

Cultural Orientations of Sport Managers*

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Abstract

Various interpretations of sport management are cultural constructs underpinned by core assumptions and values held by members of professional communities. Sport managers world wide share common problems, but differ in how they resolve them. These universal differences emerge from the relationships they form with other people, and their attitude to time, activities and the natural environment. This paper examines the role of sport managers' cultural orientations in the interpretation and practice of sport management. Using a multiple dimension model (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000) it sketches the cultural profiles of fifteen sport managers from seven countries. A combination of methods was employed including questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. It is contended that the culture of sport management concerns a social process by which managers get involved in reconciling seven fundamental cultural dilemmas in order to perform tasks and achieve certain ends. Thus, a knowledge of the cultural meaning of sport management in a particular country would equip sport managers with a valuable tool in managing both the cultural diversity of their own work forces and in developing appropriate cross-cultural skills needed for running international events, marketing campaigns, sponsorship deals and joint ventures.

Cultural Orientations of Sport Managers

“If I were again facing the challenge to integrate Europe, I would probably start with culture”.

Jean Monnet, founder of the European Community*

Introduction

Culture and sport management are not separate entities. Various interpretations of sport management are cultural constructs underpinned by core assumptions and values held by members of professional communities in different countries. These values arise from social, cultural, organisational and ethnical dimensions. We cannot fully comprehend why managers act the way they do without considering the meaning they ascribe to their actions and the environments. Sport organisations can be defined as multicultural entities if their staff or customers come from more than one culture. Thus, a knowledge of the cultural meaning of sport management in a particular country would equip sport managers with a valuable tool in managing both the cultural diversity of their own work force and in developing appropriate cross-cultural skills needed for running international events, marketing campaigns, sponsorship deals and joint ventures.

This paper examines the role of cultural orientations of sport managers in the interpretation and practice of sport management. It is based on a sample of fifteen Chefs de Mission and their assistants from Cyprus, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco and San Marino who were instrumental in staging the Games of the Small States of Europe (GSSE) in Malta 2003. It is organised in three interrelated parts. The first part looks at the relationship between culture and sport management and develops an argument for a systematic interrogation of the cultural meaning of sport management. The second part offers a multi-dimensional approach to understanding cultural orientations of sport managers based on Dilemma Theory as developed by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993, 1997, 2000). Finally, the paper presents the cultural profiles of the sport managers in the sample and discusses the dilemmas they face as result of the different values they hold, as well as their propensity to reconcile cultural dilemmas.

* Quoted in Hampden-Turner, C., & Trompenaars, F., (2000, p.8)

Theoretical framework

Culture and the study of sport management

In entering the culture and sport management debate, it is imperative to define the field. This is not an easy task because conceptualisations abound. The term culture is used in different senses in a wide range of social sciences (e.g., anthropology, psychology, sociology, management and pedagogy) and there is a burgeoning body of literature. These various perspectives make conceptual orientation difficult. Schneider and Barsoux (1998) reported 164 definitions of culture eight years ago. In a comprehensive review of the conceptualisation of culture, despite the variety of disciplines and interpretations, Groeschil and Doherty (2000) contended that many of the existing definitions are based on two early ones proposed by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) and Inkeles and Levison (1969). The essence of both definitions is that they “aimed to identify common human problems which are shared by all human groups, but which are measured in different ways” (Groeschil and Doherty, 2000, p.13). Those universally shared problems emerge from the relationships that people form with other people, and their attitude to time, activities and the natural environment.

Different cultures have dominant value orientations, and hence we distinguish one culture from another by the specific solutions it prefers for each of the four key problem areas. Thus, this study follows Hofstede’s (1991) contention that nations can be regarded as the “source of common mental programming of their citizens” (p.12) when there are strong forces for integration such as dominant language, national education system, national political system, common mass media, national armed forces and representation in sporting events. Peterson and Smith (1997, p.934) expressed a similar view maintaining that “the link between nation and culture tends to occur because people prefer to interact with other people and be guided and politically governed by institutions consistent with values and beliefs with which they identify”. Major sporting events, such as the GSSE, serve as a source of ‘common mental programming’ because they provide the citizens of those countries with a point of reference by reinforcing the link between nation and culture.

Conceptual orientation in the field of sport management presents a similar challenge (Costa, 2005*). It has been defined, among others, as a profession and an area of

study (Parkhouse, 1996*), process (Torkildsen, 1986*) and coordination (Chelladurai, 2005). Linstead's social anthropology of management helps make sense of various definitions. He proposed that management is differentially defined at operational level. "This implies the need to study management closely in the field with sensitivity to both actions performed and the inter-subjective meanings given by the actors to those actions" (1997*, p.88). This paper takes a view of sport management as a process involving a series of events in context.

Cultural differences are reflected in a number of management controversies (Hickson and Pugh, 1995, Hickson 1993). This urged commentators to observe that managers world wide share common problems, but a single best way of managing does not exist; that the applicability of management theories may stop at national boundaries; and that fundamental cultural values act as a strong determinant to managerial ideology and practice (McGuire et al, 2002, Mwaura et al, 1998).

Morden's (1999) extensive management review of models of national culture examined their relevance to the study and practice of management. He advanced further the belief that "it is unrealistic to take an ethnocentric and universalistic view towards the principles and practice of management as they are applied in other countries and other cultures" (p.20). Morden identified three types of cultural models, single (Hall, 1976, 1990, Lewis, 1992) multiple (Hofstede, 1980, Lessem and Neubauer, 1994, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1993), and historical-social (Euromanagement, Bloom et al, 1994, and South East Asian Management, Chen, 1995, Seagrave, 1995).

Students of sport management have not been insensitive to the debate of culture and its implications for the field. Studies in this area have been informed by a variety of theoretical frameworks, and in particular by the work of three recent prominent authors from the multiple dimension tradition, namely Hofstede and Schein (Smith and Shilbury, 2004*, Westerbeek, 1999, Shilbury and Hamilton, 1997, Weese, 1995) and Quinn and Spreitzer (Colyer, 2000). DeSensi (1994, 1995, 1996, 2003) raised awareness about multiculturalism as an issue in sport management, while Masteralexis and McDonald (1997*) addressed the need for cultural training in this field. Similarly, Taylor and Toohey's (1999, 2001, and 2003) and Thomas and Dayall

(1999) expressed concerns about discrimination and the need for developing intercultural sensitivity in sport from an Australasian perspective. The work of Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) and Chelladurai (2001) took the debate further by examining the implications of cultural diversity on the management of sport organisations. Doherty and Chelladurai (1999, p.293) put forward a new theoretical framework for managing cultural diversity in organisations and concluded “that the positive or negative impact of cultural diversity is a function of how that diversity is managed, which is ultimately a reflection of the underlying organisational culture”. Building on this literature Fink, Pastore and Riemer (2003)* examined the link between diversity and organisational outcomes.

