups that provided the first spark for this enquiry. Brazil won the soccer World Cup for the first time in 1958 and has followed up with wins in 1962, 1970, 1994 and 2002. Brazil has won the World Cup more often than any other nation. The All Blacks won the inaugural Rugby World Cup in 1987, and, to date, have failed to secure another win in any of the following five attempts. This is despite an 83.3% win record at World Cups. Why has this happened? Why have the All Blacks failed to secure a second win?

The research was undertaken over the period April 2005 to October 2007. The final draft was completed in the wake of another World Cup defeat for the All Blacks, this time by France in the quarter-final, 20-18. It has been almost a generation since the All Blacks last won the Rugby World Cup. In that time much has changed in the environment of New Zealand rugby. The broad intention of this research was to look at what might have changed over that time, and to consider how the changes might impact on the ability of New Zealand to win another Rugby World Cup. As the research developed the focus became more specific. Having initially considered the wider environment of New Zealand rugby union it became clear that many of the changes that

¹ Throughout this thesis rugby union will be referred to as 'rugby'. The alternative code of rugby league will be referred to as 'rugby league'. This follows the conventions in the language used by the participants who contributed to this study. 'Rugby' was used to refer to rugby union and 'league' or 'rugby league' was used when rugby league was mentioned.

² Matches played to the end of 2008.

might potentially influence the performance of the All Blacks have been discussed, either in practice or through research. Factors such as the globalisation of the game (Howitt & Haworth, 2002; Hutchins & Phillips, 1999; Obel & Austrin, 2005), the change to professionalism (FitzSimons, 2003; Romanos, 2002; Thomas, 2003), elements of the culture of the game (McConnell, 1999; Nicholls, 2005; Phillips, 1996; Ryan, 2005), the competitive landscape (Obel, 2001; Owen & Weatherspoon, 2002), and the commercialisation of the game (Boston Consulting Group, 1994; Gibson, Pratt, Roberts & Weymes, 2003) have all been examined to some degree. Many of the changes have been comprehensively documented. So the focus became one of how might research review the nature of changes that have taken place, *and* contribute towards unraveling their influence on performance - in a way that has not been done before?

Some of the responsibility for the All Blacks' failure to win a second Rugby World Cup has been laid at the door of the administrators and management, for not creating the foundations from which the players can perform at their peak (Deaker, 2004, 2007; Gillies, 2005; Hope, 2002; Mayhew, 2004; Romanos, 2002; Thomas, 2003; Verdon, 2000). It is hard to argue that those charged with the *governance* of the game do not have some impact on the performance of the All Blacks. Having a winning All Blacks team is seen as a critical element of performance for the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU)³. Indeed, the number one priority in the Union's 2005 *and* 2006 list of strategic priorities was to "ensure the All Blacks are a winning team" (NZRU Annual Report, 2005, pp. 8-9). The NZRU sets the strategic direction, they decide on resource allocation, they interpret and influence the International Rugby Board (IRB) policies, they appoint the management team, they contract the players, coaches and referees, they regulate competition structures, and they regulate the rules of the game in New Zealand. The decisions taken by those charged with governance affect many involved in New Zealand rugby, and must inevitably influence the environment in which the All Blacks perform at Rugby World Cups. This is a fundamental assumption underlying the research.

³ Prior to the 2004 Annual Report, the reporting entity was The New Zealand Rugby Football Union (Incorporated) ("NZRFU"). From 2004 the reporting entity was referred to as The New Zealand Rugby Football Union (Incorporated) ("NZRU"). The name was not legally changed until 22 December 2006.

On reviewing the wider academic literature on the link between ‘governance’ and ‘performance’⁴ it becomes clear that there are still many unanswered questions (Daily, Dalton, & Cannella, 2003; Garratt, 2006; Johnson, Daily, & Ellstrand, 1996; Lockhart, 2005). The link between governance and performance is not straight-forward and remains something of a puzzle. As many of those involved in the practice of governance intuitively ‘know’ there are many pieces to the puzzle. Highlighting the complexity of the governance environment Murray McCaw, a former chairman of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU), commented “...the need for balance, of playing the game and running the business, of respecting our traditions and shaping the future...achieving local touch in New Zealand while achieving global reach with the game” (2001). Strategy, compliance, leadership, the equitable balancing of available resources, and dealing with the unique culture of the environment might all be viewed as interrelated pieces of the puzzle. As with any complex puzzle there may be pieces missing altogether, or at least hidden from the perspectives taken so far.

Governance scholarship has been dominated by a legal-economic view (e.g., Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Fama & Jensen, 1983). Much of the focus has been on corporate governance and the board of directors as the instrument of governance, with particular emphasis on contractual arrangements, brought about by the use of agency theory. However, the broad perspective chosen for this research, given the myriad of people involved and the complexity of the environment, is that of organisational behaviour (e.g., Cyert & March, 1963; Davis & Thompson, 1994). From this perspective governance arrangements appear to be affected by wider cultural belief systems that guide decision making. This approach suggests that the logics that underlie particular governance models emerge from what might be seen as taken-for-granted understandings in a wider contextual environment (Fiss, 2008). What is legitimised in other sporting and business contexts might have come to be accepted as ‘the’ prescription for the New Zealand rugby model. This idea will be developed further in Chapter Two.

Ferkins, Shilbury, and McDonald (2005) contend that governance is a critical issue confronting sports organisations. But exactly what is governance? The term appears as

⁴ ‘governance’ and ‘performance’ are concepts that will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

long ago as 1675 in Thomas Hobbes's translation of Homer's *Odyssey* in the context of 'to steer' a vessel (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007). However, the concept of governance does not have a universally accepted definition. Debate surrounding the terminology and a justification for the chosen definition will be discussed further in Chapter Two. Building on the work of Daily et al. (2003), and in order to reflect the range of activities of the NZRU illustrated in their Annual Reports, the definition of governance in this research is as follows:

Governance is the achievement of desired outcomes, through the determination of the broad uses to which organisational resources will be deployed and the resolution of conflicts among the myriad of participants in the field of New Zealand rugby.

It is argued that the concept of governance is wider than "the system by which the elements of an organization are directed, controlled and regulated" (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007, p. 3). Governance might be viewed as an outcome, not just a system or set of processes. The puzzle lies between the decisions made and the intended outcomes. The definition above implies that governance is concerned with both making decisions and with the outcomes. This approach echoes that of Clarke (2004), who is concerned that governance is being perceived as just a set of processes and rules with little consideration given to the outcomes. The approach to governance taken here deliberately blurs the boundaries between governance and management. As Lockhart (2005) points out, organisational performance results from some combination of board and management competencies. In practice, if the boundaries were clear-cut, then, using Tricker's (1984) terminology, those charged with governance could make decisions to see that a business was run properly, and then allow management to run the business. But it is not that simple. Demarcation lines between governance and management are not an exact science. If governance is about policy and strategic direction, which appears to be the case with the NZRU, then it follows that the outcomes of those policies and directions must be an integral part of any link to performance, even if implemented through management. The broad definition of governance might allow some to see the contribution of this research as one to *management* practice. It is proposed that the interaction, between the decisions of those charged with governance and the communities affected by those decisions, is a crucial element in the

effectiveness of governance. It could also be interpreted as a crucial element in the effectiveness of management. However, the broad problem area chosen is governance. The research rests on the premise that even if, following the prescriptions emerging from governance research, a *system* of governance is in place and all the *processes* are carried out ‘correctly’, there is no assured link to desired outcomes.

According to one passionate New Zealand sports broadcaster:

Sporting administration has known no worse bungle than the New Zealand Rugby Union’s loss of the sub-hosting rights for the 2003 Rugby World Cup. This happened because of gross incompetence, unbelievable arrogance and extreme laziness (Deaker, 2004, p. 13).

Whatever the veracity of this comment, one outcome was that the CEO and the entire board resigned. However, throughout the debacle, the processes of governance had been followed. A review by a High Court Judge, Sir Thomas Eichelbaum, found “that nothing illegal had been done and that due process had been followed by both the board and senior management” (Lockhart, 2004, p. 11). If governance was just a process, it might be argued that there is little that further research can contribute. There is already a comprehensively researched prescription that, in this case, was followed. But governance is not just a process. The outcome of that set of decisions about hosting the Rugby World Cup affected many people within the environment of New Zealand rugby. For example; the coach of a struggling junior rugby side in a small town, north of Auckland, who had hoped the World Cup semi-final excitement in New Zealand would provide a boost to his playing numbers; the supporter who had hoped to take his 85 year-old father to one, perhaps last, big All Blacks’ game; Carlos Spencer, a key member of the team, who hoped his last chance to be a World Cup winner might be made easier by a home semi-final; and, the All Blacks’ coach, John Mitchell, whose job was dependent on winning the trophy. All were affected by the decisions of those charged with governance. And some might argue that the outcomes of those decisions were less than satisfactory. The consequences for New Zealand rugby might have been; a junior coach who gave up the fight and moved to coaching junior hockey; a supporter with less passion than before who gave up his season ticket at Eden Park; an individual player who might now never be revered by the next generation as one of the ‘true

heroes'; and an internationally experienced young coach lost to Australian rugby. It is the outcomes, as well as the systems and processes that should be viewed as an integral part of the governance puzzle.

The approach taken also recognises that outcomes are not merely the products of actions by those charged with governance. In his work on social-political governance Kooiman (1993) makes a distinction between the processes of governing (or goal-directed interventions) and governance which is the result (or the total effects) of the interventions and interactions (Rhodes, 1996). The NZRU may make a policy or guideline; for example, no pushing in the scrum until juniors are at least eleven years old. That is a straight-forward intervention, but it is how this policy interacts with the communities affected, that produces the outcome (or total effect). In this case it is how referees, how coaches, how parents, how the juniors themselves, interpret the policy and choose to act, and react to other interpretations, that will produce the outcome. It is argued that if the intended performance is a reduction in junior player neck injuries, then the interaction of the decision with the communities might be more important than the processes of how the decision came to be made. This is where the research starts to focus. It is an analysis that explores the point of interaction with the communities affected by those goal-directed decisions. The question becomes one of what is happening at that point that might help explain why performance does not always occur as intended.

From experience, as a senior manager and director in various business organisations over twenty years, it has been evident that often carefully considered and reasoned decisions produced unintended and sub-optimal outcomes. Viewed superficially there seemed to be 'something' in the organisational environment that caused this disruption – a breakdown in the link between decisions and intended organisational performance. One potential cause was the interaction of the decisions with what people in the environment assumed, or what they took for granted. It seemed to be their commonly held ideas and understandings, perhaps their fundamental assumptions, which influenced the reaction to the decisions. '*But we've always done it like that*' appeared as a common cry in the midst of a performance breakdown. Could this have anything to do with why the All Blacks have been unable to win a second Rugby World Cup? Are there 'things' that people in the environment of New Zealand rugby take for granted that

might actually be disrupting the decision-outcome equation? And, if so, how might they be explored?

One body of academic literature that has articulated such ‘things’, and has been used to study their changing nature, is ‘institutional theory’ (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2001; Zucker, 1983). However, it is important to be clear from the outset that this research takes the view that this so called ‘theory’ is not really one theory at all. It is not a prescription that can be applied in ‘one right way’. As Czarniawska suggests:

As it is, institutional theory is not a theory at all, but a framework, a vocabulary, a way of thinking about social life, which may take many paths (2008, p.771).

In this research, institutional theory is a framework of language that can be used to develop a better understanding of the factors that influence people to behave in particular ways in the context of decisions made by those charged with governance. Within this framework is a long established and widely researched view that there are certain ideas and understandings, in any environment, that become taken-for-granted by the people involved. These taken-for-granted ideas and understandings then seem to take on a life of their own and influence the way things are done. They may become the fundamental assumptions on which decisions are made, or the conventions that drive behaviour. Institutional theory suggests that organisational rationality is both constrained and facilitated by ‘institutions’ which may develop from “common understandings that are seldom explicitly articulated” (Zucker, 1983, p. 5). Freidland and Alford introduced the concept of ‘institutional logics’ that provide the “organizing principles” (1991, p. 248) for a field. Institutional logics are the patterns of behaviours, assumptions, understandings and beliefs that might define the content and meaning of institutions (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Thornton & Ocasio argue that they can provide a link between individual agency and cognition, and the prevailing socially constructed institutional practices. The main body of institutional literature conceptualises institutional logics as meta-logics. These broad logics, such as marketing, manufacturing or finance (Fligstein, 1990), provide the frame for the facilitation or constraint of action in a particular field. In the case of New Zealand rugby one such logic might be ‘professionalism’, which might be seen to provide a broad frame for the

behaviour of many of those communities in the field. These institutional logics are conceptualised as providing the content and meaning within institutional sectors that might be viewed at a societal level, such as those identified by Thornton (2004) – markets, corporations, professions, states, families and religion.

In this research the approach is differentiated from what has been done previously, in that the focus is on more local micro-logics that are specific to communities in the field in question. Furthermore, the institutionalised logics identified in this study may be specific to just parts of the communities that constitute an organisational field. They are not conceptualised as societal level logics. That is not to argue that these micro-logics do not develop in the context of institutions and their associated meta-logics. However, that link is not intended to be the focus of this analysis. The specific use of the word ‘institutionalised logic’ throughout this research is a deliberate attempt to ensure that the understandings that are the focus, are not confused with either broader conceptualisations of institutions, such as ‘markets’ (Thornton, 2004), or institutional logics, such as ‘market logic’ (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). As will be explored in Chapter Two, institutional theory is the “framework, the vocabulary and the way of thinking about social life” (Czarniawska, 2008, p.771) that enables the concept of a micro-logic to be brought to life. It is proposed that multiple competing and overlapping institutionalised logics are likely to ‘exist’, or be seen to exist, linking to, and affecting, each other. They might also be seen to change over time, some growing and some eroding, either gently or with increasing urgency. It is argued that these institutionalised micro-logics might have an impact upon the success, or failure, of initiatives and decisions made by those charged with the governance of the game.

The focus of the research, then, is *commonly held* logics (as patterns of understandings, assumptions and beliefs) that have, or are in the process, of acquiring a ‘taken-for-granted’ status amongst the groups who are affected by governance, which includes administrators, players, referees and supporters. Having acquired this taken-for-granted status these logics might be seen as ‘institutionalised’. The process through which they acquire this status can be viewed through the framework of the process of institutionalisation offered by Tolbert and Zucker (1999). These ‘institutionalised logics’ are specific to the communities in which they have become taken-for-granted. The argument proposed in this research is that an explicit appreciation of the changing

nature of these institutionalised logics in the environment might provide one of the missing pieces in the puzzle of governance.

The methodology that might enable these, often quite well hidden, ideas and understandings to be drawn out is discourse analysis – a systematic analysis of what people said and why they said it. The rationale for the choice of discourse analysis is developed from the close link between institutionalisation and discourse outlined by Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy (2004). Using a definition of discourse as “structured collections of meaningful texts that make certain ways of thinking and acting possible” (Parker, cited in Phillips et al., 2004, p. 636), they argued that discursive processes contribute to the process of institutionalisation. Phillips et al. (2004) proposed that discourse analysis provides a coherent framework to investigate the processes underlying institutionalisation. Consequently, it is through a systematic analysis of texts that evidence of the nature of institutionalised logics might be explored. As Phillips et al. suggest, not all discursive ideas become institutionalised. This view will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. The philosophy behind this methodological approach will also be discussed further in Chapters Two and Three. The data comes from texts created in the years being studied, and from 32 in-depth interviews that provide an insider’s interpretation of the context. The method for the oral interviews draws from Chase (2005) and, given the historical nature of the enquiry, Thompson’s *Voice of the Past* (2000). The data is presented to allow it ‘to speak for itself’. Many direct quotations have been used in the results and discussion sections. This enables readers to make their own interpretations, and place those interpretations alongside those drawn in the research.

In this section the two ‘big’ questions that inspired the research have been introduced; why have the All Blacks failed to win the Rugby World Cup since 1987 and, what might be missing from our understanding of the link between governance and organisational performance? The basic assumption underlying the research, that the NZRU has some influence over the All Blacks’ performances, has been highlighted. Governance has been introduced as an outcome, not just a process. Hence, it is amongst the communities affected by decisions of governance that the search began. One potential contributory factor in the puzzle of governance, located at the point of interaction between the decisions and those affected, are the taken-for-granted ideas and

understandings amongst those communities involved in New Zealand rugby. Using language from institutional theory these understandings are offered conceptually as institutionalised logics. However, it is important to recognise that this research is **not** an institutional analysis of New Zealand rugby, it is an analysis of taken-for-granted understandings utilising frameworks from institutional theory as way of thinking about social life.

The link with the methodological approach, discourse analysis, has been briefly introduced. Figure 1.1 (on the following page) provides a summary of the research background. In the section that follows the research problem is developed further and the research question is then presented. A context for the research is then provided. Rugby in New Zealand is discussed from both an economic and an historical perspective. The closing section of Chapter One summarises the contributions that the research is expected to make.

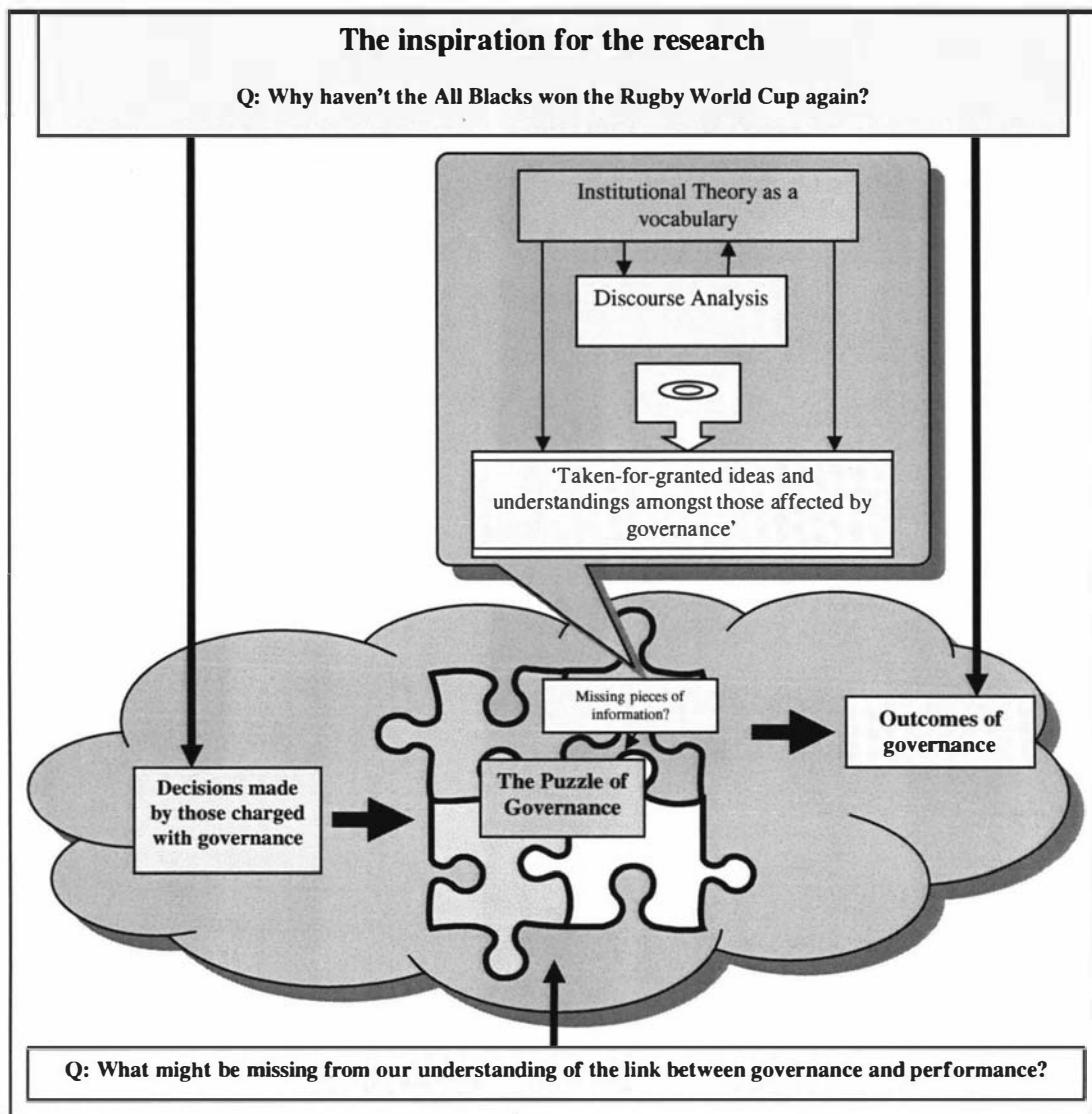
1.2. The research question and report outline

The intention of this research was to make a contribution to the theory and practice of governance by highlighting an explicit understanding of institutionalised logics as a potential piece in the puzzle of governance. In order to view the nature of the institutionalised logics, two discrete years were selected. 2005 was selected as it was the year the research started, two years out from the 2007 Rugby World Cup. 1985 was chosen as a comparative choice, two years out from the first Rugby World Cup in 1987. Further justification for the timeframe is presented in Section 1.3, when the context is discussed, and again in Section 2.4, where other analyses of change are reviewed.

The level at which the analysis has been carried out is derived from the vocabulary of institutional theory. The organisational *field*, proposed by DiMaggio and Powell (1991), is defined below:

The notion of field connotes the existence of a community of organizations that partakes of a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with actors outside of the field (Scott, 2001, p. 84).

Figure 1.1: Background summary



The common meaning system of New Zealand rugby, and 'fateful interaction', is not confined to a discrete organisational grouping. There are a myriad of participants, many of whom have no *official* connection with the NZRU. The fragmented nature of the environment means that the analysis has been undertaken at a *field* level. However, there is an explicit recognition of a link between the micro and macro level. Taken-for-granted ideas and understandings may develop in the minds of individuals, but to significantly set conditions on action in any field they must become *commonly held* (Zucker, 1977).

The specific research question is as follows:

What is the nature of ‘institutionalised logics’ that might be seen to have existed amongst communities affected by governance in the field of New Zealand rugby in 1985 and in 2005?

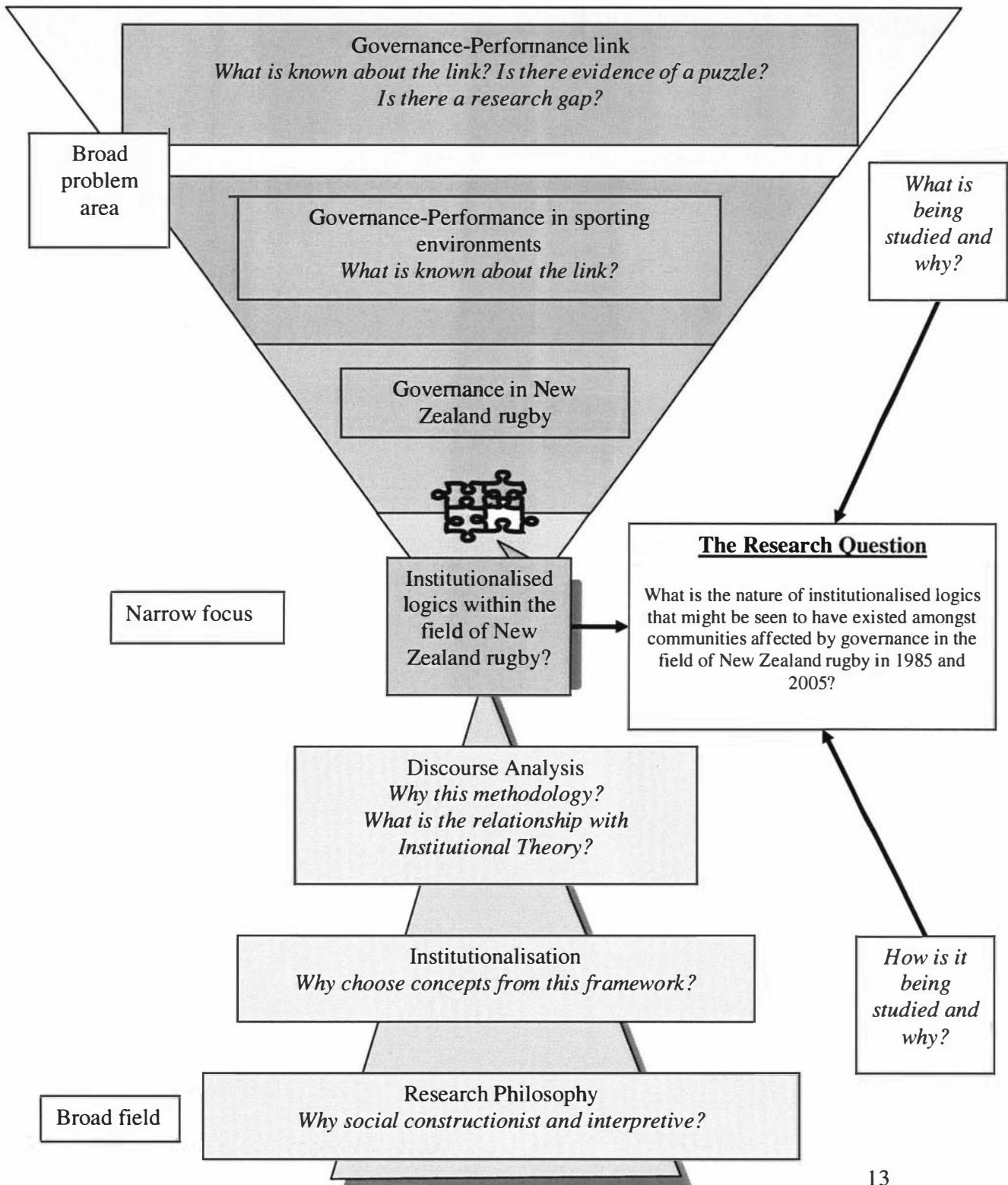
This is the question that has been answered by the thesis. Before that answer is revealed, the foundations of the research are explained. The research question has been developed from answering two distinct questions; first, *what* is being studied and why; and, second, *how* is it to be studied and why. The broad problem area of *what*, is the governance – performance link, and the broad picture of *how*, is discourse analysis utilising concepts from institutional theory. Figure 1.2 (on the following page) summarises the research process. Chapters Two and Three develop and explain why these perspectives were chosen.

In Chapter Two the literature surrounding institutionalisation is reviewed and its use as a framework and vocabulary for analysing the research problem justified. The concept of governance is discussed, and evidence provided to justify the argument that the link between governance and organisational performance remains something of a puzzle. Chapter Three describes the methodology. Discourse analysis and the links to institutional theory are explained. The interpretive nature of the research is discussed. A detailed explanation of the research procedures followed, and ethical issues involved, is documented.

In Chapter Four the results and analysis are introduced. The research question is answered. What are the ideas and understandings that are discussed by the participants? What might be seen as commonly held ideas and understandings amongst them? What might be seen as evidence of the nature of institutionalised logics? Data from 32 in-depth interviews and the texts chosen for analysis is presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In Chapter Eight the impact that these institutionalised logics might have, and might have had, on the decisions made by those charged with governance of New Zealand rugby is discussed. Implications for the future of the game in New Zealand are considered. The report concludes that these commonly held, taken-for-granted ideas and understandings, and their changing nature, might indeed affect the outcomes of decisions. Therefore, the nature of institutionalised logics should be explicitly

considered by those charged with governance of New Zealand rugby – if they wish to positively influence performance.

Figure 1.2: Research summary



So far the research area has been introduced, and the focus narrowed to a particular research question. The next step, before moving on to the theoretical underpinnings, is to justify why the field of rugby in New Zealand is an important area for study, particularly in the context of governance. This justification begins with the commercial significance and moves on to a short history of the game, highlighting both the changing nature of the environment and some parallels with the game today. A rationale for the specific years of 1985 and 2005 is also explained.

The contextual background is rather longer than might be expected for a standard doctoral thesis; for it is assumed that international readers may be unfamiliar with the status of rugby in New Zealand. The distinctive nature of a Doctorate in Business and Administration (DBA), as a practitioner-orientated programme, also justifies a more detailed review of the environment in which this research contribution will be located⁵. The DBA has developed in response to what has been termed the academic-practice divide (Pearce, 2004; Rynes, Bartunek & Daft, 2001). There is evidence that much of the research produced by academics has been largely ignored by practitioners (Lockhart & Stablein, 2002). One observation is that qualitative research is made too difficult and boring for practitioners to read (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005). The particular nature of the DBA has driven some of the choices made later in the presentation of the results and the discussion sections. Every effort has been made to bridge the divide.

1.3. Context

A game of significance

For those not familiar with the game and the country it is difficult to comprehend just how significant the relationship between the two has been. One view is that it is almost impossible to be seen to ‘live normally’ in New Zealand and not to form an opinion on rugby. Rugby might be seen to have replaced the weather as a way of initiating social interaction. This is not to claim that everybody loves rugby. There are many who

⁵ For a more complete summary of the environment there is a comprehensive and well written version of events in a Masters thesis by Gerard Martin, *The Game is not the Same – a History of Professional Rugby in New Zealand* (2005, AUT University, Auckland).

express a dislike of rugby, but in the same way as people dislike rain – in order to gain some kind of social acceptability they are encouraged to have an opinion.

Clive Woodward (coach of the British and Irish Lions⁶ rugby team) and Graham Henry (coach of the New Zealand rugby team) both die and enter Heaven. God takes Clive on a tour and ends up at a little two-bedroom cottage with a faded Lions' rugby banner hanging on the front door. "This is your house, Clive," says God, "You're very lucky. Most people don't get their own houses up here." Clive looks at the house, then turns around and looks at the huge mansion at the top of the hill. It's a palatial affair with white marble columns, balconies and beautiful gardens. All Black banners line both sides of the footpath and a huge New Zealand flag hangs between the marble columns. "Thanks for the house, God," says Clive, "But let me ask you a question. How come I get this little two-bedroom cottage and Graham Henry gets a huge mansion with all those marble columns and things?" God looks at him seriously for a moment. "That's not Graham's house," God says. "That's my house" (Overheard in an Auckland bar during Lion's tour, July 2005, and written version adapted from <http://wesclark.com/rrr/mansions.html>).

The importance of the game of rugby union in New Zealand has been recognised across a whole range of dimensions. To Owen and Weatherspoon it is much more than just the national sport. They suggested "it borders on the status of a de facto religion" (2002, p. 1). It has been called New Zealand's secular religion (Crawford, 1986). As long ago as 1947 Muligan commented, "Rugby⁷ football ... the best of all our pleasures ... religion and desire and fulfillment all in one" (p. 7). Fougere (1989) highlighted rugby's important role in the nation's sense of identity. Ryan argued that it is "crucial" in projecting New Zealand's identity to the rest of the world (2005, p. 9). On a political dimension, Statistics New Zealand (2005) even went so far as to suggest that losing in the World Cup semi-final in 1999 contributed to the fall of the incumbent government that year. A 1996 study by Orr of All Black results in seventeen key electorates since

⁶ The British and Irish Lions are a touring team comprising of players selected from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. They have an historic rivalry with the New Zealand All Blacks dating back to their first tour in 1950. The rivalry with composite teams from the British Isles goes back further. The All Blacks second ever test was against Great Britain in 1904; they won 9-3 (Palenski, Chester & McMillan, 2006).

⁷ For many years 'Rugby' was automatically capitalised by writers. For example, even in 1985, when the word was used in *Rugby News* it was 'Rugby'. By 2005 this was not the case – rugby was a small 'r'.

1949 found that the higher the rugby win rate, the higher the chances of the sitting government being re-elected (Volkerling, 2000, p. 71).

In New Zealand, rugby is also important from a commercial point of view. In 2005, the NZRU had a total income of \$146,675,000 (approximately \$US102 million) and announced a net profit of \$23,695,000 (NZRU Annual Report, 2005). As a comparison with the New Zealand Top 200⁸ companies for 2005, the NZRU would rank 71st measured by net profit; 109th measured by total equity; 152nd measured by assets; and 165th measured by revenue. The NZRU's 2005 revenues exceeded those of MacDonald's Restaurants (New Zealand) at \$145.8 million. As a comparison with other sporting bodies around the world, Manchester United, the largest (by revenue) soccer club in the world, reported revenue in 2005 of \$US315 million. In the United States the largest American Football team is the Washington Redskins with \$US303 million and for basketball, the New York Nicks, with reported revenues of some \$US181 million (Forbes.com, 2006). These figures must be considered in the context of a total population of New Zealand of only four million people.

In addition to the NZRU revenues there are other commercial impacts from rugby. For example, it is estimated that rugby betting accounted for over \$40 million annually (Romanos, 2002). This figure is echoed in the New Zealand Racing Board 2006 Annual Report which stated, "The year in review saw Rugby Union the most wagered on sport" (p. 22). In 2005, New Zealand secured the rights to host the 2011 Rugby World Cup. This bid was fully supported by the government of New Zealand. The country's Prime Minister, Helen Clark, took part in the final bid presentation. The organisers claim that the Rugby World Cup is the third largest sporting event in the world (Rugby New Zealand 2011, 2006). The claim may be an exaggeration but the event was estimated by the New Zealand government to be worth an additional \$408 million to the economy, bringing in an estimated 60,000 visitors (Bennett, 2005). A more recent report, by economic consultants, suggested the event will add \$507 million to New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) and provide the government with an additional \$112 million in tax revenue (Horwath Asia Pacific Limited, 2006). The last Rugby World

⁸ Published annually in *New Zealand Management* magazine www.management.co.nz. Figures from December 2005.

Cup in Australia in 2003 attracted around 65,000 visitors, generated \$289 million in additional GDP and was ‘broadcast’ (but not necessarily watched) to an estimated global cumulative audience of 3.4 billion (URS Finance and Economics, 2004). Whatever the accuracy of such figures, in the context of New Zealand, rugby is a significant commercial environment.

A game with a history

It is also an environment steeped in history. Many of the debates and controversies that might exist in the environment today have their own history. Decisions made today by those charged with governance of the game cannot be completely isolated from the past. Debates about the consequences of professionalism and higher values of amateurism; about the racial composition of the national team; about the relationship between central governance and provincial unions; about the competence of referees; about the rules of the game, and about the line between violence and hard play on the field, might all be characteristic of the past twenty years. In fact, they are all to be found in the discourse during the first forty years of rugby’s development in New Zealand, during the period 1870 to 1910. There is over 100 years of history to influence the ideas and understandings that might be taken-for-granted by those involved in New Zealand rugby. In the midst of this history lie some fundamental, commonly held understandings that may have both facilitated and constrained the game’s development.

This section is not a comprehensive review of the history of the sport in New Zealand. Such a review is outside the scope of this research. What is presented is a select historical account based around themes that emerged later in the data. More attention has been given to those areas that emerged in discussions with the participants, and to the years chosen for study. This selection is to be seen as an attempt to portray a contextual background of what has come to be ‘taken-for-granted’ in New Zealand rugby.

The game of rugby union itself might be seen to have been founded on an ‘idea and understanding’ that has taken on a life of its own. The understanding that in 1823 William Webb Ellis, a boarding pupil at Rugby School in Warwickshire, contrary to the rules at the time, picked up the ball during a game of football and ran with it. There is little evidence to suggest that this event, if it actually took place at all, had any impact

on the development of rugby. Indeed the ‘fact’ did not appear in written discourse until a Rugby School magazine article in 1880 (Palenski, Chester, & McMillan, 2005). And yet the ‘idea’ has become so commonly accepted amongst the rugby communities that the International Rugby Board named the ultimate prize for the Rugby World Cup winners, the William Webb Ellis Trophy. The understanding was articulated by Sir Wilson Whineray⁹ in a 1978 introduction to *Men in Black*. It is an understanding that highlights courage and initiative, and one that might have influenced how New Zealanders view the game.

His main contribution, it seems, was that he was the first to attempt, and succeed, in running forward whilst carrying the ball. After all, it took more than a little courage to hold the ball at all, let alone attempt to proceed up-field against an opposition numbering 100 or more. The gist of the game at the time was to catch the ball, claim and “mark”, then kick the ball up-field until your side neared the goal line. Then the ball was held either in the hands or between the knees and the teams packed around to shove the ball carrier over the goal-line (Palenski, Chester, & McMillan, 2006, p. 11).

Rugby was introduced to New Zealand in the 1870s via the efforts of former English public school pupils, most famously Charles John Munro. The first recorded rugby match was played in May 1870 between Nelson and Wellington (Palenski et al., 2005). An understanding that developed to help explain how rugby attained a dominant position in New Zealand sport is that it was accessible to all classes of New Zealand society. Jock Phillips, “whose opinions have become the established orthodoxy on the subject” wrote of the ‘classlessness of rugby’ in New Zealand (Vincent, 2005, p. 13). This common perception of rugby in New Zealand as having always been a game for all classes does not go uncontested. Vincent argued that “evidence indicates quite clearly that working class players were largely absent from rugby before 1880” (2005, p. 14). However, the commonly held idea may have been one contributory factor in the speed at which the game developed. Perhaps people *understood* it to be a game for all and that influenced a decision to play. Certainly Phillips’s statistical evidence makes a compelling argument that a wide cross-section of New Zealand society was represented in rugby teams of the 1890s. By the mid-1890s, just over 20 years from its introduction, there were “over 50,000 players and over 300 teams affiliated to the recently formed

⁹ Former All Black captain who went on to become managing director of Carter Holt Harvey, one of New Zealand’s biggest companies.

New Zealand Rugby Football Union" (Phillips, 1996, p. 71). This compares with 2007 figures from the IRB that shows 520 clubs and 141,726 players (IRB, 2007) in New Zealand. It is interesting to note that pre-teens account for 62,523 of that figure. Perhaps rugby as an adult participation sport was even more popular at the turn of the century than today. Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) figures in 2001 suggested 6% of the New Zealand adult population participated in Rugby Union "in the last 12 months". The 1896 Census put New Zealand's population at 743,214 (Statistics New Zealand, 2007), so "over 50,000" affiliated players might suggest around 6.7% participating in rugby.

Other explanations for the rise in the popularity of rugby union have been put forward. In his study of Canterbury rugby, 1854-c.1890, Vincent argued that the code of rugby had attained supremacy "because it provided footballers with a means of creating a perpetually expanding network of sporting rivalries and defending civic pride" (2005, p. 30). Canterbury first played an Auckland representative side in August 1875. They won 9.5 (yes, nine and one half) points to nil in front of a "crowd of at least 3000 spectators" (Vincent, 2005, p. 19). Another explanation was offered by Dunning and Sheard (1979) who suggested that the game's 'great roughness' made it more appealing to groups from a lower socio-economic class, where the traditional concepts of masculinity prevailed. They suggested the game involved a test of physical strength and courage, something that New Zealand's previously most popular sport, cricket, had been unable to offer. Whatever the reason, it is evident that rugby had very quickly achieved the position of a major sport in New Zealand.

In these early days rugby developed a reputation for its violent nature. When, in 1877, a player was killed in a club match, the coroner apparently stated that 'the game of football was only worthy of savages' (Phillips, 1996. p. 77). In 1897, three Otago players were reported to be knocked unconscious during one game against Wellington (Tobin, 2005). The trend continued through the next decade and was the subject of public debate. In 1904, a match between the senior teams of Kaierau and Pirates in Wanganui "left seven players with injuries which required at least in-patient treatment at the local hospital" (Vincent, 2005a, p. 62). The newspapers of the time highlighted the problems facing rugby with *The Star* (11 June 1904) suggesting that matches were in danger of degenerating into 'orgies for intractable hooligans' (Vincent, 2005a). Later,

in 1904, one Edgar Thompson died as a result of a kick in the head during a match in Wellington. But was this public reputation of rising violence really deserved? Vincent (2005a) suggested that one interpretation might be that violence was not on the increase, but that the middle class administrators (those charged with the governance of the game) had manipulated public perceptions and were gradually redefining the limits of acceptable behaviour; merely enforcing the rules on the field a little more rigidly.

Perhaps one outcome of the common understanding that rugby was a violent game was the male dominance of the environment. When, in 1891, a proposal to send a women's team on tour was suggested, the newspapers of the time asserted that rugby was 'unwomanly' and dismissed it as a 'huge farce' (Phillips, 1996, p. 76). Even being a spectator was problematic for women. Phillips quoted the *Western Star* in 1882:

The frequent use of oaths and foul language by some of the players during the excitement of the game (rendered) it unsafe for ladies and children to be present at such contests (1996, p. 77).

In 1888, a privately organised team captained by Joseph Warbrick, and known as the New Zealand Natives, toured Britain. Comprising 20 Maori and five Europeans (Ryan, 2005a), they played 107 matches in 11 months against teams from England, Scotland, Wales, Australia and New Zealand. The modern concept of player fatigue might have been illustrated by the several players who returned seriously ill at the end of the tour. The tour was surrounded by controversy. The racial composition of the team was questioned, the team's amateur credentials were questioned, and their over-vigorous and unsportsmanlike play was criticised (Hope, 2002). Even a referee involved was criticised:

The Natives' match against England had ended in a shambles with two New Zealand players being sent off and with the Natives accusing referee, Rowland Hill, secretary of the English RFU, of being a cheat (Tobin, 2005, p. 14).

There may be some consistency in the discourse surrounding English referees. Vincent (2005) suggested that, during the early years, the rules of the game were a problem. There was little consistency and the rules were often disputed. The ineffectiveness of offside laws, and the lack of penalties for infringements, was reported in the *Lyttelton*

Times as early as 20th July, 1874. Later in his book *The Art of Rugby Football* Tom Ellison (1902) argued that players should have the right to question incompetent referees. Again there is a certain consistency with some of the discourse in later years.

In 1892, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union (NZRFU) was established in Wellington with a remit to unify rules and coordinate matches (Owen & Weatherston, 2002), but the South Island unions at first refused to join, fearing a northern bias. Within a few years, however, they had accepted inclusion and rugby could be at last viewed as a national sport. On 15th August, 1903, New Zealand's national rugby team played their first full-scale international, against Australia. However, the relationship between the NZRFU and the Canterbury Union continued to be fragile. In 1905, Canterbury was suspended in a dispute over one glass of unspecified liquid refreshment provided to a visiting team, and then claimed as an expense from the NZRFU (Tobin, 2005).

The place of rugby at the heart of New Zealand folklore was firmly established by the first official tour of Great Britain in 1905. The touring party went away as New Zealanders and came back as All Blacks, a nickname attributed by a British journalist the day after the first game of the tour (Palenski, 2003). Led by Boer War veteran, Dave Gallagher, this team has become known as the 'Originals', and it is from this tour that many of the traditions surrounding the All Blacks have developed. Including matches on the way back against France and British Columbia, they won 34 out of 35 matches. Their solitary loss was 0-3 against Wales in Cardiff. The story of a disallowed try that day developed over time to maintain the All Black aura of supremacy. They were hailed as conquering heroes on their return, the legend of the All Blacks was established¹⁰ (Tobin, 2005).

Daley (2005) offered a slightly different view of the tour. Her version reported of the low expectations when the party set off (the team had just lost 0-3 to Wellington); of a team that had on average put on a stone in weight during the tour; of the accusations of foul and dirty play leveled at them; and, of the constant complaining about the standard

¹⁰ This version is perhaps the common understanding of many of those in the field of New Zealand rugby today.

of referees. Even Tobin's (2005) favorable version of the tour has stories of player infighting, accusations of players deliberately not trying, and possible betting scandals. As will be seen, when elements of the British and Irish Lions' tour to New Zealand in 2005 are discussed in Chapter Eight, there are many possible interpretations of what actually happens on tour.

At the end of the tour the NZRFU received a profit of £12,000 (Hope, 2002) but players were disgruntled to receive no share of this (Tobin, 2005). Professionalism was rearing its head one hundred years ago. Practices and understandings developed about what was acceptable payment for players. Reports of clubs attracting players through covert payment, or payment for 'broken time', or providing them with jobs were debated (Vincent, 2005a). A rebel All Black tour to the North of England, the stronghold of professional rugby, was organised by one Albert Baskerville. Out of the 200 or so provincial and international players, over three-quarters expressed a desire to tour (Haynes, 1996), and the NZRFU responded with legal threats and declarations that every player on the tour would be banned from rugby. However, the tour went ahead with four of the 'Originals'; the players wore black jerseys with the silver fern; match programmes listed them as All Blacks; they performed the haka; they played under *rugby league* rules; and, they scored a last minute winning try against Great Britain (Haynes, 1996). The threat to the NZRFU sounds very similar to the events that unfolded in the lead-up to the game of rugby finally, and officially, turning professional in 1995.

In New Zealand, as Obel commented, in a comprehensive historical review of the social organisation of rugby union in New Zealand, that the "amateur game of rugby union gained ascendancy over the other 'football' codes" (2001, p.43) at least in part because the NZRFU were successful in promoting the idea of rugby union as a national game. Failure to reject 'professionalism' at the time would have led to the breaking of ties with other international unions, in particular England. Consequently payment for the players was, on the face of it, rejected by the administrators of the game of rugby union. However, to claim that the professional element of the game then flowed to rugby league is too simplistic. Established in 1910, the New Zealand Provincial Rugby League (NZPRL) initially rejected the idea of professionalism, as developed by the rugby league clubs in the North of England, preferring to compensate players only for loss of

wages (Coffey, cited in Obel, 2001, p.54). In New Zealand, the two codes have co-existed over the years with varying degrees of rivalry and hostility, culminating in the role of rugby league in the build-up to the events of 1995.

Another significant episode in the folklore of New Zealand rugby began in 1921 with the first tour by the South Africans. All Black rivalry with the ‘Springboks’ became a fundamental understanding within the community for over 50 years. It was in the midst of this understanding, that beating the South Africans was the pinnacle of achievement, that rugby’s relationship with New Zealand society became intertwined in a complex and ultimately highly damaging way. On 13th August, 1921, the first test match between South Africa and New Zealand was played at Carisbrook, Dunedin. New Zealand won 13-5, in a match characterised by the All Blacks wearing letters, not numbers on their shirts (Palenski et al., 2006). The administrators were apparently trying to maximise revenue by preventing pirate programmes being sold. The series was drawn. The mythical dragon that had to be slain emerged. It was to be 1956 before the All Blacks won a home series against South Africa, and 1996 before they won a series on South African soil.

In 1928, 1949 and 1960, at the behest of the South African Rugby Board (SARB) the NZRFU sent white-only teams on tours to South Africa. Maori were ostensibly excluded from all these tours in order to meet the requirements of the domestic racial policy in South Africa at the time. The strength of the understanding that the Springboks had to be beaten may have contributed to a continued subservience to their opponent’s requirements. Even for the home tests of 1937 there was no game arranged with New Zealand Maori. The policy was widely blamed for driving Maori players away from rugby union and towards the professional rugby league code (Ryan, 2005b). The racial divisions created were to continue to trouble rugby administrators. The public discourse surrounding the 1956 tour by the South Africans also demonstrated the continued marginalised position of women in the environment. As Andrewes’s analysis of the images of gender in selected Auckland newspapers demonstrated:

A report in the *New Zealand Herald* lamented what it regarded as a rash statement made by a rugby reporter who claimed that the Springboks were a strikingly handsome team, particularly attractive to women. In the view of the correspondent, such a statement was

potentially disastrous for the masculine enjoyment of the game. ‘Can’t you see what could happen? The football grounds may be crowded to the gates with females anxious to see these unusually handsome footballers. Instead of the usual Saturday afternoon cries – “Kick it! Kick, you clot!” or “Garn, Ref – whatter you doing?” – we could be hearing, “Isn’t he super?” or “Look at the one with black hair and brown eyes!” (2005, p. 133).

It might be argued that New Zealand rugby’s most public crisis occurred at the nexus of these two strongly and widely held understandings about rugby; that the South Africans must be played and beaten; and, that rugby was a male domain. The 1981 tour to New Zealand by South Africa formed a focal point for many opposed to the apartheid regime and its racist policies. However, according to Dann (1982) the huge anti-apartheid protests that followed “brought women together and had unleashed their latent hostility towards the inherently sexist sport of rugby” (Hughes, 2005, p. 138). Dann’s views have been supported by others (Thompson, 1988; Nauright & Black, 1996), although Hughes concludes that the image of “feminist protestors hammering a giant nail in the coffin of rugby...is a pointed exaggeration” (2005, p. 150). The contribution of the feminists might be debated, as might the involvement of criminal gangs, but the riots that occurred around the country shook New Zealand. More than 150,000 people were involved in some 200 demonstrations (Richards, 1999). The “unprecedented disruption” (King, 2003, p. 488) meant that official New Zealand teams would not play South Africa again under an apartheid regime. That is not to say the NZRFU and the rugby community gave up easily on their desire to beat South Africa.

More recent history

1985 saw a tour to South Africa organised despite the New Zealand Prime Minister, David Lange’s insistence that the tour must not proceed. It was only cancelled after the High Court decided that the NZRFU had breached its own constitution. The NZRFU spent \$160,552 in legal fees that year, the majority defending its ‘right’ to send a team to South Africa. This represented almost 23% of the total income for 1985 (NZRFU Annual Report, 1985). Perhaps an example of a common understanding dominating the actions of those charged with governance of the game. South Africa had to be beaten. A ‘rebel’ tour was organised for the following year, becoming known as the New Zealand Cavaliers, and once again the NZRFU responded by banning players. Interestingly,

although the discourse suggested the players had been paid, the bans were for just two test matches. After all they were only trying to slay the dragon!

South Africa was excluded from the first Rugby World Cup, hosted and won by New Zealand in June 1987. That was to prove to be the end of New Zealand's World Cup glory. In 1991, they were beaten by a better Australian team in the semi-final (Fox, 1991, *35 Years of Rugby News*); in 1995, they were beaten in the final by the re-emergence of South Africa and food-poisoning (Mains, 1995, *35 Years of Rugby News*); 1999 saw them beaten in the semi-final by 40 minutes of brilliance and foul play by the French (Hart, 1999, *35 Years of Rugby News*); and, in 2003, they were beaten by Australia in a semi-final after which they were branded "chumps and chokers" (Paul, 2003, *35 Years of Rugby News*, p. 163). The 2007 defeat in the quarter-finals against France was the All Blacks' worst performance in a Rugby World Cup. This time the English referee was blamed in a *New Zealand Herald* editorial:

It takes a particularly bad display for an administrator to say, as New Zealand Rugby Union chairman Jock Hobbs did yesterday, "Some of the decisions the referee made had an enormous bearing on the outcome. In our view some of the decisions were very, very questionable" (10 October, 2007, nzherald.co.nz).

The World Cup now has a central place in the New Zealand rugby environment. Perhaps winning the Rugby World Cup has replaced beating South Africa as the commonly accepted goal.

From the early 1980s professionalism was starting to emerge. In 1984, Andy Haden, a 41 test All Black, appeared before the NZRFU Council to answer charges that he had breached the laws of amateurism. The charges were dismissed. Yet in his autobiography *Boots'n all!*, published in 1983, Haden had admitted:

Theoretically, I could be categorised a professional for accepting the royalties payable following publication of this book – money earned by sitting down for six months, otherwise unemployed, and recording what the game meant to me (1983, p. 223).

It took almost ten years before rugby officially turned professional in New Zealand. The World Rugby Corporation threat in 1995, led by Kerry Packer, and the emergence of the Australian Rugby League ‘Super League’, left administrators with little choice but to abandon amateurism. Obel (2001) argued that it was the threat to the national administrators’ control of rugby union in New Zealand, emerging from the pay-TV battle between rival broadcasters for rugby league competitions in Australia, that provoked the introduction of professionalism in the southern hemisphere rugby. An extensive account of the events at the time, and an insight into the players’ motivations, was given by Peter FitzSimons in his 1996 book *The Rugby War* (2003, 2nd edition). The result of the upheaval was the formation of South Africa New Zealand Australia Rugby (SANZAR), and the signing of a combined deal for exclusive TV rights with News Corporation worth US\$555 million over 10 years (Hope, 2002). On August 25, 1995, at a meeting in Paris, the IRB formally declared that the amateur rules that had been defended so vigorously for over 100 years were no longer applicable to rugby union. The taken-for-granted understandings about amateurism and the related concept of voluntarism were left behind, leaving an unclear future. O’Brien and Slack, in their study of how professionalism developed in the English rugby environment, and building on ideas from DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Zucker (1983), suggested that the old habits would not die away easily:

When values, such as amateurism, and their related operating procedures are validated through the force of habit, history, and tradition, they become unquestioningly accepted and thereby, institutionalized (O’Brien & Slack, 2003, p. 419).

The game became professional almost overnight. Players were paid significant sums of money and rugby became a product to be marketed to an audience. Unquestioning acceptance of the new values has not been a characteristic of the subsequent discourse. Not for the first time, those charged with governance came into public focus. Their decisions were seen to affect players, supporters, referees and the media. According to Obel and Austrin, popular accounts of the changes came from two contrasting perspectives – ‘the demise of the national game’ or ‘the success of professionalism’ (2005, p. 173). It is possible that a common understanding about professionalism has yet to develop amongst the communities in the rugby environment. In their books *The*

Judas Game and *A Whole New Ball Game* two authors reflected on the changes with contrasting final paragraphs:

That's always been a strength of New Zealand rugby - the huge core of rugby support. But it is coming apart at the seams. The New Zealand Rugby Union has taken its eye off the ball. It has been very concerned with the game at the top level, where it is most visible, and forgotten about the foundations of New Zealand rugby. And we're about to pay the price (Romanos, 2002, p. 243).

Rugby is closer to being a game for all New Zealanders now than at many times in the past, if not ever. The passion might have been dimmed slightly but that was inevitable because in the global village in the twenty-first century, it is impossible to regard the rugby match as a matter of life and death. No longer a male bastion, no longer confrontationally politicised through its South African connection, rugby has become a truly national game that gives New Zealand the credentials to cement its position as the definitive rugby nation. If we succeed in that, the rest will follow. The problems that loom worryingly large today will prove manageable if not solvable and the All Blacks will remain the most famous, most glamorous, most intriguing team in world rugby today (Thomas, 2003, p. 235).

The Rugby World Cup provided another very public examination of the actions of those charged with governance in 2002. Following a prolonged dispute over money and advertising rights, the IRB stripped New Zealand of the right to co-host the 2003 Rugby World Cup. The heated debate that followed included the now infamous comments from the New Zealand Sport Minister. In response to a question on the remedies available to him, he suggested they might involve using "Heinekens in particularly uncomfortable places" on the IRB chairman and the Australian Rugby Union boss (*35 Years of Rugby News*, 2005, p. 147). He later claimed he was merely reflecting and representing the disappointment of every New Zealand rugby fan. Perhaps not so much evidence of a commonly held idea, as of a politician under pressure. Following an independent inquiry by Sir Thomas Eichelbaum, the NZRU chief executive and chairman and the majority of the NZRU board members resigned.

A new board and management structure was put in place, and has remained largely intact ever since. Significant decisions have been made on the future structure of the game. There was a complete review of the structure of competitions in 2005. The

National Provincial Championship (NPC) was reduced to two divisions, and players' salaries capped. The SANZAR - News Limited agreement was extended until 2010 with an expanded Super 14 competition and Tri-Nations series¹¹. The performance of the All Blacks on the field, between World Cups, was exemplary, including a 3-0 series victory over the British Lions in 2005. Between the 2003 and 2007 Rugby World Cup competitions the All Blacks won 38 of 43 tests played, giving them a win ratio of 88%.

The history of New Zealand rugby may be littered with examples of common understandings that might have developed sufficiently over the years to influence the actions that people in the environment have taken. 'It's a game for all classes' has perhaps contributed to the speed at which the game was taken up. 'It's a violent and manly game' has perhaps contributed to the overriding male dominance of the environment. The 'Originals' and the 'Invincibles' have contributed to the way rugby is viewed as the national sport. 'The South Africans must be beaten at all costs' may have fueled the way in which rugby people defended their rights to play, against huge opposition from the government of New Zealand. It may also explain why Maori, and more recently Pacific Islanders have chosen rugby league in disproportionate numbers. The research does not claim to prove these observations one way or the other, for they are only possible interpretations of the history. Some might argue that the period 1985 to 2005 has been the most tumultuous period in the history of New Zealand rugby. Even a cursory review of the early years might counter that view, but change has certainly occurred throughout the environment. As Paul Thomas explained:

New Zealand rugby has undergone rapid, startling change, much of it reflecting the seismic social and economic changes that have shaken up the nation in the last two decades (2003, p. 19).

Many of the challenges faced have been decided upon by those charged with the governance of the game. This research will highlight the way in which their decisions might have interacted with commonly held, taken-for-granted understandings, or institutionalised logics, amongst the communities in the environment.

¹¹ Super 14 is an annual competition comprising 5 New Zealand teams, 5 South African teams, and 4 Australian teams. The Tri-Nations is an annual competition between the national teams of the three countries.

Why the choice of 1985 and 2005?

A decision was made early in the process to focus on the specific years of 1985 and 2005. Given that the frameworks selected for viewing the environment come from institutional theory, a twenty year time frame was considered sufficient for visible patterns in the nature of the taken-for-granted ideas and understandings to emerge. The timeframe is longer than O'Brien and Slack (2003, 2004) used to study changes in English rugby (1995-2000), but considerably less than the fifty year period used by Scott, Rueff, Mendel and Caronna (2000) in their study of field-level change amongst health care organisations. It is comparable with Cousens and Slack (2005), who studied field-level change in North American major league professional sport over the period 1970 to 1997. The selection of specific years was intended to ground the research, but not necessarily to limit it. As highlighted later, in Chapter Two, ideas and understandings are likely to have emerged and dissipated over varying periods of time.

Given that the initial inspiration behind the research was the All Blacks' Rugby World Cup performances, there were practical factors that contributed to the selection of these years. The enquiry began in 2005, two years out from the Rugby World Cup that was held in France in October 2007. The inaugural Rugby World Cup was held in 1987. The comparative year was thus considered to be 1985. During those years there were at least two significant comparable events – All Black matches against Australia at Eden Park, Auckland, and Ranfurly Shield games between Canterbury and Auckland in Christchurch. The 1985 Ranfurly Shield game has been described by one commentator as “The Game of the Century” (Gifford, 2006, p. 97). Again the idea of comparative events was to ground the research.

Arguably the most significant event to have affected the game in more recent years was the change to professionalism in 1995. Hence, the balanced focus - ten years before, and ten years after that event. In addition, given the link with those charged with governance, the NZRFU board was considered an important part of the study. Eight members of a board of eighteen in 1985 had passed away by 2005. The practical implication of interviewing surviving members was considered in the choice of 1985. So the years chosen for analysis were 1985 and 2005.

The organisational field in 1985 and 2005

The communities affected by governance in the field of New Zealand rugby were identified through the process detailed in Section 3.2 of Chapter 3: Methodology. The key communities included the governing bodies, the players (senior and junior), the unions and clubs, the referees, the supporters and sponsors, journalists and, by 2005, television and broadcasting representatives. The purpose of this section is to provide some context as to the relationships that existed between the communities and various competitions in each of the years chosen.

In 1985, the organisational field of New Zealand rugby was characterised by an environment where the central authority, the NZRFU, controlled and managed international relationships, the national teams (All Blacks, New Zealand Maoris, New Zealand Juniors, New Zealand Colts, Emerging Players Team, New Zealand Secondary Schools, and New Zealand Sevens), and the national competitions (the NPC, the “fresh-up” Inter-Provincial National Sevens, and Ranfurly Shield¹²). There were 27 provincial unions and their representative teams were affiliated to the NZRFU. The union representatives formed the governing Council.

By 1985, the NZRFU Council consisted of eighteen members and one full-time secretary who worked with the chairman of the time. A number of salaried coaching coordinators had been appointed that year for the first time. Various committees and sub-committees would put decisions to the Council and a vote would be taken. Decisions were, in theory at least, binding on all members and their unions. Reporting to the Council, in 1985, was the Executive Committee, consisting of seven members, through which proposals and initiatives were developed and actioned. In addition there was a Coaching Executive Committee, a Promotions and Public Relations Committee, a Medical Advisory Committee, a Television Committee, a Marketing Committee, and a Players’ Liaison Committee. There was also a Junior Advisory Board and a Maori Advisory Board. Various members of the rugby fraternity were co-opted to such committees. For example, representatives of the New Zealand Rugby Referees Association (NZRRA) were directly involved in the Coaching Committee, the Laws

¹² Between 13th September, 1902, and the introduction of the NPC, in 1976, the Ranfurly Shield was the only national inter-provincial competition

Committee and the Referee Appointments' Committee. Players such as Andy Haden, Andy Dalton and Jock Hobbs were members of the Players' Liaison Committee. In 1985, the full Council met eight times and the Executive Committee 30 times. The total expenses for administration were \$427,422 for the year (NZRFU Annual Report, 1985, p.74). This represented almost 61% of a total income for the year of \$700,919.

The establishment of the NZRFU, in 1892, as a national federation of provincial unions established the principle that clubs were subordinated to provincial unions, and this principle was still strong in 1985. The unions controlled club competitions and player eligibility to play in those competitions. All the players in New Zealand were, in 1985, as far as the NZRFU and the IRB were concerned, amateurs, although events of that year illustrated the hypocrisy of that 'fact'. An unofficial tour to South Africa took place, later named 'the Cavaliers'. Only two of the All Black team made themselves unavailable. Although the NZRFU disowned the tour, the players that went were only banned for two matches. One player that wrote about the tour, Dave Loveridge spoke about payments of as much as \$100,000 being paid to players. The NZRFU asked the players on their return to sign an oath that they were not paid – "an excellent device for asking questions to which you do not want to know the answer" (Richards, 2007, p.209). Risking a generalisation, it is fair to conclude the relationship between the players and the NZRFU in 1985 could not be described as open and honest in the context of professionalism. It may have been similar for the clubs where evidence will be presented later in this research that significant 'sums' were paid for certain players, even in 1985.

With no Rugby World Cup until 1987, the All Blacks' focus was test matches – with particular emphasis over this period on the matches against South Africa. At provincial union level the Ranfurly Shield was the focal point, with the NPC still developing its place in New Zealand rugby.

By 2005, the governing body had been renamed the NZRU and was structured as an incorporated society registered under the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. In 2005, its structure was a board, led by a chairman, consisting of eleven members. An appointed CEO led the management of the organisation. The management structure was broken down into three 'teams', an operations team, a corporate services team, and the All

Blacks team. Twenty-one management positions were listed in the Annual Report 2005, including some parallels with the 1985 committee structure. There was a High Performance Manager, a Marketing and Sponsorship Manager, a Broadcasting and Content Manager, a Professional Player, Coach and Referee Manager, and a Provincial Union Relationship and Community Rugby Manager. There was evidence in the 2005 NZRU Annual Report that the board considered its role to include elements of compliance, strategy, operational leadership and the management of equity. As a contrast to 1985, the total revenue had risen to \$146,675,000 (NZRU Annual Report, 2005, p.38), but the figures produced do not allow a comparable ‘administration’ cost to be identified. The figure for ‘governance and financial’ expenditure was \$9,984,000 representing 6.8% of total revenue.

The competition structures had changed significantly with the introduction, in 1995, of an additional tier, the ‘Super’ rugby level. By 2005, it was the Super 12 consisting of five teams from New Zealand (Auckland Blues, Waikato Chiefs, Wellington Hurricanes, Canterbury Crusaders, and the Otago Highlanders), four from South Africa, and three from Australia. The NZRU controlled franchise-like operations were organised to represent, and draw from, geographical boundaries formed by the existing provincial unions. In turn those provincial unions still controlled the clubs. There were a total of 390 senior clubs in 2005 (Palenski, Chester & McMillan, 2005), ranging from 44 registered with Northland Union to just six registered with North Otago. The clubs themselves, through their junior clubs, coexisted with secondary schools to control the organisation of junior rugby. The Unions themselves had remained substantially the same in geographic boundaries between 1985 and 2005, with changes in name to just three. North Auckland became Northland in 1994, Counties became Counties-Manukau in 1996, and Horowhenua became Horowhenua-Kapiti in 1997.

The following two schematics (Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.5) illustrate the differences between the two years, in the context of competitions and communities.

Figure 1.3. Schematic of key relationships in 1985

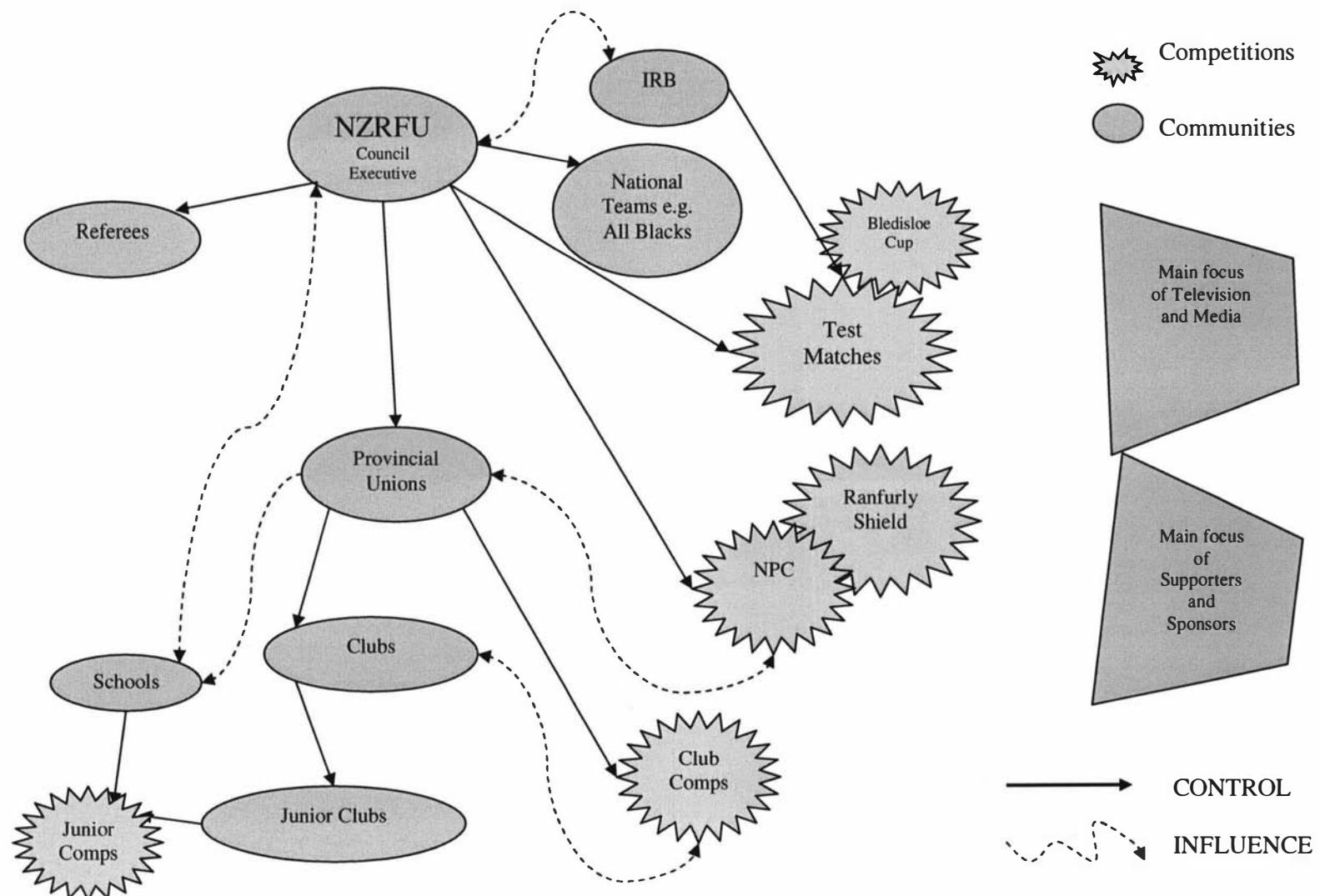
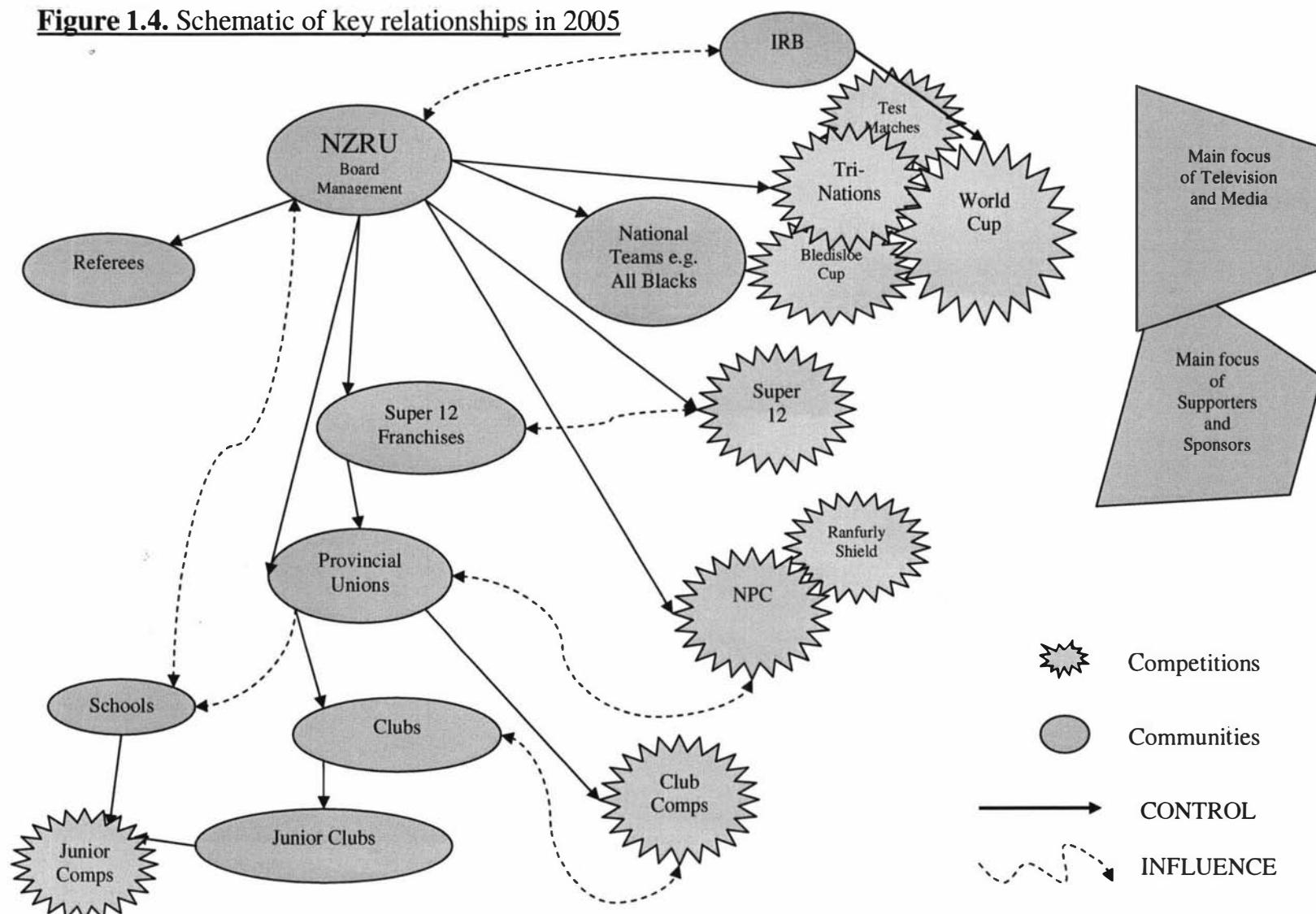


Figure 1.4. Schematic of key relationships in 2005



In summary, this section has illustrated why the field of rugby in New Zealand is an important area for study, particularly in the context of governance. The commercial significance and a brief history of the game, highlighting both the changing nature of the environment and some parallels with today, have been presented. The rationale for the specific years of 1985 and 2005 has been outlined, and the relationships between the key communities and competitions in 1985 and 2005 introduced. Chapter One concludes by summarising the contributions that the research makes.

1.4. Contributions of the research

To be transparent from the outset, this research does not provide simple answers. The environment is far too complex for that to happen. There will be implications drawn from the results but unfortunately, there will not be a list of actions to undertake to ensure the All Blacks do win another World Cup. What this research contributes is a partial picture of the way in which taken-for-granted ideas and understandings might have some influence on how governance decisions are enacted across the field of New Zealand rugby. The analysis and discussion sections highlight some of the changes that might be seen to have occurred in what is taken-for-granted, and their possible links with performance. The link highlighted is with performance across a range of decisions, from, for example, how referees should be treated to how the All Blacks might best be developed. This is an analysis of organisational behaviour in the specific field of New Zealand rugby, and can make no claim that the results can be replicated in any other environment. That is for others to judge and test. Some may view the contribution as a starting point for the recognition of *institutionalised logics* as a piece of the puzzle of governance.

Those who have contributed to the research include members of the NZRU Board, members of what was the NZRFU Council, senior NZRU managers, NZRFU executive committee members, All Blacks, referees, people from provincial unions, players and administrators from clubs in both North and South islands of New Zealand, supporters, journalists and broadcasters, and those involved in junior and school rugby - a myriad of participants in the field of New Zealand rugby. The approach has enabled some of the huge complexities of the environment to emerge in an understandable and practical

way. Perhaps the key outcome of this research might be to persuade those concerned with the future of the game in New Zealand to re-examine the assumptions on which their decisions and opinions are based. Given that those charged with the governance of the game do not operate in a world of perfect information, the practical goal of the research was to produce a report that might add value to their decision-making processes. However, the broad perspective taken means that the research might also be of interest to those involved in the game at many levels - be it playing, supporting, managing or governing.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This chapter builds the theoretical foundations upon which the research is based. First, the philosophy behind the research, a social constructionist view, is introduced. Ideas from institutional theory are used as the framework for the analysis and the reasoning behind this choice is explained. The literature surrounding institutionalisation is reviewed, with a narrowing focus on its particular contributions to the analysis of change and sporting environments. The link between institutionalisation and discourse analysis is covered in Chapter Three. A deliberately broad review of governance theory highlights the problem area and the opportunity for the research to contribute. The problem area is why, with all the years of research, might there still be a ‘puzzle of governance’? The puzzle will be considered in the context of what has already been discovered about the link between governance and performance. The governance of sporting organisations is also considered. By the end of this chapter, *what* is being researched, and *why*, will have been answered. Chapter Three then continues with *how* it is being researched.

2.1. Institutionalisation: The language to view the problem area

2.1.1. Philosophy

The choices made in this research flow from a view that ideas and understandings populating the world are the result of social construction. More specifically, from a view that ideas and understandings in the organisational world come about because individuals and groups participate in the creation of a perceived reality. Ideas and understandings would not exist if it were not for an element of on-going human intervention. Following Berger and Luckmann (1967), this philosophical stance suggests that even some of the most basic taken-for-granted facts are the result of social interaction. People interact with others in the belief that their perception of an idea or understanding is similar or at least related. Action then occurs, based on this understanding, and this reinforces the perception, until such a point that the idea or understanding develops the status of a taken-for-granted fact. At a simple level, a piece

of plastic or leather filled with air and placed in the middle of a grass field is *real*, but put it in the middle of a marked out field on a Saturday afternoon with 30 individuals who believe they are there to ‘play rugby’, and you have a perceived, but very different, reality. The action that takes place flows from a construction in the minds of those individuals – it is a commonly held perceived reality. It is fair to say that the action might be real enough to hurt!

The philosophy that underpins this argument is that reality does not *only* exist in the human mind – it can exist outside the mind. However, there is a clear distinction between reality and a perceived, albeit shared, reality – ‘the truth’. The view was summed up by Rorty:

We need to make a distinction between the claim the world is out there and the claim that truth is out there. To say that the world is out there, that it is not our creation, is to say, with common sense, that most things in space and time are the effects of causes which do not include human mental states. To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth, that sentences are elements of human languages, and that human languages are human creations (1989, pp. 4-5).

The truth is a human creation. It might be ‘truth’ to say that last Saturday a game of rugby took place. There are objects in the world that might exist without human intervention, the air that fills the piece of leather, the grass on the field, and the pieces of a tree that make up the posts. Ideas and understandings, however, do not exist without social construction. The ‘game of rugby’ is a social construction. The understandings about the rules and conventions through which the game is played by the 30 individuals are social constructions. It will be argued that ‘performance’ might be viewed as a social construction (see Herman, Renz, & Heimovics, 1997). When earlier referring to ‘things’ in the environment that might help or hinder the decision-outcome equation, the concern is with a perceived reality. The ‘things’ do not exist in a physical form, they are a human creation. They are a ‘truth’. But, because they are a human creation, ‘truth’ might be interpreted in many different ways by many different people. There may be multiple ‘truths’. That is why this research does not provide one answer. It provides an interpretation of the taken-for-granted ideas and understandings, which might be seen as a perceived reality amongst those people involved in New Zealand rugby. It is an

interpretation that views this perceived reality through Rorty's 'sentences' and 'human languages'. That is why the discourse surrounding 1985 and 2005 will provide the data set, and why the research question is phrased 'might be seen to have existed'.

2.1.2. Institutionalisation and institutional logics

Institutional theory, as an academic body of literature, has developed over many years exploring a range of organisational phenomena. Broadly speaking, institutions can be seen throughout the literature as conventions that make ways of acting acceptable in particular situations. Early institutional theorists emphasised the role of rules, values and habits as shared social reality in developing explanations of how these conventions come to 'exist' (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Parsons, 1960; Selznick, 1948, 1966). The nature and variety of institutional processes has been another thread of institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1983). The effects that these processes exert on organisational strategy (Oliver, 1991) and organisational change (Kikulis, Slack, & Hinings, 1995; Slack & Hinings, 1994; Tolbert & Zucker, 1999) have been addressed. Institutional theory has also been used to view the changing nature of sporting environments (Cousens & Slack, 2005; Kikulis, 2000; O'Brien & Slack, 2003, 2004).

The concept of institutionalisation is that over time organisational action reflects a pattern of doing things the way they have been done before. This pattern somehow becomes legitimised within that environment (Eisenhardt, 1988). Legitimacy is a central concept underlying the institutional literature. Suchman provided a definition:

Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs (1995, p. 574).

The generalised assumptions then cause the actions to be repeated. Scott's (2001) cultural-cognitive approach emphasises that an individual's internal interpretation of what they might take-for-granted is shaped by the external cultural framework. A cultural-cognitive view stresses that legitimacy can develop from something as simple

as people adopting a common frame of reference or definition of the situation. Following this argument, once those 30 individuals, out on the field on a Saturday afternoon, have adopted a common definition of ‘the game’, their actions become legitimised. This understanding about ‘the game’ might then, over time, be viewed as institutionalised. The shared understandings about the game define individuals’ actions on a Saturday afternoon. If the pattern of action is commonly accepted (or legitimised) then it will be more of the same next Saturday.

This conception of institutionalisation stresses the socially constructed frameworks of meaning that influence the actions taken. Institutionalised practices and understandings might be legitimised by widely held values, norms and beliefs that collectively could be termed culture (Gorman, 1989). In an early attempt to explore board culture Holland, Leslie, and Holzhalb argued “that anyone seeking to help a board improve its performance must consider its underlying assumptions and beliefs” (1993, p. 142). Here, what will contribute to the analysis are those underlying assumptions and beliefs that might be seen to be contributing towards the legitimisation of the understandings that affect action. There is a distinguishing feature to institutionalised phenomena; one that might be seen to set them apart from other organisational concepts. They are self-regulating in nature (Jepperson, 1991). This differentiates them from, for example, organisational norms. The argument is that a norm will only become institutionalised if it is rewarded and sanctioned (Parsons, 1951). This may happen over time, so evidence of gradually developing self-regulation may indicate early institutionalisation. Institutionalised ideas and understandings constrain or facilitate behaviour because the costs of deviating from that behaviour are viewed as too great. Non-conformity costs come in several guises: “economically (it increases risk), cognitively (it requires more thought), and socially (it reduces legitimacy and the access to resources that accompany legitimacy)” (Phillips, Lawrence & Hardy, 2000, p. 28).

Another theoretical implication that flows from institutional theory is the level at which the analysis has been carried out. The organisational field, proposed by DiMaggio and Powell, was defined in the introduction (Section 1.2) and provides a framework through which to view the myriad of groups affected by the decisions made by those charged with the governance of the game. The groups involved in New Zealand rugby are not all part of one organisation. A common feature of studies of institutional processes is the

consideration of multiple levels – individuals, organisations, fields, nation states, and international associations. Scott suggested that although no study can adequately deal with the complexity of all levels, “the most informative studies are those that identify and trace the effects of salient and influential processes across two or more levels” (2001, p. 196).

The development of a widely shared meaning is a key element of the institutionalisation process (Zucker, 1977). An idea or understanding that is not shared across a community cannot be viewed as the foundations for an institutionalised understanding. So the research will be looking for shared ideas and understandings that might shape the interactions with the decisions made by those charged with governance. For Kikulis a key element “is the idea that human agents play an active role in determining the level at which ideas and actions become institutionalized and deinstitutionalized” (2000, p. 299). The human agents at an individual level are very much part of the analysis.

Institutional logics

Friedland and Alford (1991) are commonly attributed with the introduction of the concept of institutional logics (e.g. Scott, 2001; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). They proposed that societies’ central institutions were characterised by multiple and potentially conflicting institutional logics. They defined logics as “a set of material practices and symbolic constructions – which constitute its (*the institution’s*) organizing principles” (1991, p.248). The level that Friedland and Alford (1991) were concerned with was at a society level and they articulated institutions as supra-organisational level phenomena. They identified what they referred to as the “central institutions of contemporary Western societies – capitalism, family, bureaucratic state, democracy, and Christianity” (1991, p.249). Thornton refined this list to include six sectors – markets, corporations, professions, states, families and religions. Each of these institutions has a central set of logics (higher order societal institutional logics) in which logics at a field level might be nested (Thornton, 2004). Although Freidman and Alford’s (1991) analysis was on societal level logics, institutional logics have been studied at a variety of levels; organisations (Jackall, 1988), industries (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999), geographic communities (Lounsbury, 2007), and organisational fields (Kitchener, 2002; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006).

Thornton and Ocasio defined institutional logics as:

...the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality (1999, p.804).

This suggests that institutional logics provide a link between individual agency and cognition, and socially constructed institutionalised practices. These institutionalised practices may themselves be constituted in a particular field by a range of institutionalised logics at a micro-level, perhaps even held by certain communities within the organisational field. It is these institutionalised logics that will be revealed through this research.

Another related, but different, concept was introduced by Prahalad and Bettis in 1986 - that of a 'dominant logic'. They suggested that decision makers in a field are guided by a dominant logic that becomes the prime determinant of how strategic decisions are made. Their conceptual paper did not preclude the existence of competing logics, but was again at a macro-level. The logics revealed in this research might be considered to 'exist' at a more micro-level than that proposed by Prahalad and Bettis. Institutionalised logics might be considered as elements that contribute in some way, either competing or supporting, to a prevailing dominant logic of the field of New Zealand rugby.

2.1.3. Institutional theory: History

As long ago as 1936, Robert Merton recognised that unanticipated consequences were a characteristic of social action – organisational decisions do not always result in the expected outcomes. In 1949, this problem was linked by Selznick to the concept of institutions, suggesting that constraints on action in a particular setting arose from “commitments enforced by institutionalization” (1966, p. 256). His view was that organisations were not the totally rational places they pretended to be, but could be seen as environments that gave life to distinctive value systems. The unanticipated consequences were at least in part the result of forces that these value systems produced.

Early work focused on shared norms and values as a crucial element in the development of institutions. Parsons (1960) widened the framework to examine the relationship with the organisation's external environment, and the way in which the value system is legitimised.

An article by Meyer and Rowan (1977) is credited with renewing interest in an institutional perspective (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999). The paper has an important implication for this research:

...formal organizations are often loosely coupled...structural elements are only loosely linked to each other and to activities, rules are often violated, decisions are often unimplemented, or if implemented have uncertain consequences, technologies are of problematic efficiency, and evaluation and inspection systems are subverted or rendered so vague as to provide little coordination (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 342).

This picture of violated rules, of unimplemented decisions with uncertain consequences, of subverted and vague inspections suggests that questions about the decision-outcome link have been at the heart of institutional theory for over three decades. It suggests that the 'way of looking at social life' from those years of research might be a good foundation for an analysis of why decisions made by those charged with governance do not always produce the intended outcomes. This implication also highlights an inherent problem with Meyer and Rowan's argument. As pointed out by Tolbert and Zucker (1999), by envisaging these unauthorised and unintended actions, they create an ambiguity, in so much as, earlier they had suggested that institutionalised 'structure' generated action, albeit either constraining or facilitating organisational actions. However, if these structural elements can be ignored then institutional effects are not as strong as proposed. Giddens (1979, 1980) offers an explanation by suggesting that institutionalised structures are unlikely to remain static in nature and will evolve over time. It may be that the stage of development affects an institutionalised structure's ability to constrain or facilitate action.

