

Voices from the Clubroom

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Overview



- ▶ A possible ‘chain of events’ from financial crisis to financial sustainability from those at the ‘goal-face’
- ▶ Extending study from Cordery, Sim and Baskerville (2013) and Sport New Zealand studies

This project was informed by

- ▶ Focus groups in five regions of NZ (Northland, Manawatu, Hawkes Bay, Auckland, Otago)
- ▶ Seven focus groups in total – football (4) and golf (3)
- ▶ interviews were also undertaken with sport managers and funders in these regions and nationally (17 in total).

in 2011

Structure

- ▶ Theoretical framing: Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice and understanding the nature of habitus and field, as well as capital
 - ▶ Examples of these in thriving clubs
 - ▶ An analysis of clubs in crisis using the Theory of Practice
- ...When a club survives near-collapse, such stories remain in a club’s oral tradition and members enjoy the re-telling and interrogation of causes and solutions.

Research question: How do amateur sports organisation harness both habitus and forms of capital to weather a crisis for survival

Theoretical foreground – Bourdieu and his fondness for rugby

Bourdieu's Theory of practice

$[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$

What is habitus? (1)

Dispositions

- ▶ Perceptions and appreciations structured by each person's past and present circumstances

....But not just social background

What is habitus? (2)

Dispositions

- ▶ The "feel for the game"
 - Predispositions
 - Tendencies
 - Inclinations
 - Properties (Bourdieu 1977)

Examples of Habitus: unwritten rules of the club

...(football)... Well, at the end of the day, to me, **the number one team shouldn't get the number one field just because they're number one if they don't come back to the bar** – and they piss off and drink in the local pub.

So there's got to be a carrot/stick approach, and I can't do it with money, 'cause they don't pay anything

Examples of Habitus: immigrants sticking together

...(football)...we're more successful in getting the teams, getting Fijian Indians coming to play us from teams who've been in the country longer. **Teams who are fresh off the boat stick together.** Slowly, we're slowly breaking them up, but it's taken, well jeez, five years that I know of, and I'm still kind of working on it

Examples of Habitus: a senior team making their own rules

...(football)... And The XXX are effectively, you might call them an over forties' team, they're more likely, almost an over sixties' team, and they're very much a social club in their own, incredibly, they'd probably be the richest team in [the region], I'd imagine. Really, really well off. Great supporters of the club in terms of facilities and such like.

But they all come back and **have their own little rituals** and they have their little mini yard that they drink (Interviewer: Do they have their own prize cups?) Oh yes, and they don't participate in anything out, any other thing like our prize giving or anything like that, they just do their own thing. They go off to Fiji or Rarotonga or someplace like that for their prize giving.

What is Capital? May be observed as one of

Economic	Symbolic
Social	Cultural

Capital

“The Ladies” club within a club with oodles of social capital

Golf: Tuesday and Thursday's are our ladies' day, but quite often, particularly in the winter we'll only get forty or fifty. But they do consume a fair amount of the share of the voice, if I could say that politely, of the club.

And they also, they certainly, it's almost like a club within a club. It's a bizarre thing to come into, because they, there's this kind of ruling body that politically has most of the strength but they're such a small part of the club in

numbers. Or may be 'Field?'



Cultural capital can be built with voice:

- ▶ *re White Ribbon against domestic violence in Football clubs ...*In the business world I like companies that have got a social responsibility and I think all your sports have got a social responsibility. I don't think you can shy away from those things.
 - ▶ I think it's important that you take a stand. I'm a great believer and I was slating sport and saying it arouses people's passions, but sport also does a lot of good things as well.
- 

Example of building Social Capital in Football clubs

... Can I just say, I think one of the things that the council really underestimate is the atmosphere in our clubs.

We are very safe environment for young people.

We are very much about personal development for young people, boys and girls. It's one of the best places that young people can be involved.



An example of resolving economic capital needs in football

.... they're trying to institute a sort of a situation where they, the team see themselves as families and that if there is a child within that team who is struggling financially to pay, that the team helps them out in some way



Economic capital: Uncertainty re economic asset:

It's interesting, because we were led to believe that the Council owned the [football] clubrooms that we have, and then we got a letter the other day to say that we own the clubrooms, so I don't know if the Council...

[George: Must be some repairs required. (laughter)]

Is this an Economic asset? Capital for sure

Most [golf] club's boards or management committees have got a couple of key figures who are highly qualified people, people like one or two that you saw here today who are very much, got a good business mind and a good sound analytical process they'll go through

Field

- ▶ The field is where the social world is produced and reproduced
- ▶ At stake, in the field, is the accumulation (or loss) of capital
- ▶ Each field has its own rules, histories, star players, legend and lore
- ▶ Its may be a 'battle field', or a 'field of knowledge'

Examples of Field (rules): "sucked in like tatties and spat out like chips"

....if I put some new ladies out with some older (golf) members, they would (laughter) they get eaten alive, they would get eaten alive. They get sucked in like tatties and spat out like chips.

You see the ladies are more specific about the games. **When they go round, every little rule, every 'r' of little rule is [followed at] every hole.**

Examples of the (battle) Field:

.... It's probably improving with [the Regional Sports Organisation] gradually and it's not easy for them. I mean they are battling and they're battling attitudes, but they are gradually getting more coordination, more uniformity, more control over what's happening out there.

But as I said they're finding it tough; there's a resistance in some quarters to being told what to do, or being given advice

Field: who's in control here?

... We were at a bizarre meeting where clubs locally said they weren't going to travel [away]. That's fine, if you're going to travel to Z and you're told to travel to Z and that's the competition, you go. But what are the sanctions?