Although these accounts have made a significant contribution to enhancing our understanding of multiculturalism and cultural diversity in sport, they still advocate a North American view. It is best described by what Bloom et al, (1994, p.39) called “homogenisation of diversity” characterised by largely normative goals seeking to promote more effective managerial action. This approach to managing cultural diversity is different from the Japanese “lack of diversity” and the European “integration of diversity”. The approach advocated by the above studies does not go far enough to unveil the implications of multiculturalism for the conceptualisation and practice of sport management. None of these tell us what causes the differences in people’s value orientations nor how those could be resolved. They tend to take for granted (or as universals) key concepts such as *management, goals, organisation, service and effectiveness*. In this respect, it is worth noting Tamir’s (1995, p.171) observation, which bears implications for studying sport management, that “the phenomena of multiculturalism invite a reconsideration of most concepts used in political theory: *membership, boundaries, citizenship, sovereignty, group rights and individual rights, pluralism, toleration, democracy, representation*. No such concept can be used in its traditional guise: they must all be reshaped and rejustified”. Similarly, Willett (1998) called for a more productive critique of the “master narratives” of Western culture. This view was echoed recently by Segrave (2000) who questioned the older Western European conception of Olympic internationalism as universal humanism, and alerted us to the fact that human experience is organised through a multiplicity of ontologies.

DeSensi, Chelladurai, Doherty, Taylor Fink, Pastore and Riemer and others approached the management of cultural diversity from the point of view that it is a function of an underlying organisational culture, which is a reflection of dimensions of social and national culture. Organisational culture is just one level of culture, which at the deepest level consist of a complex set of values, assumptions and beliefs (Pettigrew, 1979). The North American organisational culture, however, tends to favour objectives and achievements (Chelladurai, 2005*, Fink et al, 2004*), while Asian and South European cultures emphasise harmonious relationships between people in an organisation (Lewis, 1999, Nicholson and Stepina, 1998). Thus these analyses continue to operate within the framework of the thin “master management narrative” of the Western culture. This view of cultural diversity differs from that argued by Tamir (1995), Willett (1998) and Seagreave (2000).

What these accounts of sport management tend to promote is an implicit best way of managing. If for most North Americans sport management means providing a service in the most cost-effective way (Chelladurai, 1994, Soucie, 1994), for their East European counterparts the primary concern is to ensure the smooth functioning as planned of the sport system as a whole (Bobev et al, 1986, Zolotov et al, 2001). One does not have to be a management guru to figure out that the best way to generate public interest in the opening ceremony of a major sporting event and to sell tickets is promotion. This logic may be true in the Western world, but not in Malta. The television broadcast of the opening ceremony of the Games of the Small States of Europe was not advertised, and indeed people were told that there was not going to be live coverage of the event in order to make more of them buy tickets. Maltese people love sport, but when it comes to attending events they would prefer to park their cars next to their seats one-minute before the start. This typical cultural perception of time and comfort presents sport managers with a major dilemma: How to ensure public order and effectiveness yet increase individual satisfaction? A preoccupation with event effectiveness may result in disregarding individual needs, while too much emphasis on satisfying individual preferences may bring in chaos. The crucial issue here is not whether Maltese sport managers use promotion to sell an event, as do their Western European counterparts, but what does promotion mean to the Maltese compared to the Westerners? Hence, concepts such as ‘promotional or organisational effectiveness’ are not objective descriptions as much as a cultural perception.

The present authors believe that culture is a pluralistic concept, which reflects not only geographical differences, but also a range of gender, occupational and situational sub cultures. Therefore, no single dimension can provide a satisfactory explanation of the culture of sport managers. Each of these models provides a framework, which organises the meaning of culture of management in different ways. The next section discusses a seven-dimensional view of the culture of sport managers.

Successful sport management is a moral enterprise

This paper offers an approach to the study of the culture of sport management based on Dilemma Theory, as developed by Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993). The basic premise of this theory shares the view of other cultural models that people from all cultures have similar problems, but differ in how they measure and resolve them. It sees cultures not as arbitrary or randomly different, but as “mirror images of one another’s values, reversals of the order and sequence of looking and learning” (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000, p. 1). The gist of Dilemma Theory can be summarised in the following interrelated points.

First, every transaction that takes place in the managerial field is undertaken by people who are making choices based on their values and beliefs. “Sport managers”, as DeSensi and Rosenberg (1996, p. 7) noted, “are faced with ethical decision making each day they are on the job”. Therefore, management becomes possible because of human relationships. Second, the moral values, which underpin agents’ behaviour, originate in culture. There is ample evidence suggesting that the culture of origin (national or ethnical) is the most important determinant of values (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993, 2000, Jackson, 2001, Rokeach, 1973, Smith et al, 1996, Smith et al, 2002, Wallace et al, 1999, Zetterholm, 1994). Third, to understand how cultural values influence management choices first we have to examine the processes by which these value systems are constructed. For example, how do sport organisations make decisions necessary to creating the systems that turn out particular sport products or services? Fourth, there are seven universal fundamental valuing processes and each of them has within it a tension because values embody contrasts or differences. Values, therefore, operate in pairs, are mutually constructive, and each value in the pair is crucial to success in management. The seven tensions related to the fundamental valuing processes are:

- i) *universalism* (rules, codes, laws and generalisations) vs. *particularism* (exceptions, special circumstances, unique relations);
- ii) *individualism* (personal freedom, human rights, competitiveness) vs. *communitarianism* (social responsibility, harmonious relations, cooperation);
- iii) *analysing* (facts, reductive analytic, units, specifics) vs. *integrating* (diffuse, patterns, relationships, synthetic, rational);
- iv) *neutral* (interactions are objective and detached from emotions) vs. *affective* (expression of emotions is acceptable).
- v) *achieved* (what you've done, your track record) vs. *ascribed status* (who you are, your potential and connections).
- vi) *time as sequence* (time is a race along a set course) vs. *time as synchronisation* (time is a dance of fine coordination).
- vii) *inner-directed* (conscience and convictions are located inside) vs. *outer-directed* (examples and influences are located outside) *orientation*.

The first five dilemmas arise from the relationships we form with people, the sixth from our attitudes to time, and the seventh from our attitudes to the environment. These problem areas were derived by earlier anthropologists from concrete observations of real behaviours in real situations. A central assumption of the Dilemma theory is that people from the same country will try to resolve dilemmas in the same way, as cultural cohesion is a prerequisite for stability in society. The vision is one of “shareable integrity” and implies that shared meaning and cultural cohesion are also important prerequisites in multi-cultural terms (Darlington, 1996).

Fifth, people the world over are trying to resolve those contrasts by thinking in circles using encompassing reason. This means that they perceive and think in both directions where one cultural category seeks to ‘manage’ its opposite. Either way of approaching management will have a profound effect on how an organisation is run, its time horizon, how its performance is measured or its people rewarded. This circular type of thinking about culture is different from Hofstede’s (1980) linear view of it which tends to interpret cultures as static, mutually excluding categories on a dual axis map, or what Martin (1992) termed a differentiation perspective of culture. The logic of circular thinking will be further elaborated in the methodology section.

Finally, successful management implies reconciling value differences. The management process inevitably creates various opportunities for value conflicts. Different cultures will approach these dilemmas and prioritise them differently, but whether they would favour one set of values and neglect the others is essentially a moral choice. Morality, as Beauchamp (quoted in DeSensi & Rosenberg, 1996, p. 32) observed, has a central concern the well-being of others. The notion of ethics has become a key feature of national and international sport policies. Therefore, it would appear that achieving success in sport management, at least in part, is a moral enterprise, which Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993, p.6) described as “the fine-tuning and harmonizing of values often in tension with one another, the reconciliation of the dilemmas caused by conflicting values”. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997, p.183) asserted that “in its final analysis culture is the manner in which these dilemmas are reconciled, since every nation seeks a different and winding path to its own ideals of integrity”. A similar interpretation of culture as a process overcomes the limitations of the functionalist view of it as “essence” with its emphasis on sharedness (Holden, 2002*) by combining it with an interpretivist understanding of culture as a social construct which emphasises meaning. As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000, p. 19) put it “organisations do not simply react to their environment as a ship might to waves. They actively select, interpret, chose and create their environments”. Thus, the Dilemma theory is consistent with an interpretation of sport management as a continuous process including a series of events in context established earlier.