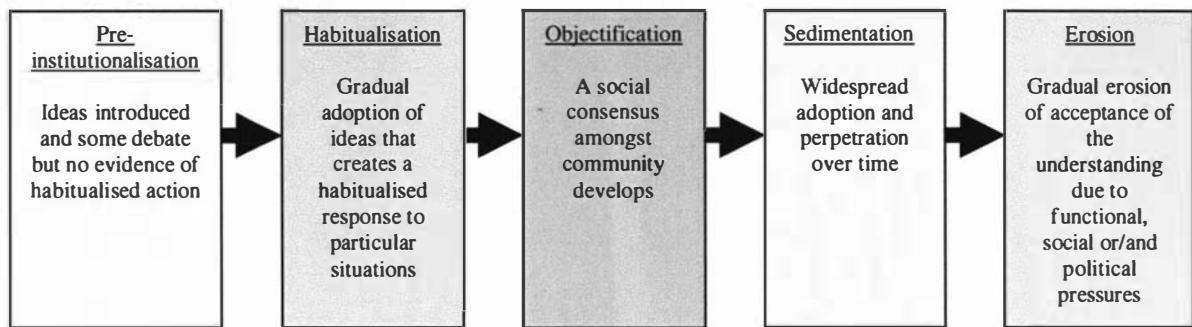
To clarify the view taken in this research, an institutionalised 'structure' might be viewed as a social construction of commonly held, ideas and understandings that leads to actions, that otherwise would not have occurred. It is proposed that the decoupling

that Meyer and Rowan described above might be related to the degree of institutionalisation that the ‘structure’ has undergone. In their analysis of organisational structure Tolbert and Zucker (1999) suggested that the process of institutionalisation has three stages. The first being “habitualization” (p. 175), which is characterised by the gradual adoption of new ideas that create a habitualised behavioural response amongst certain groups in response to particular stimuli. A degree of social consensus amongst organisational decision-makers about the ideas then develops in a process termed “objectification” (p. 176). They argued that full institutionalisation involves a further process, “sedimentation” (p. 178), which is characterised by widespread adoption and perpetuation over a lengthy period of time. A growth in interest group resistance, or a reduction in the degree of consensus, in the later sedimentation phase might help explain the decoupling to which Meyer and Rowan referred. Much of the focus of institutional research has been the emergence of institutions and their diffusion across other environments and organisations. Only in more recent times have institutions been viewed from the perspective of how they fade away, the concept of deinstitutionalisation. Oliver (1992) suggested that the erosion of fully institutionalised ideas and understandings can occur through functional, political or social pressures. Where perceptions of performance are poor, members of the organisation might attack the legitimacy of the social actions created by the extant institutionalised understanding. Alternatively, outside pressures, social or political, might undermine the stability of institutionalised frameworks. Figure 2.1 illustrates the process. The framework of institutionalisation as a process enables this research to view institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby over time at various stages of their development.

An institutional perspective has been used in several studies into sporting organisations and environments. Reviewing previous contributions on change in Canadian National Sport Organisations, Kikulis (2000) used institutional concepts to explore three aspects of governance and decision making. She described the institutionalisation of volunteer boards, the de-institutionalisation of volunteer control, and the semi-institutionalisation of paid executive roles. Kikulis concluded that by developing an understanding of the process of institutionalisation and de-institutionalisation, that considers the history and traditions of organisations *and* the role of human agents, understanding of change is enriched. She argued that knowledge of diverse institutionalised understandings within

organisations might enable managers to evaluate, and ultimately influence, which understandings become institutionalised.

Figure 2.1: The process of institutionalisation



Adapted from Oliver (1992) and Tolbert and Zucker (1999)

Cousens and Slack (2005) used a period covering 27 years in a study of change in the field of North American major league professional sport. Four dimensions derived from institutional literature were used for the study: the communities of actors involved in establishing and changing the rules, the pattern of their exchange processes, their governance mechanisms, and their institutional logics of action – all drawn from the work of Scott, Rueff, Mendel, and Caronna (2000). Primary data was collected from 410 documents containing interviews and nine personal interviews. They found that marked shifts occurred in each of the dimensions, concluding that, despite constraining forces, widespread change might occur in some circumstances. O'Brien and Slack (2003, 2004) used similar dimensions in their analysis of change and the professionalisation of English rugby union, adding the dimension of shifts in the field's legitimate forms of capital. O'Brien and Slack's studies covered the period from 1995-2000, and the main source of data was from interviews with 43 key individuals in the English game. They demonstrated that the process of institutionalisation in the field did not happen in a linear manner. It was an external event, the Paris Declaration that jolted the institutional frameworks, and may have created new dominant logics in the field.

O'Brien and Slack (2004) also illustrated the isomorphic nature of changes in the way in which the dominant logic of professionalism diffused throughout the field of English

rugby. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) introduced the concept of isomorphic processes when they argued that, at a field level, organisations modify their characteristics to be compatible with others in their environment. They do this primarily through three mechanisms – mimetic, coercive, and normative. Mimetic processes might be simply copying those organisations that are seen to be successful. Coercive processes are based on the need for legitimacy, particularly where an organisation relies on outside resources. In the case of English rugby and the introduction of professionalism in 1995, initially mimetic processes, following the high profile takeover of Newcastle-Gosforth Rugby Club by business entrepreneur Sir John Hall, were the strongest driver of change:

The chief executive of one of the first clubs to restructure after Newcastle explained that, “clubs started offering people contracts and so other clubs had to respond to that. They could’ve just sat back and not done anything, but they’d have ended up with no players at the end of the year” (O’Brien & Slack, 2004, p. 26).

Gradually more coercive pressures came into play. With the formation of two collectives – English First Division Rugby (EFDR) and English Second Division Rugby (ESDR) – the natural coercive isomorphism that is a feature of such inter-organisational relationships (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) caused a professional logic to spread amongst individual clubs. The third mechanism suggested by DiMaggio and Powell, normative, stems from the development of a similar skill and mind set for the individuals who run the organisations. Here the accountancy profession might be seen as a prime example. Through their education and qualifications, their cognitive base may be viewed as similar, and this may form the basis of selection into decision making positions. Few sporting organisations will not have an accountant on their board. The social networks that develop from that common cognitive base then contribute to the isomorphic process. The ‘wealthy benefactor’ model initiated at Newcastle led similar to investments by individuals at leading clubs. Changes at Bath, Saracens, Richmond and Northampton were all facilitated by the investment of wealthy benefactors (O’Brien & Slack, 2004). The values and ethos of these business people contributed to the diffusion of a professional logic.

2.1.4. Institutional theory: A link to performance

An institutional approach may have been implicitly considered in management texts aimed at practitioners. Three widely read books have alluded to the importance of an organisation recognising past practices and understandings that set conditions on action in the context of improving organisational performance. Hamel and Prahalad's *Competing for the Future* (1994) highlighted the importance of "unlearning the past" (p. 64). The book described the "corporate genetics" (p. 53) that potentially inhibit an organisation's development in a time of change. These genetics, they argued, frame and consequently limit an organisation's range of decision-making choices. It is implicit that these dominant managerial frames become part of the fabric of an organisation and that they set a condition on the actions that an organisation takes. If these managerial frames are limiting the responses of an organisation to changes in the environment then logically, as Hamel and Prahalad argued, they need to be 'unlearned' if organisational performance is to improve. There may be a cost to participants not following the action that the dominant frames prescribe. Following Phillips et al. (2000) alternatives might be viewed as more risky, less legitimate or more time consuming to get accepted. This may be why 'unlearning the past' is seen as a difficult process. The institutionalisation framework used in this study might be interpreted as having uncovered evidence of the genetics and frames that may place a condition on action amongst communities in the field of New Zealand rugby.

An alternative, but in many ways complementary, analysis was advocated by Collins and Porras in *Built to Last* (2000). They suggested that some of the success of their visionary companies came from "underlying processes and fundamental dynamics embedded in the organization" (p. 41). Their concept of a core ideology pervasive throughout the organisation was at the heart of their argument. In all their visionary companies they suggested that there were a set of guiding principles deeply embedded in the organisation and its people – the organisation's "essential and enduring tenets" (p. 73). They argued that this core ideology does not change in response to the environment, but provides a foundation from which an organisation can move forward. If this core ideology places a condition on action, which, on the basis of Collins and Porras's evidence leads to improved organisational performance, then an analysis that

sheds light on these embedded dynamics might be helpful. Again the institutionalisation framework might be seen to have uncovered evidence of these ‘essential and enduring tenets’ in the field of New Zealand rugby.

A third, more recent, practitioner publication *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths and Total Nonsense* by Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) suggested that business is riddled with taken-for-granted understandings that have become accepted truths. They argued that much “conventional wisdom is wrong” (p. 14), but it continues to guide decisions and action. The scope of their observations is diverse, but they highlight the potential power that frames for action can hold over those making decisions. They argued that evidence-based management might dilute, and indeed even contradict, such taken-for-granted understandings such as; organisations *must* have a strategy; organisations *must* change or they will die; and, financial incentives drive company performance. If these are institutionalised logics, there might be considerable costs to individuals, who contradict such conventions in the boardrooms of New Zealand.

So a range of conceptual ideas from institutional theory offers a coherent framework for an analysis of the nature of the institutionalised logics that might constitute a field, but the question arises, so what? Even if those charged with governance were able to view the nature of the institutionalised logics of New Zealand rugby, what can they do with the knowledge? If the pressures from these logics are so dominant, could performance be improved anyway? Research by Oliver (1991) suggests a solution. There is an argument that institutional pressures cause a narrowing of the strategic choices available to organisations. For example, the strategies and tactics available in one kind of field may not be seen as ‘appropriate’ in another. Institutional environments influence and delimit what organisations can do (Scott, 2001). However, Oliver suggested that organisations do not have to be passive in the face of these institutional pressures. She delineated five general strategies available to organisations facing institutional pressures; acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance and manipulation. The first *acquiescence* implies that organisations accede to the pressures, through the development of habits, through imitation (which is consistent with mimetic isomorphism) or through compliance (conscious recognition and obedience). This response perhaps reflects the dominant view of early institutional literature. *Compromising* covers a set of behaviours that include balancing, pacifying and

bargaining in response to an institutional pressure. Oliver grouped tactics such as concealment and attempts to decouple parts of the organisation from the necessity of conforming as *avoidance*. *Defiance* is resisting pressures to conform in a very public manner by dismissing or challenging or even attacking the source. The final strategic choice identified by Oliver was *manipulation*, “the purposeful and opportunistic attempt to co-opt, influence, or control” (1991, p. 157).

Oliver’s (1991) research, and that of others that have supported the framework (e.g. Clemens & Douglas, 2005), is important because it suggests that organisations do not have to respond passively to institutionalised constraints. There are options available to those charged with governance to cope with the institutionalised logics that dominate, provided they can be brought into focus. The discussion section (Chapter Eight) reviews how those charged with governance in the field of New Zealand rugby might be seen to be making strategic choices in the face of pressure from the institutionalised logics identified. A warning about the idea of integrating this strategic choice perspective into institutional theory was sounded by Goodrick and Salancik (1996). They argued that the distinctive and powerful nature of an institution, conceptualised as an enduring supra-organisational phenomenon, might not easily be reduced to just another constraint to be managed. Their research on cesarean operations in various types of Californian hospitals found that institutionalised rules set the limits within which different strategic behaviours were observed. It may be that institutionalised logics at a comparatively micro level have a less enduring effect, and should, therefore, be more easily managed by those charged with governance.

2.1.5. Institutionalisation: Conclusions

The fundamental basis of institutional literature is that the reality that we know is a social construction. ‘Truth’ is a shared perceived reality. Institutionalised ‘things’ are a shared perceived reality. Institutional theorists recognise the importance in organisational settings of socially produced shared conceptions that constitute the way in which situations are defined and dealt with. This fits with the basic philosophical approach. Institutional theory suggests that over time organisational action and reaction reflects a pattern of doing things the way they have been done before. This pattern then somehow becomes legitimised. Once the pattern is viewed as legitimate then the ideas

and understandings that produce that pattern might be viewed as institutionalised. That pattern might be seen as a logic that has gradually acquired the status of a taken-for-granted fact. There is a cost for groups or individuals who deviate from these accepted ideas and understandings, either economically, cognitively or socially. So these institutionalised logics have the potential to constrain or facilitate the actions of individuals and groups. Institutionalised logics provide a framework for action in a particular environment. They may shape the way in which decisions are both made, and responded to, by those in that environment.

Why have ideas from institutional theory been chosen for the framework? The study of institutionalisation is an established academic body of knowledge stretching back over 50 years. From its early days portraying organisational life as a series of monolithic and rigid society level institutions, it has developed to more recent contributions offering a view of organisational life as a multiplex of interacting and overlapping institutional effects, some developing, others decaying.

Institutional theory provides an established framework of language to view the processes of institutionalisation. Given that the many competing logics within the field of New Zealand rugby will be at various levels of development, the opportunity to apply established concepts such as *habitualisation*, *objectification*, *sedimentation* (Tolbert & Zucker, 1999), and *deinstitutionalisation* (Oliver, 1992) is important. Oliver (1991) also offers a framework to enable strategic responses (acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance and manipulation) to be made in the face of pressure arising from institutionalised logics. Finally, there is a body of institutional research on change in the context of sporting organisations, and two particular studies on the professionalisation of English rugby (O'Brien & Slack, 2003, 2004). Overall, institutional theory offers a range of established 'ways of looking at social life' that has enabled the problem area to be viewed. The focus now turns to the broad problem area of the governance – performance link.

2.2. Governance: The broad problem area

The purpose of this section is to illustrate that the body of knowledge concerning governance is, arguably, incomplete. This section does not claim to be a comprehensive

review of the literature on governance. What it offers is a sample of evidence establishing that there may, indeed, be a puzzle to which pieces might be added. It will establish that there is disagreement about what governance should be, and there is a particularly frustrating puzzle when looking at what takes place in the name of governance - specifically the link between governance and organisational performance. No clearer picture emerges in the area of sports governance. Overall this section provides the justification for an analysis that attempts to highlight one additional piece in a complex puzzle. The section also introduces two of the key elements that form part of this research, those charged with governance and those affected by governance.

2.2.1. What is governance?

The concept of governance has been studied from a number of different perspectives including legal, financial accounting, economics and organisational behaviour. Here the focus develops from an organisational behaviour perspective. It is the behaviour of groups of individuals, those affected by governance, which is considered in the context of decisions made by those charged with governance. Governance issues from corporate, non-profit and sports contexts will be considered in order to construct a meaningful understanding of governance in the context of New Zealand rugby. The term's historical context is associated with political structures, perhaps suggesting administration, bureaucracy, rules, control and regulations. Words such as innovation, competitive advantage, entrepreneurial flair, and calculated risk-taking are not so often associated with governance (Healy, 2003). Certainly the term governance does not have a universally accepted definition, and it is important that its use in this research is clarified. The word itself originates from the Greek *kubernan* 'to steer or pilot a ship' and Latin *gubernare* 'to direct, rule, guide' (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2007). Even the origins of the word seem to imply an underlying tension between a top down 'directing' approach and a more subtle 'steering' approach. A selection of definitions illustrates the confusion.

From a lay person's perspective the understanding might be more towards the 'directing' end of the scale. The Oxford English Dictionary definition of governance is "controlling, directing, or regulating influence" (2007). Over the years this simplistic definition might be viewed as being built upon by those with a particular viewpoint. The

finance and economics people bring concepts of return on investment and shareholder value into the picture, particularly when corporate governance is considered to be:

...simply how managers and directors ensure that the assets and resources of the business are used to ensure sustainable shareholder value is created (Healy, 2003, p. 9).

Ways of ensuring that corporate actions, assets and agents are directed to achieving the corporate objective established by the corporation's shareholders...to maximize shareholder wealth (Sternberg, 1994, p. 200).

These definitions emphasise the primacy of the shareholders. Shleifer and Vishny, narrow things down even further by suggesting that corporate governance:

...deals with the ways in which suppliers of finance to corporations assure themselves of getting a return on their investment (1997, p. 737).

Others enter the fray with governance categorised as a system or process, emphasising the legalistic nature of the concept:

...a more-or-less country specific framework of legal, institutional and cultural factors, shaping the patterns of influence that stakeholders...exert on managerial decision-making (Weimer & Pape, 1999, p. 152).

...can be described as the processes by which investors attempt to minimize the transaction costs...and agency costs... associated with doing business within a firm (Macey, 1997, p. 602).

Not-for-profit definitions continue the theme of a system and process, as do sports governance contributions:

...the process by which the board... sets strategic direction and priorities, sets policies and management performance expectations, characterises and manages risks, and monitors and evaluates organisational achievements...in order to exercise its accountability to the organisation and owners (SPARC, 2007, p. 18).

Another sport governance contribution takes us back to the dictionary:

...the system by which the elements of an organization are directed, controlled and regulated (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007, p. 3).

Few of the definitions above explicitly recognise that the ultimate objectives of directing and controlling might be outcomes rather than the processes. Henry and Lee begin to recognise the place of outcomes:

...the processes by which governments or governing bodies seek to steer the sports system to achieve the desired outcomes by moral pressure, use of financial or other incentives, or by licensing, regulation and control to influence other parties to act in ways consistent with desired outcomes (2004, pp. 26-27).

The picture gets a little more confused when others incorporate change into the definition:

Governance entails the processes and structures that an organization uses to direct and manage its general operations and programme activities. Without good governance, an organization cannot expect to perform effectively and to have the capacity to adapt readily to change (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, 1999, pp. 6-7).

...the appropriate board structures, processes and values to cope with the rapidly changing demands of both shareholders and stakeholders in and around their enterprises (Garratt, 2003, p. 12).

And, to confuse anyone still with this, governance:

...can be viewed as the set of structures that provides the boundaries for the operation of the enterprise (Gillan & Starks, 2003, p. 5).

Or, finally, from someone who had perhaps given up in frustration:

...governance as the art of complexity (Jessop, 1997, p. 101).

Rhodes observed that “governance has too many meanings to be useful, but the concept can be rescued by stipulating one meaning and showing how it contributes to the

analysis of change" (1996, p. 660). It seems reasonable to conclude that use of the concept of governance in social science has been eclectic, and at times, confusing. Here that tradition continues – hopefully without the confusion!

As was suggested in Chapter One, governance is viewed as wider than just a system or set of processes. This obviously stands in contrast to some of the views implied by the definitions above. Clarke summarised that governance is "being perceived as a set of processes, rules to be complied with, rather than the desired outcome of them" (2004, p. 1). The perspective on governance taken in this research is one where the term is associated with outcomes. It cannot be viewed as a process in isolation from the outcomes. For this research to make sense governance must be viewed in the context of outcomes. Those charged with governance must be concerned with the outcomes of their decisions and not just the system through which the decisions came to be made. The Mercury Energy incident that took place in New Zealand on 29th May, 2007, can be used to illustrate the perspective. This story is a simplified interpretation based on events reported in the media around the world. Following the non-payment of an electricity bill by a family in South Auckland, written warnings were given of disconnection. A subcontractor with appropriate paperwork was dispatched to action the disconnection. The family mother was reliant on an oxygen machine to help her breathe. Despite supposedly being told of this dependency, the subcontractor, following set procedures, disconnected the electricity and the mother of four died some two and a half hours later. One of those who might be seen as charged with governance, the chief executive of Mercury Energy, issued a statement that led to the headline "we didn't put a foot wrong" (*New Zealand Herald*, 31st May, 2007, p. 1). This echoes comments by the CEO of the NZRU following the World Cup hosting rights loss, "...I don't believe we got it wrong" (Lockhart, 2004, p. 11). Their argument might have been based on the illusion that adherence to the procedures and systems of governance is sufficient. Checks and balances may well have been in place, but they failed to consider the interaction point between their procedures (decisions) and the person implementing those procedures. The harassed contractor 'was only doing his job and following orders'. His belief was the disconnection needed to take place as per company policy - perhaps because of an institutionalised understanding that 'too many in South Auckland were not paying their bills'. This story illustrates that governance when viewed as a system or process may not be the complete picture. Interestingly, the focus of the media

and public attention shifted from the chief executive to the board over a two day period. That attention charged Mercury Energy with responsibility for the death despite the absence of a coroner's report¹³. This may be indicative of a shift in the public's perception of governance – an understanding that it is outcomes that are important.

Governance must be considered in the context of outcomes. This will naturally encompass the process (Clarke, 2004). Indeed, one contribution of this research may be to the process of governance, by highlighting an area that needs to be considered in decision making – the institutionalised logics. That landscape can only be discovered in the context of outcomes. When governance has been examined as a process, the outcomes are all too often ignored. Consequently, a wide view of 'governance' is taken. Daily, Dalton, and Cannella have suggested a definition:

...the determination of the broad uses to which organizational resources will be deployed and the resolution of conflicts among the myriad of participants in organizations (2003, p. 371).

The definition implies that governance incorporates both a decision making process and a concern with the outcomes. If the definition is widened a little further to account for the organisational field level of analysis, the 'myriad of participants' will include those stakeholders sitting outside one organisation. The working definition becomes:

Governance is the achievement of desired outcomes, through the determination of the broad uses to which organisational resources will be deployed and the resolution of conflicts among the myriad of participants in the field of New Zealand rugby.

So what are the implications for the research? The focus is on the decisions of those charged with governance, in the context of the point of interaction with those affected, because that is where the outcomes are likely to be influenced and viewed. Those affected by governance in the field of New Zealand rugby might include administrators, volunteers, professional players, club players, junior players, paying spectators,

¹³ As at the end of October 2007 there was still no official coroner's report. To be fair to the board of Mercury Energy, after the initial reaction, the company made great efforts to appear to 'do the right thing' by attending the funeral, and dealing quickly with the family's immediate concerns.

television spectators, corporate sponsors, professional referees, amateur referees, national media, international media, local media, international regulatory agencies, and even competing sports. For Andy Haden it was a little simpler, although his second point illustrates the complexity of the environment:

I consider there are five groups of people involved in rugby – the players, the administrators, the referees, the media and the spectators. When any one of those groups is weak, or retrogressive, the others suffer. Like anything, the whole of rugby is equal to the sum of all its parts, the construction of that whole being the responsibility of all (Haden, 1983, p. 241).

If governance was just a process then the input of the decision-makers, for example, the NZRU board, would be weighted more heavily. The research might address questions around how the decisions were made, and how the process might be executed more efficiently. If it was just a process then the input of those affected might be considered of lesser importance. But governance is viewed as an outcome and, as such, the discourse surrounding those affected by governance is given significant weight. The data arising from a junior rugby coach might be considered as important in the context of outcomes as the data from an NZRU board member. That is not to say that processes are not important; the processes may be crucial in the way in which they affect the outcomes.

2.2.2. Those charged with governance

One generally accepted theme, throughout the literature on corporate, non-profit and sports governance, is that at least some of those individuals charged with governance tend to take the form of a body of decision-makers, either elected or appointed. For a limited company, the “business and affairs of the company must be managed by, or under the direction or supervision of, the board of a company” (New Zealand Companies Act, 1993, Section 128:1). For non-profit organisations the appointment of trustees and boards is covered by the Charities Act 2005 and the Charitable Trusts Act 1957. For an incorporated society like the NZRU the statute that applies is the Incorporated Societies Act 1908. This is not quite so prescriptive and allows the society

to set its own rules on the appointment of officers of the society (Section 6:1). Although the legal form varies, it appears to be widely accepted that a board of decision-makers is somehow responsible for governance. This is common in the literature on corporate governance, non-profit governance and public sector governance. What is under dispute and clouded with confusion is what role these boards should play in the name of governance. In the last two decades there has been an increasing level of interest in exactly what those charged with governance have been doing. Following a number of high profile corporate (for example, WorldCom, Enron) and sporting organisational failures (for example, New Zealand's loss of World Cup hosting rights), investors, government agencies, employees, and other stakeholders have been questioning both the decisions and the performance. Under this sort of scrutiny it seems reasonable that a member of a governing board in New Zealand would understand their responsibilities very clearly. But do they?

Taking the corporate environment, Frederick, Davis and Post (1988) made the claim that directors see their primary responsibility as being to the organisation's shareholders, whilst managers tend to view their responsibility as being primarily to the company. Conger, Lawler and Finegold suggested that "today it is widely felt that a board's primary allegiance is to the company's shareholders" (2001, p. 141). It is argued that this misconception is partially responsible for clouding the governance – performance link. Under the legal framework of New Zealand this division does not have substance. Management, and the board of directors, both have a duty to the company as an entity (Lockhart, 2007). Directors have a legally enforceable duty. The confusion stems from a fundamental misunderstanding that the system has created. In a limited liability company the prime duty of a director and the board is *not* to the shareholders, but to the company as a legal entity. The prime duty of a board is to the company itself. This is laid down in the Companies Act 1993. Section 131:1 states that a "director of a company, when exercising powers or performing duties, must act in good faith and in what the director believes to be the best interests of the company" (www.legislation.govt.nz, 2004). In law, acting in the interests of the company is a higher duty than acting in the interests of the shareholders. In fact the only duties owed by directors to shareholders are highlighted in Section 169:

- Section 90 relating to the duty to supervise the share register.
- Section 140 relating to the duty to disclose interests.

- Section 149 relating to the disclosure of share dealings.

All other duties of directors specified by the Act, including the duty to act in good faith and to exercise powers for a proper purpose, are explicitly owed “to the company and not to shareholders” (Section 169). In law it could not be clearer. The situation only starts to get confused once ‘experts’ start interpreting and offering guidance. The position of shareholders is made primal. For example, *Best Practice for New Zealand Directors*¹⁴, approved by the Institute of Directors in New Zealand Council on 21 May 2001, suggested:

The role of the Board is to effectively represent, and promote the interests of, Shareholders with a view to adding long-term value to the Company’s shares (Institute of Directors in New Zealand, 2001, Section 3.1).

As Lockhart pointed out this is wrong, “the role of governance is not to serve the needs of either shareholders or stakeholders. It is to serve the needs of the company” (2007, p. 69). Garratt argued that when directors are asked the question, “in a limited liability company, is the prime duty of a director and board to the shareholders?” most answer yes, incorrectly (2003, p. 70). If directors of limited companies, numerically the largest number of those legally charged with governance, are unsure on such a fundamental question, then, perhaps, it is not surprising that confusion exists. If directors are acting as if their prime duty is to shareholders, then the initial link in the chain to the performance of the organisation is flawed.

Moving on to the field of New Zealand rugby, those charged with the responsibility for governance might be viewed as the board and senior management team of the NZRU. This follows the working definition and recognises that the boundaries between governance and management are in practice a little blurry. Some of the senior management team will almost certainly be involved in decisions about resource distribution and the resolution of conflicts. The contributions of key individuals such as the coaches, the captains, the managers, and the players employed by the NZRU may

¹⁴ This was revised, in 2005, to a *Code of Practice for Directors*. In this code the primacy of shareholders is reduced a little. Section 1.1 states “Boards of directors play a crucial role in enabling organisations to achieve their mission or purpose, whether that is to create wealth for shareholders or to deliver valued services to stakeholders.”

also be important. Their language concerning the use of resources and the resolution of conflicts potentially has an impact on the way in which decisions are interpreted and acted upon by the affected communities. It is argued here that such individuals are, at least partially, responsible for the outcomes of governance. This view is supported by Johnson, Scholes and Whittingham who argued that governance is the responsibility of all those involved in a “governance chain” (2005, p. 165). Perhaps this is akin to Andy Haden’s observation that “the construction of that whole being the responsibility of all” (1983, p. 241). The opposite position was presented by Thompson and Strickland who saw a much clearer demarcation of duties between directors and management (2001). They argued that directors are often not sufficiently industry experienced or company knowledgeable enough to get directly involved in formulating or implementing strategy. With four ex-All Black captains and a combined total of 187 matches for New Zealand, the 2005 board of the NZRU may not subscribe to that view. In this case the NZRU, as an entity, makes claim to be the governing body of the sport in New Zealand:

We are the custodians of the national game at all levels, with a unified vision for the growth and development of rugby. With our shared passion, commitment and contribution to the game, our aim is to ensure that New Zealand rugby is nationally treasured and internationally respected (NZRU Annual Report, 2004, p. 3).

Morgan (2002) identified four models for the governance of professional sport; first, the *hierarchy* where a national governing body makes all the decisions on issues such as structure, conduct and marketing, on behalf of members who elect the governing body; second, the *cartel* (‘the American model’) where a central body sells TV, merchandising and sponsorship rights centrally, and sells franchises who then operate as commercial concerns in their own right, albeit with restrictions such as salary caps and player selection rules; third, the *oligarchy*, which is the model that has emerged in English football, where individual clubs have a predominance of control over marketing and structure, leaving a national body, such as the Football Association (FA) with conduct and the national team; and fourth, the *promoter-led* model, as in boxing, where governance has become so-fragmented that contests tend to be one-off events pulled together by individual organisations. The model of governance for New Zealand rugby falls into the hierarchy model. The NZRU is the main commercial and regulatory body, negotiating rights for broadcasting and sponsorship. Its authority is based on its

legitimacy as the elected governing body. Clubs are viewed as feeders to provincial unions, and are largely financially dependant on the NZRU. The introduction of franchised Super 12/14 teams into the field has added an element of the cartel model, albeit with limited scope for action as a truly independent commercial concerns. The hierarchy is the traditional model for governance of amateur sport and, even prior to professionalisation in 1995, it might be argued that the model applied. Those charged with governance in the field of New Zealand rugby, the NZRFU in 1985 and the NZRU in 2005, are the starting point for the analysis. They were the people making the decisions that may interact with the commonly held, ideas and understandings amongst those affected by this concept termed governance.

In summary, the literature has revealed confusion over the definition of the term governance; confusion over what those charged with governance are supposed to be doing; and, confusion surrounding for whom they are supposed to be doing it. However, there appears to be a more general agreement on the identity of the main instrument of governance – the board. They have been identified for each of the years chosen for study. Another part of the puzzle, whether action in the name of governance can be linked to performance, is the next focus.

2.2.3. The puzzle of governance

Despite considerable research into the link between the concept of organisational governance and organisational performance the relationship remains unclear. Evidence suggests that research has yet to complete the picture (Dalton, Daily, Ellstrand, & Johnson, 1998; Daily, Dalton, & Cannella, 2003; Garratt, 2006; Johnson, Daily, & Ellstrand, 1996; Lockhart, 2005). The past two decades has seen a proliferation of new governance initiatives, particularly in areas of board selection, board composition, and board remuneration. But as long as the relationship between governance and organisational performance remains a puzzle, then any principles of governance, developed by the research, will continue to be viewed with some skepticism (Delorme, 1995). The problem is that few of the initiatives developed by academics appear to have been empirically successful. Indeed, some appear almost harmful. Ghoshal (2005) made a convincing argument that some of the ideas that have emerged from business school

academics (in particular agency theory) have had a profound *negative* effect on management practices, and are largely responsible for producing organisations riddled by “symptoms of poor governance and corruption” (Klimoski, 2005, p. 74). This far reaching criticism certainly does not go uncontested, but has found support from well regarded academics such as Mintzberg (2005) and Pfeffer (2005). Research has converged on attempts to improve the *processes* of governance and to link the prescriptions that emerge to improved organisational performance. They have been inconclusive. In the area of corporate governance, researchers have largely focused on the efficacy of mechanisms to protect shareholders from the self-interested actions of managers (Daily et al., 2003). Kaufman and Englander (2005) argued that there is a post-Enron consensus amongst investors and government regulators that boards should function principally as shareholder oversight bodies. One of the commonly prescribed mechanisms to ensure this happens is making the board independent from management, through independent outside directors. Proponents of this solution are suggesting that ownership status can be used as a proxy for the capacity to be independent of the firm. Even if this was the case, research on this is symptomatic of the puzzle:

...research has not demonstrated a relationship between board independence and firm performance (Kaufman & Englander, 2005, p. 9).

The puzzle lies between the decisions made by those charged with governance, through whatever systems and processes are in place, and the outcomes. Johnson, Daily, and Ellstrand eloquently sum up the situation:

To our knowledge, there has been no documented evidence of the existence of a unicorn (the relationship between corporate governance and corporate performance). With tongue in cheek, there can be two general rationales for our failure to “discover” this legendary species. First, this animal simply does not exist. Second, we have not searched in the right place, at the right time, with the right equipment (1996, p. 433).

More recently, Lockhart (2007a) expressed disquiet at the direction governance research has taken over the last two decades, and implicitly at the failure to discover the ‘legendary species’. He suggested that “as the governance debate unfolds we are in danger of losing sight of the outcome we originally sought – high performing

organisations" (2007a, p. 69). As this link between governance and performance continues to elude understanding, then the question has been asked; does governance really matter? (Garratt, 2006; Huson, 1997; Larcker & Tuna, 2004). Intuitively governance does matter. For sporting organisations, Fergus, Shilbury, and McDonald (2005) contend that governance is a critical issue. There is a general perception among practitioners that boards do affect performance (Leblanc, 2001). Indeed, one of the fundamental assumptions of this research is that the decisions of those charged with governance of New Zealand rugby make a difference to the performance of the All Blacks. It is also assumed that those decisions may impact on other performance indicators. So the unicorn does exist and this research has developed with the rationale that at least a small piece of the relationship might be viewed in the right place (at the point of interaction with those affected by governance), at the right time (1985 and 2005), with the right equipment (institutionalisation theory and discourse analysis). If the relationship is a puzzle then there may be many pieces. Perhaps a complex puzzle with pieces missing altogether, or at least hidden from the perspectives taken so far. A map of the institutionalised logics may be one piece of missing information. When added to interrelated pieces, grouped under headings such as processes, strategy, compliance, leadership, culture, and equity, perhaps the link between governance and performance will become clearer. The next section briefly reviews the major theoretical contributions that have attempted to explain the roles that those charged with governance might play, and how it might be linked to organisational performance.

2.2.4. Contributions to the puzzle

A range of theoretical perspectives have been applied to governance, and in particular to the roles that governing boards play. Hung (1998) has neatly, if a little too conveniently, matched roles played by a board to six main theories. The six major roles and theories suggested are; control (agency theory); strategic (stewardship theory); coordinating (stakeholder theory); linking (resource dependency theory); support (managerial hegemony theory); and maintenance (institutional theory). Despite doubts about its simplified nature, this framework can be used to review the evidence linking the actions of those charged with governance with organisational performance. The overall theme

of the argument is that “each of these theories only gives a partial and limited account of governance” (Cornforth, 2003, p. 6).

The dominant theoretical perspective that has been applied to governance is agency theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976) with its myopic focus on the differences between the way in which the owners of a business, and the managers employed to run it, behave towards capital. Much of the research in the area of governance appears to have developed in the context of reducing agency problems brought about by managers supposedly not acting in the best interests of the shareholders. *Control* of management is the key element. Agency theory asserts that independence from management is a crucial aspect of board effectiveness in a monitoring role. It appears that much of the current debate about corporate governance revolves around tightening the rules and regulations in response to high profile failures, with curbing CEO power, expensing stock options and the composition of boards all coming under consideration (Clarke, 2004). However, the link through to positive performance is inconclusive. In their meta-analysis, comprising 54 studies on board composition and 31 studies on the effects of separating leadership roles, Dalton et al. (1998) could find no significant effect on organisation performance. Bhagat and Black (1997) stated that there is no evidence that companies with more independent boards perform better than any other companies. A further meta-analysis of 229 empirical studies that measured equity holdings and firm financial performance found “few examples of systematic relationships, lending little support for agency theory” (Dalton, Daily, Certo, & Roengpitya, 2003, p. 13). The 2005 structure of the NZRU appears to have developed in line with agency theory. There is a board that ‘represents’ the interests of the nominal ‘owners’ (the provincial unions), and a management structure to ‘run the business’. Agency theory fails to explain how diverse stakeholders (such as supporters) who have no financial interest in the entity might be linked.

Stewardship theory takes a more generous view of individuals and sees management motives as being aligned with the principals of an organisation. Stewardship theory suggests that managers are not motivated by individual goals and can match their motives to the objectives of the owners. Here the managers, as stewards, will behave in a pro-organisational co-operative manner (Davis & Schoorman, 1997). Given this, the board can act in a more *strategic* manner to improve organisational performance,

without the burdens of having to seek managerial compliance. This may be more aligned with the management in an entity such as the NZRU, where return on investment might be viewed as having been, at least in the past, of lesser importance. However, given the absence of the traditional concept of ‘owners’ it cannot provide a complete picture. In the area of non-profit governance Brown and Iverson (2004) support the view that a focus on strategic organisational development will enhance organisational effectiveness. This echoes part of the prescription put forward by Carver (1997) and widely adopted as a model for New Zealand and Australian sport (Ferkins et al., 2005). Carver advocates that board members concentrate on strategic activities. So perhaps a board acting as stewards will produce a better organisational performance, but there is no conclusive evidence. In addition, there is an argument, consistent with stewardship theory, that ‘inside’ directors will produce a better organisational performance. Baysinger and Hoskisson (1990) argued that superior information made for more effective evaluation of management capabilities. Brennan and McDermott (2004) painted a mixed picture citing both positive (Pearce & Zahra, 1992) and negative (Beatty & Zajac, 1994) correlations between performance and ratios of outside directors. In an examination of *Fortune 500* companies, Kesner (1987) found a positive and significant association between inside directors and firm performance. However, the broader analysis by Dalton et al. (2003) concluded no relationship of a meaningful level existed between board composition and firm performance. Lockhart might be seen to sum up the current situation:

Some 160 studies have been conducted during the past four decades, of which many have been published in the world’s most prestigious business journals. Yet there is, as yet, no systematic relationship between board composition and its many manifestations – and subsequent financial performance (2007b, p. 69).

Despite this contention, there is one particular strand of research that has highlighted possible links between board composition and performance. This is research on the relationship between increased diversity amongst boards and senior management, and financial performance. The arguments are a long way from being conclusive, but there is developing evidence that in some situations a more diverse board composition, in particular boards with a higher than average make-up of women, will perform better. Arguments against board diversity have tended to focus on the increased level of

conflict that diversity brings (Hambrick, Choi & Chen, 1996; Knight, Pearce, Smith, Olian, Sims, Smith & Flood, 1999). More recent studies have supported diversity. Erhardt, Werbel and Shrader (2003), in their study of women and minorities on the boards of 127 large US companies, suggested that board diversity was positively associated with return on asset and investment. Their argument centred around the idea that diversity aided the control function of boards by enabling more opinions to be considered. However, the study could not identify whether the diversity was the cause, or the result, of financial performance.

A perhaps more politically driven study by Catalyst¹⁵ (2007) reported that companies with a higher representation of women in senior management positions financially outperform companies with lesser representation of women. They examined 520 Fortune 500 companies, between 2001 and 2004, and found that those companies with the highest representation of women (a top quartile of 132 companies) had on average a 53 percent higher return on equity than companies with lower female representation (bottom quartile of 129). Smith, Smith and Verner studied 2,500 Danish firms and found that “even after controlling for numerous characteristics of the firm and direction of causality” (2006, p. 569), the proportion of women in top management jobs tended to have a positive effect on firm performance. Diversity might be emerging as one small piece in the link between governance and performance.

Another framework to gain momentum is that of stakeholder management, linked with the *coordinating* role of a board. Stakeholder theory conceptualises organisations as a series of relationships for which governance has responsibility (Wang & Dewhurst, 1992). The stakeholder approach to the role of a board sees them negotiating and compromising with stakeholders in the interests of the organisation (Hung, 1998). This intuitively might fit with the actions of the NZRU, given the myriad of participants in the field. However, Wolfe, Weick, Usher, Terborg, Poppo, Murrell, Dukerich, Cown Core, Dickson and Simmons Jourdan, in their review of sport and organisational studies, suggest “the view that stakeholder management and favorable performance go hand in hand, *though rarely tested*, has become commonplace in the management literature” (2005, p. 199, emphasis added). There is again little conclusive evidence that

¹⁵ Catalyst is a nonprofit research and advisory organisation working globally with businesses and the professions with an objective to ‘build inclusive environments and expand opportunities for women’.

the actions of a board following advice prescribed by stakeholder theory will actually improve organisational performance. Indeed, Sternberg went as far as to comment that stakeholder theory is “...incapable of providing better corporate governance, business performance or business conduct” (1997, p. 3).

In the area of non-profit governance Herman, Renz, and Heimovics (1997) used a social constructionist approach to view board and organisational effectiveness. This approach allowed the researchers to view the concept of effectiveness as socially constructed – it depends on who you ask. This allowed them to take into account the idea that different stakeholders might view effectiveness in different ways. Their findings, not surprisingly, were that judgments on board effectiveness differed substantially. Further research using this approach found a correlation between organisational effectiveness and board effectiveness. The researchers concluded that effective boards of non-profit organisations improved organisational performance, but conceded that how they did this remained unclear (Herman & Renz, 2000). A further study reaffirmed the confusion by concluding that, although stakeholders believed board and organisational effectiveness were correlated, implementing board ‘best’ practices was not related to changing judgments of board effectiveness (Herman & Renz, 2004).

Resource dependence theory has also been used to attempt to explain aspects of governance, in particular the *linking* role of the board. This stance views boards as mechanisms to reduce environmental uncertainty and provide access to resources. Interlocking directorates enable organisations to obtain access to valuable resources and, perhaps, to control other organisations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The focus in the literature has been on boards increasing the proportion of outside directors. However, once again the link to improved organisational performance is inconclusive. Rhoades, Rechner, and Sundaramurthy in a meta-analysis of the influence of outside directors found that “board composition explains less than 1 percent of the variation in financial performance” (2000, p. 83). Other research has consistently “found no relationship between board composition and financial performance” (Dalton et al., 1998, p. 271).

Another theory relevant to understanding governance is managerial hegemony. This suggests that responsibility for the organisation is assumed by managers, despite the legal rights of shareholders or members (Stiles, 2001). In sports governance this is

evident through the professionalisation of sports, where volunteer boards have gradually ceded control to professional staff (Ferkins et al., 2005). This theory suggests a *supporting* role for the board. Hung argued that boards are constrained from taking independent action because they have to rely on management to provide information, and “the directors have a relative lack of required knowledge to make effective decisions” (1998, p. 108). This may not apply universally as board members often have the capacity and motivation to seek out relevant information, even if it is not directly supplied by management. Perhaps one piece of the knowledge lacking might be an appreciation of the institutional logics of the environment.

The last role for the board, according to Hung (1998), is that of *maintenance* of the organisation. He identified that boards can simply act as legitimating bodies in respect of the decisions of management. This emerges from early institutional theory, which in essence suggests that the governance frameworks adopted are the result of external pressures to conform. Governments, members, and shareholders all provide a pressure to conform to a ‘what is expected’ norm. This tendency to conform leads organisations to adopt similar governance protocols in a process termed institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This framework has been used to explain how governance systems are adopted over time (Kikulis, 2000; Slack & Hinings, 1994; Cousens & Slack, 2005; O’Brien & Slack, 2004). However, there is scant evidence that the adoption of similar systems of governance can be linked to performance. According to Miller-Millesen (2003) there has been relatively little research that has applied institutional theory to the study of boards of directors. One exception was Luoma and Goodstein (1999), who demonstrated the normative pressures to include non-shareholder stakeholders on boards of directors. Ocasio (1999) used institutional theory to explore the consequences of formal and informal rules on the CEO succession process. The results demonstrated a considerable inertia in the rules which might be consistent with the restraining nature of an institutionalised understanding.

Moving on to contributions in the area of sport governance, the link between governance and performance is no clearer. In their review of sport governance research, Ferkins et al. suggested the significance of governance for sport organisations is a relatively recent development in the research literature, and conclude, “governance literature is shaped by a normative and prescriptive approach that may not fully

encompass the diversity that exists within sport settings" (2005, p. 195). They argued that the focus has been on interactions between paid management and voluntary boards (see e.g. Auld & Godbey, 1998; Hoye, 2003; Kikulis, 2000), board motivation (Searle, 1989), and board roles (Inglis, 1997; Shilbury, 2001). Explanations of the relationships and the individual motivations have been developed, but no research has convincingly linked this through to improved organisational performance.

Following a social constructionist framework, Hoye and Auld (2001) used the term 'performance' to discuss board effectiveness in a study of state sport organisations in Australia, although they were concerned only with an internal perspective. They did not consider those affected by governance were in a position to make assessments of performance. They considered that:

...board members and executives interact primarily through board processes and within a formal board structure. As such, they are in the best position to make assessments of the performance of the board (Hoye & Auld, 2001, p. 110).

This approach is clearly at odds with the choice made in this research, but their findings did link 'better' performing boards with elements such as board-executive relationships, financial management, strategic planning and selecting board members. Hoye and Cuskelly (2003) followed up with a study that linked board-executive relationships specifically with effective board performance. Papadimitriou (1999) took a different approach and surveyed a range of external groups, but the findings were inconclusive. Perhaps not surprisingly, the five external groups involved in the study (board members, paid staff, technical staff, state and national athletes) failed to agree on what made voluntary sport boards effective. This illustrates the inherent difficulty with measuring the link between governance and performance; outcomes might be viewed very differently by those affected. However, this does not alter the basic premise of this research, which is that the way that those affected interact with decisions, ultimately, might have an impact on the outcomes. By identifying the institutionalised logics that might influence the interaction, it may be that the link becomes a little clearer.

□

Given all these inconclusive attempts to link governance with performance, the question emerges as to what is organisational performance? What exactly have they been trying

to link? Most of the studies reviewed, particularly those coming from an agency theory perspective, have focused on trying to explain the link with financial performance. Others have attempted to avoid that narrow focus and taken a step back to look at board effectiveness, defined in a number of ways. The fact that the links have proved inconclusive precludes debate about individual research definitions, except in the context of this research. In this research governance *is the achievement of desired outcomes*, which may or not be financial. The NZRU 2005 Annual Report provided the basis on which some interpretation of the key desired outcomes could be made. The NZRU appear to run a version of a balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) performance measurement system for the organisation as a whole. Of the 100% target; ‘game development’ represented 15%; ‘performance of representative teams’ 40%; ‘running the competitions’ 30%, and ‘governance and financial’ 15%. Following the multiple constituency approach used by Hoye and Auld (2001) and Papadimitriou (1999) the performance part of the equation might be interpreted from a range of alternative perspectives. This will be discussed further in Chapter Three when the methodology is covered in more detail.

2.2.5. The institutionalised logics of governance

What is perhaps surprising is that there is so little evidence that anything proposed by academics, and implemented in practice, actually has much effect on organisational performance, whichever way it has been viewed. The performance link would appear to be elusive, and is likely to continue to be so, given the complex nature of the puzzle. However, the question arises as to why, despite a lack of both face validity and empirical support (Ghoshal, 2005), agency theory continues to dominate much of the research and practice of governance. Clarke (2004) argued that it is the continual repetition of the notions emerging from agency theory, which cause them to be accepted as unquestioned dogma. Green (2004) supports this idea when he suggested that rhetorical theory can be used to view the diffusion of managerial practices. He argued that when discursive justifications for a practice “are accepted and taken-for-granted, a practice reaches a state of institutionalization” (p. 653). An alternative way of viewing this is through Prahalad and Bettis’s (1986) concept of dominant logic. They contend that the strategic behaviour of a field’s key decision makers may be guided by a certain

dominant logic, which they suggest both facilitates and constrains ways of operating within a certain field.

Perhaps governance research has been characterised by an institutionalised set of ideas and understandings. Perhaps governance has its own institutionalised logics. It is possible that the predominance of agency theory has allowed a range of commonly held, taken-for-granted practices and understandings to develop in the environment of governance research; the understanding that governance is a process; the understanding that shareholders/members needs are the overriding priority; the understanding that boards alone are responsible for governance; the understanding that governance must be separated from management, and hence, somehow distanced from the responsibility for outcomes. Perhaps this is one contributing factor as to why the research has not been able to consistently explain the link between governance and performance. Perhaps these institutionalised ideas and understandings are both facilitating and constraining researchers' focus. These prevailing logics might help explain why answers are constantly being sought in the processes, and so rarely in the midst of outcomes. By breaking out of these constraints and viewing governance in the context of outcomes it is hoped some contribution to the puzzle can be made.

2.3. Summary

In this chapter concepts from institutional theory have been introduced as a framework to view one potential piece of the puzzle linking governance and organisational performance. A brief and selective review of the governance literature provided evidence to back up an interpretation that there is room, and indeed a need, for further contributions as to how the decisions of those charged with governance might link through to organisational performance. There is evidence of an unsolved puzzle. This is not surprising given the confusion that exists in the field of governance; confusion over definitions; confusion over who is responsible; confusion over primary duties; confusion over how performance is measured; and, even confusion over the definition of performance. There is also a scarcity of conclusive evidence that any of the theories put forward so far can provide any more than a partial explanation of the link between governance and performance. Research on governance has been dominated by agency

theory, and has subsequently developed a range of constraining understandings that *muddy* attempts to find evidence of a link. Intuitively, practitioners believe, better governance should lead to better organisational performance. Quite what 'better' means is left for others to define. A completely finished puzzle may prove elusive, but, by changing the perspective on governance to one suggested by Kooiman, it is argued that one contributing piece might be highlighted. Governance can be seen:

...as the pattern...that emerges...as a 'common' result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors. This pattern cannot be reduced to one actor or group of actors in particular (Kooiman, 1993, p. 258).

From this perspective, the interacting intervention efforts of those charged with governance and those affected by governance are central to the pattern that is governance. Institutionalised logics might facilitate or constrain that interaction. It is proposed that this interaction might be a crucial element in the effectiveness of governance. In the context of the roles of a board proposed by Hung (1998), it is argued that an understanding of the taken-for-granted institutionalised ideas and understandings might potentially help with control, strategy, linking, maintenance, coordination, or support. The decision making will be aided by the information that is currently not explicitly recognised. This research does not solve the puzzle, but may be seen to add a piece, a picture of institutionalised logics, that contributes to a better understanding of the link between governance and performance.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The methodology behind the collection and analysis of data used to answer the research question is described in this chapter. The first section (3.1) provides the justification for the choice of discourse analysis and explains the particular perspective taken. The second section (3.2) provides an explanation of the data sources. In Section 3.3 the detailed procedures used to collect the data are outlined. Some limitations of the methodology are clarified and justified in Section 3.4. In Section 3.5 research ethics and how they relate to this research are introduced. The processes used to ensure compliance with Massey University's research ethics agenda are described.

3.1. Discourse Analysis

The approach taken in this research is qualitative, with an interpretive perspective. Other approaches were considered, but the complexity of the problem area, the view that reality is socially constructed, the emergence of the framework of institutionalisation, and an underlying belief that numbers alone are inadequate for the understanding of human action, dictated the direction taken. This was a study of 'things' in their natural setting where an interpretation of phenomena is made through the meanings that people have attributed to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The approach provides rich detailed descriptions, but little exactitude:

...G.K. Chesterton wrote, life is "a trap for logicians" because it is almost reasonable but not quite; it is usually sensible but occasionally otherwise: "it looks just a little more mathematical than it is; its exactitude is obvious, but its inexactitude is hidden; its wilderness lies in wait" (Lowenstein, 2000, p. 69).

This research has attempted to address a small piece of the complex environment of New Zealand rugby. It is argued that it might be the 'wilderness' of such complex environments that has contributed to the ongoing puzzle of governance. Perhaps there is too much complexity for a one 'right' answer approach. Perhaps too much of the

research to date has been quantitative in nature, with the naïve realism of a prescriptive best practice answer.

The constructivist philosophy, discussed in Chapter Two, meant that the research was necessarily interpretive in nature. Two fundamental assumptions of a constructivist paradigm are important here. First, that there are multiple realities, and second, that understanding is co-created by knower and respondent (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is the interaction of the words chosen and the interpretation that you, as reader, choose to place upon them that creates an understanding. Any number of different understandings might be created with different readers. This leads to another assumption; the purpose of the inquiry. It is assumed that a co-created understanding might facilitate action of some sort. Who chooses to use the developed understanding will define the actions that might result. It is hoped that an understanding of the institutionalised logics (co-created with those charged with governance in the field of New Zealand rugby) might contribute towards ‘better’ decision-making and ultimately ‘better’ performance. These principles, multiple realities and co-created understanding, establish the interpretive nature of the ‘reality’ being explored. The next question was how knowledge of these realities might be viewed. How might an understanding of the nature of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby be co-created? A version of discourse analysis was the method selected. It was chosen because of the interplay between discourse and the process of institutionalisation, articulated by Phillips, Lawrence and Hardy (2004). Before this interplay is explained, a brief review of discourse analysis is needed, as once again, some confusion exists.

Varieties of discourse analysis

Finding a commonly accepted definition for discourse and discourse analysis has proved a difficult task. Pritchard (2006) reviewed the patterns of citations of research papers using the term discourse in the ISI’s Web of Science database, to identify the academic community’s various approaches to discourse. One conclusion he reached was that there is a general lack of consensus about what discourse analysis means or exactly how it might be carried out. Alvesson and Karreman suggested there is “no agreed-upon definition and confusingly many uses” (2000, p. 1127). However, in the midst of the different positions there are some general principles that appear to apply. Discourse

analysis is a study of language in use (Fasold, 1990). Of primary concern is “language above the sentence” (Stubbs, 1983, p. 1). It is more than a just a language analysis, as Johnstone explained:

Calling what we do “*discourse analysis*” rather than “language analysis” underscores the fact that we are not centrally focused on language as abstract system. We tend instead to be interested in what happens when people draw on the knowledge they have about language, based on their memories of things they have said, heard, seen or written before to do things in the world: exchange information, express feelings, make things happen, create beauty, entertain themselves and others, and so on (2002, p. 3).

Discourse analysts have been criticised for failing to clarify exactly what they are using the term to describe (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). Attempts will be made to avoid this trap by careful clarification. As someone else¹⁶ once said discourse analysis has more varieties than Heinz beans, and there are allegedly 59 *varieties* of those. So the relevant questions are what variety of discourse analysis has been used in this study, and why?

Even a brief review of discourse analysis, such as this, might begin with perhaps the most influential exponent of discourse, Foucault (1972, 1980). Without claiming to have studied ‘Foucault’ in great depth, and at the risk of being criticised for a “fairly superficial and ill-informed use of Foucault” (Scheurich & McKenzie, 2005, p. 859), it seems that his ideas have had some influence on the choice of approach. According to Alvesson and Karreman, Foucault’s “well known and often copied” (2000, p. 1127) contribution was to suggest that language, when put together as discourses, *constitutes* objects and subjects. Language, when put together as discourses, does more than just *reflect* objects and subjects. Language, when put together as discourses, is a powerful influence over the way in which people act and behave. Part of Foucault’s work concerned power, and the relationship between knowledge and discourses, suggesting that knowledge does not necessarily have to be ‘true’ to be powerful. It merely has to be labeled as true to have an effect on discourses. Whether knowledge is true or not, through discourses, it might make people act as if it were true. A key to unraveling the way people act, then, might be to view the discourses. However, language, in the form of statements, is not discourse. Foucault began to differentiate;

¹⁶ With apologies. Read somewhere but can't recall.

The analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation: it does not question things said as to what they were hiding, what they were ‘really’ saying, in spite of themselves, the unspoken element they contain, the proliferation of thoughts, images, or fantasies that inhabit them (1969, p. 123).

In this research, in the field of New Zealand rugby, interpretation is central. The analysis makes interpretations of what was really said, of what was hidden, and of what was behind the language. As stated in the introduction of this section, the variety of discourse analysis used draws heavily from a paper by Phillips et al. (2004) linking discourse and institutionalisation. Two of the authors suggested a specific definition of discourse, which builds on Foucault’s central ideas, and those of Parker (1992):

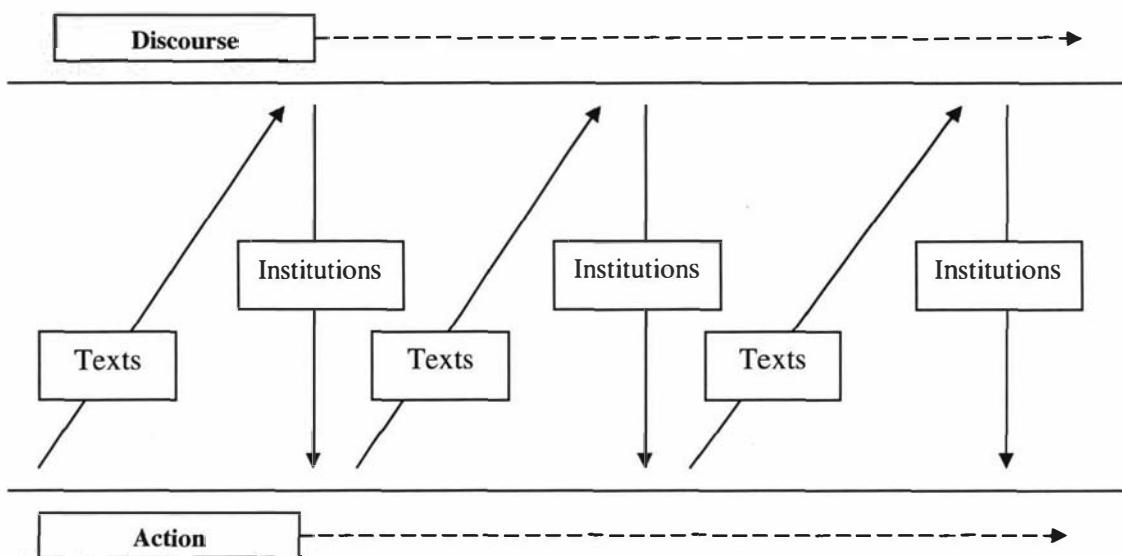
We define a discourse as an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3).

It is not individual texts that produce a social phenomenon, but bodies of interrelated texts that together make up a discourse. Phillips et al. (2004) argued that discursive processes underlie institutionalisation, and, therefore, discourse analysis might provide a coherent framework for the investigation of the processes of institutionalisation. The central proposition in their paper was that institutions are social phenomena constituted primarily through the production of interrelated texts (these could be written, spoken words, cartoons, photographs, or symbols). They argued that it is through discourse that various social realities might be produced. One such social reality might be the taken-for-granted understandings, or institutionalised logics, that are the focus of this research.

The texts themselves might be considered as an exchange point between two parties. At the risk of simplifying a complex process they will have a discursive effect that is the result of the exchange at a number of levels. One level might be the plain text message itself, another might be the way it was delivered (ordering, selection, emphasis, vocabulary etc.). A third level might be the interpretive schema of the reader, which may have been influenced by the existing discourse. The challenge of the methodology is to unravel the complexities to unveil the discursive effect that produces particular social realities. Phillips et al. (2004) argued that the concept of an institution is

constituted, not through actions per se, but through the texts that communicate and describe those actions. This suggests that whilst actions may form the basis of institutionalisation processes, it is when those actions are observed, talked about, written or depicted in texts, that the self-regulating nature of an institutionalised understanding might develop. Based upon their terminology, action generates texts, which become embedded in the discourse, which might produce institutionalised understandings, which constrain or enable action. The model proposed by Phillips et al. highlights the importance of examining not just the content of texts “but also their trajectories: where texts emanate from, how they are used by organizational actors, and what connections are established among texts” (2004, p. 646). The model is reproduced as Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The relationship between action and discourse



Source: Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy, 2004, p. 639

Phillips and Malhotra (2008) venture as far as arguing that discourses provide the socially constituted, self-regulating mechanisms that actually enable institutional effects to occur. It is the institutionalised logics that emerge in the discourses of New Zealand rugby that are the focus of this research. There are parallels between levels of institutional logic and levels of discourse. Society-wide discourses will impact on field discourses, in the same way as society level institutional logics might interplay with

field level logics (Phillips & Malhotra, 2008). If texts are the precursor to institutional phenomena, then evidence of the logics that might contribute to the make-up of phenomena might reasonably be found in those texts. Put simply, it is through a systematic analysis of texts contributing to the discourse of rugby in New Zealand, that the nature of institutionalised logics, and their stage of institutionalisation, has been explored.

According to Pritchard (2006) discourse analysis connects knowledge and practices. For example, a discourse analysis of what might be termed a ‘loyal rugby supporter’ would bring together the practices that a ‘loyal rugby supporter’ might be seen to engage in, the texts (spoken and written words) surrounding ‘loyal supporter’, and the different ways in which the meaning of ‘loyal supporter’ is interpreted by different people. Integrating this idea into Phillips et al.’s (2004) model, the actions of a ‘loyal supporter’ might be captured in texts, which might become embedded in the discourse of a ‘loyal supporter’. This discourse might then constitute the institutionalised logic of how a ‘loyal supporter’ should act, which might in turn influence the actions of supporters, through facilitation or constraint. Here the approach taken was to analyse texts that might be viewed as embedded in the discourse, for evidence of institutionalised logics that might be seen to have been constituted. This takes us full circle to the aim of discourse analysis which is “to identify (some of) the multiple meanings assigned to texts” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 74). Discourses are not one text; therefore, bodies of texts need to be studied. It is how the texts are made meaningful that is important; how they are linked; how and to whom they are disseminated; who they are produced by; and, how they are interpreted and acted upon.

Positioning of this discourse analysis

In order to narrow down the variety of discourse analysis further, and avoid the wrath of Alvesson and Karreman, the research can be at least loosely positioned in a framework proposed by Phillips and Hardy (2002). They suggested, based on Phillips and Ravasi’s (1998) work, that the varieties of discourse could be categorised along two key theoretical dimensions. The first dimension was the relative importance of text versus context - whether the focus is on a particular piece of text or the broader social context. The second dimension was the degree to which power dynamics form the focus of the

research. Concerning the first dimension, Alvesson and Karreman made a distinction between discourse with a small 'd' and Discourses with a capital, when they proposed four levels of discourse analysis:

1. micro-discourse approach – social texts, calling for the detailed study of language use in a specific micro-context; *this might be a word by word study of the 'language above the sentences' in the NZRU Annual Reports.*
 2. meso-discourse approach – being relatively sensitive to language use in context but interested in finding broader patterns and going beyond the details of the text and generalizing to similar local contexts; *this might be a study of a range of texts surrounding referees looking for interrelationships and patterns about phenomena (for example, institutionalised logics) that might be applicable to others in the field of New Zealand rugby.*
 3. Grand Discourse approach – an assembly of discourses, ordered and presented as an integrated frame. A Grand Discourse may refer to/constitute organizational reality, for example dominating language use about corporate culture or ideology; *this might be a study of the Discourse of New Zealand rugby, where a range of discourses are investigated and presented as an overall picture.*
 4. Mega-Discourse approach – an idea of a more or less universal connection of discourse material. Mega-Discourse typically addresses more or less standardized ways of referring to/constituting a certain type of phenomenon, e.g. business re-engineering, diversity or globalization; *this might be a study of the effects of globalisation or even professionalisation in the context of New Zealand rugby.*
- (2000, pp.1133-4, words in italics added)

The position taken in this research might be viewed as primarily a meso-discourse approach, with some integration at a Grand Discourse level. Alvesson and Karreman suggest one way to do this is to use empirical material about social texts to move up on “a discursive ladder” (2000, p. 1146) to build a case for Discourses.

The second dimension on which the research might be positioned is the degree to which power dynamics are incorporated. At one end of the continuum are critical approaches (e.g. Fairclough, 1993, 1995), with an explicit focus on power relationships, and at the other end, more constructivist approaches (e.g. Hirsch, 1986; Wodak, 1991), focusing on discursive processes of social construction. Following the lead of Phillips et al.

(2004), this research develops from a form of critical discourse analysis where discourses might be viewed as the site of on-going struggles for power - whose ideas and opinions are going to prevail? Discourses are viewed as not totally stable, and can potentially be influenced by self-interested parties. Individuals or groups might influence the discourse for their own ends through the production and dissemination of texts. For example, back in the early 1900s texts that contributed to the 'Discourse of rugby' focused on the violent nature of the game. A critical discourse analysis could view the possibility that some of the texts making up that discourse might have been produced by the NZRFU in order to assert control over the game. They may have produced, for example, press releases emphasising the unruly behaviour in order that their own rules and procedures might be seen as a solution to a 'problem'. However, this study does not focus exclusively on the dynamics of power; it is open to other, broader elements that might shape the interpretive frames of people involved in the field. For that reason it might be viewed as being more towards the middle of the continuum.

Validity and reliability; plausibility and interpretation

Given the philosophy and positioning of this research, traditional concepts of validity and reliability do not sit easily within the framework. Validity is concerned with how closely the research maps 'the real world', and yet it is argued 'the real world' may not exist if it is not created through discourse (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Indeed, given the constructivist paradigm, there may be multiple realities. How can proximity to one reality be any indication of the quality of the research? Reliability has traditionally emphasised the need for consistency and the need to be able to replicate the research; but discourse analysis is likely to produce multiple and different readings of a particular situation (Wood & Kroger, 2000). The research does not claim that every possible reading has been covered. The position of the researcher within the context of the research is critical in that no two people are likely to have the exact same interpretive schema.

However, as Guba and Lincoln (2005) point out validity and reliability cannot be totally ignored because they focus on the question as to whether the research is sufficiently authentic to act upon. This research stands or falls by its authenticity amongst those

involved in New Zealand rugby. So how is the question handled? Following Guba and Lincoln it is applied separately to “method and interpretation” (2005, p. 205). The method by which the research has been carried out is subject to a rigour borrowed from a more traditional scientific stance. The steps in the process are designed to be entirely replicable. Where, however, the procedure requires interpretations to be made, no claim can be made that another researcher would make exactly the same interpretation. The results and the discussions that follow make no claim to be exactly replicable. They are an individual’s interpretation of the phenomena being studied.

The use of triangulation can be viewed as an alternative to validation (Flick, 2002), and has been used to add depth, richness, complexity and rigour to this study. Combinations of analyses from 1985 and 2005 have been used to increase the authenticity of this research; texts and contexts; narrative interviews and publicly recorded perspectives; and, contributions from insiders and those at the periphery of the field. The research might only be judged as authentic if it is considered plausible by those who read and, in turn, make their own interpretations. The aim of the research is to be viewed as sufficiently plausible by those involved in sharing ‘realities’ in the environment of New Zealand rugby, that an analysis of the institutionalised logics becomes an integral part of the decision-making process.

Summary

The choice of discourse analysis as a methodology has perhaps introduced a level of complexity to this research that some may find uncomfortable. However, if the idea is accepted that everything in an organisational field is some kind of social construction, and might be seen to exist primarily through language, then the choice of discourse analysis becomes more obvious. The ‘things’, or institutionalised logics, that are being studied can only be viewed as social constructions. The approach views language as constitutive and constructionist, not just representative (Wood & Kroger, 2000). If it is accepted that texts become embedded in the discourse, and it is discourse that might enable institutional, effects, then it follows that an analysis of those texts that might constitute a part of the discourse must be a starting point. The organisational field, in which the NZRU is constituted, is characterised by strong opinions, constantly and vociferously debated, partly because the cause and effect associated with performance is

so difficult to understand. Yesterday's debate as to the most important 'things' in the environment evolves quickly to become tomorrow's history. It may be that the "stories, the narratives, and symbols – the discourses – that hold together these contradictory flows and make them 'real' ..." (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 15) can provide evidence of the institutionalised logics that affect how decisions of governance are enacted in the field.

The variety of discourse analysis chosen has been influenced by the conceptualisation of an institutionalised logic. It is not one overriding institutionalisation process that is being revealed, but a whole series of them. Some of the logics are in the early stages of development, some in decay, and some at the height of their power to facilitate or constrain action. They are, in many cases, interconnected. A micro-discourse approach, in isolation, might underestimate this interconnectedness. By moving up a 'discursive ladder' from meso-discourse and even to a Grand Discourse level, the nature of institutionalised logics in the field can be revealed. Recognising power as but one element in the process of institutionalisation places the research as a 'mild' variety of critical discourse analysis. Having established the methodological approach, a variety of discourse analysis, the implications for traditional concepts such as validity and reliability become clear. This research was focused on producing a plausible interpretation. The next section moves on to detail exactly how that plausible interpretation has been produced.

3.2. Where has the data come from?

Me, myself and I

Taking Stablein's definition of data in organisational studies as "representations which maintain a two-way correspondence between an empirical reality and a symbol system" (1999, p. 261), the empirical realities captured are institutionalised logics as constructed by an interpretation of what previous institutional theorists have developed. Stablein argued that data are manipulated within a symbol system to give results that increase the understanding of an organisational reality. The symbol system here is the natural language of the environment of New Zealand rugby. Here, what has been written, and

what has been said is a symbol system, to which Stablein might have referred. It is the language in the chosen texts and from the narrative interviews which have been analysed, or *manipulated*, to provide an ‘insightful’ description of the nature of institutionalised logics in the field (Stablein, 1999).

There was a purpose to the construction of this ‘insightful’ description, the co-creation of understanding. If data are representations, then an important element in their construction is the researcher at the centre of the study. The methodology chosen locates one individual as the observer in this natural setting. The data presented in the study have been chosen by that individual. There might be other data that could have been chosen. The results may be one version of ‘truth’. It may not be the only version. There may be multiple alternative interpretations. Interpretations have influenced what is presented. The background and experiences of the researcher might influence what has been chosen to portray, even whilst making every effort to remain “interpretively rigorous” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 205). For a co-created understanding to develop the reader may find some background on the researcher helpful – even if it is a constructed background!

Obel’s (2001) historical and sociological account questioned the taken-for-granted explanations of All Black success and the position of rugby as the national game. As she pointed out, “this process of doing sociological research on rugby players and administrators had...‘a natural history’ that affected the outcome of the research” (2004, p. 430). It is a researcher’s natural history that might make some contribution to what becomes a co-created understanding. This process of reflexivity, “of reflecting critically on self as a researcher” (Guba & Lincoln. 2005, p. 210) might be important in the context of the environment under study. Given its profile in New Zealand, opinions about rugby are as pervasive as they are perverse. The credibility of the opinion often appears linked to the credibility of the person putting them forward. If nothing was known about the person with the opinion, it seems unlikely that they would be granted much credibility. Given that the aim of the research is plausibility, the choice of an interpretive approach surely demands such background information. Obel argued that reflexivity in writing research requires a ‘confessional’ that “reveals how the researcher entered the field, her biases, and her self as a product of knowledge and social life produced by others” (2004, p. 418).

One paragraph should be sufficient. I am 48 years old, and arrived in New Zealand, with a young family, in 2001. We emigrated from the north of England, because New Zealand might be ‘the best place in the world to bring up kids’. I believe that it is. My background is as a business person and not an academic. I have never played a game of rugby in my life. My sporting life was dominated by soccer, and, in 1979, I played for Levin United, whilst on a 10 month visit to New Zealand. I attended the Rugby World Cup semi-finals in 1999, which was when I first developed an interest in rugby. In 2003, I attended the Rugby World Cup semi-finals, this time as a disappointed All Black supporter. In 2007, I attended the Rugby World cup semi-finals again, this time as a very, very disappointed All Black supporter. My son, who is now eleven, has played rugby since we arrived, for Silverdale Junior Rugby Club. His avowed intention is to play for the All Blacks. I have attended every game he has played. I have attended every All Black game in Auckland since 2001, and most Blues Super 12/14 home games. I have attended club and National Provincial games irregularly.

Okay, two paragraphs. My most significant exposure to the New Zealand rugby environment has come through my role in teaching business principles to members of the Auckland Blues squad during 2005 and 2006. This involved working closely for three to four hours per week with players in the context of their professional development. The group included six All Blacks and two Junior All Blacks, as well as more junior members of the squad. Certainly this has been helpful in achieving access, rapport, and some ‘insider’ perspective (Cresswell, 1998). I have no official connection with the NZRU or any other community within the field of New Zealand rugby. Indeed, an early request for assistance with the study to the CEO of the NZRU was rejected because “it does not directly relate to any of our current priorities” (personal communication, 2006). My exposure to the field has time-wise been short, although intensive. I believe I have no dominating allegiances to any particular parties in the field of New Zealand rugby. I believe I have developed a passion for ‘the game’, largely through my son’s involvement, and this has manifested itself as a desire to see ‘the game’ in New Zealand thrive. I view this research as a small contribution towards that end. Hopefully, this brief natural history has given some clue as to the biases that might be inherent in the choices made in this research. The next section deals with how those choices were made, beginning with the sources of data.

Sources of data

Given the discursive approach and the desire to build authenticity through triangulation, data has been collected from multiple sources. The foundation of the analysis is the discourse surrounding New Zealand rugby in 1985 and 2005. So a key question addressed in considering the method was; what texts were likely to help uncover the nature of the institutionalised logics in New Zealand rugby? Returning to Phillips et al.'s model, it is suggested "only certain texts will ever become embedded in discourse to form the prescriptive basis of institutions by framing the understanding and experience of actors" (2004, p. 643). Thus, they proposed that some forms of text are more likely to produce institutionalisation effects than others; for example, widely disseminated texts, texts surrounding organisational sense-making or organisational legitimacy, texts emerging from centrally located actors, and texts that are recognisable, coherent and drawn from other well-established discourses.

The starting point was a text that meets all of Phillips et al.'s (2004) criteria as most likely to form the basis for institutionalisation effects. It is a text produced by a visible central actor; it is widely disseminated; the content surrounds legitimacy and sense-making; it is recognizable; and, it draws from other discourses of finance and business – the NZRFU/NZRU annual reports produced for 1985 and 2005. This text also made sense from a governance perspective. As the central communication document for its stakeholders, the annual reports might give evidence of 'those communities affected by governance'. An additional source was used to help identify the communities and individuals, and to ensure a more complete picture was developed – the *Rugby Almanack(s) of New Zealand 1985 and 2005*. This publication has recorded statistics for first-class rugby each season since 1935. According to its authors it is the longest running rugby annual in the world. It is produced independently of the governing body of New Zealand rugby. These two texts were used initially to identify the communities affected in each of the years. The intention was to revise the picture of the communities as the research developed, and other groups 'affected' were discovered. As it turned out the groupings did not fundamentally change throughout the research process as no further significant communities emerged.

Another text chosen for inclusion was *Rugby News*. This has been continuously published since 1970. It is a weekly publication, throughout the season, and features contributions from, and published interviews with, a broad, though not necessarily complete, range of the potential communities (including administrators, players, coaches, supporters, and media commentators). Its status as a central and meaningful text is perhaps best illustrated by comments attributed to the Prime Minister of New Zealand:

Rugby is our national game, and *Rugby News* performs an important role in satisfying rugby fans' enormous appetite for information about what happens on and off the field in the world of rugby" (Clark, 2005, p. 5).

Even if these words were actually written by a press secretary, rather than the Prime Minister herself, an endorsement of the importance of *Rugby News* from the Office of the Prime Minister might be considered significant. *Rugby News'* status was also acknowledged by the chairman of the NZRU: "...the magazine should be applauded for its comprehensive reporting on all our national teams and competitions and the issues associated with rugby in New Zealand" (Hobbs, 2005, p. 4). Phillips et al. (2004) suggested using texts that are widely disseminated, recognisable, and emerging from centrally located actors. With a monthly readership estimated as 452,000 (over 20% of the total male population of New Zealand) according to their advertised AC Nielsen data, it is argued that *Rugby News* is such a text in the context of New Zealand rugby. A set of 30 issues from 1985, and 35 issues from 2005, was used as a source of data. This in itself provided over 2800 pages of raw material. In 1995, a competitor to *Rugby News* was introduced into the New Zealand rugby environment. This was the monthly publication, *New Zealand Rugby World (NZ Rugby World)*, formerly known as *New Zealand Rugby Monthly*. The readership figure for this publication is 161,000, again according to advertised AC Nielsen data. With a 2005 cover price of \$8.95 compared with *Rugby News*'s \$4.95 it offers a slightly different perspective; a more international focus and more 'in-depth' articles. A set of ten issues, from 2005, was obtained, comprising of 1000 pages, and used as an additional source of data.

In addition, secondary data were collected from press articles including newspapers, on-line newspapers, dedicated rugby publications and broadcast media. According to Brundage: "published sources of data including materials intended from the outset to be

printed and made public, such as newspaper articles and annual company reports, are considered primary sources of data” (cited by Cousens & Slack, 2005, p. 19). Much of the data represented as quotations might, following this argument, be categorised as primary data. Popular press books written within one year of the dates under study were also included as a specific source of data. For example, a retiring All Black half-back in each of the years produced a biography, Justin Marshall (Gillies, 2005) and Dave Loverage (Palenski, 1985) and, a self-proclaimed ‘out-spoken’ All Black produced an autobiography, Anton Oliver (Oliver & Turner, 2005), and Murray Mexted (Mexted & Veysey, 1986).

The most central of the texts, the NZRFU/NZRU Annual Reports produced in 1985 and 2005, were analysed on a sentence by sentence surface level basis for references to particular groups of people. This enabled an interpretation to be made of the communities involved in the field in each of those years. The communities were reduced to those affected by governance, through questioning as to whether they were potentially affected by decisions about resources, or might be part of a conflict about resources. This followed the definition of governance developed earlier in Chapter Two. This was not a complete picture, but was a replicable, and practicable, starting point. Appendix I shows how the reduction was achieved. There were eight communities identified as follows:

1985	2005
NZRFU Council	NZRU Board
NZRFU Executive Committee	NZRU Management
All Blacks ‘Team’	All Blacks ‘Team’
Unions & Clubs	Unions & Clubs
Supporters & Spectators	Supporters & Spectators
Broadcasters & Journalists	Broadcasters & Journalists
Referees	Referees
“ Juniors & Schools	Juniors & Schools

Once the communities had been identified, a decision was taken to interview two people from each of the groups in each of the years. A total of 32 interviews lasting between one and two hours were carried out between January 2006 and October 2007. The selection of the participants was, where possible, made from named individuals in the selected texts (NZRFU/NZRU annual reports, *Rugby Almanacks* and *Rugby News/NZ Rugby World*). Where similar communities were found in 1985 and 2005 then, where practicable, some equivalence as to the individual positions was attempted. For example, if an NZRFU executive member on a particular committee was selected for 1985, then an NZRU management executive with some responsibilities for the same area was selected for 2005. For other communities equivalence was introduced through a common event that created discursive activity; for example, a Bledisloe Cup¹⁷ match and a Ranfurly Shield game between Canterbury and Auckland was played in each of the years. Players and supporters were selected on this basis. Given the narrative nature of the interviews (this will be discussed in Section 3.3) one of the selection criteria was the ability to tell a good story. As the research progressed this became an additional criteria to identify participants. When the nature of the research was explained to people the, “have you spoken to... he’d be really good to interview” question was continuously raised. By taking advantage of these types of referrals access was gradually obtained across all communities. The specific participants were selected on the following basis.

NZRFU Council 1985 / NZRU Board 2005

Eleven members, who were not part of the Executive Committee, were named in the Annual Report that entered the discourse in 1985. Eight were still alive. One was specifically selected as being regularly referred to in the 1985 texts and, therefore, possibly more likely to have stories to tell. One was selected on the basis of regular attendance at 1985 Council meetings. In 2005, eleven members of the NZRU Board were named in the Annual Report. One was selected based on regular references in the 2005 texts, and one on the basis of his position on the board.

¹⁷ Certain games between New Zealand and Australia are played for the Bledisloe Cup.

NZRFU Executive Committee 1985 / NZRU Management team 2005

Of the seven members listed in the 1985 NZRFU Annual Report, two were interviewed given their centrality to the decision making process. The particular specialist experience of the individuals was considered. In 2005, twenty-one members of the management are individually listed in the annual report. Two members of the team were interviewed. They were chosen to provide an approximate match to the 1985 selections. Clearly an exact match was not possible due to the expansion of numbers of administrators, and the development of different roles.

All Blacks 'Team' 1985 and 2005

Thirty-nine individuals, including selectors and managers, were listed in the 1985 NZRFU Annual Report as part of the All Black 'team' that year. Two were selected on the basis of centrality to the texts. Both were involved in the Bledisloe Cup match between the All Blacks and Australia, played at Eden Park, Auckland on 29th June 1985. Forty-nine individuals, including selectors and managers, were listed as part of the All Blacks 'team' in the 2005 NZRU Annual Report. Two were selected, one the basis of availability, and one on the basis of centrality to the texts. Both were involved in the Bledisloe Cup match between the All Blacks and Australia, played at Eden Park, Auckland on 3rd September 2005.

The Clubs and Unions 1985 and 2005

One event in 1985 provided a point of interest; the 'Game of the Century' (Gifford, 2006) occurred between Auckland and Canterbury in Christchurch on 14th September for the Ranfurly Shield. An equivalent Ranfurly Shield game between the same two Unions was held in Christchurch on 8th October 2005. An administrator with significant experience in each of those Unions was chosen. The individuals selected also held positions in national level administration. A coach from a senior team in each of the catchment areas (for the Auckland Blues and the Canterbury Crusaders) was also selected. These coaches had extensive club experience. Here the decisions were influenced by the 'ability to tell a story' and word of mouth 'snowball sampling' (Page & Meyer, 2000).

Supporters and Spectators 1985 and 2005

Spectators were also identified through snowball sampling. Interviewees and other 'rugby' contacts were asked if they knew of individuals who attended the 1985 or the 2005 Ranfurly Shield games. Two individuals were interviewed from each year. In 1985, 52,000 attended the game at Lancaster Park. In 2005, some 25,000 people attended the game at Jade Stadium. These participants were not individually named in the texts. In order to take into account the 2005 NZRU use of the word 'supporters' to include sponsors, one individual who attended the game as a corporate host (using his company's private box) was included as a 2005 participant.

Journalists and Broadcasters 1985 and 2005

Given the centrality of *Rugby News* data to the study one selection in each year was from the editorial staff. The individuals were in an equivalent position. A second selection was made on evidence in the discourse of influence and standing in the rugby communities. This selection also took into account a growing influence of TV and radio commentary, by 2005. All were individually named in the texts.

Referees 1985 and 2005

The 1985 *Almanack* listed nine referees who had been appointed internationally. Two were interviewed. The 2005 *Almanack* listed thirteen referees appointed internationally. Two were interviewed. Some equivalence was made through the games they officiated. All were named in the texts.

Juniors and Schools 1985 and 2005

In 1985, the North Harbour Union was formed when it broke away from the Auckland Union. It was a point of discursive activity. Participants, who were involved in playing or coaching in junior and/or schoolboy rugby, were identified from those Unions. The individuals were selected on the basis of their ability to 'tell a story' and came from recommendations from 'rugby' contacts. These participants were not individually named in the texts.

Duality of roles

One of the factors that emerged as the interviews progressed provided additional triangulation. Some participants were actively part of the field in both years. From the 1985 selections; one participant had gone on to be a senior manager in a Union, another was involved with the Professional Players Association; both referees were still involved in some administrative capacity; both 1985 journalists were still contributing to the discourse of 2005; and one 1985 Council member was still turning out as an emergency player for his local club. From the 2005 participant list; one board member was involved with schools rugby in 1985; several participants were representative and club players; and a broadcaster and a junior coach were involved in junior rugby. In addition, one of the spectators had attended both 1985 and 2005 Ranfurly Shield games. There were other significant dual roles where listing might impinge on confidentiality issues and are not revealed.

Summary

In summary, the sources of data were equivalent texts from each of the years chosen. The texts were made up of:

- *written texts* produced in the years 1985 and 2005 (NZRFU/NZRU annual reports, the *Rugby Almanacks*, 65 editions of *Rugby News*, and 10 editions of *NZ Rugby Monthly*)
- *transcripts* of 32 paired narrative interviews with two members from each identified rugby community.
- *supporting texts* (newspaper articles, dedicated rugby publications, broadcast media and popular press books published in or around the years under study).

The next section details the procedures that were followed to produce the results presented in Chapter Four.

3.3. Procedures

With discourse analysis, as Phillips and Hardy (2002) pointed out, ‘recipes’ for data analysis are difficult to provide. Each situation necessitates a slightly different

approach. To be plausible, a justification for the individual approach needs to be made. In this case the approach has broadly followed Kearins (2006) suggestions for interpretive research. The first stage, first-order interpretations, reviews the descriptive properties of the scene under study at a common sense level. The researcher becomes familiar with the territory. Second-order interpretations can then be made to organise and explain patterns in the first-order data. These second-order interpretations derive the interaction patterns “that may be meaningful beyond the organisation – plausible to other people because they reflect their own experience” (Kearins, 2006, p. 1). The specific steps in the process have been:

1. The scene of New Zealand rugby was studied through a first reading of the *written texts* and *supporting texts*.
2. One potential institutionalised logic was identified as a template for the study sample, ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’. Tentative evidence for other possible institutionalised logics began to emerge.
3. The participants for the narrative interviews were selected and the interviews were conducted.
4. The *transcripts* from the interviews were analysed, initially to view the within-narrative connections and to consider how narrators might have positioned themselves.
5. The *transcripts* were then re-analysed at a meso-discourse level (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000) to provide evidence of themes amongst which commonly held ideas and understandings might be found.
6. The *transcripts*, the *written texts* and the *supporting texts* were then re-analysed in the context of these themes to identify evidence of institutionalised logics, or commonly held, *taken-for-granted and self-regulating* ideas and understandings.
7. The complete set of sources was then re-analysed for connections with, and between, the institutionalised logics emerging from the analysis.