So teams decide they're not going to do that, so then you get into this **ridiculous situation where who's in control here and who's doing what, and you're not quite sure**. So I think we've got to sort that out. And we've got to have a consensus that for three years, this is the competition, this is how it's going to be, you don't like, get over it, this is the majority.

Using Bourdieu's' Theory of practice

- ▶ Attributes within the categories of habitus, capital and field may be also observed in cases where sports clubs have failed, and have either collapsed or been resuscitated.
- ▶ Capital may become stretched, habitus diluted or the field too rough

$[(\text{habitus})(\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}$

Where did we find weak link in narratives of crisis?

Was a fatal weakness always from a bad apple?

When an individual habitus led to severe losses of social and economic capital, there may be departures from the field.....

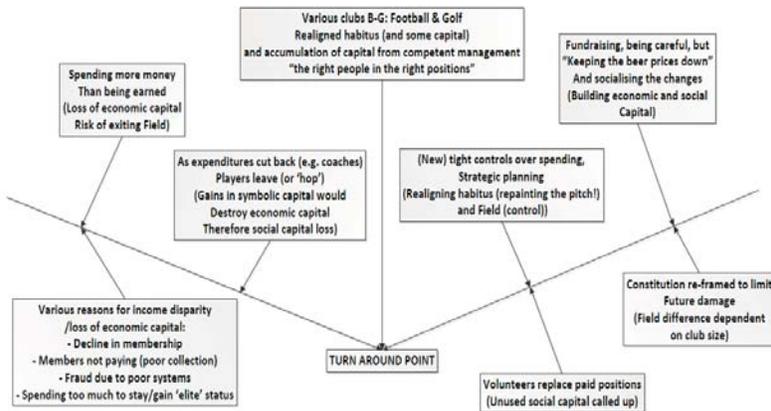


Not always: this could be survivable if action was robust

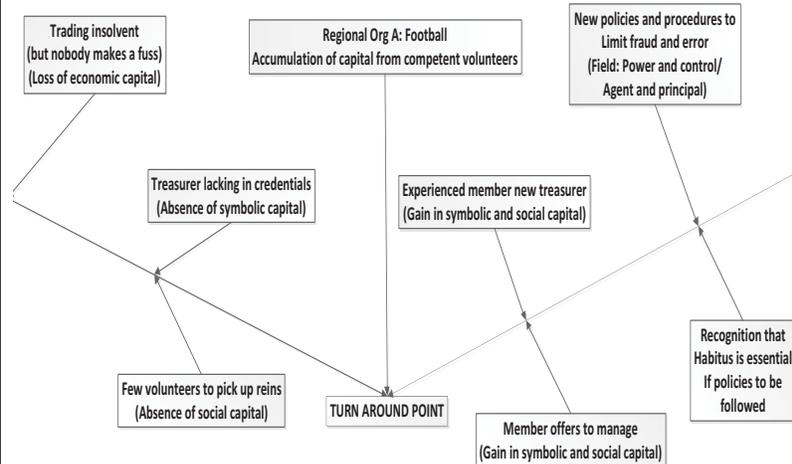


Our analysis led us to observe three other patterns for getting out of a sticky situation:

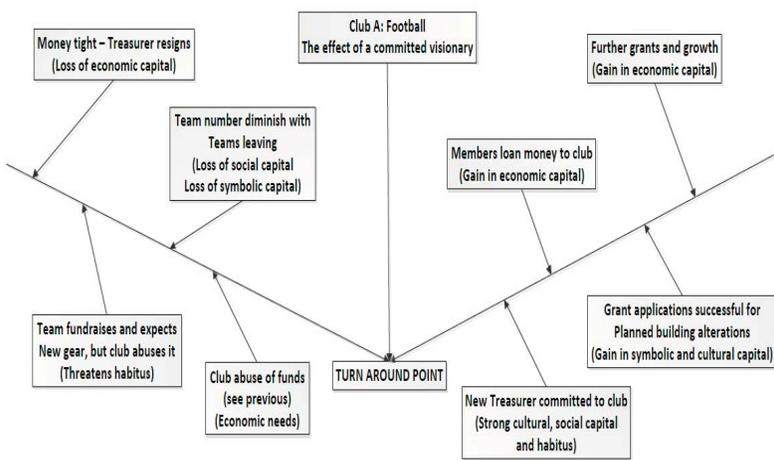
Narratives of crisis: various clubs with a common pattern:



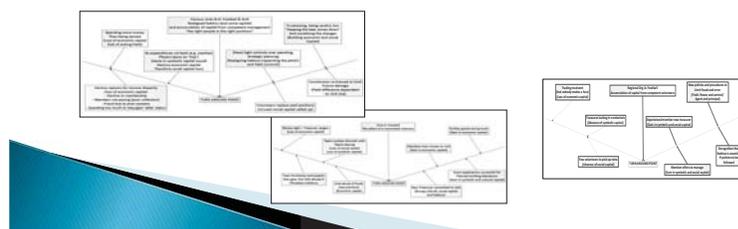
Narratives of crisis: A regional organisation



Club A: Football The effect of a committed visionary



We have identified the losses of capital and habitus, and how habitus and capital were reengineered or recaptured and rebuilt to regain stasis/equilibrium



Discussion

- ▶ Habitus, field and capital are interdependent, and co-constructed
- ▶ None are primary, dominant or causal
- ▶ There have been observations that the Field may have fuzzy or contested borders i.e. where do field effects stop?
- ▶ A valuable lens for amateur sports club research

Conclusion

- ▶ Bourdieu's love of rugby led him to offer a fresh insight into understanding the outcomes from changes in habitus, capital and field
- ▶ Too often, perceptions of club failures dwell on economic capital, or 'the bad apple in the barrel', but there may be some benefits for researchers in these 'fields' in giving equivalent weight to social, cultural and symbolic capital