In summation, this study views the field of culture of sport management as a social process by which managers get involved in reconciling fundamental cultural dilemmas in order to perform tasks and achieve certain ends. Its purpose was to examine the role of sport managers’ cultural orientations in the interpretation and practices of sport management. As culture presents itself on different levels, national, corporate or professional, the Dilemma theory is concerned with the differences in culture at a national level. As Peterson and Smith (1997, p. 933) contended “country” is a reasonable, if not the only possible, delimitation of “various parts of the world”. Culture was conceptualised as a set of seven interrelated every day dilemmas, which all managers share, but differ in the solutions they provide to those dilemmas. In particular, the paper analyses how sport managers from seven countries approached

the seven dilemmas and what was their propensity to reconcile dilemmas in the pursuit of success. It is therefore, practical and deals with real world issues by using as evidence sport managers' behaviour. The concept and methods of inquiry also comply with Shein's (1996*, p.231) four concerns for progressing in the field in that they are: (i) anchored in and derive from concrete observations; (ii) hang together and make sense of the data; (iii) amenable to some kind of formal operational definition, and (iv) provide some link to the concerns of practitioners. This approach to understanding the culture of sport managers is different from the much-utilised Hofstede's five dimensional model. Moreover, as he noted for his own work "the culture dimensions developed for understanding nations simply do not work when applied to organisations" (Hofstede and Peterson.2000, p.405).

Method

Setting and sampling

The present study is based on the case of the Games of the Small States of Europe (GSSE) held in Malta in June 2003. The project received the full backing of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and since 1981 the GSSE have been organised every two years. Eligible for participation are eight small states of Europe, Andorra, Cyprus, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco and San Marino, with populations of less than one million people. The GSSE follow the Olympic protocol, generate emotions and tensions between nations of similar magnitude to the Olympics, and in all participating countries serve as a major topic of conversation for many months. As such small states struggle to qualify athletes for the Olympics, logistically the GSSE presents a major operation. The GSSE is overseen by an Executive Committee which granted the research team full accesses to the event, to key officials and to documents.

From a management point of view, the key figures responsible for preparing national teams, their participation and well-being during the Games, for regular communications with the Organising Committee as well as for the post-Games debriefing were the Chefs de Missions and their assistants (their duties are detailed in the Olympic Charter, IOC. 2003). Sixteen of those managers, two from each country, were the focus for the present study. All of them had previous experiences with

national teams during the Olympic Games and/or the GSSE, the Mediterranean Games or Youth Olympic Days.

Data collection and analysis

The dilemma methodology examines where managers start when forming a values integrity by using a structured questionnaire. It suggests that values and assumptions are manifested in behavioural patterns. The purpose of this instrument is to provide managers' cultural profiles which tell us how they function in 'normal conditions'. These profiles are then compared to Trompenaars' cross-cultural management database, the largest of its kind in the world, comprising some 60,000 cases from more than 100 countries collected over 20 years of research. Various authors, and in particular Smith's (1994*, 1996*) meta analyses and large-scale studies (Euro-management project, 1997*) largely validated the key dimensions of this model and showed that they do not change greatly over time. Only the measurement of the time dimension remains problematic because of various competing methods. While this database may provide grounding for generalizations of national culture, neither the Dilemma Theory nor the present authors have sought to do that.

Cultures have an integrity, which members do not easily abandon. Those who do, however, lose an important point of reference, which undermines their sense of identity. This implies that people need to reconcile differences to be themselves, yet allowing for other perspectives to exist and to help their own. These dilemmas were defined as a set of seven contrasting values. The respondents were presented with 28 specific situations where each dilemma is measured by a set of four questions, or twenty-eight questions in total.

Each question consisted of five answers, two of which are reconciled, two rejected, and one was a compromise. The multiple-choice questions were based around three outcomes that the dilemmas may produce. Managers may choose to ignore other cultural orientations and stick to his/her own cultural standpoint; they can select one or another reconciliation which uses alternative sequences; and they may choose to compromise by abandoning his or her own orientation and pretending to be another person culturally. The important point here is that managers are presented with five alternatives and they do not have to choose between these values unless they decide

to. In this way sport managers can move to and fro upon values continua. It is this logic that tells us how they function under ‘normal conditions’ as it separates the measurement of responses from measuring the conditions in which they are produced. Hence, the dilemma methodology measures a momentum “which is corybantic, that dances between values opposites, so that the dance itself can become the potential reconciler of contrasts” (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000, p. 358). It also allows capturing the essence of sport management as a process. The Dilemma theory contends that what is needed is an approach where the two opposing views can fuse or blend. That is, the “strength of one extreme is extended by considering and accommodating the other” (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997, p.196). This is called reconciliation. This methodology differs from similar approaches that measure cultural dilemmas by using a single Critical Incident Technique (McNeil, 2001), where participants are invited to describe an ethical incident that has occurred to them.

In analysing the data the system counts the number of times a respondent chooses a reconciled or rejected answer. For example, in the ‘Who made the serious error?’ incident, which measures the communitarianism-individualism dimension, managers were asked to decide among the following options:

“You are investigating a serious error made by one of the members of the Organising Committee of an international sporting event. A foreign team had been allocated fewer hotel rooms than the number of athletes. The cost of relodging the team in one place is high. You have asked the director of accommodation to indicate which employee made the error. You are amazed when the director claims not to know but explains to you that the whole team has accepted responsibility, and the whole team has apologized”.

You consider what you (and others in your organisation) would do.

My answer Others

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <i>a. You insist on knowing who was the person responsible or the individual will hide under the group’s protection and serious errors of this kind may be repeated.</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <i>b. You can leave the person responsible to be supervised by the group. Its members know, better than you, whether the person responsible let them down or needed more support.</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <i>c. Whether a group or individual should be held responsible is difficult to decide. Perhaps both should be made to share the blame. Look for the middle way and avoid confrontation.</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <i>d. You can leave the person responsible to be supervised by the group responsible. The group has more power to control that individual than you have ~ so do not antagonize it.</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <i>e. You insist on knowing who was the person responsible - not so much to punish the individual but to discover what is happening in the team.</i> |

Each answer represents a particular possibility (a Cronbach's alpha in brackets indicates the internal consistency and reliability of the culture-map scales, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002, p.472*): (a) individualism rejecting communitarianism (0.71); (b) individualism reconciling communitarianism (0.79); (c) compromise (0.68); (d) communitarianism rejecting individualism; and (e) communitarianism reconciling individualism. The closer a manager's score to one of the extremes (0% or 100%), the more his/her orientation resembles the extreme end of the dimension. It should be noted that no orientation is superior, they are simply different. As Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000, p.246) elaborated, their approach "combines responses from different questions to give a scale along each dimension, not a polarised bimodal measure at each end". These combinations are used "to make *fine distinctions* (our emphasis) between countries" (1997, p.157). Making fine distinctions between countries is not to be confused with producing national profiles. The use of weighted combinations provides scale values for each of the cultural dimensions not averages. When we say that the Chef de Mission of Liechtenstein displayed a distinct individualist orientation of 90% (as opposed to a communitarian) this means that he can be placed 90% along the individualism-communitarianism scale, and not that 90% of sport managers from Liechtenstein chose the individualist option.