The details of each stage will be outlined, following a short note about the practicalities of managing the data.

5

Managing the data

The volume of raw material used in this study as a source of data necessitated the use of data analysis software. The interview *transcripts* produced 510 pages of raw material, 252 pages from the 1985 participants and 258 pages from 2005 participants. The *written texts*, excluding the *Almanacks*, comprised over 3800 magazine pages. It has been recognised that Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) can increase the transparency and rigour of the analysis process (Fielding & Lee, 1998). Given the quantity and complexity, as Richards argued, “why would you not use software for qualitative analysis?” (2005). The choice was made to use QSR International’s NVivo 7 software on the basis of the flexibility offered by this version. The iterative nature of the analysis, and the interpretive nature of the coding, meant that the use of the software was crucial in the process of identifying the linkages between different texts. One benefit of the use of NVivo 7 has been to enable two supervisors to examine the integrity of various elements of the procedures (Kaczynski, 2006). Reports generated during the process have given them the opportunity to assess the application of codes, and to explore the logic behind the coding structures. In practice this has meant revisiting the raw data at a deeper level, and more often, than initially envisaged. Certainly the data analysis has been the most time consuming part of this research, and the outcomes have benefited from Grice’s call to “...handle your own rat” (Frost & Stablein, 1992, p. 246). In Frost and Stablein’s review of exemplary research, one common theme was how the researchers had immersed themselves in the raw data to understand what was going on. They suggested that in all cases “... ‘getting their hands dirty’ served to draw the researchers closer to the phenomena they were studying” (1992, p. 249). My hands are very dirty.

Act 1: The scene is set

In the first instance the *written texts* of each issue of *Rugby News* and *New Zealand Rugby World*, the *Almanacks* and the Annual Reports from 1985 and 2005 were examined to become familiar with the environment of rugby in New Zealand. This was easier for 2005, as New Zealand was ‘home’ for the researcher during that time. No specific data was noted in this ‘first pass’. The process was undertaken to look for broad patterns in the discourse, and to ensure that the narrative interviews could be undertaken

with a degree of confidence. As Wood and Kroger (2000) pointed out discourse analysis interviews require follow-up questions, and some familiarity with the context contributed to this process. This turned out to be the case with 1985 interviewees where it would have been a struggle to comprehend some of the complexities of their stories about ‘South Africa’, without some prior exposure to the discourse. Even at this stage some thought was given to potential institutionalised logics through a superficial interpretation of the discourse.

Act 2: A logic ‘jumps out’

As the process of scene review was taking place an event occurred that gave rise to considerable discursive activity. Press reports about the first test match of the 2005 British Lions’ tour was dominated by an incident in which the captain of the Lions, Brian O’Driscoll, was hurt in a clash with two All Black players. The responses of the two teams’ management and players to the incident illustrated the potential existence of an institutionalised logic in the field of New Zealand rugby – one that might be directly linked to the actions taken by the different parties. ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’ was the working title given to the logic. The first data supporting such a possible institutionalised logic came from the initial review of the *written texts* and a chance conversation with a Palmerston North taxi driver. A short article was written and published in *Rugby News* outlining the arguments (Harris, 2005, p. 33, see Appendix IV). The article was used to suggest that there might be seen to be an understanding amongst players, supporters and administrators in New Zealand that on-field incidents should, wherever possible, be left on the field of play and forgotten about once the game had finished. This logic may have had an effect on the way in which the ‘O’Driscoll incident’ was dealt with by New Zealand administrators. A full discussion as to the nature of this particular institutionalised logic, and its possible implications for those charged with governance, follows in Chapters Six and Eight. At this stage it is merely a convenient template to illustrate the procedures that were undertaken at the various stages of the research process. An example of the data that first indicated the nature of

the institutionalised logic, identified whilst reviewing the 1985 environment, came from Mark Shaw¹⁸:

Whatever happens, as soon as the game's over that's it. Soon as that final whistle has gone, good or bad, what's happened is history. I've never carried grudges over. I don't always win. I cop my share, but people miss those ones. You don't say 'I've got your number mate, we'll line up and I'll go out and cream you next year to get square'. If you can't shake hands, have a shower, have a beer after the game, that's when you start looking at Rugby and thinking it's not what it should be (Barton, 1985, *Rugby News*¹⁹, p. 36).

This quotation is shown to illustrate the initial thought process – a process sensitive to language that appeared to be used to explain human conduct, particularly that language which was used to explain what happened or what didn't happen. At a first-order interpretation level this was considered to be one piece of evidence surrounding a potential institutionalised logic, 'What happens on the field stays on the field'.

Act 3: The narrative interviews

Data was collected through narrative interviews (Chase, 2005) with two individuals representing each identified community. The purpose of the interview was to collect data on the participant's interpretations and context, through the act of getting them to tell a story. The aim was to "trigger self-sustainable narration" (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 62) that might produce data about the taken-for-granted ideas and understandings that placed conditions on their actions. Narrative is "retrospective meaning making – the shaping or ordering of past experience" (Chase, 2005, p. 656). It is a particular form of discourse where the narrator is expressing his or her point of view, either as an actor in the events or as an interested observer of other's actions. Emotions, thoughts, interpretations are the key elements in a narrative. An assumption of this approach is that narrative is actively created to achieve something. It might be to

¹⁸ Mark "Cowboy" Shaw played 68 matches for the All Blacks between 1980 and 1986. "His hard, uncompromising play gained him a reputation as the All Blacks' enforcer" (Palenski, Chester & McMillan, 2005, p. 189).

¹⁹ The in-text referencing style used is not strictly APA 5th. It is considered important to recognise, in-text, that the data presented comes from a primary source (*Rugby News/NZ Rugby World*). However, the references do follow APA 5th style in the section at the end of the report.

explain, to justify, to entertain, perhaps to complain, but it is created to shape a ‘reality’ of some sort. Therefore, the ‘factual’ content of the words was not considered to be important. If a participant got confused over dates or event details it did not affect the efficacy of the words.

The process of interviewing began by making contact, either by email or telephone, with the participant. They were provided with an outline of the research (see Information Sheet, Appendix II) and asked if they would contribute. The interviews took place at a variety of places; participant’s homes, local rugby clubs, NZRU Head Office, cafes and a bar, wherever was convenient for the participants. Locations included Auckland, Christchurch, Hamilton, Masterton, Napier, Paraparumu, Sydney, Timaru, Upper Hutt, Waipu and Wellington. The strategy was to obtain interviews with the NZRFU/NZRU Board members first, as they were initially considered potentially the most difficult to organise given the seniority of the individuals. The 32 interviews were carried out during 2006 and 2007. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix III).

The specific method used for the narrative interviews drew from Czarniawska’s idea that most people “would break through my structure” (1997, p. 28) and tell the stories that they wanted to tell. It is argued that the stories that people constitute are exactly the empirical materials that are required if an understanding of the ‘things’ that might constrain or facilitate them is to be built. How they speak about things in their lives, what they miss out, how they order things, and the emphases they make, are the essential texts that need to be examined (Thompson, 2000). Asking a specific question like ‘what institutionalised logics drive the way you behave?’ was unlikely to be effective given the potentially hidden nature of such logics. At the same time, recognising that some interviewees might not be natural narrators, stories were invited. This was achieved through framing the interview with a broad, non-contentious question that enabled stories to be told (Chase, 2005). It was through the stories and the language that they chose to use, that data about the nature of institutionalised logics was interpreted. The planned broad questions for each interview were:

- Tell me how you became involved in rugby in the first place.

- What do you consider the most important things you were involved with in the year in question?
- Why were those things important?
- What else was important to you in the context of New Zealand rugby?

An important aspect of the interviews was that the ideas and understandings were allowed to emerge from the participants own words. Only when they themselves made reference to ideas was further probing undertaken. Follow-up questions were asked with a view to encouraging further and deeper stories. A concerted effort was made not to lead the participants to an already constituted group of ideas, for example, ‘what happens on the field stays on the field’. However, the interview was still a conversation. If an interviewee made reference to, for example, the World Cup, then a follow-up question designed to encourage a story about the World Cup might have been asked. The style of questions in these follow-ups was: How did you feel about the World Cup? How did the World Cup affect you? What did this mean to you? As the research progressed proficiency at managing the follow-up questions increased. The first three interviews, reviewed with supervisors in early 2006, were characterised by a degree of impatience, when ‘stories’ seemed to be adding little. On reflection, it was realised that it was exactly these kinds of almost ‘rambling’ stories that might provide interesting data. The interviews were transcribed ‘literally’. Repeated words and phrases were noted, and if what the participant said was ‘gobbledygook’ then ‘gobbledygook’ was transcribed. After having a third party transcribe several of the early interviews, the rest of the transcriptions were completed by the researcher. The re-listening and consistent ‘literal’ transcription meant that interpretations were taking place even at this stage. To be consistent it was felt that the interpretations should all come from one source. Following Stake’s (2005) reflections on the ethical dimensions of qualitative research, the situation of those currently working directly for the NZRU was given special consideration. They were offered the opportunity to check the transcripts for accuracy to ensure that the potential for embarrassment was minimised. The nature of the interviews, in that they were allowed to generate their own discourse, meant that not all requested the transcripts.

Act 4: Reading the transcripts: Who said that?

The transcripts of the interviews were analysed initially to view the within-narrative connections and to consider how narrators might have positioned themselves. Chase observed that narratives are “both enabled and constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances” (2005, p. 657). Whilst it was the patterns across the stories that have been the more important element in this research, the themes only emerged from the individual narratives. As Chase emphasised, “rather than locating distinct themes across interviews, narrative researchers listen first to the voices within each narrative” (2005, p. 663). In practical terms this meant the first stage of analysis was at an individual interview transcript level. The focus was on how the narrator had positioned themselves and others (Bamberg, 1997). Who is telling the story? What is their purpose in telling the story? What ‘trajectory’ is the story on? For example, in the context of ‘what happens on the field’ a story about violence on the field might be portrayed in different ways for different purposes by an official responsible for discipline in the game, or by a spectator wanting to be entertained. In the case of the data presented earlier to illustrate ‘what happens on the field’ the narrator, Mark ‘Cowboy’ Shaw, would be considered. As a current player, in 1985, would he have wanted to suggest that grudges might be carried forward to new games? After all, his perceived role was to be an ‘enforcer’, to ensure a physical and psychological dominance over other teams. He might be seen to be trying to influence the discourse in such a way that his style of play continued to be viewed as acceptable. Given that he might have been in a position to consistently ‘dish out’ more than he received, could he do anything else but call for everything to be forgotten at the end of the game? Or did he really believe in tradition, that the game was just a game, and for all its inherent physical conflict, the eighty minutes of rough and tumble was really an excuse for a social beer. Given the confidential nature of the interviews, the outcomes of this stage of the analysis are not presented in the results. However, the process was reflected in the selection of data for the next stage.

Act 5: Re-reading the transcripts: What was commonly talked about?

The next stage of analysis considered connections between the various stories. Wood and Kroger (2000) made a number of specific recommendations as to how a text should

be considered when *doing* discourse analysis. These include; how the text makes you as the reader feel; don't ignore the obvious, but do assume the literal meaning to be the least useful; consider what is not there; consider the possibility of multiple functions for the text; and, take nothing for granted. In essence this is what was considered at each stage. The transcriptions were analysed at a meso-discourse level, being "relatively sensitive to language used in context but interested in finding broader patterns" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1133), to provide evidence of themes in the midst of which commonly held ideas and understandings might be found. The themes emerged from the transcript data. To get to the themes presented in the results, Chapter Four, the transcripts were first individually coded into what the NVivo 7 system terms *nodes*. There were 2067 quotations or pieces of data, ranging from fragments of a statement to full paragraphs, allocated to 79 nodes. The nodes were then clustered into ten broad themes. These themes were groupings of broad areas of discourse that the transcripts had commonly highlighted. The themes were analysed across interviews and between years, and the results are presented in Chapter Four, Section 4.1. The approach broadly followed the general data analysis 'spiral' strategy proposed by Cresswell (1998).

Act 6: Re-reading the transcripts, the written and supporting texts: What were the common ideas and understandings that might be seen to form the basis of institutionalised logics?

Having identified the broad areas of discourse that appeared to be a part of some reality in the years under study, the transcripts were then re-analysed for commonly held ideas and understandings that might be seen to have existed. The method of analysis again followed Wood and Kroger's (2000) suggestions, looking for evidence ideas and understandings that might form the basis of institutionalised logics. The written texts and the supporting texts were also re-analysed in the context of these broad areas of discourse to identify evidence of institutionalised logics. Given the working definition of institutionalised logics, evidence as to the taken-for-grantedness of ideas and understandings was identified. Specific evidence was considered at this stage of the constraining or facilitating nature of the logic, its self-regulating nature, and its stage of development. Words, phrases, cartoons, advertisements and photographs that might be interpreted as being relevant to the institutionalised logic were noted. The list of logics developed makes no claim to be complete. The list developed contained taken-for-

granted ideas and understandings that potentially existed in at least one of the years studied. Some had a place in both 1985 and 2005. There appeared to be considerable overlaps and interaction between the logics. The results of this stage are presented in Chapter Four, Section 4.2.

Act 7: Re-reading the transcripts, the written and supporting texts: Connections

The complete raw data set was then re-analysed for any connections with institutionalised logics emerging from the texts. It was at this stage the analysis moved to an approach closer to Alvesson and Karreman's (2000) Grand Discourse. This is the stage that has proved one of the most difficult elements of discourse analysis. Alvesson and Karreman posed the question:

How does one in empirical work proceed from encounters with texts (documents, interview talk, observed talk) to make summaries and interpretations of wider sets of discourses including aggregations of a variety of elements, an integrated framework of vocabularies, ideas, cognition and, interrelated with these, practices of various kinds? In short: To what extent – and if so, when and how – can we move from discourses to Discourse(s)? (2000, p. 1146).

One solution, Fairclough's 'three dimensional approach' (Scott, 2001), suggested connecting particular texts to discourses, then locating the discourses in the historical and social context of the particular site being studied. It was through locating the discourses, and institutionalised logics, in the historical and social context of New Zealand rugby that an interpretation of how they might be integrated was formed. The assembly of discourses was considered as an integrated frame and their impact on the organisational environment of New Zealand rugby was considered. The results of this stage are reflected in the presentation of the discussion section, Chapter Eight. The format for the discussion draws on Bougeois's (1979) 'metaphysical elaboration'. This allows for the institutionalised logics and insights that have formed as the research has developed to be presented without the rigid constraints of more traditional research conventions. One solution to Alvesson and Karreman's question is to drop back to the issues of co-creation of understanding and plausibility. The aggregations, the vocabularies, the ideas, the practices, and the connections that make up this particular

interpretation of the potential effects of the institutionalised logics , presented in Chapter Eight, will stand or fall by its plausibility.

3.4. Limitations of the methodology

Having explained in detail how the data was collected, there are some limitations that need to be considered.

The scope of the research

The research has addressed a specific question; what is the nature of institutionalised logics that might be seen to have existed amongst communities affected by governance in the field of New Zealand rugby in 1985 and 2005? The scope limits the results that might be presented and interpreted. The research does **not** address communities not affected by governance; it focuses on just two specific years; it does **not** focus on other business or sport environments; and, it does not specifically address the international nature of rugby, except where the discourse encompassed that element. A limitation of the research is that it is **not** an institutional analysis of change in a traditional institutional theory sense where institutions are conceptualised at a macro-level (e.g. O'Brien & Slack, 2003, 2004). The focus is **not** on 'institutional logics' (Friedland & Alford, 1991) that might be seen to exist in the wider societal sense. The research is limited to an analysis of micro-logics, which exhibit the characteristics of an institutionalised understanding, and appear to affect outcomes of decisions made by those charged with the governance of in the field of New Zealand rugby. These limitations in scope may reduce the applicability of any insights to other environments.

Co-creation of understanding

As stated earlier the research stands or falls on its claim to plausibility, and its ability to co-create an understanding of the nature of institutionalised logics with those in the field of New Zealand rugby. In some ways the approach taken makes this a little more difficult. Some readers may not be entirely receptive to this kind of interpretive research. This research has not uncovered easy to reproduce 'sound-bites'. There are no standard, presentable figures that 'prove' anything – there is just complex analysis incorporating multiple perspectives. It may be convenient for some to dismiss the

research as one individual's interpretation. The presentation of the interpretations in the discussion section may cause consternation. Some sections do not look like 'traditional' research. Positivist criticisms might be leveled, "it does not look like research at all..." (Smircich, 1992, p. 227). Richardson, however, suggested that much qualitative writing is boring, and this is a problem, because qualitative research has to be read (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005). At times a narrative style is employed to provide, as Phillips argued, "a useful addition to our ways of thinking about organizations and an indispensable approach to strengthening the connection between organizational analysis as an academic discipline and the subjective experience of organizational membership" (1995, p. 625). Throughout this research there has been a tension between the 'scientific' way in which research is expected to be presented and a desire to make this interesting and relevant to those involved in the field of New Zealand rugby. Up to this point the "inherent conservatism of empirical organizational research" (Martin, 1992, p. 231) has prevailed. The discussion section extends the boundaries and may test the co-creation of understanding with some readers.

The chosen texts

Another limitation of the research is that the texts selected can only be considered a part of the discourse. There is much more that has contributed to the social construction of taken-for-granted ideas and understandings in the field. For some of the communities, documents, instructions, meetings and conversations with the international community, particularly the International Rugby Board (IRB) might have influenced them. For others internal NZRU material might have had a significant impact (e.g. strategic plans, board minutes, job descriptions, internal promotional material). For the wider communities such as supporters and juniors the influence that television commentary (particularly Sky's Rugby Channel) might also have been considered. These sources of discursive data have not been captured directly in this research. Some of their construction effects may have been captured through the interviews and other texts, but the interpretation made might be considered, like all discourse analyses, weaker because it is inevitably incomplete.

The narrative interviews

The choice of narrative style interviews has its own critics. Researchers have highlighted the ‘interview society’ that we inhabit and warn against an expectation that narrators might reveal their ‘authentic selves’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Given that the majority of the participants in this research have been interviewed on several occasions; some many, many times, this is an important consideration. The possibility of individuals churning out well versed and practiced ‘stories’ was certainly there, but has been, at least partially, addressed by the method of discourse analysis employed. In the interview itself, the use of follow-up questions helped break through some surface stories. In addition, in Act 4 of the procedures, the ‘who said that and why might they have said it?’ was considered.

On a practical note the narrative interview technique necessitated some choices to be made in the context of follow-up questions. Having agreed that the time given by participants was to be one hour, this meant that in some cases follow-up questions could not be asked, due to time constraints. For example, one participant mentioned that his work included trying to involve the partners of the All Blacks in activities in 1985. This was not followed up, as a story about ‘lack of leadership’ took priority in the agreed time. This choice was made in real-time and was clearly an interpretive decision that affected the data collected.

The participants

The unavailability of certain participants, for example, the Chairman of the NZRFU in 1985 (Ces Blazey who died in 1998) and the 2005 CEO of the NZRU (who declined to support the research) may be viewed by some as weakening the interpretation. Two other potential participants refused to be interviewed, one was “too busy” and another felt there were others in a better position to contribute to a study on governance issues. The most difficult people to arrange interviews with were All Blacks from the 2005 ‘team’. Overall, though, it appears that no previous study of New Zealand rugby has managed to access the range of participants who have contributed.

3.5. Ethical Issues

NZRU support

As was explained earlier, the CEO of the NZRU declined a request for the NZRU to take part in the research. This was interpreted as a decision not to give official NZRU sanction. This did not preclude approaching individuals and asking them to contribute at their own convenience. In order to be open with the CEO, an email was sent on 14th February, 2006, explaining that the research would continue to be undertaken, and offering to discuss progress at any time that was convenient. This offer was not taken up. At the beginning of each narrative interview it was explained that this was not part of any officially sanctioned NZRU research. It was also explained to all those employed, or connected with the NZRU, that my request for official support from the CEO had been turned down. No participants withdrew or raised any concerns over this issue.

Confidentiality

Given the nature of the rugby environment in New Zealand, confidentiality has been an issue. Many of the participants were happy to be quoted directly and openly, but some were not. Consequently, the identities of all participants have been protected as far as possible. It would have been helpful in terms of credibility and plausibility to list the individuals who have taken part in the study, and to attribute direct quotations. Where quotations have been used by individuals who might be identified through the relatively small possible sample, groupings have been made. For example, quotations from either an NZRU Board member or from one of the NZRU management team are attributed to an 'NZRU Administrator, 2005'. The attribution 'All Blacks team, 2005' is used to cover both players and selectors. Particular action has been taken for individuals active in the field in both 1985 and 2005, who might be identified through their comments.

Individual contributions in texts

One issue of an ethical nature came in the analysis of direct quotations from the *written texts* which were in the public domain. In some cases it was the same individuals whose

identities were being protected from the interviews. It felt uncomfortable to quote directly from, for example, *Rugby News* in 1985, a comment that might be interpreted as unfavorable in today's light. This did not necessarily stop the data being presented where it was considered important. However, it did stop some interpretations being presented, specifically linking data from the *written texts* to the *transcripts*, such as comparison between what an individual said publicly, and what an individual said in a private interview situation. The confidentiality issue was placed at a higher level of importance than the contribution to the overall research.

The recordings and transcripts

The narrative interviews were recorded. One participant, at the end of the interview, appeared to be concerned that he had been too open about confidential issues. He was asked if he wanted to withdraw the interview and he said no. On reflecting upon his discomfort a decision was taken to destroy the recording, and to rely upon field notes, written after the interview. The individual was contacted and informed that the tape was destroyed, and that only interview notes would be used. This was considered the ethical action, despite the loss of potentially interesting data.

Where specifically requested, participants were given a transcript to review. On review, changes were made to nine of the 32 transcripts. Most changes were minor grammatical errors or proper name spellings. The literal transcription caused frustration for some of the participants. Only in two cases was the raw data substantially changed. This was where the participants, on reflection, wanted to withdraw a section of what they had said or add an additional paragraph of explanation.

3.6. Summary

In this chapter the methodology behind the collection and analysis of data used to answer the research question has been described. The choice of discourse analysis has been justified through an explanation of the link with institutionalisation developed by Phillips et al. (2004). The particular variety has been described, through a description of the level of analyses (a meso-discourse level) and through a consideration of the focus

on power relationships (some, but not exclusively). The selection of the raw material for the sources of data was explained, and the people who have contributed through the narrative interviews were introduced. The detailed procedures that were used to collect and analyse the data have been outlined. Finally, some limitations of the methodology have been clarified and ethical issues discussed. The next step is to present the results.

Chapter Four: Introducing the Results

The results presented in this chapter, and the following three, are the outcomes of Acts 5 and 6, as described in the procedures section of Chapter Three. In Act 5, the *transcripts* were analysed at a meso-discourse level (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000) to provide evidence of themes amongst which commonly held ideas and understandings, or logics, might be found. An example of one such theme was termed ‘amateurs and professionals’. In total ten themes were identified. The effect of this process was to narrow the focus of the research to areas where institutionalised logics were most likely to be discovered. The themes, and an explanation of how they were developed, are presented in this chapter.

In Act 6, the *transcripts*, the *written texts* and the *supporting texts* were re-analysed, in the context of these themes, to identify evidence of institutionalised logics, or *commonly held, taken-for-granted and self-regulating* ideas and understandings. One such institutionalised logic, found amongst the theme ‘amateurs and professionals’, was termed ‘It’s only a game’. In total, evidence for twenty institutionalised logics was identified and each was given a working title. For the purposes of presentation the evidence surrounding the nature of such logics has been divided into three broad areas – ‘The Business of Rugby’; ‘Laws to be Obeyed’; and, ‘Conveyor to the Goal’. A chapter is allocated to each area. These groupings might be seen as a step towards higher level institutional logics, but as this is not an institutional analysis in the academically accepted sense, they are not intended to be interpreted as such. Chapters Five, Six and Seven represent a convenient organisation of the results in order to effectively minimise the sheer volume of data to be shared with the reader. Evidence, as to the nature of three of the logics identified, cannot be conveniently grouped under these headings. These three are presented as discrete sets of data in Appendix V.

4.1. Themes emerging from Act 5

Act 5 itself consisted of two stages. First, the transcripts were individually coded into what the NVivo 7 system terms nodes. Altogether 2067 quotations or pieces of data, ranging from fragments of a statement to full paragraphs, were allocated through this process to a total of 79 nodes. These nodes might be seen as groupings of data with a common central topic - topics that emerged from the narrative interviews. Table 4.1 presents a complete list of the 79 nodes and the percentage of participants who raised each of these topics in some way. On average the 16 participants, from 1985, raised 23.4 nodes in each interview. This compared with an average of 24.1 nodes per interview raised by the 2005 participants. Nodes raised by half, or more than half, of the participants are highlighted in bold.

Subtle differences between the topics raised by the 1985 participants and those raised by the 2005 participants were observed at this early stage of analysis. The 2005 participants appeared to use the language of business more often. They contributed to the nodes of 'business', 'leadership' and 'management' more often than the 1985 participants:

- 'business': 10 out of 16 contributed compared with 3 out of 16 in 1985.
- 'leadership': 7 out of 16 contributed compared with 2 out of 16 in 1985.
- 'management': 9 out of 16 contributed compared with 4 out of 16 in 1985.

The 2005 participants were also more inclined to bring up the subject of the Rugby World Cup and the system by which players are developed:

- 'World Cup': 15 out of 16 contributed compared with 10 out of 16 in 1985.
- 'development system': 14 out of 16 contributed compared with 9 out of 16 in 1985.

Table 4.1: Nodes emerging from interviews conducted with 32 participants

Table 4.1	Number of interviews in which node emerged	Number of interviews in which node emerged	Total of interviews (both years)	% of interviews in which node emerged	Number of quotations (or pieces of raw data from interviews)
	1985	2005	Total		
	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>2067</i>
	(a)	(b)	($\Sigma=a+b$)		
NODE					
abuse	0	4	4	13%	10
amateur	10	6	16	50%	47
ambitions	2	3	5	16%	13
appraisal	2	2	4	13%	18
Auckland	4	1	5	16%	8
Boston report	1	0	1	3%	3
brawn drain	2	2	4	13%	4
British Lions	1	3	4	13%	9
browning of rugby	8	5	13	41%	37
business	3	10	13	41%	20
class system	1	2	3	9%	4
club rugby	11	14	25	78%	123
coaching	8	11	19	59%	55
competitions	3	7	10	31%	16
control of the game	6	11	17	53%	56
corporate hospitality	1	1	2	6%	4
development system	9	14	23	72%	93
early feelings	13	10	23	72%	46
entertainment	1	3	4	13%	5
ethos	11	6	17	53%	28
everyone plays when they are young	10	10	20	63%	33
excitement	2	3	5	16%	12
family involvement	14	14	28	88%	60
governance	9	6	15	47%	48
heroes	1	0	1	3%	1
image	0	1	1	3%	3
injuries	7	8	15	47%	25
innovation	1	1	2	6%	6
journalists	8	6	14	44%	23
kiss and tell books	2	0	2	6%	2
leadership	2	7	9	28%	33
learning through experience	1	6	7	22%	11
life and rugby balance	3	4	7	22%	13
loyalty	2	0	2	6%	3
management	4	9	13	41%	28
mental ability	4	3	7	22%	22
mental ability source	1	0	1	3%	4
motivation	3	6	9	28%	14

Table 4.1	Number of interviews in which node emerged	Number of interviews in which node emerged	Total of interviews (both years)	% of interviews in which node emerged	Number of quotations (or pieces of raw data from interviews)
	1985	2005	Total		
	16	16	32	100%	2067
	(a)	(b)	($\Sigma=a+b$)		
NODE					
national identity	2	1	3	9%	3
NZRU reports	3	0	3	9%	3
other sports	2	2	4	13%	5
parochialism	1	1	2	6%	2
passion	1	4	5	16%	12
player burnout	3	3	6	19%	7
professional player development	3	4	7	22%	15
players attitudes	7	7	14	44%	30
players collective agreement	1	2	3	9%	21
politics	3	3	6	19%	12
preparing for the future	1	1	2	6%	4
professionalism	12	10	22	69%	83
publicity	1	0	1	3%	1
Ranfurly Shield	6	2	8	25%	23
reasons for success	8	4	12	38%	30
referees	9	9	18	56%	105
rules of the game	11	9	20	63%	47
selection	7	7	14	44%	29
self analysis	1	1	2	6%	4
soccer	6	1	7	22%	10
social change	9	10	19	59%	49
social supporters	2	0	2	6%	4
South Africa	8	9	17	53%	46
sponsorship	7	2	9	28%	18
standards	1	2	3	9%	4
styles of rugby	6	5	11	34%	17
television and broadcasting	11	11	22	69%	82
the big debates	2	2	4	13%	5
the crowd	3	3	6	19%	37
the kids	13	10	23	72%	77
they who must be obeyed	0	1	1	3%	4
traditions	2	2	4	13%	11
violence and physicality	13	12	25	78%	111
vision	1	3	4	13%	4
volunteers	3	2	5	16%	6
winning at all costs	4	6	10	31%	16
women	13	10	23	72%	69
World Cup	10	15	25	78%	87
worldwide game	7	5	12	38%	24
x factor	0	2	2	6%	5
young fellas	1	2	3	9%	5

One area where the 1985 participants had more input concerned the ‘ethos’ of the game, which was raised by 11 out of 16 compared with just 6 out of 16 of the 2005 participants.

Figure 4.1 presents the 79 nodes in a sequence of those most commonly occurring, with those brought up by half, or more than half, of all interviewees grouped together. The 79 nodes were then aggregated in a process of data reduction. The nodes were synthesised, or grouped, into broad *themes*. These themes were clustered around the most common nodes across all 32 interviews. Figure 4.2 illustrates the process of synthesising the 79 nodes and the emergence of ten themes.

The reduction to, and subsequent selection of, ten broad themes was made on the basis of aggregation of those nodes most commonly occurring, and then reviewed for some degree of commonality. For example, the nodes of ‘amateur’ and ‘professionalism’ were considered to have sufficient commonality to become an aggregated theme. This is marked in Figure 4.2 as ‘Theme 1’. At this stage the allocated data was a mix of viewpoints, some might have been supporting an idea whilst other participants expressed opposing views. Each of the ten broad themes comprised of at least one node that emerged in at least half of the interviews. The dotted line across Figure 4.2 represents this ‘cut-off’ point.

In another example, the nodes ‘women’ and ‘the kids’ were clustered as the data suggested a link between the two. Women were often seen as a major influence on children. Table 4.2 illustrates the specific contributing nodes from which the ten themes were developed, with examples of the data that might be seen as typifying the node. An example here is the theme ‘Referees and the rough stuff’ which emerged from three contributing nodes, ‘referees’, ‘rules of the game’ and ‘violence and physicality’, each raised by more than half of the participants. Some of the data presented here demands comment, but at the risk of frustrating the reader, it is presented in a raw form so as to demonstrate the process undertaken.

Figure 4.1: Ranking of nodes across both data sets

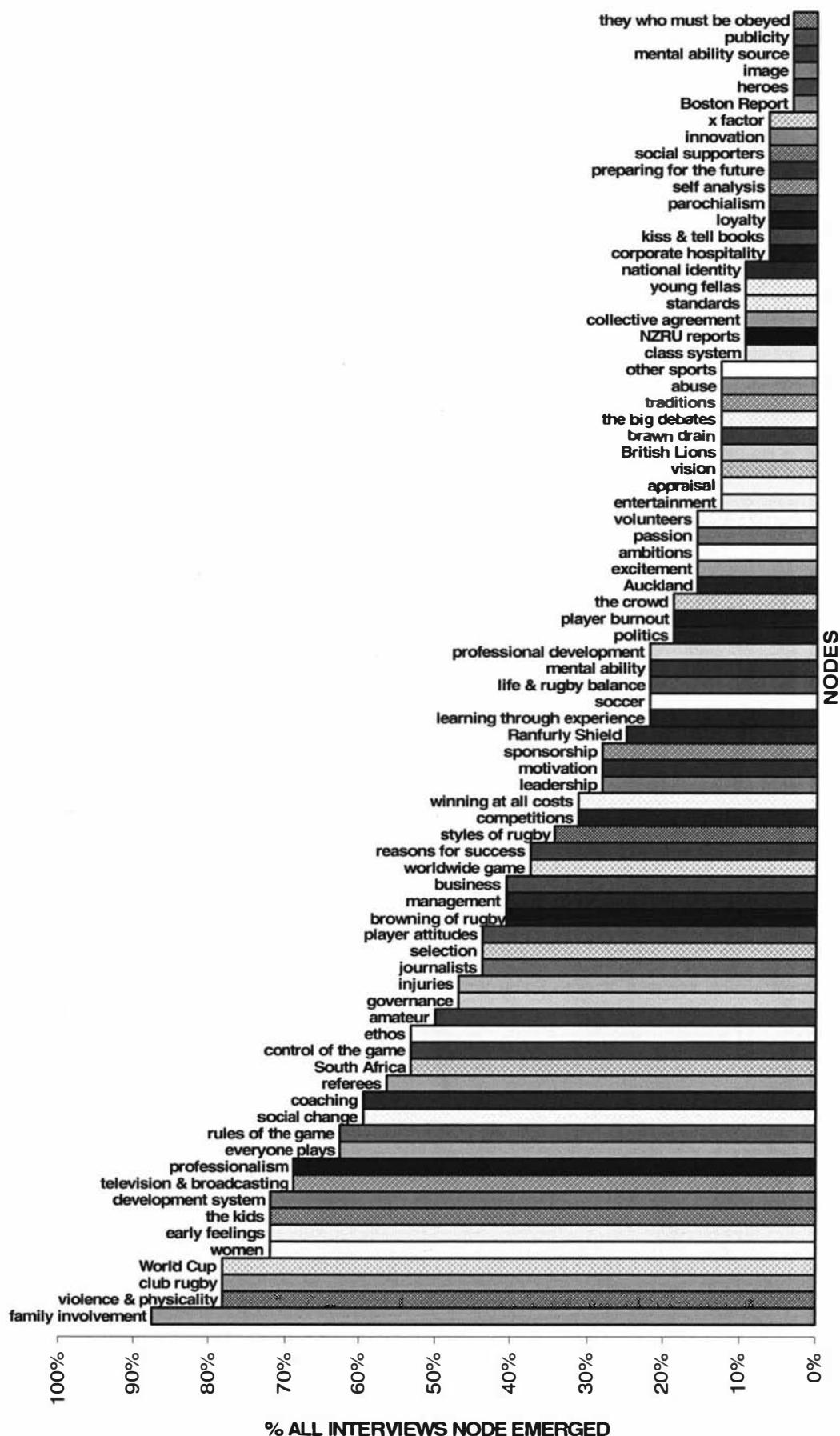


Figure 4.2: Data reduction through the aggregation of nodes into themes

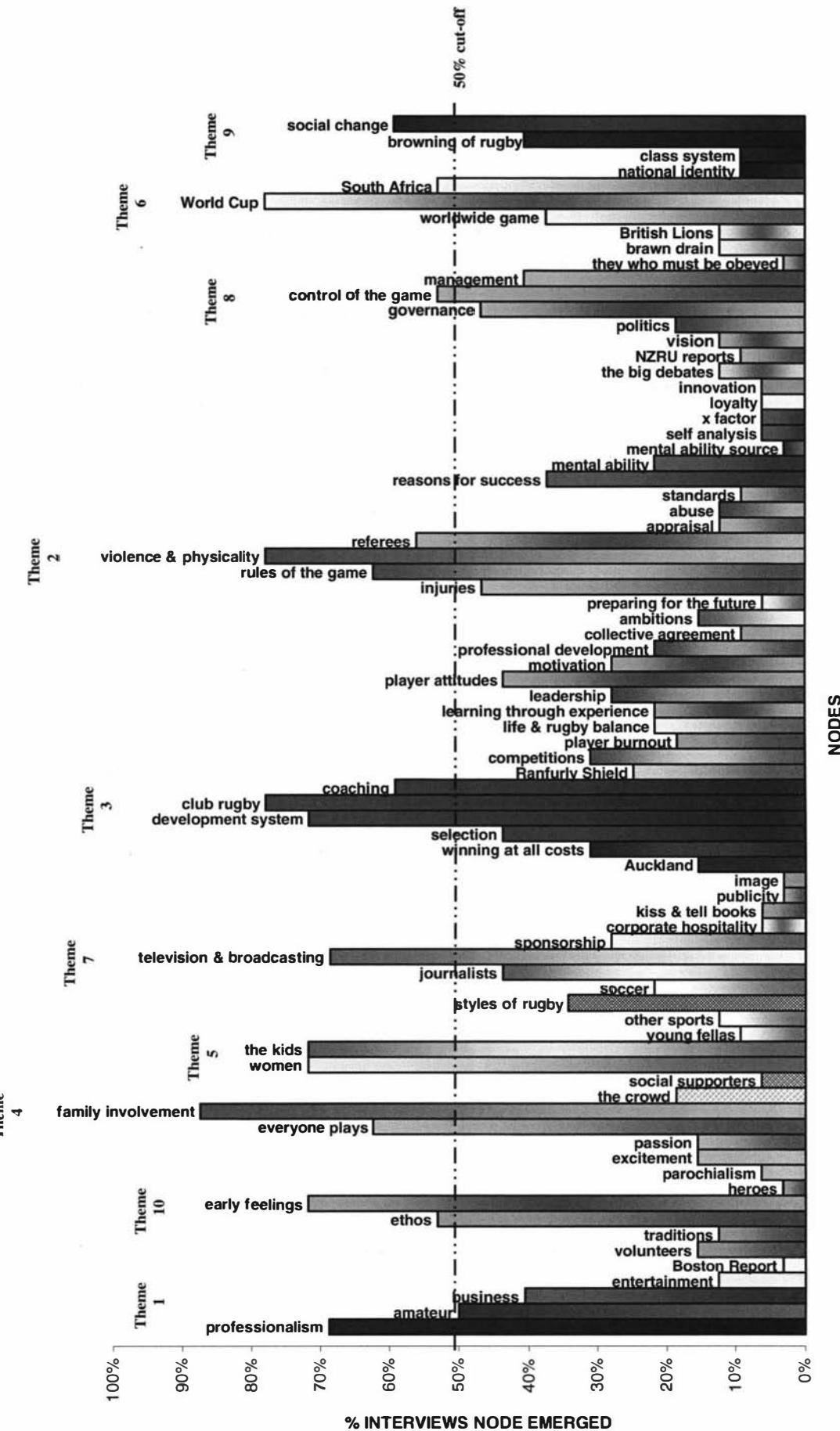


Table 4.2: Identification of the themes

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
1. Amateurs and professionals	'amateur'	<p>There were certainly individual players, the likes of Andy Haden who made the most of things. There were also clubs that would pay players in France. They'd play for Harlequins on Saturday and a French club on Sunday. There were the ticket deals, where they'd sell the tickets but there was nobody making much money out of it in any real sense. If you went to the UK there were expenses...the Welsh clubs would pay 4 or 5 pounds but it was only beer money. Pocket money. Second division in Auckland you'd be buying your own boots. You still had to pay money, \$75 I think, to join the club... (Club Coach, 1985).</p> <p>There was very little (<i>payment</i>); I would almost say none I think in '85. It changed a little bit after that. There may have been a little bit in the big centres where the clubs were, I know some clubs got burnt. Like I know clubs in some situations would buy an All Black a house and set him up in business. They would turn up, play a couple of games, sell the house. There were all sorts of bad tricks played but it was in that transitional period where players were starting to get paid (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).</p>
	'professionalism'	<p>I have no hesitation in saying that before rugby was recognised as a professional sport many clubs, particularly bigger clubs, were cheating, individuals were cheating, and that is one reason really why we had to recognise professionalism and give everyone the same chance. I'm sure other administrators were aware of that, though... and particularly because it started overseas. Various countries... I don't want to criticise anyone... led the change into recognised professionalism but really they had been, and I'll use the word, cheating. They had been cheating for years so it had to change (Union Administrator, 1985).</p> <p>Professional rugby changed the world of rugby. We for a long time in New Zealand didn't know the difference between an amateur rugby player and a professional rugby player. Everybody thought they had to get paid now because it was professional. Well you know it doesn't work like that. If you play for a small club you are still going to have to buy your own boots and bag. If you play for the District they'll probably give you the bag, now you are running as a semi-pro... Rugby couldn't get the game sorted. It didn't know where it sat (Club Coach, 1985).</p>

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
2. Referees and the rough stuff	'referees'	<p>If there is no mention of the referee in the after-match speeches, or the after-match summary of the games, I think that's great. I suppose that has been my philosophy right through, to play a more minor part if you can (Referee, 1985).</p> <p>I think that's probably one of the fundamental things we're missing in the modern game is we're trying to get kids who are 19, and earlier, refereeing the game, and they haven't got a good grounding in rugby themselves. Some of these guys, in some cases have only been playing the game for two or three years and they're plucked out of school because we've now got referee training programmes which are targeted at the school market to try and get young guys refereeing the game (Referee, 2005).</p>
	'violence and physicality'	<p>I suppose going back 20 years I would say there was probably more violence in the game than there is now. That would be my view. I think there's been a good effort to stamp it out (Referee, 1985).</p> <p>If there is really dangerous dirty play that's when things like eye gouging and grabbing of the testicles and that kind of thing is a real no no. There is the odd punch, referees generally have common sense to deal with it as is. You just have a quick word to them and on you go (Journalist, 2005).</p>
	'rules of the game'	<p>The rugby league element. See rugby league, which I didn't realise, well according to the media, that you can actually use your shoulder to tackle. Whereas, we have to use our arms clearly. Now there were a couple of cases there in the Warriors game, I was watching, where they used the shoulder. Now a lot of the boys they watch the Warriors now, I'm on about the first fifteen and such like, and the games we've had, particularly this year, there's been some nasty tackling going on through just the shoulder (Referee, 1985).</p> <p>I played senior rugby a few years ago and they introduced that lifting. We hated it. We couldn't work it out. We just couldn't make it work. Mind you neither can the All Blacks (Supporter, 2005).</p>

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
3. The journey to the top	'development system'	<p>They go to an academy and I'm not sure about the ability of the people that are in the academy, that are running it, that they have got the thoughts, the feelings and the knowledge that I have got. Is it from a book? Did they read it, did they interpret what was meant to be done, and I think that's the problem with these younger players (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).</p> <p>...we invested 20 million dollars over three years at the community level, because whether the kids that are going to go on, grow up and become professional rugby players, and ultimately the best ones become All Blacks, come out of a club in the sort of shape and form the clubs have been known for the last 100 years or not, doesn't matter. We have to have competitions for people at those early age groups so we've made a really big effort to get as many people at primary school age that we possibly can involved in the game (NZRU Administrator, 2005).</p>
	'club rugby'	<p>Today the focus sadly in a sense is all at the top. In those days it was all at the base. The base was club rugby and now it's all at the summit, now its all about, I suppose you could say people now only want to know about Edmund Hillary reaching the summit and not all the bloody Sherpas that got him there sort of thing and so that's how rugby has evolved (Journalist, 1985).</p> <p>I'd suggest that the clubs are not as strong as they once were because we used to have club, then NPC, then All Blacks. Now we go to another layer so we've got club, NPC, Super 14, All Blacks. So by virtue of that in the club rugby... All Blacks don't play club rugby anymore like they used too. Club rugby...is probably weaker than it used to be 20 years ago (NZRU Administrator, 2005).</p>
	'coaching'	<p>I think the best coach is the best bush psychologist. Somebody at the end of the day that those players trust, whether they are good players or bad players. You have got to work out what ignites them. What protects them? An average player is going to have some deficiencies so you have to get that guy to overcome his deficiencies. You sometimes have to protect him from those deficiencies, all the time you are developing him as a person and a rugby player, and making him feel stronger, making him feel better (All Black, 2005).</p>

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
3. The journey to the top	'coaching'	<p>They used to have one coach, although even in 1985 they might have had a forwards coach and a backs coach, but it's gone up exponentially from one to two to four to eight to 16... what are they now about 32, no, 16 probably. Scrum coach, defence coach, tackling coach, kicking coach, running coach, this coach, that coach... just a good lineout coach, drinking beer coach, and then you get onto the off the field support. It's a shitload (Supporter, 2005).</p>
4. Everyone plays	'everybody plays when they are young'	<p>Even like when I was playing senior rugby I wanted to give it up but couldn't because there was no alternative, I couldn't see an alternative. Not only in a sporting sense but in a social sense. The whole thing of rugby, you practiced twice a week, you work with the guys that you play rugby with, you would party with them, you would play rugby, you would travel with them around the district. You would meet girls at different rugby clubs, you know, pubs... everything was predicated on the rugby. You would read the newspapers; you would watch television to watch the rugby. And to not play rugby I didn't know what the social circle would look like, I didn't know how to get into it. I had the stigma of being a rugby player (Supporter, 1985).</p> <p>I mean, every kid played rugby when I went to school (All Black 'team', 1985).</p>
	'family involvement'	<p>My family was very involved in rugby. My father was a very keen rugby man. We started playing when we were at school and it was very much a part of our family life (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).</p> <p>I suppose it was part of the family culture. We all played rugby and that was just the tradition that had been instilled in us by Dad, and probably by his Dad, and that was the way it all transpired (Referee, 2005).</p>
5. Women and kids	'women'	<p>The change is of course that women play the game now. Personally I wouldn't like my daughter to play rugby but each to their own, a lot of women play it. I would sooner, I might be old fashioned but I think those games like netball, hockey, even soccer are better suited to ladies. I don't think it's a lady-like game (Journalist, 1985).</p>

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
5. Women and kids	'women'	<p>...with regards to knowledge of rugby I have always said that if I get a woman from the Riverton Rocks she knows more about rugby in her fingertip than Sir Clive Woodward would know right through his whole body because this is a rugby nation, we know this game. It's our game. We know it. We understand it. We're passionate about it (Journalist/Broadcaster, 2005).</p>
	'the kids'	<p>...the increase this year is the greatest we've seen for some considerable time, it's about 10%. Now you stop and you think about that. Their problem is that they don't have enough coaches to be able to take care of these kids (Journalist/Broadcaster, 2005).</p> <p>My wife, when she watches her son playing, she always watches him, she just sits there on the side line and shudders every time he hits the ground because she thinks he's been half-murdered, and doesn't realise that if he was being half-murdered he wouldn't play the game, would he? I mean they wouldn't play if they didn't enjoy it (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).</p>
6. The goal	'South Africa'	<p>...I got married in 1981. That was during the Springboks tour. It so happens that our wedding was on the day of the first test against the Springboks. We were actually getting married at the time that the game was being played. So we were in Auckland and I remember one of my mates, suddenly halfway through the ceremony his ear plug falls out and you hear the commentary going on (Supporter, 1985).</p> <p>They are our real foes and they are probably the hardest to subdue, even though at times they can play poorly against other nations they seem to lift against the All Blacks, so there's still that sort of mystical rivalry there (Journalist, 2005).</p>
	'World Cup'	<p>...I don't actually have that connection. By cutting me off from that, you are cutting me off from the history. What actually made it good in the first place. Just for the sake of the few bucks. Hello Mr. Rugby World Cup and Mr. News Corp. I am not in the game for money. So I don't really give a rat's arse about it. Okay a lot of people do and the players certainly do. And my sons might (Juniors administrator, 2005).</p>

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
6. The goal	'World Cup'	The last World Cup (2003) was a disaster. I don't know what went wrong, wrong players... but this team now, after watching them play, how the hell can they not win the World Cup? But other teams are getting better. We have not got a divine right (Club Coach, 1985).
7. The media	'television & broadcasting'	<p>Everything comes back to TV. TV is what's changed everything. The fact that you have... just turn the television set on now and you're watching FA Cup soccer and you're watching... there'll be a golf tournament on in the states at the moment and if you want to you can turn on Sky, you can watch UK soccer you can watch Aussie league, you can watch American gridiron. You can watch all of these sports. Up until the 1980s before the satellite TV in the '70s the big thing for people at this time of the year would be the club rugby. Plenty of examples, and people would remember it, of thousands and thousands of people going to watch a club game. Like Old Boys against Marist or University against Ponsonby or something and they would have thousands at the game because we lived in our own little neck of the woods (Journalist, 1985).</p> <p>...by 1985 we were televising all matches, all test matches, very few provincial matches but all test matches. There was a period and I'm not sure when in fact it was, where no television was played. I think that was prior to 1985. They would only televise a match... sometimes if they sold the ground out, they would broadcast it (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).</p>
8. Who's in charge?	'control of the game'	<p>Now compare it with the opposition. My experience is that rugby league is controlled by, and this is not an exaggeration, thieves, blaggards and rogues, right, very few good people, but rugby league has a lot of good people but they don't ever seem to be coming into control. Association Football or soccer as we call it is just... you know, you shake your head in despair at the decisions that they have made over a long period of time, so rugby really has had it its own way (Journalist/Broadcaster, 2005).</p> <p>...the IRB are in charge and I mean we do have an input into the decision making process but it's not always a large input. A lot of people up in the Northern hemisphere where the IRB are based, they are very set in their ways in terms of ...how they believe the game should be controlled and what the product is they're wanting, so, it's a tough one. Yeah, they basically control the way the game is played and officiated (Referee, 2005).</p>

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
8. Who's in charge?	'governance' ²⁰	<p>...the chairman was effectively the CEO. So there was a huge overlap between governance and management and the governance side of the organisation was heavily involved in management (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).</p> <p>The appointment of Moller as the Chief Executive to replace David Rutherford was at first greeted by apprehension by many of us, because Moller has no background in rugby whatsoever. He has no understanding of a game, no knowledge of it at all and Chris Moller was the first person to acknowledge that in those early days. What he was able to do though was to bring business practices that he had learned at Fonterra into the rugby environment highly successfully, and those practices included the selection of correct people. The usage of people who could have been his enemy. For example, he beat Steve Tew for that job, the current deputy chief executive but Tew and Moller work extremely well together. So Moller didn't isolate him and then knife him, Moller used him and that way Tew's background, which was well established by his time as the CEO of the Crusaders in Canterbury, was being properly utilised. The third party in running the rugby affairs was in fact Tew. Tew can give the impression of being arrogant, distant and a bully but at the same time he is very able and it is his ability, more than anything else, which has enabled this thing to be driven at grass roots as well. So I think that what you're seeing in 2005 is a lovely link between governance and management and they know their roles in that Hobbs very rarely speaks publicly, which is what I would expect a chairman to do. Very, very rarely does he speak. Moller answers all the grubby questions about money, about contracts and about the business of the NZRU and the football side of it is taken care of by Steve Tew (Journalist/Broadcaster, 2005).</p>
9. Social change	'social change'	<p>Nobody booed the opposition, they clapped good play regardless of which side did it, and all that has just gone by the way and it's quite ugly the way, you know, the crowd carries on. They've just lost that true sportsmanship. I don't know whether that's society, but it's sad to see that go. It's a bad reflection on society really. It's not good for the game anyway (Supporter, 2005).</p>

²⁰ Actually only raised by 47% of participants but included as central to the research problem area.

Theme	Contributing nodes emerging in >50% of interviews	Representative quotations/data
9. Social change	'social change'	...throughout society is, you know, there's more aggression now than there ever was in my day in the general sense there are people getting whacked, punched, kicked in an ordinary social situation than ever occurred in my era, and that's just a deterioration of social habits, social behaviour and lack of discipline. And that clearly has a cost in the sporting arena at below professional level (NZRU Administrator, 2005).
10. Something special	'early feelings'	<p>I was excited. I was excited about the whole rough and tumble. That was me, the country kid that loved the physical involvement. Rugby provided that. You know, the tackling and the passing and kicking (All Blacks 'team', 2005).</p> <p>It was almost like a religion way back then. It was really the only sport I knew much about and I started playing rugby when I was four and a half, five for a club, but obviously played a lot with my two brothers at home. We played a lot on the back lawn (Referee, 2005).</p>
	'ethos'	<p>Rugby's lost something as a social game. Anyone will tell you that. There used to be good social, after-match functions, they are a thing of the past now. I just think it has lost... it's lost some of its soul because I suppose it's the price when you sell out to commercial interest. You lose something, it definitely has, it's lost its ethos (Journalist, 1985).</p> <p>I'm still of course a great fan in the social side of rugby. Thousands of people throughout the world have made friendships through rugby that will last them the rest of their lives, and that is important in my opinion. Not just for rugby but for world peace. I don't know whether there is any peace these days. But I really mean what I said before that if only the so called world leaders could accept the philosophy of rugby, it would be a far better world, but that will never happen (Union Administrator, 1985).</p>

4.2. Institutionalised logics emerging from Act 6

The ten broad themes that emerged from the narrative interviews were identified, and illustrated with examples of the data, in the previous section. They were labeled as follows:

1. ‘Amateurs and professionals’
2. ‘Referees and the rough stuff’
3. ‘The journey to the top’
4. ‘Everyone plays’
5. ‘Women and kids’
6. ‘The goal’
7. ‘The media’
8. ‘Who’s in charge?’
9. ‘Social change’
10. ‘Something special’

These ten broad themes provided the focus for Act 6 of the method. The themes were viewed as representations of the issues, raised by those affected by the governance of New Zealand rugby, amongst which evidence of institutionalised logics might be found. Act 6 consisted of a re-reading of the narrative interview transcripts, the written and supporting texts, with the question of what were the common ideas and understandings that might be seen to form the basis of institutionalised logics in mind. The results of Act 6 are presented in the following three chapters; this time as more than raw data.

Chapter Five is given the heading ‘The Business of Rugby’. This brings together the institutionalised logics that might be seen to have emerged in the field before and after the advent of professional rugby. Evidence of institutionalised understandings surrounding the amateur game, the kind of business that rugby might be, the growth in influence of television and sponsors, and the mechanisms through which control is exerted over the field are presented. In Chapter Six, under a heading ‘Laws to be Obeyed’, logics concerning referees, rules, the on-field game, violence and the underlying ethos of the game are presented. Chapter Seven is entitled ‘Conveyor to the

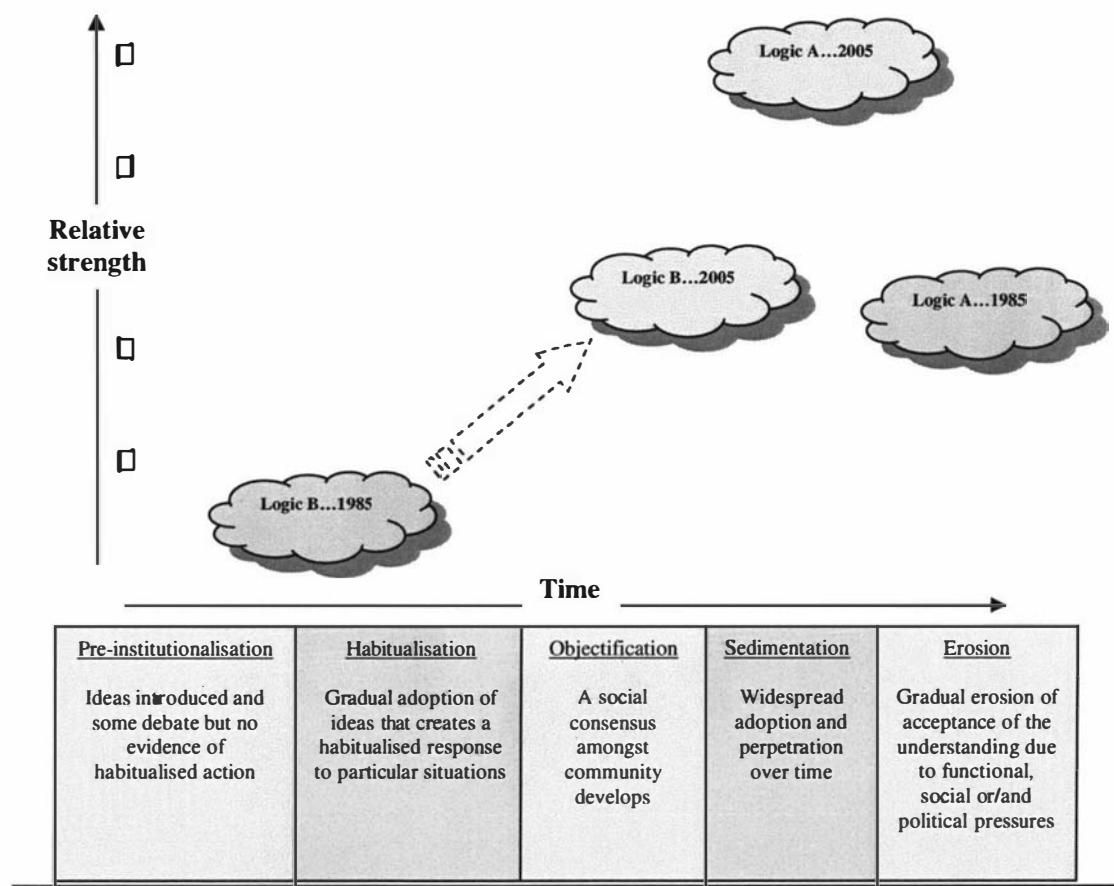
'Goal'. Institutionalised logics about how players are selected, developed and managed, and what they are ultimately aiming to achieve, are presented here. Evidence of logics surrounding the place of women in the environment, alcohol consumption, and issues of ethnicity are presented in Appendix V.

Within each of the following three chapters, institutionalised logics are discussed as discrete, socially constructed entities. Examples are given of the kind of data that has contributed to an interpretation as to the nature of each of the logics that might be seen to exist in the field of New Zealand rugby. A total of twenty such logics have been identified. In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven commentary is provided on the strength of each institutionalised logic, and its stage of development. The focus of Chapter Eight is the specific links with decisions made by those charged with governance, and the ways in which these institutionalised logics may have interacted with, and often contradicted, each other.

Institutional theory highlights the self-regulating nature of institutionalised understandings. What gives them their contextual strength in the field are the costs of non-conformity. These costs were identified by Phillips et al. (2000) as; economic cost (it increases risk); cognitive cost (it requires more thought); and, social cost (it reduces legitimacy). Evidence of the non-conformity costs in these results might indicate the strength of a particular institutionalised logic. The strength might also be related to the stage of a logic's development, and given that the research viewed two time periods separated by twenty years, an interpretation of the transition over time is also presented. Using the framework proposed by Tolbert and Zucker (1999), data is presented supporting an interpretation of where an institutionalised logic might sit in the development scale of 'habitualization', 'objectification', and 'sedimentation'. The proposed framework also incorporates Oliver's (1992) suggestion that erosion of fully institutionalised practices and understandings can occur through functional, political or social pressures. Figure 4.3 illustrates the format through which this framework is used to illustrate an interpretation of the strength and stage of development of each institutionalised logic. The relative strength scale is a subjective judgement as to the degree of influence that the institutionalised logic might be seen to hold over the environment of New Zealand rugby. The higher up the scale, the more dominant the logic. A comparison is made between the same logic in 1985 and in 2005. The nature of

the institutionalised logic may have changed over that period, and that is made clear in the commentary. In the example in Figure 4.3, Logic A in 2005 might be seen as having more influence than Logic B in 1985. Logic B in 2005 might be seen to have grown in strength from 1985.

Figure 4.3: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby found amongst a 'particular theme'



Note: Adapted from Tolbert and Zucker (1999) and Oliver (1992).

Chapter Five: The Business of Rugby

The common thread here was the change from an amateur game to a professional game, which was officially sanctioned in 1995. Some of the data from the ‘amateur’ game, in 1985, was looking forward to professionalism, and some of the data from the ‘professional’ game, in 2005, was looking back at the amateur era. Also contributing here was discourse surrounding ideas and understandings about television and broadcasting, and journalists; governance of the game; and views on the control of the game. Evidence for five institutionalised logics is presented: ‘It’s only a game’, ‘It’s a business now’, ‘TV runs the game’, ‘What the sponsor says goes’, and, ‘Central Control is the way to go!’.

5.1. Institutionalised logic 1: ‘It’s only a game’

A widely taken-for-granted understanding that emerged from the 1985 data was that rugby was considered, above all else, to be a game. The central idea was that money was not the main motivator for actions that were taken. It incorporated the ideas that players played because they loved the game, administrators gave their time and worked tirelessly for little financial return, and the money that spectators handed over would somehow be spent in the pursuit of the ‘good’ of the game. The game was understood to be played, administered and watched for its intrinsic rewards. Examples of behaviours that might conceivably flow as a consequence of such a logic could be increased willingness to volunteer; an automatic respect for those senior people in the game (players and administrators); a willingness to contribute in gate money; and, an acceptance of amateur values, such as being a good loser. For one journalist, from 1985, it might have been seen as a fundamental assumption:

Most people who play sport are amateurs and they play it for love which is what... literally not money but the love of it and that to me is fundamental.

There was evidence that this understanding was reasonably strong in 1985, although there were some indications that it might have been starting to breakdown. This was ten

years before professionalism was fully endorsed in 1995. A call by one of the most widely respected administrators at the time, Richie Guy²¹, might be viewed as an attempt to support the logic:

Rugby is only a GAME. We should never lose sight of this fact... Is any championship or any trophy won in the name of 'sport' worth causing irrevocable harm to the participant's physical or mental health? Of course not. REMEMBER – it's only a game and a game is a contest where players try within the context and SPIRIT of the laws to win. Remember too, that in most instances one team must lose, but that's not the end of the world (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 23)

The logic was supported in other ways. From a legitimacy point of view there were potential costs if players and clubs did not behave in a manner appropriate to the logic of amateurism. An NZRFU administrator explained:

...we were administering the amateur rules which said you can't accept money and that's it. And we were doing it to a T because Ces (*Blazey*) was a black and white man, and the rules are the rules and you stand by them. It didn't matter what the subject or issue was, the rules are in the book. And there was no deviation.

However, the debate surrounding Andy Haden's attempts to exploit commercial opportunities suggest that 1985 was something of a battleground for the legitimacy of this particular logic. For example, although the players' actions at the time might still be seen as governed by 'It's only a game', there was an acceptance that the environment was changing. An All Black at the time described his perspective:

Don't ask I won't tell you. Don't ask and you won't be told. If you are asked, fudge it and... say oh its going through, going through the club. Money could be paid to a club but probably the club would reimburse the player, so in that type of environment, where no-one wanted to know, and if they did it was an easy fob off. No-one ever wanted to go further.

²¹ Richie Guy was a four test All Black who became the last chairman of the NZRFU Council and the first chairman of the NZRFU board in 1996.

A published letter to the editor of *Rugby News* suggested that change was on its way and that rugby was being viewed as more than a game by some:

If the Union had decided to expel Andy (Haden) from Rugby I think they would have received so much pressure from the general public he would have had to be reinstated... And, what's so wrong with players receiving royalties from THEIR books? ('Mailbox', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 34).

The rumblings about money went across the rugby world. In his regular column, T.P. McLean²² took a pot-shot at the IRB, bemoaning the change to rugby's standing as the game 'of the pure and the free':

...reaction around the world against the board could be as severe as they were last year when for reasons beyond normal comprehension it defeated the recommendation that players should be allowed to publish autobiographies without loss of their amateur status. It was about that time that the board's standing had been injured by severe attacks by Andy Haden and others; and that Rugby itself had suffered because apparent transgressions of regulations as to amateurism had not been dealt with. From several of these events, Rugby's²³ standing as the game of the pure and the free in which nobody made a cracker to his self-advantage took some heavy knocks (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

The confusion surrounding the impending breakdown of this prevailing logic was illustrated by the following comment from a centrally placed administrator in 1985:

...it was really a totally unfair situation as far as the players were concerned. They were expected to be amateurs but they were expected to more or less perform a professional role. And so there were big issues revolving around whether or not players should be paid. I played in the '60s and '70s, provincial rugby that is, and in 1966 one of the Northland players was sourced off to Hawkes Bay. And that's the first inkling I had of any players actually being paid to play rugby. Now what he got I don't know - it would have to be something and he did tell me, he was being paid but how much I don't know.

²² Terence P. McLean was Sports Editor for the New Zealand Herald where he worked from 1946 to 1978.

²³ Just a reminder: In 1985 every mention of the word 'Rugby' in *Rugby News* was capitalised. By 2005 this was not the case.

It may have only been a few thousand dollars but that was a start of shamateurism. So by the mid '80s - that's half-way from then until the professional era - it was fairly rife.

A junior player at the time rather sheepishly intimated that things were happening under the NZRFU radar. A local club, Silverdale RFC, had acquired a nickname 'Silverdollar':

There was the silver dollar theory at Silverdale where the better players were, I probably shouldn't say that... every other club around knew that Silverdale had brought the better players from all round the country to come and play...

In 1985, the actions of the players and, indeed, the administrators were still largely driven by amateur ideals; an understanding that rugby was only a game, albeit an important game. At the time the costs of non-conformity appear to have been high. Andy Haden again took the flak. According to an administrator at the time:

Well the committee in those days... it was an amateur game and those that decided to turn their back on it and go to league couldn't come back. Ces being a very strict man, he ruled that way. The rules were you don't come back and that was the way it stood. Didn't matter if you got five dollars or five pounds in those days. I well remember Andy Hayden. I sat on the committee when Andy Haden wrote a book, the first book that was published by a player and everyone said, 'oh Andy is getting this and Andy is getting that'. Well we set up the meeting and we interviewed Andy. Andy said no I'm not getting any money and everyone said he was. We got nowhere with it because no-one had any proof. And the book had been published and sold but he had probably never taken the money or done anything at that stage, so we couldn't rule against him. I well remember that. That was first up. I remember Andy... he was being sponsored with his boots and there was a test, I think it was in Dunedin at the time, and whatever the boot name was, I don't know, there was a hell of an argument and Andy had to blacken the name on his boots before he could go out and play. That's how... you couldn't be sponsored, nothing to do with money in those days.

Publish and be damned was not an option. An experienced journalist reflected on just how strong the self-regulating nature of the understanding was:

I certainly never said rugby should become professional because that was treasonous, but what I did say was that when... my policy I promoted and it was sort of along the Andy Hayden line, was that when the All Blacks are touring they should be paid. They should be re-imbursed the equivalent of the standard New Zealand wage while they were on tour.

At a governance level things remained cosseted. More evidence of the constraining nature was provided by the following contribution from an NZRFU councillor:

It wouldn't have been spoken about at the Council level but obviously the Councillors were aware that it was going on, but I don't recall it actually being discussed at that time at an actual meeting. It may have been but not that I can recall... I think probably within the Council itself there were those people who felt that rugby was an amateur game and there were people like myself who thought, well maybe rugby shouldn't be an amateur game.

Even twenty years after the event the same administrator still seemed constrained by an understanding about the amateur nature of the game at the time:

...clearly at that time in South Africa the game was quite professional. Amateur, I suppose, we can't say it was professional because it was illegal, but that's the way it operated.

Bob Howitt, editor of *Rugby News* at the time, supported the amateur ethos whilst at the same time slighting the establishment:

Mind you, league, unashamedly professional, indulges in commercialism that would make an International Rugby Board member choke on his gin and tonic. Rugby's strict laws of amateurism would forbid such blatant commercialism – thank goodness (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

The constraining nature of the understanding might be viewed in a report on a call by a former captain of Wales, Eddie Butler, to make the game professional:

Butler's comments are seen by some in Rugby circles as being almost heretical ('Davies slams World Cup proposals', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 20).

Heretic: n. “One who maintains theological or religious opinions at variance with the...orthodox doctrine of the...church” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007). ‘It’s only a game’ might have been the orthodox doctrine at the time. The strength of the widespread understanding that the players played for a love of the game might be best illustrated by a call for supporters to directly contribute towards paying the All Blacks:

Rugby News readers are invited to contribute to the fund which will support any All Blacks financially disadvantaged through touring South Africa. Some All Blacks, particularly those employed by government departments, could lose their jobs, or have their incomes stopped, if they win selection for the big tour (‘All Black fund’, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 7).

Whilst not yet habitualised action, the emergence of new professional ideas signaled that the breakdown of the institutionalised logic appeared to be just around the corner in 1985. One NZRFU administrator claimed to be aware of this change:

I know that in our club a particular player came from another union and they gave him three thousand dollars, and it might have paid his petrol, and other clubs were buying players and it was getting out of control. So once it starts, the fire is like a bush, it burns and then, of course, it got to the stage it just about split the game.

Given that Rugby League had been professional for many years, ‘experts’ were brought in to try and make some sense of what was going on. New Zealand Director of Coaching for Rugby League, Graham Lowe, stated in a guest column:

For a sporting person to earn money doesn’t make him in my opinion, a professional – to be a professional is to have a professional attitude. I know of many sporting personalities earning quite large sums of money but they have, in my opinion, an amateur attitude...I don’t know of one Rugby League player in Australia that is full time in the game – they all work 40 hours a week and then have to do their training outside work hours. Every player, particularly at senior level, should be giving 100 per cent commitment and be total in attitude. If he tries harder for money he is a liar and a cheat and a bludger to himself...It doesn’t matter what sport we are involved in, as long as we keep in our minds these important factors. Sport offers us the opportunity to learn and enjoy and, most of all, it must be remembered that it is just a game (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

Rugby league, professionalism and the writing of books by players was brought together by Loosehead Len's cartoon that appeared early in 1985. Susan of Herne Bay will be discussed later in the context of understandings surrounding the roles of women in the environment, but the portrayal of the rather seedy league scout with the suitcase of money suggested the socially unacceptable nature of payment at the time.



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 3, p. 19

Perhaps the functional pressures to conform to a developing professional environment, even at the grass roots level of the game, meant that erosion was inevitable. In *Rugby News* there was a report from the editor of Te Kauwhata club's 'Touchdown' magazine:

One rugby topic that has been thrashed around quite a bit is professionalism. And let me tell you that it hasn't by-passed Te Kauwhata either. You may scoff at this remark, but coach Howells has been busy selling off some yearlings just to meet the retainers on last year's players. It is also rumoured that his overseas trip is to arrange further finance

with foreign banks to meet the contract payments ('Odds & Ends', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 23).

For one contributor to the research, a supporter, 1985 was the year the power of the institutionalised logic of 'It's only a game' might be seen to have died:

I don't know you just... don't have the passion any more with all the money involved and all the politics and stuff, whereas before you'd be there for the sport's sake. About then, that was the end of it, about 1985. They started getting paid for it soon after that, under the table at first and then over the table.

By 2005, evidence for 'It's only a game' as an institutionalised logic was hard to find. It seemed to have been completely eroded. No community in the field of New Zealand rugby appeared to hold the understanding in any strong form. The term was even used in the title of *NZ Rugby World* Editor, Grant Harding's regular column. "Who said it was just a game?" (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, 80, p.14) suggested gentle ridicule of those who believed it was only a game. Even at amateur level, evidence was hard to find, although one union administrator still held on to the memories:

Rugby is to be enjoyed on and off the field. And there is no doubt in my mind that these people who played only amateur rugby got far more enjoyment out of the game and everything to do with it, than the modern player, who simply doesn't know or understand the world of amateur rugby.

At a junior level there was evidence that youngsters now viewed rugby as something more than a game, as one junior coach recognised:

It's (*rugby*) just like a job nowadays, you know that the age of 12 or 14 you might have an idea of what you are going to do in life whether it be a farmer or accountant or a lawyer, they can say this is what I want to do and really concentrate on it.

By 2005, 'It's only a game' appeared to have been replaced by an even more strongly and widely held understanding that 'It's a business now'. One journalist implied as much:

I say it's a game but it's become a business and that's what you get with professionalism against amateurism. I always thought it was a game. The basic object of rugby or any other sport in my opinion is to work up a thirst and have a few chats after the game, but now it's become a lot more than that. It's a business, it's a profession to me, it's taken something away.

5.2. Institutionalised logic 2: 'It's a business now'

By 2005, there was evidence of a taken-for-granted understanding that rugby, particularly at the highest level, was seen as a business driven by commercial objectives; a business dominated by conceptions of profit and loss; balance sheets; investing for return; and, not necessarily a socially responsible model. There was evidence that people in the field of New Zealand rugby, by 2005, expect decisions to be made on a commercial basis. They accepted justifications for decisions made on a profit and loss argument. Even individual careers are accepted as being a business. Players leaving New Zealand to play off-shore, using the justification of money they can earn, is becoming an accepted part of the game. The language of business has come to dominate the environment. An example came from the deputy chief executive of the NZRU:

"This is a very competitive and complex commercial environment," says NZRU deputy chief executive Steve Tew. "There were some issues in regard to a particular product line which have been resolved. We absolutely refute any allegation of bad business practice" (Campbell, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 5).

As highlighted earlier the increased use of business language might be reflected in the comparison between 1985 and 2005 participants contributions to the nodes of 'business', 'leadership' and 'management'. Even coaches get into the business speak. Kevin Putt, coach of Counties Manukau, discussed the proposed NPC premier division and keeping his players in the 'loop':

Contracts are contracts as far as I am concerned, but one thing I pointed out when I came on board was that I don't want to inherit systems, management or players, purely and simply because I have been burnt on it in the past. Having said that, there are

contracts that are in place, and with that there will be a process of obviously making sure that these people are important to the loop (Campbell, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 10).

One member of the 2005 NZRU management team explained, in a very ‘matter-of-fact’ way, his view of the commercial realities of rugby. He was strong in his conviction that the fundamental business is making rugby players:

It’s a business based on the sport. I mean for us it’s a business. We employ directly... five hundred people’s families get fed out of this organisation, if you count everybody up, and there’s another whole raft of them at provincial union level, so we are a substantial commercial enterprise. But the thing that we have, that we make commerce out of, if that’s the way of saying it, is the sport. We manage brands, we do research and development, we manage people, we run budgets, we have a treasury policy, we have a reserves policy. I mean it’s a business in any other sense of the word, except our business... we’re not making biscuits, we produce rugby teams in rugby competitions, rugby players.

Outside of the NZRU management, the understanding ‘It’s a business now’ can be seen to be shared by others in the field. One columnist made a comparison between the 1978 and the 2005 Grand Slam tours:

How different it is today...this is more a business trip, than adventure (Harding, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 26).

The economic consequences of decisions are considered, although this particular NZRU administrator attempted to differentiate rugby from ‘any other business’:

You know we still have rugby clubs in communities where there is nothing else. Literally we’ve still got a couple of provinces that in any other business, well there wouldn’t be an individual province there, because it’s not economic.

Arguments emerging in the discourse were not just about the game in 2005. Ken Anderson, the chairman of Lane Walker Rudkin (LWR), a jersey supplier, was quoted in the article, referring to official NZRU merchandise:

It is too expensive and inferior in quality. It reflects badly on the Rugby Union who are being blamed for ‘ripping off’ the fan or being greedy (Campbell, 2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 34, p. 5).

In 2005, rugby was viewed as if it were a ‘normal’ place of work by some of those involved. One research participant, a referee, explained:

...the game has changed and that now, it’s earning my bread and butter and obviously bread and butter means, it’s for the family. So the family is important, so it’s like any career path I suppose. Anybody in a job will do their damnedest to stay in that position and look to get promotions too. I mean we all want to go up the corporate ladder don’t we? We all want to get the next bonus or the next income level or whatever the case may be, so I think anyone’s work environment is a competitive environment.

An administrator reflected the same attitude:

...it is a business and you can’t lose sight of that. You know you can never ignore that because you’re dealing with peoples’ livelihoods, it’s a career for the people. You know when you’re dealing with something that’s a career for people, that is their livelihood, you can’t just treat it as a game, you have to treat it responsibly and seriously.

Even players, by 2005, appeared to be driven by a desire not to be late for work. One emerging provincial union player, Colin Bourke, stated in a magazine interview:

Professionalism is a big step for me. It’s not a job, but it is. You wake up every morning and you’ve got this to do, that to do. You can’t be late. It’s just like a job in that respect (Edwards, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 59).

In his autobiography, All Black Anton Oliver’s comments suggested a degree of frustration that money has to be used directly to make players turn up on time:

When I started playing, players were subjected to intense peer pressure from their teammates; for example, we were made to feel, and did feel, ashamed if we turned up late. There was no need to impose monetary fines on players. Modern players, though, see monetary fines as a strong deterrent. Often it seems that monetary fines are the only things that work (Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 232).

Has money emerged as the prime motivator? Others working in the environment illustrated a social acceptance that it is a business environment. As one senior administrator explained:

We take for granted the money that's available. I guess in my current context I'm dealing with professional players and contracts. We take-for-granted the money that's available you know. Take for granted the resources, the fact that you turn up to an airport and your departure card is already filled out and someone has checked you in and you just drop your bags and leave them on the floor and someone will check them through and you can bugger off and have coffee and get on the plane. Just all of that stuff is, I think, is taken-for-granted all the time.

There was evidence that supporters accept the inevitability of rugby as a business. For example, this supporter made an attempt to justify the 'good' that flows from 'It's a business now'.

I guess from a purely business point of view they have managed to commoditise the game. If people go to the game you buy a ticket like for the opera, it's become a thing that you just go and do, and they have managed to do that, which is good, obviously keeps the money flowing through to pay the players and so on and so forth. So that's good.

There was little evidence that much is in dispute in the context of this institutionalised logic. Outbursts against the prevailing logic are viewed as old fashioned, and even as a form of jealousy. A few look back with, perhaps, rose tinted glasses. 'Tiny' Hill, former All Black, coach and Cantabrians RFC chief argued:

I think the All Blacks today are going alright, but let's face it, it's a different thing with professionalism. I'm glad I wasn't a professional player. Money's not everything. That's the trouble with some of these buggers, all they think about is money (Haworth, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 41).

There were still the occasional slightly defensive comments, perhaps offered by some feeling guilty for the way things have developed. One 1985 All Black explained the inevitability of 'It's a business':

I think it's inevitable, given that it's a professional game now and you're competing on the international arena with a whole range of sports, and for the money to stay in the game, for it to continue to grow, it's got to be a game people want to watch on an international scale and we have to be competitive at the end of the day.

There were clues as to the behaviours that the institutionalised logic may be facilitating or constraining. In the words of one journalist:

I mean anyone who is involved in a club or a small province will tell you that there are huge problems out there, huge challenges for them. Because the volunteer basis is being undermined a little bit in this professional era. Some people say "well why should I bust my boiler helping the club when there's some guy up there getting hundreds and hundreds of thousands?"

This view of a behavioural change was shared by a senior administrator from 1985:

Well, just about everyone in rugby now gets paid, the players, the coaches, the referees, the line umpires and they're not as keen as they used to be at club level, where it all starts, to be committee members, treasurers, secretaries, coaches - unless they get paid.

Another NZRFU administrator felt that the behaviour amongst the players had changed:

There's a certain amount of camaraderie but it's quite shallow, there's jealousy within the team and he's getting more money than me and the type of team spirit that was prevalent in '85 is totally different today at club level.

The concept of loyalty has been gradually eroded in the eyes of one former club and union coach:

Well loyalty has gone out of the window with professional rugby. There has been a breakdown of loyalty.

Back in the 1985 data, the stirrings of the logic's development could be viewed, but it had not reached any kind of habitualisation stage. For example, would the players of today, if facilitated by the 'It's a business now' understanding, have turned down the

opportunity to tour South Africa? Dave Lovage, All Black player at the time, commented in his biography:

We had been led to believe that we would get \$100,000 each for going there on an unofficial tour. We weren't told who was doing the paying or any other detail, just that that was the sort of money we'd get if we went. Obviously that takes a fair amount of thinking about and the chance of getting that sort of money doesn't come along too often. I think it said a great deal for the team as a whole that we decided against it (Palenski, 1985, p. 41).

Perhaps, by the following year, 1986, when the unofficial New Zealand Cavaliers toured South Africa, the majority of the team had invested the necessary cognitive effort (or non-conformity cost) required to overcome the prevailing 'It's only a game' logic. Only two, David Kirk and John Kirwan, made themselves unavailable to tour. T.P.McLean, reflecting on the events of 1985, came to an almost resigned conclusion:

Professionalised sponsoring of Rugby, chasing the buck for the sake of the game, had acquired Andy Haden as its first significant figurehead. Now that step has been taken, Rugby will not retreat. At the whistling of the Pied Piper, it will march on into areas and fields of unexplored territory. Fateful as have been the last 12 months, the most significant feature of them has been the trying and freeing of Andy Haden and the firm establishment, for good or ill, of the processes he set going in one of the most conservative of games. One marvels. So little time. So much changed (1985a, *Rugby News*, p. 16).

By 2005, non-conformity costs for the 'It's a business now' understanding might be seen in the vilification of those showing a 'non-professionalism' attitude. It has become socially unacceptable to act like an amateur in the field of New Zealand rugby. At a junior level passing the ball 'like an amateur' is strong criticism. At a more senior level not returning someone's phone calls was viewed by one journalist as the explanation for a sacking:

...they dumped him (*John Mitchell*²⁴) because he treated them abominably, the Rugby Union. Moller would ring him up, 'John I want to talk you about a few issues', leave a message on his cell phone and he wouldn't return the calls. That's asking for trouble.

Mitchell himself reflected on the business-like environment that coaches are expected to operate within. Performance on the field was only a small part of the coaches' key performance indicators:

These days a professional coach is not just measured on results. From what I gather in New Zealand, certainly with the contracts at the moment, on-field results are like 10 percent of the make-up or something like that. You're covered in all categories, so it's really about being an all-rounder in a lot of ways (Campbell, 2005b, *Rugby News*, p. 37).

Most importantly it might be seen to be about being a 'professional' and 'business-like' all-rounder. Former All Black, Justin Marshall, illustrated, in his autobiography, a point at which those charged with governance, those affected by governance, and the 'It's a business now' institutionalised logic, might have collided. It was a collision that may have produced an unintended outcome. In the changing rooms, immediately following the 2003 Rugby World Cup semi-final loss to Australia:

... if you can think of the real low points in your own life when you feel awful and drained, well that's what we felt like. We were devastated. But then Chris Moller and Jock Hobbs told us there was going to be a full review of the entire World Cup campaign. There was going to be a decision made on the future of the All Black coaches within the next week or so... So how are Mitch and Robbie supposed to feel? They're suffering anyway from the loss, and yet the first thing they get told is, 'There's going to be a full review of your positions.' It's just absolutely poor business practice for a start off, and I think it's disgraceful to treat people that way...the NZRU, in handling the situation that way, lost a lot of respect from the players...The players' trust of the union was almost irreparably damaged. They felt isolated from the union and insulted by it. The scene in the dressing room created a big gap between union bosses and the players (Gillies, 2005, p. 171).

²⁴ All Black coach 2001-2003

Evidence, perhaps, of the pervasive nature of ‘It’s a business now’. It might be seen to have been facilitating the actions of administrators even in the sanctuary of the changing rooms. In 2007, following another World Cup loss, an announcement in the changing rooms about a ‘review’ was unnecessary. It was taken-for-granted that it would happen.

5.3. Institutionalised logic 3: ‘TV runs the game’

In 2005, there was evidence of a commonly held and taken-for-granted understanding that television somehow controls the game. There was a widespread recognition that decisions that affect the game in New Zealand are taken by television companies, and even the decisions taken by those charged with governance are heavily influenced by the interests of the television companies. The ‘television god’ was mentioned:

There is something rather attractive about an afternoon rugby match on a well grassed surface before a capacity crowd and a blazing sun. It doesn’t happen enough in New Zealand as we bow to the television god (Burnes, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

The first live telecast of a test match was the game against Australia in September 1972. Up until 1989 Television New Zealand (TVNZ) had a monopoly on sports coverage. But in 1992 the rights to cover the All Black tour to South Africa were sold to Sky Television (Obel, 2001). A television channel entirely devoted to rugby, Sky’s Rugby Channel, was launched on May 1st, 2002.

For two participants, the first, a former administrator, and the second, a journalist, the articulation of the logic came through in an almost indignant concern about TV controlling the kick-off times:

Well unfortunately it dictates the game, TV. I look back to the past which is one of the things we’ve got to talk about, but in my day when television came on... before television the game was to kick off at 2.30, if the referee didn’t blow the whistle at 2.30 Ces (*Blazey*) would give him a ticking off. Now they don’t blow the whistle till TV gives them the signal to say go, and that’s when they’re ready. It could be 2.35 when in fact they’re dictating the game now.

...the times that are set, when the matches are played, are set by the television schedule. They are not set by any other reason. Why the hell do we start at 7.35 at night? We start at 7.35 because of the end of a programme at half past seven, we have five minutes of television, and then you've got to start the rugby game, and that's why you know. 7.35 is a ridiculous time to start a fixture and also when you look at the way these things are done and geared for the northern hemisphere major audiences, again it's TV which calls the shots.

The understanding appeared to be accepted and recognised at different levels of the game. At the top level of the game's administration, the foundations of the institutionalised logic were supported by one participant from the NZRU:

TV is good for the game, there is no downside. Some moan about the lack of supporters at club rugby but overall TV has been very positive.

