

A Network Governance Perspective on Tackling Match-Fixi

ABSTRACT

Match-fixing – i.e., sport competition manipulation – is strongly present worldwide and does not only damage the image of sport, but has grown into a general public policy issue (Constandt & Manoli, 2022). Such issues are recognized for being complex problems; existing across countries, sectors, and organizations. Aiming for a globally harmonized approach, the Council of Europe (CoE) established an international treaty (i.e., Macolin Convention) to prevent, detect, and sanction match-fixing in sport (Serby, 2015). Although the convention is considered a major step forward by those involved, the effectiveness of this interorganizational network in tackling match-fixing remains unstudied (Van Bottenburg, 2022). This study uses Network Governance Theory (NGT) to explore the network’s governance, performance, and outcomes.

Each member state of the CoE and the other signatories of this Convention (22 in total) have committed to constitute a network of actors (i.e., National Platform (NP)) addressing match-fixing. This transnational network approach is challenging for three reasons. First, the CoE is assigned with the difficult balancing task of coordinating, steering, and attaining *community level outcomes*, while also stimulating independent operations of the NPs. Second, a NP contains heterogeneous and unequal organizations (e.g., sport organizations, governments, law enforcement agencies, betting regulators) that can have conflicting individual interests (i.e., *organizational level outcomes*). Third, the performance of the NPs (i.e., *network level outcomes*) depends on their network structures and governance modes (Provan & Milward, 2011).

Following Provan and Kenis’ (2008) seminal work on network governance modes, we can assume that the NPs are structured according to three types; shared participant governed, lead organization governed, and network administrative organization (NAO) governed networks. However, there is a dearth of research on how these governance types relate to the effectiveness or capacity to reduce match-fixing within their respective country.

Starting from the premise that a variety of actors is involved, we consider performance is not treated as a single subject but as a set of several statements, each reflecting the evaluative criteria applied by various actors at different levels. On this base, we consider network effectiveness as a normative and socially constructed concept that needs to be studied bottom-up, taking into account the perceptions of actors at the community, network, and organizational level (Provan & Milward, 2011).

The CoE was interviewed at the community level. Coordinators of multiple NPs (6) were questioned to assess the network outcomes. We purposefully selected 2 NPs in all 3 governance types. Additionally, some key individual members (e.g., sport organizations, law enforcement agencies, betting operators) per NP were engaged in the study to assess their role and impact in the network. In total, 22 interviews were conducted. Data collection is currently being finalized and analysis will be done using NVIVO software.

The results will be presented at the conference. These will provide insights in the relationship between interorganizational network structures and governance and measures of effectiveness. Evaluating network performance is critical for understanding whether networks - and the network form of organizing - are effective in solving complex policy problems, such as match-fixing.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

none

PRESENTATION OPTIONS


No Response

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