By asking managers to indicate what they thought others in their organisations would do in the same situation it became possible to identify important differences and to relate national to organisational culture. This is because, as Hofstede and Peterson (2000, p.412) observed, "national culture affects values, whereas organisational culture affects practice". The real difference between managers from those eight countries is not whether they would 'name and shame' the individual or the team responsible for this error, but "on which foundation stone they would try to resolve the dilemma" (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1993, p.23). There are two competing arguments here, reflecting the individual or group orientation of sport managers. On the one hand, it could be argued that the person who did the hotel booking is solely responsible for the problem with the foreign team (individualism). He or she knew what their responsibilities were when they voluntarily accepted this job, and they should bear the consequences of making a mistake. On the other hand, we could reasonably ask what measures, staff training and control mechanisms were

put in place by the organising committee to make sure that similar incidents do not occur (communitarianism). How managers approach this situation, whether from individualist or a group perspective, would have serious implications for the individual concerned and for the whole organisation.

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000) acknowledged that their research involved predominantly top and middle level managers (75% of the total database) who were studied mainly by a way of questionnaire in a non-working environment (e.g., while attending a workshop, with one main exception involving 21 interviews with top leaders, 2002). To avoid this possible limitation of dilemma methodology it was decided to complement the questionnaire with ethnography and to observe managers' behaviour in real life. The main advantages of ethnography to this project, as Denscombe (1998*, p. 79), observed, are to be found in that it deals with holistic explanations focusing on processes and relationships that lie behind the surface events, explores 'actors' perceptions' and offers useful comparisons between managers from different cultures. Four methods for data collection, as identified by Sands (2002), including field notes, photography, audiotaping and videotaping were used. Several researchers (Lewis, 2002, Tayeb, 1994, Bryman, 1988) advocated the use of a combination of approaches in studying culture. Slack (1996) also argued for a similar approach to better comprehend the reality of sport organisations and their management.

Earlier studies in the field warned about cultural problems in international qualitative research concerning researchers' acceptability, respondents' willingness to cooperate, inherent meaning in answers given and matters of language/translation (Zimmerman and Szenberg, 2000, Bell, 1999, Tayeb, 1994). To address these issues, after a consultation with one of the authors of Dilemma Theory, the original questionnaire was modified in a "sport manager-friendly" language and where appropriate relevant sport scenarios substituted for business situations. Access to our sample was secured by employing a 'guides strategy' (Berg, 1998) where an established authority within the GSSE was used to legitimise the study to the group and to ensure cooperation. To ensure a better response rate and to minimise possible misinterpretations, the questionnaire was translated into Spanish, French and Greek, thus covering all but the Icelandic and German spoken by the sport managers from

Iceland and Liechtenstein respectively. However, the official language of the Games was English, in which all Chefs de Mission were fluent. Additionally, the members of the research team were fluent in all but the Icelandic and German languages, which helped overcome a major barrier in the way of effective communication.

A regular communication was established between the research team and the Organising Committee of the Games for five months, and with all Chefs de Mission, for two months before the event. The purpose of the study was disclosed and a voluntary co-operation of all subjects was sought and ensured. Each member of the research team was introduced to two or three Chefs de Mission and their assistants, and shadowed them for three days during the Games. Ethnographic observations and detailed diaries permitted the research team to gain useful insights into the cultural orientation of managers. Allowing for the cultural customs and particular circumstances of each country, a good collegial acceptance was achieved. Most of our informants felt comfortable enough to reveal both different 'layers of their personality and cultural knowledge' (Sands, 2002, p. 69). The survey was distributed to all respondents three to four weeks before the start of the Games thus providing sufficient time for answering the questions. Individual and group meetings followed this where detailed instructions were given to those who did not respond to the questionnaire before they arrive in Malta. As a form of triangulation, an open-ended version of the dilemma questionnaire was also administered. It included twelve scenarios derived from Chefs de Mission's experiences at previous Olympic Games (Jackson, 1999) that corresponded to the seven dilemmas. This stage involved one-on-one sessions with a response rate of 100%. The dilemma questionnaire was processed at THT Consulting. A themed analysis was applied to the open-ended version of the questionnaire. It looked at the type of response, including action, sequence and reaction (Charmaz and Mitchell, 1997) and the results were compared for consistency. To ensure a correct logic of the study and to increase the credibility of the findings two colleagues from different institutions were asked to assess the methodology and analysis. The only issue raised concerned the difference between national and organisational culture and this was addressed in the manuscript.

Limitations

There are two main limitations to this study. First, it was not possible to compare our scores with the average of the Trompenaars' cross-cultural management database, as it did not include cases from the small states of Europe. As a result no attempts for generalisations about the cultures from which those managers come have been made. Second, we fully appreciate that our conceptual tools to understand managers' cultural orientations could not be completely neutral and passive instruments of discovery.

Results and discussion: *The culture of sport management as a way of solving problems and reconciling dilemmas*

This section discusses the cultural profiles of Chefs de Mission and their assistants by addressing two interrelated issues: (i) what dilemmas do differences between Chefs de Mission and other people in the organisation produce? and (ii) what is the managers' propensity to reconcile these dilemmas?

The response rate to the dilemma questionnaire was 81%, as only one Chef de Mission and two assistants did not respond. In the case of Cyprus and Iceland, the third person that appeared in the sample was the president of the basketball and athletics federations respectively. Figures 1–7 show the cultural orientation of seven Chefs de Mission and their assistants on each of the seven dimensions. Cronbach alpha test scores for reliability for each dimension are shown in brackets (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002, p.472*). For clarity, further in the text, the respondents are referred to as follows: Cyprus (e.g. Chef de Mission), Cyprus A (e.g. Assistant Chef de Mission) and in the case of a third respondent, Cyprus A1.

Figures 1-7 about here

Three distinct clusters of managers' orientations emerged across each cultural dimension. As can be seen below only the external-internal and diffuse-specific (integrating-analysing) dimensions showed a dominant orientation among managers, where twelve managers displayed an inner orientation with only two who were externally oriented and one who was in the middle (compromise) of the scale:

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| i) | <i>universalism</i> (7) | <i>middle</i> (1) | <i>particularism</i> (7) (0.71) |
| ii) | <i>individualism</i> (6)) | <i>middle</i> (5) | <i>communitarianism</i> (4) (0.73) |
| iii) | <i>diffuse</i> (10) | <i>middle</i> (3) | <i>specific</i> (2) (0.63) |
| iv) | <i>neutral</i> (7) | <i>middle</i> (5) | <i>affective</i> (3) (0.75) |
| v) | <i>achievement</i> (8) | <i>middle</i> (5) | <i>ascription</i> (2) (0.64) |

vi)	<i>sequential</i> (5)	<i>middle</i> (4)	<i>synchronic</i> (6) (0.74)
vii)	<i>internal</i> (12)	<i>middle</i> (1)	<i>external</i> (2) (0.71)

It is interesting to note that there are considerable discrepancies between the cultural profiles of our sample (except Iceland), and what they thought other people in their organisation would do in a particular situation. Only in 15% of the cases (16 out of a total of 105 dimensions) did the managers expect others in the organisation to do as they would do. This situation indicates the tensions that may arise between managers inside an organisation and between countries. As the Director of the GSSE put it before the start of the event “we all talk about fair play, but everybody has their own rules” (field notes. 2003, May 31). Subsequently, he opened the first meeting with all Chefs de Mission, hostesses and the management team with the words “the co-operation of everybody in this room is crucial for the success of the Games”. To put it differently, this was an appeal to some 1,400 people (as athletes and officials are supposed to channel their communications with the Organising Committee only via Chefs de Mission) from eight diverse cultures to reconcile their personal differences. Only on that basis would the Games achieve success. The Chef de Mission of Cyprus, who himself was under a lot of pressure from officials of his delegation, expressed eloquently this view: “we are not here to create problems for the organisers” (field notes. 2003, June 2), a view echoed by his colleague from San Marino. Not surprisingly, both have one of the highest propensities to reconcile dilemmas, of 61% and 50% across all 7 cultural dimensions respectively. The seven dilemmas and their implications for sport managers are now discussed in turn.