This echoes the 'unarguable' position taken on the economic benefits of the World Cup. The 'moaners' might be seen to be stifled by this vociferous support for the logic. Not this particular journalist though:

Rugby's actually lost control of itself at top level in my opinion. It's run by the, run by television, run by Sky TV. I think it's almost anti-social, what they have now, the TV programme. Friday night, Saturday, Saturday evening, Sunday type thing – that's what you get and now they're talking about making it Monday!

Here the constraining nature of the logic might be illustrated. One former All Black implied that it was almost immature not to accept that 'TV controls the game':

I see the control of the game has been wrested from the administration of the game to the broadcasters. Clearly broadcasting is controlling a large part of the annual calendar particularly at the higher level. You can argue, right through Super 14s and to a lesser extent New Zealand clubs, broadcasters are driving the game whereas that certainly wasn't the case previously, but I think we've grown up. I mean that's the nature of the beast.

Back in 1985, there was no evidence of this as an institutionalised logic. According to an All Black at the time things were very different:

...at that stage the game was running the broadcasting. You wouldn't get that now. It's definitely, I mean, they control the events.

Television was seen as a servant to the game, as illustrated by these comments from a journalist:

1985, the Ranfurly Shield game in Christchurch between Canterbury and Auckland which you have probably heard about. Some people say the greatest provincial game of all time and just not on TV. The argument was then, a lot of people said, why the hell is this game, which is creating so much interest, not on TV? The rugby people said we're not going to put this on TV because we've got six other provincial games all kicking off at the same time, 2.30, to them a game was kicked off at 2.30.

There was even evidence that any attempt at control by television was resisted by 'cultivated rugger types'. Here television was accused of trying to change the language of rugby; getting rid of the 'Garryowen':

...whether they are being given a fair deal in the application of what Television New Zealand is now so busily trying to describe as the bomb but which all of us cultivated rugger types know is the Garryowen (McLean, 1985b, *Rugby News*, p. 22).

In 1985, the relationship between television and rugby was not always smooth. A television news item attempted to link increased violence and even murder in New Zealand to rugby. The NZRFU council complained and received an apology from the chairman of the Broadcasting Corporation of New Zealand. The apology ended in a contrite tone:

The corporation expresses the hope that the occurrence will be seen by your council in the context of our much wider and happier association ('BCNZ reply satisfies council', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 4).

One debate that ran in *Rugby News* in 1985, surrounded the level of radio coverage given to the game. “Radio coverage non-existent” headlines were followed by “Our station does care” (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 10, Club News section, p. 1). The claim at the time was that not enough rugby was being broadcast live. Ideas surrounding the influence of TV were also being debated in the field. The Saturday TV slot was discussed at the NZRFU annual meeting. Bob Howitt reported:

Rugby would be retaining its 5 to 6pm television slot on Saturday evenings, Russ Thomas told delegates. He said a survey had been undertaken and revealed that the 5pm start on Saturdays attracted large interest from schoolboys. “While it is a difficult time for clubs, the emphasis is on schoolboys, and they are watching in large numbers.” Preliminary talks had been staged regarding the incorporation of Rugby into the Sunday afternoon Grandstand programme on TV2 (1985a, *Rugby News*, p. 10).

Some were not so keen on the coverage. T.P.McLean for one, lamented the poor crowd at Athletic Park for the test against England:

In the good old days, this country would have been in a hubbub about the England tour and, more, the prospects of players to go to South Africa. Now the Press dutifully reports matches and build-ups and goes for angles where any are visible. Radio and television weigh in. The public could be said to be well served – too well served, maybe, at least by television of tests. But, like my travelling companion, much of the public has switched off. It is even possible that, considering the marketing qualities of the product, Rugby is being too well served by the media (1985c, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

The debate raged. In a letter to the editor criticising the NZRFU ‘An All Black fan (New Zealand)’ demanded:

Apart from the obvious, one thing the NZRFU is going to have to do to keep Rugby on its feet is to push for an increase of live television coverage, especially important provincial clashes such as Auckland’s exciting clashes with Canterbury and Wellington last year (‘Changes essential’, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 30).

One journalist recognised just how far the logic might have influenced the actions of those charged with governance:

They've gone this complete circle from adamantly opposing anything to do with live television to almost... now I would say television, Murdoch, Sky, they run the game. They control the game and they fund the game, millions and millions.

The gradual emergence of the institutionalised logic, and the battle for supremacy, might be referred to by this NZRFU administrator:

They set the rules because they were paying the money and all we did was go along, but then they had the money. They were paying the money, so we just had to go along with it and I remember the arguments round the table over TV, the rights, the wrongs, the fors and againsts and the pluses and the minuses, it really caused some friction.

By 2005, the friction had all but disappeared. Pockets of resistance might be seen to remain, but there was widespread acceptance that 'TV runs the game'. The understanding appears to be fuelled by the belief that the money supplied by television is vital to the health of the game in New Zealand. The money paid by the broadcasters is used as the justification for the 'way it is', often to quell contrary ideas and opinions. Even this research might not have been possible, according to an NZRU administrator:

TV funds the game. Without broadcasting you wouldn't be sitting talking to me here without any doubt...I think we have to continue to work closely with our partners in broadcasting to ensure that the game is looked after.

Rhetoric in the rugby press was supportive of the logic. This, from Sky TV host Tony Johnson, told people that the money paid by television is directly linked to the development of the game:

The more money, the more top players we can keep in the country and the more there is to fund the development of the game. And while fans will have to pay to watch it, at least they can do so in the knowledge that just about any game of consequence will be available live, not to mention programmes like Re:Union, Press Box, Total Rugby, Boots and All, Inside Rugby and so on (2005, *NZRugby World*, p. 18).

And more programmes, with more presenters, could be produced perhaps. The Rugby Channel's executive producer was blunt in his assertion:

The reality is that pay television provides the money that helps to fund sport (Stone, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 36).

The discourse resounded with exclamations that TV is good for all. An example linked to the 2011 Rugby World Cup bid:

We have a pre-existing Rugby Channel, whose superlative coverage of the game has done arguably as much for the sport's growth as all the IRB funds put together. As much as New Zealand rugby has earned the rights to host a World Cup, the Rugby Channel has earned the right to broadcast one ('Inky', 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 43).

Although the anonymous columnist 'Inky' admitted it might be arguable, the Rugby Channel had apparently earned that right in just three years of operation. 'TV runs the game' has developed very quickly as an institutionalised logic, if it allows a comparison with over 100 years of history that New Zealand rugby can offer. The logic might be seen as legitimised by support from the IRB. Greg Thomas, Communications Director:

The pressure of commercial arrangements (TV broadcast, sponsorship, etc) cannot be ignored either as revenue and exposure from international matches is one of the main drivers of the development of the game (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 34).

This former All Black seemed to accept that the revenue base supplied by television drives decisions:

I think that's a huge quantum change, in terms of what are the drivers of the game I mean clearly its revenue, and broadcasting rights that is driving it at the moment.

The CEO of the NZRU, Chris Moller, outlined his take on the relationship with Sky TV. He left little doubt as to how important he considered television to be. 'At the end of the day' they provide the money:

We have an excellent relationship with Sky. We work very closely with them. Rugby is important to them, and they're very important to us...At the end of the day fifty percent plus of our revenue comes from broadcasting (Harding, 2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 83).

'TV runs the game' might be seen as self-regulating by attacking opposition on a number of discursive fronts. Money for the development of the game is one. Money for maintaining the quality of players is another. In the discourse surrounding threats of players leaving New Zealand, and the consequential quality reduction at domestic level, the money provided by broadcasters was often highlighted:

The Northern Hemisphere club circuit is no longer just a retirement home. It is now attracting provincial players in their prime...The departures leave huge holes in the New Zealand game...The answer, of course, is cool, hard cash (McIlraith, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 27).

Of course, the cash! One journalist recognised a dichotomy introduced by the acceptance that 'TV controls the game'. Advertisements are run proclaiming the benefits of staying at home to watch the rugby:

...they grizzle because they have trouble getting a crowd. They will have trouble getting a crowd because people are not prepared to travel from around the hinterland and yet as I said they have these ads saying "why bother going to the game sit on your arse at home and watch it on TV". That's what Sky... I don't think a lot of them care less having people go to the games now just so long as it's got good figures on TV and they're getting the big TV dollars.

There are specific areas that television is seen to have some control over. They control how rugby is seen on television. This administrator pulled back from giving television the accolade of 'biggest influence' on kids taking up the sport:

The professional game which is an entertainment and a commercial driver for the business of television, it is also the biggest influencer on people's decisions, whether or not, well, not the biggest, but it is an influencer on decisions that people make about them and their kids playing our sport.

Although the NZRU might have some guiding influence, the way in which referees are portrayed was ultimately seen as being controlled by television. The Rugby Channel's executive producer defended a suggestion that they are instructed to ease off on referees:

Guys like Keith Lawrence (NZRU Referees Manager) address our team regularly to keep them up to speed with new rulings, but he doesn't coach them on their commentary style (Stone, *Rugby News*, p. 36).

What games are played might be seen to be influenced by the understanding. One journalist and broadcaster suggested that the decision to increase the number of Tri-Nations tests, surely a decision facilitated by 'TV controls the game', might have consequences for players:

The broadcasters... that was the main reason the extent of the deal was for five years for SANZAR. Chris Moller was saying they got the best return for that, certainly, probably, he claimed and they probably have, but Justin Marshall will tell you differently, and he'll say that it was getting boring playing the same sides more and more every year.

A development of the logic might be the addition of an idea that TV has got to be a little too dominant. Expressed as 'there's too much rugby on TV' there was some evidence that this set of ideas was beginning to emerge in 2005, and was becoming more widespread in the community.

5.4. Institutionalised logic 4: 'Central control is the way to go!'

There was evidence that many in the field of New Zealand rugby have accepted and taken-for-granted a particular model of governance and management. In 2005, there was evidence of an understanding that the game is, and should be, centrally controlled by the NZRU. The discourse suggested that ideas and practices emanating from 'Central control is the way to go!' logic has been so widely accepted that the actions facilitated and constrained by such a 'command and control' model are rarely questioned or debated. Governance from the top was the only way to go, according to one coach interviewed:

...governance comes from the top. So you play for your club, you get nothing. You play for your province, you get \$20,000. You get a Super 12 contract, you get \$95,000. Then you play for the All Blacks and you negotiate, but you only get up to x amount. Governance from the top was the only way to go.

Or at least the ‘right’ way to go, in the words of an All Black from 1985:

I think all models need to be a balance, need to be a mixture; you need to choose what’s appropriate to centralise. I think New Zealand has centralised in many ways the right things, the biggest and most important of course are the players. Player contracts, which had them firmly and correctly contracted to New Zealand Rugby Union, which means they can then control the nature of payments and terms and conditions of employment including who players play for...I think that side of the game is very centralised but I think it’s the right way to go.

The logic might be seen to be supported by rhetoric surrounding the perceived problems in France and England. An example came from this NZRU administrator:

It’s a really important model for us to have centrally contracted players because it enables us to retain control over them. If you look at English rugby, it’s exactly where we don’t want to be. The clubs employ the players, they own them, and England has a scrap with the clubs every time they want to pull together an England team or arrange a fixture for England to play. We employ the players, we second them out to the provincial unions and the franchises to manage them, but when we want to assemble an All Blacks team to go away on end of year tours or to play down (*under*) tours in the middle of the year; that takes precedence.

Another, this time a 1985 club coach, delivered the ‘you’re better off than anywhere in the world’ message:

New Zealand rugby has always been in a better position than any other rugby anywhere in the world – it has been governed from the top down. Every province, every club, every province is under the New Zealand Rugby Union umbrella, so the governance comes from the top, who give it to the province, who give it to the clubs.

Kevin Roberts, former NZRU board member, was involved at the beginning of professionalism. He reflected on the best decision by any union anywhere in the world!

In New Zealand we took the view that it would be all about the players and we moved to central contracts for them and the coaches. Ten years on this has proven to be the best decision made by any Union in the world, and has avoided all the pressures we’re

seeing elsewhere between conflicting club and country agendas (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 36).

The rhetoric might be seen to make it difficult to argue differently. There were some economic justifications put forward, by one NZRU administrator, in support of the ideas underpinning the logic:

We also have that control over their treatment and care. We centralise it. There's economies of scale as well in that regard, rather than each provincial union, each of the 14 provincial unions having a contracting arm and a medical care arm, we have a team of six here.

Back in 1985, the model of governance might also be described as something akin to central control, but the nature of the institutionalised logic was very different. Here a journalist and broadcaster offered one version of history:

The game was governed in '85 by the old boy network, by the Blazers and by the Fish Heads, and it was governed with the closeted secrecy of the Masonic Lodge. You did not know what was going on and they never wanted you to know, they kept it secret to themselves the whole way through. Nothing could be more different than the way it's governed now, where it's transparent – where if you want an answer you can ask and you go damn close to getting the whole thing laid out in front of you, and that's what I appreciate most about Moller, what I appreciate about Hobbs. Sure in any business there are things for business reasons and commercial reasons that you should keep secret but it is standard that anybody who speaks to you truthfully about '85/'86 will tell you that Ces Blazey controlled the whole of the rugby union on a bloody postage stamp. Nobody knew what he was doing. Now that is not to degrade Ces Blazey who, although I had never met him, everything I have heard and read about him would suggest to me that he was a man of great personal integrity but what a load of crap. What we've got here is one guy controlling the entire rugby union, controlling the entire game. Telling people who would be picked, given the whole thing and rugby people denied that from that particular time, but the truth is that it happened...you've got to appreciate that in those days rugby coaches when asked why they picked so and so, they'd say 'no comment'. You had a chairman of the board at one stage, about this time Sullivan from the Taranaki whose famous comment was 'no comment'. He just did not bloody well comment on anything. Well that would not be tolerated now because, what I believe

now, what has happened, is the country really does own the game because it is much more transparent.

A version of 1985 governance backed up by others. An administrator of the time recalled:

Ces Blazey was an ultra conservative and the epitome of administrative man chaired a lot of those sort of committees so it was still to exert a degree of control over them.

From the players' perspective, an All Black was amazed at how the administration used to work:

Ces was quite a remarkable guy in that he maintained control in what must have been an extremely difficult environment to manage with, I think, was it 27 unions round the table? I mean the meetings...just how the hell they got any decisions made, and they made few, but how they got any at all out of that was amazing, so I think while the councillors were respected – there were some very good ones amongst them - I don't think there was huge respect for the organisation as a whole. Largely just because it was such a bloody great organisation in terms of it was cumbersome. I think the saving grace was Ces Blazey and with dear old Barry Usmar around and in behind. That they survived with probably three people in the organisation is quite remarkable when you look at it now.

There was some evidence that the NZRFU was perceived as an overly controlling influence:

North Harbour is unhappy about the New Zealand Rugby Union's coaching set up. It does not care for the directive from the executive director of the national coaching movement, Bill Freeman, that only men who have been All Blacks should be used as staff coaches within the national set-up (McLean, 1985d, *Rugby News*, p. 10).

One NZRFU council member, John Dowling, gave his version of what governance should be:

Structured and controlled administration combining subtly with the interests of the players will always keep abreast of the ever changing times (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 9).

Given the earlier evidence, ‘combining subtly’ with Andy Haden might have made an interesting spectacle. A letter to the editor of *Rugby News* suggested an understanding that the NZRFU was a bureaucratic and politically driven organisation. Motivated by the approach taken to the South African issue, one “wife of a long-time Rugby player, referee and administrator” pointed out:

In its blatant disregard of public opinion, the Rugby Union has demonstrated all the worst aspects of a blind and bureaucratic organisation which has lost sight of the reason for its existence (Dawe, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 26).

Others shared the view. Grahame Thorne, a former All Black, might be seen to have expressed a more widely held opinion:

The NZRFU is the ‘Aunt Sally’ of New Zealand, a venerable institution, ripe for picking on, and thousands have done it over the years – myself included. Yet at times, the union asks for it through its uncompromising attitude to change (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 13).

For one NZRU administrator, by 2005, alternatives to central control were not credible. The justification here was that central control is good because other models would not give those controlling things centrally the control they need:

...it gives us some control over ensuring that there’s a good distribution of talent across the franchises. We’ve got a broadcasting agreement with News. We’ve got five teams that play in the Super 14, the potential of those teams are strong and competitive, so we run that selection process, which is a draft process and once again, being the employer, and having the structure that we do enables us to run that process a lot more smoothly than if we just... The other option would be to leave it open to the market, that each franchise or provincial union would stand on its own merits and contract players individually, in which case we’d actually have no control over the product we’re delivering to the broadcasters either in that regard.

New Zealand rugby is lucky to have such a wonderful system might be the cry. For another administrator, himself an ex-player, having central control was lucky:

Well contracting, yeah we've been lucky. We've always had central contracts here you know for the last ten years. The contracting model has really had a rapid evolution...ten years ago I remember when I was playing, the contracts were really haphazard from the NZRU. It meant some players would be sub-contractors, some would be employees. Contracts were negotiated or not really negotiated, they were thrown in front of you and you signed them or you didn't.

Perhaps now they are presented to the players in an orderly and controlled manner and signed, or not. The position of the players in the context of central control might be seen to have changed. According to the 1985 All Blacks, from a position of little influence...

We would get referred to at odd times, but had very little control over the game really. I'm not even sure that the board were too worried about the players and that's not a derogatory comment, I think they managed as best they could. If I didn't play there would be somebody else to take my place, it wouldn't have been too much of an issue, so you know the players certainly didn't have, certainly no talk of a third of the share of the income or players committees and things like that.

I don't remember ever going to a council committee meeting in those days to talk about the future of the game or anything like that. I'm not even sure that the players would be given that opportunity then.

...to a position where they might eventually challenge central control through their Players Association:

...you've got the players' collective that's just come out now. I mean the players are represented. At every meeting they have a strong say in number of games, remuneration levels and so on, and that is growing. Growing very, very quickly and I think that's fine to a point, but it's like, you know, the union battles. I liken it to where the unions overstepped the mark and started to try and wag the dog. There can be some real major problems and I'd just be interested to watch the strength of the players' collective group. I think it needs to be managed very carefully, if you get the wrong people in there, there's potential for some real damage, and baseball in the States I think has been through that.

The central control mantra might be seen to be facilitating the development of players. One senior administrator counseled against players turning out to be like David Beckham. Quite why is unclear; perhaps an inference that Beckham is beyond any form of central control:

I think that's one of the reasons why we work as hard as we can to keep the All Blacks as normal as possible, that we don't want them to be, we don't want Richie and Dan to be Beckham...

The strength of the institutionalised logic might be seen to have influenced players' behaviour. Reflecting on his years as an All Black, Anton Oliver noted that:

For years and years I kept my head down. I did exactly what I was told. I hardly ever took issue openly with what we were asked to do. I may not have liked some things all that much, and I sometimes felt we could have done things differently, but many players are like that. I just wanted to play rugby at the highest level and to the best of my ability (Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 14).

There is an implication that questioning that control might not have been the best route to success in the environment. In the environment of performance assessment the differences between 1985 and 2005 might be illustrated by the actions that affected one referee:

There was no formal assessment like there is today. You would be watched by the local selector or assessor, and at times you would get something in writing, sometimes you wouldn't. The best you would get would be a discussion after the game where they would raise some issues and that would be it. It was quite a loose, compared to today it was very loose, but I still think in retrospect that the best referees got through. But it was a bit of a hit and miss type of situation.

In 2005, as viewed in the words of another international referee, control by those numbers littered the discourse:

In relation to the outcome of that assessment report you're scored out of 200. In today's world, if you're scoring less than 150 you've had a poor game. You've had a below

average game. At the moment in Super 14, I understand the average is about 160, over all the referees that have refereed and been assessed during the competition. Now I think from memory I'm sitting on about 167.

Central control of referees had got a bit much, for this referee:

Last year they were 'assessed'. This year they're 'coached' and really it's pedantic. The terms are the same, at the end of the day you're still going to have a grading of 1-20. Now the political nature of the beast is control – we want to see you managing a game, we want to see you, if there's any carry on, regardless of whether it's retaliation or the other way, you must do something. However, if you have more than ten sin bins then somewhere along the line your man-management is strained. Or if you have more than five ordered off – it's just a number.

For coaches the position might be seen as a little more sinister. 'Co-operation' with central control is built into their key performance indicators (KPIs). An NZRU administrator explained:

We changed KPIs for the coaches. For example, Super 14 coaches, we employ them and we choose the KPIs to reflect, not so much their on-field results, we obviously want them to win, but to reflect their ability to coach, their ability to develop players and their relationship with New Zealand rugby, *and their co-operation with the things that we're trying to achieve*. And again, an example of that is the movement of players around the country and not allowing one franchise to hoard all the best players. Another example is encouraging coaches to rest players, so that they are still able to play a test series, in the Super 14 (emphasis added).

Perhaps this is evidence that central control has developed KPIs to ensure co-operation with central control. Journalists might be seen to be affected by the actions facilitated by the central logic:

Access to players if you're in the media is very difficult; it's controlled by media liaison officers who control when these people talk to people. They actually control a lot about rugby players when they sign the contract, they sign some of the intellectual rights and all this sort of stuff. I've done a few books and getting photographs and images of players is very difficult now. You've got to go through the rugby union.

There was evidence of some resistance to the dominance of the logic by a few battle hardened campaigners. ‘Veteran journalist’, Lindsay Knight, in a discussion about the British Lions’ tour:

To admit to mixed feelings about anything to do with rugby these days is, of course, a dangerous exercise. The New Zealand Rugby Union gives an impression of expecting from the media only cheer-leading and those who raise questions on aspects of the Lions tour, professionalism, the NPC changes and the World Cup are either chastised as “dinosaurs” or “disloyal” (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 34).

More evidence of resistance came from one of the participants:

...another fundamental of the rugby situation in New Zealand, which I think the Rugby Union tend to forget, is that they don’t own the game. They don’t own rugby in New Zealand and they don’t own the clubs, and they don’t own the provincial unions. It’s the other way round. The NZRU is owned by the provincial unions of New Zealand on behalf of their clubs. The main stakeholder I think in the rugby system is the average guy who pays his sub at the club. An average club member. That’s where it all starts. The clubs started first, then the provincial unions, then the NZRU.

Provincial players might be affected by the actions taken centrally and accepted by the community. The level of attempted control by the NZRU was linked by one supporter to players’ lack of responsibility; and, then directly to some unintended consequences of the process:

So the example where they get into trouble in a nightclub, there’s protection there. They (NZRU) act if they can, to protect that incident. So they don’t actually learn responsibility for their actions, you know, urinating in public, bashing somebody with their hand bag! The South Canterbury team. Did you hear about that? They were up in Wanganui last weekend, the older guys go out, the younger guys could not afford to go out with them, but they will go out at about 11 o’clock. So the older guys are out and the younger guys go and get bottles of spirits to drink while they’re waiting to go out. And they trashed the hotel, it made national news and everything. They got fined \$25,000 was it? The union got fined and it was \$200 per player for this damage that they did. So the union gets fined...they are meant to go today down to North Otago. But now the union cannot afford the bus so they are not playing. Because they had to

pay that fine. It's bizarre. The ramifications of that central control saying we will fine you, who gets punished? It is these development players and their coaches. Now you see North Otago are upset because they can't play their development team.

One of the consequences of an acceptance of 'Central control is the way to go!' might be emergence of a group of administrators who are happy to be centrally controlled. Resistance to change was an echo between the years. This was from an NZRFU administrator in 1985...

(Some Unions) were much more progressive than any of the others who tended to maintain the status quo and accept the resistance to change factor that is so inherent in many organisations. And it's really a fear factor that they're not sure how they will cope with the changes that are made.

...and this was from a coach in 2005:

In terms of the executive committee a lot of clubs around here are run by, how do you say, freezer workers, people that go to work at 7.30am, home at 3.00 everyday of the week and aren't used to taking a risk, which in today's game as I see it, you've got to be able to take the risks to get ahead.

Another consequence of such an institutionalised understanding was highlighted by a former All Black:

...it's more centralised in a whole lot of ways. Competitions are controlled from the top. Refereeing appointments are controlled from the top. It's a different model of running the game. More a centralisation that does command and control is one way to look at it. It allows the establishment of, and I don't necessarily agree, imposed, agreed standards to be set and it allows standardisation. It allows people to perform regularly to that standard. Of course it fights against innovation, you know, a thousand little balloons, it's just a whole different style and you choose it and you get the best of which one you choose.

Perhaps the 'shiny' arses' at central control are aware of the position they hold. One NZRU administrator considered that it was important not to be seen to be making too many decisions in pursuit of doing what the 'beast has to do':

People who are operating clubs still see themselves as volunteers in a community, but they've got this other beast that some will appreciate has to do what it has to do, and others will see us as a bunch of shiny arses that are taking a lot of bloody money and credit and good times away from where it should be. I'm personally very conscious of the way we present ourselves when we're talking about the community game, it's really important. We have to be very careful that we don't be seen to be condescending, to be making their decisions for them and that's why we haven't forced amalgamations at club level.

Another example of central control that might be particularly relevant to this research was the decree from the NZRU that all unions wanting to be accepted into the new premier division must have independent board members:

The Harbour union appointed MacGowan...to comply with an NZRU prerequisite that each province should have at least three independent members on its board ('MacGowan switches codes', 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 8).

Given the paucity of evidence that independent directors make any difference to performance it may be another case of blindly following what 'business' does. The appearance in the discourse, though, might be further evidence of an accepted logic that if you don't follow the central line you can't play the game.

5.5. Institutionalised logic 5: 'What the sponsors say goes'

The understandings that surround sponsors, and particularly corporate sponsors, appear to have evolved over the twenty year period. The corporate sponsors appear linked, in the minds of the rugby community, with the emergence of 'TV runs the game'. This may reflect a business 'reality'; that the sponsors pay for the exposure to wider audiences. However, where television was widely accepted as a positive influence on the environment, there appeared to be a weak, but commonly held, negative idea about corporate sponsors. The institutionalised logic identified in the 2005 data was characterised by some resentment that 'What the sponsor says goes'. Evidence would suggest that this underlying resentment does not make the influence of the logic any weaker. However, this resentment may, if allowed to develop, have a potentially

negative influence on the activities of the games' sponsors, with a consequential knock-on effect to the revenues. 'What the sponsor says goes' appeared to both facilitate and constrain action across sections of the New Zealand rugby community. 'Corporates' and sponsors are integrated in the understanding illustrated, perhaps, by one journalist's complaints:

...the TV and the corporate world have taken the game over. It's easier now for people in the corporate world to go to a game than it is for the average Joe Blow from the club. He used to be able to get tickets if you were a club member - you find it very hard to get them now. Because if you go to a game now it's full of, half of them are corporate boxes and sitting in the stands and they're all corporate people because the corporates just get their hands on so many tickets.

Reviewing the data from 1985, ideas were being debated and corporate sponsorship was evident in the discourse. Perhaps these early understandings might be seen as the source of the negativity. As one NZRFU administrator articulated:

There were some people who didn't like it because in effect, to become, in some form or another, a slave to the sponsor. You would have to say slave in inverted commas because it's not exactly a slave but they felt there would be a tie because of the sponsorship situation, but I think the general perception was we needed to accept.

Another administrator at the time explained the confused beginnings of the relationships:

I was probably there in the first years of sponsorship coming in on a national basis, and again it was welcomed, but it was almost done with a certain amount of suspicion from many of the rugby people. Like we want the money but we actually don't want to give anything for it, and I think there was a number of painful years both for sponsors and the Rugby Union for coming to grips with the responsibilities that both parties had.

It was a time where sponsor's activities were in their infancy. At the NZRFU AGM Ces Blazey was reported to have explained an IRB decision concerning advertising:

Advertisers' logos can now appear on the playing uniform – once only on the jersey and once only on the shorts. The maximum dimension is 6cm x 6cm. This ruling applies to referees. Asked if oblong emblems could be used where the sponsor's name was a long one, Blazey said he thought clubs and unions should stick to the 6 x 6 ruling (Howitt, 1985b, *Rugby News*, p. 5).

There was evidence that sponsorship was starting to find a place in the discourse:

When Manurewa tied the financial knot with its new sponsor, Zip Wholesalers, it wasn't a spur of the moment arrangement...At Zip's request, the worth of the sponsorship is confidential and that confidentiality is being honoured. No way would a club official tell Rugby News the dollars and cents of the Zip-Manurewa arrangement. That's a true professional attitude from an amateur organisation and speaks volumes for Manurewa ('Canadian tour planned for '86', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 13).

Sponsorship was clearly viewed, by some, as a positive development. Reporting on a deal with DB by Mount Wellington club:

The sponsorship means more than money. The seniors were each given a gear bag and tankard while the club as a whole benefits with a new scoreboard and goalpost pads ('Ambitious trip for seniors', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 5).

There was again that coyness about using figures:

The beer maker will back the club for the next three years and while the club is reluctant to disclose the dollars and cents of the deal it is apparently in the five figure bracket ('Ambitious trip for seniors', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 5).

Not that sponsors were unanimously supported:

There's been a subtle change in the brand of orange juice being drunk after training and matches by the Southland team. Their choice is now the bottled fruit juice prepared by the local milk board. They've rejected Fresh-up juices since the Apple and Pear Board (makers of Fresh-up) withdrew their sponsorship of Rugby over the South African tour issue (Howitt, 1985c, *Rugby News*, 16, 15, p. 9).

A letter from A.P.Hay (Taupo) called for businesses to make a pro-tour protest and boycott sponsors who had withdrawn support because of the South African tour:

I own two businesses in Taupo and have received favourable response from other businessmen in staging a pro Rugby protest of our own. Our intention is to withdraw support from all firms involved in sponsorship withdrawal (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 30).

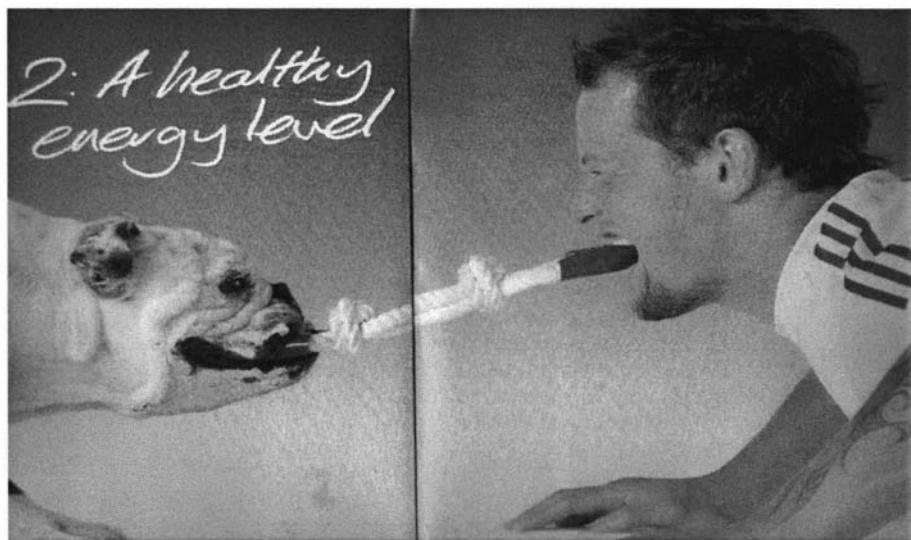
Sponsors were not always popular for different reasons, as Bob Howitt reported:

You didn't have to be terribly alert to detect the strong undercurrent of feeling at the after-match function which followed Saturday's Ranfurly Shield classic at Lancaster Park. And it didn't have anything to do with the match itself, which had given more than 50,000 fans an incredible buzz. It soon became apparent there were a lot of angry people present. Not angry that Canterbury had lost its precious "log" after three golden years and 25 defences, but very, very angry that midweek a sponsor's name had been appended to the trophy (1985d, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

NEC was the unfortunate sponsor, and it appears that, since that day, the Ranfurly Shield has been protected from 'What the sponsor says goes'. By 2005, sponsorship had become an accepted part of the environment. There was evidence that 'What the sponsor says goes' was widely accepted and not generally opposed in the discourse. However, the level of sponsorship and advertising had reached a point where a 'saturation' debate might be seen to be taking place. One columnist decried the signage around the pitch:

The point is that the greedy publicity signage at most New Zealand games has now reached the point of being far too intrusive. And dangerous... (Quinn, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 36).

The institutionalised logic can be seen to facilitate and constrain action amongst a number of groups in the field of New Zealand rugby. Players are told what to do and they do it, even if it looks a little silly.



Source: *NZ Rugby World*, 2005, 79, p. 2

In the photograph above, 2005 All Black Carlos Spencer, wrestled with a dog in an advertisement for a dog nutrient product. Another All Black, Dan Carter, has his image undressed all over the world for Jockey:

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Source: *NZ Rugby World*, 2005, 86, p. 85

Obviously the justification for an individual's choices might be money, but the institutionalised understanding 'What the sponsors say goes' might facilitate the actions. An appearance by All Black, John Kirwan, in car showroom adverts might be the nearest comparison from 1985. The demands made by the sponsor might have included a request to smile. More likely it was just to provide a photograph:



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 28, p. 3

Players might also have a 'responsibility' to behave in a manner that is compatible with sponsors. Their contracts include commitments to sponsors. One recent All Black, Kees Meeus, compared the more centrally controlled All Black environment with that of the New Zealand Maori team:

You are accepted for what you are, not what you do. They don't really care what you do, as long as you front up for training and on the day...There's not a lot of pressure and he expects you as a grown man to know your limits. That's what's important. Whereas with the All Blacks, it's such a corporate brand, you've gotta be this person, you've gotta always be nice to people. With the Maori, you can be you (Burnes, 2005a, *Rugby News*, 36, 21, p. 16).

Supporters might be seen to be accepting of the logic. They accepted inferior seat allocations for the Lions' 2005 tour, due to sponsors' requirements. They might also be seen to have accepted ticket price increases²⁵. Any blame for this in the discourse appeared to be allocated to the 'corporate' world. Administrators were accused of pandering to corporates by one journalist:

²⁵ Lowest seating ticket price for the second test against the British and Irish Lions in Wellington, in 2005, was \$80. A more 'normal' test match seat price in 2005 was around \$45. In 1985, an uncovered seating ticket for the second test against England in Wellington was \$11. Based on the Reserve Bank of New Zealand inflation calculator this would have been equivalent to \$24.16 in 2005.

They have a control over the rugby, they have control. It's probably a subtle, insidious sort of thing where the rugby will do everything to pander to the corporate world.

Coaches too were expected to conform to the sponsors' requirements. According to one participant there was a little more to John Mitchell's removal as coach of the All Blacks, than just the fact he would not return his boss's telephone calls:

...he treated the corporates...they got rid of him. The corporates, it wasn't the media, they had nothing to do with it, they couldn't give a stuff he wouldn't give an interview to some reporter or wouldn't talk on the radio. They didn't give a damn he spoke bloody nonsense whenever he was being interviewed, it wasn't the treatment of them. He treated the corporates with disdain and it was them and the Rugby Union, they were the ones that got rid of him... So that's an example of that power they have. If someone doesn't go to their functions and treat their clients and make an appearance and glad-hand him as they expect. I know that's what happened a couple of times, he just said 'I'm not going to that corporate thing' and, of course, they watched him going off to play...he said to Clear (*Communications*) he was unavailable and he was going off to play golf somewhere.

You crossed the sponsors at your own peril by 2005. There was headline news when the sponsors were allegedly obstructed. Under the heading "NZRU accused of illegal merchandise removal", a sponsor complained:

As sponsors of provincial unions LWR (*Lane Walker Rudkin*) are quite rightly annoyed at your lack of care for provincial rugby, LWR, concessionaires and retailers. There are quantifiable losses here (Campbell, 2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 34, p. 5).

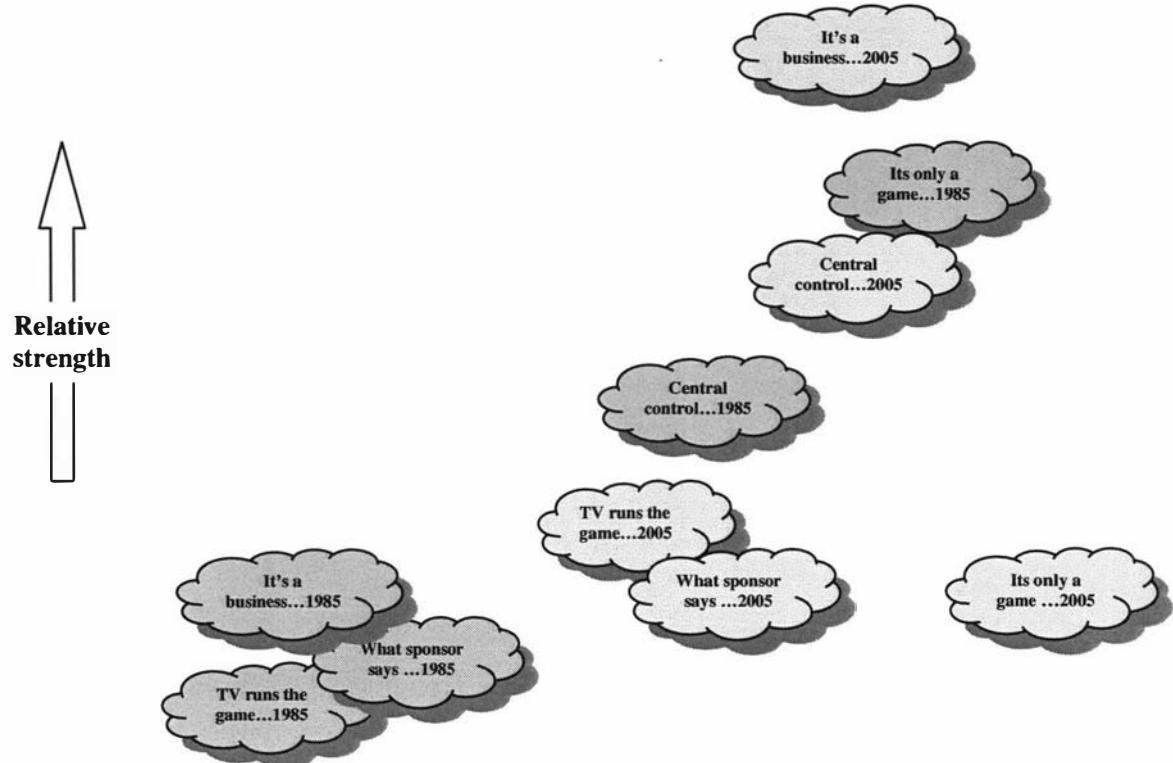
As will be discussed in Chapter Eight quantifiable numbers are an important justification tool for the NZRU themselves. The insidious nature of 'What the sponsors say goes' had, by 2005, spread a long way in the field. Even the journalist, who stood out as a fighting against the prevailing institutionalised logic, sounded almost resigned to the fate of rugby. Logical argument was abandoned in favour of the plaintive cry "it's just wrong":

In a sense its good, some will say it's good because they fund the game like these sponsorships etc. etc. but long term I reckon it's bad. They're actually dictating what happens to the game. People like the corporate world, Air New Zealand, Sky, Telecom all these places; they've got so much control and say on rugby, it's just wrong.

5.6. An interpretation of the strength of the logics

An interpretation of the relative strengths of the institutionalised logics grouped under the heading 'The Business of Rugby' is presented in Figure 5.1. on the following page. In 1985, evidence suggested that the institutionalised logic of 'It's only a game' was starting to break down. By 2005, the logic's power to facilitate or constrain behaviour had all but disappeared. In its place was an institutionalised logic that appears to dominate the landscape, and evidence suggests, drives the much of the action amongst the rugby communities, 'It's a business now'. This may be getting close to the idea of the kind of 'dominant logic' proposed by Prahalad and Bettis (1986). In 1985, ideas and understandings about rugby as a business were being debated but there was little to suggest habitualised action. 'Central control is the way to go!' appears to have developed and, perhaps, has got stronger, particularly in the context of players. Evidence suggests 'What the sponsor says goes' was not institutionalised in 1985, but by 2005, facilitated at least some behaviours in the field. In 1985, 'TV runs the game' did not exist in the minds of the rugby communities, but by 2005, might be seen to exert a moderate influence and be widely accepted.

Figure 5.1. The Business of Rugby: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby



<u>Pre-institutionalisation</u>	<u>Habitualisation</u>	<u>Objectification</u>	<u>Sedimentation</u>	<u>Erosion</u>
Ideas introduced and some debate but no evidence of habitualised action	Gradual adoption of ideas that creates a habitualised response to particular situations	A social consensus amongst community develops	Widespread adoption and perpetuation over time	Gradual erosion of acceptance of the understanding due to functional, social or/and political pressures

Time →

Chapter Six: Laws to be Obeyed

The common thread in this grouping was the link between how referees are seen and treated, and the ambiguous line between physical aggression (acceptable) and violence (unacceptable). The unwritten conventions that make up the so-called ‘ethos of rugby’ are also considered in this section. Evidence for four institutionalised logics was found amongst this data: ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’, ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’, ‘You don’t argue with the referee’, and ‘Don’t cross the ethos’.

6.1. Institutionalised logic 6: ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’

As was identified in Chapter Three, a possible institutionalised logic, ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’, emerged from the initial reading of the *written texts*. This was an understanding that events on the field, particularly in the context of violence, should be dealt with on the field and not taken forward either off the field or into the next match. Evidence suggested this was stronger in 1985, and may have been affected by television and the evolving judiciary system. The understanding was articulated by a Palmerston North (New Zealand) taxi driver in a conversation about the Lions tour incident. He was complaining about the “whinging” that Sir Clive Woodward had been doing all tour. “What happens on the paddock should stay there” was his actual expression (Unknown, personal communication, 21 July, 2005).

Mark Shaw’s understanding was quoted earlier; “Whatever happens, as soon as the game’s over that’s it. Soon as that final whistle has gone, good or bad, what’s happened is history...” (Barton, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 36)²⁶. This understanding was widely echoed in the narrative interviews. The behaviour that such a logic might facilitate was rather bemusedly illustrated by one referee at the centre of the action back in 1985:

²⁶ Given Shaw’s rather dubious disciplinary history on the field it may be that he had a vested interest in supporting a style of game that suited his particular skills.

...they'd kick the shit out of each other and they'd finish the game, 'that was a good one you did there mate' and they'd walk off arm in arm. I still can't come to grips with that. Physically brutalise you, but... the only time would be if anyone was on the ground and the head, couldn't touch the head, but any other part of the body. They'd pick themselves up and once the final whistle... and the beers afterwards you know, they would... everything would be forgotten until obviously... until the time they struck each other in the next game.

The picture of the convivial after-match was drawn by another All Black, Allan Hewson, when describing a scene from his Petone club:

Wander in on a Saturday evening in winter and the setting is literally a home away from home for scores of people... players talking and drinking with team-mates, with opponents they've recently been trying to knock the daylights out of, with wives and girlfriends. It's an almost frenzied scene, the laughter and chatter being interrupted only by cheers and/or boos when the results are announced (Gault, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

This understanding has potentially enabled players to define a point at which the physical nature of the game can be constrained within an unofficially agreed boundary. An understanding that acts of physicality occur on the field of play will not be carried over once the match has finished. There seems to have been quite strong boundaries for the behaviours allowed under the scheme. Eye-gouging, kicking, testicle-grabbing, and biting are all outside the institutionalised understanding. The data suggests the practice and understanding has been in existence over the period of twenty years in some form or other.

Regardless of the root causes of any bust-ups on field, the understanding was dominant enough to produce similar behavioural results across a number of levels. One supporter recalled a club game:

...he stood up to him. They were expecting the little white guys to all fall over. It was a little bit about teamwork but also about taking out the aggression on people. And then we went back to the club rooms afterwards, they put a hangi on for us, and then we got on the bus and went back to Auckland. You know, you were all mates afterwards.

One area in which the institutionalised logic may have constrained behaviour is in the way after-match comments were made. In 1985, incidents seemed to be closed off at the end of a game and further comment or action was considered unnecessary. After-match discussions rarely focused on the questionable conduct of the players on the field. A rare exception was Taranaki coach Bill Batchelor interviewed after a defeat in the Ranfurly Shield game:

Batchelor was a little critical of the way Kieran Crowley had been “taken out of the game” but he made no accusations. “It was probably just one of those things that can happen in ruck situations, but it was a blow to our hopes” (*‘Shell shocked’*, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

Even then the language used, “probably just one of those things”, is constrained. When allegedly blatant on the field incidents of violence had been seen at the highest level of the game, there remained an atmosphere of tolerance. An All Black prop was sent off for punching in a Barbarians fixture, in an off the ball incident:

The New Zealand manager Murray Reid, asked to comment on the incident, said that Boroevich had to have 10 stitches inserted in his head. “It was an unfortunate incident but it takes two to tango”. Boroevich’s action angered Australian players. Slow-motion television replays show how he hit McBain from behind, more than 25 metres off the ball (Ross, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 7).

By 2005, there was evidence in the discourse that a slightly ‘louder’ version of criticism might be acceptable. The winning coach, Robbie Deans was quoted after a fiery Auckland Blues versus Canterbury Crusaders encounter:

Personally I was disappointed with the response of the Blues. There were three headshots and there are three lots of stiches in our camp as a result of that. The game got away from them quite early and that’s how it manifested itself (Campbell, 2005c, *Rugby News*, 36, 4, p. 5).

Another possible area where behaviour was facilitated or constrained was spectator involvement. In 1985, the following incident of spectator violence was treated with amusement. The reported actions of the players might be interpreted as indicating an active enforcement of the convention:

...one of the funniest incidents seen at Eden Park...The stage, Eden Park's number two pitch. The bit players, the Waitemata Ponsonby seniors. The stars? Well, in the crowd was a Waitemata supporter watching his son play. Also in the crowd was a Ponsonby supporter watching his son perform. (Both were several decades older than the best vintage that comes out of the western districts). As the game progressed so their vocal support heightened. Inevitably, their chorus became personal until the aged gentlemen were caught up in a verbal punch-up. The verbals grew hotter to the point when fists were raised. A fracas was only avoided when the sons of the feuding fathers walked off the pitch and separated their old timers ('Wally's massive contribution', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

There might also be a link to a view that 'what happens on tour stays on tour' where the field is extended to take in the social activities that take place whilst the touring team are away from home. It appears that the two phrases were juxtaposed in the language of one NZRFU administrator:

In those days, what stayed, you know, what happened on the field stayed on the field - it was sort of unwritten law... there was unwritten rules that if press guys were on tour, they didn't write about those sorts of things that have happened and so now. Probably now, one of the disturbing things that has happened in sport is you get a degree of sensationalism that has crept in on incidents that really... what do they really mean, what does it really matter. Like the All Blacks recently in the UK four or five were photographed relaxing having a few beers or staying up or doing whatever. What was the point of that particular article other than to create strife and trouble, for the journo that wrote it or the photographer that took it making money themselves.

There may be subtle differences in interpretation but it would appear that the constraining and facilitating effects on behaviour are very similar in nature, as another NZRFU administrator alluded to:

Funnily enough many people have said because of my experience I guess over a long period of time, that I should write a book myself but I firmly believe in the old saying "what happens on tour stays on tour". And I would never tell stories about players, or other interesting happenings, that happened on any of the tours I took. And I still don't agree with players writing for money about incidents they say happened on tour. Many of these stories I've read and I know they're incorrect. But that's life today.

The scorn with which ‘kiss and tell’ books were viewed by this administrator, might be seen as a strong social regulation of the logic:

...the guys that write the books later, that's the killer. It takes a bit of defending when it comes out two years later, three years later, that someone did this or did that.

By 2005, the strength of the institutionalised logic was waning. Television, with its constant relays, extensive coverage and precision camera work, appears to be the element held responsible for bringing about change. One of the journalists reviewed the changes that meant things could no longer be left on the field, but at the same time hinted at the administrative hassles (economic costs) that were involved when things were taken off the field:

...the violence, the dirty play, foul play and things like that, that gives another ongoing controversy in rugby which in the '70s and '80s was just bloody nuts. It was a dirty game, I think and that has to be said. There used to be fists thrown and punches thrown and unless it was really over the top like someone kicking someone in the head, quite often it was ignored. They didn't order people off. Years ago back in the '50s people ordered off in the game was regarded as a major crime. Say someone got ordered off in a game, this was huge, headlines in the paper, Joe Blow ordered off and it used to... a lot of people were reluctant to order people off because they didn't want to go through all this hassle it used to create. There was no TV to police it. It was pretty patchy but once they got it replayed and all that sort of thing came in you could see, you could actually replay it and see a guy punching a guy off the ball and in the old days they never caught that.

Some version of the practice and understanding could still be seen in the discourse of 2005, but its nature was no longer clear cut. John Mitchell, former coach of the All Blacks, was discussing the disciplinary record of the South African team. He articulated the confusion between the current practices of dealing with violence and the understanding:

You're seeing some players being sin-binned or suspended for poor technique in some acts of play. But then there are those players who are getting away with more serious acts of violence. Something needs to be done before someone gets seriously hurt. I still believe things should be left on the field, but sometimes the Springboks overstep the mark (Mitchell, 2005).

A New Zealand player might be seen to illustrate one element of the changing nature of the institutionalised logic - that leaving it on the field is okay, provided no-one gets seriously hurt. Rua Tipoki, commented on a spear tackle that he had been on the receiving end of in the match against the British and Irish Lions:

He lifted me up and tipped me on my head. I think he was getting a bit frustrated. I was glad I got a penalty from it. I could have got hurt but you don't mind as long as no-one gets hurt (Burnes, 2005b, *Rugby News*, 36, 31, p. 11).

International referee, Paul Honiss, commented on the same incident and compared it with the O'Driscoll tackle that caused such uproar in the discourse:

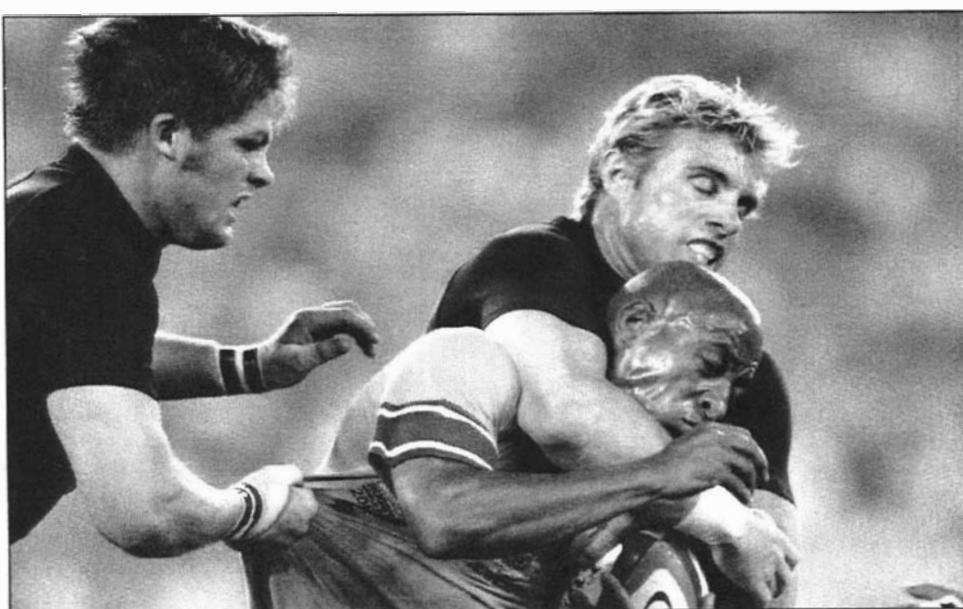
The only clear difference between the two was that an injury resulted from the Test match incident, whereas Rua managed to control his 'return to earth' (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 24).

However, despite a weakening, the mantra of 'What happens on the field stays on the field' can still be seen as ingrained in the players. The words themselves were used by Byron Kelleher, quoted when discussing an incident in which Justin Marshall, his main rival for the All Black half-back position, had stamped on his hand:

...I suppose that was just a heat of the moment action that happens during a game. But as far as I'm concerned whatever happens on the field stays on the field. I don't judge people on how they behave on the field. I judge them off the field (Gillies, 2005, p. 150).

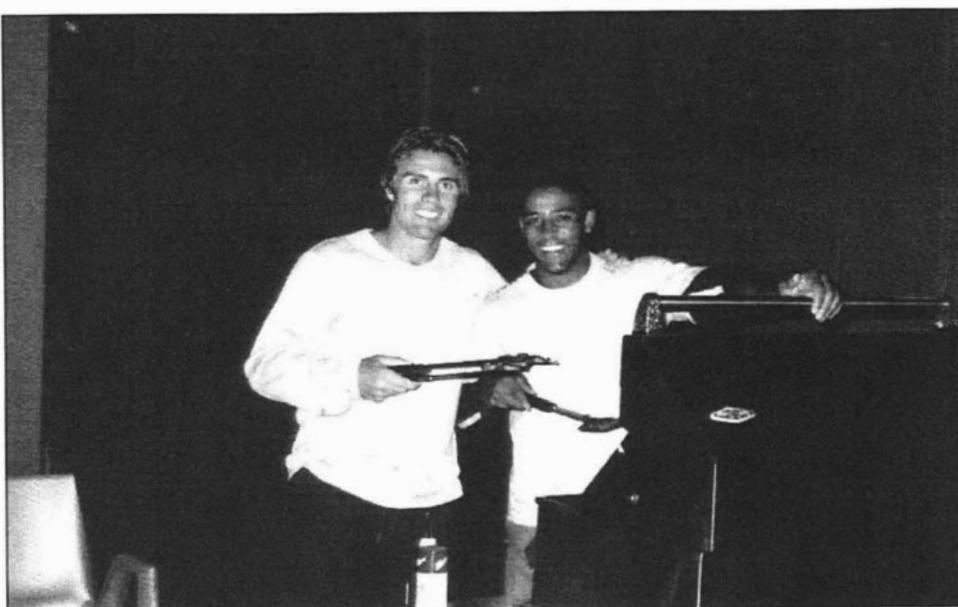
Further evidence of behaviour inspired by the understanding comes from a set of photographs in Justin Marshall's biography. The intense rivalry on the field between Marshall and the Australian half-back George Gregan might be illustrated by the top photograph. The bottom photograph implies that much was left on the field.

PHOTOSHOT



'Your place or mine for that barbecue, George?' Tackling George Gregan during our World Cup semifinal loss to the Wallabies at the 2003 World Cup.

MARSHALL COLLECTION



Rivals on the field, mates off it. George and I, enjoying a barbecue at his place in Sydney, during the off-season.

Source: *Justin Marshall, Gillies, 2005, p. 160*

There was other evidence that the logic might still exist, and the actions it facilitates might still be grudgingly viewed as socially acceptable practice. Particularly, according to one journalist, at lower levels of the game where television is not involved:

...it really depends at club level on what sort of attitude the sides take into it. These guys might think oh we're prepared to have a bit of a biff and still have a beer afterwards and that's fine. If there is anything over the top, over-hyped sort of play, then coaches and players can generally clamp down on that. It still goes on to a certain extent and no-one is going to worry too much about that.

'A bit of biff is part of the game' is the next institutionalised logic identified.

'What happens on the field stays on the field' may have wider implications and effects. A senior NZRU administrator seemed to suggest that there was a developing understanding that what happens on the field was not always dealt with very well by those off the field. He could be interpreted as making the point that those people new to the field (for example, a mother of a junior player) might struggle to comprehend why a lenient approach is often taken by the judiciary system. The partially hidden nature of the logic perhaps led him to blame 'weak New Zealanders':

Well they still see it (*violence*) happening on the field - I can't see how they can stop it. And they have got no way of stopping it. What can a Mum do if her boy gets kicked other than complain and then what happens to that boy. Nine times out of ten she will be disappointed in terms of what's happened to that boy because school authorities and club authorities are weak New Zealanders. They just aren't prepared to say to that boy you can't play again.

This might be seen as evidence of the understanding weakening, and not being passed down to the next generation. It may be that those on the junior judiciary are still driven by conventions that surround 'What happens on the field should stay on the field'.

In the professional game, with the judicial system in place, including the citing of players by observers and from television replays, the non-conformity costs of 'leaving it on the field' have been completely over-ridden. The social costs of not accepting defeat or a physical beating gracefully might still be seen to exist, but the functional control now exerted by television and administrators means that players can no longer behave in a manner facilitated by the institutionalised logic. At the highest level of the game 'What happens on the field stays on the field' has been almost completely eroded. The game no longer allows what happens on the field to be left there. There was evidence

that the logic may still exist in the way players comment on the game, but the judicial system is driving behaviour. The perceived inadequacy of the judicial system has caused some confusion, not necessarily surprising when it might be seen to have taken the place of a strong institutionalised understanding; an understanding that might have been seen to facilitate and constrain players' behaviour for over 100 years. Those participants charged with policing the centre of the confusion, one referee from 1985, and one from 2005, commented:

I think the lawmakers...and we still haven't got the judicial system right, citing commissioners and other judicial groups are still giving some Mickey Mouse decisions.

The judicial process, once they are in the system, I think is very good but the step in between, the citing process is an absolute shambles at the moment. There is so much inconsistency and I am sure that that comes down to around the world, in New Zealand and SANZAR there might be 50 people doing the job, and in my view there needs to be eight. And that will lead to consistency. The same people talking to one another, getting the same view. I just think there's too many people doing the job. In 2005 how Tana Umaga and Kevin Mealamu didn't have to appear before a judicial hearing to answer for the O'Driscoll incident is just an absolute joke.

The 'joke' will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

6.2. Institutionalised logic 7: 'A bit of biff is part of the game'

An institutionalised logic closely related to 'Whatever happens on the field...' is an understanding that 'A bit of biff is part of the game'. There seems to have been an understanding that some level of violence on the field is part of the game. Players, referees, spectators, journalists and administrators all expected some level of violence to occur. One of the 1985 All Blacks explained:

...as far as the players were concerned it was just, it always happened very quickly so there was no sense that this was all about a fight, this was just about something that happened as part of a physical contest. As a captain it didn't bother me at all. I would often, from time to time, if it was important, I'd ask if it was a good thing to do. We

weren't prepared to take it from anyone. We weren't going to dish it out or take it, but we were not going to be physically muscled out of anything. And that was always the case with a good team and it was a kind of understanding that... there was no point in starting because no one is going to step back, so you didn't need to do it to weak teams. So I guess you, in the end, you reach the equilibrium which was an understanding with those who are physical - if people want to try and dominate physically, they're going to see a response, there'll be a bit of blood spilt, but we'll just end up in the same place as we were. So in that sense it was probably self-regulating.

Another participant, a former All Black, reflected on the reasons for some of the flare-ups:

The other thing was if someone was being stomped or attacked then obviously the other people would support...the herd mentality of protecting team mates...

Perhaps the self-regulation was through a fear of looking weak in front of the opposition and other team members. Few could take a backward step from this logic. The legitimacy of the behaviour resulting from such an understanding might be illustrated by a story told in 1985:

Their hatchet man, Springbok lock Stompieven der Merwe, waited for Jones (All Black No 8) to jump in a lineout, and then hit him with his Sunday punch. He landed it to his satisfaction, and trotted off after the action, feeling well content. He had not gone very far when he received a tap on his shoulder. He turned around, and there, to his astonishment was Jones. "Good shot, number four", said the All Black, who then proceeded to win the loose ball and score a try. Afrikaans Rugby fanatics tell that story with awe and admiration. It's because they respect power (Barrow, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

Here an insight was given, by an NZRFU administrator, as to how the understanding might have been passed on to new entrants to the field:

When I started off I was told when somebody hung onto your jersey the way to fix that was just to clock them...it was probably told by so many people and you know one way to fix it then they know they can't get away with it. So you know there is certain

amount of fisticuffs at odd times in games...it was just part of the unwritten code of ethics in the game in those days.

Referees might have been seen to condone the behaviour that flowed from the understanding. One referee at the time explained:

...well if you transgressed and if you jersey pulled, if you lay on the ball, if you obstructed me then it was accepted practice that you got what you deserved. Well I would like to think that I refereed in that vein. Don't expect me to protect you if you want to foot-trip or obstruct or jersey-pull. Don't expect me to protect you from the retaliator, and that's very naughty but I think most of the teams once I'd refereed them two or three times they came to understand that and I would like to think that that's what came through.

Although this particular approach to jersey pulling may have been somewhat influenced by his personal experiences:

Well I started refereeing...because I got my nose broken five times - same guy did it four times...Elbow. I was a jersey puller. So you got what you deserved...When you had the line out ball thrown in, it's tapped off, we've won it, and this guy comes through, I grab his jersey to slow him down - you get what you deserve. Smacked - and this same guy did it four times.

By 2005, there was evidence that those who were supportive of the old logic were somehow being distanced from mainstream supporters. They might be referred to as 'rugby purists'. The rather scathing report of a bust-up between Auckland Blues' Carlos Spencer and Canterbury Crusaders' Richie McCaw illustrated as much:

And when Spencer threw his handbag at McCaw in the first half most rugby purists would have seen it as an entirely acceptable, if ineffectual reaction to being held back (Harding, 2005b, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 15).

And later in the article, when talking about a rucking incident that saw three players suspended:

Yes, McCaw got a good tagging but once again the rugby purist would have said that was justice for lying on the wrong side of the ruck and playing the ball on the ground (Harding, 2005, *NZ Rugby News*, 80, p. 15).

It is almost as if these ‘rugby purists’ have to be brought out to voice an opinion contrary to the prevailing convention. There was evidence, from a journalist, of a more general understanding in 1985:

That violence was a factor in rugby and an acceptance and tolerance and turning a blind eye to foul play was quite wide spread.

It was as if some kind of violence was an inevitable part of the game, and the players themselves had some responsibility for the policing of the rules. An NZRFU administrator hinted at the mindset that he might have taken to the Council table:

When I played the players used to do a lot of the refereeing themselves in the sense jersey pulling, obstruction and those sorts of things, the players dealt with that. I played in the front row, if my opponent did something to me which I considered was outside the, the unwritten rules of the game, I belted him and he would expect to get belted and if he did it again I’d belt him harder and that was the way it worked.

The discourse surrounding this convention shows, that whilst recognised, it was not accepted by all. It might be that the understandings widespread adoption of foul play was causing functional problems:

...too little attention has been turned to that suppurating sore we call foul play...in 1984 68 per cent of the facial fractures notified by provincial unions resulted from foul play. Mr Calcinai (*a plastic surgeon, and member of the NZRFU medical advisory committee*) ...said, “There is no justification to be found for any of this in the old platitude that it’s a contact game, a physical game, and the odd punch is an inevitable part of it, that there were punches and kicks in the ’20s and ’30s, just as there are now” (Veysey, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 9).

Discussing the view that kids’ coaches have a large degree of influence on how widely accepted ‘a bit of biff’ might be, Veysey continued:

Yes mate, you're right, of course. She's a real physical game and someone's going to throw one. Someone's going to get hurt. It's the nature of the game...all that stuff. You can rationalise anything and unfortunately too many coaches do... 'Now this game today, you jokers, I want you to get your retaliation in first'...Can't see a thing about superior ability in kicking a man, punching a man, maiming a man. Those things are defined in the appropriate place, under 'criminal assault' (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 9).

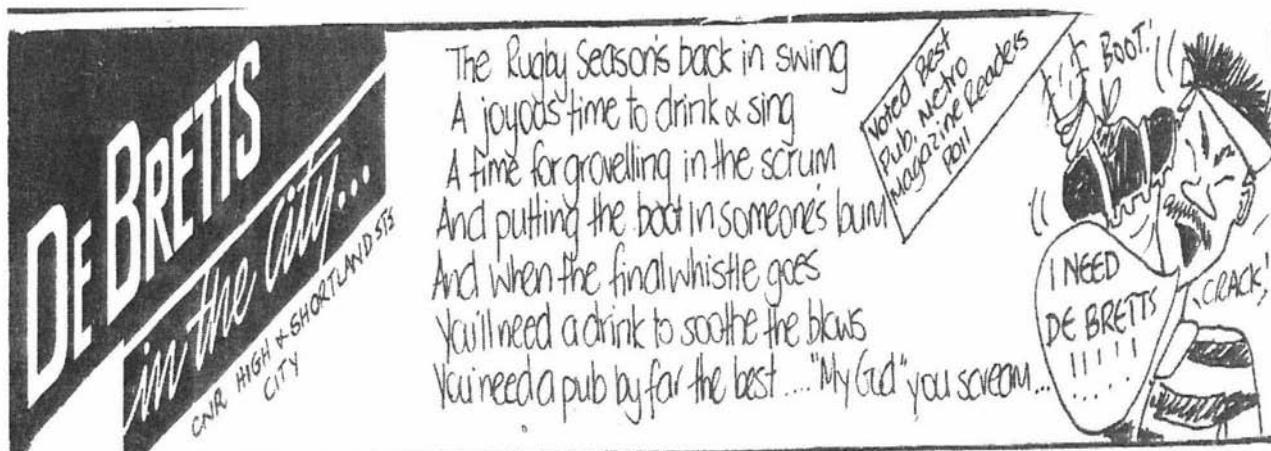
Indeed one former coach, although an NZRFU administrator by 1985, admitted to facilitating the behaviour:

My instruction is hit, because if he does it on this occasion he will do it again.

And even if the coach wouldn't go all the way, at least one former player felt they had to anyway:

We complained that they gouged and bit us. Well why didn't we bite and gouge them back? Because our coach said you can't do that. Well in my book you fight fire with fire, you had to.

Further evidence for a widespread acceptance of violent acts might be seen in an advert for an Auckland City bar – De Bretts. The graphic picture of a kick to the head, or 'the boot in someone's bum' could be interpreted as implicit acceptance of a practice on the field that would not be tolerated off the field – say, in the bar.



A boot to the head, by 2005, came in for some strong condemnation. The advertising standards authority of 1985 might have received a formal complaint from this commentator:

A boot to head is up there at the very top of the indiscretion tree. The head is sacrosanct. That's why there's no leeway given with regard to intent. There are men on the ground at every ruck, so players need to know exactly where their feet are (Stone, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 46).

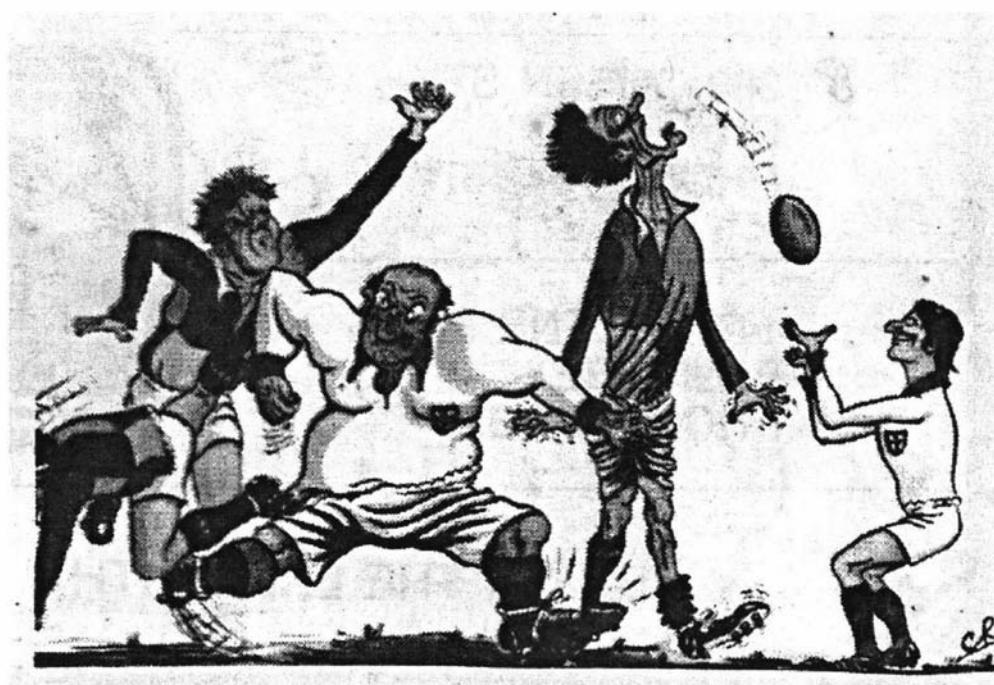
However, in 1985, even the worst kind of violence could be viewed as a source of amusement. In his report from France, Ian Borthwick actually highlighted the benefits of foul play (alleged eye-gouging) that accrued to Jean-Pierre Garuet:

However, support for Gannet has been such that since the sending-off, his potato business (he spends the greater part of his day delivering 100kg sacks of potatoes to cafes and restaurants in the holy town of Lourdes) has shown an increase in turnover of more than 20 percent (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 8).

Different kinds of violence are perhaps treated in different ways. Generally, biting, testicle pulling, eye-gouging, and elbowing have all been subject to strong condemnation. For example, in a 2005 *Rugby News* report there was an outraged tone:

The lowest point of their cowardly performance came when Santiago Gomez Cora was shown a red card by South African referee Craig Joubert for biting Tamati Ellison after the youngster nailed him with a copybook tackle (Campbell & Deges, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 35).

This might be contrasted with a 1985 ‘amusing’ cartoon in a ‘Wormald Fire Engineering’ advertorial illustrated on the following page. The message was mixed to say the least:



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 5, Club News section, p. 6

The evidence suggested that, by 2005, things had changed. The understanding could not be accepted any longer by administrators who were concerned with the image of the game. An NZRU administrator explained:

It has changed, not because of any great desire amongst the players to change it, but the fact the administrators demonstrated quite clearly that, if you do it, then of course you would be severely dealt with not only by financial loss of money but also by inability to play and that is a dramatic change in the game, and I would think that the modern game is cleaner now than it's ever been in terms of "biffo" or whatever you want to call it. I mean in my time when players played for the All Blacks they made their reputations out of it. There was no way they would have lasted...that that aspect of their play would be condoned in the modern game, so that has dramatically changed the game.

A specific event, in 1992, was identified by one journalist as a turning point for the strength of the institutionalised logic:

The Loe case. Do you remember Richard Loe? He got caught eye gouging someone and that just really blew everything apart and rugby has gone again a full circle from where officials almost turned a blind eye to dirty play. That's just part of the game you know.

Little punch ups once, but again it's gone full circle now. The game is now PC (*politically correct*). Some of the things they get yellow carded, red carded...

By 2005, Richard Loe had undergone something of a religious conversion, according to one columnist, Keith Quinn. Under the heading 'Mr Holier than Thou':

Want a good laugh? Read these goody-goody and almost pious words... "We have to clean up the game, no argument there. We have to look after our game and guard against kids and others being put off..." Nice words eh. The writer? None other than old friend Richard Loe (Quinn, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 25).

Perhaps a conversion facilitated by the breakdown of the logic 'A bit of biff is part of the game'. Again television was seen as the catalyst for change, by one administrator:

...it's brought about by television, isn't it now. It's identified and they are fined or put out of the game for short periods of time. So what somebody identifies them doing on the television, if it hits him in the pocket or hits him not getting onto the field then that will be a deterrent to them doing that again.

This might be seen as economic self-regulation of an emerging institutionalised logic 'A bit of biff is NOT part of the game'. There may have also been some functional changes that have contributed to the breakdown. There was a view that the physical nature of the game in 2005, meant that the traditional punch-up is now not the battleground for physical dominance on the field. Dominance is gained through the impact of collisions. This functional change may partially explain the erosion of 'A bit of biff is part of the game'. A supporter explained:

They've cleaned it up. They've softened it a bit. These guys don't do that today, it's their careers, it's their money...It's a more physical game, but what they are doing now, it's not punch, it is tackle. What we are seeing now is that they're hitting players harder in the tackle. It's a hit thing... more of the rugby league. So you make your presence felt by tackling, it's a more skilful game I think.

The place of rucking in the game created discourse in 2005, and appeared in the eyes of this journalist to have become the next target for those that wish to sanitise the game:

Well it's much cleaner, but it might be too clean. I mean they've got to the stage now where you're not allowed to ruck...It comes back to this, we can't allow rucking because a lot of people didn't understand rucking and thought it was dirty which it wasn't actually, it was a sound part of the game. That's been phased out again part of this whole PC business.

Regardless of any official (politically correct) line, what is taken-for-granted in the environment might be of far more significance. The understanding that this junior coach transmits to perhaps thirty children each year might define the next generation actions:

I mean the whole game has gone PC, you are not allowed to push in the scrums, you get frowned upon for any rucking. Well to me those are all fundamentals of the game, that's why you play the game, it is to have a physical contest. A bit of rucking, if someone is lying on the ball it means they're offside and stopping the ball coming back, well he gets rucked and he won't do it again.

'Rugby purists' might take heart from this. However, the social pressures to dismantle the logic do appear to have grown. Referees are left to arbitrate on what constitutes rucking. The comments made by one referee suggested that, by 2005, their decisions might be seen to be influenced by a responsibility they feel to the 'business':

...that debate has continued now for about four or five years and it relates primarily to rucking the player - where there are boots being put on players who are supposedly over the ball. That has caused a great debate. I mean we have a citing from the weekend games about that as well, and we as referees are trying to deal with those as often as we can. But it's not always easy because we see an incident which is difficult, the touch judges can help you, but you get one look at it and the citing commissioners can look at that incident 20 or 30 times if they want to and slow it down as many times as they want to. So we try and keep the game as clean as we possibly can so that Mums at home see it as a game that is attractive, because the business act of the product is now trying to attract females as well as males to the stadiums to watch the game.

The penalties for non-conformance to the new environment are stacked against 'a bit of biff' by 2005. As one referee commented:

...with any televised game you've got something like upwards of 12 cameras and especially if you're a professional. I don't know what the contracts state but I would imagine the latest contracts would have something about, yes we'll still pay you if you're injured but if you're stood down through disobedience, through being red carded, ordered off, then your penalty is such. Don't come knocking on my door for compensation for payment. I would suspect that is in the latest contracts. If it's not, then it jolly well should be. So the player of today with 12 cameras, citings, three pairs of eyes on the field itself, he's just a jolly idiot.

The reasons for the punch-ups might be changing. Perhaps, by 2005, it had less to do with establishing physical dominance as a tactic. A journalist explained:

I think at school level there is a certain problem, because they get big crowds and people get so over-hyped and school boys at 15, 16, 17 tend to get over aroused. I've seen some of these first XV matches and played in them and it's just ridiculous. These guys are so hyped up they can't even catch the ball and they end up taking out their steam by punching players.

Evidence suggested that 'A bit of biff is part of the game' is only occasionally transferred to spectators. The almost shocked nature of the comments about events, such as the following from a supporter, did not suggest habitualised action:

...something happened, there was a strong tackle and one of the fathers, he said, hit him back, you know, get him back. Then the guy says to him that is my son you're talking about. Then the fathers started having fisticuffs on the sidelines. I think there's always been an edge to it which can be triggered. And that happens all over the place.

Perhaps 'a bit of biff is part of the game' no more. The fond memories of 'rugby purists' may remain, but as an institutionalised logic that facilitates or constrains action, it has little strength in the field of New Zealand rugby in 2005. Between 1985 and 2005, for many carefully considered reasons, events have moved the game a fraction closer to tiddly-winks. Or perhaps, reflected in these comments from a journalist, somewhere, hidden away in the dark recesses of the rucks and mauls, 'a bit of biff' lives on:

...it played quite a large part back in the days prior to when TV cameras were around, and I think it was a good way back then, of sorting out if someone was getting niggly. Pinetree he said he never struck someone that he didn't warn first - those great tales. Now particularly at the top level that can't really be done unless there's some sorting out which comes from an all in brawl or something, but now with TV cameras everywhere.... There isn't a lot of scope for it. There are a lot more different people watching the game. I think the players are probably aware of this but it still doesn't take away the physical edge, and if someone biffs you from behind or gives you a cheap shot, the player is very tempted to retaliate and there's got to be some sympathy for that. The referees often miss a bit but the TV cameras generally pick a lot up. Having said that, the world of rucks and mauls are still very dark places and all sorts goes on in there. I think there's still... I don't think there's a place for violence as such. If it happens people get excited and think it's great but there's no room for cheap and nasty play. There is always going to be the odd punch I think and biffo, but you know as Tana Umaga said "we're not playing tiddly-winks".

6.3. Institutionalised logic 8: 'You don't argue with the referee'

In amongst the theme 'referees and the rough stuff' there appears to have been a widely held understanding that the referee's role is difficult and his decision should be adhered to without dissent. When a referee made a decision, players accepted it and got on with the game. It was integrated with an understanding that referees were to be respected. Evidence suggested that an institutionalised logic was stronger in 1985 than in 2005. One NZRFU administrator commented:

I think the referees were really looked on with a certain amount of respect in those days. You were never always satisfied with decisions that they made. But again the amateur ideal was that they were there trying to do a job and you respected that.

A player at junior level, in 1985, recalled:

I always thought they made the best decisions that they could and the referees were fair. We never had any trouble with them. I thought they were like the police. They stood out like the police. They were always respected...we always respected them. We couldn't even go up to them and ask them the reason, it was their decision. You never

argued with them and I always thought they made the best choices on the day and we always respected that.

In 1985, any criticism of referees after games was comparatively mild. Generally there was little comment on referees' performances; perhaps evidence that the rugby press were being constrained by the prevailing logic. Only on one occasion was an individual referee named in a strong criticism. One wonders just how bad the performance was in the Bledisloe Cup game at Eden Park:

Players and officials from both sides rued the lack of continuity in the game and almost unanimously condemned referee Burnett as one of the main villains (Howitt, 1985e, *Rugby News*, p. 3).

The following comments did not come from Mr. Burnett, but from an international referee clearly not too worried about his decisions being disputed or reported on negatively. Or at least a referee with a sense of fun, facilitated by an institutionalised logic that allowed him to get away with it:

The only thing I used to experiment with, and I only did very infrequently, I would invent a knock-on just to see...because some of the games would get boring...I would invent a knock on to see if anyone disputed me in a line out and it always intrigued me that in those particular points of the game no one would pick it up.

Even back in 1985, there was some evidence that the logic, 'You don't argue with the referee', was under threat. A comparison was made with 'unfortunate' soccer types:

In no time they will be inviting the referee to place his whistle in a peculiar place. Serenity will be sundered. The Sin Bin may become densely populated. The unfortunate language of soccer when a Rothmans League match was recently played at Carisbrook, Rugby types present were astounded, and horrified, by the lurid qualities of the talk between player and player and, unitedly, against the referee – could prevail (McLean, 1985e, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

By 2005, there was evidence that the competence of referees could be openly called into question. An example might be this from an administrator:

...the referees aren't very good at refereeing - in fact they're hopeless most of them. There are exceptions but most of them are no good at refereeing the front row and so they're penalising the wrong players, and the last thing you can do is belt somebody because they're packing illegally, and the referee starts to listen. If they squawk to the referee, he just sits there squawking.

It was perhaps seen as natural for commentators to mock referees, comments from former NZRU director Kevin Roberts, illustrated:

If injuries and loopy refereeing can be avoided, I think the All Blacks could take the next step... (2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 23).

Or New Zealand Sevens physiotherapist, Kevin McQuoid:

I realised I wasn't going to be an All Black but wanted a way to get to the top in rugby. I thought about refereeing but then I'd have no mates! (Troughton, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 84).

Despite implicitly recognising the institutionalised nature of 'You don't argue with the referee', regular *Rugby News* columnist Hamish McKay, got slightly carried away:

As a commentator I'm constantly reminded of a number of things I must never do or say...never and I mean never criticise the ref. And to that rule I've always said "be damned". Despite this overly PC world we live in, where excellence stands for nothing, I make no apology. These guys are highly paid professionals with a vast amount of support and technology backing up what they do. So when they make a mistake it should be noted for the record and addressed accordingly...

So far the constraining nature was just about holding together, but then the dam burst:

Lyndon Bray's refusal to use the TMO (*Television Match Official*) was a display of arrogance of the highest order. Of course the replay showed him to be wrong with a capital W...If Bray was an NRL (*National Rugby League*) whistler across the ditch he'd be gone fishin' next weekend. He would be given the red card and with it some time to think about his absolutely disgraceful decision (2005, *Rugby News*, p. 42).

Under the headline ‘Whine from sour grapes’ the institutionalised logic was rather sarcastically supported when it was the English doing the complaining. Colin High, the English Referee Manager, was reported as commenting on the referee’s performance following England’s loss to Ireland:

“The International Rugby Board will be disappointed,” High told the *Daily Mail*. “Jonathan Kaplan is in the top 20 in the world but that wasn’t an international performance. It would not have been acceptable in the Zurich Premiership. If one of my referees had done that, I would have had my backside kicked for making the appointment. If any English referee refereed like that in a European match, there would be an inquest. No question about that. If someone had performed like that, he would have been pulled from the next game.” Phew...would you like a little cheese to go with that whine? (‘Whine from sour grapes’, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 14).

That such vehement criticism of a referee was allowed into the discourse, however, might be an indication of the changing nature of the logic. Even the use of words like ‘cheat’ have entered the discourse, albeit half in jest. Here the referees were criticised, by one former administrator, for talking back to the players too much:

I’d stir up all the referees around by saying or implying that they cheat, but to my mind it could lead to that and therefore it’s undesirable. The players are there to play the game not the referee. The referee is there to ensure the game is played properly and within the rules in my opinion. So this huge amount of discourse from a referee out on the paddock to me I think is highly undesirable.

The most striking change emerging in the discourse was the acceptance that communication between players and referees was a genuine two-way process. By 2005, there was evidence that the communication flow between players and referees had increased, to the detriment of the game, in the eyes of one former referee:

That English referee for example, who I think will make it as a top international referee, his communication involvement in the game was far too much. I’ve been quite severe in my feedback to him and to my fellow selectors. I think there is an ongoing issue of making sure that the professional referees continue to recognise what their role in the game is and overall it should be quite a minor role. But there will be times in games where they do have to be quite dominant. So getting that right balance for me is

critical, and I think, going back to my era, we had less involvement then, which I think was a positive. I think it is a problem today. Less involvement in the way in which we didn't dominate the game as much.

Another referee, this time from the 2005 participants, agreed:

I look at my peers on the TV and listen to them and it sounds often like a bit of white noise, too much talk. I think if you talk the whole time nobody is going to listen to the key important message that you've got.

There was also concern expressed by one participant, with some responsibility for assessing referees, about the communication from referees to the broader public and sporting press:

I think it's hopeless if the... for example there is a Sunday article, a full-page article in the Sunday paper on Jonathan Kaplan saying I'm doing this, I'm doing that, and I find that a bit off-putting. Some of the comments that were there I didn't really appreciate. Again it gets back... I think it's great that we have referees that are recognised and given credit and all that but I would like to see them having a more minor role. I think we have to tread carefully in giving some stages to referees, which I'm certainly against.

This general acceptance of an increase in communication may be seen as a breakdown in the logic's self-regulation process. The legitimacy of 'arguing' with the referee might be seen to have increased. One 1985 referee described a form of self-regulation. Nobody but the captain was going to talk to the referee, never mind argue with him:

Jock (*Hobbs*) was pretty raw at that stage, and he might have said something to me in my first game. Grizzly (*Alex Wyllie*) was the coach for them and Jock I think might have said something to me. I'm sure (*Robbie*) Deans was the captain, Deans just climbed into him straight away. It was something along the lines of well you do your job, he'll do his. 'I'm the captain I do all that'. It was good.

An 'old school' attitude perhaps, but one referee expressed just how strong the pressure to conform might once have been. He also outlined a concern that directives from above are undermining referees' attempts to manage the game:

I believe... the referees today have been conned in terms of being told 'look we don't want so many penalties so you've got to talk to the players more, you've got to keep them on side, you've got to keep their hands out of the ruck, you've got all this...' and because they allow too much talking... its a two way process now, which if it was me, the captain is the only one who is going to talk to me. If you're not the captain, don't talk to me, if you talk to me then, you'll get what you deserve. I don't want to hear from you. So my argument was look if you talk to me you're distracting me from my job and you from your job.

By 2005, there was a suggestion, from this administrator, that captains were 'arguing' with referees:

...the captains are more intelligent, but a strong and a fair referee can penalise players, even captains, for talking too much and that was verified just this current weekend. Again that's over to the referees who we've agreed are highly paid. But somehow referees have got to be instructed, if they aren't already, that any breaking of the law is punished immediately. To shorten that, it doesn't matter who the captain is if he argues with the referee he should be penalised and hopefully that will make them stop.

Coaches were generally more circumspect. Commenting on a referee's admission of a mistake in the Under-19 World Cup, coach Bryce Woodward:

That's probably cold comfort for us but sometimes in footie these things go against you and have to be accepted (Knight, 2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 78).

David Nucifora, newly appointed defence coach of the Auckland Blues, explained his version of the understanding:

I don't think there's any point in bagging them (referees). I think coaches, in the same way as players, have a responsibility to work with them (Stone, 2005b, *Rugby News*, p. 37).

Not all were working with the same constraints. Regular *Rugby News* columnist Keith Quinn commented on the ten things he would like to see less of in the forthcoming season. Number five was:

Criticism of referees who are generally of a solid international standard but who might make one contentious decision in the heat of one game's battle (2005b, *Rugby News*, p. 25).