A disciplined (universalism) or a flexible (particularism) manager?

All sport managers ought to be both disciplined and flexible, but they tend to deploy those skills from two different starting points (Figure 1). A disciplined manager is one who will affirm the law and the rules (universals) and then seek to either reject the exceptions (particular-what a specific situation entails, e.g. a polarized response) or to integrate them by actively trying to accommodate the specifics while respecting the law (integrated response). A flexible manager will do the opposite. This tension is best illustrated in the global-local dichotomy which pervades modern sport. Examples abound, but one that shows a successful reconciliation is the Trans World Sport, a weekly one-hour sports anthology television programme watched by some 200 million people in over 140 countries. Its formula is simple – global production and

distribution (the company is based in London, UK), but local reach, as it includes features from various kind of sports from all over the world where everyone speaks their native language. The reconciliation is achieved through the promotion of a universal message of sport by incorporating examples of how it is practiced locally. Hofstede (2001* in smith) and Schein (1997*) couched this dilemma in terms of cooperation (universals) and conflict (particulars) depending on organisational members' orientations towards either end.

The Director of the Games, a successful Maltese businessman himself, showed a universalist tendency coupled with attempts to integrate the particular. When asked by a Chef de Mission to replace 25 lost meal tickets for his team (at £7,50/Euro10) each, that is, an exception) he reluctantly agreed, but made it clear to everybody that this was not going to happen again (asserting the universal rule), "I am not prepared to do that every day" (field notes. 2003, June 3). That the management adhered to the rules of the Games was confirmed when a high ranking member of a royal family, despite all VIP accreditations, was made to pay for his lunch with other athletes at the hotel! As the Director of the Games stated in capital letters in his final report "nobody got a single meal free of charge" (Psaila, 2003, p.15).

During the interviews Chefs de Mission were asked what they would do if one of their athletes was subjected to a random drug test, and while the result was negative, there were discrepancies in the testing procedure. Those with a particularist orientation reaffirmed the exception and answered "why bother raising concerns when the test is negative?" However, when the Chef de Mission of Luxembourg (scoring 30% on the particularism-universalism scale) faced exactly the same situation with one of his athletes in reality, he actively sought the co-operation of the Organising Committee in asserting the law (universalism) and demanded that the procedures should be followed strictly. Interestingly, he showed no propensity (0%) to reconcile dilemmas on this dimension. The tension between a disciplined and a flexible manager entails considering a different meaning of organisational rules, norms and procedures. As Adler (2000, p. 65) observed for those cultures "the general (or universal) principle of what is legal, or illegal, takes precedence over the particular details of who is involved in specific situation. By contrast, in particularist societies, the nature of the relationship determines how someone will act in a particular situation".

Asserting the individual (individualism) or the group (communitarianism) spirit?

A sport manager who lives in individualist cultures (most of Western Europe and North America, Azevedo *et al*, 2002) tends to celebrate the resourceful individual and emphasises her/his interests first, which, once satisfied should lead automatically to the wellbeing of the group (Figure 2). Triandis (1990) offered ample evidence for the explanatory power of individualist-collectivist variables on a range of organisational and social behaviours. The Chef de Mission and his two assistants from Cyprus provide an instructive example for managers who subscribe to the view that individual interest should come first. However, they did not reject, but actively sought to integrate the communitarian interest. This was necessary, as the whole team wanted to top the medal table, which would have been the first time ever Cyprus won the Games when held outside the country. A similar achievement would set a powerful example for the Cypriot sport movement characterised by fragmentation and regular squabbles. As the Cypriot Chef de Mission observed “it is for the first time all those ten sports get together and support each other. Back home they would normally fight and find something to disagree about” (field notes. 2003, June 5). This finding is in line with his propensity (61%) to reconcile dilemmas, which was among the highest three. It is, however, in contrast to Hofstede’s view on individualism, which suggests that individualism implies a heavy reliance on formal control, where the team approach is not applicable (Rodrigues, 1998, p. 30). Koopman *et al* (1999) study on national culture and leadership profiles in 21 European countries found that the factor ‘team-oriented leadership’ received universal endorsement, which challenges the ‘culture contingent’ nature of cultural determinants and organisational practices. Asserting the individual or celebrating the group spirit will have implications for staff recruitment, training and assessment policies, marketing, as well as for managers’ commitment to an organisation. Trompenaars and Woolliams (2004*) provide convincing illustrations of this dilemma manifested in advertising practices and their regulation where the same product can be used in different cultures to carry either a group or individualistic messages. The reconciliation of this dilemma, as Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2002*) demonstrated, can be found in what they described as a ‘community of creative individuals’ at LEGO company. (???)

Seeing the strategy (integrating) or concentrating on the task (analysing)?

Sport managers tend to display a line of reasoning that starts with either a wider picture of the organisation (its strategy, mission and policies - diffuse), or by focusing on the specific task at hand (what, when and how needs to be done – specific) as shown on Figure 3. Davis (1994, p.268) “how to bring reality closer to the management “ideal” illustrates the point. Her first suggestion advises sport managers to “create clear, realistic, measurable objectives for management and employees”. While there is nothing wrong with this advice, it clearly shows the cultural embeddedness of management thinking. In this case it is underpinned by an assumption that gives importance to setting specific and measurable objectives in order to achieve good results.

Both Chefs de Mission of Iceland and Luxembourg displayed a distinct diffuse orientation of 30% and 40% respectively. In the case of Iceland, the Chef de Mission was concerned mainly with strategic and political issues. He had very limited knowledge of the daily tasks faced by the delegation that needed attention, did not (or only in part) attend regular daily briefings with his delegation’s team officials, leaving all that to his assistant. His diffuse orientation, however, could be attributed to his role as a Board member of the National Sport Organisation of Iceland. The Chef de Mission from San Marino displayed a similar behaviour.

The managers of Luxembourg’s delegation also displayed a diffuse orientation, and as the Chef de Mission remarked at the beginning of the Games “my job will be done within two days and then I will enjoy the competitions” (field notes. 2003, June 1). The amateur status of sport organisations in the country would not tolerate bureaucratic and authoritative methods of management. Hence, the Chef de Mission and his assistants were concerned with the wider issues affecting the team and delegated the responsibility for handling the specific tasks to the leaders of each sport.

In contrast, the Chefs de Mission from Monaco and Liechtenstein displayed a distinct specific orientation of 70%. The former did not attend the first extraordinary meeting with the Organising Committee and all Chefs de Mission, where important issues concerning the organisation of the Games were discussed. Instead, he continued with what had been planned in advance and went to meet the national delegation at the airport. The daily programme of the Chef de Mission of Liechtenstein was equally

task specific, but this could be down to the fact that his occupation did not relate in any way to the job of a voluntary sport manager. Diffuse and specific cultures are often referred to as high and low context where the former has a tendency to look first at relationships and connections and the later on specifics and objects (Hall & Hall, 1990). A manager's concentration on strategy or on the task at hand will make difference not only to how they plan and conduct their daily business, but also on the systems for control and remuneration. Hinings et al (1996*) analysis of the relationship between values and organisational structure in Canadian national sport organisations (NSO) illustrates this tension. Prior to 1984 a voluntary ethos and specific orientation to management dominated those NSOs. Voluntary sport managers tended to be task oriented (i.e. the specifics), believed in flat organisational structures where people work as colleagues and saw the role of hierarchy in organising tasks and facilitating problems. In an attempt to change this culture, the Canadian government, invested considerable pressure and resources and pushed NSOs towards long term planning and policies (i.e. defuse). This policy, however, achieved only limited success (Aimis et al, 2004*??) as it failed to reconcile the dilemma and sought to impose a diffuse orientation on what was essentially a specific culture of NSOs. An illuminating example for the reconciliation of this tension is provided by the transformation of British gymnastics, where the specific British orientation to management successfully incorporated Eastern European diffuse model of management (Girginov and Sandanski, 2004). Managers from diffuse-oriented societies see the relationship between people as responsible for producing results, not the objectives. They perceive hierarchical structures as necessary to determine who has authority over whom, hence their approach to business from people to task (Adler, 2000).

An emotional (affective) or cool (neutral) manager?

Sport managers are also confronted with the issue of whether it is professional to display emotions when doing their job, or whether they keep their personal and professional lives separate (Figure 4). Western cultures view management as instrumental and task-oriented. To be considered as a "professional" conveys status and clearly points out the primacy of being up to the standards of your job. However, in many parts of the world (Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia and Latin America) successful sport management is about human relationships, which includes the whole

spectrum of emotions, and displaying them on the job is not deemed unprofessional (Lewis, 1999, Hickson & Pugh, 1995). Managing sport is not confined to interactions framed by contracts and task timetables. It is believed that a contract can only be fulfilled if first, you get to know the person with whom you are doing business.

Predictably, the Chefs de Mission of Malta (30%), San Marino (40%) and Monaco (40%) favoured an affective type of management. For example, the San Marinense managers would not suppress their emotions during meetings of Chefs de Mission and took phone calls and spoke rather loudly in Italian, leaving the room making gestures. They were also very open and would readily reveal details of their personal lives even to the researchers who they only just met. The Chef de Mission of Cyprus showed a similar emotional style. He would freely and loudly express emotions during competitions and when minor VIP's demands have become more prominent than athletes' needs. The team's hostess who quickly learned when the time was right to talk to him noted that his behaviour was affected by emotions. The tension between an emotional and "cool" manager urges an appreciation that the professional contract and human relationships are not hierarchically ordered. Managers from different cultures give them different priorities. Moreover, this tension has a particular bearing on how managers communicate. It is manifested in the use of tone, eye contact, touch and private space, all of which carries meaning and affect practices (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1997, Lewis, 1999). Tan et al (2005*) studied specifically the relationship between cultural orientation and emotions and provided empirical support to this statement. Thus, we have to accept that our understanding of contracts, deadlines and feedback may not be the only possible ones.

A rebellious (achieved) or stability (ascribed) manager?

This dimension measures the meaning managers attribute to status in sport organisations (Figure 5). A rebellious manager is one who subscribes to an achievement ethos and judges people by what they have done, their track record. In contrast, a stability manager would respect titles and the power a position confers on people (ascription). The Chefs de Mission of Iceland (40%) and Luxembourg (40%) were in favour of ascribed status. This is partly because both were volunteers who had worked for a number of years to earn the privilege to represent their countries at major international events. The sports movements in both countries are based on a

voluntary tradition and a few full-time paid jobs in sport are available. After all, voluntarism is an ascribed quality and a rarely achieved one. In most of Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America (in Spanish volunteers are ironically referred to as *masoquista*) nobody gets recognition for volunteering, while in Britain, volunteerism is seen as an essential characteristic of 21st century citizenship and is promoted by a government initiative called Millennium Volunteers (DEE, 1998).

Interestingly, the three Cypriot managers, who also operate in a culture which cherishes ascribed status, showed a clear achievement orientation (of 60%, 50% and 90% respectively) which was in contrast with the views of others in their organisation. This presented them with a real problem, as they had to attend to regular demands from home officials for attention and services, including help with shopping or sightseeing, that were clearly beyond their responsibilities, but reflected those officials' perceptions of their status. In this respect Korac-Kakabadse *et al* (2001, p.11) noted that "complex organisations consists of many social and cultural groupings and communication between them is likely to involve not only shared meaning but also contradictory and contested ones, thus requiring value and conflict resolution as well as quality dialogue". The Organising Committee of the Games experienced a similar problem when a sport official from Monaco demanded a private car to accompany the Prince of Monaco who was a guest of honour as well as a president of the Monaco NOC and an IOC member. The request was turned down because the organisers saw it as an attempt to extend the ascribed status of the Prince to that person. Being a rebellious or stability manager suggests that it is legitimate to ascribe different importance to power, hierarchy, results and promotion in an organisation. Everyone who has taught Chinese or Asian sport management students would easily recognise this tension. Their approach to knowledge is based on seeing the professor as a repository of knowledge and the ultimate authority to judge its correctness. Thus, status conveys knowledge. Equally pronounced is the link between ascription/achieving cultures and performance. Ascription oriented managers always aspire to live up to their status and tend to ascribe importance to projects before they are completed. Thus, status leads to better performance. Conversely, achievement oriented managers would try to deliver the results that will help them to achieve success and to establish status. Hence, the justification of a manager's role lies in her record.

A Chronos (sequential time) or a Kairos (synchronised time) manager?

Chronos and Kairos are the ancient Greek gods of clock time (“chronology”) and of time and opportunity (“good timing”) respectively. How sport managers and organisations think of time can have serious implications for their operations (Figure 6). If they think of time as racing by, they would be more likely to adopt a short-term orientation and emphasise quick results. This perception of time is evident in most of the elite sport systems where funding is allocated in relation to competition results (Oakley & Green, 2001). Conversely, if they think of time as recurrent and generative, they are likely to develop more long-term strategies. In reality, all cultures use both synchronised and sequential time as these will have bearing on how a manager operates on a daily basis. The Cypriot Chef de Mission provided a good example of a synchronising type of manager (score 30%) by doing a number of tasks at the same time. In a typical situation, he would talk to journalists while giving instructions to his assistant, and dealing with a complaining team official on his mobile phone. Interestingly, all those simultaneous interactions did not appear to cause him stress or discomfort. This type of behaviour is indicative of what Hall (1976) described as low-context cultures. Members of those cultures function within polychronic time (P-time) mode as opposed to monochronic (M-time) time mode. “M-time emphasises schedules, segmentation and promptness. P-time systems are characterised by several things happening at once. They stress involvement of actors and completion of transactions rather than adherence to pre-set schedules” (Hall, 1976, p. 17). Thus, a low-context culture manager will be quicker to get to the point compared to his/her high-context culture counterpart.