Summarising the widely held understanding, he put forward an idea 'we all surely agree' upon:

We all surely agree there is now more abuse directed at referees who penalise the players who perpetrate the edge-of-integrity tackles (2005c, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

What would make people stop 'arguing' and abusing, are the non-conformity costs associated with the institutionalised logic. One of the costs of non-conformity to 'Don't argue with the referee' is laid out in the rules of the game:

6.A.6 Players disputing a referee's decision

All players must respect the authority of the referee. They must not dispute the referee's decisions. They must stop playing at once when the referee blows the whistle except at a kick-off. Penalty: Penalty Kick at the place of infringement or where play would next commence (IRB, 2004, p. 32).

What happens to those that do argue with the referee? During 2005, there was little evidence in the discourse studied that players were disciplined for incidents of 'arguing' with officials. However, the sanctions imposed on referees for their actions might be seen as more severe. One reported his penalty for swearing back at a player:

I got suspended... That was significant to me because I know that I'm two strikes, and three strikes and you are gone.

Another non-conformity cost is not specified in the *Laws of the Game* (IRB, 2004). This is the convention that any dissent of a decision will cost the offending team ten metres of territory. In terms of official rules, which might be a parallel with economic costs, regulating the institutionalised logic, maybe things have not changed so much, as one administrator recalled:

...how many referees ever change their ruling after a player disputes it. I would say none and I have seen players in test matches recently really give away three points because the referee penalises them for talking too much, marches them back 10 metres and the kicker can kick a goal from that distance, whereas he wouldn't from the original place of the penalty. I can recall hammering players on that point more than 25 years ago.

An ‘official’ view may be that things haven’t changed much. One NZRU official’s reflections illustrated the now taken-for-granted nature of the two way communication. The comment from such as senior figure might be seen to legitimate the practice:

Arguing with the referee is not much different between 1985 and 2005. Players are more intelligent and know the rules better. It’s certainly okay for a captain to ask for clarification.

In terms of the NZRU, they themselves might be interpreted as ‘arguing with the referee’ very differently to 1985. The continuous and detailed analysis of referees’ performances might suggest as much. There seems to be an official inference that it is okay for administrators to question the referees’ decisions and to give them marks accordingly. One referee explained:

We are assessed. We have performance reviewers. We have guys in the grandstand sitting in, watching our performance. Now, as part of that performance there is also a performance criteria they have to adhere to in assessing the referees’ performance. Now, that’s broken down to a number of components. Like for example, he’s looking at the way I’ve managed the game. Have I been over-officious, have I been quite dogmatic with the players, have I been sort of condescending in terms of my communication, like finger pointing and talking down to players, and being quite aggressive. They look at it from that aspect. They look at the decisions I’ve made.

A referee admitted that the process of internally ‘arguing’ with the referees has not been seen as entirely successful:

Though the assessment process picks up management and technical aspects you are still getting an assessment done, a lot of it comes off of video, but it’s then really putting marks alongside, and you have got the degree of difficulty in a game which becomes an

issue. And although that approach has been useful, well it's been more than useful, I don't think we can hang our hats on that totally. We've looked at it and said, it has got a part to play in selection but it's not the total picture. What do the coaches and players say about the performance? What does the selector say as an overview about the performance? So we've got the selectors more involved in this new regime and I think we're starting to get a bit more balance in that whole thing.

Perhaps the process is not really much of an argument anyway. More a one way process according to one referee:

I must admit my experience is that you give your views and your views are ignored and they go with their gut feeling anyway.

Doubts were expressed as to whether a rigid assessment scheme really is the answer. It might be a realisation that the more measurable the performance becomes, the easier criticism of referees might become. The marks might be the stick to further beat the referees. It is almost as if, by 2005, there was a developing recognition that refereeing has to have an element of mystique, if it is not to be undermined. One referee explained:

I believe to be a good referee it's an art not a science. The art is when not to blow your whistle, not when. We can all identify hundreds of mistakes but nobody wants to hear your whistle hundreds of times during the match. So it's the art of identifying what matters and what doesn't matter.

Overall the picture was of a strong institutionalised understanding in 1985, where communication was restrained by the prevailing logic. Referees' decisions were generally automatically respected, by players and the press. By 2005, the nature of the logic had changed. Referees were being asked to justify and explain decisions more often, to captains, to administrators, and even to the press. The essence of the logic might still be seen to exist on the field of play affecting the way in which players react, but off-field the institutionalised understanding is being eroded by 'political' pressures to make referees accountable. The potential impact of this erosion will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

6.4. Institutionalised logic 9: ‘Don’t cross the ethos’

There was evidence in the data that there might be a shared understanding about the ethos of rugby in New Zealand and the special nature of the people that are involved in the game. There was evidence of a commonly held belief that there is ‘something’ special about the game, but that the ‘something’ is very difficult to explain. In the context of this research, as an institutionalised logic, the ‘something’ might be seen as providing boundaries to behaviour. There is a line constructed in the minds of parts of the community, which should not be crossed. Where the line implied by the ethos lies is difficult to ascertain, but it might cover behaviours concerning teams, friends, people in trouble, and people new to an area. The action that flows is both offered and sought by those involved in the field. The understanding might be summed up by the following comment:

Ask any Taranaki Rugby man what he feels about Rugby and he will be unable to put it into words. He will think for a while, run his finger around his collar from which frequently hair is growing upwards and finally say, “Well – you know what’s it’s like”. What he is really saying is that it’s a meaningless request to ask him to do so, “for those who understand no explanation is necessary, for those who don’t understand, no explanation is possible” (Stewart, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 13).

Some have tried hard to explain. One journalist and broadcaster linked rugby to the very essence of being a New Zealander:

I think he may be Chief Justice Wild, lovely name for a chief justice, and it was something like this, “Rugby Union and New Zealanders are a natural mix. The game is about courage and controlled violence with a good smattering of discipline and that is what New Zealanders are about”. When I read it I thought it’s well used..... I thought, he’s got it. It suits our makeup. You see. Well the other thing is if you are in many social environments in this country, you’ll find that the New Zealander can be dour, he can be stand-offish and he can be inhospitable, but you take that same person and stick him on a rugby ground and throw a piece of pig skin to him and he changes, and he is comfortable with what he is doing.

There might be a connection with a military unwritten code of conduct, as ‘Tiny’ Hill, former All Black, coach and Cantabrians RFC chief inferred when interviewed:

Hill is a great believer in the closeness of the army/rugby ethos. “They are interlinked as far as I am concerned. It’s the team rather than individual stars. Boost the unit up, boost the team up. That’s why I’m a great believer that they should play team sports in the army. Bugger golf and all that” (Haworth, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 41).

The link between rugby and military service might provide some clue as to why the ethos should not be crossed:

It was actually referred to as the soldier-making game...I wonder...if the modern players still think like soldiers. Do they still have the same respect for authority? Do they still see themselves as cogs in a bigger mechanism? Or do they simply paddle their own canoes with a big contract in mind (Grieves, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 45).

The evidence suggested that the participants from 1985 had a greater appreciation of the kind of elements that might be seen to make up the ethos of rugby. Contributions towards the node ‘ethos’ came from 11 of the 16 participants in 1985 but just six of the 16 in 2005. One contribution came from an NZRFU administrator:

...as a consequence of that traditional and conservative approach there was a very definite rugby culture that developed. There was a definite value system, a definite belief system. The amateur ideal was pretty heavily engrained, particularly the older players that took a great pride in having been involved in rugby. The camaraderie, the fun that they had at playing with different players, the association gave them friendships which lasted for a long, long time. Which is quite different, to many of the professional sports where people are in it for what they can get out of it, and you just don’t have that association. So those sorts of things...a very definite value and belief system.

The ethos of rugby might be another name for the spirit of rugby in the discourse. One of the most successful All Blacks of the last twenty years, Andrew Mehrtens, talked of his enjoyment at playing in England outside the Premiership:

It is better than some of the First Division grounds I have played on back home. I feel much happier playing at places like this where the spirit of the game is alive (Newcombe, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 9).

For others something in the ethos of rugby had a major impact on their lives. This supporter tried hard to explain:

I think it is that peer thing, that you are in a group of people, that know you, you get away with things, respect for your abilities. So when you are outside of that you are trying to recapture that in a new environment...Over the years I tried to recapture what I had down in South Canterbury and that status and mana and the team and the club.

For one 1985 NZRFU administrator the ethos might be seen as tied up with friendships formed after the game:

The players of my era like nothing better than to go to these functions, meet up with their old mates. We're like a family. That's the only way you can describe it. We're very much like a close knit family. Today's players, they don't even bother to belong, they get paid for what they do and soon as they're finished they're gone.

Another administrator at that time agreed:

Rugby is to be enjoyed on and off the field. And there is no doubt in my mind that these people who played only amateur rugby got far more enjoyment out of the game and everything to do with it, than the modern player, who simply doesn't know or understand the world of amateur rugby.

It might be seen as part of the amateur era, as this administrator implied:

There were a number of characteristics in rugby that people wanted to preserve like the amateur principles ideals and you know I sympathise with a lot of those people because there are some great characteristics of the art of game, of the camaraderie, the fun, the friendship, the playing for the joy of playing.

Part of the ethos might be seen to facilitate the actions of those in the field. Perhaps guiding the actions of these supporters:

...when you moved to a new place the first thing you did was find the rugby club. The rugby club was the centre of any little community... that is what you did...

I played in that for two seasons in Auckland and really that was just to meet people, because I was from out of the area. I certainly think... I found it a great way to meet other fellas of a similar age and that sort of thing.

Those that cross the ethos might be in line for a ‘good kicking’. Matt Dawson, the English half back, was viewed by this journalist as crossing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour on the field:

...there’s an interesting situation – a Dawson would not be tolerated in New Zealand rugby, but he was highlighted by the English system of recognising what he was, in the media. Whereas here he would be seen to be having a bad effect on the team and they would – somebody would stick the boot into him somewhere – and it would be the end of the road for him.

The same journalist went on to explain what might be seen as the effect on behaviour of a widespread acceptance that there is something special about rugby:

And that’s an inherent difference – there is a lot of pride in maintaining, I don’t like to use the word products, I’m going to use the word ‘the game’. The game means everything. The delightful play that Greg McGhee wrote called *Foreskin’s Lament*,²⁷ which was based, I understand, on my old coach Eric Watson who coached for Otago. When I went to *Foreskin’s Lament*, now this gives you an idea of what it was like in the ’60s, when I went to *Foreskin’s Lament* with my wife I never realised until a quarter of an hour into the game that they had no clothes on in the dressing room scene, because

²⁷ *Foreskin’s Lament* by Greg McGhee tells a story of violence, historical understandings and moral dilemmas set amongst a small-town New Zealand rugby team. First presented in 1981, the popularity of the production has perhaps contributed to the discourse surrounding New Zealand rugby over the period studied. Indeed, in 2003, it was produced as a television film called *Skin and Bones*. Another example came during 2005, at a junior rugby training session on forward play and rucking, where a coach was heard to say “unless it’s got hairs on it, ruck it!” This might be a partial reflection of the coach in the play: “Certainly the ball. But if, on occasion the ball has got the odd bit of hair on it, or an ear or such-like, then we’ll give it the benefit of the doubt and kick the shit out of it first and let the ref ask questions after” (McGhee, 1981, p.43). In the play the title character struggles to deal with the changing nature of New Zealand society and the taken-for-granted understandings about violence that dominate his rugby environment.

I just felt I was there. I just felt that this was me and when the coach was screaming and yelling at them I took as little notice of him then, as I did back in the 1960s. Because every leader used to yell and scream at you and you sort of expected it and if he wasn't doing it you thought he was sick. You know so, you didn't challenge it and I've been a rebel all my life, but you didn't challenge it because it was the game, and you knew it was important to lots of your friends, and you knew it was important to your family, and you knew it was important deep down to you. So we accepted things and that's really why the bad administration was tolerated, the poor refereeing was tolerated, all those things.

Behaviour on the field can sometimes cause an outcry, driven perhaps by the 'Don't cross the ethos' logic. In 2005, this commentator's indignant reaction to a player injured, and left whilst play continued, suggested a concern that what was seen was not in line with the ethos:

Stu Wilson's valid commentary point was that while the doctors worked on the prone Witcombe NOT ONE PLAYER from either side went to check on the injured player's condition! Gosh, was it too far for ANY player to move 20 metres from where they were waiting to offer solace or concern...Must we assume that an old fashioned act of rugby civility and courtesy is gone forever? I would certainly hope not (Quinn, 2005d, *Rugby News*, p. 36).

Behaviour off the field can also be seen to be facilitated by an understanding that the ethos should not be crossed. Here the ethos might be seen as tied up with the author's sense of national identity. Criticism of rugby, back in 1985, by the 'uninformed' provoked another indignant response:

Rugby **grew up** with New Zealand. It still embodies our rugged, pioneering character which conquered Everest, split the atom, took Olympic Games by storm and gave women the vote before all those slow fellas that belong to the great unwashed in the rest of the world. Isn't that good news? Say yes! In Rugby, camaraderie and life-long friendship go together like lungs and lumps of oxygen (Potter, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

Clearly the New Zealand rugby community, in 1985, had their shirts washed for them more often than the rest of the world. The understanding that rugby has some overriding

'goodness' about it might be seen as facilitating an acceptance amongst the community of this kind of tirade. Former All Black coach, J.J. Stewart, perhaps recognising the more outrageous claims made in support of the special nature of rugby, suggested:

Rugby isn't some of the silly things often claimed for it. It isn't a religion, it isn't an obsession, it isn't a way of life. It's just a game – but a bit more, and that's the imponderable bit. It's a love of the game just for the game it is (1985a, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

The institutionalised logic might be seen to facilitate attendance at a tournament that has been held all over the world between the two years under study. The 'Golden Oldies' World Rugby festival in San Diego, in 2005, was attended by over 3000 rugby players, all over-35 years of age. The fourth 'Golden Oldies' tournament in London took place in 1985, attended by 3900 players: "Purple shorts were for those (*players*) over 70!" ('Golden Oldies action', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 2). The 2005 tournament provided Dave Campbell, editor, with an opportunity to hint at the 'something special':

Being around such an enormous group of genuine rugby-lovers reminded me what it is that makes people so attached to the game of rugby; why they devote so much time to chasing an odd shaped ball around a rectangular strip of grass. It reminded me that rugby people – no matter where they hail from – are generally good people (2005d, *Rugby News*, p. 35).

There was evidence that the understanding that rugby has its own ethos is passed onto the next generation as part of their induction to rugby. This occurred, not through any prescribed NZRU edict, but driven by some kind of personal responsibility. One junior coach described his first meeting with six-year-olds:

I sort of got a little bit deep and meaningful, with... 'this is the jersey, this is the badge', it went over a lot of their heads. But I said one of the reasons why I used to love playing rugby is that, one thing, is that you'll make friends for life. I've still got mates that I used to play with years ago. I still keep in touch. I like the idea of 15 guys out there, they are all working as a team, putting their bodies on the line, spilling a bit of blood and guts for each other and trying to win a game. I've always been a team player, and the team person, I've always liked that particular facet of rugby.

Even the most important event in 2005, according to the administrators, might owe something to the understanding. The ethos of the game might have contributed to New Zealand winning the bid for the 2011 Rugby World Cup hosting rights. With no clarification the IRB Communications Director suggested:

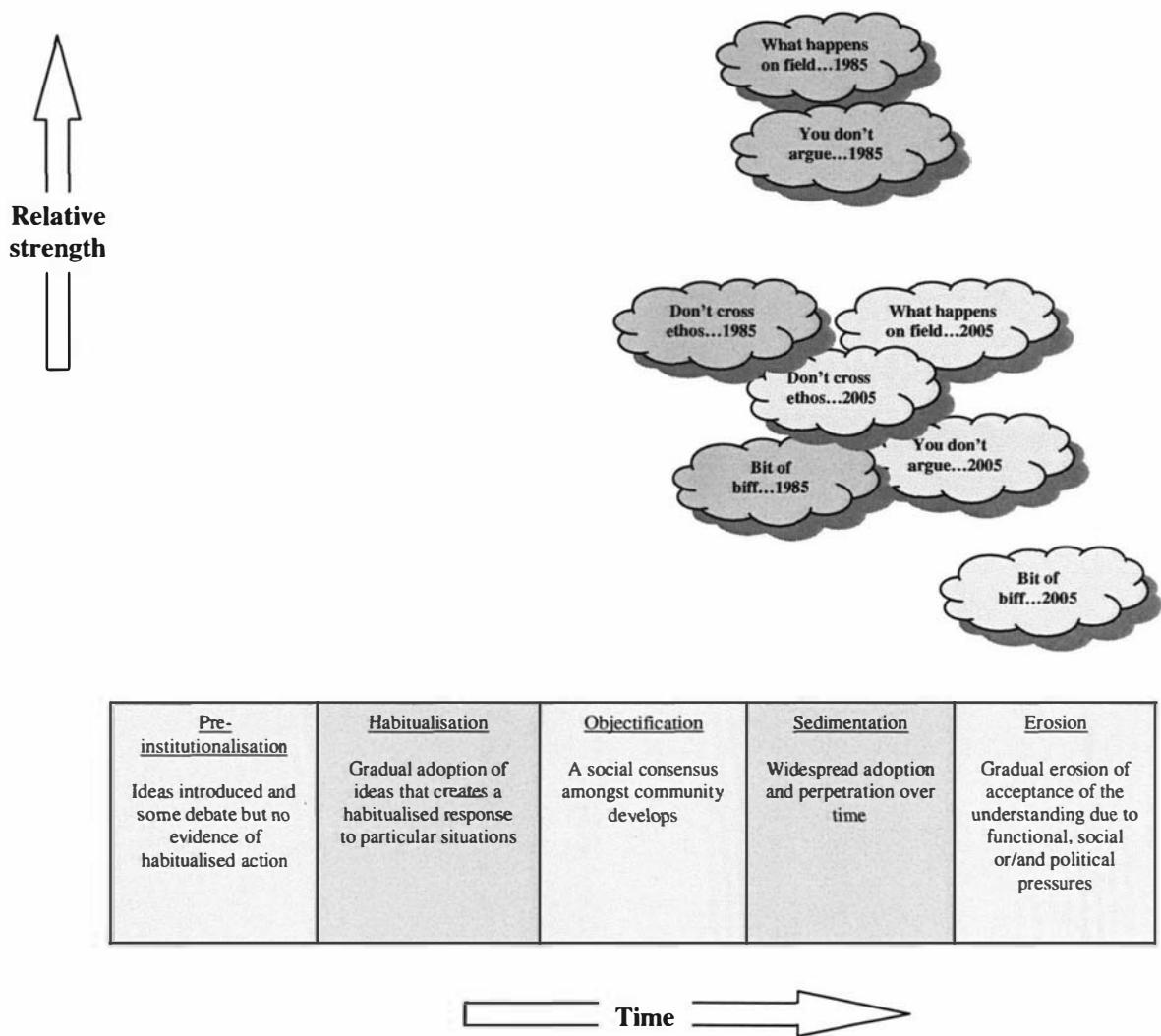
The New Zealand tender tugged on the heartstrings of rugby's traditions and ethos, its influence across the globe in all matters rugby and its "stadium of four million people" (Thomas, 2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 30).

Perhaps the influence of this particular understanding has spread internationally. Perhaps one reason the New Zealand bid was chosen, against the predictions of many commentators, was that delegates were convinced that it was less risky to select a country where 'the ethos' was understood, albeit not articulated very clearly.

6.5. An interpretation of the strength of the logics

An interpretation of the relative strengths of the institutionalised logics is offered in Figure 6.1. on the following page. All four of the institutionalised logics identified in this chapter, 'What happens on the field stays on the field', 'A bit of biff is part of the game', 'You don't argue with the referee', and 'Don't cross the ethos', appeared to follow a similar pattern. They were all stronger in 1985 and were in some state of erosion by 2005.

Figure 6.1. Laws to be Obeyed: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby



Chapter Seven: Conveyer to the Goal

The common thread in this chapter was the way in which players develop through the various levels of the game, and make it to compete for what is considered to be the ultimate goal for New Zealand rugby. The data here included the influence of coaching, the influence of networking, the influence of players' intelligence and education, and the influence of experience (particularly through club rugby). Evidence for eight institutionalised logics was found amongst this data: 'Who's scratching whose back?', 'It's the top two inches that matters', 'The clubs are history', 'The coach is king', 'Every boy *must* want to be an All Black', 'My boy isn't playing that game', 'Beating the Boks is everything', and 'We're building for the World Cup'.

7.1. Institutionalised logic 10: 'Who's scratching whose back?'

There was evidence of an understanding that the right name, the right school and the right contacts will help players, coaches, and administrators progress up the New Zealand rugby 'ladder'. The nature of this institutionalised logic can be seen to vary amongst the communities, but it has developed around the idea that selection in New Zealand rugby can be a harsh and unforgiving process, and that sometimes decisions cannot be explained by performance based logic alone. Evidence suggested that if the institutionalised understanding is recognised, it is not necessarily viewed negatively by those involved in the field. If anything, it is viewed as a positive contributor to the 'way things work'. The logic may not be restricted to influencing selection at a playing level, and might be seen to facilitate or constrain the choice of coaches, administrators and even employees outside the rugby environment. It is important to remember that this study does not claim to provide evidence that selections are actually made in anything other than an even-handed way, just that there might be a widely held understanding that this is not always the case. This is probably the institutionalised logic for which there is the least presentable evidence. It may be that the understanding is so embedded that there is little evidence in the discourse, particularly of any contrary viewpoints. As long as the systems continue to produce teams that are seen to be successful, grounds for criticism are limited. Additionally those that have been successful may not wish to

attribute their success to any kind of flawed or biased process. Given that many of the people interviewed for this research have been relatively successful in this environment it is, perhaps, not surprising that strong evidence was hard to find²⁸.

There have always been controversies in the context of team selection. All Black selections created discourse in both the years under study. In 1985, the selection of Andy Haden was widely debated, whilst in 2005, arguments about the merits of Luke McAlister raged. This, however, was not seen as a source of evidence for an institutionalised logic, ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’. It was the more hidden elements of the selection process that provided clues as to the nature of this logic. Back in 1985, All Black, Don McKay referred to ‘the wool sale’, implying a process of bidding and counter-bidding, and a trade-off to ensure representation for all unions:

Many selections for a rep team depend on what the selectors are looking for. There were a lot of good wingers around then and those who played for a small union stood out. There is also the political aspect – the wool sale as they call it – when one player is chosen before another because he comes from a union that is not represented in the final team (Dixon, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

There was some discourse surrounding the ‘horse trading’ that selection panels might have been involved in. What might be viewed as an official line was put forward by Bob Duff (a former All Black coach) when quoted in a *Rugby News* report:

He is adamant that there was no horse trading over selections and if there had been, “I would rather not have got involved.” Which rather shoots full of holes the theory that selectors trade their favourites off with another (Dixon, 1985a, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

²⁸ The initial idea that such an understanding might exist came from a personal observation made during a local junior selection process in 2005. This may not sit comfortably with research purists but given the interpretive nature of the research cannot be hidden. It also gives an indication of the kind of behaviour that such an institutionalised logic, if it does exist, might facilitate. When discussing the possibility of putting my son forward for a trial for the North Harbour touch team with a group of parents from his junior rugby team, I was told that we would be wasting our time. The common view was that the selectors would have already made their decisions based on who they knew. None of the group of parents was going to put their children forward to the trials. Given that they were parents of some of the faster and more skillful members of the junior team, I thought at the time this was strange. It was the strength of the understanding amongst a group of parents that stood out. ‘Who’s scratching whose back’ might have been seen to be causing them to take an action, not to send their kids to touch trials. The enduring nature of such an institutionalised logic, if widely held, and passed on from one set of parents to another, might eventually have an impact on the quality of players in the North Harbour touch team.

‘...and if there had been’ might be a clue as to the more widely held view in 1985. By 2005, elements of the understanding were not so hidden away. In the context of players, a union coach openly admitted that particular favourites are looked after in outlying areas:

...if there was a particular player but we were keen to see, say the NPC coaches were keen to see get into our side, we would say look, if you can't make everything we would still like to see you if you can try... we might create an opportunity for them but exclude them from the nucleus of our week to week side.

Those on the receiving end of negative selection decisions rarely complained. The understanding may constrain any opposition by its alignment with the ‘success of rugby in New Zealand’ stories. An acceptance that ‘opinions’ were part of the environment was made clear by a former All Black. Additionally, perhaps, evidence that it was not socially acceptable to voice concerns:

You know I never discussed it with anybody, it was just another person’s opinion and I felt they were wrong in some cases and in some cases I clearly wasn’t good enough and I accepted that and it just made me more determined to work harder. But generally I dealt with it myself. I don’t recall ever talking to Dad about it or being concerned by not having a relationship that I talked through those things, but I dealt with it myself as far as I recall but it just made me more determined to do it.

Although at the most senior levels of the game, the somewhat ‘patchy’ nature of selection processes were recognised. An All Black from 1985, commented:

Combining good coaching with sometimes patchy, but usually good, team selection and putting that in the context of strong competition which is where you develop people.

There was evidence of a slightly disparaging view of selectors in the way in which they were portrayed by Loosehead Len in his cartoon strip:



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 2, p. 33

In the context of particular schools being advantageous for progression, there was an element of official denial in 2005. Kevin Putt (coach of Counties Manakau), when asked directly about the 'special relationship' between the union and Wesley College, voiced a practical concern with what might be viewed as a consequence of the logic:

The biggest fear at any given stage is to put all of your eggs into one basket and suggest Wesley is the be-all and end-all of Counties rugby (Campbell, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 12).

But later in the same interview, when talking about his behaviour, he provided some evidence of the understanding in action:

My first port of call when I got in was to go and check Wesley out. I was teaching at Hamilton Boys' High School but I ended up going around and watching more of the Wesley games than anything else (Campbell, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 12).

Anton Oliver, in his autobiography, told of a 'view from the provinces' that might be seen as a common understanding:

At the time the view from the provinces was that my chances of making New Zealand Secondary School teams were much greater if I attended certain so-called 'good' schools. Christchurch Boys' and St Andrews, for example, came into that category (Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 40).

For one 2005 All Black, the draw of certain schools had become a 'natural process':

Those players who don't get that (*opportunity*) are the ones that come into the area, they sort of naturally migrate, coming into the schools, coming into the universities and I think that's just a natural process. Some players or parents, if they are out in those areas, those suburbs where they are not going to get those opportunities, they'll naturally move to the bigger areas.

If a taken-for-granted understanding exists, that contacts contribute to success, perhaps it partially explains why the smaller unions and clubs might find it difficult to retain and recruit players. There was some evidence of an understanding that for a player, the bigger unions offer more chance of being noticed. This was put simply by a supporter:

You have to play for the bigger unions if you're going to make it. You have to play for the bigger teams.

Evidence for action driven by the institutionalised logic came from a junior player in 1985:

Silverdale is such a big club. That's one of the reasons that I've come back from (*rural town*), for my son to have a really good shot at it.

There was evidence that a name might be seen as important. According to one senior NZRFU administrator, when he was growing up, it was the first thing a coach wanted to know, before they even got onto the field:

The name, the name was then identified by the people who were the coaches...and I got offered the opportunity of playing, and so then when you get onto the field “please look at me Mr. Selector I'll show you what I can do”.

One particular ‘name’, Anton Oliver, again, explained the burdens of being the son of a famous All Black, Frank Oliver:

Everyone – so I thought – looked at me, marked me. Everything I did or said was noticed. At first I was thrown. Why I asked, couldn't I be treated the same as everybody else? ... It was unsettling initially, but within the next year I decided that it had to be turned around to become a positive experience. I decided that I would say to myself, ‘Great. That means everyone is looking at me already.’ In other words, ‘I already have the selectors' attention’ (Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 35).

Perhaps evidence of an institutionalised understanding that spreads further than team selection came from a newly appointed club coach in 1985, in the context of being provided with ‘employment’:

...the guy who gave me the interview for the job was a rugby man. Not from my club but he was a rugby man. I walked in with my rugby blazer and tie and he was more impressed about that than the fact that I'd (*been on*) TV. I was a rugby player. We are still mates now but I never played for his club, I played against his club several times.

Another example where the right contacts might be seen to make a difference involved Andy Haden. In 1985, Haden was leading the breakdown of the ‘It's only a game’ logic. Having only the previous year appeared before the NZRFU council to answer charges he had breached the laws of amateurism, he appeared to be well and truly welcomed back into the fold:

Wednesday was quite a day for Andy Haden. During the day he learnt that his company Sporting Contacts Ltd had been appointed by the NZRFU to market Rugby over the

next 18 months. And shortly after 6pm he heard Ces Blazey read his name among the 30 All Blacks chosen to tour South Africa ('Big day for Andy', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

An inference was observed in the 2005 data that the leading players are coming through from a similar development pathway. This may be the result of the self-fulfilling nature of the institutionalised logic, 'Who's scratching whose back?'. Players, and parents of players, take for granted that there are certain pathways (particularly certain schools), where the chances of success are viewed as being higher. Promising players gravitate towards these centres, which then have a better pool from which to select first XVs. One participant, himself a former All Black captain, explained:

What we find now principally is that a lot of our leading players are almost fast tracked from first XVs to development squads and they are sort of put, not in cotton wool, but they are fast tracked from there into the NPC sides, and then to the Super 14 and on. So club rugby as a feeder is still important but is not where a lot of the players come from, particularly in the major unions in New Zealand.

One 2005 All Black explained one of the reasons he believed was behind his early success:

I was in the system as such. I was identified and my name was amongst the elite coaching, amongst the coaches at the time. I was in the New Zealand under 19s, and then the Academy, I was with the under 21 age groups.

Commenting on a surprise inclusion in the All Black squad, the following paragraph illustrated an understanding that there might be some 'below the radar' selection process:

Toeava is clearly one of those hand-picked individuals who are becoming more and more common in the modern game. They're identified early – the cynical might say soon after they've discarded their nappies – and they're fast-tracked through the levels, in some instances faster than their feet can hit the ground (Hinton, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 19).

Concerns were expressed by a 2005 administrator in junior rugby that getting into ‘the system’ was potentially a flawed process:

You can talk about guys getting through the system and playing rugby. When you are young the big thing is to get to Roller Mills²⁹. That's really the first big step. If you get into Roller Mills then you can think ‘I'm on the path’. Harbour has got a really good academy system. It went to 16 upwards, and now it might be down to 12, but again who is choosing the players that are going there? Some of them are being nominated by clubs, but who in the club is actually nominating them? It is so-and-so's son, and so-and-so's son. Because his dad is on the committee or his dad's this or... who's making the choices about which kids are getting picked?

There may be a belief that if you are outside these ‘pathways’ at a certain age, your chances of making it as a professional are limited. A supporter, who was also manager of a union team, articulated part of the understanding:

I think that at a younger age, if they were earmarked, they would have been tapped into by the Crusaders' schools program and that sort of thing. There is probably the odd late developer, we did have last year a couple of guys in our development squad that have gone on to the NPC side.

Those who do not come from a standard development pathway are held up as examples in the discourse. For example, 2005 All Black Ali Williams is trumpeted as not taking the game up until he was in his late teens. One participant from junior rugby commented:

...you could pick up rugby at 15 or 16...and go as far as the person that has done it from five. I don't think it makes a lot of difference. Ali Williams is one of those, who played soccer until he was 18 or 19.

It is almost as if the institutionalised logic is recognised as a potential weakness, and an attempt is being made to reduce its power. With both players' and coaches' contracts centrally controlled by the NZRU and there was evidence of a perception of a ‘closed

²⁹ The Roller Mills competition is for under 13, under 55kg representative players from Auckland, Waikato, Thames Valley, Counties Manukau, North Harbour, Northland, Bay of Plenty and King Country. It might be viewed as one of the first steps in the system.

shop arrangement'. Players who have left the fold are perhaps in a better position to comment. One former All Black, Kees Meeuws, was blunt in his assessment:

In New Zealand, if they don't like you, they don't pick you and they don't pay you (Burnes, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 15).

This 'closed shop' might not just operate in one dimension. Manawatu chief executive, Hadyn Smith on trying to recruit players to one of the smaller unions:

Smith says the union has not let the grass grow under their feet in the recruitment stakes, but has met a "closed shop" from many New Zealand players (Burnes, 2005c, *Rugby News*, p. 15).

In the context of coaching jobs there is evidence of a 'jobs for the boys' understanding, illustrated by the following:

Rugby, like many other professional sports, is often guilty of adhering to a "jobs for the boys" mentality. Club coaches rarely secure NPC positions within their own regions these days, let alone Super 12 jobs, while former players with little or no coaching experience are popping up everywhere, but at what cost? (Campbell, 2005e, *Rugby News*, p. 10).

One of the difficulties faced in gathering evidence is that, if an institutionalised logic exists, talking about it openly would be likely to cause economic or social costs for individuals. They might not be allowed access to the benefits of 'mutual back scratching'. One piece of evidence for the understanding came from a comparison of the data from the journalists. Their comments might be seen to reflect the need for 'establishment approval' to carry out their roles effectively in each of the years. The following, from a 2005 journalist and broadcaster, might be seen in this light:

In '85 those clowns were ready to be ripped to pieces and if I had been a member of the media at that time I would have been ripping them to pieces. But be conscious of what happened then too. We're talking about the old boys' brigade and we're talking about the Blazers and the Fish Heads and the favours that they took and the media was part of that.

Whilst from the same participant, a slightly more positive comment regarding the 2005 administrators:

So it comes down to management as much as anything else and the management has been very effective. So that's how I see 2005. I think they are a streamlined organisation that is doing...they are an organisation that is doing the job very well.

However, a 1985 journalist, who might now be seen by some as one of those 'rugby purists' outside mainstream, saw the same set of administrators slightly differently:

They've (*the NZRU*) become a monolith who stifle freedom of speech. Yeah I'll say that. They don't have open debate like they used to...They have an annual meeting and it lasts no more than an hour or so. And they've got all these great issues with the game. They should be debated and talked about it. To pretend that the game has not got issues, hasn't got problems is like putting their head in the sand really, isn't it?

Overall there was little evidence to suggest that this institutionalised logic has changed much between 1985 and 2005. There was some evidence to suggest that 'Who's scratching whose back?' drives behaviour, particularly when development paths are being considered. The evidence presented here represents the weakest argument for the existence of the twenty institutionalised logics identified in the field of New Zealand rugby. It would have been easy to leave it out altogether, but part of a discourse analysis is to consider what is not said. It may be that this understanding has become so widely accepted, over such a long period of time, as to make it almost invisible. Oliver's (1992) factors that might cause change, or erosion, have not been evident. Functionally, the logic continues to appear to work well; legitimacy in the environment flows to those on the inside; and politically there has been little to undermine the logic's stability. The sources of data that have been used to explore the nature of the institutionalised understandings may not be the best to produce insights on this particular logic. Most of the participants have been successful in the environment. They might be seen to have benefited from the 'back scratching'. Even the *Rugby News* data comes from a publication that might be seen to rely on input from those same 'successful' people. Ultimately it is for each reader to judge the plausibility of such a hidden taken-for-granted understanding.

7.2. Institutionalised logic 11: ‘It’s the top two inches that matters’

One debate that has characterised the field of New Zealand rugby over many years is the relative importance of ‘intelligent’ players versus ‘physically imposing’ players. Clearly these are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but the discourse has tended to polarise the arguments. In the field of New Zealand rugby, in 2005, there appeared to be a common understanding that some of the failures and losses can be attributed to what goes on in players’ heads, particularly in the context of ‘leadership’, or a perceived lack of it, and decision-making. One 1985 All Black articulated a view of why he was successful; an idea that might be seen to contribute to an explanation of the institutionalised logic:

...a capacity to see and understand the game and to lead by making decisions. Making correct decisions on the field, and in training and... just a feel about how the game was going. It came from consistently thinking about... bathing in the mental side of rugby from an early age.

It appears that the mental ability required to play rugby union has at times become of less concern to people than the race for physical dominance, or, perhaps, it had become so widely accepted and understood that it was rarely raised in the discourse. This may have been the case in 1985, where there was little data to suggest any institutionalised effect. ‘It’s the top two inches that matters’ was either not recognised or so widely accepted as to be unworthy of debate. The results of this study cannot confirm the position either way. However, by 2005, the emergence in the discourse of such an understanding can be seen to be facilitating action in the field. As one commentator saw fit to remind the rugby community:

Matches are won by the smartest team. Rugby’s many rules require more thought from its players...Rugby is the most mentally and physically demanding sport in the world. It doesn’t have to be the world’s most played game to be the world’s best, because quite frankly not all sportsmen are smart enough to play it in the first place (Stone, 2005c, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

In an article linking university rugby with intelligent players, Roger Drummond, President of New Zealand Universities Rugby Council, made a blatant appeal to the understanding:

We can still provide a traditional part of New Zealand rugby life. Look at Conrad Smith, an outstanding A-grade student and an able, young lawyer. The ‘top two inches,’ as they say, is so important in rugby these days. You can see it in him with the timing of his passes (Burnes, 2005d, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

Grant Harding, editor of *NZ Rugby World*, when commenting about a particular player’s strengths and weaknesses, put a version of the understanding in inverted commas suggesting that readers will implicitly understand, even if he got his figures mixed up:

His pass can sometimes falter and there may be a fitness issue. But the ‘top three inches’ are so important at this level, and Weepu strikes me as having the grey matter to succeed on a regular basis (2005c, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 6).

A former All Black might be seen to have summed up the understanding by highlighting the critical importance of the mental part of the game:

How else do you make decisions, consistently correct decisions under pressure at a high level, if you don’t just have a kind of inner compass, or an inner way of thinking about the game, that is a combination of a feeling for people, and how the ebb and flow of physiological dominance, which a lot of it is in sport, is going, combined with a deep understanding of the mechanics of the game.

The understanding might be characterised by a belief that games are won and lost at key points, where particular players have to make the ‘right decisions’. There was evidence that some kind of shared understanding about the importance of this element of the game might have been starting to develop by 2005. One commentator linked mental strength to winning the World Cup:

Look at the way England built towards the 2003 World Cup. It was as much about mental strength as ability, which got them through in Australia. The skill and

athleticism of New Zealand's players has never been in question. Their mental strength has (Harding, 2005d, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 15).

Murray Mexted, a former All Black and more recently Sky Television commentator, suggested:

In the past our mental game was much stronger than our opposition...that 'edge' which has seen our All Blacks enjoy a 73 per cent success rate over the years – which is a staggering 25 per cent higher than our nearest rivals, the Springboks. This mental 'edge' comes from the strength of our domestic competitions. For our players to survive they need to be as tough mentally as they are physically. The old Kiwi expression "toughen up" actually refers to the mental and not the physical game (2005, *Rugby News*, p. 43).

There was some evidence that the nature of this understanding might be facilitating actions that are being taken to address the problem of critical losses. The understanding that the mental capacity of players is critical may be seen to be gaining momentum, and is perhaps driving the actions of those charged with managing teams. In 1985, there was some evidence of a similar grouping of ideas, but less evidence that it was facilitating or constraining action. It may be that, in 1985, the nature of any institutionalised logic was influenced by a widely held assumption that players had to be constantly using their brains in order to make a living. In 2005, actions of the NZRU appear to have been influenced by the logic. One NZRU administrator explained:

Next strategy is holistic development. We feel that there's a big issue in New Zealand society and that's manifesting itself in rugby in terms of our classes coming through the system, a lack of self-reliance, lack of independence, lack of leadership, self-leadership skills. So there's a big push in that area. So we've done things like, for example, put on specific leadership and captaincy courses and made it the development of holistic people... we use a catch cry 'better people make better All Blacks'.

'Better people make better All Blacks' is a mantra from those charged with governance, but what does it mean? It would seem to be driven by a motivation for All Blacks to make the right decisions at the right times. Whole programmes are being developed for elite players. Perhaps action facilitated by 'It's the top two inches that matters', as might be seen in the words of the same administrator:

...that whole area, we're trying to develop better people off the field who have better values and better decision making and better self-leadership on the field, so in the end you end up with better teams.

One explanation for the rise in the power of the logic to facilitate the actions by the NZRU is the changing nature of the players' lives. There seems to be a recognition that the players of 2005 were living very narrow existences; existences that may not be supportive of the understanding that 'It's the top two inches that matters'. According to one journalist;

Well all they do is play rugby. Do you know much about cricket? There's a famous book written on cricket by a West Indian, C.R. James, 'Beyond the Boundary'. It takes a theme, what do they know of cricket and non-cricket. Now you can apply that to rugby, what do they know of rugby, they only know rugby. In other words if rugby is the only thing they do and play, they really don't understand what rugby's place is. It's not the be all and end all. It's got its place in the overall scheme of things. A lot of these people who play professional rugby now, they don't go to work. All they do is mix with other players; they don't go and interchange with Joe Blow and all this sort of thing. They're living in a very, very closed environment.

Another former NZRFU administrator expressed frustration at the players' attitudes to taking responsibility:

...they don't take responsibility in the same manner either. I recall last year one of the players...he didn't want to tell the coach he wasn't available Saturday, and he knew he was going to his brother's wedding and he turned up at one o'clock and said "I can't play I've got to go to a wedding" and it threw the team and the coach out, but that's how irresponsible... they won't take ownership. If they want to go away for a weekend they go, they don't worry about the team.

The justification of academies as a means of producing players might owe something to an acceptance of the institutionalised logic, and to the failure of society to produce responsible, natural decision makers. According to an NZRU administrator these developing players need to be provided with balance:

The academy has a focus on holistic development so they we want to produce a good rugby player but we want to do that in the context of... they need to be studying, working, so having a life outside rugby. That's for a few reasons. One is they may not make it as a rugby player, so what are they going to fall back on, and we don't want to be a organisation that chews them up and spits them out at the other end with nothing to fall back on, and the other thing is we believe that if they have got something outside of rugby it makes them more motivated and energetic and committed to rugby. So if you work a few hours each day or go study each day and then it comes to rugby training, you're excited about going to it, because it's a thing that you look forward too. As opposed to you do nothing all day and then you just train, you play Playstation all day, so rugby training then becomes your job as opposed to something to look forward too.

'It's the top two inches that matters' might also be seen to include a set of ideas surrounding what the players might end up doing at the end of their professional career. It was widely recognised that, for many, rugby is only going to be a transitory part of their lives. A journalist made a comparison between players of today and those prior to professionalism:

Well when they get to about 30 god knows what's going to happen to them. Some of them. Not all of them because some of them are quite smart. A good case, it's a pity actually, he'd be a good one to talk too. Robyn Brooke. He sort of came to rugby before...he was sort of a part of that semi-amateur, and the professional era, he straddled both. He had enough brains up there to know by the time he got to 30 he's going to have to look for something else. There's still a lot of life to be led. While he was still playing rugby for the Blues and Auckland and the All Blacks he was taking himself off after training each day, that wasn't the end of his day. He didn't go home to watch Space Invaders and those funny little things, Walkmans and all those. Their minds are not developing, but Robin Brooke comes from that era where people used to actually work...they actually had to work in the day jobs. Some of the great players like Grant Fox, the Whettons, those sort of people, they were still in the work place. Robyn Brooke went off and learnt how to be...he used to go to the supermarket and started as a trainee supermarket manager. He would spend the rest of the day packing shelves.

The link between a life after rugby and some kind of intelligence was made, if a little unkindly, by the same journalist:

Some of these other players probably haven't got the nous to do that. They probably think they're going to play rugby for the rest of their lives. Sooner or later the old body is going to catch up with it and they're going to have to find a job.

'Better people make better All Blacks' might be the NZRU catch-cry, but for many in the field the understanding is not that the people need to be nice or pleasant, or even particularly good, they just have to make the right decisions at the right time. The inclusion of mental coaching (sport psychologists) and professional development might be seen as all part of action driven by the institutionalised logic 'It's the top two inches that matters'. The point here is not to argue about whether the results that emerge from action facilitated by the logic will be better or worse, just that it might be seen to be having an influence. The players themselves may be seen to have accepted, at least partially, the idea. There are certainly pockets of players who have recognised the importance of developing themselves outside of rugby. Their actions in attending professional development courses might be seen to be driven by an understanding that it is the 'top two inches that matters', or at least an understanding that their bosses have come to accept that. One 2005 administrator, commented:

...the reaction of everyone around was really positive, the players could see that the programme had real merit and they were positive to me being involved in it. We'd used player focus groups in developing the model, so it was something that was designed with the players input; it was the programme that the players wanted. When we designed it, we designed it on the basis that unless it was driven by the players...

The connections with on-field performances may not have fully developed yet amongst the players themselves. Many are undertaking part-time qualifications but, perhaps, somewhat grudgingly. Reacting to the fact that five Otago forwards have, "or are working towards", degrees at Otago University, player Tom Donnelly commented:

"I don't know if it has a lot of relevance to our rugby," Donnelly says with a laugh, "but at least it shows we can think" (Edwards, 2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 59).

At this stage non-conformity costs are not great. Players contracts have built-in hours that should be devoted to professional development, but the players are unlikely to be disciplined for non-performance in these areas. There appear to be pockets of resistance

to the logic in the form of coaches who believe that all the players should be there for is rugby, and the focus on anything else is just wasting time. There may be some coaches who still view ideas emanating from the logic with some skepticism, and they transmit such beliefs to players. Possibly the biggest supporters of the institutionalised logic might be the Players Association, and the NZRU themselves, who have put significant resource into initiatives. Whether the logic is as yet fully accepted across the field is difficult to confirm. At lower levels of the game acceptance of the idea that 'brain' will beat 'brawn' might be less widely accepted, and perhaps the more prevalent understanding might be that 'a good big one will beat a good little one'. There was evidence of concern that the 'dumbing down' and simplification of the rules will weight the scales further in favour of brawn. This may be a potential functional change that will undermine the developing strength of the institutionalised logic.

The link between 'better people and better All Blacks' may not yet be proven to everyone's satisfaction. It may be that the link will never be proven. That does not stop the logic continuing to gain momentum and influence over the field. The final comment on the actions being driven by 'It's the top two inches that matters' comes from the senior NZRU administrator who saw part of the business of rugby as the production of players (not biscuits):

...you know Brian (*Lochore*) learned how to be a person because he was a farmer in the Wairarapa. (*Young All Black*) has never had a job, other than rugby, so how does he learn to be a person, actually? How does he learn that, in fact, when you go to an airport you've got to know how to get from here to here? How does he know? Out there unfortunately the professional rugby environment is such that...It's a danger; it's a big danger that we produce people that don't cope with the real world. If they don't cope with the real world when they leave, they have a real potential to do significant damage to the image of the game while they're here...we didn't want the American football model here which produced these ex-jocks that were boozers, druggies, divorced and useless. We wanted to produce...we wanted to produce good people at the end of their careers, who we knew in a way would recycle back into it as the Canterbury model has produced...what we've learnt even more, I think, now, is that we'll actually get more out of them, we knew this about them anyway intuitively, but, you know, we've made a really big step forward in the All Black environment. 'Better people make better All Blacks'. So they've got to become better people, they've got to become normal even

though that's actually impossible. Richie McCaw can never be normal. Tana, he can't actually be anything but who he now is. Just like the news-reader or anyone who's got a public face that gets exposed over a long period of time ends up living their life...that's just the way it is. You get compensated for that and you move on, but we want them to be as normal as they can be. We certainly want them to understand some normality because in the end they're just like you and me. They wake up in the morning if they don't eat, they don't go to the toilet, then eventually they die.

If the objective is 'to produce' winning All Blacks then there may be some dangers in a development system founded on a belief that somehow these players can be taught to be 'normal people'. If the ideas underpinning 'It's the top two inches that matters' were fully accepted, then it might be that players who are unable to take responsibility for making 'normal' decisions (when to get up, what to eat, *when to go to the toilet?*) would not be the raw material in the production process. This issue will be raised again in the discussion in Chapter Eight.

7.3. Institutionalised logic 12: 'The clubs are history'

Another logic that may be seen to be growing in influence is one based on the belief that 'The clubs are history'. There appeared to be a widely accepted understanding that the clubs are somehow linked more strongly with the history of the game than the future. The logic might include ideas that the clubs no longer have a role in the development of All Blacks, particularly once they are at high school age; that the clubs are financially not viable; and the recruitment of volunteers for clubs has become very difficult. These ideas, evident in the discourse, potentially combine to produce actions in the field. Actions such as; administrators and coaches not volunteering for a 'dying' part of the organisation; young players not bothering to develop any loyalty towards the clubs; eighteen year-olds not returning to the game when they finish school rugby; and, supporters failing to connect with what is presented as a down-trodden sector of the rugby environment.

In 1985, there was evidence in the discourse that the clubs were viewed with great reverence by the community. There was little evidence that ‘the clubs are history’ was even considered a conceivable notion back in 1985. One referee explained:

I think the first thing in those days was that club rugby was quite a dominant Saturday morning activity. Even as I got up the grades, and even into senior B and under 21s, and first XV rugby, it wasn't unusual to get five hundred to a thousand people at those games. So Saturday afternoons rugby was a major activity in the respective towns of this region. Just like it was round the country...So club rugby really was the big thing, and club finals would just... to get those games was the ultimate in those days.

The genuine affection for club rugby came through from a range of participants, illustrated by the words of, first, a journalist and then a referee from 1985:

...club rugby was everything in those days and while tests came and went you knew club rugby was always there, and I can remember going to Athletic Park and watching Petone play University in a club final; 25,000 people packed into Athletic Park. I know they had big crowds up here in Auckland, I wasn't involved, so club rugby was huge in those days.

That was wonderful really because they used to stand on the touchline, but you'd all go afterwards and have a drink. It was a different environment to today. It was so, so different. Saturday club rugby was the dominant town, city, and regional activity. There were a lot of people involved, it was wonderful really.

In 1985, the implication was that ‘the clubs are history’ might not have been acceptable to the rugby communities. The social costs of accepting such an idea would have been very high. Even nine years later the unacceptability of such an idea lead one participant to suggest it was the reason that ‘the clubs’ were not mentioned in The Boston Report (1994). The report, commissioned at the outset of professionalism, addressed the future of the game. The implications for club rugby were not spelt out, according to one journalist, deliberately:

That would inevitably just about erode, destroy the provincial rugby as well, and club rugby, the smaller rural clubs who are a very strong component of rugby in New

Zealand. That in effect would have, well... we can't go with that... because that would give them reasons not to proceed. People would say oh no if it's going to destroy the clubs, we're not going to have professionalism, and they (*the NZRFU*) didn't want anything that would stand in their way. That was certainly, I would have thought, people's thinking – it wasn't going to be oh no we've done this study, clubs will be bankrupt, going out of existence and provincial unions will be going down the gurgler and people will be turning this nation of New Zealanders into a nation of watchers.

According to one former club coach, even the elite players felt constrained to show loyalty to their clubs:

...everybody, your Garry Whetton, your Joe Stanley, everybody played for their club, Tana Umaga, all played club rugby. Whether they got picked for Auckland or Counties or...they played their club rugby.

One journalist made a comparison between the eras:

Once upon a time Richie McCaw for instance, Daniel Carter, who are superb players, superb people too, they would have gone back to mingle with their club mates after a game at their club. They would have passed on all their great knowledge; they would have played with the club scene. Now they're removed from all that aren't they?

The decline of the clubs was not evident in the discourse of 1985, but participants felt they knew it was coming. This NZRFU administrator's words suggested acceptance, with a justification that might have come straight from 'It's a business now':

You can see it's going to happen, but go as long as you can, build the players. The next thing will be fewer clubs... So there won't be the number of clubs, some of them have got to go. So maintaining all those facilities...when in fact it could be one. It's not different from anything else, amalgamation or shrinkage.

Amalgamation and rationalisation are the language of business and used by this journalist and broadcaster:

...the spin off is that a lot of the rural areas can't compete any longer and it is difficult to see what that solution is. But it appears to me is what the rugby union thinks the

solution is, is amalgamation. Now that could lead to loss of identity on the way through and they'll be conscious of that, but these small places have hated each other for years and will continue to do so.

By 2005, senior players were considered a rarity in club rugby. Jerry Collins was notable for his almost deviant attitude in wanting to play for his club, as might be illustrated by the words of this NZRU administrator:

I mean realistically they can't play for their clubs any more, that's just a nonsense. There are people out of Petone that think players should still be able to play Petone, Wellington, Hurricanes, All Blacks. They do and Tana would like to, and in fact will now play for Petone because he will be able to, because he's given up one aspect of it, but the realism of that...there was some positive symbolism about Richie being named as captain at the Christchurch club. I remember distinctly Scott Robinson who you know, popular Crusader, the guy certainly lived out at Sumner in Christchurch and ended up being quite an iconic feature around the club rooms. I don't think he ever wore the jersey. If he did it would have been a couple of times but go to the club rooms have a few beers with the boys. He did on occasion, on nights that he could. This always gave really, really important signals that I think in New Zealand we're able... we're small enough to keep those sorts of things alive, you know. I mean Jerry will want to play...The realism of that is not there anymore, but it's the mental process that's important. Not all of our players are like that though I have to admit.

The mental process might, indeed, be important. That an idea with so many benefits can be labeled 'nonsense' in its introduction might be very strong evidence of the institutionalised logic constraining action. Perhaps the debate around why All Blacks can't contribute to the clubs is being stifled by the prevailing understanding, with a justification of 'why waste valuable resource on history?' Another player, Anthony Tuitavake, not yet an All Black, illustrated the influence that the institutionalised logic might be having on expressing positive comments about your club. It's almost as if he had to say it quietly for fear of impacting on his rugby career:

He points out somewhat sheepishly that one of his ambitions, besides becoming an All Black, is to gain his club's blazer (Knight, 2005b, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 67).

A blazer is awarded for just thirty games with his Massey club. The recognition that 'The clubs are history' appeared widespread in 2005. The discourse was full of 'doom and gloom' surrounding the clubs. Players themselves were talking down the club rugby environment. Nick Moore, a former Otago player, commented with an almost resigned acceptance:

I don't think the standard is anywhere near as good. I guess it's just the way it is with professional rugby...It takes that 24 to 30 year-old age group right out of the equation. If they're half good, they go (Edwards, 2005b, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 91).

There was some evidence of a decline in the standard of club rugby. A downward spiral in action again. The players don't return to the clubs because they believe the environment is dying, the standard falls and contributes to the decline. A journalist highlighted one outcome:

I think the standard is often driven by the quality of the senior, senior players and that wasn't really evident. So when people talk about a decline in club rugby what they mean is a decline in standard due to the fact that there is not as many players who are 28 who have 150 club games. There's guys who are 22 and have had five club games who are now in senior roles.

The fall in standard couldn't be much worse than this former provincial player's memory of club rugby. It was an opinion that may not have been widely expressed before 'The clubs are history' emerged:

I enjoyed playing club rugby but I was pleased when it was over so that I could play rep football. I got more enjoyment. And in fact it was easier to play rep rugby than it was to play club rugby. Well you didn't have guys running in the wrong direction or getting in your way and because they knew what they were doing it made it easier.

There was also evidence that the reporting of club rugby was being influenced by the logic. In the opinion of one journalist:

...you know the club rugby has been totally neglected in recent times. It's even neglected by the New Zealand Herald - you get about that much on club rugby in

Auckland. Probably don't get anything on Counties competition, North Harbour you get about that much (*finger and thumb about 20 mm apart*) in eight point in the grass roots rap and that's it.

In 1985, each week during the club season, *Rugby News* included a sixteen page Club News supplement. This was full of features and reports of club rugby. In addition there were four pages in the main newspaper devoted to club results and tables from the entire country. By 2005, the coverage had reduced to two pages, and according to another journalist:

There's been a massive shift. You only have to look at the media now. Far less is written about club rugby than there used to be. It's a real shame. *Rugby News* was still trying to give two pages a week to it through out the year. Lindsay Knight, one of the senior journalists in the country is still very much a pro-club rugby man, whereas a lot of journos wouldn't even go to a club game now, they'd just say well we haven't got time, it's not important etcetera, etcetera.

There was evidence that, although the logic was widespread, there was some disquiet about its affect on the game. Some participants expressed concern that such an understanding could be allowed to emerge, but their arguments appeared hesitant in the face of such a powerful and widely accepted logic. It was almost as if they had been driven to acceptance. These comments from a former union coach might be seen to paint those opposed to the development of the prevailing logic as old and behind the times:

In New Zealand we always talk of the old days. The clubs might say they (*All Blacks*) should play on a Saturday but forget it. Forget it! So now the All Blacks don't even play in the NPC.

Another journalist perhaps overplayed his argument with a conspiracy theory that the rugby authorities knew exactly what professionalism would do to clubs:

...one of the repercussions of professionalism which I think they'd pretty well accepted...was this is going to have monstrous bloody impacts on all the clubs, and the domestic rugby. It's virtually going to take players away from that. It's going to cause

this big line between amateur and professional...well this is going to have devastating effects, clubs are going to go bankrupt, they're going to be driven to the wall...

The arguments may be well founded, but the logic facilitates the portrayal of such viewpoints as old-fashioned, and out-of-step with the realities of professional rugby. The social costs of expressing such views might be allocation of the 'rugby purist' label. After all, 'The clubs are history'! Here an NZRU administrator offered an explanation of the way it has to be:

The negatives being the drop off in numbers playing, the serious drop off in schools and clubs, the struggle that clubs have right throughout the country now to survive in an environment where all the emphasis is on an elite group at the top and that is where much of the money goes.

The understanding that 'The clubs are history' can also be seen to be justified by social change arguments. 'The me, me, me society' according to one supporter:

Well I've got some mates who are on the committees of clubs and that in Christchurch and they say that they used to have guys who would play rugby until they were 35, but now they play until they are about 21, and if they don't make it up into the senior teams or the Canterbury development sides, they go and do triathlons, tennis or golf, because you don't have that longevity. In the senior teams the average age must have dropped by ten years. You just haven't got the camaraderie, the real spirit, the club spirit, the family thing. People are in it for what they can get and then they're out; you don't have people playing for years and years now. It's just kids. It's all changed now. And that can't be good. They struggle at the local clubs to get 20-year-olds, never mind 30-year-olds. It's all changed.

Or changes in community focus, according to one administrator:

Is club rugby struggling because All Blacks don't play in club rugby? There's only 30 of them and 600 clubs. Or is club rugby struggling because the club is no longer the hub of the local community...

Or even the 'fact' there was nothing else to do in New Zealand, as one 1985 club coach explained:

Whereas in the old days there was bugger all to do in New Zealand really, I can well assure you of that, there was no St Lukes, no Super 12 on a Friday night, the pubs closed at 10pm on a Friday night, no wine bars on Ponsonby Road, the rugby club was as good as you were going to get! So they were the glory days – you had no bloody option.

Evidence emerged that even the provincial unions might be being swept into the backwater that club rugby is widely understood to have become:

Todd Blackadder gave a great victory speech, in which he mentioned all of the Crusaders member unions. It was the mark of an outstanding leader, and made people in those unions feel they were part of the deal, which seems less and less the case these days (Johnson, 2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 20).

Following the decision to ban loan players³⁰, a rather disgruntled Mike Mavor, a North Otago player, commented:

It's always tough for a small union like ours. This will just make it tougher. The thing that disappoints me is that they continue to create obstacles for us. It makes you wonder (Edwards, 2005c, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 82).

Perhaps the institutionalised logic will spread to 'The small unions are history'. It looks like it might be every man for himself as unions threaten to take players away from clubs:

Lam (*Auckland NPC Coach*), backed by the union, made a "strong call" to remove his rep squad totally from club play (Burnes, 2005e, *Rugby News*, p. 4).

In the same article a club coach, Terry Reardon, is quoted as responding:

I understand where Pat's coming from, but there has to be a trade off. Players want to play and the club is the last rung on the ladder (Burnes, 2005e, *Rugby News*, p. 4).

³⁰ In order to balance out the available rugby playing talent and, perhaps, to stop the biggest unions from getting even stronger, a decision was made by the NZRU to limit the number of 'loan' players any union can sign. The idea was that this would encourage more players to sign on 'properly' with the smaller unions.

The last rung on the ladder might also be seen as the first rung on the ladder. Occasionally there was evidence of a common idea that the clubs should have a future. They are, after all, an integral part of the ‘grass-roots’ of rugby. There was a hint that the clubs might have a future, but few managed to articulate exactly what that future might be. Here a journalist and broadcaster tried:

I think people have unrealistic expectations about club rugby as well. It’s still got a major niche and a place to play.

But what is that niche? One administrator expressed the conflict between an ideal and the functional pressures that are supporting this particular logic:

We have a responsibility to see the club game, the amateur game, remain strong, we also want the All Blacks to be the best team in the world and our competitions to be good and those things don’t always sit hand in hand. The clubs would love to see All Blacks back down playing club rugby really. If you talk to the coaches of our professional teams they would probably like to see them play less games across less competition structures, and never set foot inside a club in a training capacity.

Given the strength of the understanding that ‘The clubs are history’, it is perhaps of no surprise that the professional coaches do not want much to do with the backwaters of club rugby. In 2005, there were more exciting, and lucrative areas, in which to be involved. The use of specific language may also be having an impact on the nature of the institutionalised logic. Take, for example, the use of the word ‘grass-roots’. In 1985, the term appeared, without exception, to be associated with the positive elements of rugby. Indeed, many of the participants who developed through that time still used the word with positive associations. However, there is the potential for the word ‘grass-roots’ to now be associated rather more negatively with a backwater of the game. The repeated association between ‘grass-roots’ and the clubs may be contributing to the institutionalised understanding that ‘The clubs are history’. There was evidence that the term ‘grass roots’ might be being replaced by another, ‘the pyramid’. Chris Moller, CEO of the NZRU, led the charge, using the term to justify the broadcasting contract signed recently:

...at the end of the day if you don't get the base of the pyramid right then you won't have the players playing in either numbers or quality. And as a consequence it's likely to lead to a weakening of the All Blacks capability over time (Harding, 2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 83).

This sort of talk was acknowledged but somewhat dismissed in the discourse. Commentator Don Cameron suggested a certain weariness with platitudes:

There used to be a lot of apparently well meaning talk from the NZRU and its provincial unions about catering for the clubs' grass-roots, and so and so on. That is just fine – as long as the clubs with many leading rep players are not unfairly penalised at the sharp end of their club competitions (2005, *Rugby News*, p. 42).

One *Rugby News* commentator summarised the understanding:

The average rugby fan on the street is (for the most part) happy with the state of the game at the top end, but there is still much to worry about at club and indeed age-grade level. There are cracks that need to be fixed before it's too late (Campbell, 2005f, *Rugby News*, p. 5).

The cracks might need fixing, but how and what with? There was little evidence that the clubs were viewed, in the discourse of 2005, as having a positive and defined role to play. The pyramid argument was perhaps recognised as a sound-bite to appease 'rugby purists'. There was no evidence in the discourse studied that a clear, and widely understood, role for the clubs has been established. There was little evidence in the discourse of a positive common understanding as to the future of the clubs in New Zealand. There was evidence of a self-fulfilling understanding that 'The clubs are history'.

7.4. Institutionalised logic 13: 'The coach is king'

There seems to be a growing consensus in the field that the role of the coach is pivotal to the success of a team. The idea that the coach has some influence on team success might have been around for many years, but a more recent development in the wider

community of New Zealand rugby is an understanding that ‘The coach is king’. There was evidence of an understanding that the coach should be allowed to influence the objectives and dictate the resources required to achieve those objectives. This influence was seen as gradually spreading from on-field plans to off-field activities and programmes. This institutionalised logic might be seen to be facilitating actions that may not have been acceptable in the past. An example might be the conditioning ‘window’ required by Graham Henry, coach of the All Blacks, for the players involved in the 2007 Rugby World Cup, where selected players were withdrawn from other competitions. Evidence will be presented to suggest that coaches, such as Graham Henry, whose most recent biography was entitled *The Reign of King Henry* (Paul, 2007), are viewed by many of those in the field as a ‘king’. It is argued that the understanding facilitates and constrains the behaviour of players, spectators and administrators, and whilst functional failure (losing) can lead to the overthrow of one king, the logic lives on.

In 1985, there was little evidence that this logic existed. In the 1985 Annual Report there was not a single mention of a coach of the All Blacks. Thanks are recorded to Brian Lochore, as Convener of Selectors, alongside S.F. Hill and D.B. Rope. In 2005, there is official recognition for the coach’s position:

In their second season, the Graham Henry-led coaching team built on the promise of the 2004 campaign to craft a team which spent all year as the IRB’s top-ranked side (NZRU Annual Report, 2005, p. 16).

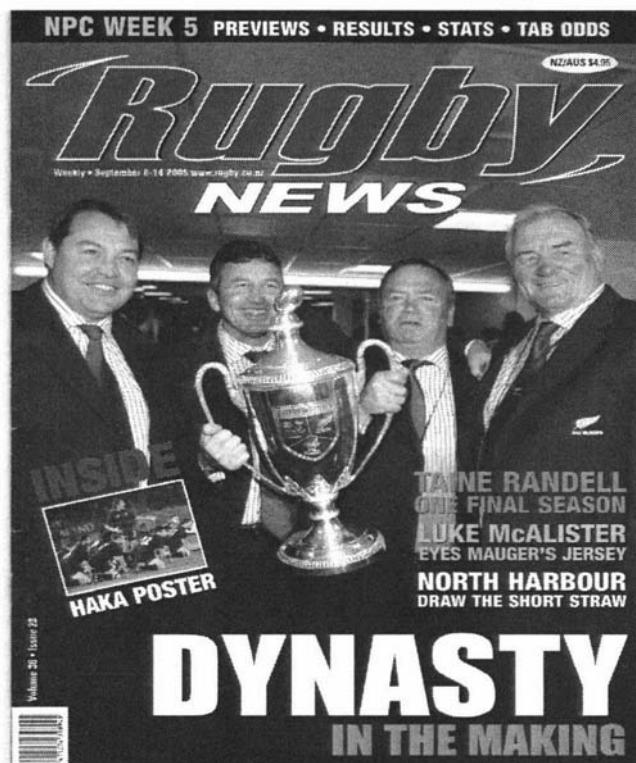
By 2005, the discourse suggested the team belonged, somehow, to the coach. The All Blacks were commonly referred to as ‘Graham Henry’s All Blacks’:

That expectation was not placed on the shoulders of Graham Henry’s youthful 2004 All Blacks (Verdon, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 32).

Woodward has already sat in two New Zealand grandstands and watched Henry-coached All Black sides (Stone, 2005d, *Rugby News*, p. 46).

Graham Henry’s side didn’t... (Campbell, 2005g, *Rugby News*, p. 34).

The All Black coach and his high table are, by 2005, revered as a potential dynasty, as the front page of one issue of *Rugby News* illustrated. Graham Henry and his ‘team’ Steve Hansen, Wayne Smith and Brian Lochore were shown with the Bledisloe Cup, which ‘they’, it might be seen to be implied, had won:



Source: *Rugby News*, 2005, 36, 28, p. 1

One commentator had promoted Mr. Henry even further:

The All Black supremo (*Henry*) rates the trial as being “very worthwhile” (Campbell, 2005h, *Rugby News*, p. 6).

...Graham Henry continued his impressive reign as All Black supremo with a commanding 3-0 series victory (Campbell, 2005i, *Rugby News*, p. 20).

Even kings of a previous era might be seen to be afforded the same treatment:

It should also be mentioned that Laurie Mains’ All Blacks achieved...(Verdon, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 32).

The analogy gets a little out of hand when it was applied to the Lions' coach, the recently knighted Sir Clive Woodward:

"King of Smug" was one description I read, later calling him in lick-spittle tones, "The Knight of the Realm" (Quinn, 2005e, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

Back in 1985, the nearest comparison were references to "Brian Lochore's men...(Howitt, 1985f, *Rugby News*, p. 3). Brian Lochore had been appointed as coach during that year. The All Blacks were also identified by use of the captain's name; "...with the intended tour of South Africa by Andy Dalton's All Blacks" (McLean, 1985f, *Rugby News*, p.18); and, "Tough task facing Hobbs' All Blacks (Howitt, 1985g, *Rugby News*, p.11). In contrast this practice was not extended to 2005 captains Tana Umaga, Richie McCaw and, for one game, Aaron Mauger. The shortly to rise logic might have been foretold by Bob Howitt, when he discussed the tour to South Africa:

So barring injuries Brian Lochore should have a royal chance of becoming the first coach to prepare a New Zealand team to win a series on South African soil (1985h, *Rugby News*, p. 1).

More evidence suggested that the coach was not considered to be of great importance at the time. The role might have been seen to be more of an almost honorary position. For the cancelled tour to South Africa, a list of those selected was listed in the Annual Report. The list included the players, "Honorary Manager: R.J. Littlejohn", "Honorary Assistant Manager: B.J. Lochore" (NZRFU Annual Report, 1985, p. 15), but no mention of a coach. Coaches were discussed in the wider rugby discourse. In a guest column, Phil Gifford, argued that the 1985 All Blacks needed a new coach, either John Hart or Alex Wyllie³¹:

In both their cases it could be that they will need to be persuaded to ever take on the job as All Black coach. That goes against everything that has ever been done at top level in our football. Do a deal to make someone All Black coach? A shocking thought to the blazers and ties boys in Wellington (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 13).

³¹ Both eventually became All Black coaches.

The resignation of All Black coach, Bryce Rope, however, hardly caused a ripple in *Rugby News*. So quiet was his exit that one columnist reflected some months later:

So it was rather sad that the first news of Rope's retirement came with the choice of Meads as his replacement (*on selection panel*). Rope has laboured long and hard with Colts, Juniors and All Black teams, and he deserved rather better than so quiet an exit (White, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 22).

The kind of ideas that aggregate to form the institutionalised logic, 'The coach is king', were beginning to enter the discourse in 1985. One journalist of the time argued:

Anyone who thinks coaches are of only secondary importance to any sporting team ought to think again. History proves too regularly not even the best teams can do the job without the best coach (Becht, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 13).

One coach, in the headlines consistently over 1985, was John Hart with 'his' Auckland provincial team. Towards the end of the year there was evidence that the discourse was gradually attributing more credit for a winning formula to the coach. This was typified by a headline:

Hart's magic back on show (Howitt, 1985i, *Rugby News*, 16, 33, p. 12).

A comparison between the discourse surrounding coaches in two biographies, from Dave Loveridge (1985) and Anton Oliver (2005), reveals that the coach's role might always have been central to the players. However, extracts might be used to illustrate the differences in the understandings about the role between 1985 and 2005. First, Dave Loveridge suggested:

...the coach must know when to be one of the boys with the players and when to stand aloof, to revert to his role on the managerial side of things...He must when the occasion demands it listen to the views of his players, especially those who have had greater international experience than he, but also on the right occasion he must be able to say – and to have the players unreservedly accept it – 'This is the way it will be done' (Palenski, 1985, pp. 234-235).

Anton Oliver identified a much more defined relationship that had developed by 2005:

Essentially, the coach is the boss. The circumstances have to be exceptional before players should set out to undermine or challenge the authority of the coach. As a captain or senior player, for instance, I would never challenge the coach in front of other members of the team (Oliver & Turner, 2005, pp. 223-224).

Perhaps fearing that that he may have his head removed. When commenting on the importance of the coach, one 2005 All Black stated:

It all begins and ends with him. The thing is that only 26 players can be selected for a squad, and whatever position you play in, only three in your position can be selected on the squad. So everything begins and ends with him.

By 2005, there was a more widely held recognition that the coach (in this case Graham Henry) was making the decisions, even, according to one journalist and broadcaster, during the game:

So he controls that. You watch the All Blacks, the messages are going out all the time. That is something reasonably new. I incidentally don't like it because it smacks of American sport to me, where the coach controls everything you know, so I hope he doesn't over do it.

Back in 1985, there was evidence that the players took responsibility for what happened on the field, and that coach's role was relatively minor. An All Black at the time recalled:

...in the better teams I played for the players were easily the most dominant factor when it came to coaching and tactics and budgets and motivation and anything. It was the players, senior players and it was great. And we had great coaches that understood that, and could funnel it and fashion it, but they didn't try and control it.

There may not have been great complexity in the relationship between a coach and players back in 1985, according to one administrator heavily involved in the coaching:

I think the general feeling among them was the coach will tell me what to do, not why to do it, when to do it, or how to do it.

Coaching, in 1985, may have been in its relative infancy. A senior administrator recalled:

...in those earlier days not many people knew about coaching. I think they thought, how can I express it, that there was no emphasis on coaching, there was an emphasis on an individual.

To become a coach then was perhaps seen as a haphazard development process. The same NZRFU administrator continued:

And many times we'd have people that had developed into coaching that had got there because of their availability at an earlier stage of being involved, not necessarily through ability but through availability to be there.

Coaching in schools has faced some difficult issues. According to one journalist, the South Africa tour in 1981, had taken its toll on the willing volunteers:

Previously all coaching was done by teachers. Now suddenly rugby had identified a shortcoming, a shortage of these teachers who were prepared to coach and so now rugby was having to get its act together, and they were having to work with clubs. Clubs were having to go to schools and say right we can provide coaching, we can provide people who are prepared to come along to coach your teams if you want us.

And so, according to an administrator, had the reduction in male primary school teachers:

Coaching in schools was going to get harder but didn't really hit secondary schools until the '90s, but it certainly was starting to, starting to be a problem to get very able men to coach the game because they weren't coming into teaching.

Perhaps only certain coaches are king. Those at school do not seem to be, if the opinion expressed by this NZRFU administrator was more commonly held:

...they get people into positions and the school teacher type of person is the particular worst type of person because they know how to teach, but they don't know what it is that they are teaching when it comes to sport. So they will teach because it is organised, and there, it says on the programme, this is what I'm going to do and I am going to do that. When in actual fact it is not coming from here (*points to heart*) to do it and that's the problem with New Zealand rugby at the level that we have now.

According to one senior administrator the quality of the coaches in schools, by 2005, had been reduced by the advent of professionalism. Perhaps being treated like a king in the professional game was just too tempting. Or at least, the understanding that they might be treated as king in the professional game:

It's worse now. A long, long way. Professional sport has meant that top rugby players don't teach...Currently at Auckland Grammar School there is not one person who has played senior rugby to coach them.

The understanding can be seen to contribute to the dearth of coaches in the backwaters of the game. Perhaps facilitated by the institutionalised logic, the NZRU appears to have integrated 'the coach' into their development programmes at a high level. An NZRU administrator explained:

...we brought on board a whole lot of resource coaches and we've developed a whole lot of both accredited and non-accredited coach development courses. That's one way we're putting a lot more emphasis at the high performance level on individualised coach development for our top guys, you know, sitting down and doing a performance plan with them.

The tentacles of the logic had spread throughout the rugby community by 2005. It had become accepted practice to have individual coaches for all sorts of purposes. There was evidence that a culture of coaching had spread to referees, and the openness of the following comments from one in particular suggested a widespread acceptance:

I also have a mentor who's a guy I used as a coach... for a number of years and he looks at me from a technical aspect. He's looking at my running lines, the decisions I'm making, whereas my coach tends to look at the overall package. So I have somebody

who looks at me from a, I suppose, a common sense approach and an image approach, and I've got somebody who looks at me from a technical aspect which is probably what I do more so. I look at both, and so the three of us are sort of working in a triangle, sort of figure an overlapping, if you can imagine the Olympic rings where they're inter-linked.

The 'common sense' coach might be seen as pushing the boundaries of action facilitated by the logic. One supporter highlighted a certain cynicism entwined in the understanding:

I seriously think that once you start talking about psyche and managing staff, it's all got pretty bloody stupid. It's just a game, you know, and these 20 bloody coaches that they have, a breakfast coach and a lunch coach and a tea coach, telling them what to eat, drink, think. It's pretty ridiculous. It is a bloody game for goodness sake. But I guess that is just money and they keep putting their hands up and dragging more people in. You know in the old days the All Blacks would just shake in their grave if they saw how the team was managed now.

There was an opinion that the game has become more complicated. Here one administrator suggested that the coaches are, by 2005, driving the players in the 'wrong' direction:

But the coaches seem to me to be trying to get from their players the breaking of the rules but so, hopefully, they won't be penalised. This has gradually spoiled the game, it's increased the number of penalties and although the IRB is aware of this, they're obviously having great difficulty in changing the rules to make them simpler.

The coach's success had become synonymous with the team's success. This administrator implied an understanding that once the king is dead, it's a case of long live the next king, 'obviously' at a higher salary:

...all coaches are paid now, as are the players, and referees too get pretty big salaries I believe. I don't know the figures but certainly there is tremendous pressure on coaches now, and everyone knows, because the media covers it all the time, if the team's coaches are not successful, the coaches soon get replaced and each time they get replaced I guess their replacement gets a bigger salary. So the whole thing is fuelled.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that such an institutionalised logic is starting to take hold in the field came from a senior administrator. When discussing the 2005 attempt at achieving the Grand Slam during the UK and Ireland tour, there appeared to be no question that the “coaches got whatever they needed within reason to get up there and deal to that - that was very significant”. Giving the king whatever he needs might, indeed, be significant in the link to performance as will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

7.5. Institutionalised logic 14: ‘Every boy must want to be an All Black’

This logic is complex in nature, comprising of at least two integrated, but separate, ideas. First, there is a shared understanding that every New Zealand male dreams of being an All Black from a young age. There appears to be an assumption that New Zealand boys are somehow culturally programmed to want to represent their country at rugby. It is assumed that it is ‘natural’ for boys to play rugby in New Zealand, and that this natural state of affairs must be maintained for the good of the game. The subtlety of the logic comes from a second taken-for-granted idea that, if every boy in New Zealand *didn’t* want to be an All Black, the game would somehow disintegrate. This translates into a battle for playing numbers. The fear that any fall in playing numbers generates might be viewed as a specific instrument that facilitates and constrains action. The two understandings combine to create an institutionalised logic that drives action to make as many boys play rugby as possible. Evidence suggested that the logic is viewed as one of the very foundations of the game. Greg Growden, an Australian rugby writer, reflected on the difficulties Australia has maintaining numbers playing:

In rugby, New Zealand cannot use that excuse – as the game is the heart and soul of the nation, and because of an overwhelming fervour about the game is able to boast substantial participation numbers to ensure that the stock of quality players remains buoyant...New Zealanders are pushed into rugby (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 38).

There is nothing subtle about the evidence for the first part of the logic. The same clear and confidently put idea came through time and time again. The evidence from the 1985 participants suggested that playing at school ‘is what you did’:

It was something that you had to do as a kid. There were no other alternatives. It was part of the male psyche in a small town, rural area that you played footie (Supporter, 1985).

You just played at school – I mean everyone played rugby. It's what you did after school, and the school played other primary schools on a regular basis (All Blacks 'team', 1985).

In the winter that would be all we'd play at lunchtime, playtime would be rugby during the winter months of course (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).

I mean, every kid played rugby when I went to school (All Blacks 'team', 1985).

In New Zealand boys played rugby (Supporter, 1985).

Even the 2005 participants looked back in a similar way:

...rugby was the only sport that anybody played at that time in primary school. We had a single teacher school and the only organised sport in the school for boys and girls was rugby. And so I naturally played it (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

Rugby was seen as the natural choice at school (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

It was almost like an extension of your school days, getting together and having a bit of rough and tumble with your mates against some guys, some kids, you didn't even know, so that was all part and parcel of it. Part of growing up really... is playing rugby (Referee, 2005).

I like every other New Zealand born boy in the late 1950s was introduced to rugby as a three or four year old and played school boy rugby from age five (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

I was a young boy playing rugby and stuff like that, like most New Zealanders do (Referee, 2005).

An acceptance of this kind of logic might be demonstrated even at the extremes of the field. A supporter, former Split Enz³² bassist, Mike Chunn, first articulated the understanding and then hinted at the possible breakdown:

Like everyone you dream of being an All Black. But the world of the All Blacks was quite mysterious then because you never got to go to the games, they hovered off into the distance unlike today in the professional era where you see them all the time (Haworth, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 41).

A journalist suggested that the reasons why ‘Every boy *must* want to be an All Black’ might be seen to have subtly changed over the 20 year period:

They may think, I could be earning a living out of this game in ten or 12 years. I mean for me it was never a thought of that, I wanted to be an All Black like most kids.

One participant from junior rugby talked of youngsters’ motivations ‘today’:

In a way they realise probably they can do this for a job, so later on they can take it somewhere further, more seriously... they know they can take this a level further... I can look at my son, and the amount of reading and research that he does, like I wouldn't have read a book to save my life back then, but now they're reading and researching, they're on the Internet and they're looking at stuff all the time. That's got to be soaking into them, rugby itself, and they realise they can go a lot further in rugby these days. Because basically... some of these kids know that they can treat this as a job.

Perhaps not for the research and reading, but back in 1985, rugby might still have been the reason for going to school, according to one supporter:

Most of the guys came back in the seventh form to play rugby for the first XV and, they had sat UE (*University Entrance*) in the sixth form and failed. They came back in the seventh form anyway. Some of them, when the season was over, just got stopped coming to school.

³² A New Zealand rock band who had some international success from the 1980's

The second element of this institutionalised logic is the numbers of players, and the fear that a drop in the published playing numbers induces. Some see the danger to the understanding coming from societal change. Here an NZRU administrator highlighted the reduction in male primary teachers:

...the other thing that's changed of course is the make up of the primary school teacher population and it's a biggie for sport per se. And it's definitely a biggie for rugby. I see that we're a decile 10 area now so my kids are growing up in a very different background than I did. Our school has proactively recruited and you'd be able to track sort of 25% - 30% male population in primary school which is almost unheard of. They just make such a difference to the school in terms of the types of activities they're involved in...The culture is a bit harder for a start. The rest of the teacher population is... (*they*) don't necessarily like rugby and certainly don't like getting out there and doing it. Not just rugby – it's the whole physical activity thing. That's why this whole debate in our primary schools, about making primary curricula address the physical activity thing, I think is really, really important. We saw it in the British Isles I think the '80s when sport went off the curriculum and the heads went off sports.

The range of choices available to youngsters now was also seen as a threat by this supporter:

...there are so many more alternatives for people nowadays, particularly the kids, other than rugby. It's changed to keep its status, its ability to pull punters. Think of triathlons and stuff like that now. In Auckland you can go and watch the Warriors, the Breakers, the Knights or the Auckland Blues or the Harbour team or Counties-Manukau and all that happens in a weekend. So with a limited budget, all those things are competing with each other so it's got to be a compelling proposition.

Evidence of the second component of the logic, a widely held understanding that playing numbers are a critical measure, might be seen in the way figures were used to justify that the game is in good shape. One journalist and broadcaster put forward a case for the health of the game:

The evidence is very clear there are more kids playing Rugby Union now than there ever have been before. There's the biggest increase, I interviewed (*NZRU Employee*) at

the weekend, and the increase this year is the greatest we've seen for some considerable time, it's about 10%.

Back in 1985, similar figures were used for much the same purpose. In 1985, the numbers emerged in the context of a discourse still smarting from the 1981 Springbok tour backlash. The cry went up "Rugby has maintained its popularity":

...(figures from Recreation and Sport Council). Rugby is the most popular sport, with just over 200,000 players taking part – not including women and social teams. Netball is next with 110,840; golf is third at 108,390 and bowls follows with 83,192. Soccer has 69,678 players and league is well down with just 24,000 ('Rugby has maintained its popularity', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 20).

Some cynicism about the numbers was evident even back then. Bryan Craies, chairman of coaching for Auckland Union, stated:

For years we have listened to the glib clichés from the mouths of our leaders, none more so than our own Ron Don of how the game was "in great heart" and "we have more people playing Rugby than ever before." Suddenly one man, Frank Colson, from the Marist club, took the time to find out exactly how many young boys were playing Rugby. The results of his survey put paid to the utterings of our leaders. Out of 60,000 boys under the age of 15, 10,000 played soccer, 3500 league, 2700 hockey and 4500 Rugby (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 7).

The rhetoric surrounding the numbers continued throughout 1985. This, in the College and Teenage Review section of *Rugby News*, might have been an indication of a wider mild panic that falling numbers seemed to generate:

Make no mistake about it – if Rugby is not fostered at all school levels and more is not done to attract young boys to the game it will be a heavy loser. The competition is getting tougher every year ('Lincoln school again a great success', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 20).

This might be seen as evidence of a 'cunning plan' to get the numbers to paint a better picture:

The Manawatu union has come up with a clever suggestion that will allow up to 19,000 players to get a game every Saturday. Very simply, Manawatu wants the NZRFU to allow up to two substitutes (for other than injuries) in matches at schoolboy and age-grade level (Howitt, 1985j, *Rugby News*, p. 5).

Reacting to the proposal in a time-honoured ‘you can’t do it like that’ manner, one councilor, J.J.Stewart, failed to see the irony of his suggestion:

If you can allow two, why not four? (Howitt, 1985j, *Rugby News*, 16, 8, p. 5).