In contrast, the Chefs de Mission of Luxembourg (60%) and San Marino (70%) displayed a sequential orientation, and tended to pursue one task at a time (M-time). Usually, they would try to impose a structure on the day by fixing in advance what they were going to do in a particular order, which occasionally was seriously disrupted by an unexpected call. Sport managers’ conception of time informs their perception of efficiency. It implies following a straight line with minimum effort and maximum effect. However, sport management often requires dealing with crisis situations that defy ‘straight lines’ and suggest that sometime it would be better to do the right thing not things right.

The tension between a Chronos and Kairos manager will have bearing on the time horizon of a sport organisation and on the mode of its operations. Although sport managers from an M-time culture will have strategic plans, their practices will, nonetheless, emphasise weekly and monthly results. In contrast, their colleagues from P-time cultures will value long-term commitment to the organisation and managers' ability to attend to many issues at the same time.

Believing in fate (outer directed) or taking control of your future (inner directed)?

This dimension (Figure 7) represents the tension between people who believe they know who they are and what they are capable of, and that there is no such thing as luck on the one hand, and those who favour more respect for natural and social forces on the other. Getting your way is a question of inner belief, self-determination and control for the former, and your fate and the circumstance determine the outcome for the latter. The Chefs de Mission of Luxembourg (20%) and Monaco (40%) expressed a clear external orientation. In doing business they were relying on established methodologies representing a combination of considerations for circumstances and past experiences. This type of orientation, as Rodrigues (1998) argued, is likely to result in low commitment to plans and strong formal controls. Sport managers' belief in natural, political and economic forces or in their own inner determination will seriously influence the nature of the information circulating in an organisation, the decision-making process and its outcomes. Individualistic and achievement oriented societies tend to rely heavily on research reports and findings, statistics and discussion papers in formulating policies and decisions. A Sport England (2005) statement illustrates the point: "Sport England is becoming an organisation that is focused on achievement and where decisions are based on evidence rather than opinion and anecdote". Their counterparts from collectivist and ascription-oriented cultures will place greater importance on formal authority and judgement of senior colleagues.

The analysis of the managers' cultural orientations demonstrates they all (save the Chef de Mission of Iceland) face to a some degree the seven fundamental dilemmas because they differ in their cultural assumptions and value systems from others in their organisations and countries. These results were largely confirmed when triangulated with the analysis of the twelve scenarios. This analysis centered on the type of response, including action, sequence and reaction (Charmaz and Mitchell,

1997). Particularly pronounced were the responses of Chefs de Mission on four scenarios which provided support to their scores on dilemma questionnaire. However, being aware of those differences is just the first step in valuing cultural diversity and in developing cross-cultural sensitivity. For managers, it is equally important to be able to reconcile those dilemmas. This is necessary because they are not on their own in organisations and at international sporting events. They are in the business of wealth creation, which entails they have to share the values of planning, organising, implementing and leading by working in partnership.

In the case of the GSSE in Malta, wealth creation for the host country translated into four major projects: (i) running a commercially viable Games by adopting the IOC global marketing approach; (ii) putting in place a whole system for elite sport; (iii) making a big social impact by asserting national identity and the role of sport in society. “We (the GSSE, *explanation added*) have made a cultural revolution. That is a big satisfaction we managed to turn the tables around” (Director of GSSE, field notes, 2003, June 7). His view was echoed by *The Times*, the most popular newspaper in the country. On the night of the closing ceremony of the Games, which coincided with Malta versus Cyprus Euro 2004 soccer qualifier, *The Times* reported “although the game has not attracted the usual publicity in the media, our football team can only intensify the national euphoria generated by the GSSE if the players beat Cyprus this evening” (Azzopardi, 2003, p.41), and (iv) mobilising moral and financial support of the state for sport. The government invested directly Lm650,000 (Euro 450,000) in operational grants for the Games and for athletes’ preparation. Additionally, aid for upgrading sport facilities and a four-day paid leave for every public sector worker who volunteered at the GSSE (more than 80 people) was provided.

Chefs de Mission and their assistants showed varying degrees of propensity to reconcile dilemmas (see Table 2). However, when making decisions only four of them (Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Luxembourg A and San Marino) tended to ignore other cultures. This could be either because they wanted to impose their own way of doing business or because they would not accept other ways of doing things because of failing to recognise or respect them. Four other managers (Cyprus, Cyprus A, Iceland and Malta) demonstrated more than fifty per cent propensity for reconciliation. This indicates understanding cultural differences and readiness to integrate them to make

your own position stronger. When sport managers (Iceland A1 and Luxembourg A) decided to assert their cultural standpoint on particular occasions and to let others do what they deemed appropriate in another, they created an inconsistent, compromising position that does not lead to a satisfying solution for either party. All of the above reasons or a combination of several could be responsible for this behaviour. A propensity to compromise could also be attributed to a lack of experience and motivation to act accordingly.

Sport managers' reconciliation profiles provide them with a valuable tool for identifying those cultural dimensions on which they fail to appreciate other people's values, consequently either rejecting them or compromising, which can only lead to poor outcomes. On this basis, managers could work to understand specifically the underlying assumptions underpinning the behaviour of their counterparts from different cultures.

Conclusions

Building cross-cultural competence for a successful sport management

The Dilemma Theory employed by the present study goes a step beyond the main concerns of cultural diversity studies. It helps to identify the basic differences between cultures that are not confined to perceptions about ethnicity, gender and age. These differences originate from culture and are underpinned by seven basic valuing processes that people share the world over. However, it is the way people approach those processes and how they resolve the dilemmas each of them contains that makes them different from other cultures. In resolving these seven dilemmas sport managers attribute meaning to the world around them.

Differences in cultural orientations of the fifteen managers examined by this study resulted in varied perceptions about the role of human relationships, time, and the environment in managing national teams' participation at the Games of the Small States of Europe. Most pronounced were the differences on three cultural dimensions, particularism-universalism (7 answers each), communitarianism-individualism (4 and 6 answers respectively) and synchronic-sequential (6 and 5 answers respectively).

The real issue for sport managers is to learn to go beyond their own mental cultural framework and to appreciate the legitimacy of other people's cultural models of thinking. Thus, developing the transcultural competence of sport managers would enable them both to appreciate that cultural differences offer a different (not weaker) style of management that could be equally successful, and to better explore those differences to learn more about themselves (Hickson & Pugh, 1995, Welsh *et al*, 1993). This is necessary because successful sport management at all levels is a moral enterprise involving making value choices between alternatives. No alternative is necessarily superior, these are simply different opinions and when seen that way can bring certain advantages to sport managers. Sport managers therefore, have to learn to share the meaning of planning, organising, controlling and rewarding.

The next step in developing sport managers' transcultural competence is to enhance their propensity to reconcile dilemmas. Cross-cultural awareness is not sufficient for achieving success in a multicultural environment. It is the basis on which sport managers build the skills they need to reconcile across each cultural dimension. Nine out of fifteen managers from our sample showed less than a fifty percent propensity to reconcile dilemmas. This suggests they have to focus on particular areas where they most need to develop an understanding about other cultures.

The case of the GSSE supported Martin's (1992) assertion about a three perspective view of organisational culture that are always simultaneously present in organisations. Each represents a particular managerial horizon, where the integrative perspective concentrates on organisation-wide consistency, the differentiation perspective focuses on dichotomous subcultural conflicts, and the fragmentation perspective views organisations as fluid and characterised by ambiguity, complexity and a multiplicity of interpretations. While we agree that members of a particular group or community share similar cultural values, it would appear that a manager's position in an organisation has an impact on how they approach and reconcile dilemmas. Our conclusions echoed Harris and Ogbonna's (1998) findings that the nature of hierarchical position shapes and conditions organisations' members' perspectives on culture.