By 2005, seven substitutes were allowed in the professional game and at junior level it was apparently unlimited. Overall, evidence from the discourse suggested that there might be widely accepted and taken-for-granted understandings that most young boys would want to become All Blacks, and that the numbers of young boys playing was critical to the future of the game. The understandings were, perhaps, a little stronger in 1985, than those in 2005. If these combined understandings are an institutionalised logic then the question becomes, what action does this logic facilitate or constrain?

On the face of it, the understanding appears to be shared and respected by those charged with governance in 2005, and there was little evidence of complacency in the words that one senior administrator used:

I wanted to be an All Black, although it didn’t take me very long to work out that I was never going to be an All Black. I mean in my wildest dreams, it wasn’t going to happen...I think at the moment if you’ve got enough of an aspirational hook, enough of the younger population and enough of the generation stuff feeding back into that, that we can be comfortable that the aspiration is still a good driver of our business, but it cannot be taken-for-granted.

The logic might be seen to be a driver of actions taken to increase junior playing ‘numbers’. Flowing from a particular interpretation of the understanding, the vision statement “that rugby is the sport of choice for the maximum number of people in New Zealand” (NZRU Annual Report, 2005, p.6), there was evidence that the discourse has subtly altered to focus on the numbers. Issues of the quality of junior players, and their likelihood to continue the All Black production line have been sidelined in the

discourse. The widespread acceptance of the ‘fact’ that ‘Every boy *must* want to be an All Black’ might be seen to be facilitating an acceptance that things are being done in the ‘right’ way, *as long as numbers are there to support it*. The understanding, supported by numbers, might also be used as a justification to avoid some fundamental concerns about the junior game.

Just as in 1985, when two substitutes allowed numbers to be increased, there was evidence that decisions are being driven by a fear that ‘numbers’ might decline. The power of the institutionalised logic might be to make decisions that mean numbers do not go up are socially unacceptable. At a junior level, the ‘game’ might be viewed as being manipulated in an attempt to be a game for ‘every boy’. There is an argument that rugby has never been a game for ‘every boy’; it has always been a game for the boys who enjoyed the physical confrontation. This might be inferred from the comments from a former coach:

...if you didn’t play rugby you were a wuss and you didn’t want to be a wuss.

Or from an NZRU board member:

The other winter sport, football was almost looked down on by everybody. Boys who played it seemed a bit unusual. I suppose soft, very much a macho approach in those days to the game.

One administrator argued that rugby, quite logically, might not be the choice of all boys:

I would think that there are youngsters to whom the physicality appeals – there are hell of a lot more to whom it does not appeal, I think, at a young age. I mean I can’t remember ever crying on the football field, I might of, can’t remember. I’ve seen dozens of youngsters when they fall over or get hurt, they burst into tears and run to Dad or Mum.

But the drive for total playing numbers continues to prevail. The success of the All White soccer team in reaching the 1982 World Cup finals made a lasting impression on the discourse that surrounds this understanding. It produced a visible challenge to the prevailing logic, and, perhaps, introduced the concept of ‘justification by total numbers’. One interpretation might be that the logic is so ingrained in the community

that any threat to the numbers is perceived as a threat to the game as a whole. Driven by the understanding that 'Every boy *must* want to be an All Black' the reaction of administrators has been to change the game to make it appeal to the widest number of juniors. In 1985, the introduction of 'New Image' rugby might be seen as a drive to maintain the logic. 'New Image' rugby might have an alter ego in 2005, 'Rippa' rugby. Both were attempts to take the physical contact out of the game for junior players:

It's known as New Image Rugby and varies from the accepted game in these ways: At the scrum, the team feeding the ball must win it without competition from the other side; At the lineout, the side throwing-in should jump and feed the ball to the halfback without competition...In a tackle, when a player has an opponent place hands on each hip, he must instantly pass the ball... ('Super safe law changes introduced', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 3).

The wider community could be seen to be supportive of such changes. Lindsay Knight commented on the introduction of 'New Image' rugby:

It could provide some of the answers to Rugby's problems at junior schoolboy level especially as it stresses safety, the basic principles of passing and handling and, most importantly, that Rugby should always be a fun activity, involving even womenfolk (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 7).

The 'even womenfolk' comment might provide a clue as to the nature of another institutionalised logic, 'Thank the ladies for the spread', evidence for which is detailed in Appendix V. In much the same way 'Rippa' rugby, and 'Touch' rugby, were highlighted as a contribution to the numbers, by an NZRU administrator:

We have to have competitions for people at those early age groups so we've made a really big effort to get as many people at primary school age that we possibly can involved in the game. Thus Rippa rugby and all the things like Rippa, and it's working, against pretty stiff competition from the other codes, being football and you know I've got kids as well...I see what's going on in soccer. I would have thought having got them into the game there's always been a drop off (*in numbers*), even in the old days between primary school, secondary school and then club.

As he recognised, perhaps the numbers do not necessarily help later in the player development cycle. The same administrator admitted to possible desperation in what has been done in pursuit of the player numbers:

There aren't many rules so inadequate physical education teachers at primary school can organise those games. It is still competitive and it is still active and it still demands ball skills and it still demands thinking – the only thing it doesn't do is have line-out, scrums and rucks, which is the dangerous part of the game. And Mum will let their sons do that. If a youngster enjoys that and they are enjoying it (it's only been going for three years) dozens of youngsters are playing it and enjoying it and that might resurrect it. But it's a pretty desperate thing to have to do because Dad normally wanted the kids to go straight into a scrum and boys want to tackle. "I was tackling when I was seven" they'd say, "so why don't you guys tackle, you softie".

So for some, the numbers playing the game might not be the full picture. The fact that rugby is a physical game is recognised as a reason why it might not be suitable for 'everyone'. However, it is possible that the understanding that 'Everyone *must* want to be an All Black' has allowed the junior game to be altered to a different, and far less physical game, and one that tries to compete on a numbers basis with a multitude of other choices. An NZRU administrator perhaps recognised the futility of the persistent chase for 'everyone':

I just think that it's a natural part of the way life in this country and in most countries has gone. So unless you are very good – really good sportsman then have multi choices, and then if you decide as your choice...that you want to play rugby and are very good, you're fine. But if you're an average sportsman, rugby wouldn't be your choice, I don't think, because of the physicality of it, the demands of fitness, training at night, training in cold conditions often, and so on. There are a lot more interesting activities that kids can do.

The argument here does not imply that people are not concerned with the state of junior rugby. What is being suggested is that there is an institutionalised logic that is affecting the rugby community's patterns of thought. The logic drives a belief that if the numbers look good then all is okay. The understanding is self-regulating in that there is a cognitive cost to opposition. It requires considerably more thought and effort to get to

the issues behind the numbers. This cognitive effort does not have an immediate economic return. Concern was expressed by the Deputy CEO at the NZRU that every boy doesn't want to be an All Black, although the rather defensive stance suggested some recognition of the cognitive costs involved:

...we have a community plan that embraces all of community that includes school, juniors and open club environment (sic). We need to be realistic about what we can do as a national body. We can provide the framework but we have to be very mindful of the needs facing those levels and driving funding, *et cetera*. At the end of the day, responsibility for club and school rugby rests with the provincial unions...One of the huge issues is the drop-off rate for kids leaving school (Burnes, 2005f, *Rugby News*, p. 12).

As a national body the allocation of responsibility to provincial unions might be seen to be an issue. The needs and the '*et ceteras*' facing those unions are surely dictated by the framework set by the NZRU; a framework that might affect the quality of the All Blacks twenty years from now. Of the team that took the field in the Bledisloe Cup game at Eden Park in 2005, all the players would have been aged between two and 12 in 1985. It might be that these future All Blacks were the result of something other than just the simple 1985 playing numbers.

7.6. Institutionalised logic 15: '*My boy isn't playing that game*'

There was some evidence of an understanding that mothers now have considerable power over the choice of sport for their children. This institutionalised logic might be seen to have developed as the influence of 'Thank the ladies for the spread' (see Appendix V) has waned. It is almost as if this understanding has legitimised one important function for women in the environment of rugby. Integrated into the logic is a widespread taken-for-granted assumption that the reason why mothers might not want sons and daughters to play is the perceived levels of violence and injury. There was evidence that this understanding was developing back in 1985, although the recollections of how participants came to play rugby was dominated by fathers. Few of

the participants gave any credit to their mothers for influencing their choice of sport. Fathers were commonly seen to be drivers of action:

My father was a very keen rugby man. We started playing when we were at school and it was very much a part of our family life (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).

I was a five year old. My father was absolutely besotted with rugby so it was just the natural order of things that I took up playing (Referee, 1985).

...my father took me along to a weigh in session with a whole lot of my school mates (Supporter, 1985).

My father had been involved in rugby, and was keen and played, not to a high level but rugby was part of our family... My father used to take us rugby (Referee, 1985).

I can remember my Dad and I we never missed a game any Saturday (Journalist, 1985).

...like any young child your father is sort of God at some stage in your life and I was very keen to play (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).

In 1985, the wider discourse reflected this common theme. Dave Loveridge commented about his father, who never lived to see his son become an All Black:

He probably wanted me to be an All Black more even than I did. He was my greatest fan, always sticking up for me in discussions down at the club (Palenski, 1985, p. 94).

So there was a clear common understanding that it was 'Dad' that influenced what sport was going to be played. Even the contributions from the 2005 participants illustrated the same behaviour patterns:

Always went to club football with Dad on Saturday for the first two or three years while I was playing (Journalist, 2005).

There was certainly no direction or directive from Mum as to what sport I played. It was just Dad, I had grown up watching it and it was a natural flow on for me to go and play rugby (Journalist/Broadcaster, 2005).

I suppose it was part of the family culture. We all played rugby and that was just the tradition that had been instilled in us by Dad and probably by his Dad and that was the way it all transpired (Referee, 2005).

However, evidence emerged that, outside of their own experiences, there was an accepted understanding that mothers were having a greater influence on the choice of sport:

...the influence they wielded on sons. If they said no, you're not going to play rugby, I'm taking you along or your Dad's taking you along to play soccer or I'm taking you along to play soccer or another sport or I'm just not having you playing rugby, you can do something else (Journalist, 1985).

...there is no doubt in my mind now that women have far more say in what their sons will do in terms of the sport they will play, than what they did 20-25 years ago. And you go back any further than that and they had no say. Way back. There were some great marriages and obviously Mum and Dad talked about what their sons were going to do but Dad would say well he's going to play rugby and Mum would agree. This was the only sport available anyway. It was the only one that had any prestige at all (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

One NZRU Administrator's words might be seen as an illustration of just how far the power had shifted:

Was always keen on rugby, but I wasn't allowed to play by my mum. All my friends played rugby so I ended up playing (*another sport*).

The reasoning behind the development of this understanding, that women were an important influencing factor in the choice of sport, can be seen to be tied to two factors. The first was the opposition to apartheid, and the associated South African tours. The second was the spate of injuries that was highly visible in the discourse during 1984. On the South African issue, one journalist of the time explained:

...if you're little Johnny aged five, which is five, six, seven when you might be starting to get involved in rugby, you literally need someone to take you along to weigh in, and if your parent/parents are suddenly up in arms because they don't believe in sporting

contact with South Africa, because of what they've read or heard and its all wrong then I'm not going to let my boy be associated with that sport. And there are a lot of families that took that stance and so it was quite a number of years before rugby got over that...mothers – 'I'm not going to let my son play that terrible game'... mothers who were swayed by what I considered to be left wing bias from the media influencing a hell of a lot of mothers – 'terrible rugby people who dared to consort with bloody South Africa'.

Because of the South African issue it might be interpreted that the 'influence of mum' became a tool to be used in the discourse by the 'left wing' opposition to the tour. Others saw the horrendous run of injuries during the 1984 season as a focus for the logic's beginnings. A journalist recalled:

...and of course they naturally link that also with spinal injuries. You imagine how Mum's terrified that her kid might finish up in a wheel chair. So all those things came together at once. It was cataclysmic for rugby.

Cataclysmic, perhaps, in terms of those numbers again. An All Black from 1985 linked the neck injuries directly back to the mums:

I think we went through a stage in the, it would have been in the '80s when we got into the power scrumming and there were neck injuries, and that became quite a concern for the game with Mums holding the kids out of it, because Mums were concerned they were going to get injured.

In the words of one 1985 NZRFU council member, there might be evidence that the logic was strong enough to begin to drive the thought processes of those in charge of the game:

...in 1985 I think the rugby unions were starting very much to work towards getting women involved because they started to realise that women had more influence on who played rugby in the family than the fathers did. And so there was an awareness by 1985 that we needed to get women involved with rugby.

Outside the establishment there were calls for the game to promote itself to mums and dads. In a guest column in *Rugby News* a 'rugby mum', Dianne Haworth, wrote:

No one expects to increase sales of soap powder, wallpaper or motor cars without advertising – so why isn't the Rugby Union doing more to promote the game, where it counts, with the families of New Zealand? If the image of a Rugby player that springs to mind is of a beer drinking thick-witted zombie then the fault lies squarely with the Rugby Union for failing to correct this image. Rugby is, as we all know, a game of skill and flair with many of New Zealand's leading Rugby players going on to highly successful careers in the fields of industry, commerce and academia. So why not promote this image to the children of New Zealand, their mums and their dads (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 15).

The somewhat limited NZRFU publicity machine at the time might have been put into action to 'convince mothers' according to one report:

Gradually mothers are being convinced that injuries are very rare in schoolboy rugby, especially up to 15 years of age. So clubs, schools and especially colleges have to foster parents' support...Bad language and booze do more to put mothers off Rugby than most other things...Rugby cannot survive unless we look after the younger players, right from their early days at school (Reeve, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 25).

The following quotation, from a senior administrator at the time, might be interpreted as suggesting one reason women were allowed to play in the first place was a response to the developing logic:

...it was an acceptance I think at board level that we needed to get women involved. Women.... My wife is a classic example of this. She looks in a ruck and shudders and thinks there's all sorts of terrible things going on in there but if they've actually played the game they understand its not so bad. And so by getting them involved, I think it's very good now in the schools where they like to have a women's team. Most schools have a women's rugby team and so the girls play the game and realise this is not as barbaric as they sometimes think it is.

A *Rugby News* guest columnist, Bill Potter, addressed the understanding head on in a 'support for the game needed' article:

A few years ago, I was nearly mugged by an irate mother who told me that her son was not going to play this dangerous, rotten game called Rugby. Her boy was not going to

get his important self hurt by those monsters who cavorted about multi-lined paddocks...A friend told me recently that the game of Rugby was violent. "My kid isn't going to be exposed to that naughty rough stuff" (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

There was evidence of a common understanding developing that the root cause of any problems with mothers was the perceived level of violence inherent in rugby. This might be seen when participants were discussing the situation in 2005. On journalist commented:

...it has changed quite a bit and the women, they have had a say in what the kids play and as we said before some of them find rugby a bit too violent.

Two referees also commented on the link with foul play:

Rugby is a bit scared because mums... they see too much foul play and they won't let their kids and children play it.

This is probably why soccer is so popular because they don't get hurt. When people get hurt... simple as that, and also when you're watching it from the side line yee gods – what about mum?

The institutionalised logic might be seen to facilitate action to make the game 'appear' less physical. In combination with the effects of 'Every boy *must* want to be an All Black' action can be seen to be justified. One administrator, Vic Hinton, reacted to 'New Image' rugby in 1985:

It's something to make mothers happy. We've had lots of calls from delighted parents ('Super safe law changes introduced', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 3).

Not everybody was accepting of the actions. The logic was not so powerful that it could silence all opposition. Although, this 1985 coach's assertion that the 'majority stayed', indicted it may have had some influence on the outcomes:

At every level we had 'new image' rugby – you start off with a two handed catch, then one handed, then you progressed, so you'd get in that body position ready to tackle.

There were parents who weren't happy with no tackling, and we had all the threats to go to rugby league, but the majority stayed.

And another journalist reacted to 'Rippa' rugby in 2005:

I think Mums are less inclined to have their little kids playing rugby than they used to. Rugby has tried to counter that to be fair. They've introduced all sorts of measures, what do they call the new game, 'Rippa' rugby? What your kids play, there's no tackling and all that sort of thing and they try to limit the contact.

In 2005, there was some evidence that the understanding might be driving the actions of Sky television, in the way they cover the game. An NZRU administrator involved admitted that the decision of what to show, and what not to show, might be influenced by such an understanding:

The Sky guys here are very conscious that if there is a nasty injury or a big hit or something then what they say, how they produce it, how often it's replayed goes back to Mum. She's watching it, "I don't want Johnny playing in the forwards".

There were still some in the field, in 2005, who didn't accept that mothers were stopping boys playing. The fact that the debate could still occur, albeit in a private interview, suggested the institutionalisation of the logic might be at a relatively early stage. An example was the opinion offered by a journalist:

You get pretty amped over the evidence supposedly of parents particularly Mums who are not wanting their sons to play. I'm not convinced by that. I think sure there'll be some over protective Mums and who knows I think there probably are some cases, in many families, where the Mum takes the lead and says you're going to play this and play that. Overall I don't see it as an issue. The kids will play rugby or soccer or whatever they want really.

In summary, the evidence suggested a relatively weak institutionalised logic existed in both years. Possibly a little stronger in 1985, fuelled by South Africa and injuries. By 2005, these issues do not fuel the power of the logic. However, it might be that another factor is starting to give new life to the understanding. If mothers had forgiven rugby for

South Africa, they might not be so forgiving about the perception of the size of the opposition their sons face, according to one administrator:

...its quite dramatic and this is a problem area for rugby because you have fast maturing Polynesian people dominating the rugby scene right throughout and a lot of Mums have said hey my son is not playing and getting his head knocked off at an early age.

This might be linked with another possible developing understanding 'I don't want to be in the front row, I'm white', evidence for which is presented in Appendix V

7.7. Institutionalised logic 16: '*Beating the Springboks is everything*'

There appears to have been an understanding that, once a player had developed to be an All Black, the pinnacle was test matches against the South Africans. This institutionalised logic included an assumption that the ultimate goal for New Zealand rugby was to beat the Springboks, in South Africa. It was a powerful understanding that might be seen to have driven the actions of players, administrators and supporters further than a rational consideration of the 'facts' of the situation might have taken them. The discourse of 1985 was dominated by the proposed, and then cancelled, tour to South Africa. It is clear that this discourse had been strongly influenced by the events of 1981 when the Springboks had visited New Zealand. The evidence from 1985 begins with the discourse surrounding the challenge:

Haden told me that the All Blacks wanted to go because South Africa is the pinnacle for any red-blooded young man that wants a challenge. Undoubtedly. Well dream dreams (McLean, 1985g, *Rugby News*, p. 18).



An aborted crusade.

Source: Palenski, 1985, p. 220.

The logic might be seen to have developed over many years of rivalry going back to 1921. It was an integral part of rugby for some. An All Black, from 1985, recalled the impact that history might have had upon him:

The South Africans toured in 1970, I was nine, probably turned ten that year, that was a big event, scrap books and all that sort of stuff. Beating South Africa was always important.

It appears to have been the same for supporters. One supporter commented on another's behaviour:

The joke was, one of my sister-in-law's friends, her husband, when they got married, he was a strong rugby supporter at the time, he got up in the middle of the night on their honeymoon to watch the Springbok match. That's how important rugby was, that's just what you did.

In the rugby press Bob Howitt, editor of *Rugby News*, appeared to articulate a taken-for-granted 'fact':

The main mission of the 1985 All Blacks will be to succeed where their predecessors of 1928, 1949, 1960, 1970 and 1976 failed – in winning a series on South African soil (1985k, *Rugby News*, p. 3).

The understanding, in 1985, was very specific; beating the South Africans in South Africa. In fact, this was not to happen until 1996. The following extract was printed as a letter to the editor from a Rod Houghton (Rotorua):

To beat the Boks on their grounds is the Everest of Rugby (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 26).

Bob Howitt continued with the mountaineering theme:

South Africa is to a New Zealand player what Everest is to a mountaineer (1985m, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

In 1985, this logic might be seen as at the height of its power to influence actions. There is an interpretation that the desire of the rugby community to tour South Africa, in the face of widespread opposition, was driven by the institutionalised logic. The vehemence with which the rugby community defended its right to maintain sporting links with South Africa was perhaps fuelled by the strength of the understanding ‘Beating the Springboks is everything’. An NZRFU administrator at the time recalled:

South Africa had been traditional friends, opponents obviously, they had been our strongest opponents right back if you went back to the 1920s and so South Africa was a long time rugby friend. Rugby people by and large wanted to continue that relationship. There were a growing number of people who thought that was propping up apartheid and we shouldn’t have a sporting contact with South Africa... it was really at its height and was a terrible furor at that particular time over the Springbok tour that came here. The Rugby Union, probably the Rugby Union, would never have given up its right to continue the sporting contacts with South Africa, but the government stepped in and stopped us from touring South Africa in that year.

The rugby press was supportive of the stance. Front page headlines “We’re off to bust the Boks” (Howitt, 1985h, *Rugby News*, p. 1) with a logo based on a popular film and

song of the year ‘*Ghostbusters*’, might illustrate the passion felt in the community. This logo was advertised as a T-Shirt for \$12.95.



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 8, p. 14.

In 1985, other test matches might have been seen to be relegated to a lesser importance:

One might regard carefully All Black coach Brian Lochore’s comments, when he stated he was unhappy that some of the All Blacks could be dismissing the English and Australian test matches, in favour of the South African tour (McLean, 1985e, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

The first Rugby World Cup was less than two years away. Who cared when there was South Africa to beat? The All Blacks at the time did not appear to care much about the World Cup:

...everything was over shadowed by the Springbok tour. The selection, obviously the legal challenge, and the calling off of it. That was a big event of the year basically.

It may well have been in the pipeline but I do not recall it being something that we were aiming at, at that time. We were really focusing on that South African tour. Totally.

Support for the tour is still a sensitive issue for many of those involved. With hindsight this was not an easy decision for the players, according to one participant involved at the time:

In general, you see, the sports press wanted the tour to go ahead. And they were reasonably okay with where we sat on the issue. I couldn't do a lot about it. I just had to go with the punches and accept the consequences. My feeling always was that it would be better... I certainly had no problem justifying going to South Africa...I had an absolute clear conscience because I think I have done my bit towards breaking the racial barriers down in South Africa. Not all journalists understood that. Of course many of them didn't want to anyway.

The decisions were not easy for administrators in the face of such a powerful logic. This justification from one administrator, who made the decision not to support the tour, suggested there were social consequences of acting contrary to the prevailing institutionalised understanding:

I know in my heart of hearts I was absolutely correct and I think now a lot of people have been to South Africa and seen what actually occurs, including some people around here who were Cavaliers.

The New Zealand Cavaliers tour took place in 1986. This was an unofficial tour undertaken by largely the same group of players who were stopped from touring in 1985. The strength of the institutionalised logic might be seen as helping them through some difficult decisions, according to one former All Black:

Some of our great players had targeted that tour because we had never beaten South Africa in South Africa. We had a very good team, potentially a very good team. They wanted to be the first All Black side to bowl South Africa in South Africa.

The strength of the disappointment felt when the tour was halted through legal action was expressed by one participant involved with the All Black 'team' at the time. The words perhaps imply that the force behind the prevailing logic almost flew them through the storm:

So when the tour was cancelled they were in an awful state. They just felt that their whole world had fallen down on them. Because they practiced, every training run they'd gone on... I guess it's like someone training for a world triathlon. Every time you go out you can only think of... I've got to get my time down. So here was me sitting back on the farm, tour cancelled and people ringing me up all the time, all the players saying what are we going to do? We've got to go. We did organise a rebel tour which we pulled the pin on less than 12 hours before we were due to leave. Because they had declared a state of emergency in South Africa. We would have been flying into a storm. We would not have had the support of the New Zealand public if we had have gone over there. We all made a cumulative decision, and we were almost assembled. Nobody knew we were going but... that's when we cancelled.

The understanding was so strongly felt that on the abandonment of the tour, one selected All Black, Murray Mexted, was motivated to write an open letter to the editor of *Rugby News* to express his disappointment:

As a present member of the All Black side, I know I speak for many others when I say that I consider to play South Africa in South Africa is the ultimate challenge (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 26).

The 1986 decision to tour as the Cavaliers might be seen to be driven by the institutionalised logic. Only two players (David Kirk and John Kirwan) made themselves unavailable. There is an interpretation that the players on the tour might have been viewed very differently by the rugby community had they won the series. They lost three games to one, and the players involved were suspended for two games on their return.

By 2005, there was evidence that the logic had waned in influence. The Springboks were still viewed as the traditional foe, but as an institutionalised logic that drove action there was little to support its existence. One journalist perhaps summed up the prevailing view:

They are our real foes and they are probably the hardest to subdue, even though at times they can play poorly against other nations they seem to lift against the All Blacks, so there's still that sort of mystical rivalry still there.

The view might have gotten a little stronger when the South Africans start to play well:

But the best thing about the Phillips Tri-Nations was to feel again that old respect, and the intense rivalry between those who support or wear the green and gold jersey with the leaping Springbok, and those who follow, or carry on the great tradition of playing in the black jersey with the silver fern. There's nothing quite like it (Johnson, 2005b, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 32).

There was evidence that even the Springbok players were starting to recognise the reducing power of the logic. Their captain, John Smit commented:

A few years ago when I faced the haka, I felt they were just going through the motions because we did not provide them with enough of a challenge (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 54).

By 2005, even supporters may not be motivated by 'Beating the Springboks'. One participant, a 2005 supporter, justified his grudging acceptance that losing a test has become acceptable in pursuit of bigger goals, by claiming to come from an old 'romantic view':

From an old romantic point of view, I was brought up that a test was the ultimate, you lose and you're going to be in the record books. You would never throw a test or lose one if you could help it. It's sad that that happens now, I'm only thinking about South Africa, you just don't want to lose your record against them.

There was strong evidence that 'Beating the Boks is everything' had been replaced by a new and perhaps even more powerful institutionalised logic, 'We're building for the World Cup'. On the cancellation of the 1985 tour to South Africa, Bob Howitt concluded:

We'd all better hope that the World Cup concept itself becomes a satisfactory substitute for the best series the game can offer (1985m, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

As will be uncovered, 'be careful what you hope for' might be apt.

7.8. Institutionalised logic 17: ‘We’re building for the World Cup’

In the 2005 data there was strong evidence of a widely held and, beginning to be taken-for-granted, understanding that the Rugby World Cup is now the ultimate goal for New Zealand rugby. This increasingly widespread understanding is facilitating and constraining action across a range of communities in the field. There was evidence that it is driving those charged with governance, and an institutionalised logic, ‘We’re building for the World Cup’, was being used as a justification for a range of actions that might not otherwise be acceptable to various rugby communities. The link to the previous institutionalised logic, ‘Beating the Springboks’, was evident in an explanation of the 2007 Rugby World Cup preparation offered by a member of the All Blacks ‘team’:

...in 1995 we started focusing on the World Cup probably 12 months out, or maybe 18 at the most. This time, rightly or wrongly, it’s been the focus for two or three years. As long as this group of selectors and coaches have been together we have done nothing else but focus on the World Cup. Why? Because it has become something that is a bit like focusing on South Africa...the focus this year is very similar to that because we haven’t done it yet. And the public are getting increasingly frustrated. And that’s a challenge, because we have not been able to do it the challenge becomes bigger. It’s got to be a bigger challenge for us than it is for Australia, because they have done it a couple of times. We have only ever done it once and that was the first year.

Making an argument that the All Black selectors should consider players contracted overseas, a *Rugby News* columnist referred to the Brazilian football team, and the mythical creature that the World Cup had become:

In football the last two World Cups were won by French and Brazilian sides comprised almost exclusively of overseas players. Could be an omen that if the NZRU change their stance a new generation of Kiwis might get the chance to see that the William Webb Ellis trophy is not just a mythical creature invented by their granddads (*sic*) (Davis, 2005, *Rugby News*, p. 43).

The fear of failing to slay this new mythical beast can be seen to have been used to support a variety of arguments in the discourse, surrounding actions such as; the

withdrawal of All Blacks from ‘lesser’ competitions and club rugby; and rotation policies, where All Black reserves are given game time to cover the possibility of injury to the number one selection. This suggests that the fear might have reached an institutionalised state, one that might only be eroded by a specific functional change – winning the thing! Back in 1985, the evidence suggested that ideas about a World Cup were a part of the discourse, but had not yet produced any kind of habitualised response. It was in March, 1985, that the IRB made the decision to introduce a World Cup. At the time the issue that stirred most passion amongst the rugby community was whether South Africa would be invited:

The IRB has shied off nominating which 16 countries will compete in the inaugural World Cup in 1987, but it was emphatic that as a member nation South Africa must be invited ('World Cup too late..., 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 3).

The editor of *Rugby News* was clearly in favour of the World Cup proposals:

This cannot have escaped the attention of those gentlemen pushing hard for the introduction of a World Cup for Rugby in 1987. Though the concept is still being viewed sceptically by administrators in Britain, a World Cup championship, imaginatively presented, would surely command a vast world-wide audience, and could do wonders for the promotion of the game. One only needs to watch live a few games of American Football in the States or, closer to home, the midweek league knockout competition in Australia, to appreciate the possibilities television holds (Howitt, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 2).

Even back in 1985, the dearth of true competition for the All Blacks was evident in the discourse. In a letter to the editor ‘An All Black fan (New Zealand)’ supported the idea of a World Cup:

We cannot go on playing against the same handful of sides for ever. Thank goodness the IRB has finally agreed to a World Cup. It is the only bright spot in a bleak future ('Changes essential', 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 30).

The concept of a World Cup was slipping into other parts of the discourse. A new Adidas rugby boot, “note the light, tough kangaroo leather” was called World Cup,

“When you slip your feet into a pair of World Cups, you know you’re into something special...” (‘Boot it!’, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 20). Just how ‘special’ the World Cup was to become was perhaps unappreciated at the time. It was interesting to note that the World Cup was considered unimportant enough at the time for the Australians to be given credit for coming up with the concept by at least one NZRFU administrator:

...as far as I’m concerned it (*World Cup*) started in Australia. I hate to say this. And I give them full marks and they were really driven by a certain amount of desperation at that stage. They hadn’t been doing very well, they realised they had to do something to improve things and our relationship with Australia was pretty good and we helped them in those days.

It may be that the failed South African tour provided the vacuum into which the institutionalised logic first started to emerge. T.P.McLean lamented the failed Springbok tour under the heading “World Cup our Rugby salvation” and reported:

On Saturday, in Sydney, the full World Cup sub-committee of the International Board is to meet and to make lasting decisions. One will concern the company or corporation which has been signed to promote a great many angles of the cup. Television, ground signage, sponsorships, all manner of things will be involved; to an extent that, so I am told by members of the committee, “there will be no cause for concern as to the financial success of the cup tournament” (1985g, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

For the players in 1985, the World Cup was only just on the horizon. Their behaviour might be seen to be focused on the next match, not some future event. One 1985 All Black recalled:

I think it was about that time, yeah about, maybe even a year later ’86, no it must have been ’85. There was discussion about it. I didn’t engage in it or care much about it to be honest, whatever happened, happened. I was a player and if they put on a World Cup I’d be there. I wanted to make the next team and play well in the next game.

According to one NZRFU administrator it did not have much influence in the boardroom:

Many of those probably didn't regard it as a particularly important issue at that time. They were more concerned over what was happening with South Africa or just over probably the odd petty parochial things in rugby.

Perhaps some were intuitively aware just what a powerful influence the logic was to become. A member of the All Blacks 'team' commented:

In 1987, or 1986 probably, when the World Cup was first talked about I said to the rugby union and I said to leading IRB members, I said I don't believe it should be every four years. I think it should be every six years and they said well why? I said, because I think you'll find the focus will just become the World Cup and therefore the internationals that have been so important in the last hundred years will be lesser. Lesser competition, as everyone focuses every four years and I don't think that's good for rugby and I still haven't changed my mind.

By 2005, the evidence was that an institutionalised logic, 'We're building for the World Cup', held a dominant and pervasive position at the centre of the field of New Zealand rugby. There was some evidence that the focus on the World Cup has been driven by money. 'It's a business now' can be seen as a fundamental driver for the IRB's approach to the Rugby World Cup. The economic consequences of opposing the institutionalised logic might be sanctions from the international body. The acceptance that the NZRU have 'no real choice' might be a strong indicator that the logic has established itself at the centre of the board table. This was reflected in the views of an NZRU board member:

The IRB depends so much, so much on finance from the World Cup, to try and get the game global – they would have a fit if they thought we were moving away from the World Cup.

It might be that some are not even sure how the World Cup got to such a dominant position, but the frustration at its power to facilitate and constrain action came through in these comments from the same administrator:

We're talking more about 2007 (*Rugby World Cup*) now than we are about anything else, and we have been for the last two years. I mean the board meeting in March which

is designated World Cup Board Meeting, you get all the low down from the coaches and the rest of the management squad as to how they're going to win the World Cup and the board then has to say well you can do this, you can do that and you can't do that. Bloody nonsense. I don't get it anyway.

Another board member confirmed that, in 2005, winning the World Cup in 2007 was the primary focus of the board. The actual building that houses the World Cup was important for at least one person as the following quotation illustrates. Justification for the commercial benefits that may flow to the winners came from this administrator:

It's seen as the most prestigious trophy or championship to win in rugby, so whilst Bledisloe and Tri-Nations are very, very important to us, it hurts to not have the World Cup in the building as well. And every country wants to hold the World Cup. England, what have they done since they won it? It doesn't matter that, they're the world champions and they will be for another year, and they might get up and be world champions for another four, and they will be happy just to live off that. So it's really important I guess from a pride perspective. New Zealand wants to win a World Cup and from a business sense. I only spend the money, I'm not in the area of generating it. I guarantee that if you talk to the guys that bring the dollars in, that it has real value. That holding the World Cup, being world champion adds value.

The growing influence of television, according to one journalist and broadcaster, might have helped establish the Rugby World Cup at the centre of New Zealand rugby's universe:

Well it's the same in soccer that the World Cup is the focus there and yet the greatest soccer team in the world, Brazil, doesn't win it every time. And I think it is fair to say that we are the best rugby team in the world year in year out, but we need to win it in the near future – either this next one or the one after – to be able to establish that we're still the number one brand in the world. People want the black jersey more than they want anyone else's jersey and so those things remain important. For the future of the game, because so much is decided by television coverage and by events. A single event saying we are the world champion suits the mentality of television and television controls the game internationally.

The arguments used to support the logic have been firmly established in the minds of those involved, and can be viewed in the discourse of 2005. For one former coach, it was the expansion of the game worldwide:

Brilliant. It puts rugby in the eye of the world, like the Olympics and the soccer World Cup. If its good enough for them hundreds of years ago, its got to be good for us. Look when Georgia play Russia and 80,000 people turn up at a rugby game. I read that five times and thought there's something wrong, but I checked it up. Tunisia playing Ethiopia to go to the next World Cup. It's our game. I want to share our game with everybody.

Whilst appreciating the argument, a slightly more cynical view was expressed by one journalist:

I think you could argue that the Rugby World Cup is trying to send messages out to people that what a great game this is and you should be playing and it should be played in more places. But I don't think that will happen for the same reason that soccer never got a foothold here.

For another, a 1985 NZRFU official, it was the soccer World Cup and those numbers again:

...you've only got to look back to when the New Zealand soccer team did very well in the World Cup, soccer went ahead in leaps and bounds as a result of that, and success by the premier team of any sport has hugely... has a huge determinance on how many people play the game. More kids playing the game, then it's a bigger pool to pick from and better quality. So I think that winning the World Cup is hugely important for New Zealand.

The pervasive nature of the logic might be illustrated by this journalist's comment. Its effect can start to be seen, with the positioning of all other All Black games as subservient to the World Cup:

...the public make it the priority and so does the international press, so sadly the individual test matches like the Tri-Nations and the Bledisloe Cup and important matches like that, and the Lions series, they played very much a secondary role to the

World Cup. And I think it's probably also due to the fact that we haven't won it since 1987.

Even supporters, by 2005, appeared to accept that losses are just part of the process of building towards the World Cup:

It was the same with All Black losses. I mean apart from the World Cup, if the All Blacks lost... the All Blacks lost the other week, in the past I would feel the depression the next day. There would be national mourning, it just doesn't happen any more. It's a fact of life. We are going to lose.

The commonly held understanding appears to have been interpreted, by the NZRU, in terms of what the 'public' will and will not accept. One NZRU administrator suggested as much:

Priorities have changed so I think the public could handle not winning the Tri-Nations if we won the World Cup. Certainly they would hate to lose the Bledisloe Cup but they could probably give that up for the World Cup too.

The question arises as to why one necessarily has to be given up for the other. Has part of the logic's pervasive nature caused a change in the psyche of New Zealand rugby – that losing is acceptable, as long as it is in pursuit of winning the World Cup?

Even the much maligned women's rugby was building for the World Cup. "Ferns building for World Cup" was one headline from 2005 (Stone, 2005e, *Rugby News*, p. 37). The tentacles of the institutionalised understanding spread far and wide. One commentator, a former Manu Samoa representative, suggested it was affecting New Zealand rugby's stance towards Pacific Island players' eligibility for the All Blacks. The suggestion was that the desire to win the World Cup is influencing unfairly selection policies:

Many, sometimes motivated by racism, will be quick to say we should look after our own and to hell with the rest of the world. This short-sighted, narrow-minded view overlooks the great contribution the Pacific peoples have made to our rugby fabric. We

should not allow a slavish pursuit of World Cup glory cloud the fact that we need them, as they need us (Burnes, 2005g, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

‘We’re building for the World Cup’ may have taken a little longer to become as widely accepted amongst the players. A former All Black made a comparison between the World Cup ambitions in 2005, and the 1985 acceptance amongst the players that ‘Beating the Springboks is everything’:

I don’t think they were probably on board in 2004 when we started. But they certainly are on board now. They have a strong drive as well but I think it was initiated by Graham (*Henry*) whereas in the ’85 the players initiated the importance of that tour.

Opposing the prevailing logic would, by 2005, appear to be difficult. Here one administrator articulated an idea opposing the dominance of the World Cup, but then recovered quickly and disassociated himself from the ‘strong body of opinion’:

...there is a strong body of opinion that considers that the World Cup might be taking the popularity away from the normal test matches – if I may use the word normal, in the main rugby playing countries. However the contrary argument, rugby has been developed in so many more countries now that little countries are playing rugby at test level, and playing it pretty well. They were never even heard of in those years. And the popularity of women’s rugby is partly because of that. Even the... a lot of the so-called rugby fanatics wouldn’t know how many countries are playing rugby, involving literally hundreds of people in each country.

Would these so-called ‘rugby fanatics’ be related to the ‘rugby purists’ that opposed an earlier logic? Another, this time a journalist, was a little braver, recognising one obvious consequence of the understanding as the ‘soccer friendly’:

The World Cup is the IRB’s only revenue and that’s used to assist global rugby so that’s crucial there, but there’s four years in between, so there is a lot of rugby to be played, and I would hate to see rugby go the way of soccer and start calling internationals friendlies in between World Cups. The All Blacks have never played a friendly in their life. You play the game to win and it’s an international, it’s a bone fide international. I just think there is an obsession with it.

Here a supporter was perhaps grumbling, but the tone was accepting of the focus on ‘different things’:

...before a test used to be what the game was all about. A test was a test, that was the ultimate. But now it’s pretty mundane, you know, they’re sort of throwing in tests here and there just to build up, with players out and all that kind of thing so they are focusing on different things.

Another supporter showed some acceptance of the institutionalised logic, and commented on one of the effects:

I don’t think that the resting of the All Blacks really matters. I think most people have bought into the theory of resting for the World Cup. If they win it then it’s worked and if they don’t win it then nothing has worked. I don’t think that will be a major problem. I mean if next year it’s the Blues playing Canterbury early on in the Super 14 then I would probably still be keen to go. There will still be ten, maybe fifteen former All Blacks on display – they are still good players.

But, having thought a little more deeply about the implications, some disquiet emerged. Is the dominance of the logic starting to get out of control?

It’s almost become a fixation, maybe it’s become too... people have become too carried away with it. Just because we haven’t won it for so long and we do enjoy our rugby here. We seem to go well between World Cups but not the actual year itself. It possibly has become too big a focus to be honest.

But then he felt the urge to justify the actions that flowed from the logic once again. As if trying to convince himself that the behaviours driven by ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ were positive for the game, and the country:

I think it’s just good for the country as a whole... I haven’t been around long enough to know if it has a direct flow on effect to our local game. I would guess it will do. I would hope it would do. But until we win it we might not quite know. It is just in the last wee while that it has spiraled into...

He couldn't finish that sentence. 'We're building for the World Cup' may not allow too vocal an opposition. The institutionalised logic might be seen to be facilitating a whole new set of patriots in the field, those that are trying in some way to take responsibility for the psyche of the whole country. A referee for example:

I think because we haven't won it for 20 years, it is almost vitally important for this country for us to win it, for the psyche of the country.

There was more evidence of the constraining nature of the logic. Even those on the NZRU board might have found it unacceptable to put forward contradictory ideas:

This is a heinous³³ thing to say. I would not have a World Cup. It does more harm than good – it establishes a four year complex which I think is wrong. Every test match you play for your country is as important as the one before and the one after. And the frantic effort to prepare every four years for the big show down is just bloody nonsense...In the end when the usual top four get through to the final, South Africa, Australia and England. We play them most years so why a World Cup?

Perhaps so heinous that it hasn't been brought up at board level? More evidence of pressure to conform comes from the IRB. The IRB Communications Director made sure everyone understood just how important the Rugby World Cup is:

The Rugby World Cup is now the world's third biggest sporting event...the tournament is responsible for 95 percent of the IRB's revenue. It is therefore the main source of funding for the development of the game (Thomas, 2005b, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 32).

This sort of comment might be seen to place anyone opposing the power of the institutionalised logic as a blockage to the 'development of the game'. Holding a view opposed to the prevailing understanding might have been labeled 'old fashioned' according to one NZRU administrator:

The aspirational paths for a New Zealand rugby player should be to become an All Black and if he's good enough to play in a test that should be as important as any other test he plays in, never mind the World Cup. That's just an old fashioned approach to it.

³³ **Heinous** adj. "Hateful, odious; highly criminal or wicked; infamous, atrocious" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007).

'Building for the World Cup' took on a new dimension at the end of 2005, when New Zealand won the hosting rights for the 2011 Rugby World Cup. It is possible that the logic may have extended its powers outside the field of New Zealand rugby, and into the country as a whole. Infrastructure projects, justified by the 'need to be ready for the World Cup' began to appear in national press during 2006. Much of the debate on whether a national stadium should be built on Auckland's waterfront was predicated on a justification that this was an integral part of 'We're building for the World Cup'. Some of the contributions from the government implied that anybody who was not willing to accept this justification was somehow lacking in vision and unpatriotic. For the NZRU, according to this senior administrator, the World Cup has become a 'legacy'. Evidence, perhaps, that a set of ideas has reached a fully institutionalised state:

The World Cup was the big prize and it's ultimate successful conclusion the most important thing in 2005, I think...It might prove to be over time because there is no doubt having the opportunity to host the World Cup is going to give this game in this country an enormous profile and an enormous something on the horizon. One of things we talked about in the bid was... it's quite hard to talk about the legacy. A legacy is a very important thing to Olympic movements and IRBs of the world. We worked very hard to think through how we'd say what would our legacy be, and one of the things we came back to was "that New Zealand rugby provides a significant amount of the intellectual equity of the game worldwide". Our players, coaches, administrators, referees, doctors, they are all through the game of rugby in the world, everywhere you look...We had more coaches and players at that Rugby World Cup in 2003 than any other country. So what we were saying was "if the World Cup helps make rugby stronger in New Zealand for another five to ten years then we can continue to grow these players, grow these managers, grow these coaches and continue that contribution to the world", so that would be the legacy... it will be enormous for the country if we can host the World Cup successfully because the economic impacts are unarguable. That's why the Prime Minister flew across the other side of the world and spent literally four hours in Dublin and flew back. But thankfully the fact that the Rugby World Cup will be here is something that will make sure that rugby will be a positive headline, if we get it right, for the next six years.

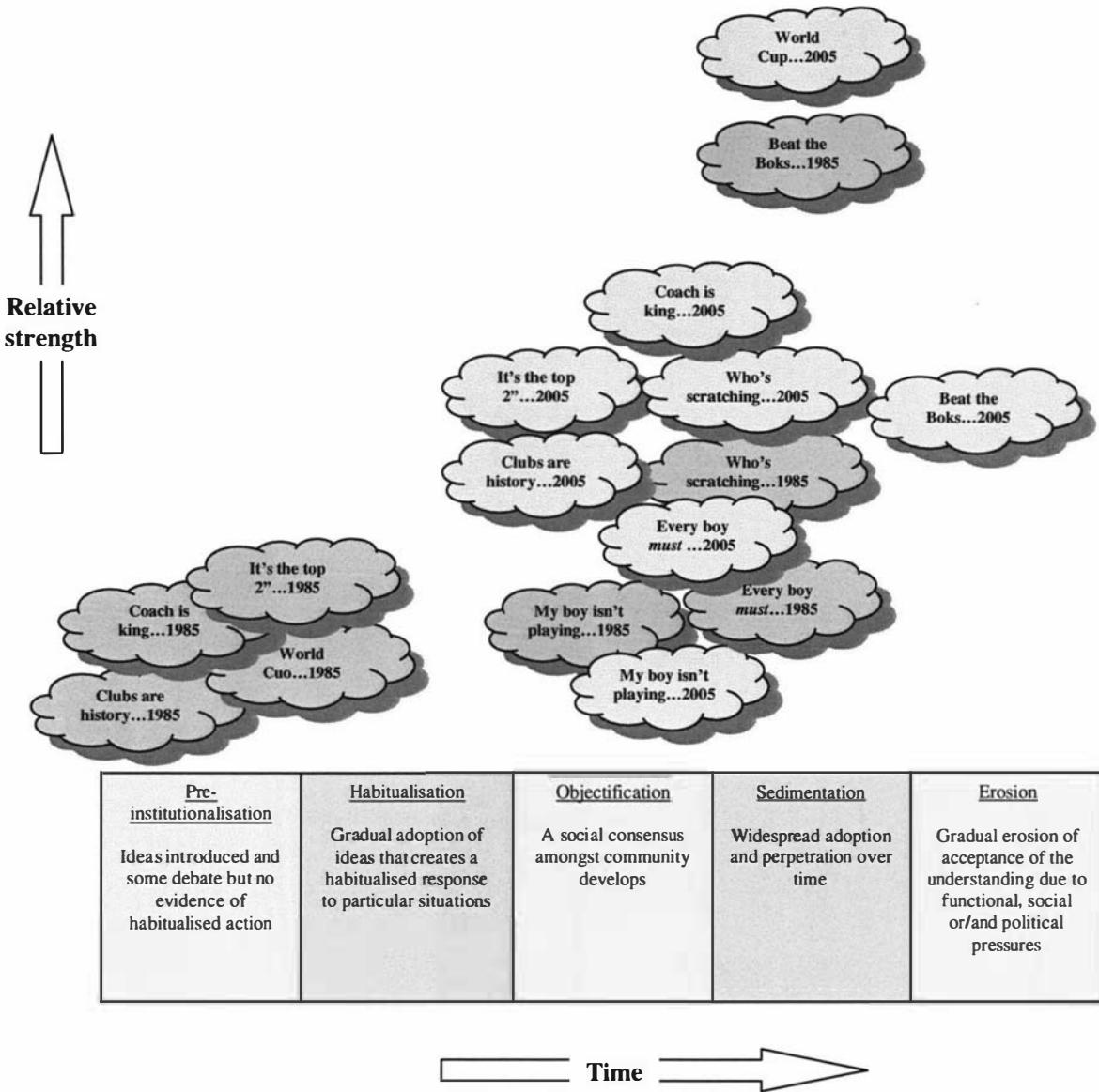
An institutionalised logic that can close down any arguments about economic impacts as 'unarguable', and facilitate the Prime Minister of a country traveling around the world

for a four hour meeting, must surely be recognised as having the power to influence behaviour in the field of New Zealand rugby.

7.9. An interpretation of the strength of the logics

An interpretation of the relative strengths of the institutionalised logics that might be seen in the discourse under the heading, ‘The Conveyer to the Goal’ is presented in Figure 7.1. on the following page. In 1985, evidence suggested that ‘Beating the Springboks is everything’ was dominant, but by 2005, the logic’s power to facilitate or constrain behaviour had largely disappeared. In its place was an institutionalised logic that appears to dominate the landscape, ‘We’re building for the World Cup’. As to other logics that might influence how All Blacks are developed, evidence suggests that ‘Every boy *must* want to be an All Black’, ‘My boy is not playing that game’, and ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’ have remained reasonably stable between the years studied. ‘The Coach is King’, ‘It’s the top two inches that matters’, and ‘The clubs are history’ all appear to have grown in influence over the field during the twenty year period examined.

Figure 7.1. The Conveyor to the Goal: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby



Chapter Eight: Discussion

Evidence as to the nature of seventeen potential institutionalised logics of varying strengths, and at various stages of development, was presented in the previous three chapters. The institutionalised logics were allocated labels so as to convey meaning. Those labels were grouped under broad headings as follows:

The Business of Rugby

It's only a game
It's a business now
TV runs the game
What the sponsors say goes
Central control is the way to go!

Laws to be Obeyed

What happens on the field stays on the field
A bit of biff is part of the game
You don't argue with the referee
Don't cross the ethos

Conveyor to the Goal

Who's scratching whose back?
The clubs are history
The coach is king
It's the top two inches that matter
Every boy must want to be an All Black
My boy isn't playing that game
Beating the Springboks is everything
We're building for the World Cup

Evidence for a further three institutionalised logics are presented in Appendix V

Thank the ladies for the spread
I don't want to be in the front row, I'm white
It's a good excuse for a drink

The nature of these taken-for-granted understandings might be viewed as features of the environment of New Zealand rugby in 1985 and 2005. This chapter presents a discussion on the findings, linking them to the theory outlined in Chapter Two, the concepts derived from institutional theory, and the puzzle of governance. The discussion is conducted within the context of decisions made by those charged with the

governance of rugby in New Zealand. What emerges is a picture of just how the nature of the institutionalised logics might affect outcomes.

8.1. Links to the concepts derived from institutional theory

The balance of evidence supports an argument that institutionalised logics can be seen to ‘exist’ in the field of New Zealand rugby. The examination of a part of the discourse surrounding rugby in 1985, and in 2005, supports the existence of “historical accretions of past practices and understandings that set conditions on action” (Phillips et al., 2004, p. 637). These institutionalised logics might be seen to exist only in the human mind; they do not exist as “effects of causes which do not include human states” (Rorty, 1989, pp. 4-5). However, this does not make them any less influential in the environment in which they are seen to exist. For a group of individuals to share a common understanding that, for example, ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’ leads to action that may or may not be considered to be in the long term interests of the game. The results suggest support for Scott’s (2001) view that an individual’s interpretation of what they might take for granted is shaped by an external cultural framework. It is the institutionalised logics that are commonly accepted in a particular environment that produce patterns of action. This suggests that the institutionalised logics of Australian, or English rugby union, for example, might look very different from that of New Zealand rugby union.

The strength of the institutionalised logic can be seen to increase or decrease with the degree of legitimacy (Eisenhardt, 1988; Suchman, 1995). The influence wielded by ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’, for example, can be seen to have waned between 1985 and 2005, as the generalised perception, that the actions it causes are inappropriate, has spread through the rugby community. The model of the process of institutionalisation, adapted from Tolbert and Zucker (1999) and Oliver (1992), has proved a useful conceptual tool to interpret the different institutionalised logics strength in each of the years. However, the process does not offer a mechanism to reach a level of exactitude that some might prefer. There are no standard measures that can be used to precisely measure the degree of institutionalisation and its level of influence in a field. This might be a problem for studies using a different methodological approach.

Using discourse analysis as a method to draw out evidence of institutionalisation of the logics has gone some way to overcome Zucker's concerns that common understandings are "seldom explicitly articulated" (1983, p. 5). In some cases the evidence has been explicit, once the context had been established. For example, "matches are won by the smartest team. Rugby's many rules require more thought from its players" (Stone, 2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 5, p. 11) can be seen as a clear articulation of the understanding behind 'It's the top two inches that matters'. For other logics the evidence is less explicit. Only by integrating the actions produced by the understandings into the analysis can the institutionalisation of the logics begin to be viewed. An example might be the evidence of the actions taken by parents to move their prospective 'rugby stars' to particular schools, in response to 'Who's scratching whose back?'.

There was strong evidence that Andy Haden provided an example of Kikulis's idea "that human agents play an active role in determining the level at which ideas and actions become institutionalized" (2000, p. 299). At times the discourse suggests that Andy Haden was almost alone in pushing for the development of professionalism. The fact that professionalism was not fully endorsed until 1995, some ten years later, does not diminish the evidence that 'It's a business now' had taken its place in the environment long before that date.

In the context of governance one observation that emerges is the contrast with the way in which English rugby developed its professional model (O'Brien & Slack, 2003, 2004). The isomorphic change to a professional logic that diffused throughout the field of English rugby was not exactly replicated in New Zealand. The driver for the model in England was the takeover of Newcastle-Gosforth Rugby Club by business entrepreneur Sir John Hall (O'Brien & Slack, 2004). This ultimately led to the dominant position of the clubs at the expense of the central national union. In New Zealand this did not happen. One possible reason for this was the existence of the institutionalised logic 'Central control is the way to go!'. Even in 1985, there was evidence for such an institutionalised logic, as led at the time by chairman, Ces Blazey. Few in the environment of 1985 (Andy Haden excepted), were willing to challenge the prevailing understandings. It appears that the dominant logic that spread through New Zealand rugby was that of 'business', and that of a centrally controlled business, rather than that of a 'professional sport'. The effect was to give legitimacy to the idea that 'Central

control is the way to go!”. This has enabled Morgan’s (2002) hierarchy to become firmly established as the model of governance in New Zealand rugby. Even the addition of a weak cartel model in the form of Super 14 franchises has done little to loosen that central control.

In summary, the analysis, based on ideas developed from institutional theory, has proven to be a practical and novel mechanism through which to view the environment of New Zealand rugby. It has provided the tools needed to expose the nature of changes in what was commonly taken-for-granted between 1985 and 2005. The next step is to link those changes to decisions made by those charged with governance.

8.2. Links to governance

It is argued that each of the institutionalised logics identified might have some effect on the outcomes of decisions made by those charged with governance. In certain situations the effect may be seen as positively facilitating the desired outcomes, but in other situations it may be seen as blocking, or slowing down the achievement of such outcomes. The same institutionalised logic might be seen as having a positive effect in the context of the achievement of some decision-outcome equations, but a negative effect on the achievement of others.

The following sections of this chapter focus on how the identified institutionalised logics might be interpreted as affecting the decisions of those charged with governance. How these logics might be seen to interact and affect each other will also be considered. A partial picture of the changing nature of the landscape of New Zealand rugby will emerge. It will not be a complete picture, but might provide some insight into the two problems posed at the start of this research; why haven’t the All Blacks won the Rugby World Cup since 1987, and might the nature of institutionalised logics be one missing piece in our understanding of the link between governance and performance?

This discussion illustrates the landscape of New Zealand rugby through a focus on five sample questions that have faced the game over the twenty year time frame. The format is based on Bougeois’s (1979) ‘metaphysical elaboration’ which is a forum in which to

explore not only the meaning but also the impact of the institutionalised logics and insights identified, and formed as the research progressed. Bougeois suggested that there are some conceptualisations that just do not fit the rigid categories that traditional empirical research might impose. In this case the speculative, and possibly un-testable, nature of the interpretations offered, supports this approach. The questions have been chosen only to provide a framework for the discussion. The aim of the discussion section is to link the institutionalised logics that have been identified, with decisions made by those charged with governance. An interpretation will be made as to whether the institutionalised logics are helping or hindering performance in the context of possible desired outcomes. The format for the discussion will be; first, a short background to the question; second, an explanation of the institutionalised logics that may be involved; and third, an interpretation of the effects on any decisions made. The questions chosen are just five of many that may have required decisions to be made by those charged with the game's governance in New Zealand. Each question has produced a focal point for discourse in the field of New Zealand rugby over the period of the study. The questions have been developed directly from the topics raised most often by the interview participants. Effectively the questions have emerged from the data.

As presented in Chapter Four, each of the themes that emerged through the aggregation process was developed from nodes raised by at least half of the participants. Within those themes certain topics (nodes) were raised more frequently than others. For example the 'development system' was raised on 93 occasions by 23 of the 32 participants. This produced 93 pieces of data around the 'development system'. As a contrast 'early feelings' was raised on only 46 occasions, by 23 of the 32 participants. The number of pieces of data was interpreted as a proxy for focal points in the discourse. In simple terms, the topics raised most often, by more people, were considered most likely to form the focal points of the discourse. Thus it was more likely to be a subject area where decisions might be seen to be affected by the discourse. The ten top nodes from the interviews, measured by number of quotations or pieces of data, and taken from Table 4.1 (pp. 109-110) were as follows:

● 'club rugby'	123
● 'violence and physicality'	111
● 'referees'	105

● ‘development system’	93
● ‘World Cup’	87
● ‘professionalism’	83
● ‘television and broadcasting’	82
● ‘the kids’	77
● ‘women’	69
● ‘family involvement’	60

The nodes were then reviewed to identify five central questions that might enable the potential effects of the logics to be illustrated. Five was considered to be a practical number, given the already considerable length of the thesis. By making an interpretation of the links in the data, the five questions that emerged from within these nodes:

1. How is foul play on the field to be dealt with? (‘violence and physicality’).
2. What is the referee’s place in the game? (‘referees’).
3. Is rugby now an entertainment business? (‘professionalism’ and ‘television and broadcasting’).
4. Where should the Rugby World Cup sit in the list of New Zealand rugby priorities? (‘World Cup’).
5. What is the place of club rugby in the development of future All Blacks? (‘club rugby’ and ‘development system’).

Whether these specific questions have actually been explicitly considered is impossible to verify without access to internal board and management papers. However, in the eyes of those interviewed, and in the surrounding discourse of New Zealand rugby, decisions are seen to be made in these areas. The potential impact of institutionalised logics on these decisions is discussed, with interpretations made as to the possible consequences.

8.3. What happens on the field can't stay there anymore

Background

One issue faced by those charged with governance has been the question of how to deal with on-field foul play. The history of this vexing question goes back over one hundred years. The difference between hard, tough play aimed at achieving physical dominance, and violent acts that constitute foul play has always been a finely trodden line. Administrators have struggled to maintain this line for over 100 years. There are similarities between a news report in *The Star* newspaper on 11th June 1904...

Violence and ‘filthy and disgusting language’ were, it was claimed, becoming common in football in Canterbury and Otago. If left unchecked particularly by the NZRFU, this malaise would cause football matches to ‘degenerate into orgies for intractable hoodlums’ (Vincent, 2005a, p. 62).

...and a more recent call by Andy Dalton, CEO of Auckland Blues rugby franchise:

Unfortunately some unsavoury aspects of play and poor sportsmanship have arisen at a few matches this season, needing to be dealt with at a judiciary level. While this is not commonplace, it saddens me that this unacceptable behaviour is darkening what should be an enjoyable weekend experience for many Aucklanders – young and old. I firmly believe that everybody who plays this great game should know they are safe when they take the field. Sure, rugby should be a tough and invigorating contest but it must also be a fair one (Dalton, 2007, p. 1).

When faced with decisions about foul play on the field one possible desirable outcome might be to ensure that the line between acceptable physical play and unacceptable violence continues to be maintained throughout the game in New Zealand. An assumption here is that decisions made about how events are handled in the professional game will have an effect on other communities within the field. Decisions cannot be made in isolation from that effect. The way in which institutionalised logics might affect attempts by those charged with governance to deal with the issue is illustrated through a

use of the discourse surrounding two, in many ways similar, incidents that took place, one in 1985, ‘the battle at Athletic Park’, and one in 2005, ‘the O’Driscoll incident’.

The ‘battle at Athletic Park’ took place on 8th June, 1985. It was the second test between the All Blacks and the touring England side. The All Blacks won 42-15, but at least part of the discourse surrounding the game was dominated by the on-field violence and foul play that occurred. One report suggested that the “England dressing room was like a battle clearing station following Saturday’s second test” (‘English count their wounded’, *Rugby News*, 1985, p. 7). Punching, head-stamping, king-hits and general fighting were apparently all prevalent during the game.

The ‘O’Driscoll incident’ occurred on 25th June, 2005. The British and Irish Lions team had just begun the first test match (of a three match series) in Christchurch when ‘the incident’ occurred. Two minutes into the match, the British and Irish Lions’ captain, Brian O’Driscoll, was involved in a physical contact (widely referred to as a ‘spear-tackle’) with two All Blacks. The result was that O’Driscoll was stretchered from the field and played no further part in the game, or the tour. A spear-tackle is viewed as one where a player’s legs are lifted and he is driven into the ground headfirst. This is outlawed in the game under rule 10.4 (e) (IRB, *Laws of the Game*, 2004) which deals with dangerous tackling. It is an example of wilful foul play.

Debate about the physical contact and foul play characterised the post-match media reports, and the sports pages of New Zealand, Irish and British press over the ensuing weeks. It was the nature of the debate, and specifically the contributions from those with some responsibility for the governance of the game (senior players and management) that highlighted a potential relationship with taken-for-granted understandings. The contrasts, and similarities, in the discourse of the two years, perhaps, give some indication of the relative strength of the institutionalised logics in each of the years.

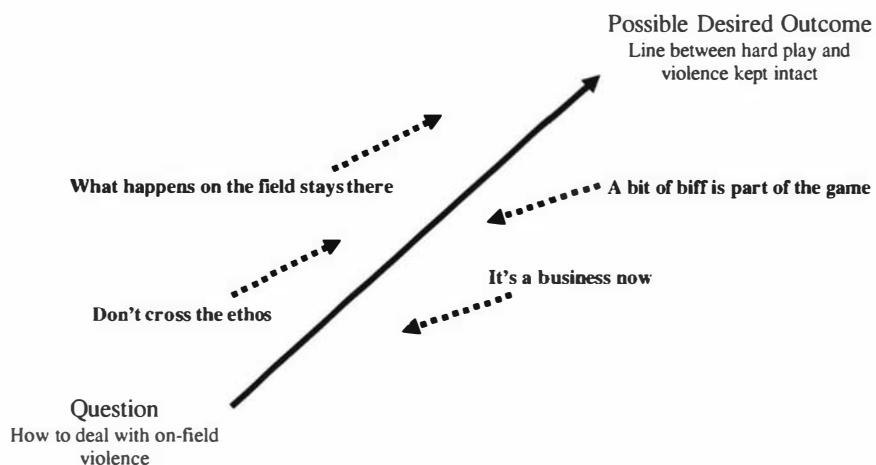
The institutionalised logics involved

One logic that might be interpreted as having a major impact on the way in which the incidents were handled by those involved was ‘Whatever happens on the field stays on the field’. To a lesser degree, other logics, ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’, ‘Don’t

cross the ethos' and 'It's a business now' may have also played a part in the discursive interactions. The first understanding has potentially enabled those in the environment to define a point where the physical battle is ended, on the field. 'A bit of biff is part of the game' has led people to accept a higher level of violence in the game than might otherwise be acceptable. The clash between the understandings surrounding the 'ethos of the game' and the 'business of rugby' might be seen as a common tension in the field of New Zealand rugby.

In this case a desirable outcome for those charged with governance might be the maintenance of an acceptable line between hard play and violence, where wilful foul play is considered unacceptable. The strength of these institutionalised logics might be interpreted as facilitating or hindering the achievement of the desired outcome in the particular context. This is illustrated in Figure 8.1³⁴.

Figure 8.1: Institutionalised logics that might affect a decision on how to deal with on-field violence



Evidence presented in Chapter Four suggested that the reporting of violence in the New Zealand rugby press might have been constrained by the understandings, 'What happens on the field stays on the field' and 'A bit of biff is part of the game'. The match report of the 1985 game in *Rugby News* might be viewed as constrained, mentioning violence

³⁴ This illustration is used to visually summarise the institutionalised logics involved. Given the nature of the data collected, the interpretation cannot offer exact measures. No attempt is made to visually represent the relative degree of influence that each institutionalised logic might exert on the situation in question.

of any kind only once in a full page. Not surprisingly, perhaps, it involved ‘leave it on the field’ Mark Shaw:

Shaw was probably the pick of the mighty pack, though his punch into Harrison’s jaw was an unnecessary and unfortunate lapse (Howitt, 1985n, *Rugby News*, p. 3).

No other mention was made regarding incidents of foul play. Further into the newspaper, a much less prominent report from the English dressing room hinted at what had really gone on, with a list of the injured:

The other sufferers were: Hooker Steve Brain, a gashed head requiring stiches. Flanker David Cooke, a suspected broken nose. Flanker John Hall, stiches in a cut eye... (‘English count their wounded’, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 7).

The *Rugby News* report of the 2005 game was similarly restrained. The only reference to the ‘O’Driscoll incident’ was:

Tragedy struck with just over a minute up on the clock when inspirational Lions skipper Brian O’Driscoll was stretchered off the field after dislocating his collarbone when he was blown over by Tana Umaga and Kevin Mealamu at the breakdown (Campbell, 2005j, *Rugby News*, p. 10).

Perhaps reflecting a view that the ethos had been crossed, T.P.McLean’s 1985 column the following week offered what he described as a “minority opinion” of events at Athletic Park:

Like it or not, players do have a responsibility to play the game for the game’s sake – and if that sounds odiously snooty, too bad; the game is there for the players, who, accepting its laws and disciplines, accept the responsibility of competing in it fairly, with full attention to sportsmanship (1985c, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

However, a letter to the editor a week later regarding the incidents might be seen as a more widely held and commonly accepted view. It would be hard to argue that in 1985 ‘PGH from Auckland’ did not consider a bit of biff to be part of the game:

I suppose some people would describe me as a barbarian, or a blood thirsty masochist, but I am sure that all the press box were on their feet screaming for blood during the brawl at the end of the match (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 26).

The visiting press were less constrained. An indication of how the violence, in 1985, was reported in the international press could be found in T.P. McLean's column:

Players, and their officials, complained about the “brutality” of the All Blacks. They said they were ‘horrified’ by what went on on the field. One of their Pressmen, Terry Cooper, who represents the British Press Association in London, and who among a fair number of big-time assignments was in New Zealand with the Lions of '83, wondered if he might have gone a bit far in talking of All Blacks “thuggery” and “intimidation” (1985c, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

‘Thuggery’ is exactly the headline used by the Irish *Sunday World* newspaper to describe the 2005 incident. So the evidence suggested some consistency between the years in the context of the press reporting. Perhaps of more relevance was the approach taken by those charged with governance. Given the conceptualisation of governance used throughout this research, it seems reasonable to suggest that the captains, the coaches, and the managers of the teams involved might have had *some* responsibility for governance. It was in this area where some contrasts started to open up. In 1985, the English manager was clearly not happy, but might still be seen to be relatively restrained:

England’s manager Derek Morgan was decidedly testy after the match and implied that an over-aggressive approach was largely to blame for his team’s sad casualty list. Asked if he considered the test a rough game, Morgan said, “That is a reasonable assumption to make.” And asked whether he felt the referee had been strong enough, he said, “The fact that the fighting was still going on at the end bares no good reflection on anyone on the pitch” (‘English count their wounded’, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 7).

The 2005 Lions’ coach, Clive Woodward, was not, with a vivid description and accusation:

In my opinion it was a pretty horrendous tackle and it has Brian out for a long time. It took half an hour for the doctors to put his shoulder back in. Brian was in a ruck, the ball goes away and both players – one lifts up one leg and one lifts up the other – turn him over and spear him into the ground. The ball was long gone. To me it's a sending-off offence. Brian is extremely angry. He in no doubt that he was speared into the floor by two New Zealand players. It's a bad foul (Ackford, 2005).

The Lions' management team then held an extraordinary press conference on the night of the match using a full audio-visual presentation to focus on the incident. The presentation was extremely 'business-like'. There was a suspicion from one of the journalists interviewed for the research that the incident was used purely to divert attention from the game, and the Lions' defeat:

I think particularly the O'Driscoll saga which was spin doctoring really from Alistair Campbell. I mean there was the case to answer for that tackle certainly, but it was a clean out. It wasn't a tackle, that's the first thing, but there was a case to answer, but as Graham Henry, I think, mentioned afterwards Alistair Campbell³⁵ is not a rugby man. He was there just to deal with the political side of things and how to put his spin on it.

Brian O'Driscoll went even further than the coach. He wasn't leaving anything on the field:

I am in no doubt whatever that it was deliberate foul play, a double spearing. It was a cheap shot which has put me out of the tour...I can hardly believe that I put so much into this and just got over a minute of play in a Test match. I have worked so hard for so long to get to this and to have it taken away by such a cheap shot leaves a really nasty feeling. I am really shocked that Umaga did that (Campbell, 2005k, *Rugby News*, p. 6).

I think the general public are much of that opinion as well, that it was a very lethal tackle. And I just met a guy down in the lobby, and he was absolutely shocked and disgusted at what a cowardly act it was. And if that's coming from a Kiwi, I can only imagine what the opinion back home is... (Thornley, 2007).

³⁵

³⁵ Alistair Campbell was brought over by Clive Woodward to manage the press relationships on the tour. He was formerly Press Secretary to Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister.

This kind of public and sustained personal attack on another player has not been ‘the way things should be done’ in rugby in New Zealand. In 1985, despite the serious nature of some of the injuries the English players received, there is no evidence in the discourse that individual players directly accused named opponents. In 2005, the response from the All Black management appeared to be driven by an understanding that what happened should be left on the field:

The O'Driscoll incident didn't strike me as anything different to any other part of the game, quite frankly... It hasn't been part of my policy to try and find fault with the opposition, but it seems to be becoming part of the game today. I think our guys are a bit disappointed in the reaction. Rather than saying 'well done All Blacks, you've played pretty well', there's been a major concentration on the Brian O'Driscoll situation... for the opposition to concentrate on one incident which I can't see anything wrong with, it struck me in the face ('After the All Blacks win, Sir Clive spins', 2005).

And from the All Black captain:

My allegiance is first and foremost to All Blacks. I asked about Brian after the match and I've tried to make contact. I try not to do these things through the media. I'll maybe have a word with Brian at the right time, and do that man to man. It was an unfortunate incident. I play hard but I try to play as fairly as I can (Cleary, 2005).

Even as late as November 2005, the discursive activity around the ‘O’Driscoll incident’ continued. In an article entitled “Sorry Brian, but remember the unwritten rules – some of the things that happen on the field are best sorted out over a few beers”, Louisa Wall, a former New Zealand netball and rugby representative, concluded:

So we hope you enjoyed last week’s game and we hope you are enjoying being the host for this week’s game and that the beer tastes good. That’s usually how on-field issues are dealt with. Also known as what happens on the field stays on the field (2005, p. D7).

Also in November 2005, the International Rugby Board referees manager, Paddy O’Brien, was interviewed after the incident was revived on the publication of Brian O’Driscoll’s book. It was reported:

He has no doubt that the O'Driscoll incident...has no business in the game. But he is equally sure that the subsequent reaction by the Lions management and O'Driscoll himself have been in many ways harmful to the game (Paul, 2005, p. 78).

An interpretation of how this might have been harmful is now made.

One interpretation

The similarities between the sentiments expressed by Mark Shaw, in 1985, and Louisa Wall, in 2005, provide a strong clue to the existence of an enduring institutionalised logic, 'What happens on the field stays on the field', at least amongst those involved in New Zealand rugby. The data suggests that there have been subtle changes in the way in which the communities' actions are constrained, or framed, by the prevailing logic. The analysis of a limited selection of the discourse surrounding both the 'battle at Athletic Park' and the 'O'Driscoll incident' illustrates a possible intersection point between the actions of those charged with governance and the institutionalised logic. The results show a divergence in the way in which the incident was portrayed in the media. Back in 1985, the approach of the two teams and managers appears similar and relatively constrained by the institutionalised logic. In 2005, there was a stark contrast between the two parties. The focus of the Lions' team was very much one of bringing the incident into a public arena. Blame and acrimony were directed at named individuals. The evidence presented suggests the All Blacks team might be interpreted as responding in a way very much in line with the logic, 'What happens on the field stays on the field', and even the remnants of 'A bit of biff is part of the game'.

In a wider context, one of the communities in the field of New Zealand rugby that may be constrained by these institutionalised logics is the supporters. The supporters at rugby matches behave in a way that might be constrained by tradition and history. Parents taking children to games set patterns in place for the way in which rugby is followed. The discourse surrounding the 'O'Driscoll incident' illustrates the erosion of the understanding that violence on the field gets dealt with on the field, and at the end of the game gets left there. The actions of the Lions' management might be seen as a direct challenge to the prevailing logic. In New Zealand, no matter how tough it gets on the field, violence has rarely been carried into the after-match. Supporters' behaviour has been constrained over time to match this convention. They might debate, even argue

about the rights and wrongs in particular games, but they do not fight. No matter how strong the feelings about the game and the incidents, the institutionalised logic, 'What happens on the field stays on the field', might be seen to constrain those with any inclination to fight. If that constraint is broken down, or even accidentally eroded, the consequences to the game might be significant. If supporters were to erupt into sporadic violence, the damage to the core values of the game might be disastrous. The publicity surrounding such events might have severe financial consequences for the game. A comparison with soccer in the 2005 discourse, used to highlight the benefits of rugby, would become null and void. Here description of an FA Cup final in England between Manchester United and Arsenal illustrated how different streets for different sets of fans had to be used. Different pubs apparently had to be identified as either red or black to keep fans separated:

At least rugby union retains its dignity and freedom of choice for fans. No need to divide the city, like the Berlin Wall used to do...For the Heineken Cup rugby final in Edinburgh, hundreds, if not thousands of flags waved in support of either Stade Francais or Toulouse. Flags are deemed potential weapons at soccer clashes (Quinn, 2005f, *Rugby News*, p. 22).

Incidents of spectator driven violence are rare in rugby, but there is evidence of a trend, particularly at junior games, that worried one journalist:

...that can be driven by parents on the sideline. There have been examples in the last couple of years. Of over-hyped parents on the sideline inciting violence, which is crazy stuff...all they need is a spark and they're in there and it's completely uncharacteristic behaviour generally. I don't think its endemic or anything like that but there have been instances that have been highlighted in the media so it's something to watch.

The power of an institutionalised logic to restrain unruly behaviour might be viewed as one factor in keeping incidents to a minimum. On 19th August, 2006, in a match between New Zealand and Australia, another 'spear-tackle' incident emerged. The All Black captain, Richie McCaw, appeared to be picked up and thrown headfirst into the ground by Australian winger Lote Tuqiri. At the time of the incident, which was not picked up by the referee, sections of the crowd were furious and made their feelings known by directing verbal insults at Tuqiri. Tuqiri reacted by urging the crowd on and

the threat of violence was evident for several minutes. At the time an eight-year-old boy was heard to say, "Dad, why doesn't somebody go on the pitch and smash him in?" After the match the understanding amongst the New Zealand rugby community that what happens on the field should stay there was still in evidence, even though the victim this time was an All Black. The individuals were very restrained in their comments. From All Black coach, Graham Henry:

It was a tactic to take McCaw out of the game. But that's part of rugby and you live with that ('Tuqiri gets five match suspension', 2006).

And from the victim, Richie McCaw:

He gave me a wee tickle-up. But I guess I managed to stay out there, so I'm all right (Brown, 2006).

So in the context of 'the O'Driscoll incident' why did the New Zealand contingent view the clash differently from the British and Irish Lions contingent? One explanation may be linked to the concept of dominant logic (Prahalad & Bettis, 1986). As they posited decision makers in a field are guided by some kind of logic, and they argue the dominant logic is the prime determinant of how strategic decisions are made. Here it may be that the institutionalised logics of 'What happens on the field stays on the field' and to a lesser extent 'A bit of biff is part of the game' are a constituent part of such a dominant logic in New Zealand. Using O'Brien and Slack's (2003, 2004) research it is possible to interpret why the British and Irish Lions' contingent had a different dominant logic. Their analysis suggests that when professionalism was introduced in English rugby union in 1995, there were significant shifts in the field's dominant logic, prompted by, in particular, "significant shifts in the communities of actors composing the field" (2003, p. 443). The influx of people with strong business backgrounds was facilitated by the way in which clubs quickly became limited companies. This might be contrasted with the continued dominance in the governance of New Zealand rugby of individuals who have a very strong rugby background. In their biographical notes in the 2005 NZRU Annual Report, of the eleven board members, nine focus more heavily on their rugby and sporting history than on their business experience. This might be viewed as one expression of their claim for legitimacy in the environment of governance of

New Zealand rugby. Of course, that is not to say that they do not contribute ‘business values’; just that, perhaps, ‘rugby values’ are a stronger element of the professional logic in New Zealand. Perhaps these individuals may have a professional logic that has been derived from a closer association with the history of the game.

An alternative interpretation

An alternative interpretation might be made; that the institutionalised logics, ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’ and ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’, might be constraining the actions of those involved in governance from properly addressing the issues of deliberate and violent play. It could be argued that the advent of professionalism has changed the game, and the cynical professional foul is a growing practice. To scythe down the most dangerous player in the Lions team in the first minutes of the test match might be viewed as the ultimate cynical action. It is an action that might be viewed as an assault on the core values of the game; an action that crossed the ethos of rugby. As Glenn Turner³⁶ suggested in an article calling for a return to traditional values in sport:

In more recent times, the so-called professional era has allowed players to be turned into products, destroying the very essence of their being. Competition needs to retain humane, humanitarian qualities allowing for what some call character moments, opportunities to show honesty, respect, responsibility and sportsmanship (2006, p. 6).

The combined strength of the understandings, ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’ and ‘A bit of biff is part of the game’, might have blinded some to the possibility that the intrinsic values of the game were being put at risk. Graham Henry’s “...I can’t see anything wrong....” (*‘After the All Blacks win, Sir Clive spins’*, 2005) was surely a protest too far. Perhaps the strength of these institutionalised logics amongst the New Zealand rugby community has brought about a direct clash with another, ‘Don’t cross the ethos’. The editorial of the *New Zealand Herald* reflected this clash. With a headline, “Tackle affair tests All Black character”, the article hinted at a underlying

³⁶ Glenn Turner is currently a selector for the New Zealand cricket team. He played for New Zealand in 41 tests, 10 as captain, between 1969 and 1983.

belief that there was something wrong with the way the New Zealand management handled the affair:

The coaches must have recognised the enormity of the incident, even though, as they insisted, it had no influence on the outcome of the match. They should have come to the media conference willing to talk about it from an All Black perspective ('Our view', 2005, p. A10).

So the actions of Brian O'Driscoll and the Lions' management might be seen in this light as a stand for the ethos of rugby in the midst of a rising tide of professional cynicism. If the winning at all costs attitude prevails to the detriment of some of the established core values of the game, that both constrain and facilitate action, then there are consequences that should be considered. 'Whatever happens on the field stays on the field' and 'A bit of biff is part of the game' may be acting as a shield for acts of violence that certainly cross the ethos. Perhaps the cynicism of professionalism will mean the players will no longer be able to face the game trusting that none of the opposing team is willing to maim them. Players will not "know they are safe when they take the field" (Dalton, 2007, p. 1).

Summary

In any consideration of how to deal with incidents of violence and foul play administrators might take into account the possible institutionalisation effects outlined. The patterns of action facilitated by 'What happens on the field stays on the field' and 'Don't cross the ethos' may be acting in support of the generally good off-field behaviour that has characterised, and helped promote rugby over many decades. This might be seen as one interpretation of effect that institutionalised logics might have. By taking strategic action, along the lines advocated by Oliver (1991), the institutionalisation pressures might be manipulated by demonstrating support for 'What happens on the field stays on the field'. One example might be a compromise over the use of rucking to free the ball and stop player frustrations developing. This would transfer some responsibility for the management of foul play back to the players. Clear signals from those charged with governance that those causing the initial problems can expect to be dealt with 'on the field' might mean much less has to be dealt with off the

field. The clash with ‘It’s a business now’ and the win-at-all costs mentality that has begun to emerge is another possible interpretation, and if this is considered plausible, then the strategic actions might be very different. It might be necessary to ‘decouple’ (Oliver, 1991) parts of the organisation, such as junior rugby, and free it from the institutionalisation effects outlined. It may be that juniors are not considered to be sufficiently mature to self-police on the field incidents. Those charged with governance of the game in New Zealand can consider the plausibility of such interpretations. The argument put forward here is that consideration of the potential effects of the institutionalisation of logics might be one element in the quest for their desired outcome.

8.4. Rest in Peace Jimmy Plunkett... he did not a bad job³⁷

Background

Another decision that has faced those charged with governance concerns the status of the referee. In the middle of every game is an individual who has a great deal of control over how the game is actually played. Perhaps more than anyone referees are responsible for the implementation of the decisions regarding the line between violence and ‘good’ hard physical play. Given their integral importance, questions about their status might be considered by those charged with governance. One possible desirable outcome might be the achievement of effective refereeing at all levels of the game. The assumption here is that decisions about the status of the referee cannot be isolated to just the professional game. Decisions about the referees’ status in the professional game also have an impact on amateur and junior games. In 2006, some discursive activity was caused by a proposal that the referees should attend post-match press conferences in order to explain their decisions. The background to this proposal, and the New Zealand rugby community’s reaction, may have been influenced by the strength, or weakness, of taken-for-granted understandings. It is argued that the complex nature of the

³⁷ “Jimmy Plunkett” was the referee in *Foreskin’s Lament* thanked at the after-match function (McGee, 1981, p.57).

institutionalised logics has helped shape the prevailing views as to the status of referees, leading to some potentially undesirable outcomes.

In 2006, a proposal was put forward by SANZAR for the NZRU board and management to consider the compulsory attendance of referees at press conferences after matches. This stemmed from a growing discourse surrounding the view that the referees had become a ‘protected species’. By 2007, this had reached a point where the sports headline in the *New Zealand Herald*, penned by journalist, Wynne Gray, proclaimed “Time to blow whistle on air of mystery around referees”. He presented a view that might be seen to be gaining momentum:

Players are held to account, coaches too and even those of us in the media. But the referee’s decision remains sacrosanct although we hear they are ticked off in the privacy of the committee room. Make them available at press conferences. Half the time they won’t field any questions but get them involved, don’t encourage their men of mystery persona (Gray, 2007, 24 February).

This could be interpreted as an attempt to enliven a journalist’s rather disappointing platform for news stories. One senior NZRU administrator had expressed concern over the ‘sweaty microphone’ environment:

I mean I’ve been to some of these after match interviews – they are the most appalling thing in this country; if ever a man should be a stumbling inarticulate rugby player trying to explain how the game is, what he felt about the game, what his team could have done better. Sticking a microphone up his nose after the game and you’re sweaty and you haven’t thought about things, I just find those so bad and I’m embarrassed every time I see them. So we switch it off, I don’t watch it, can’t bear to watch it.

However, the proposal was serious enough to give one referee some obvious concern:

I am very nervous that some media will use it to line you up. Invariably you are going to be there at a media conference, you haven’t had a chance to view the decision, the controversial decision that somebody will want to talk about. And then of course you will explain your decision, which will be totally wrong as opposed to everybody else who has seen it. So they’ll say that guy is trying to justify himself and is on cloud nine.

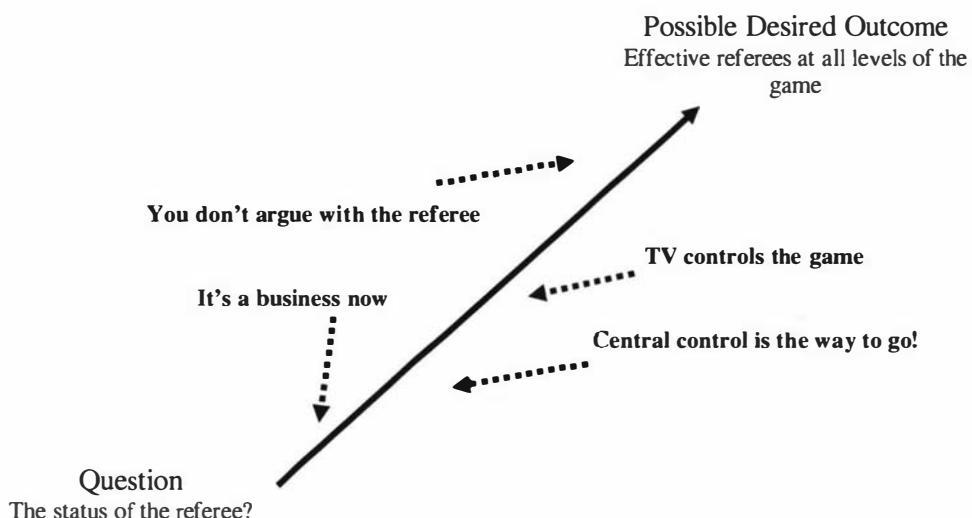
Whereas it's how you saw it at the time. Unfortunately for you it was 100% wrong. And it happens. Everyone makes mistakes, there are a huge number every match. You try to make sure that they're not game altering mistakes.

The outcome to date is that referees do not yet appear at press conferences. The discussion that follows is an interpretation of the way in which the institutionalised logics might have helped shape the outcomes, and the potential consequences.

The institutionalised logics involved

The logics that may have contributed to the way in which people in the field formed views about, and have accepted or rejected the proposals are: 'Don't argue with the referee', 'It's a business now', 'Central control is the way to go!', and 'TV controls the game'. This is illustrated in Figure 8.2. below.

Figure 8.2: Institutionalised logics that might affect a decision on the status of referees



Behaviour is shaped by what people in the field have come to see as legitimate and the focus here is the effect that institutionalised logics have had on what people take-for-granted about the status of referees in the game. By comparing the 1985 and 2005 discourse, surrounding the status of the referee, it is possible to make an interpretation of the influence of various logics.

The institutionalised logic, ‘You don’t argue with the referee’, is central to a view as to the status of referees. The strength of this understanding appears to have declined between 1985 and 2005, as illustrated in Chapter Six. The practice of ‘arguing with the referee’ whether in the form of player back-chat, press criticism, or performance ‘appraisal’ has visibly increased in the discourse of 2005. The reduction in strength of the logic, ‘You don’t argue with the referee’, has enabled these behaviours to become acceptable. The reasons behind the reduction in strength are complex. There has obviously been broad societal change that might be linked to the referee’s position. According to one 2005 referee interviewed:

I don’t think people in life...respect authority like they did back when my parents were at school. In those days everything was sir and ma’am, even in school. Nobody spoke to the referee in those days. The referee never spoke to the players. It was just here is the whistle and bang, go away. Now we are getting challenged a lot more and I must say in 2005 it was the worst I’ve ever experienced.

That is not the only cause that might be seen in the discourse. Perhaps the biggest change visible in the discourse is the growth of two way communication. Convention has established that you can ask for clarification of a referee’s decision, if you are the captain of a team. But asking for clarification, discussing, debating, arguing are surely all on a continuum. This exchange, as explained by the 2005 referee involved, might be viewed as at the extreme:

I had a player abuse me over two decisions at different times in the first half. He didn’t swear at me but just had a bit of a crack at my decisions. On the second one I snapped and told him to fuck off. Yes, fuck off you joke. Which is clearly unacceptable. I don’t know why I did it even to this day.

The referee was disciplined, the player was not. A recent development in the discourse is the communication style of the All Black captain. There have been calls for him to be more vocal with the referees to try and better influence their decisions. Even a top referee was reported as having suggested more chat:

“It’s all about the timing of the communication and whether it’s sewing the seeds with the referee,” Honiss told Radio Sport. “If they win the odd battle here or there, it could

result in tries being scored and a test match being swayed one way or the other” (‘Honiss calls for more All Blacks chat’, 2007).

It is as if ‘arguing’ with the referee has become a legitimate tactic in the professional game, although it was reported that IRB chief executive, Mike Millar had responded:

Paul Honiss’ comments encouraging players to verbally engage the referee more were out of line. He has been reprimanded by the IRB referees manager and he has been told that such actions will not be tolerated going forward (‘Ref reprimanded’, 2007).

Again the referee was disciplined. A not yet widely held but interesting idea from one administrator interviewed, was that the referee talking might actually influence results:

So now professional referees and particularly with the ability, or being allowed, to tell players what to do which I think is a very, very dangerous and a bad change because it leaves itself open to, to many ways of actually influencing a result rather than adjudicating on what is happening.

This increase in the level of communication might be an illustration of how behaviour that results from the erosion of an institutionalised logic then contributes, and even accelerates, that erosion. Other factors were also different in 1985. There is some evidence that it was not just the referees that controlled the way in which the game was played. ‘Don’t cross the ethos’ was stronger and there was an element of recognition that one of the underlying understandings in the game is that the rules might be followed in spirit more often than in the letter. Lee Smith, Director of coaching New Zealand Secondary Schools’ Council:

The laws do, however, have an element of gentleman’s agreement about them...Indeed the law book itself would be much less complicated if the spirit rather than the ‘letter’ of the laws were more closely followed (1985, *Rugby News*, p. 17).

There was perhaps an understanding that the rules were not the final word. Former All Black, Leicester Rutledge, on taking up refereeing:⁹

The man who holds the record for most tests played by a Southlander said he feels refereeing is mainly a matter of commonsense. "If you're hard on the laws all the time you're not going to get much of a game of Rugby" (McConnell, 1985, *Rugby News*, p. 12).

Players might have been seen to be taking more responsibility for how the game was run, although whether 'A bit of biff' can be described as taking responsibility is a debatable. One 1985 referee described how it used to be:

...the players used to do a lot of the refereeing themselves in the sense jersey pulling, obstruction and those sorts of things the players dealt with that... the front row used to sort themselves out and the referees just shut their eyes. There might be a bit of a fight in the first scrum or second scrum and then it would all settle down and then it would go away.

By 2005, 'It's a business now' had come to influence how referees are perceived. The justification that livelihoods are at stake is widely accepted for behaviour that would not have been previously accepted. Players and coaches are professionals; administrators are professionals; referees are professionals and are expected to perform like professionals. In a 'professional' environment people are held accountable for their mistakes. The position might be represented by a 2005 All Black captain, Tana Umaga's rather frustrated cry:

They get paid just like us but the problem is they don't get dropped and they suffer no accountability for bad games. I tell my son to become a ref because it is the safest job in the world at the moment (Paul, 2007, 6 May).

One New Zealand referee recognised communication as a central issue. Between coaches and referees, he suggested there should be more:

While the game is played by humans and refereed by humans there will always be judgement calls a referee gets wrong...But with more and more communication between coaches and referees the gap is definitely closing between the them and us syndrome (O'Brien, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 20).

By urging for an opportunity for coaches to debate decisions, albeit 48 hours after the game, Paddy O'Brien, might, unintentionally, be seen to be contributing to the erosion of 'Don't argue with the ref'. Perhaps the power of 'It's a business now', and the dominance of accountability, are driving the action. The link between the referee's status and the influence of television was articulated by O'Brien, at the time just appointed as High Performance Referees Coach for the NZRU:

For if referees have a much higher profile than once was the case it's entirely due to television and the role it now plays in sport. Referees and umpires are now part and parcel of the lounges of many viewers whether they want to be or not. The television age in sport is something we all have to accept (2005a, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 22).

Perhaps acceptance of 'TV runs the game' is the next step. The call for accountability might be seen as being socially acceptable, but alongside it goes some more morally questionable behaviour. Some might take the view that in a 'professional' world as long as you don't get caught breaking the rules anything goes. By 2005, we are seeing the development of an understanding 'that cheats do prosper'. Players who view the game as a career might be inclined to push both the rules and the accepted boundaries further and further to gain an advantage on the field. The discourse suggested it has become an accepted practice particularly for some positions. Prior to the NPC semi-finals a debate had broken out in the public domain about a 'cheating Richie McCaw'. A letter from a Tony Seiuli put one side:

Auckland are not the only team saying Richie McCaw is a cheat. You know and I know he plays so close to the law he's practically choking on it. But no, the New Zealand refs turn a blind eye (2005, *Rugby News*, p. 38).

The acceptance and 'magnificence' of cheating was highlighted by one journalist and broadcaster:

They (*the Crusaders*) will cheat better than anyone else I've ever seen. Richie McCaw is a magnificent cheat alright. He goes right to the line the whole time and if the referee is a weakling, and most of them are, he's over the bloody line isn't he, and they all are.

Based on the idea that ‘Richie cheats so why shouldn’t I, if I can get away with it’, practices might be seen to be spreading, as this referee explained:

I mean, the game has changed. We’re seeing a lot more of that (*talking to the referee*). I mean, there is a little bit more acceptance of that, but there’s also the smarter more cunning rugby players who are exploiting that as well. Unfortunately we’re having younger referees who can’t go to the next level because of the sheer pressure they come under. Not only from the players but also the spectators as well.

Perhaps an unintended consequence in the context of those spectators again. An acceptance of the understanding that rugby is now an entertainment business is influencing the expected behaviour of referees. Rule changes would appear to be driven by the need to ‘entertain’, even though this administrator could not quite bring himself to say ‘TV runs the game’:

I’m not suggesting that the rules should be changed just for television people, but I am saying that if the rules were simpler and applied evenly, if all referees refereed the same way, the game would become more popular.

The consequent ‘dumbing down’ of the rules, he might be interpreted as implying, will ensure that even the most incompetent referee will not be able to spoil the spectators’ understanding of the game. Alternatively, there might be a major problem with the rules. Debate about the rules of the game has gained momentum over recent years. There was evidence of the beginnings of a shared understanding that the rules had become too complex and that this was making the referees’ job very difficult. A junior, from 1985, commented:

There are too many rules. There is just nobody who understands. When we were lying in front of the ball, or you collapsed...nowadays if you are not on your feet, if you are kneeling on the ground, there is so many... and rucking. The rucking side of it is just... they used to move out of your way, now there’s an idea that you are not allowed to touch them. There are just too many rules, too. Way too many rules. To really understand. Like you could blow a penalty and you could ask five people and they will all go, it was for this, it was for that, there is no real standard. I think there are way too many rules. It has slowed the game down.

A referee also recognised a problem:

...the laws are just so complicated. And there is so much grey area that we are having to explain our decisions instead of it being just so obvious to everybody watching. So we are probably more facilitators on the field than just adjudicators which I don't think everybody really wants, but under the current laws that is the only way it can really work. Otherwise you're just going to have penalty after penalty.

However, it might be that rule variations are not new and have been part of the discourse for many years. One NZRFU administrator recalled:

The only major changes that seemed to, or the only changes that seemed to happen year by year, were alterations to the rules of playing the game which to me was probably the area that you needed to keep constantly changing and that's been a problem area of rugby because it is quite complicated to play when compared to many other sports on a lot of the rules and their interpretation.

However the constant 'tinkering' has usually meant additions, and the end result is a law book of 191 pages comprising 22 Laws³⁸. A 2005 junior coach commented:

I think that they have tinkered with the rules in some areas too much, especially what we talked about, the ruck side of things. They've mucked around with that too much, they've bastardised it. They need to go back a little bit there. The point where now...as much as I enjoyed watching the All Blacks win, it wasn't much of a spectacle from a free-flowing, out through the backs and scoring in the corner. We haven't had that for a long time. It's become such a defence orientated game now.

As the institutionalised logic, 'You don't argue with the referee', has weakened it may be that referees themselves have attempted to increase their control by adding to the rules. A senior administrator from 1985, still constrained by the logic, articulated the role that referees had played:

Twenty years ago I really think the laws of the game were simpler and there weren't so many of them. All the changes that have been made, and a lot of them pushed by

³⁸ As a comparison the rules of soccer runs to 84 pages comprising 17 Laws, obtained from <http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/RulesandRegulations>

referees only, have not helped with the problem. However, I cannot and will not criticise referees only, because ultimately decisions are made by boards or councils and the top line, of course, is the IRB.

Developments in 2006 and 2007, regarding experimental law variations suggest the IRB are moving towards the solutions offered by this NZRU administrator:

Rule changes around scrums, rule changes around rucks, second phase, I think are crucial, absolutely crucial. Simple things like letting you put your hands in the ruck, it's a hand ball game so why can't you use your hands all the time. That would make a huge difference so long as you are on your feet.

Further down the levels of rugby the complexity of the rules may not be such a problem. One junior administrator, who also refereed, explained a practical way of making complexity work:

I have been refereeing for six years and I am virtually at a point with juniors now where I actually say to them before the game at J3s, J5s, I'm not going to explain ruck and maul rules to you during the game, because it's pointless. Some of you understand it and some of you don't. I'm going to say one word, one word, and if you... release. Because the moment you are tackled in junior rugby you are meant to release the ball. Just like you are in senior rugby. They give you two or three seconds. But you see the referees are confused, the players are confused, they are dishing out penalties, there is no consistency. But if they use that one word. Really basic. If you're holding the ball and you are on the ground and that is a tackle then you must release the ball. It's there in black and white. It could not be any simpler.

The effect of the rules complicates the discussion about the status of referees. It may be that those still constrained by 'You don't argue with the referee' have used the complexity of the rules as a focus for their frustrations. Rather than blaming the referee it is socially more acceptable to blame the rules. Alternatively it may be that the constant addition to the rules over many years is creating genuine operational difficulties. The data collected in this research does not provide strong evidence either way.

Another institutionalised logic, ‘TV controls the game’, can be seen to influence how referees are viewed. Television producers and Sky in particular, would appear to be contributing to the decisions on how referees are portrayed. There was evidence that this is uncomfortable, but accepted by the administrators. A tirade, from a journalist, about the deficiencies of referees and the impact of television illustrated the influence:

Television replays, television slow motions, referees have been shown to be what they always were. I don’t think they’re any worse now than what they were in 1985, no worse at all, but in 1985 they weren’t subjected to one replay after another of their mistakes. So sadly referees often have been shown to be dummies. They were dummies back in ’85 on getting some things wrong, and now they’re still doing the same types of things but we’re seeing them more. That can lead to disrespect of the rules and that would be my sole worry about that. Then, after a period of time, you’re saying “well jees, why isn’t he getting it right?” and you’re saying that in ’85 you just knew that there was just one bloody rule. If he blew his whistle against you, go back ten yards because there was no point in arguing with him. But now, you know, it is the couch potato at home who is the expert because television is highlighting referees mistakes.

One referee highlighted one of the most vocal ‘highlighters’:

...they’re interlinked as far as we’re concerned because the commentators, I mean, if we take a classic example of a Murray Mexted he says “oh I think that was bloody over the top” when in actual fact, technically you are 100% correct. A Joe Bloggs sitting back in his TV lounge he doesn’t know a lot about the game “oh yeah, yeah, that’s over the top”. He doesn’t actually know what he’s saying.

This might have been personal. From the same referee:

...so often out there people will come up to you and say, no, they don’t come up to you, they ring Radio Sport as a classic example and say “Gees that bloody Calvin Deaker was awful last night wasn’t he?” and in actual fact the examples they’re using are almost direct quotes from what Murray Mexted has said, and Murray Mexted nine times out of ten is wrong. So they are educating people to believe that referees are always at fault.

But perhaps not. The link between Murray Mexted and behaviour in the field was explicitly recognised by this senior NZRU official:

If Mex is abusing Paul Honiss, why can't I abuse the guy who's refereeing my kids' sports on a Saturday morning or really make our point of view clearly to this guy. Not a good example our Mr. Mexted in this instance. Well yeah he isn't. He annoys us because he makes outrageously inaccurate criticisms of people who are doing actually a bloody good job and then we're trying to educate the people out there that they shouldn't be on the sideline screaming at some poor 18 year old who is trying to referee kids for the sake of those kids. You know the linkage is direct, absolutely direct and in my time... we had two or three very, very serious incidences of referee abuse, physical and verbal and when you see that carnage, when you see what that does to the refereeing community and the attitude they have whether they want to be involved. If you don't have a referee, you don't have a game.

But 'It's a business now' and, once again, accountability has entered the equation. This crucial point was highlighted by an NZRU administrator:

So you know I'm not the best person to give this lecture because I come here most Mondays and go and hassle Keith (*Referee's Manager*) for whatever poor refereeing I picked on from the weekend. I was like that when I played unfortunately. I was a bit like that when... so bloody important, you know the referee makes a wrong decision and it could cost you half a million dollars. It could cost you a whole slice of your business, that's the fragility of the professional sports model.

'Central control is the way to go!' might also have an influence on the decisions made about the status of the referee. There was evidence that it is driving the management of the referees. As illustrated in Chapter Five, referees' performances appear to be carefully monitored and measured. The criteria on which they are judged are explicitly laid down. This might be interpreted as suggesting that referees are not to be trusted to run the game anymore. They have to conform to a prescribed pattern, and be proven to conform. The gradual erosion of any 'gentleman's agreement' about how the game is to be played means that rules may have to become even more specific.

This section has illustrated the possible impact that various institutionalised logics might have had on views and behaviours surrounding the status of the referee. An interpretation of the potential outcomes of those effects for the wider game can now be presented.

One interpretation

The referees are professionals in an entertainment business and should be accountable for their errors. You have got to be able to criticise the referee or they will not improve. The institutionalised logic, ‘Don’t argue with the referee’, can be supported to a point on the field, but, if extended off-field, is hindering the game’s development. Without the correct implementation of the laid down rules, the other professionals in the field, the players, and the coaches will not be able to achieve their key performance indicators. The referees have become a ‘protected species’ in an environment where professional standards must be maintained. Their job is to control what goes on out on the field. They must implement the rules that are laid down in a visibly professional manner. They are paid employees with a job to do. If they cannot perform they should be replaced. Central control means that the standards can be precise. The rules are being simplified so that the ‘new’ audience can understand them. All that is needed is for referees to clearly and fairly implement those rules. It’s a business now. The business of entertainment means that the customers must have access to this important part of the product offering. If referees are made to look stupid because of their own mistakes, then they might be less inclined to make them again. Hence the desirable outcome will be referees attending press conferences.

An alternative interpretation

Referees are the guardians of the values of the game. The complexity of the rules means they must be treated with an absolute respect. ‘Don’t argue with the referee’ needs all the support that the game can offer, even at the expense of ‘professional accountability’. The game is more complex than any other sport in the world and that is a part of its appeal. Good referees have an instinctive feel for the game that cannot be created by a rigid assessment and development scheme. Even Murray Mexted recognised this when praising, yes, praising, retiring referee Paddy O’Brien’s style:

...given the complexity of the rule book it's the only way the game can progress. Adhering to the strict "letter of the law" style of yesteryear would have strangled to death the game we have now (2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 43).

All this control from above is turning referees into pedantic rule robots. Referees should be encouraged to develop initiative and to be creative in their interpretation of the rules, particularly if the object is to entertain. Even if it is now a business, the business will only thrive by building on foundations that have served the game well over 100 years. 'Don't cross the ethos' is fundamental to the belief that players can play safely. The referee alone cannot police this effectively. Even the precise implementation of written down rules will not take the place of 'unwritten rules'. TV cannot be allowed to totally control the portrayal of referees. The TV portrayal of referees is an extremely powerful message to the entire rugby community in New Zealand. If the message does not reinforce their position as the ultimate guardians of the values of the game it should not be sent. Hence the desirable outcome will be referees not attending press conference.

It is not difficult to extrapolate that the referee might begin to take a central role in the entertainment business. Another commonly accepted and widely held understanding might develop in the field - 'The referee's a clown'. Players, coaches, administrators will blame the clown for performance lapses, further eroding the ethos of rugby that differentiates the game from so many other professional sports. Driven by TV, the referee could become the pantomime clown or 'goose'. One referee explained:

I think if the media use it right then it can work, but there is clearly going to be a time where there is a major cock-up by the referee and they will want to have a real crack at you. You are going to come away looking like a goose. I don't know whether that is necessarily the right thing either. Because sometimes all you do to explain your decision, you are adding fuel to the fire.

Respect for referees might continue to fall, and particularly at junior level, they may lose control. The physical nature^a of the game surely precludes it from being controlled by a figure of fun. Even at professional level the warning signs are evident, according to one referee interviewed:

They are now trying to tell us how to referee the game. That just can't happen because then we have anarchy.

At junior level rugby the volunteer referees might be cast as the villains; they are already shouted at by the spectators. The nature of the abuse has changed from shocking in 1985, to common practice in 2005. The Kamo junior club incident, where a referee faced death threats, was a trigger for discursive activity:

He was going to hunt me down, find my home and sooner or later he was going to get me...He came into the clubrooms, he followed me to my car, he just went on and on. It was quite disturbing in the end ('Rugby fan faces ban over referee threats', 2006).

Murray Deaker suggested the "interest on talk back on this subject was staggering and could have filled a six hour programme" (Newstalk ZB Radio, 7th August, 2006). He argued that almost all of the callers offered their own experiences of referee abuse.

Summary of Jimmy Plunkett

The links provided in this section of the discussion are illustrations of the institutionalised logics that might be affecting the decisions made by those charged with governance regarding the status of referees. The landscape is complex and different interpretations can obviously be made. In the case of the referees and press conferences the results seem to indicate that this decision might be the site of a clash between 'It's a business now' and 'Don't cross the ethos'. However, the 'answer' for those charged with governance might not be very complicated, and might be seen in the consistency of the discourse between 1985 and 2005:

I seem to have wandered from the main thrust of this article – that referees, as administrators of the law...the ONLY administrators of the law, lets not forget... (McLean, 1985e, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

The referee is the only qualified legal expert on the pitch, and according to the same laws he is paid to enforce, the sole judge of fact. Therefore even when he makes a mistake he is correct. That is that, end of story (Stone, 2005f, *Rugby News*, p. 46).

The final word goes to a supporter who recognised the need for referees' decisions to be respected particularly at non-professional levels. They even suggested an answer:

But the top-level referees have a big-time influence, but at the bottom levels it's hard, they rely on coaches, parents and everyone else to support them in their decision-making, because if a referee says right, you are off son, and there's no support, it can escalate. So it is about support.

Perhaps support from players, from parents, from coaches, from journalists, from most importantly from administrators. Perhaps strategic support in the form of Oliver's (1991) 'acquiescence' through conscious recognition, and then 'manipulation' to help to revive the fading institutionalised logic, 'You don't argue with the referee'. Even if they were at fault in a Rugby World Cup quarter-final!

8.5. Tradition! All those old warthogs crying into their beer?³⁹

Background

Of the many things in rugby that have changed between 1985 and 2005, the event that appears to have had most impact on the discourse in the field of New Zealand rugby was the introduction of professionalism in 1995. A simple case of 'evolution' according to one 2005 administrator:

...it was a sport and the players played because they wanted to play at the highest level and there was a reward in that, and people came to watch it because it was bloody good to watch. But the money that was generated from people coming to watch the game flowed back into the clubs, which was where those guys would actually go back and be having a beer and playing the following week, so it flowed back in that direction. And then I guess in time the value for people to watch those games grew so people would pay more to go and watch a game and TV broadcasters could sell advertising and subscriptions. So it's obvious that they'd expect to pay for it and, of course, the players

³⁹ Again taken from *Foreskin's Lament*, McGee, 1981, p. 39. This was a dismissive reaction to a character who tried to suggest that rugby was not just a game, but a tradition.

started saying well hang on a sec, and in fact I'm not even playing for my club very often these days, so it doesn't matter so much to me. What am I getting as part of my return for helping to generate all this revenue, so I guess that's how the evolution has happened.

A journalist talked of a much more difficult transition, more of a revolution:

...it wasn't easy to go overnight from a totally amateur game, the game had been amateur for a century, to a game where suddenly you're paying your best players say \$200,000 upwards, and just for playing NPC you get \$15,000, Super 12 at the time \$80,000 or \$60,000 was it? If you put the two together you're getting \$80,000 and that's serious money for someone basically to just go and play rugby. So it changed the whole thing around.

Whether the transition was painful or not, the most commonly recurring theme from the narrative interviews was the question about how the 'amateur game' fits together with the 'professional business'. There was some evidence that this debate has taken place amongst those charged with governance. According to one NZRU administrator:

...you know one of the philosophical debates that goes on is; should rugby separate professional from the amateur game? It might still be one organisation but should we still, or could we in fact, should there be two complete separate relationships? Should there be our professional rugby, New Zealand professional rugby, New Zealand rugby or whatever you want to call it that looks after the All Blacks, the national teams and the five professional franchises, and then another organisation that looks after everything else? Reasonable question. Or should this organisation more clearly delineate between those two?

The decision about whether the amateur game and the professional business should stay together appears to have been made, according to the same NZRU administrator:

I've got an unwavering view to date that the amateur game, amateur/community game, will be significantly worse off if it ends up separated too far from where the money and the public interest in the game is at, because that will end up being a charity mentality relationship. Whereas at the moment we are forced to make decisions and sometimes I guess this is the issue. You make balanced decisions that don't benefit at the extreme

end (*of*) either, so like most continuums there's going to be some debate around the fringes. I think we've got it about right but there are plenty of people who think we've got it wrong.

The decision appears to be a compromise, that New Zealand rugby will run as a business whilst at the same time trying to maintain and develop the amateur/community game. There may be no choice now, according to one former All Black:

...we have to get the money in the game to keep it going – we're going to have to be competitive. You know I think it's inevitable.

There seems little prospect of turning back the clock to a time when the game was just a game. Rugby is now a business. But what is the business of New Zealand rugby? Is it a sport business, focused on the production of winning teams? Is it an entertainment business, where the performers are the stars? Is it a socially responsible community business, making profit only to plough back into the grass-roots of the game? Is it all of the above? There does not appear to be a commonly accepted view as to what should be the business of New Zealand rugby. A review of the 2005 Annual Report offered some clues as to what the NZRU believe the business to be. The NZRU vision combines a number of elements:

...the All Blacks and other high performance teams maintain their enviable historical winning records...ensure competitions at all levels of the game are entertaining, aspirational, sustainable and safe for all our players...outstanding identification and development programmes to generate quality players, referees, coaches and administrators...the global game is healthy and prosperous...the base of the game at community level in New Zealand is healthy and strong...that rugby is the sport of choice for the maximum number of people in New Zealand, as participants, spectators or broadcast audiences (NZRU Annual Report 2005, pp. 5-6).

All of the above mentioned businesses, then. Perhaps not entirely convincingly, one senior NZRU administrator suggested it's an entertainment business:

At the top end it is big business. It's still a game, to 99% of players in New Zealand it's a game. It's something for recreation that they do because they enjoy it, but here it is a

business. We have a product which we sell, it's entertainment but to the players playing it probably still a game, playing footy on a field with 29 other people, with a referee is the same game that they played as five year-olds but to a lot of people around it it's probably big business, absolutely.

Another NZRU official was a little clearer about the business of entertainment, although the 'karaoke hacks' in club rugby might still have a part to play:

...there's fifty thousand people sitting in a stadium that have paid to be there and watch it, and there's a couple of million people watching it on TV who are paying subscriptions to watch it on TV and entertainment is a business. So when you say it's entertainment, in my mind it certainly sits in the business side of the equation as entertainment, but hey, club rugby you know, it's a sport and it's played by 30 guys on a paddock out in Petone somewhere. But there's still five or six hundred people that are being entertained by watching the game. Mums and Dads and friends, they're not paying so there, at that level, it's entertainment, and it's entertainment as a sport. At this level here you've got all these people filling a stand, its entertainment as a business...the players, while they are playing the game as sports people at professional level, you also have to recognise that all of those one and a half million people who are watching the game on TV, or in the stadium, are paying money to watch those people play their sport, so they deserve a share of that revenue. Just as a singer who sells a million records deserves a cut of those million records versus a karaoke hack who doesn't sell any, you know. So at that level they are entertainers as well as sports people, I guess.

It seems reasonable to assume that the question of what business rugby is in should be of primary concern to those charged with governance. It is surely unacceptable to allow such an important decision to 'naturally' emerge. It also seems reasonable to assume that one possible desirable outcome might be that the business of New Zealand rugby should be sustainable in the long-term. It is in this context that the potential effects of the institutionalised logics might be illustrated.

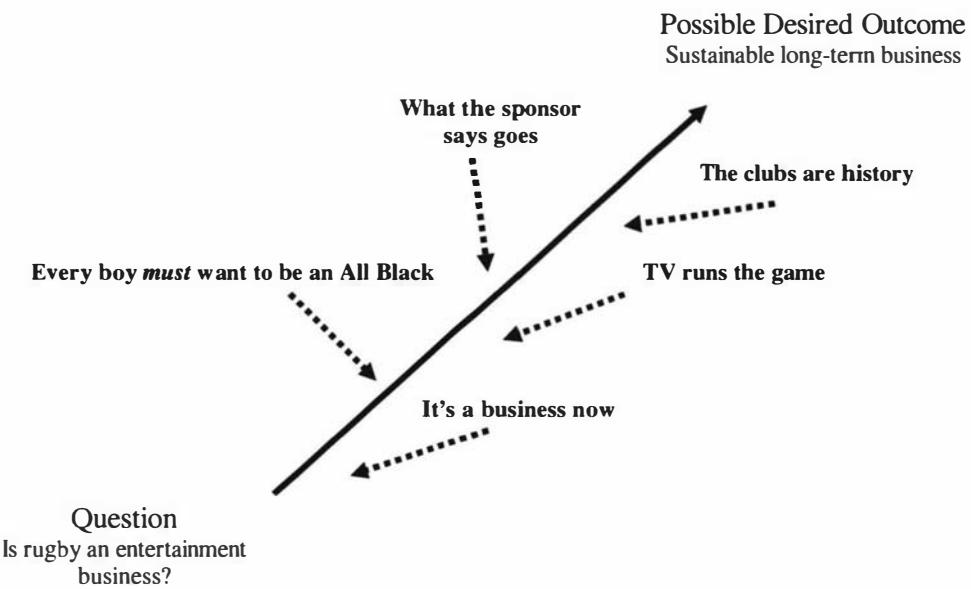
The institutionalised logics involved

Whatever business is chosen, the outcomes of that choice might be affected by what has come to be commonly understood by those in the field. Whatever business New Zealand rugby chooses to be in, it will need the support of those in the field. Given the entertainment business model that appears to be running at the moment there are at least three communities⁴⁰ that might be viewed as critical to the success of the business; people that pay for the products and services offered; people that offer services to the business; and, people that make the strategic decisions. The paying customers of the business are likely to be the supporters, either through attendance, television viewing, or the purchase of merchandise. Many of the services that the business needs are offered by volunteers, or at least below market rate, administrators. Other administrators, mostly through the NZRU, make the strategic decisions.

So what institutionalised logics might affect these communities, and have an impact on the long-term viability of the ‘business’ of rugby in New Zealand? Despite confusion over what business, one strong commonly held understanding is that ‘It’s a business now’, as was illustrated in Chapter Five. Whether rugby is, or is not, exclusively a business may not be as important in affecting the behaviour of people, as the commonly shared understanding. The facilitating and constraining powers of the institutionalised logic might be far more influential than any vision statements from the NZRU. The understanding that ‘It’s a business now’, potentially brings ‘business’ expectations and actions into an environment that has traditionally been founded on an amateur ethos. The erosion of the understanding, ‘It’s only a game’, has taken with it values and behaviours that, perhaps, even in the pursuit of a successful business New Zealand rugby might not want to lose. Other institutionalised logics at work on how people react to the way in which the business of New Zealand rugby is operated might be: ‘The clubs are history’, ‘TV runs the game’, ‘What the sponsor says goes’ and ‘Every boy *must* want to be an All Black’ (illustrated in Figure 8.3 on the following page).

⁴⁰ There are obviously other communities that might be important, such as the players at the top level that deliver the core product, but for the purpose here of illustrating the potential impact of institutions, the discourse surrounding three communities is the focus.

Figure 8.3: Institutionalised logics that might affect decisions as to the business of rugby



Institutionalised logics affecting customers (supporters)

'It's a business now' might be seen to have an affect on action by supporters. The 'business' ultimately depends on the actions of these customers. There was evidence of a growing understanding that, because 'It's a business now', rugby will be treated by 'customers' in a manner similar to how they might treat other businesses. Any attempts to make money out of customers might be seen with growing cynicism. That does not stop customers from purchasing the product, but it might be fundamentally changing the basis on which the transaction is made. If 'the business' is viewed as monolithic and self-serving, then the long-term sustainability of the business might be affected. There was perhaps evidence of the increasing cynicism from a supporter when he talked about going to a game:

It is more organised now so it's about getting you in, fleecing you and getting you out.

A columnist in *Rugby News* may have been representing a wider view that rugby is trying to make money at the supporters' expense. Sponsors are dragged into the debate. He discussed the official 'kit' supplies for supporters:

All have the British and Irish crest, and adidas or Zurich logos. "Mum! I want one of each," I hear your kids cry. Well be very selective dear parents...To buy just one each of the above 33 Lions items will set you back \$NZ2500 (or 964 British pounds). Be warned is all I can say (Quinn, 2005g, *Rugby News*, p. 24).

A link between this cynicism and supporters' passion was opened up by the discourse surrounding supporters making money out of selling prized Lions' tickets:

Sadly I fear New Zealand's passion for the All Blacks will be shown to be no more than a fallacy. A Kiwi's chance of seeing McCaw, Muliaina, Howlett and Jack in the flesh will be readily forfeited for the sight of Hillary, Rutherford and Sir Apirana Ngata⁴¹ in their wallet (Davis, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 43).

A supporter talked of the consequences for passion:

I don't know you just... don't have the passion any more with all the money involved and all the politics and stuff, whereas before you'd be there for the sport's sake.

Another supporter recognised the move that had occurred to an 'entertainment business'. The use of 'they' might be significant as evidence of the nature of the developing business-customer relationship. Perhaps the move to a business has shifted ownership away from 'us':

...the thing that I might have appreciated then was the fact that it was a bit more rugged, like you had to stand whereas now there is seating everywhere. You had to queue for everything, you don't really have to queue at all now. They are quite efficient at moving you through. And I suppose back then there was a certain arrogance about the rugby. It was more about the rugby than the entertainment whereas today it's more about the entertainment than the rugby sometimes, because you've got the radio announcers talking up this competition at half-time, stuff before the game, selling of cars, cheerleaders, lots of people walking round to direct you. I don't believe there was any of that in 1985. We would just turn up for the game and that was it. That was it.

⁴¹ These are all people represented on New Zealand currency notes.

The *razzmatazz* might be overshadowing the game. Another supporter recalled the reasons for going to the game:

I mean they have horses and fireworks and tractors and games in the middle of half-time and things. They seem so desperate to keep the public's attention and excitement. It's like going to a fair rather than a game of rugby. Now when I was a kid I went with my father to Christchurch and it was a big deal and you were there to watch rugby.

'They' again. Perhaps just as if it were any other entertainment business, 'TV runs the game'. And just like any other television programme there might be viewers that reach saturation point. The passion for the game might be seeping away, according to one journalist interviewed:

...they see so much rugby. They will think, if we see seven games in a week on TV why should we watch another club game. There will always be a hard core there, but the numbers are down.

Another journalist and broadcaster, admitted:

I get sick of it but if I wasn't seeing it I'd also be grumpy because I enjoy it in the main but sometimes yeah you can get over-rugbyed, but for the average person who isn't watching it for their job, they can turn the damn thing off and move onto something else...So you know you've got a choice. You've got the remote button in your hand. You don't need to be there sitting glued to it the whole way through.

When supporters do watch there have been some changes, as one explained:

There's that much rugby on nowadays that you don't get as excited as you used to about going to a game...it seems, whether I'm right or not I don't know, that the crowds of old used to get more excited about it pre-professionalism era...people were a lot more genuine about supporting a team for the sport's sake rather than paying to watch professionals.

Players are not seen as so special anymore. They are viewed as artificially created for people. Packaged as products even. It might be naïve to assume that supporters do not recognise this:

I think it is not so special anymore. I'm not sure. I suppose that...there are so many different players that it is hard...without the media creating the iconic ones it's hard to name the All Blacks. Whereas in the past you could always name the also-rans, now there's so many of them so rapidly turning over.

A journalist articulated the changing perception of players that might come with 'It's a business now'. The 'some of us' he refers to might be the supporters:

You paid homage to them. You weren't quite sure why you were, because some of them were thicko's, but you actually admired them because of their love of the game, and you learnt things from them, and so you learnt about leadership and you learnt about responsibility, and you learnt about accountability. And I watch the Auckland Blues at the moment...and they know none of those things. They don't know – all they are interested in it seems to me is to collect the pay cheque. You know it's coming through so clearly to some of us that, that's what it is about.

Those supporters also spoke for themselves. One from 1985, when passion was everywhere:

These guys were committed and the passion was there...They did it because they wanted to, you know, passionately.

And one from 2005, when passion was not so evident perhaps:

People are in it for what they can get and then they're out, you don't have people playing for years and years now. It's just kids. It's all changed now. And that can't be good.

'What sponsors say goes' might also affect how supporters view the game, particularly in the context of 'corporates'. A journalist might have been representing a more widely held view:

Most people are priced out of the major games now. How many New Zealanders were able to go and watch the Lions play last year, quite apart from not being able to watch them train? Very few New Zealanders actually went to those games. Most of the people were either Lions' supporters or corporate people.

A view held widely enough for an official response from NZRU Deputy Chief Executive, Steve Tew:

There may have been a feeling that some of the tickets were overpriced given the Lions didn't turnout to be as good as expected. No, I don't think the tickets were overpriced, given the speed with which we sold the test tickets in particular. You could, if you were a pure market driven person, argue that we under priced the tickets (Burnes, 2005f, *Rugby News*, p. 10).

The issue might be that the supporters' widely held understanding is that the NZRU is fundamentally market driven and therefore factors that cannot easily be measured by 'the market' might no longer matter. Tradition, passion, and respect are all factors that business has found difficult to authentically package, but they may be the foundations of the supporters' relationship with New Zealand rugby. If the NZRU are not seen to fully value these factors, then TV might as well run the game.

Institutionalised logics affecting suppliers (volunteers)

Even with the advent of professionalism, the volunteer base might still be viewed as the largest supplier to the 'business of New Zealand rugby'. The effects of institutionalised logics on this group might be seen to have potential impacts on the long-term sustainability of the business. There can be little doubt that the erosion of 'It's only a game' and the growth of 'It's a business now' has impacted on how volunteers view their work. In 1985, the view might have been that volunteering for coaching, refereeing, and administration was a normal part of the game. If you were involved, it was up to you to put something back in. There were some strong social pressures to conform. As one former All Black explained:

I chose to do my coaching when I was playing because I said when I retire I want to get out of the game. I wanted to put my effort into my club, I didn't want people saying I didn't do anything for the club when I'd retired.

As was illustrated in Chapter Five, perhaps fewer are willing to 'bust their boiler' helping out when there is the perception of so much money being paid to an elite few. Perhaps the social pressures to contribute have been replaced by something less subtle: a jealousy based on the money that some receive. One NZRFU administrator compared things with 1985:

Clubs are struggling and that has to be a concern to the NZRU. In fact I'm quite sure it is. Clubs are struggling for a number of reasons and not the least of which is changing societal situations. In 1985 it was much easier to get volunteers. When I started in 1960, I mean, there was always an election to get on the club committee and there was some appointments. I was the captain of the junior team at that time and so I was automatically appointed to the committee and so was the captain of the senior team but everyone one else was voted in. I mean there was an election every year. People fighting to get on the committee. Now the clubs are really struggling to get people to do the jobs.

The understanding that 'The clubs are history' may also be impacting on how volunteers view their work. What was viewed as an integral, and even prestigious, contribution might now be viewed as an outpost of nostalgia, as one administrator hinted:

The clubs in the cities are fighting the fact that voluntary workers have steadily disappeared and young people are not willing to provide unpaid services which takes up their time. That however, as you know, is part of modern living – all bound up with professionalism and the change in life style.

Why would young people choose to make a contribution to an environment that openly admits to be struggling to survive? There are plenty of alternative, dynamic environments where they can, and do, contribute. To blame the change on 'society' or 'young people today' might be to avoid taking responsibility for an institutionalised logic that the environment of rugby has largely created itself. A crucial link here is to

the sustainability of the ‘business’. Unless the volunteers are of a quality that will sustain the kids’ interest then the ‘playing numbers’ approach, that seems to dominate the governance of the game, might ultimately be too superficial. One administrator intuitively recognised this:

Well the biggest thing is that...we can get sufficient administrator support within the clubs because they’re the people who look after the kids. They’re the ones who take them and look after them on Saturdays, get their gear and all those things, and if they aren’t doing that, before we know where we are we will have a very thin game with the same number playing at the bottom and at the top, and we’ll fall over. I think it’s absolutely critical that they look after the clubs.

‘The clubs are history’, as an institutionalised understanding, has the potential to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Perhaps those charged with governance might take the kind of action proposed by Oliver (1991). ‘Defiance’, or a very public attack on the developing logic, with a clear, and continuously repeated message about the role that the clubs might have in the future; a role that might return the clubs to the centre of the field; a role that might encourage the return of high quality (and even young!) volunteers; a role that might begin to erode the institutionalised understanding. One such potential role will be discussed later in this chapter in Section 8.7, entitled ‘Squeaky bum time’. The key factor here is whilst an institutionalised logic might obtain its power though the discourse, the discourse might also starve it, and, at least, accelerate the erosion of one that might be blocking the link to a desired outcome.

Institutionalised logics affecting decision makers (NZRU)

Whilst things may have moved on a long way from the ‘gin swilling fish-heads’, there was evidence that certain taken-for-granted logics are affecting the thought patterns of those in a position to make strategic decisions about the ‘business of New Zealand rugby’. ‘It’s a business now’ and its partner ‘Central control is the way to go!’ are self-regulating. As long as things appear to be working in terms of the measurements suggested by business then the logics get stronger. And, on the face of it, it’s working in terms of measurements by numbers, according to the NZRU CEO:

In 2005, the NZRU achieved a performance of 90 percent, which is an outstanding result (NZRU Annual Report, 2005, p. 7).

There can be no arguments with that then. Ninety percent achievement of objectives put forward by themselves. Still much better than the 80% they achieved the year before, and definitely better than the 63% recorded in 2003. The discourse surrounding those that make the strategic decisions for rugby in New Zealand is littered with numbers and measurements. There is potentially an implication that if it cannot be measured then it is not important. But the field of New Zealand rugby might be full of immeasurables, and to focus on just what can be measured, might be doing a disservice to important parts of the sustainable business. As a general rule in business, what is measurable is the easy stuff. The complexity of a successful business might lie in the areas just outside what can be measured. The puzzle of governance is still there because of what cannot currently be measured. For this senior NZRU administrator ‘It’s a business now’ was synonymous with ‘you’ve got to measure it’:

You could call the sport what you want to, or you could call it a business but at the end of the day you’ve got to earn your income, you’ve got to have the right people in the right place, you’ve got to have a vision and a strategy and you’ve got to measure it.

The numbers are looking good is the defence, and this is well supported by the institutionalised logic, ‘It’s a business now’. As long as ‘Every boy *must* want to be an All Black’ the pyramid will be stable, might be the thought pattern developing. That’s enough for most in the field to accept; after all, aren’t numbers and measurements what business is all about? Well maybe in the 1960s IBM model of controlling a business, but some businesses have moved on since then. Taking the practitioner books introduced in Chapter Two as examples, Hamel and Prahalad (1994), Collins and Porras (2000), and Pfeffer and Sutton (2006), all suggest that the conventional numbers and measurement model is fundamentally flawed. There may be another options more suited to an environment that has developed so many core values from ‘It’s only a game’.

The administrators’ options may be being constrained by the power of ‘It’s a business’ standard version, or alternatively, and more cynically, their actions are facilitated by such an arrangement. This research produces no firm results on any power based

motivations of those who make the strategic decisions, except to raise it as one possible interpretation. The point made here is that their actions might be affected by such a powerful commonly held understanding as ‘Central control is the way to go!’. The number of levels that comprise the pyramid might be seen to flow from such an institutionalised logic. The structure of New Zealand rugby, with the national team at the top, with franchised Super 14 sides, with provincial union sides in an NPC competition, and club sides and school sides mixed up at the bottom, might be a direct result of a thought pattern driven by ‘It’s a 1960s business’. A study such as this is only a part of the picture, and other factors have obviously contributed to the structural development. The point to consider is that, although the logic of business, dominates, there may be a better way to go than central control in the context of a desired outcome of long-term sustainability.

Having established that institutionalised logics have the potential to affect some of the key stakeholders involved in the sustainability of the business of rugby, the next step is to offer interpretations as to the impact on outcomes.

One interpretation

One key underlying element that the institutionalised logics might be seen to be having an impact on is the strength of the bonds that those involved feel they have with the game. There was evidence that some supporters and volunteers saw the advent of professionalism as a watershed for their passion. There was evidence that the passion for the game is being affected negatively by certain institutionalised understandings. One interpretation suggests that each step that the business of rugby takes creates another fissure through which the passion dissipates. The distance between the professional elements of the game and the ‘grass-roots’ appears to be getting bigger. Passion is being disconnected with every move the business makes. Even players, in this case All Black Carl Hoeft, are beginning to express concern about a lack of passion:

The whole game’s a lot faster but I just wonder whether there is the same enthusiasm with the public...I can see both sides of the coin. It can be expensive to take families to rugby and, on a cold night in winter, a lot of people prefer to stay at home, buy a box of beers and park in front of the telly (Edwards, 2005d, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 64).

The relatively recent phenomenon of the franchise system may not be to the long term good of New Zealand rugby. It adds another link in the chain between the traditional supporters and volunteers, and the focus of their passion. The traditional links between the clubs and the unions have been weakened by the introduction another level, the franchised ‘Super’ teams, built on primarily business logic rather than traditional affiliations. In a country the size of New Zealand, what justification is there for four levels between club and national side? The consequence of chasing the revenue over an ever-extending season is stretching the passion of even the most loyal of supporters. In 2007, perhaps driven by ‘TV runs the game’, the Super 12 was extended to 14 teams, with the addition of one South African and one Australian side. The ‘rugby season’ in New Zealand now lasts from February to November. Even the product itself was recognised as a break with the traditions of the game, albeit by a ‘northern hemisphere’ commentator:

It’s a product that has been designed purely for non-rugby fans. A Clayton’s form of the game that has prostituted itself in an attempt to compete with other forms of “entertainment”. Personally I think adapting any sport to widen its appeal is a dangerous policy. How loyal any new audience? What fad will they be into next year? And what of the true rugby fan? How long will they be content with the dilution of the game they love and grew up with? (Davis, 2005b, *Rugby News*, p. 43).

The answer might be for those charged with governance to act to reduce the distance between professional rugby and the amateur game. If the traditional unions could be allowed to rekindle their connections with clubs, and re-establish themselves as the pinnacle of domestic rugby, then it is possible that passion might be re-energised. Those in the environment talk of their passion being sustained by the history of the game, and how it is passed from one generation to another. The stories of memorable moments in rugby history are the foundations of sustainability. Individual feats that can become the common understandings of tomorrow; the Originals; the Invincibles; Fred Allen; the South African battles; Colin Meads; ‘Buck’ Shelford. Dan Carter’s underpants are but a diversion from the path of history.

6

One way to achieve this might be to allow the unions to compete in an NPC open competition with the top sides each year progressing to an international stage. Imagine

the stories and the sustained passion that might emerge from Hawkes Bay⁴² competing against the best teams from Australia and South Africa in 2008. Just two levels of domestic rugby might enable the top players to have a relationship with their clubs, and the benefits of this are discussed later in this chapter. With juniors able to ‘touch’ the All Blacks again a sustainable cycle might emerge. Intuitively those within the environment know that connections have to be made. From a 2005 All Black, at the ‘top’ ...

...the game, the global game, New Zealand rugby, the All Blacks, it's going to turn into a monster of its own. As a professional, for them to survive...I don't know the logistics of it, it's interesting to see how it's going to work in the next five or 10 years time. For those that don't get the opportunity, if the grass roots get left behind, it's really important for those that have been part of it, for those on the conveyor belt, to still add value.

...to a junior delegate at the ‘bottom’, in the excerpt singing the praises of one 2005 All Black on an unofficial mission:

He will come down here on a Tuesday night and kick a ball around. Not because he has to, but because he played here. Kids love it. All of a sudden they see Luke out there kicking the ball. You can hear them in the car parks saying Luke McAlister is out there kicking the ball round. We have to keep that in the game because the moment professionals become too precious and too high up for anyone to get them is the moment when all the kids at the bottom start saying I don't care.

If the kids do not care then the future of rugby as a sustainable entertainment business must be in doubt.

An alternative interpretation

The passion for the game is as strong, if not stronger, than it has ever been. Those player numbers are increasing. Junior numbers for Rippa rugby are looking really great. A picture perhaps portrayed by the NZRU Community Rugby Manager, Brent Anderson:

⁴² Hawkes Bay are considered one of the smaller unions in New Zealand but in 2007 they finished in the top four of the NPC.

Over the last four years, we have seen a significant increase in the number of people involved in rugby, from players to coaches and referees, and other volunteers and administrators ('\$25 Million boost for Community Rugby from NZRU', 2007).

A whole new audience has been introduced to the game. In fact the danger of an artificially created, all consuming passion for the All Blacks might have implications for the country as a whole, according to one journalist not necessarily known for his impartial view of New Zealand rugby:

At the start of the presentation, we were told that the 2011 World Cup must come to New Zealand because of the sheer love of the sport in the country – the presentation told us that “the spirit of the country is boosted by an All Black victory”. It also said that “the entire nation mourns an All Black Test-match loss”. It said that production dips if the All Blacks lose, that the All Blacks captain is regarded as holding the highest office in the land and so on. It is not just that all this tripe came in the week of the London bombings and the desperate perspective they afforded. This testimony to New Zealand obsession should actually banish the World Cup from coming to New Zealand. It should have the effect of making every New Zealander who is keen on literature and discourse and natural glories and other sports and the whole vast panoply of non-rugby life to realise that their obsession has become a wounding nonsense. Their rugby team, at present, is probably the best in the world but it does not make people live or die (Jones⁴³, 2005).

The evidence from this study would suggest that this view of an escalating and damaging passion for rugby in New Zealand is not an interpretation shared by many in the field.

Summary of *those old warthogs*

Professionalism has forced New Zealand rugby to make changes. The money has arrived from television and broadcasting. Rugby is an entertainment business. All these things might be inevitable, but the decision making around these issues would appear to have been affected by the institutionalised logics of New Zealand rugby. In the running

⁴³ Stephen Jones is a UK based journalist whose criticisms of New Zealand rugby have made him a cult figure of hatred for many All Black supporters.

of the ‘business of New Zealand rugby’ there are several institutionalised logics that might be interpreted as influencing the decision-outcome equation. The strategic decision makers might be constrained by a shared view of ‘It’s a business now’, and their options limited by ‘Central control is the way to go!’. Key volunteers might be guided by ‘The clubs are history’, and the supporters by ‘It’s a business now’ and ‘TV runs the game’. Linking the traditions of the game with this new entertainment business, without losing the passion that has sustained New Zealand rugby is not an easy balancing act. Perhaps the last word on the business of New Zealand should go to someone that has been involved in the grass-roots of the game as a player, a referee and a club administrator:

...we know that there is a lot of money there but where is it? Because it is being treated like a dammed business, it is all going to the top, isn't it? I mean how many million dollars has the Rugby World Cup made out of the last three World Cups? A billion. Where does it go? Has anyone ever walked into this clubhouse and said here is a cheque. Do something for your kids, buy some balls...They have got the money to do it but they don't do it, do they? So where does that money go? Maybe they only want to grow 1% a year. I don't know. I mean I am too far down the food chain. What I do know is that while all these guys go up in the administration world with fantastic salaries, I mean even the CEO of Harbour was on \$100,000 or something. To me that's obscene. Totally obscene...when there are hundreds and thousands of volunteers doing hours like this at night in the rain and cold, weekends, paying for their own gas, paying for their own everything. A lot of them buying balls...The answer is to put more into those people in other ways. Give them more resources. Better gear, better equipment, shit even a jacket.

A jacket to sustain the passion would seem a reasonable business expense⁴⁴; a jacket that emphasises the link from clubs to the All Blacks.

⁴⁴ In 2007 the NZRU announced an additional \$25 million investment in community rugby from 2008-2011. Steve Tew stated, “a key initiative is for us to continue to improve the administration of rugby in our schools and clubs which will build on the success of the previous plan” (from www.steelers.co.nz/news, 11 September, 2007).

8.6 There's a new dragon to slay and it bites

Background

How important should the Rugby World Cup be in terms of the priorities for New Zealand rugby? For many years New Zealand rugby focused on the South Africans to provide the ‘ultimate goal’. When the goal was finally achieved by beating the Springboks in South Africa in 1996, it created a vacuum into which the Rugby World Cup ‘naturally’ slotted. It was as if the game had to have an on-going dragon to slay. In the context of Collins and Porras’s (2000) visionary companies, this might be equated with their Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAGs):

A BHAG engages people – it reaches out and grabs them in the gut. It is tangible, energizing, highly focused. People “get it” right away; it takes little or no explanation (Collins & Porras, 2000, p. 94).

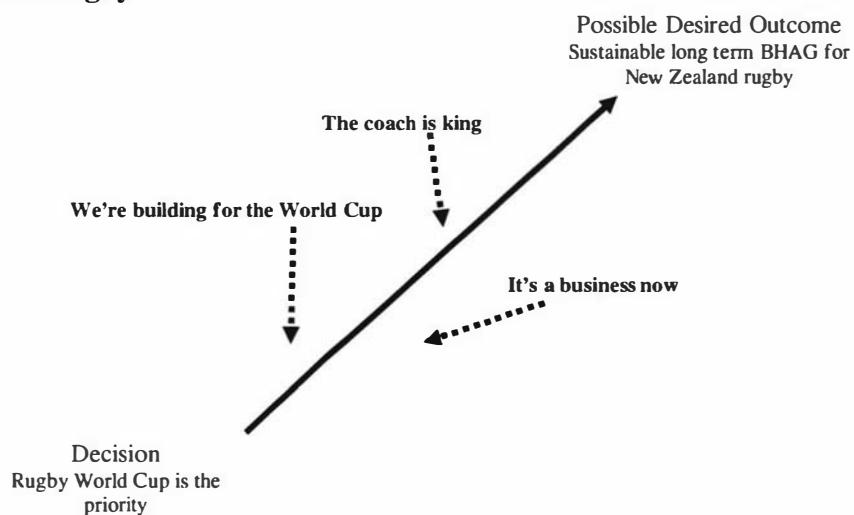
There is little doubt that, by 2005, the Rugby World Cup fits this description, and is widely considered to be a worthy successor to beating the Springboks. The goal is easily understood, easily shared, and appeals to the emotions of those in the field.

The institutionalised logics involved

There was strong evidence, presented in Chapter Seven, for the existence of a well developed logic in 2005, ‘We’re building for the World Cup’. Opposition to placing the Rugby World Cup at the centre of New Zealand rugby priorities was more fragmented in the discourse. The evidence suggested that events had almost made any meaningful debate superfluous, even at board level. The primacy of the Rugby World Cup had emerged, with almost universal acceptance, cutting off rational consideration in the process. In this section, the discussion centres around the impact that institutionalised logics might have had on the emergence of winning the World Cup as a primary goal of New Zealand rugby, and offers an interpretation of the potential consequences for the future of the game. The map of this group of institutionalised logics might look quite simple. In the build-up to the 2007 Rugby World Cup the decisions made by those

charged with governance appear to have been fundamentally influenced by two dominant logics, 'We're building for the World Cup' and 'The coach is king'. The two appear to have dovetailed to drive the decisions made by both the board and the management of the NZRU. With the occasional addition of justifications from 'It's a business now', decisions appear to have been made that winning the Rugby World Cup was the primary goal for New Zealand rugby, subjugating all other considerations. Figure 8.4 illustrates the institutionalised logics involved.

Figure 8.4: Institutionalised logics that might affect decision on priorities for New Zealand rugby



In the context of those charged with governance, the allocation of resources appears to have been influenced by an overriding desire to ensure 'everything possible' was done to win the Rugby World Cup. Before the loss to France in the quarter-final there was some disquiet at this:

First-class travel, luxury hotels, free guitars...our World Cup All Blacks are being pampered right down to their personally embroidered airline blankets (Paul, 2007, 2 September).

After the result the discourse was predictably more vitriolic from many 'who knew all along that this was going to happen'. Headlines included:

Pamper less, play more, job done (Rattue, 2007).

AB's campaign a 'bloody disgrace' (Knight, 2007).

Looking back, a focus on the World Cup existed prior to Graham Henry's tenure as All Black coach, but the power of the logic, 'We're building for the World Cup', might be seen to have grown significantly during his time. Henry's drive to win the World Cup was explained by one of the 2005 All Black 'team':

...this time I think Graham is more driven, initially more driven, than the players because he has been a good coach and done a lots of things, and this is an opportunity for him, in a personal sense, to do something in rugby that other coaches have not done...and I'm not being nasty about that, I think that's very logical.

Logical enough not to argue with, perhaps. In the eyes of one journalist and broadcaster interviewed this focus was 'correct':

I think Graham Henry will, he will say the end goal is the World Cup and that's correct and he will say we're working towards that.

From a players perspective arguing might not have been an option, according to Gregor Paul:

There was rejection of the policy (*rotation*) at first. When it was put to Umaga that he and other senior pros take some time off during the 2005 Tri Nations, the players weren't having it. But Henry wasn't budging and by the end of that year the players had no choice – they either bought the strategy lock, stock and barrel or they didn't get picked (2007, p. 221).

'The coach is king' after all. Umaga retired from international rugby at the end of 2005. Grant Harding, editor of *NZ Rugby World* might be seen to have linked the emergence of the power of the two logics:

During the Lions tour (*Graham*) Henry made it clear that every action taken from now on is a building block towards an assault on the Rugby World Cup in France in 2007. It's almost becoming his catch-cry every time they spring one of their little surprises, like 32 players to Italy, Wales and France last year, like the three changes for the All Blacks-Lions Test in Wellington (2005e, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 17).

There was considerable evidence, presented in Chapter Seven, that the majority of administrators, including the board, did not need much convincing that winning the 2007 Rugby World Cup was to be the main priority. Those administrators must also have considerable responsibility for the decisions taken. If, as the evidence suggested, they were influenced by the logics, ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ and ‘The coach is king’, then what are the consequences in the context of outcomes? Why might it be a problem for New Zealand rugby? An interpretation of some unintended consequences follows.

An interpretation of the effects of the institutionalised logics

If ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ is dominant and the World Cup is every four years then the life cycles of coaches, players and, perhaps, even administrators might be affected. One journalist recognised the possible consequences:

...even coaches seem to go in four yearly cycles and Graham Henry will probably step down, I imagine, after 2007 as well. It is a tough one to expect them to turn it out every year and then the World Cup, and they will say the focus is developing for the World Cup. That’s fine but I think there’s still a major importance in every international in between that and the intervening years.

Following each Rugby World Cup defeat there is a consequential change in coaching staff. It is not just the head coach, but a wholesale change of coaches and specialists. An All Black, Dave Hewett, made the point that the new king is likely to bring in his own staff. He might also be influenced by his understanding that ‘It’s a business now’:

The reality of professional sport is that a new coach means new players. It’s just like a business – when a head of the company is replaced, it often means a change of staff as well (Johnstone, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 42).

Well actually a complete turnover of staff is very unlike most business situations, especially every four years. Interestingly, the increasing power of ‘The coach is king’ in recent years may have slowed this effect. Despite being responsible for the worst performance by the All Blacks in any Rugby World Cup the power of ‘King Henry’

may be resisting this change. The headline “King Henry not ready to abdicate just yet” (Gray, 3rd November, 2007, nzherald.co.nz) might be indicative of a subtle change when compared with the ‘beheadings’ of John Hart (1999) and John Mitchell (2003). This king may prove to have more power over his own destiny. An alternative interpretation was raised by the same journalist:

What loomed as an uncomplicated succession plan for the All Black panel, has now become an exercise in self-preservation. It has left the NZRU board and staff in a difficult position because, if they change the coaches, they are also condemning the World Cup policies they condoned (Gray, 2007, 3 November).

Not just condoned, but actively supported. The link between the decisions of those charged with governance and the outcome, as a failure, could not be clearer. Ultimately it may be that, not only will the coach suffer the consequences of the All Blacks’ failure to win the Rugby World Cup every four years, but it will also be that those charged with governance suffer the institutionalised logic’s backlash.

There was evidence in the discourse of other behaviour patterns driven by the logic, ‘We’re building for the World Cup’, that might have unintended consequences. Here a senior NZRU administrator explained 2005 contract negotiations:

All our contracts behaviour in the last 12 months has been looking towards 2007 and ensuring that we’ve got key players that are contracted beyond 2007, because you don’t want to be building an All Blacks team, or some strong teams at a level below that, of players who will feed into that, and then be at risk of losing four or five of them on the eve of such a big tournament. So it really impacts on the way we approach our business in that regard. It doesn’t impact so much on the collective bargaining cycle other than one of the things we take into account in that agreement is how we deal with the World Cup. But absolutely in terms of practical day to day engagement of coaches and players, in particular the coaches, you know. We don’t want to lose the current All Black coaches at the end of this year heading into the World Cup so we’ve got to have people contracted. And the World Cup is absolutely an anchor in the calendar of contracting people for the professional game.

The implication is that losing them after the Rugby World Cup is acceptable. However, with a number of the players, who took the field against France, already contracted to take up new positions, there have been some that have questioned their focus, and openly pondered the influence of those contract discussions in the lead-up to the Rugby World Cup. The nexus of the Rugby World Cup and contract negotiations might also be unsettling for those players choosing to stay with New Zealand rugby. The pressure on that set of players to perform well (and hence earn a better contract) may be increased.

The result of the 2007 Rugby World Cup quarter-final created a discursive view that the players were influenced negatively by the magnitude of the task that winning the World Cup has become in the context of New Zealand rugby. Robbie Deans, at one point widely expected to become the next All Black coach, suggested:

It was at this point (the haka) that the French first began to isolate individuals within the All Black team...By doing this, the French players were seeking to get into the minds of their All Black counterparts, to reinforce the magnitude of the challenge ahead...all we can contemplate now is the fact that we have been reminded – once again – that whatever happens prior to contests of this nature holds no real relevance, aside from creating a level of expectation that can be counter productive once it enters the minds of the players involved (Deans, 2007).

It is exactly this ‘aside’ in the players’ minds that such a dominant logic as ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ might be seen to create. The players are increasingly being presented with a one-stop option in their drive to become ‘great’ All Blacks; they have to win the World Cup. However, the counter position is that those that fail have tended to be vilified. The question that arises is, do players want to risk everything to win one World Cup or do they just want to get out of the next debacle with as much of their reputation intact as possible? One 2005 All Black interviewed, who did not make the 2007 squad, said little about the World Cup. He did not express any kind of disappointment that he was not going. Perhaps it was telling that his concern was for the players selected:

And if we’re not going to (*win the World Cup*), I feel sorry for the boys, they are going to get ripped.

In that context the institutionalised logic might also be facilitating the flight off-shore immediately following World Cups. One interpretation suggests that ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ is fuelling a developing understanding amongst professional players that they can only play a limited number of games in the years building up to World Cups. It might be that they do not want to risk injury and miss their opportunity, or they want to be at maximum fitness levels for the three critical World Cup games (quarter-final, semi-final and final). There are other actions that have taken in the name of ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ that might be seen to have negative consequences for the game as a whole in New Zealand. These included; a rotation policy which saw reserve All Blacks given game time in matches that were considered less important; the withdrawal of twenty-two All Blacks from the early rounds of the Super 14 competition in 2007; the entrenchment of the convention that All Blacks would rarely play at clubs; and, latterly the withdrawal of All Blacks from the NPC competition. Driven by a coach whose catch-cry, according to Harding again, was:

...We haven’t won the World Cup since 1987, what we’ve been doing hasn’t worked, we must look for answers and change (2005e, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 17).

The search for answers as to how to perform in three games, over two weeks, every four years may be considered acceptable at an individual level (e.g. for an Olympic 100m athlete), but at a field-level might not. Those charged with governance have a responsibility to consider the wider implications for the long-term future of the game in New Zealand. The effect of such action facilitated by the institutionalised logic has been to raise the specter of the ‘soccer friendly’. Internationals will only be seen as true contests if, by chance, both countries are playing their best team as a part of a programmed build-up the next World Cup. The consequent devaluation of an All Black test jersey might potentially reduce the desire of players to stay in New Zealand. The actions might also be seen to diminish the value of other competitions:

According to AC Neilson figures, the average audience for all live games dropped 38 per cent this year. There was a 30 per cent drop in all live games that featured a New Zealand team...The Blues average crowd was down 4 per cent, the Hurricanes 7 per cent and the Crusaders 17 per cent. The Chiefs were the exception, enjoying a 10 per cent rise but the good numbers in Hamilton can’t deflect the truth – the 2007 competition has been a massive commercial flop (Paul, 2007, 20 May).

A least one version of the truth. A version that might be seen to be widely held in the environment, and a version that might be helping to fuel the effects of the understanding ‘We’re building for the World Cup’. If enough people in the environment come to take-for-granted that no other competitions matter, then it becomes self-fulfilling, no other competitions *will* matter. Despite what marketers might suggest the passion cannot be turned on and off like a tap.

An alternative interpretation

The widespread acceptance of the Rugby World Cup as the focus of attention is entirely positive. It has enabled the professional side of the game to develop. It gives those at the professional levels of the game a clear and unambiguous target against which performance can be measured. Players, coaches and administrators understand that they will be given the support and resources necessary to achieve the goal. For the rugby public and the media, the success (or failure) at Rugby World Cups offers a transparent view of the strength of New Zealand rugby in governance, administration and performance on the field.

For those charged with governance and management, stability and continuity are enhanced. There are unlikely to be unpredictable knee-jerk reactions to performance ‘blips’ between World Cups. No individual is likely to lose his job in between World Cups unless completely incompetent. The four year cycle enables strategies to be put in place and plans taken to fruition. Suppliers, sponsors and players can be managed on a predetermined four year cycle, making central control much more practicable. Organisational performance will be enhanced as a result.

The institutionalised logic should be supported by ‘acquiescence’ (Oliver, 1991). New Zealand rugby has limited resources when compared to international competitors such as France and England, and focusing those resources on a four yearly event is one way to maintain international parity.

There was little data to support this interpretation.

Summary of *the dragon*

The NZRU perhaps feel they have an overwhelming duty to feed the public with a serving of take-away passion every four years, as illustrated by one 2005 administrator:

I think as a sport we have the danger of taking for granted our place in this country. That's why I think the World Cup is so important. Let's put another big milestone highlight on the horizon, and you know the fact that it tends to be, for the majority of New Zealanders, an important and relevant thing that's happening every four years.

The importance to New Zealand rugby of a 'big milestone' is not disputed here - just the assumption that the World Cup is the only option. Without the all consuming dragon standing over the landscape, it is possible to imagine alternatives. Imagine if those charged with governance began, through discursive activity, to down play the importance of the World Cup. Imagine if those charged with governance began through the discourse to raise the profile of another long term goal (BHAGs (Collins & Porras, 2000)) for New Zealand rugby. Imagine if the focus of the rugby community could be changed to producing a win record over say a ten year time frame that surpassed 80%. Imagine if the World Cup was subjugated in the language of those charged with governance to such a goal. Imagine if New Zealand could take a lead in the context of world rugby and make a clear, unambiguous statement that *any* team facing the All Blacks can expect to face the best available team. The World Cup could be incorporated into the BHAG in the same context as any other games against the major nations. The concept is not so far removed from the thoughts of this senior NZRU administrator:

That's why we talk about a total vision for the game as a raft of strategies that are all important and they're hard to rank. Winning All Black sides is not a debatable point. If the All Blacks are not winning more games than anyone else then... New Zealanders expect it to be every game but realistically you can't win every game. It's not physically possible but we have to win most otherwise we're in deep trouble and we have a winning record, I think better than any other international sporting team that you can define. Better than Real Madrid or anybody. That is an undebatable priority – no excuse.

No excuses, that is until ‘We’re building for the World Cup’ and ‘The coach is king’ got together.

8.7. *Squeaky bum time*⁴⁵

Background

This section brings us back to one of the original inspirations behind the research, why haven’t the All Blacks won the Rugby World Cup since 1987? It is widely accepted that the All Blacks need to win the Rugby World Cup to prove their status as the number one team in world rugby. The losses, particularly in the last three World Cups have led to a growing belief that it is the mental rather than physical aspects of the game that have failed the All Blacks at critical times. Headlines in the national press included:

Reminder that at this level, it’s all in the mind (Deans, 2007).

Pressure cooker once again proves too hot for All Blacks (Drake, 2007).

There was evidence in the discourse of concern about the way in which players are being developed. This concern might be illustrated by the words of one columnist:

This brings me to something else that’s been bugging me. As I watched the Blues search for answers against the Crusaders at Eden Park I began to wonder about the mental state or more precisely the mental hardness of our young players. The ability to take stock of a situation seems at times woeful. It raises the question: are the new systems in place guilty of over-protecting, and dumbing down the new generation of players. Certainly in the last World Cup semi-final there was no better example of the inability to react to a dire situation (McKay, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 42).

An example might be the last ten minutes of the quarter-final of the 2007 Rugby World Cup, against France, when, despite overwhelming possession, the All Blacks failed to

⁴⁵ A phrase attributed to Sir Alec Ferguson, long time manager of Manchester United Football Club to describe the defining moments in a season when players and teams are under the most pressure to make the ‘right’ decisions.

score the three points needed. In the independent review of the 2007 Rugby World Cup campaign carried out on behalf of the NZRU concluded:

The leadership model failed to deliver what was its most important objective – decisions which give the best chance of winning the game. The team failed to ensure that the right decisions were taken at critical moments (Heron & Tricker, 2007).

The range of questions addressed by those charged with governance might be; how can the foundations be laid to develop the mental and physical characteristics of a winning team; what is the best way to develop winning All Blacks? Academies or clubs? Control or flair? As an individual or as a team? Of course, these might not be mutually exclusive. The last twenty years has seen some fundamental changes in the way in which All Blacks have developed. In 1985, the situation for those that made the All Blacks was very different, as one recalled:

...the major issues that the players were struggling with then were holding down jobs and getting the balance between playing club, representative and international, playing three tiers of rugby. It would be nothing to play an international on a Saturday and go home and play for your club on a Sunday. And that got quite taxing. I mean in those days I would be working hard on the farm, then I'd go to training and we'd train Sunday mornings and Monday and Wednesday nights for the provincial team and Tuesday and Thursdays for the club. Quite often I'd play Saturday for the union and Sunday for the club. How the hell we did it god knows, and holding down a job as well was pretty demanding.

The players had to make decisions for themselves all the time. Contrast that with the analysis from one of the 2005 All Black ‘team’:

Now, and this is what we are probably spending a lot of energy on in the All Black environment of today. They are not great decision-makers. They need to be told what to do. In the professional era they have personal trainers, they have managers look after their financial situation, they are all bloody well off so they don't actually have to make decisions on a day-to-day basis, about money, about work, and now most of these guys with the All Blacks are full-time rugby players. They do have other interests, some of them, and the ones that do have other interests are the best prepared All Blacks. Some

of them don't have any interests at all apart from rugby, they have never had any other interests, they have never done anything except to play rugby. So there is quite a major development to be done in the psychological and mental preparation of...and their ability to make decisions.

In 1985, the development path for an All Black would have been, school, club, provincial union and then national honours. By 2005, the club was not part of the equation, replaced by 'development squads' or academies, according to one former All Black:

It (*club rugby*) was a lot more valuable to the players than it is now. In fact it was essential. Because that was where rep players were selected from. Therefore that was where international players were selected from. So there was a progression through. What we find now, principally, is that a lot of our leading players are almost fast tracked from first XVs to development squads and they are sort of put, not in cotton wool, but they are fast-tracked from there into the NPC sides, and then to the Super 14 and on. So club rugby as a feeder is still important but is not where a lot of the players come from, particularly in the major unions in New Zealand.

One 2005 All Black talked of his experiences:

I was selected as one of the 20...so if anything, I was in the system as such. I was identified and my name was amongst the elite coaching, amongst the coaches at the time. I was in the New Zealand under 19s, and then the Academy, I was with the under 21 age groups.

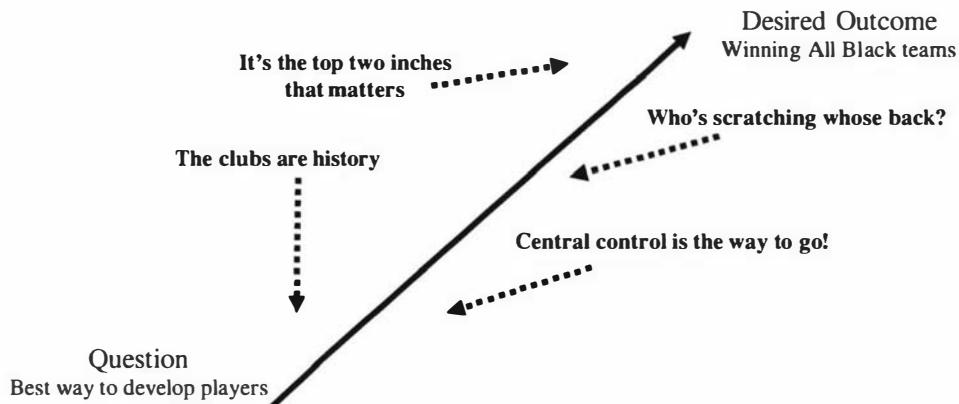
So in the context of developing All Blacks, change has occurred in the last ten years, and the discussion here centres on how institutionalised logics might be seen to have influenced, and potentially, be influencing, the decisions made by those who set the platforms for such development.

The institutionalised logics involved

The dominant logics that may be affecting decisions as to the best way to develop All Blacks might be 'Central control is the way to go!', 'Who's scratching whose back?',

'The clubs are history', and 'It's the top two inches that matters'. Figure 8.5 below illustrates.

Figure 8.5: Institutionalised logics that might affect decision on how to develop players



The evidence suggested that one developing logic, 'It's the top two inches that matters', may be a strong driver in the current production process for All Blacks. This logic is facilitating the actions of those who recognise the importance of the mental development of players. Other logics might be interpreted as being less helpful, and more constraining in nature, are: 'Who's scratching whose back?', 'Central control is the way to go!' and, once again, 'The clubs are history'.

An interpretation of the effects

The combination of two institutionalised logics, 'Who's scratching whose back?' and 'Central control is the way to go!' might have lead to the widespread acceptance of a 'cloned' development path. This was explicitly recognised by one NZRU board member:

The majority of guys who get to All Black level now go through a very cloned, if that's the right word, development. Where they go through secondary school perhaps, international teams and under 17 camps, under 19 internationals, under 21 internationals, there is now New Zealand A and then into the All Blacks. In that environment they don't get enough time, as the Lochores and the Whinerays and the Mouries. I'm talking about our great captains that I know... just those three, take those

three. Those three captained their school teams, captained their junior club side, captained their club team playing with ordinary people, captained their province, captained the All Blacks eventually. So there was a process of development of leadership skills amongst those who showed right from the start.

The right schools are expected to produce the New Zealand Secondary Schools team, which will lead to ‘development teams’, the academy system, the Under 19s, the Colts and ultimately the All Blacks⁴⁶. The ‘conveyor belt’ system was a term used by one of the 2005 All Blacks:

So I was very fortunate...that's where I slipped back into it again or maybe jumped back on to the conveyor belt. And then I was just soaking it all up, just to be in an environment where the coaches...

The strength of ‘Central control is the way to go’ might be seen as the driving force for action to standardise and control the way in which All Blacks are developed. The discourse surrounding the failure in the Under-19 World Cup was used by one coach as a thinly disguised call for even more central control, blaming the loss on too ‘generalised’ development:

The New Zealand players, on the other hand, had mainly come from more generalised schoolboy training. This was something, McLean (*coach*) believes, needs to be addressed for in time it could even affect New Zealand at the top level (Knight, 2005c, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 83).

There might be a stark contrast with the 1985 development path, according to one administrator:

Everything was structured around people having working lives. Players worked, played for clubs, they got selected and played for provincial unions. Now rugby is a career path. Players can, players are employed to play rugby, and aspiring players can dedicate themselves to achieving a professional career in rugby.

⁴⁶ Of the 2005 All Black team that took the field against Australia in the Bledisloe Cup match, 14 out of 15 had played for the Colts (U21s), 9 had played U19s and 7 for New Zealand Secondary Schools. Only Ali Williams had played for none of the development teams.

There was a widespread concern that the system facilitated by the two institutionalised logics, ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’ and ‘Central control is the way to go!’, might be flawed. Elements of a player’s development are missing, and that those elements are seen by some as crucial at ‘squeaky bum time’. The system is producing a set of homogenous players, as one NZRU official admitted:

The majority of guys who get to All Black level now go through a very cloned, if that’s the right word, development. They go through New Zealand secondary school teams, under 17 camps, under 19 internationals, under 21 internationals, there is now New Zealand A, and then into the All Blacks. In that environment they don’t get enough time...to develop leadership skills.

A homogeneous set with ‘something’ missing perhaps. More support for the cloned theory came from Australian, David Campese:

They do become clones, you’re right, because they’ve got no idea. All they know is rugby. They’ve never worked a day in their lives. It’s the culture we’ve created. The unions look after you but the day that you retire it’s bad luck, see you later (Campbell, 2005m, *Rugby News*, p. 11).

The desire from the unions to ‘look after you’, whilst players are contributing, might be seen as a typical characteristic of a command and control model. Players themselves recognise the cloned environment. Dave Hewett, All Black, commented:

I’ve seen the initiatives they are putting in place for players to deal with life outside rugby. It has to be done because now the youngsters are coming straight out of school into academies...it’s rugby, rugby, rugby (Johnstone, 2005, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 41).

Another generalisation about the players of today came from a current All Black, Anton Oliver:

Former players from the pre-professional era, and longstanding supporters – categorised as ‘old school’ – are apt to say, ‘Well, players get everything these days when compared with what we were given. Players talk about what they are entitled to, what their rights are, but when the discussion turns to where their responsibilities lie there’s a silence’. I

think that those who came before me, before professionalism, have a valid point. Today's players are not so self-reliant. Just about everything is handed to them on a plate (Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 232).

The nature of the centrally controlled environment might be seen to have reached taken-for-granted status, when players accept that even the simple things will be done for them. Comparing life in an amateur environment with his professional career, Mark Hammett, recent All Black, perhaps expressed a certain disquiet that he wasn't really allowed to fill his own water bottle:

Those are the things you taken for granted as a professional player. You don't have to pick water bottles or fill them up...everything's just laid on and done for you (Campbell, 2005n, *Rugby News*, 36, 12, p. 39).

An All Black, from 2005, talked of an organised schedule that was broken down for him into hours:

We obviously have an overall schedule of the competition and we know we are playing on the dates, we have got a calendar. And then that is all broken down into weeks, so we can only live on a weekly basis. What I mean by that is that we play on a Saturday, we have a recovery day on a Sunday, and usually after the game on Saturday we get the calendar and a preview of the next week. So that's how it's organised. It's broken into hours pretty much.

Their lives might be controlled to a degree that other environments would consider unreasonable for highly paid individuals in other 'professions':

A no-snooze policy has been introduced to stop players from taking afternoon naps during their two days in Corsica... "We don't want them retiring to their rooms, this is when we need them out soaking up the sun, which helps recovery from jetlag," (*All Black*) manager Darren Shand said. The policy was being strictly policed, with senior players on alert for anyone even thinking of taking an afternoon siesta (Paul, 2007, 2 September).

The controlled nature of the environment might have other effects. Perhaps amongst some there is a yearning for more freedom. Grant Harding, editor of *NZ Rugby World*, reported overhearing a conversation on a plane between Carlos Spencer and other players:

They were organising a game of Touch, an opportunity to get the ball in their hands, have fun and forget about grid patterns for a moment. The Spencer spirit needed to find freedom from restraint, rediscover the joy of rugby (2005f, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 51).

An obsession with central control might have contributed to the creation of an environment that stifles independent action and the freedom for players to be individuals. They have to stay on the conveyor belt in order to be picked. It might also be seen to contribute to an environment where the individuals that succeed have followed a similar development path, and exhibit a degree of congruency. It is a congruency that is viewed by some as characterised by certain flaws. As one commentator expressed what might be a more commonly held frustration:

All these fancy academies and the like seem to me to be failing to deliver thinking, resourceful footballers (McKay, 2005a, *Rugby News*, p. 42).

The gradual recognition of those flaws that has contributed to the development of the institutionalised understanding that ‘It’s the top two inches that matters’. The understanding that an ability to make the right decisions at crucial times is missing might be seen to have increasingly driven the actions of Graham Henry and his team. They might be seen to be trying to fill the gaps that the development system has failed to address. The growing momentum of the logic, ‘It’s the top two inches that matters’, has allowed them to take actions to attempt to improve the decision making capabilities of the All Blacks. Henry, himself, admitted:

That was the biggest learning curve that this group of management has been through with this group of players. We realised that we couldn’t handle a big occasion. We realised we needed to develop self-reliance and leadership in the group. We realised we needed to look after players more and not over-train them (Harding, 2005g, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 14).

The need ‘to look after the players more’ might be an indication that ‘control’ was still an important element. If the top two inches are really working it might be that those players could look after themselves. There was a view that the actions of Graham Henry and his team had already solved the problem for this particular group of players. Former NZRU director, Kevin Roberts, felt that, on the basis of performances during the Lions’ tour, the All Blacks might have already achieved the mental state that might win World Cups. This might have been a case of peak performance peaking a little early, or maybe, given that the comment followed a description of a ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’ dinner party hosted by Roberts, a case of some easily digestible conclusions based on rather under-cooked evidence:

Our players have been empowered to cope under pressure and to grow as people. A dozen players have taken leadership roles on and off the field and you can see the results. For an average age of 25 the maturity level and confidence of the All Blacks is amazing...

Roberts, in the same paragraph, proclaimed:

...In business the best results are achieved by unleashing and inspiring all employees to be the best they can be. The old command and control methodology just doesn’t cut it in today’s world (2005b, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 29).

Well exactly. But the evidence from this research suggested there is a widespread understanding that the ‘old command and control’ model is exactly what is seen to dominate the governance and management of New Zealand rugby. Andrew Mehrtens, a 70 test match All Black, offered a contrasting perspective in an interview with Lindsay Knight, a perspective that doesn’t quite tie up with ‘unleashing and inspiring’:

One of the things which has concerned him, as one who became a top player before fully fledged professionalism, is that players today are “smothered” with the game and have little chance of gaining a normal balance (2005d, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 83).

Regardless of the progress made by one coaching team with one set of players, the concern here is the long-term development pathway for future All Blacks. Certainly the environment is changing, perhaps in part due to the influence of ‘It’s the top two inches

that matters'. As the understanding filters down through the professional grades, the logic might also have been seen to facilitate the actions taken by the Players Association, and Professional Development Managers, but this might also be seen as a slow process. It is a process that might have been contingent on 'proof' that Henry and his team's actions had produced results. It is conceivable that because the World Cup was not won in 2007, then the actions taken so far will be significantly devalued. The all or nothing environment might be a concern to those charged with governance. The on-going development of leadership and decision making skills for all future All Blacks is the real issue here. It should not be dependant on the views of just the current 'king'. As one of the All Blacks 'team' put it:

In the old days it was done way down here, do you understand? It was done at the grass-roots of club rugby. It's not actually being done now. It's left to us to do it when it should be done on the way up.

An NZRU administrator recognised the same thing:

...that's one of the things that has changed since '85. These young kids would have been in club teams, playing club rugby with some gnarly old props, getting bashed around, they'd sit at the bar and listen to war stories and learning from them, and yet as they go through that system, becoming leaders in their own right through their rugby ability and trying to get the best out of others, possibly being a first fifteen captain and a club captain. Now they go from school, into academy, into professional rugby and if they haven't made it by 21, they may, that's the sort of attitude, you don't make it. Where do they get those experiences? So how many of the Blues, for example, have captained a team, at club or school level?

Where players might get those experiences emerges – the same hot-bed for rugby development that was the foundation for All Blacks in 1985. The role of the clubs in the 1985 development model comes through strongly in the discourse. It was recognised by an NZRU administrator:

...the key point here is that prior to the professional era of academies and the high performance pathway...we learnt to play with different ages at club level, and at provincial level, and if you were captain you had to learn leadership skills to cope with

these gnarled old guys and your younger team mates. You were not constantly told what to do from the sideline through those running on the field relaying coaches' advice. You were on your own, and you and others in the team, learned to lead.

The environment of club rugby has long been seen as a positive development environment. Dave Loveridge commented on his experiences, after being rejected by the school, and taken in by Inglewood club:

There was encouragement when I needed it, support when I needed it, advice when I needed it. I'm sure all clubs are the same and the further you go in the game, the more you appreciate the value of the clubs. They really are the bedrock of the game (Palenski, 1985, p. 218).

The coaching apprenticeship might also benefit from a club rugby element according to Lindsay Knight:

...many of New Zealand's aspiring coaches in the professional era are missing out on the grounding which used to be gained by starting at club level (2005e, *Rugby News*, p. 18).

The institutionalised logic, 'The clubs are history' might be constraining such a radical solution being properly considered. It might be that 'The clubs are history', as a widely shared understanding, has led to a blinkered approach to the idea of a development path incorporating club rugby, driving thought patterns such as: How can the development of the key players be left in the hands of amateurs? What contribution could playing for a poor quality club side possibly make? How can carefully designed programmes be managed in such an uncontrolled environment as club rugby?

An alternative interpretation

The All Blacks are still the number one team in the world. The fact that they are the most successful international sporting team of the last 100 years is because the development system has continued to evolve in line with events. The game is now 'professional'. The current academy system is based on the best practices from major professional sports around the world. If this system was not in place, the numerical

superiority of the English, French and South African unions⁴⁷ would soon overwhelm a rugby nation of only four million people. Without such an academy system offering focused attention, and the development of players in a controlled environment, the international competitiveness of the All Blacks would wane. This would have serious consequences for rugby in New Zealand.

It is no longer possible for the amateur game to offer the kind of controlled and precise environment necessary to nurture what are highly tuned professional athletes. Taking factors such as the sophisticated training equipment, the special dietary requirements, and the availability of specialist analysts and coaches into account means that development has to be done centrally. The club environment is important to keep the raw material growing, but must not be allowed to contaminate the finished products. Those who have not played, coached or managed ‘professional’ rugby are unable to understand the new environment so their opinions can be discounted. There is just one small but persistent doubt associated with this interpretation. Why has the Rugby World Cup not been won since 1987?

Summary of *squeaky bum time*

The contrasts between 1985 and 2005 highlight the issues. Those charged with governance might be missing an opportunity to link clubs into the development path. If the pursuit of winning the Rugby World Cup is firmly established at the heart of New Zealand rugby then the objective might be stated quite simply:

Surely building the mental strength to sustain maximum effort over at least three games is the preparation our players need now, because you can lose in Canberra and Pretoria and win the Super 12, and you can lose in Cape Town and win the Tri-Nations. But you can’t lose anywhere once you’ve arrived in the World Cup quarter-finals (Harding, 2005d, *NZ Rugby World*, p. 14).

⁴⁷ The total number of registered players New Zealand 141,726: England 716,505: South Africa 464,477: France 212,059. The picture for senior registered players (20 years and above) was New Zealand 29,089: England 156,504: South Africa 155,463: France 83,321: and Australia 30,550: USA 38,638: Japan 42,337 (Source: IRB, 2007, www.irb.com).

That mental strength has been built in the environment of rugby before. Over the twenty year period there appears to be consistency on one issue involved here. Former All Black, Dave Loveridge, made the point that the players themselves are the only ones that will be in a position to make the ‘squeaky bum decisions’:

A rugby player, especially in a test, instinctively knows when his side has control even if the scoreline is close or, as can happen sometimes, the team in control is actually behind. Equally test players know when they are not in control of a match. Sometimes this control is visible from the touchline...but at other times it is not noticeable at all (Palenski, 1985, p. 184).

Coaches do not make the ‘squeaky bum decisions’, administrators do not make the ‘squeaky bum decisions’, video analysts do not make ‘squeaky bum decisions’, and New Zealand referees will never make ‘squeaky bum decisions’ that affect the All Blacks. The players make those decisions. If the institutionalised logics, ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’, ‘Central control is the way to go!’, and ‘The clubs are history’ could be pushed aside, then the answer might be seen amongst the grass-roots. This administrator demonstrated the blinkers that the logics might be seen to have applied:

Now you’re a veteran if you’re 23 and haven’t been picked up for an academy or something. So where do the young players go to learn life skills, leadership skills, playing skills, tactical, all that sort of stuff? Where do they go if they’re not in the academy?

Many of those involved in the field of New Zealand rugby know exactly where to go. They have an intuitive knowledge that there is a connection between the clubs and the development of winning All Blacks. They know the qualities that it takes to win World Cups:

Just to give you a classic example of why England won the World Cup 2003, apart from having a very good side, they had an outstanding captain. Australia, outstanding captain John Eales. Previous Australian win, Farr-Jones at half back – outstanding captain, clever, outstanding player and he was natural, as were Eales and Johnson. I’ve tried to say to Graham Henry you will not win the World Cup in 2007 unless your skipper is an outstanding human being who has got qualities that force the players, force the players

to play. Johnson forced them to play because they wouldn't dare let him down (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

They know what is needed in terms of development:

...under pressure people will revert to type and you want to make sure that you know what is in their mind, and develop them (NZRFU Administrator, 1985).

They know where those qualities have been traditionally been developed:

I was selected to be the leader and the attributes that are sort of a requirement you need for leadership are the ability to demonstrate your confidence and belief and mental intensity about winning, and that becomes, you know, that becomes someone, a winner, someone that wants to win, will win and knows what it takes to win and will do it, will deliver it themselves. Club rugby gives you that opportunity. You learn through experience of people management. You make mistakes, say the wrong things at the wrong time, you try and tell someone what to do when you don't know what to do, so the people management side of it. The decision making on the field. As captain you're making millions of calls, you don't take a shot at goal when you should and you learn (All Blacks 'team', 2005).

You know you could be really effective at club rugby so it gave you confidence to try things to do things, to get used to that and of course it was much harder in international rugby, but at least you'd rehearsed it if you like. So the rehearsal side of it would be part of it (All Blacks 'team', 1985).

Captaining a club side is a bloody sight more difficult than captaining a rep side because you have people who are top players and they did their job. Captaining a club side you have to encourage everybody, push everybody around and literally did have to change tactics. You actually led on the field! (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

They know where they cannot be developed in isolation:

Theory is fine but actual practice at it week in and week out through the grades creates great rugby leaders (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

They also know there are some practical difficulties involved:

...club rugby for us, or community clubs and schools, is a slightly more problematic matter because we, rightly I think, believe that the majority of that interaction has to happen at provincial union level. You've got to talk roles and responsibilities to understand where each live. We have an international focus, we have a national competition focus, we have a policy and framework focus but we don't have an interface with 600 schools at primary school level and 300 hundred clubs or whatever numbers you end up with (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

But, if the Rugby World Cup needs to be won, then that interface needs to become a priority, not from a charitable 'looking after the grass-roots' point of view, but from hard-nosed 'this is the place to develop the mental qualities that winning All Blacks require' view. The interface does not have to be complicated. It may as simple as the allocation of resource in such a manner that those selected for the 'conveyer' are required to captain their club side for a minimum of ten games per season over the first five years of their career. Luke McAlister's instincts to turn up at the club on a Tuesday night would have an 'official' place, after all:

...it's the bottom tier base in the game which sustains it right throughout the world I suppose - certainly in this country. There's only four million people so we're not financially well off at the top. The only way we can produce a strong All Black side is by having strong clubs, strong base, strong clubs (NZRU Administrator, 2005).

If the pressures from institutionalised logics can be recognised, then there becomes a real reason to develop strong clubs and a strong base to the game in New Zealand - to enable the development of the mental qualities in players necessary to handle 'squeaky bum time'. 'The clubs are history' is an evolving logic – it does not have to be an inevitable 'fact'.

8.8. Summary of the discussion

That was the messy part of discourse analysis. The objective was a construction of a co-created understanding based on the analysis of texts, discourses and contexts. The five

decision-outcome situations have been used to illustrate the potential impact that institutionalised logics might have for those charged with governance in the field of New Zealand rugby. There are multiple possible interpretations, but the broad intention was to stimulate debate around the issues by uncovering connections that may not have been visible previously. To that end, first, when considering how to deal with foul play, one interpretation suggests the logic, ‘What happens on the field stays on the field’, may have a direct link to the generally good behaviour of rugby supporters. Second, when the status of the referee is considered, the damage to the community game of any erosion in ‘You don’t argue with the referee’ might be taken into account. Third, when considering the long-term sustainability of the ‘business of New Zealand rugby’, institutionalisation effects, from ‘It’s a business now’ and ‘Central control is the way to go!’ might be culminating in a reduction in passion in the environment. Fourth, when considering the priorities for New Zealand rugby, the insidious expansion of influence that ‘We’re building for the World Cup’, and ‘The coach is king’, has had in the environment should be considered, before the logics become so powerful and established as to be intractable. And finally, when deciding the optimum way to develop winning All Blacks, institutionalised logics such as ‘The clubs are history’, ‘Who’s scratching whose back?’ and ‘Central control is the way to go!’ might be blocking the consideration of potential solutions.

It is important to recognise that the decisions and the effects of institutionalisation of certain logics are only interpretations. They are illustrations of the potential impact of institutionalised logics on decisions in the field of New Zealand rugby. It is for those involved in the governance of rugby to judge the credibility and plausibility of the analysis; an analysis that has been carried out in isolation from other important pieces in the puzzle of governance. The nature of this study means that specific attention has not been given to the financial, the international or the competitive landscapes that face the NZRU. Attention has also not been focused on more macro-institutions that might affect their decision-making. The recommendations that flow from the results and discussion sections should be considered in this context. They will be summarised in Chapter Nine, in the section 9.4 detailing implications for practice.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions

9.1. Introduction

This thesis began with an introduction to the idea that socially constructed widely shared conceptions may have an effect on decisions made by those charged with governance in a particular environment. Developed from ideas within institutional theory, the concept of 'taken-for-granted ideas and understandings' as institutionalised logics was introduced. The research question, therefore, was:

What is the nature of institutionalised logics that might be seen to have existed amongst communities affected by governance in the field of New Zealand rugby in 1985 and in 2005?

Chapter Two established the theoretical foundations on which the study has been constructed. The on-going puzzle of governance was highlighted and missing pieces in the literature, and practice, exposed. The use of ideas from institutional theory, and its associated frameworks, was then justified. The link between institutionalisation and discourse was developed in Chapter Three as a methodology. Here the interpretive nature of this research was emphasised. The detail of the method used was then explained. A series of interpretations of the data that emerged during the investigation were presented as discrete, albeit interlinked, results in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. The discussion in Chapter Eight was used to illustrate potential links between institutionalised logics and the decisions of those charged with governance of the game. What follows in this chapter is a summary of the implications that can be drawn; first, about the practice of research; then, about the theoretical concepts involved; and finally, about the governance of rugby in New Zealand.

9.2. Implications for the practice of research

The Doctor of Business and Administration (DBA) programme is described as practitioner-orientated (Massey University, n.d.). It differs from a Doctor of Philosophy

(PhD) in one significant way. PhD research is expected to make a significant contribution to theory; DBA research must make a contribution to *both* theory and practice. This dual objective has produced an element of tension throughout this research. It is a tension that other researchers may increasingly face as the drive to produce ‘useful’ management research continues to develop in academia.

One tension that emerged early in the process was in the choice of research topic. Issues that might have appeared important in practice were too complex to fit neatly into the narrowly defined confines of academic schools of thought. It seemed that in order to make a genuine contribution to practice, academic boundaries would have to be crossed. Early developments of this research were criticised by academics as being too broad to be manageable, with the mix of ideas from institutional theory, governance and discourse analysis all involved. At the same time, the proposals were also dismissed by the CEO as not specific enough to be relevant to NZRU priorities. It might be that this study is an example of research that would not normally be undertaken by either academics or practitioners. It would not, on the basis of experience, appear likely to be funded by either academia or practice. In academia even the choice of a practitioner-orientated programme (the DBA) was initially viewed as potentially career-limiting by the university that employs me. The advice was to complete a PhD and to focus on making a contribution to theory. It was only a personal determination to make some small contribution to bridging the academic-practice divide (Pearce, 2004; Rynes, Bartunek & Daft, 2001) that kept me on the DBA path. The overriding focus to produce ‘useful’ research has driven some of the choices made throughout the process.

The approach taken in this research has endeavored to overcome criticisms that qualitative research is often boring (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005). However, it has come at a cost to some of the conventions of scientific academic writing. One purpose of the research was to develop debate and to create public dialogue. It has been argued that many doctoral students know “that perhaps only the two or three examiners will read the text that they produce and that genuine public ‘dialogue’ is a fiction that must be sustained for the text to be possible at all” (Lee, 1998, p. 11). In this case the creation of public dialogue is not a fiction. In April, 2008, news of the inspiration behind the thesis reached the New Zealand national press. It was the subject of the editorial column in The Herald-on-Sunday:

Just as events of Black Sunday, 2007, were fading from memory, along comes two items of news today to send All Black fans into a state of despair. First up, our rugby writer Gregor Paul reveals New Zealand's best ever number 10, Daniel Carter, is set to quit the All Blacks at the end of the year to chase the big bucks in Europe...Carter will be a huge loss and if that news wasn't bad enough, we also have the audacity of an Englishman, now studying in New Zealand, who based part of his thesis on why the All Blacks can't win that damned William Webb Ellis cup. For someone who comes from a country that hasn't won football's World Cup in more than 40 years we find his thesis a little ironic – but we're prepared to listen (2008, p.36).

The report led to interviews on both national radio and national television news. The subject matter means that public dialogue may have been almost inevitable. This has led to decisions in the presentation of the research that may not sit easily with more traditional academics. For example, academic convention appears to suggest that explicit linkages with the theoretical concepts raised in Chapters Two and Three should dominate the discussion section. In this case those linkages have been somewhat curtailed in the interests of co-creating understanding with those in practice. The language used in Chapter Eight is from the field of New Zealand rugby. It is not the traditional language of academia.

Other implications for the practice of research might be taken from the process. I was warned that the field of New Zealand rugby had been thoroughly researched and that access to senior people would be difficult. I found neither of these assertions to be founded. Certainly the field of New Zealand rugby has been extensively written about, but relatively little would appear to have been based on rigorous puzzle-solving research (Kuhn, 1970). As for access, just two individuals refused to be interviewed and a few more were difficult to track down. This would suggest that even the most discursively visible sites can be viewed in new and interesting ways, and that the people involved will be open to possibilities.

The choice of rugby in New Zealand as the site for the research ensured that the doctoral process was not a lonely one. Throughout the three years that the study has taken, few days have gone by without someone expressing an opinion about the subject,

or interest in progress. This made Kearin's (2006) 'familiarity with the territory' relatively easy to achieve. Each of those thousands of contributions has inevitably helped form the basis of the interpretation offered here.

9.3. *Implications for theory*

Does this research add to theory on governance? It suggests that *institutionalised logics* might be one missing piece in the puzzle of governance. It only suggests. It does not prove the case. The research adds to an understanding of how governance decisions in a particular field might be interpreted as being influenced by such institutionalised logics. The implication of the research is that a theoretical framework for governance might consider the nature of such logics as one piece of the puzzle. This research does not claim that this understanding will necessarily provide the link to improved organisational performance, only that it might make some contribution to 'more informed' decisions. The findings suggest that an explicit understanding of the nature of the institutionalised logics that exist in a particular environment, and specifically their restraining or facilitating effects, could make decision making more predictable for those charged with governance. This opens up the possibilities for an analysis of the institutionalised logics in other organisational settings. Further research is required to explore whether the concept of an institutionalised logic can be applied more widely. Research into other sporting environments might be the obvious place to start. The concept of an institutionalised logic has been applied here at a 'field' level. It may be that further research could attempt to apply it at an 'organisational' level. In addition, perhaps the big question for further research remains unanswered; does an understanding of institutionalised logics actually help those charged with governance make 'better' decisions?

As to contributions to institutional theory, these are limited. This is not an institutional analysis in the traditional sense. The contribution that the research makes is the recognition that 'institutionalisation', as a process, might be applied to more micro-level logics - logics that play an important role in the way in which decisions of those charged with governance are interpreted and implemented.

The research also provides an example of the connection between the process of institutionalisation and discourse analysis. Using discourse analysis has enabled insights into the dynamics of the institutionalisation of particular logics, and provides support, on a micro-level, for Phillips et al.'s (2004) discursive model of institutionalisation. The process of institutionalisation, offered by Tolbert and Zucker (1999) and Oliver (1992), appears to help explain the nature of the development of certain logics in the field of New Zealand rugby.

The evidence presented suggests that the NZRU have attempted to apply a range of Oliver's (1991) options in the face of the pressures arising from the institutionalised logics. Acquiescence in the face of 'We're building for the World Cup' might be one example. They may not have done so consciously, and had they been explicitly aware of the effect of institutionalised logics they may have acted differently.

It may be that certain institutionalised logics highlighted in this research emerge as a site for further research. This analysis can only claim to have viewed parts of the discourse, and a more focused study on, for example, the status of referees, might take into account other discursive material. This might be a way to link specific pressures emerging from institutionalised logics to specific decisions made by those charged with governance.

9.4. Implications for practice

This research has provided a partial interpretation of the history of New Zealand rugby. There are many similarities between the discourses of 1985 and 2005, but at the same time there are many startling differences. Considering them side by side has identified significant changes that might have a 'real' effect on the future of New Zealand rugby. The method has drawn out 'rugby' people talking about 'rugby' things using 'rugby' language. Perhaps the research:

...gives history back to the people in their own words. And in giving a past, it also helps them towards a future of their own making (Thompson, 2000, p. 308).

The picture of institutionalised logics in New Zealand rugby has been provided with a view that those charged with governance might consider the implications when moving towards ‘a future of their own making’. There are a number of implications that have emerged in the discussion in Chapter Eight. They are based on just this one piece in the puzzle of governance. They are interpretations and do not claim to account for ‘other pieces’ in the puzzle. However, the implications have emerged from the words of New Zealand ‘rugby’ people in a study that has attempted to view the environment in a way that has never been done before.

- The traditions of players self-managing the incidents of foul play on the field should be encouraged and supported. Those seen to be acting against the ‘spirit of the laws’ (often in the interests of ‘professional’ success) are those that should be most heavily penalised. Players view rucking as an important mechanism in the process of on-field regulation. The official stance to rucking might be reviewed in the light of these findings.
- Referees should be afforded the status of ‘gods’ in the community, and should be supported in public in every possible way. Administrators in particular have to change their attitudes and behaviour towards referees. Public criticism of referees should not be tolerated, and internal assessments should be managed privately and positively.
- Rugby is seen as a game based on difficult to measure factors like tradition and passion. The model of business that rugby in New Zealand currently operates might have too many layers and too much rigidity to sustain that passion in the long term. One consideration might be to revise the artificially created Super 14 franchise system and create a closer connection with the traditional communities in which passion can be nurtured. This might be done through the guise of the provincial unions that have been the more traditional focal points for supporter passion.
- The Rugby World Cup should not be allowed to dominate the landscape. Action to reduce the power of this institutionalised logic should be undertaken

immediately. Something as simple as a declaration that New Zealand will field the best available team in *every* test match might be a signal that would start the process.

- The current development model for All Blacks is seen by some as flawed and too narrowly cloned to ultimately be successful. The club environment exhibits characteristics that might provide excellent development opportunities when placed alongside elements of academy development. The ‘pyramid’ will only be stable if a clearly articulated, and commonly held, positive understanding about the future of the clubs can be established. The allocation of resources into this area (as has been recently announced) might be the necessary signal, provided it is accompanied by a consistent and clear message that ‘the clubs are the future’.

In addition, there were other implications for those charged with governance of New Zealand rugby that might have been seen to emerge from the results presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, and Appendix V:

- Junior and schoolboy rugby is a priority for the future of the game and not the responsibility of ‘someone else’. It should not just be considered in terms of playing numbers. Action should be taken to stop the artificial and damaging break in the continuity of passion when twelve year-olds are taken away from their clubs and sent to school rugby.
- Weight grade rugby at junior level should be supported, which might be seen as positive discrimination in favour of the ‘little guys’. However, unless the game moves towards the uniformity of Rugby League, the little guys (and the ‘fatties’) will still have a part to play.
- Positively discriminate to allow women in the environment to fully contribute at senior levels, not just offer ‘equal’ opportunities. Recognise the historic barriers that are ingrained in the New Zealand rugby communities. An example might be to actively recruit women to the NZRU board. As introduced in Chapter Two

one emerging link between governance and performance was diversity on boards of directors (Smith et al., 2006; Erhardt et al., 2003; Catalyst, 2007).

The strength of this research does not lie in these implications, for they are but one interpretation of the data. The strength of the analysis lies in its ability to make those charged with governance question the assumptions on which they are making decisions. The range of implications offered merely illustrates how one element of the puzzle of governance, *not explicitly considered at present*, may give more weight to certain courses of action. Whether those courses of action will lead to improved organisational performance is for others to consider. Many of these implications might be dismissed as impracticable, but are they impracticable only because of the thought processes facilitated and constrained by the institutionalised logics of New Zealand rugby?

9.5. Final thoughts

The original question that provided the spark for this research was why haven't the All Blacks won the Rugby World Cup since 1987? In attempting to throw light on the question, the research has provided a map of the nature of the institutionalised logics that dominate New Zealand rugby. Like all maps, the perspective taken has applied a simplifying lens to complex realities. The issue is whether the simplification has added to an understanding of the environment. One interpretation is that the research has achieved exactly that. During 2008, a complete version of the draft report was distributed to a selection of people who had contributed to the process. A request for their feedback was made. In the context of practitioner plausibility, the responses included:

I think you have done a brilliant job with this thesis. I am very interested in the conclusions you have come to...

You have produced a highly credible and authentic report...I would hope that your document is well received by the New Zealand Rugby Board and more importantly they act on the recommendations.

I am really keen that the board and the management get to see your conclusions, particularly those about the referees.

It is a very good piece of research that would have more impact if it was quoting people (*directly*).

...I would have to honestly say that some of what your findings say do have great merit, although personally I don't concur with all of them...after reading your work more than once I would have to say it is a very good study and one that I hope the powers that be consider.

It is the most turgid piece of work I have ever read all the way through, but I think you have hit the nail on the head in terms of the key issues for New Zealand rugby.

And, finally:

What started out as a typically pointless piece of academic research suddenly starts to identify serious cracks in one of the pillars of New Zealand society.

Evidence, perhaps, that the academic-practitioner divide can be bridged, if both sides are willing to compromise a little.

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Appendix I – The communities affected by governance reduced to eight

Stage 1:

- To identify the communities in the field of New Zealand rugby union in 1985.
- To identify the communities in the field of New Zealand rugby union in 2005.

The two documents that were initially analysed to identify the communities were the governing body's annual reports that entered the discourse in 1985 and 2005:

- New Zealand Rugby Football Union Incorporated Annual Report & Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 December 1984.
- New Zealand Rugby Union 2004 Annual Report.

The groups that emerged are listed below:

1985	2005
Officers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Patron ● President ● Vice-Presidents ● Life Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Patron ● President ● Vice-President ● Life Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Council Members ● Chairman 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board of Directors ● Chairman ● Area Representatives ● Maori Representative ● Independent Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Executive Committee ● Executive Chairman 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management ● Chief Executive Officer ● Deputy CEO ● All Blacks Manager ● General Manager - Corporate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appeal Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appeal Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maori Rugby Advisory Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Zealand Maori Rugby Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NZRU Judicial
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NZRU Citing Commission
Past Life Members	
International Rugby Football Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Rugby Football Board
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SANZAR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federation of Oceania Rugby Unions

	<p>Associate Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NZ Colleges of Education Rugby Football Federation ● NZ Deaf Rugby Football Union ● NZ Defence Force Sports Committee ● NZ Marist Rugby Football Federation ● NZ Rugby Foundation ● NZ Schools Rugby Council ● NZ Universities Rugby Football Council ● Rugby Museum Society of New Zealand
International Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● France ● Australia ● Fiji ● Argentina ● England ● Ireland ● South Africa ● Wales ● Scotland ● France ● Australia ● Fiji ● Argentina ● England ● Ireland ● South Africa ● Wales ● Scotland ● Samoa ● Kenya ● United States ● Russia ● Georgia ● Japan ● Canada ● Pacific Islanders ● British & Irish Lions
New Zealand Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Zealand ● All Blacks ● New Zealand Maoris ● New Zealand Juniors ● New Zealand Colts ● Emerging Players Team ● Under 19 team ● Under 17 team ● New Zealand Secondary Schools ● New Zealand Sevens ● Possibles ● Probables ● All Blacks ● New Zealand Maoris ● Junior All Blacks ● Under 19 team ● New Zealand Schools ● New Zealand Sevens ● New Zealand Under 21

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Zealand Divisional XV ● Black Ferns
Selectors	Selectors
Referees	High Performance Referee Coach Referees
Coaches	Coaching staff
The Players	<p>The Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professionals ● NZ Rugby Players Association ● Agents' Forum ● Amateurs ● Juniors
Television	<p>Broadcasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● News Limited ● SuperSport (S.A.) ● Small Blacks TV
Radio New Zealand	
Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competitions Review
Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Division 1</u> ● Hawkes Bay ● ● Auckland ● Bay of Plenty ● Canterbury ● Counties ● Manawatu ● ● North Auckland ● Otago ● Waikato ● Wairarapa-Bush ● ● Wellington ● <u>Division 2</u> ● Taranaki ● ● Taranaki ● Auckland ● Bay of Plenty ● Canterbury ● ● ● North Harbour ● Northland ● Otago ● Waitkato ● ● Southland ● Wellington ● <u>Division 2</u> ● ● Counties Manakau

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southland • • Buller • King Country • Marlborough • West Coast • Wanganui • Mid-Canterbury • • • • • • • • • <u>Division 3 (N)</u> • North Harbour • East Coast • • Poverty Bay • Thames Valley • • <u>Division 3 (S)</u> • Horowhenua • Nelson Bays • North Otago • South Canterbury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawkes Bay • Manawatu • • • Marlborough • • Wanganui • • East Coast • Nelson Bays • North Otago • Thames Valley • Manawatu • <u>Division 3</u> • • • Buller • Poverty Bay • • King Country • Horowhenua Kapiti • • • South Canterbury • Wairarapa Bush • West Coast • Mid Canterbury
Sporting Journalists	Principal Partner of NZRU • addidas
Sponsors	Supporters (sponsors)
Supporters	Spectators Fans Audiences
St. Johns Ambulance Brigade	
New Zealand Secondary Schools Rugby Council	
Council for Recreation and Sport	
New Zealand Sports Foundation	
Schools	
	Volunteers
	Parents
	School teachers
	Ethnic Communities • Iwi • Polynesian • Asian

	Women
	New Zealand Government

Stage 2

Having identified the communities involved through the analysis of the Annual Reports, the next task was to attempt to group these into communities that could become the focus of the research process. Some of the groupings were very clear and some were more subtle. Some are clearly common between the years. An interpretation was made at this stage of the relative importance of these communities. This was based on the number of times each community was referred to and their prominence in the documents. At this stage the Annual Reports of the years ending 31 December, 1985 and 31 December, 2005 were also utilised. The analysis was aimed at providing a platform from which to base further data collection and was not attempting to explain the complete network.

Community in 1985	Community in 2005
NZRFU Council	NZRU Board
Executive Committee	NZRU Management
International Rugby Football Board	International Rugby Board
All Blacks including selectors	All Blacks including selectors
New Zealand Representative Teams	New Zealand Representative Teams
Referees	Referees
Rugby journalists/broadcasters	Rugby journalists/broadcasters
The Unions	The Unions
Sponsors	Sponsors
Schools	Schools
Government	Government
Supporters	Supporters
Players – Unions/Clubs/Juniors/Women	Players – Franchises/Unions/Clubs/Juniors/Women

Stage 3

The groups were further refined. Government and the International Rugby Board were viewed as more likely to affect, rather than be affected by, governance of New Zealand rugby. Players were considered to appear at multiple levels and would be included in All Blacks, Club/Union, Juniors/Schools. ‘Supporters’ was aggregated to include spectators and sponsors. The final grouping was as follows:

1985	2005
NZRFU Council	NZRU Board
NZRFU Executive Committee	NZRU Executive Management
All Blacks ‘Team’	All Blacks ‘Team’
Unions & Clubs	Unions & Clubs
‘Supporters’ & Spectators	‘Supporters’ & Spectators
Broadcasters & Journalists	Broadcasters & Journalists
Referees	Referees
Juniors & Schools	Juniors & Schools

Appendix II - Information sheet for participants



Massey University

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An institutional analysis of change in the field of New Zealand Rugby between 1985 and 2005

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction

My name is David Harris. I am currently undertaking a Doctorate in Business and Administration at Massey University. The purpose of this project is to explore some of the changes that have taken place in New Zealand rugby between 1985 and 2005. I can be contacted at any time by telephone (021 618 366) or by email (davidlesley@xtra.co.nz).

The project is supervised by Dr. Sarah Leberman. Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be addressed in the first instance to:

Sarah Leberman, PhD
Senior Lecturer & Programme Manager
Sport Management & Coaching
Department of Management
Massey University
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand

Phone: 0064-6-3505799 ext.2785
Fax: 0064-6-3505661

Participants

You have been selected to take part in this study on the basis of your perceived involvement with New Zealand rugby in either 1985 or 2005. The information on which this is based comes from you being named in the NZRU Annual Reports or named in the rugby press of that year. It is intended that around 20 participants from each year will be interviewed. The number will, it is hoped, provide a balanced view of what was happening in each of the years.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you will be at liberty to withdraw information, without stating reasons for withdrawal, at any time prior to completion of data collection (estimated to be December 2006).

There are no direct financial costs of participation. You will be asked to participate in an interview at a time and place of your convenience. The duration will be

approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. I would like to invite you to check the transcription of the interview before subsequent data analysis.

Project Procedures

Your participation will help me understand the practices and understandings that existed or exist in the environment of New Zealand rugby in 1985 and 2005. The benefits that might flow from this project include:

- An opportunity to 'discover' taken-for-granted understandings in the environment that might be so ingrained that it is difficult for people involved to see.
- A potential framework for 'respect for the past' to be explicitly considered in board decision making. A framework that allows people to understand how an organisation's past influences how 'it' views the world.
- An opportunity to develop a model for New Zealand business for the way in which these historical practices and understandings might be incorporated into their decision making processes.

All the data collected will be used for the purposes of this research project. The data will not be made available to any other parties. In any publications arising from the thesis the researcher will take steps to ensure that you are not identified individually (unless you have given specific consent). Any tapes will be stored by the researcher in a secure site and will be destroyed on completion of the research.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;
- to ask for the audio/video tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Thankyou

Appendix III – Consent form



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An institutional analysis of change in the field of New Zealand Rugby between 1985 and 2005

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions. I understand that I have agreed to be interviewed for at least 60 minutes.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that the information will be used for this research and publications arising from this research project.

I agree to the interview being audio taped. I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview. The tapes will be used solely for the purposes of this particular study and will be securely stored.

I understand that by my participation in this study I am not waiving any of my legal rights. I agree to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix IV – Rugby News O'Driscoll article

FEATURE

A DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION OF 'THE O'DRISCOLL INCIDENT'

Born in England, **David Harris** is a 45-year-old doctoral student at Massey University, researching changes that have taken place in New Zealand rugby over the past 20 years. A particular focus is on how taken-for-granted practices and understandings have an impact on the governance of the game. He lectures in management and business at Auckland University of Technology.

Debate has raged over the rights and wrongs of the Brian O'Driscoll incident. There have been strong feelings expressed that it should have been handled differently by many of those involved, particularly those charged with the responsibility for governance of the game.

I would like to offer a wider interpretation of the event – one that strikes at the very foundations on which the world-wide game of rugby is built. It is an interpretation that those charged with the governance of the game might want to consider.

The spectre raised is that of "the British Disease" – football hooliganism. "Surely not." I can hear people shouting, "followers of rugby are a different breed than those that fanatically follow soccer teams". Well maybe, but maybe not. Some research suggests many of those who participate in hooliganism are not the caricatured 18-year-old working-class skinhead portrayed by the media. They might even appear to be 'normal' with jobs and kids and their own (misdirected) version of passion.

Supporters of rugby are bonded in their enthusiasm for the game. The passion is evident. But these supporters behave in a way that is constrained by tradition and history. They behave at games in a manner that is handed down through the generations. The experiences they grow up with set in place patterns of action that dominate the way in which they follow rugby. There are certain ways of doing things for a rugby supporter that appear to be taken for granted.

If we look back a few years one such taken-for-granted 'fact' is the tradition to accept that some 'biff' is a part of rugby. There has always been a level of violence attached to the game. The history of this goes back a long way, as do the arguments about how much. On June 17 1904, after a Wellington club game where a player died as a result of a kick to the head, the *Lyttelton Times* reported "a frustrated

policeman admonished all players to remember that any act which caused death or serious injury came within the provisions of the Criminal Code" (Vincent, 2005, p62). The eye of Simon Shaw on the Lions tour is testament to the enduring nature of 'biff'. Nobody is suggesting that outright thuggery should be accepted but there are some well established ways of dealing with the issue. I would suggest the way the O'Driscoll incident was dealt with by the Lions management, is not one of those ways. It appears to be a clear break from the established practices and understandings of rugby.

So what has the O'Driscoll incident got to do with supporter violence? I suggest it is evidence of the erosion of one particular taken-for-granted understanding and practice that has both facilitated and constrained the actions of supporters. It is the erosion of the understanding among followers of rugby that "violence on the field gets dealt with on the field, and at the end of the game gets left on the field". I suggest that the understanding that dominated for many, many years was that no matter how rough it got during the game, violence would not be carried through after the match.

The players would drink together, the supporters would drink together, they would argue and debate together but they would not fight. No matter how strong the feelings about the game and the incidents, the strong common understanding that whatever happened was left on the field, constrained those with any inclination to fight.

The way in which those charged with the management of the Lions presented the incident could be interpreted by rugby supporters as a direct challenge to the 'leaving it on the field' convention. The language used by O'Driscoll and Woodward, surely directed by some grand management plan, might even be viewed as potential incitement. The interpretation of those words, and the

technology rich video presentations, certainly contributed to the headline 'THUGS' in the *Irish Sunday World*.

Whatever the inefficiencies of the referees and the citing system, the short term benefits of such a public portrayal of the incident should surely have been weighed against the damage done to the convention that what happens on the field stays there.

It is interesting to contrast the measured response of the NZRU. Perhaps recognising the potential damage to the established culture of the game in New Zealand, Graham Henry's response was that it was "his policy not to alert citing officers of foul play, believing it was their job alone to spot it" (Leggat, 2005).

Surely the supporters would never allow passion to boil over into violence, even to right the wrongs that happened on the field. But what if they did? What if the game that arouses such passion came to be tainted with even the minority violence that takes place on a regular basis at soccer matches in the UK? The core values of the game in New Zealand that have served the game so well over the past century could be quickly undermined in a blaze of bad publicity. The name of rugby around the world might be tarnished and the potential financial fall out could seriously damage the game.

Let us hope the NZRU continue to recognise and support those taken-for-granted practices and understandings that underpin the strength of the game in New Zealand. *RM*

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Appendix V – Other Institutionalised Logics

This was a grouping of the data around issues reflecting more general changes in the nature of New Zealand society over the period 1985 to 2005. The attitude of society to women is included in ‘Thank the ladies for the spread’ analysis. Evidence of two other institutionalised logics emerged from the data: ‘I don’t want to be in the front row, I’m white’ and ‘It’s a good excuse for a drink’.

Institutionalised logic 18: ‘Thank the ladies for the spread’

There appears to have been some commonly held understanding as to the role that women played in the environment. There were some significant differences in both the nature and the strength of the logic between the two years. Understandings become institutionalised when they facilitate or constrain action, and when acting in a manner that is seen to conflict with the understanding incurs costs (economic, cognitive or social). The evidence suggests that there were strong institutionalised understandings about women in the environment in both 1985 and 2005.

In 1985, there was evidence that the role of women in the environment of rugby was seen as being based largely around a supporting function in the kitchen, or laundry, or bedroom. The discourse leaves little doubt that the environment was viewed as a male domain. One senior administrator of the time saw the understanding very simply:

...they would sit in the car and wait until he comes out.

Perhaps a more widespread understanding was that women were viewed as fulfilling a mix of roles. For one coach it was in the kitchen:

Do the dishes. Cook the food. Take the kids home and come back to the club a couple of hours later. We weren’t as bad then, it’s not as bad now, but ten years before that the women weren’t even allowed into rugby clubs in New Zealand. A lot of women have told me they hate rugby and I ask them why and they say because they had to sit in the car with their mother knitting, waiting for dad to come out of the rugby club.

For another administrator it was in the laundry:

They started off naturally in supporting their husbands or boyfriends as the case may be. When they had families there was kids' rugby, the ladies were very prominent particularly in country areas in washing the jerseys for the whole team without any payment at all. They would provide and serve afternoon teas and did a tremendous job.

And for this supporter perhaps in the bedroom:

Mostly they were the supporters, and they did the teas and made the sandwiches. At the clubs they were the ones that did the food, and they were merely... and yes I suppose they would just... that's what the guys went looking for after the game.

J.J. Stewart, a councilor from the NZRFU, was reported as calling for more women in to get involved in rugby:

In a lengthy, wide ranging interview with the Gisborne Herald, J.J. surprised some by strongly advocating the active participation of women in Rugby... "And perhaps also," he said with probably a twinkle in his eye, "with many females playing Rugby, there would be a greater incentive for an increased number of males to take part!" (Curran, 1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 28, p. 28).

The twinkle in his eyes might also have been caused by a weekly cartoon strip featuring 'Susan of Herne Bay', written by 'Loosehead Len', and illustrated by Darryl Kirby. 'Susan' was used to illustrate the topical issues of rugby and how they might be related to sex in some, often round-about, way. 'Susan' was portrayed as a suburban prostitute happy to undertake a variety of sexual practices. An example is illustrated on the following page.



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 22, p. 19

One commentator implied that the cartoon strip was central to the discourse at the time:

Have found the guest writer's page required reading in my copy of *Rugby News*, it has taken over first place from Loosehead and Susan of Herne Bay (Bush, 1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 24, p. 13).

Women themselves added to a picture of long suffering acceptance:

As one of the long-suffering breed of Rugby wives, there is something I have never come to terms with during my lengthy association with the game. It is nothing as complicated as the ever-changing rule book, it is not even the many lonely nights I've spent on my own with only the television, a book or the cat for company. It's not the years of wasted weekends. It's the washing! There is nothing in this world that can make me pale quite as much as the sight, and smell, of that familiar grubby gear bag, lying, flung on to the laundry floor every Tuesday and Thursday night (Kidd, 1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 22, p. 18).

Changing social conditions meant women could not continue to be discriminated against in such a blatant way. One former coach suggested political pressure and social pressure was starting to impact on the environment:

They (NZRFU) had to become less sexist. They had to encourage women's rugby. That was from the top again, that could have been from the IRB, 'everybody is entitled to rugby'.

Was it that drive for numbers again? The same coach explained the evolution, albeit a little grudgingly:

...the girls today they have what they want, they force it. Whether you like it or not, it's like professional rugby, it's the evolution of rugby – and I'm rapt at the girls' involvement. My daughter could talk rugby as good as me and that's because she grew up with it, it was always there, it was always around her. The more you're around it the more you're part of it.

By 2005, all the stops have been pulled out, cardboard wine casks had been replaced by bottles for the ladies:

I'm also talking as well about a Saturday afternoon at the local clubs they'd be more welcome. In the old days in the clubroom you'd have cardboard wine, if she didn't like the cardboard wine then tough luck. Now they have nice bottles of wine in the club. It's become more welcoming and inviting to women. It's changed.

An interpretation of just how much it had changed follows. Professionalism was on the way, but not quite quickly enough to pay for the ladies, according to one administrator at the time:

I think the ladies themselves realised how important they were and gradually sought and gained more help from the clubs and provincial unions. Indeed long before all these ladies were playing rugby many of them became members of club committees, treasurers, secretaries. They did a tremendous job and were really due for better consideration than we could give them. Of course when I started, even on the Auckland Rugby Union, we simply couldn't afford to spend money entertaining ladies because we didn't have any money.

The discourse of 1985 reflected the beginnings of a growth the numbers of women playing rugby:

The 1984/85 season of ‘Touch’ proved even more successful than the previous season with team entries jumping from 48 to 76. This increase enabled the Marist Touch Association to run three competitions; competitive, social and ladies. The ladies grade was made up of eight teams, all new to the club and most new to the game (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 18, p. 19).

There was certainly debate around this ‘new’ role for women. J.J. Stewart again, without the twinkle:

We have to recognise the importance of women to our game, even to the point of providing playing opportunities for them (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 20, p. 2).

Not everyone agreed. One participant, an NZRFU official at the time, explained his view of women playing rugby:

Where women were playing women. Personally I’m not in favour of it. You know I think a woman’s got a place in the house, woman’s got a place in society and I don’t see a woman out in the paddock there getting tackled and thrown all around the ground. It’s not my view of a woman but the fact is that they are now promoting it. I wouldn’t waste my time going across the road to see two teams of women.

In the rugby press women rugby players tended to be portrayed as less than glamorous, the “rather larger Te Atatu rival” perhaps being typical. However, the girls “pleasing readiness to run the ball in search of tries” was appreciated in the article on the next page.

WOMEN'S Rugby came to Auckland on Sunday, and attracted a crowd of several hundred. Williams Park, Mangere, was the venue for the first of what will be fortnightly women's matches. The girls showed a pleasing readiness to run the ball in search of tries.

In fact, tries accounted for all the scoring as Frankton beat Grammar 8-0 and Manukau beat Te Atatu 16-0.

● Next week's *Rugby News* will carry a full, illustrated, report on women's Rugby.



A Manukau player about to be engulfed by a rather larger Te Atatu rival during Sunday's women's tournament at Mangere in Auckland. Manukau won the game 16-0.

Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 16, p. 3

Was this the beginning of a change in the understanding of women's place in rugby – 'a full, illustrated, report' to follow the next week? Probably not. Rather unfortunately, this report was headlined:

WOMEN NOW MAKING THE PLAY – ON THE FIELD (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 17, p. 22).

Things were much better for women in 1985, than they used to be according to one All Black's wife:

I've got an awful lot out of rugby, quite apart from the fact that it's what David (Loveridge) wants to do and makes him happy. If it hadn't been for rugby, I wouldn't have been to Europe, I wouldn't have clothes from Paris, I wouldn't have the many nice friends I do both in New Zealand and overseas (Palenski, 1985, p. 232).

Perhaps Victoria Beckham might have had a role to play. The South Africa tour had provided a focal point for women's opposition to rugby. One Daig Laing (sex unknown) was reported as writing in the Wellington programme:

I hate to labour a point, but the formation (sic) of a Women against Rugby group (insert Bandwagon) inspired a mixture of laughter and pity. It might be going too far to suggest the women (wimmin?) involved in the group have little or no interest in Rugby or sport in general. But from their comments, it's unreasonable to guess that they don't appreciate the role of women in men's sports, or the role of men in women's sport. Without the work of women in Rugby – now extended way past what may have been the traditions of boiling the spuds, making the tea and washing the gear, to coaching, refereeing and, even, playing – many players would have been forced out of the game at much earlier ages (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 17, p. 23).

Even twenty years later there might be some lingering bitterness, in the words of this NZRFU administrator, towards such an attack on the institutionalised understandings:

...we haven't really talked about the alienation of women and so on through that '70s and '80s period. You know you had a very strong rise in feminism and it embraced a whole lot of factors and rugby bore the brunt of quite a few of those. How would I describe it, without being derogatory. They were absolutely entrenched. Rugby was an absolute no no because it represented male chauvinism in their eyes at its worst and all the rest of it...through the Springbok tour controversy, just because it was rugby and it was male oriented, then it was wrong.

Sounding far more placatory, Dianne Hawarth, 'rugby mum' commented on the consequences of a lack of positive encouragement for women in the environment:

I'm not advocating a back to the good old days nostalgia, but I do believe the Rugby Union has let women go, to the game's detriment. After all, women are not only the mothers of budding Rugby players, they are also the bulk of the nation's primary school teachers (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 13, p. 15).

Here a union administrator at the time explained the consequences of acting in contravention of the institutionalised logic. An example of a social non-conformity cost was that people might have laughed at you:

I can't help thinking of the growth in recent years of rugby for ladies. If that had been suggested, say 20 years ago people, would have laughed but today I think women's rugby is one of the biggest sports in New Zealand.

The evidence so far suggests that a strong institutionalised logic of the role of women existed in 1985. There were signs that the conditions for erosion might have been starting to develop. So what was the nature of the logic by 2005? Women rugby players, particularly in the form of the national side, the Black Ferns, had established themselves as a part of the rugby discourse. Their forthcoming game against England was discussed by coach Jed Rowlands. It could have been any pre-game comment prior to a men's game:

They are going to be a younger faster backline and possibly a more expansive game. They have a couple of physical forwards, but it depends how they come together" (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 34, p. 9).

The photograph on the following page might be considered to be typical of any rugby game shot; gender considerations appear secondary to the action.



Source: *Rugby News*, 2005, 36, 34, p. 9

In a report on the award of Women's Player of the Year for 2004, there was no hint that women have anything than equal standing in the use of rugby language. The winner, Stephanie Mortimer, commented on the Black Fern environment:

The environment is so professional – it's about improving, giving your best 100 percent of the time. Training is always full-on and even bad eating habits are frowned on by the girls (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, 82, p. 87).

The discourse surrounding women was on the surface generally positive, although the following non-attributed piece hinted at a lingering institutionalised logic:

...the same living-in-the-past critics also disrespect women's rugby, as if rugby being a game created for men should stay that way. The trouble with such opinions is that they keep rugby mired in the past. Some of the old-fashioned values that rugby keeps alive, ones that have a continuing relevance from generation to generation, are discredited by chauvinistic associations. Plenty of female supporters is the hallmark of the world's most successful clubs. And these women are only likely to KEEP attending if they are invited to do so as equals rather than plate-bearing subordinates (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 6, p. 16).

By 2005, there might even be evidence of non-conformity costs, associated with the ‘living-in-the past’ label. The nature of the prevailing logic had changed at surface level to one of expressed equality. It might be viewed as ‘politically incorrect’ in a social sense, not to claim that you were a driving force for change. Apparently, hidden away in 1985 there were at least two administrators in the NZRFU working on women’s behalf to get them involved in the environment on an equal footing. If only the women at the time had known!

The women, they were not a part of it. Now I changed that. I changed that because of my wife who always attended. We were in a little bookshop so when I went away on these rugby things she had to run the shop. So then what we did was we developed support from the players’ wives, and after-match functions. I got the Wellington rugby to agree that the wives could come to after-match functions.

...we refused in the early years that if the women weren’t invited to the functions that we had after games then we weren’t going either and we had a very good set up here where women came to all our functions and so on. But you know if you went to Auckland or you went to Wellington the women were away in a room on their own. It was, it was bizarre in many ways, it really was. But again it was part of an evolutionary change, old habits die hard and it was the last bastion of male chauvinism I suppose at that level. Why couldn’t women be, you know. It changed through the ’70s slowly and today nobody would tolerate it.

Apparently the changes were being supported by All Blacks as well:

I tell you another thing that was an issue then, were the partners getting involved in games. Getting them to come to the games and where we did have an involvement is we got the wives invited to one game a year, and that was quite an achievement which is laughable when you think about it now. The unions invited the partners to one test match a year and that was seen as quite a massive change for them.

Underneath the surface language of 2005, there was some evidence that the ‘old’ institutionalised logic still lingers – a logic that drives the attitudes and behaviours of people in the environment. The impression is left that there is still an element that

everything in rugby cannot be equal. The economic costs of equality were referred to by this journalist:

I'm not sure how inclusive rugby is to women. This women's rugby has become quite militant. I'm told that they think they should have the same rights as men. The Auckland Women's rugby team think they should be treated like men which is a bit of a nonsense because no-one really wants to watch them. You only have to go to Eden Park. Have you been there to see some of the women curtain raisers? There is no-one there really. They put them on in Eden Park, I mean England v New Zealand last year, but there's no-one there, they all turn up for the last hour, and the level of the play is pretty low I think. I mean they're good at certain things but it's actually like watching the old Japs play rugby, the old women playing rugby. They're very skilful, very good hands, but they sort of lack another dimension to the game, it's not the same. Some of those women are quite good handlers and good touch, they play touch, a lot of the women play touch, netball and they've got certain skills but the women involved in rugby..... I think it has changed. I think women just go to all the after-match things now.

Possible cognitive costs of true equality in coaching, were illustrated by this 2005 referee:

I'm just thinking back historically. I think males have been the only coaches of the women's team. Now has there been a development path or a place for women to come through and coach at the elite level? I can honestly say I don't think there has...From an issue of chauvinism I don't know whether the guys would enjoy... I mean a female being in their domain, that's a tough one, that's a real tough one.

However, there are some real benefits that might accrue for the team if you can involve 'the woman' according to one member of the All Black 'team':

It's a process. I think socially you have got to be pro-active. You sometimes need to involve his family. Likes it is no good somebody playing in a team if his wife does not support him. So I feel you need to involve the family. You need to involve the woman. To make them feel "hey, this is quite exciting. I don't mind my husband going to training on Sunday morning, and working damn hard, because I get a kick out of it and so I'm going to support him, so he's feeling good and he plays better".

Perhaps for this referee ‘women’ had become a different kind of target in 2005. They might even be seen as customers on equal terms with any male:

...we try and keep the game as clean as we possibly can so that Mums at home see it as a game that is attractive, because the business act of the product is now trying to attract females as well as males to the stadiums to watch the game.

...we can't produce a brand that is focused on one area of the market, which is a sort of chauvinist, male dominated area of the market. We have to provide a product or a business, which is attractive to a much wider section of the market which includes females and that includes males.

It's about getting repeat customers and if they happen to be females who want to come along and watch guys in shorts and muscled jerseys, skin tight jerseys, or whatever, well so be it.

An implication that ‘It’s a business now’ might have facilitated the acceptance of customers who want to look “at the one with the black hair and brown eyes” (*New Zealand Herald*, 1956). Women might also be viewed as potential employees on equal terms, as suggested by a 1985 All Black:

Now with the marketing, the levels of marketing, and you have sponsorship, I mean probably half our staff is female so you know there's a huge involvement. You've got women playing the game. 60% of women 18 or over watched Super 12, 65% Super 14 so they're a big part of the game and you have to cater for them at the end of the day.

A view echoed by a 2005 referee:

I could quite easily say 50% of the staff are females and that's from event management through to club liaison officers. Right through at the different levels of the corporate structure in the life of the rugby union, and that would be a common percentage I would imagine at provincial unions around the country. I can think of venues now where there is a number of females running the events, running referee groups, all over. In head office in Wellington there would be 50% if not more females in head office, it's incredible, so yeah; I mean the game has changed dramatically and so have the chauvinistic barriers been broken down over the years.

Or, as a former All Black argued, women might be seen as suppliers of the raw material on more than equal terms:

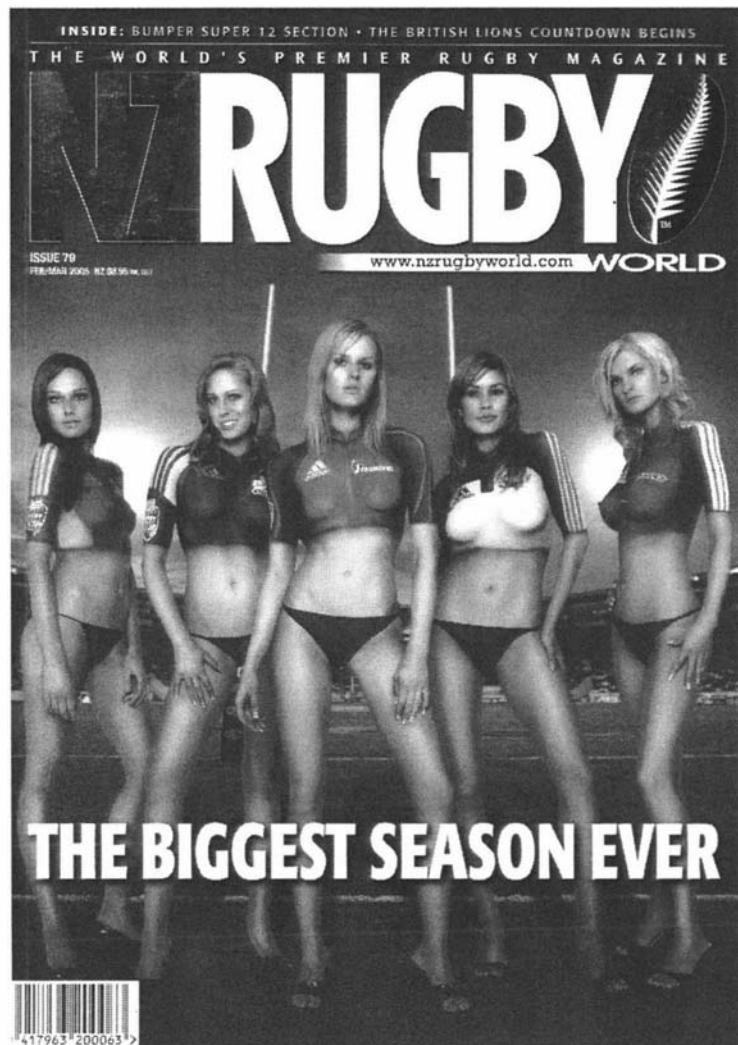
They are the Mums of these players going forward.

That is not to say that the power of the ‘old’ logic cannot still emerge with a twinkle, as illustrated when a former coach tried to dig himself out of a potential hole:

So that has changed drastically, there’s now women’s rugby, women administrators, which I think is great. Women have always been good administrators, so I think that’s only for the benefit of rugby. If your wife likes rugby, likes going, she’s going to push your kids in that direction. So it is a world away. In rugby in the UK now there’d be 3:1 not 10:1 women, which might be the figure for 1985. It is significant. The girls weren’t there. You had some real rugby diehards who would come along and cheer, now you’ve got gorgeous, attractive...not that the girls in ’85 weren’t gorgeous and attractive, but now you’ve got models, you’ve got women that beautiful they could be at the theatre or opera, or at the nightclub dancing, and they’re there at rugby.

There was more evidence that the institutionalised logic is not dead on the front page of the first issue of the *NZ Rugby World* in 2005. The edition attempted to attract potential readers’ attention with ‘painted ladies’⁴⁸ – literally ladies dressed only in paint. Can it be reasonably assumed that ‘guys in shorts and muscled jerseys, skin tight jerseys’ might have been less effective in attracting attention to the magazine?

⁴⁸The term ‘painted ladies’ has been used in New Zealand as a colloquialism for prostitutes

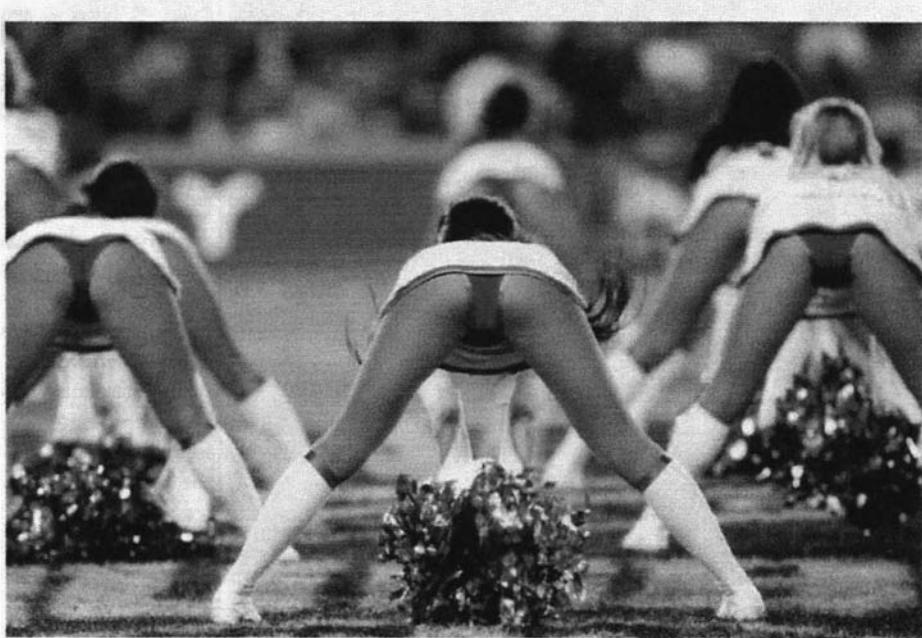


Source: *NZ Rugby World*, 2005, 79, p. 1

Inside the magazine, each month during 2005, was a full two page spread focused on the Black Ferns and women's rugby. The style of the discourse could not be differentiated from any section on the male game. However, in the May 2005 edition of *Rugby News*, the dichotomy that is the place of women in rugby comes together within the space of three pages. On page 44 under the heading "Women still seeking respect", Black Fern, Anna Richards, made a passionate and articulate argument that women's rugby is still not being treated seriously. She concluded:

All this shows me is that people, especially the media, still don't take women's rugby seriously and continue to treat it as a novelty (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 10, p. 44).

The irony is that on page 41 of the same edition, there was an article on cheerleading, compiled by Dianne Haworth. The penultimate paragraph, about a recent change of uniform, was accompanied by this uncaptioned photograph (carefully reproduced actual size):



Source: *Rugby News*, 2005, 36, 10, p. 41

At least not for one disgruntled fan who recently fired off a complaint to the Auckland Rugby Union stating that the cheerleaders' uniform be "much" smaller, complaining that "their skirts are down to their ankles" and that there should be "not so much emphasis on the choreography. Just get them out there waving their bits" (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 10, p. 41).

An element of blatant sexism might still have been acceptable in the discourse of 2005. Take, for example, a feature on the "Heroes and Zeros" of the Lions tour:

Best assets: Kerre Woodham's rugby humour was as flimsy as her dress fabric, but the dress showed some first class fun-bags to great effect (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 20, p. 24).

Female readers of *Rugby News* might be seen to be accepting of the understanding. One letter from Kiwi Gal, Sydney, suggested:

Dear Sir

Okay...I do know Rugby News is the Man's Man magazine (admit it), though as you are aware you have a vast female following (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 29, p. 45).

So the institutionalised logic of 'Thank the ladies for the spread' may not have eroded entirely, not really surprising given that it has been a bastion of male domination for over one hundred years. At the end of a long interview, and even longer day, with all thoughts of political correctness gone, one senior NZRU administrator made a comment that might indicate that the remnants of the logic remain:

Well we fight wars and they don't. I mean that's actually right. I mean I get criticised all the time by my wife for being un-politically correct. We are different. A different set of hormonal drivers for a start.

Perhaps more importantly, there was evidence, from another senior NZRU administrator, that the constraining nature of the institutionalised logic still had some hold over what might be discussed at board level:

I can't understand why we don't explore the women thing. They're better at administrating than Dads in many cases. Anyway more meticulous, more detailed, they drive you mad on the detail, they're so meticulous.

Another NZRU official confirmed that there was no specific focus on women, but that 'obviously they were accepted and recognised as a normal part of the rugby community now'. However, at governance level, in 2005, there were no women on the board of the NZRU. Louisa Wall, a former Black Fern, expressed ambition:

...we are still fighting for opportunities to wear the black jersey with the silver fern, and I thought it would be in the best interests of New Zealand regarding the IRB Olympic bid for the NZRU to push the women's game given our proven success to date. But people seem unable to see such opportunities and as such, this limitation in the board of the NZRU continues to drive my ambition for a seat around the NZRU table (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 29, p. 36).

Perhaps the institutionalised logic behind ‘Thank the ladies for the spread’ is still hindering the ability of some to see such opportunities.

Institutionalised logic 19: ‘I don’t want to be in the front row, I’m a white boy’

In 2005, there was evidence in the discourse that junior and schoolboy rugby was being affected by a range of developing understandings about the ethnicity of players. There was evidence that certain roles in rugby are becoming seen as race specific. This is mixed up with an emerging view that somehow different ethnic groups have to be treated differently as rugby players and supporters by coaches and administrators. The kind of behaviours that may be facilitated by such an evolving logic might be a form of occupational segregation, with the appointment of coaches and administrators who can ‘motivate’ specific ethnic groups, and players being guided towards particular roles on the field. There was evidence of the beginnings of an understanding that if you are not from a particular ethnic background then there might be little point pursuing a particular role. There is no evidence that this existed in 1985, but some evidence that it might be a developing logic by 2005. This issue was one of the more hidden logics in terms of discourse. Little was written down, and opinions were generally guarded. Where participants requested the opportunity to review and change their transcripts, this was the one area that came back altered. The evidence was relatively weak. This really is one for those charged with governance to decide on the plausibility of such an institutionalised logic acting in the field. If it can be seen to be acting, the question becomes, is it acting in a positive way (in which case support it) or a negative way (in which case act to reduce its influence)?

The ethnic make-up of New Zealand has changed significantly over the period of study⁴⁹ and society’s attitudes to actions based on ethnicity have changed. New Zealand Maori coach, Matt Te Pou, offered an example of a change relevant to rugby:

⁴⁹ From 2006 Census the ethnic breakdown was: European 68%, Maori 15%, Pacific Islander 7%, Asian 9%. In 1986 Census the breakdown was: European 82%, Maori 13%, Pacific Islander 4%, Asian 1%. Figures from New Zealand Official Yearbook published by Department of Statistics/Statistics New Zealand, Wellington.

Now we have people, even though they have only a small percentage of Maori blood, putting their hand up to be identified as Maori, but 20 years ago it didn't necessarily happen. A lot of us who have been around for a while speak about this (2005 *Rugby News*, 36, 15, p. 13).

Attitudes to humour have changed. Back in 1985, acceptable behaviour from a racial point of view might have been very different from what was considered acceptable in 2005. One example came from Dave Loverage's biography:

Loveridge was often the joker of teams, the humour in gestures and expressions rather than verbally. He and Mourie regularly played an act of Oriental ambassador and interpreter – Loveridge with his drooping moustache and crinkling eyes making an ideal Ho Chi Minh (Palenski, 1985, pp. 216-7).

Pulling Ho Chi Minh faces in Auckland, in 2005, might elicit a somewhat negative response, particularly if you were an All Black. There was also evidence of some barely hidden racist views, from 1985. There was no evidence that these were widely held, but that such ideas could be expressed in the context of a 'rugby interview' might indicate a degree of tolerance by the environment that some might find unacceptable. One example was:

Well because you had a mainly European based, and I hate using that term, I would rather call it New Zealand where New Zealand equals white. So you had a New Zealand flavoured side-line and the two or three Maori boys that were there, their parents never came along.

These individual views are only relevant in the context of this research in that they provide the background to the environment in which institutionalised logics have developed. There was more evidence that parts of the rugby community attributed certain generalised characteristics to particular ethnic groupings. One white European New Zealand participant articulated his view of how Polynesian families work:

So what is different now is you've got a lot of families and particularly with Polynesians, the whole whanau saying 'hey bro you get in there, you get the professional contract and you can bring the money in for the whole family' because

that's how they work. Whoever makes the money comes in, you divvy it all up and suddenly the chance two years out of college to be earning two hundred thousand a year or even a hundred thousand a year is a very significant amount of money. So that's certainly turned a lot of things around.

Another journalist and broadcaster, with rather more direct evidence, backed up the view:

I'm told by Inga Tuigamala that in his community there are people who are pinning all their hopes on large Polynesian kids to go professional and make the money for the family, and that these kids are being encouraged to do that as opposed to getting a balanced education, and the parents are pushing them to rugby as opposed to school, which is what they used to do.

There was evidence in the 2005 discourse of a belief that certain ethnic groups react better to certain methods of coaching. A former All Black hinted as much in an interview:

As a strategist...Brooke believes (*Graham*) Henry has no peer. His background as a former headmaster of Kelston Boys High School has also given him a unique ability to connect with Polynesian players (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, 82, p. 60).

This 1985 coach, in a slightly round-about way, supported the view that different ethnic groups have to be treated differently:

That is so important. That is so important. You can be a king in Rome and a clown in Paris. That is so, so significant with rugby today. I think you've got to be able to run with the Indians and handle the cowboys.

Another administrator, from 1985, recognised the cowboys and Indians:

This is not detrimental but you see the darker races are a problem. The coaches that are dealing with them have to understand what is in the mind of a Fijian, of a Tongan, of a Cook Islander; they've got to have a knowledge of those guys, so that when they're working with them, the interpretation of what you want from them, you've got to get to the core of that.

An NZRU official suggested that there are cultural differences that mean the style of coaching might have to be adapted:

Culture has got a bit to do with that. So we're getting more Pacific Island and Maori players with different cultures, some of them and I don't wish to stereotype here, some of the cultures are a little bit more... 'do it', you know... 'do it, do it as the matriarch or patriarch says' type cultures. So there's not that sort of wanting to follow their own track. It's like, okay, if the coach says this, I must do this kind of thing.

The cowboys and indians issue in Auckland might be particularly acute:

Almost three-quarters of the Auckland union's playing numbers are of Pacific stock (Burnes, 2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 2, p. 10).

A journalist's comments reflected the effect of those numbers:

You would be hard pressed to find in Auckland a full team of European guys, and that's had an impact on the game. They're wonderful athletes on the one hand but they are a deterrent to certain other ethnic groups playing. Especially, I don't know whether that's a nationwide...certainly an Auckland factor. I don't know how that impacts on it... It does have an effect on the participation numbers I would say.

The changing nature of New Zealand society and the influx of 'big boys' were considered by this NZRU administrator:

In the old days you used to just say "Oh (*name*) you're quite big so you"... that's how I became a prop, "you're the biggest so you go here and bend down and push". That was physically pretty much the extent of my coaching the entire time that I was there, unfortunately. Otherwise I could have been an All Black! But there are kids who can't get into that grade, who probably won't do any harm to the other kids in the grade in reality, but the exception is that they're too big. Because they're bigger they would play in the front row, but they aren't big enough to play in the front row in the grade they're stuck in. So they can't play anywhere else in that grade so they're lost in the system and they're probably.... He's talking about losing 40 kids because they can't get the mix right. Well that's tragic. I said the story to someone around here because in the end it's not ours, it's the provincial union level. The reality of our demographics are we're

going to increasingly have a dominating Polynesian influence and just as in the UK you've seen an increasing influence from the coloured population.

'It's not ours' perhaps implied that the difficulty of getting the age and weight mix right in junior and schoolboy rugby is seen as the responsibility of the provincial unions. The provincial unions might see it as the responsibility of the schools and clubs. If it is the outcomes that matter, it might be the responsibility of those charged with governance. A referee agreed that demographic changes were having an impact:

Well in terms of today you've got such a vast difference between your little white boys versus your Polynesians at those ages. You know they seem to be so much heavier, it levels itself out around about 19, 20 but in the meantime...

The reality might not have been so different in 1985, according to one supporter:

We were supposed to be playing a game of social rugby and when we saw who we were playing against, they were huge, because it was like the bros down there. Trying to tackle these guys was difficult so what we did was to try and keep the ball in close. If they got the ball out in the backline it was a nightmare. But my mates stood up to them...

There might be a developing understanding that the front row is the domain of only certain kinds of boys, as one senior NZRU official recognised:

They've got this real dilemma where none of the kids that are in the... because they've gone away from ages for grades, none of the kids in this grade actually want to be in the front row. Right. So you've got all these kids, they're all like minded kids, none of their parents want them to be in the front row and none of the kids particularly want to be in the front row.

Parents, and indeed the children of European ethnicity themselves, appear to be taking action on the basis of 'there's no point playing in the front row anymore'. They perhaps see the investment of time and energy to learn the roles of prop and hooker to be a waste. There was a commonly held view that by the time they get to around thirteen years of age, those positions will be dominated by much larger boys primarily of

Polynesian descent. They are also viewed as the most dangerous positions in rugby. An NZRFU administrator articulated a more widely held view that ethnicity might define particular skill sets:

That's not saying that Polynesians can't lock a scrum or anything like that but I think they have got a slightly different skill base, slightly different make up, they mature at a different age and I think it's a composite game for everybody and there's a part and a role for everybody. What's happening at the moment is that young Polynesians are getting into age grade teams at an early level and then they go right through, and are making it into the All Blacks. I think a lot of our potential... (*the*) European New Zealander is turned off rugby and does other things.

The view might be seen to have much in common with an NZRU administrator who recognised, if a little uncomfortably, the existence of a perception that was causing some consternation:

One of the questions whether we like it or not is this whole, at least this perception, that the little... boy rugby is now too difficult to play in New Zealand because there are too many at an early age big boys and you know you can write that in which ever nice way you want to write it, but at the end of the day that's what the equation is. And there are little people who tend to be white in our country going through the grades until they get to a certain age where they are physically not as well developed as their peers who came from Pacific Polynesian and to a lesser extent Maori background.

No implications are made as to whether this perception is good or bad, right or wrong – just that it might affect decisions made by those charged with governance. It is a small part of the picture of institutionalised logics. The front row is used as an example of the nature of the understanding. If the positions of the front row do not, in the minds of those in the field, require qualities offered by particular ethnic groups that are driven to avoid the positions, then it may not be a concern. The link with the perception of mothers might be more of an issue according to one administrator:

...this is a problem area for rugby because you have fast maturing Polynesian people dominating the rugby scene right throughout, and a lot of Mums have said hey my son is not playing and getting his head knocked off at an early age, and something needs to

be done in this area because the European New Zealander is very important to rugby and its long term view.

A journalist articulated the direct link with 'My boy is not playing that game':

One is that Polynesian factor where Mums will say you're not going to play these... they are much bigger physically so you go and play another sport.

The effect on the All Blacks might be some way in the future, but the link is there, according to another journalist:

Would Jeff Wilson have ever been an All Black if as a snotty nosed blonde headed wimp he was playing in Ponsonby – would he ever have made it? No. But he's nurtured through in Southland and he becomes stronger and bigger and he makes it, but he would have been smashed to a pulp in Ponsonby you know, and I've never discussed that with him, but that to me is a fact.

One difficulty with the emergence of a sensitive logic like 'I don't want to be in the front row, I'm white' is the constraint it places on open debate. It might be socially difficult, not to mention cognitively difficult, to discuss the effects and solutions to such a racially charged issue. It may be difficult to bring up openly at a board level. The radical solution offered in confidence by one participant might be evidence of this constraint:

So you know one way of doing it would be to have a European game. You can imagine the liberal reaction to that kind of thing. It's not as silly as it sounds although I certainly wouldn't be prepared to advocate too strongly for reasons, you'd get an uproar. But we have had ethnically selected teams. You know Maoris have been selected on their own, so if you got an acceptance that the reasons weren't racist - they were actually to create teams where guys didn't get hurt and injured at a young level until they get to a certain age and from then on it was open slather, maybe it's a solution. But I don't think it would be accepted today in this day and age.

Perhaps a more acceptable and less cognitively challenging is developing in the field. A view summed up by a journalist and broadcaster - 'toughen up little white boy':

Now, your difference is that there's a number of white kids who have been directed into soccer because the big Polynesian kids are doing so well in rugby. Now that's just what rugby's about. Rugby is about... rugby is a brutal collision sport, it's a game played by tough people, it's a game where you have to be bloody hard to be able to handle it.

If the institutionalised logic behind 'I don't want to be in the front row' continues to influence outcomes, then those charged with governance may also have to be tough enough to face up to a brutal collision.

Institutionalised logic 20: 'It's a good excuse for a drink'

Rugby has long been synonymous with alcohol consumption. The after-match function has at times reached legendary status in the discourse. There was evidence that the game was played as a prelude to a social occasion in 1985. A commonly held view was that whilst the result was important, the after-match activities were at least on a par. The understanding might be seen to have facilitated action by players, supporters and administrators, particularly attendance at the after-match. This may be important as it is at these occasions that participants established their prevailing views of rugby, and developed some of their long standing relationships. It may be that the after-match was a primary site for the development of the discourse of rugby. The after-match might have played a significant role in the transmission of the ideas and understandings that have developed to form the institutionalised logics of New Zealand rugby. By 2005, evidence suggested that circumstances had changed and significantly eroded this particular logic. One referee recalled the after-match functions:

The club after-match activities were big, there were the speeches and there was the food and the drink, but you built relationships, and I've made a lot of friends through those. People I still see today and I mixed with in that environment. A lot of people that I still have a relationship with.

They were occasions where it was taken-for-granted that everybody would attend. The social costs of not attending were high. By 2005, the changing nature of the after-match function was evident. Attempts have to be made to support the logic. The 'encouragement', in the following quote, suggested there might have been a breakdown

in the self-regulating nature of the logic. Dave Campbell, editor of *Rugby News*, discussed Counties Manukau's relationship with Growers Stadium:

Members of the supporters club are encouraged to make their presence felt at the after-match, too, mingling with the players and match officials as those same kids savour the opportunity to showcase their skills on the hallowed Pukekohe turf. It's what grass-roots rugby is about (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 35, p. 5).

A former club coach was convinced that drinking was still an integral part of the game's grass-roots:

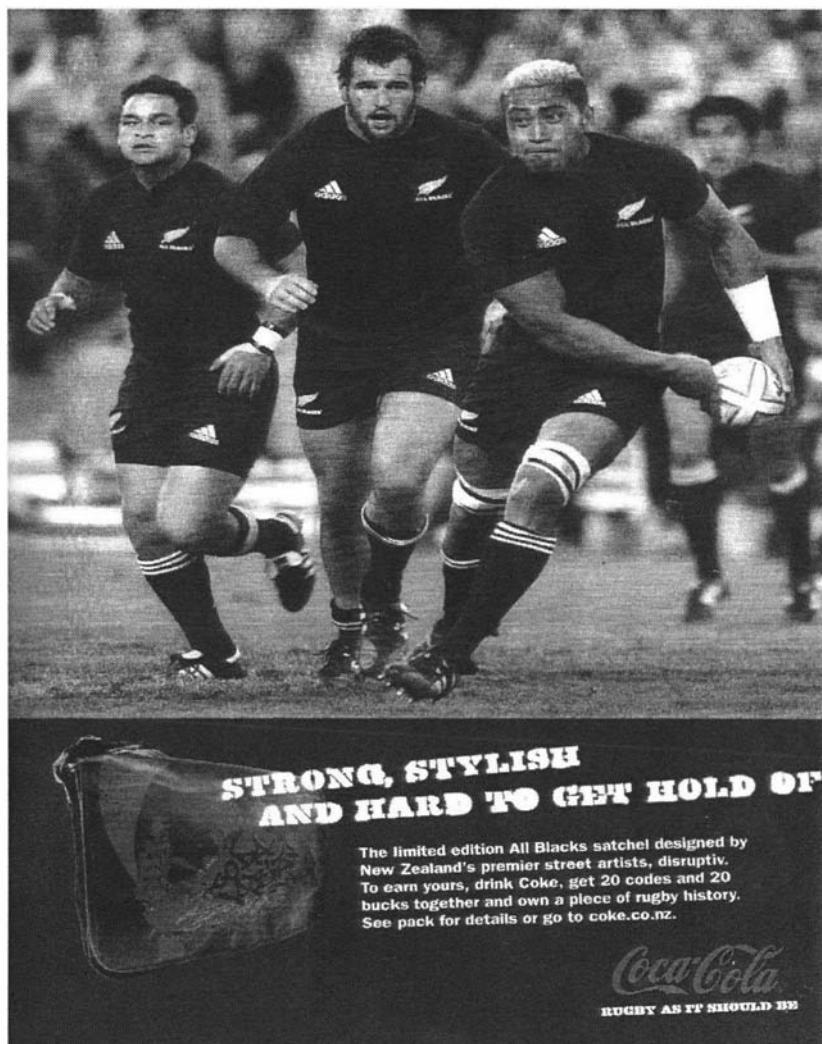
That is still part of rugby. If you go to Super 12 tonight I might be able to get into the after-match tonight. You won't unless you're with me or you know someone. That will be because I've been drinking with the boys in (*senior*) Rugby Club, singing their rugby club songs. That is still there. That is what I call the grass-roots.

There are many factors that might have brought about change in the nature of the logic, 'It's a good excuse for a drink'. Political changes have attempted to forcibly break the link between sport and alcohol. Advertising legislation has affected what could be viewed in the discourse of each of the years under study. The link between advertising alcohol and rugby was strong in 1985. The advert below for DB Draught illustrated players and beer and mud.



Source: *Rugby News*, 16, 2, p. 25

By 2005, the strongest drink you can find in *Rugby News* associated with players, was a Coca-Cola, as featured in the advertisement below:



Source: *Rugby News*, 36, 27, p. 8

The attitude of players towards alcohol has changed for some at least. At a professional level there are functional factors in that alcohol has been proven beyond reasonable doubt to impair performance. In 1985 the players and administrators probably knew that anyway. From the 1985 data, came a story about an earlier tour to Argentina in which alcohol may have played a part:

Manager Ron Don officially reprimanded two players during the tour...for using bad language in public. He also unofficially reprimanded another player who, late one night,

was seen swinging from hotel balconies five stories above a busy Buenos Aires street (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 32, p. 11).

On the 1985 tour to Argentina there was some evidence that enjoyment might have been part of the plan. Bob Howitt, a journalist at the time explained how the media contingent were invited onto the players' bus for transport to and from all "training sessions, sight seeing outings and shopping expeditions":

They're so enthusiastic about promoting the player-media thing they've even appointed a press committee, headed by Alan Whetton and Grant Fox, whose first assignment was to organise a meet the media party...copious quantities of Steinlager were served and the players mingled freely (1985, *Rugby News*, 16, 34, p. 2).

Bernie Fraser, who had finished as an All Black in 1984, 'popular for his good humour', talked of his days as an All Black:

The only times that Stu (Wilson) set me up were in his dreams and 3am at the bar, which of course was his second home in those days...I can't think of one test that I didn't have a few (too many), and we didn't have to do the old breath test either – this was a hell of a bonus for a few of the boys (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 18, p. 46).

Loosehead Len was himself sponsored by DB Brewery and regularly featured the over-use of alcohol, as illustrated on the following page.

By 2005, the concept of 'drinking lots of piss' did not fit with the prevailing understandings in the professional game. Lee Lidgard, still turning out for Counties at the age of 38, explained:

The professional side of things has brought a different type of sportsperson into the game, they're genuine athletes now. We used to play our rugby hard back in the day, but we all had jobs to go to as well. We played for the beers after training on a Thursday night and then at the after-match. Things have definitely changed for the better in regard to the actual professionalism, but people need to remember that rugby's still about enjoyment.... A big man back in the day used to be a guy who could drink a lot of piss

and eat a few meat pies. It's a different type of big fella nowadays (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 34, p. 16).



Source: *Rugby News*, 1985, 16, 29, p. 23

However, even at professional level a beer after the game can be discussed with impunity, if dressed up as relaxing and recovery; a sort of rugby medicinal purpose. Justin Marshall obviously knew how to take his medicine:

It was a tough match and we ended up losing. A few of us were quite keen to relax and get over the loss with a few beers (Gillies, 2005, pp. 121-2).

After the midweek games me and my dirt-tracker mates tended to overcook the social side of things as well. We'd play our game then go out and have a few drinks (Gillies, 2005, p. 66).

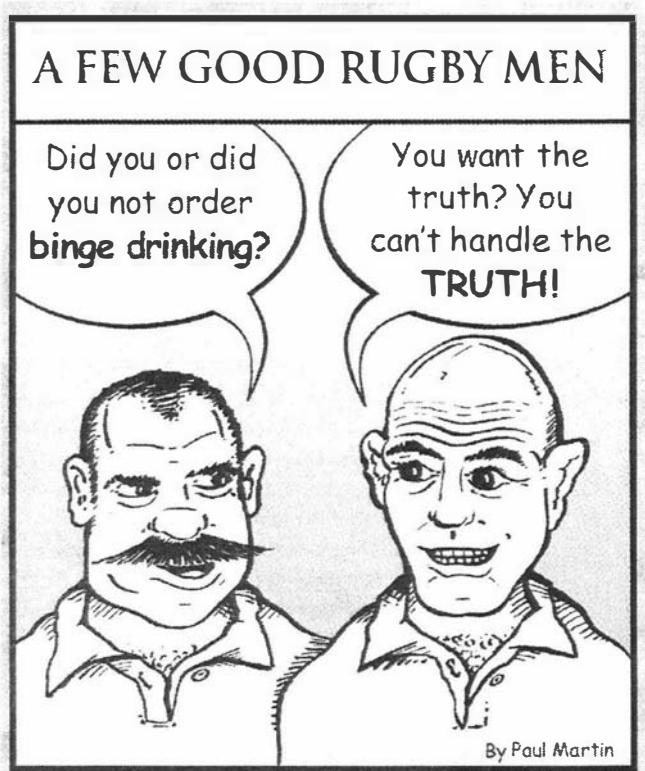
Drinking and rugby might still be seen to go together in the minds of some in the community. The All Black scrum coach, Mike Cron, joked about the workload of props:

And once you get through that someone might ask you to carry drinks at the after-match function! (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, 82, p. 43).

In 2005, a survey⁵⁰ undertaken in Australia, involving 84 professional players, including 27 international players, was referred to in the discourse:

RUPA (*Australian Rugby Union Players Association*) officials were aghast that the Sydney Morning Herald had printed on its front-page the findings of a player survey, which stated that just over half of those questioned thought that between one and 10 players in their state squad had a serious problem with alcohol (2005, *NZ Rugby World*, 82, p. 66).

Also entering the discourse of 2005 was a report on the criticism of the former All Black coach, John Mitchell, that he had overseen a binge drinking culture. In the following cartoon it is not made clear whether this was amongst players, administrators, supporters or New Zealand:



Source: *Rugby News*, 2005, 36, 1, p.6

⁵⁰The survey was conducted in January 2004 and was published in the 2004 Annual Report of the Australian Rugby Union Players' Association, obtained from http://www.rupa.com.au/Documents/45_2004AnnualReport.pdf

Anton Oliver admitted in his autobiography that the culture of drinking was an issue during his time with the All Blacks:

With respect to alcohol, it is true that the All Blacks were perceived as sportsmen who traditionally drank a fair amount of alcohol (Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 158).

A little more than just perception if his description of a players' 'court session'⁵¹ was true:

Halfway through the court session I stopped drinking altogether, I was so disgusted with what was happening. I remember talking to Tana and him saying he was disgusted too. Tana wasn't drinking at this stage; he had a history of having had one or two drink-related incidents...(Oliver & Turner, 2005, p. 158).

At a wider societal level several changes have contributed to the erosion of the effects of the institutionalised logic. There are a significant group of players who do not wish to drink in the prescribed manner, as one NZRU administrator explained:

The rugby club was a real hub of activity. I think that's changed. So now one, there's more options for kids, two, they are not really involved with the rugby club so they don't go back to the club and drink after games. They play their game, get changed and go out to a night club or something. Society has changed in that regard and I think individuals in society... you know people talk about Gen X and Gen Y and baby boomers etc.. I think the generation now probably are a little bit more "me" centred, probably lacking in some of the self-reliance and opinion skills, and I think that's reflective in some of the players we see coming through the system.

Another administrator concurred. It was no longer like the old days:

...you also went back to the club and you sat around and drunk and had a few beers and you might stay there till 10 or 11 o'clock at night and that was your weekend. I remember when I finished playing and I used to go back and play club rugby after the Super 14 and in my last year when I knew it was my last shift, I really wanted to enjoy the club again so I've made an effort in sticking around, there was nobody there to drink

⁵¹ A tradition where senior players would decide on a punishment for misdemeanors on tour (often an enforced drink).

with. Society has changed. Kids don't..... young guys now they play footie, they just want to get out of there, get home, sit around and do their own thing with their mates at home until 10 or 11 and then go into town. Whereas it used to be you'd play your game, have a few beers, wander back up to the club room sit in the club till 10. That's not rugby, that's just society changing, so it's not just rugby changing on the field but society changing off the field is changing rugby as well.

At a community level social changes such as the acceptability of drinking and driving have altered the nature of the after-match function, with some serious implications for the rugby club. 'It's a good excuse for a drink' had little hold left, according to one administrator:

With the clubs in particular now...its ruined the clubs, they've taken the players away, the rep players are away, the club bar turnovers don't give as much. They're only there between one and five on the Saturday, so all these club members - we've got 250 club members over here - they go to the clubs or pubs or home or disperse. The clubs are losing out. It's very difficult, even if you've got a TV screen there, to hold people back. They want to go and sit and have a few beers around the home...from that point of view, from the club point of view, it's a disaster...

In an article about club rugby entitled "Where it all starts" one commentator linked drinking-driving with the game, whilst at the same time trying to support the rural club as a social centre:

There is a salutary drink-driving message which is regularly posted across our screen. After all, country rugby can lead to country drinking. Many of these rural clubs promote a family atmosphere which is difficult to replicate in some city clubs (Burnes, 2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 21, p. 46).

At the lower levels of the game there was still evidence of the logic having some influence. A player in his final season, Lee Lidgard again, reflected on the advent of professionalism:

We used to play our rugby hard back in the day, but we all had jobs to go to as well...They play hard rugby in this division but they always enjoy a beer after the game (2005, *Rugby News*, 36, 34, p. 16).

In the end the institutionalised logic might not have been too complicated. The action it facilitates might be as simple as a view held by one journalist:

The basic object of rugby or any other sport in my opinion is to work up a thirst and have a few chats after the game, but now it's become a lot more than that.

Rugby in New Zealand has, indeed, become more complicated, and is no longer seen as straight-forwardly as 'a good excuse for a drink'.

An interpretation of the relative strengths of the institutionalised logics covered in Appendix V is presented below. In 1985, evidence suggested that 'It's a good excuse for a drink' facilitated behaviour, but had been eroded significantly, due to functional, social and political pressures by 2005. 'I don't want to be in the front row, I'm white' might be seen to be an emerging logic in 2005, with as yet little evidence of a widespread effect on behaviour. 'Thank the ladies for the spread' has eroded over the period, although not as completely as some would have us believe.

Figure: Other logics: An interpretation of the relative strength of institutionalised logics in the field of New Zealand rugby