The key point is that these three perspectives have political implications. For example, a concentration on the integration perspective means ignoring the ambiguities and complexity of real life as experienced by managers at lower levels of an organisational hierarchy. A voluntary force ran the Games, including its Director. He worked on the preparation of the GSSE for four years for six hours a day. This enabled him to develop a comprehensive knowledge about all aspects of the event. Moreover, he himself had to reconcile a major personal dilemma of how to accommodate the voluntary ethos (communitarianism) of the Games' management with the competitive ethos (individualism) of his own private company. However, as he put it to the management team one day before the end of the event, "you have to understand that there is a difference between the planning and the execution stage of the Games. During the planning we were able to discuss various options. At the execution stage it is different. I have my brain programmed and I have to decide in five seconds. This is not to say I was ignoring your opinions, but I have to take the lead" (field notes. 2003, June 7). This message is indicative of the difference between the integrative (top management-Games Director), differentiated (middle-functional areas directors) and fragmented (front line staff-team hostesses) perspectives. It is even more pronounced, when viewed from a particular cultural standpoint. Maltese culture values highly universalism, communitarianism, synchronisation of time and diffusiveness (Blouet, 1984).

The culture of sport management in all these seven European countries has an integrity ensured by the key principles to which managers subscribe. The Games of the Small States of Europe was a success story from an organisational, commercial and social point of view. It may not be a coincidence, then, that the managers from the host country, Malta, and the most successful sporting nation, Cyprus, showed the highest propensity to reconcile cultural dilemmas. Further research, however, is needed to establish the relationship between organisational performance and transcultural competence of sport managers and between managers' positions in their organisation and their cultural orientation and propensity to reconcile dilemmas.

Table 1. Countries at the Games of the Small States of Europe, Malta 2-7 June 2003

Country	Found	Capital	Population	Area	Language	Athletes/ medals
Andorra	1278	Andorra-la-	66,824	468 sq.	Catalan, French,	91/18

		Vella		kms.	Spanish	
Cyprus	1960 independence	Nicosia	762,887	9,251 sq. kms.	Greek, English, Turkish	158/81
Iceland	1944 independence	Reykjavik	276,365	103,000 sq. kms.	Icelandic	132/67
Liechtenstein	1719	Vaduz	32,207	160 sq. kms.	German	47/5
Luxembourg	963	Luxembourg City	437,389	2586 sq. kms.	Luxembourgish, French, German	120/53
Malta	17C	Valletta	391,700	320 sq. kms	Maltese, English	174/44
Monaco	1419	Monaco	31,693	1.95 sq. kms.	French	104/23
San Marino	301 A.D.	San Marino	26,937	60.5 sq. kms	Italian	100/26

Table 2. Chefs de Mission and Assistants propensity to reconcile across each cultural dimension and average across 7 dimensions.

Chefs de Mission & Assistants		Particularism- Universalism	Communitarianism- Individualism	Diffuse – Specific	Affective – Neutral	Ascription – Achievement	Synchronic – Sequential	External - Internal	Average across 7 dimensions
Cyprus	You	100	50	50	50	25	100	50	61
	% Others	50	25	25	25	50	75	0	36
Cyprus A	You	50	50	50	75	50	25	25	46
	% Others	25	25	25	25	50	25	25	29
Cyprus A1	You	75	100	75	75	50	100	50	75
	% Others	25	50	50	50	50	100	50	54
Iceland	You	100	75	50	50	50	100	25	64
	% Others	100	75	50	50	50	100	25	64
Iceland A	You	25	50	75	50	25	50	50	46
	% Others	0	50	50	25	25	50	50	36
Iceland A1	You	75	50	50	25	50	0	0	36
	% Others	25	25	50	50	50	50	50	43
Liechtenstein	You	25	25	75	25	75	0	50	39
	% Others	0	25	100	50	25	25	25	36
Luxembourg	You	0	25	50	50	50	25	25	32
	% Others	75	50	50	75	50	50	25	54
Luxembourg A	You	50	25	25	25	25	25	25	29
	% Others	50	25	25	0	0	0	50	21
Malta	You	100	50	75	100	50	75	25	68
	% Others	25	50	50	25	25	50	25	36
Malta A	You	25	50	75	25	25	50	25	39
	% Others	50	50	50	100	25	75	0	50
Monaco	You	50	25	50	25	25	75	25	39
	% Others	75	25	0	25	50	0	50	32
Monaco A	You	75	0	50	50	50	75	50	50
	% Others	50	25	25	25	75	50	100	50
San Marino	You	50	25	25	25	75	50	100	50
	% Others	75	0	50	50	50	75	50	50
San Marino A	You	0	50	50	0	0	75	75	36
	% Others	50	25	75	25	25	25	25	36

Figure 1. Particularism - Universalism

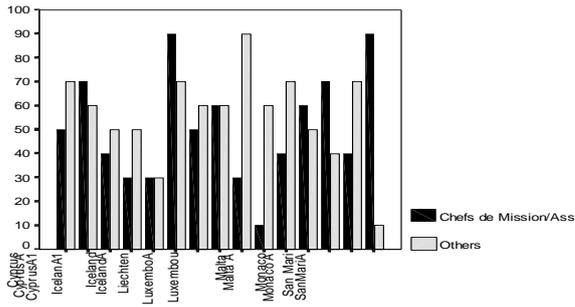


Figure 2. Communitarianism - Individualism

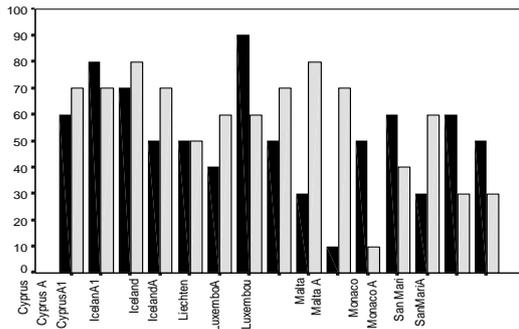


Figure 5. Ascription - Achievement

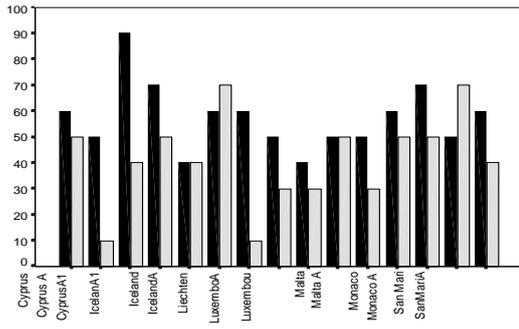


Figure 3. Diffuse - Specific

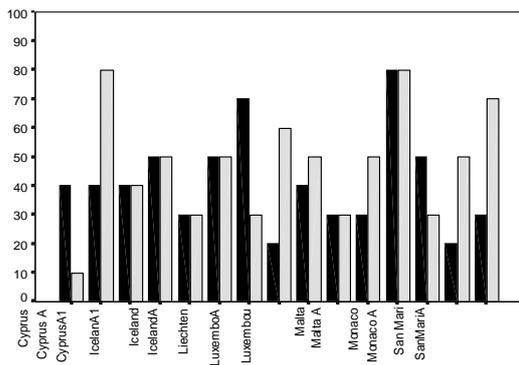


Figure 6. Synchronic - Sequential Time

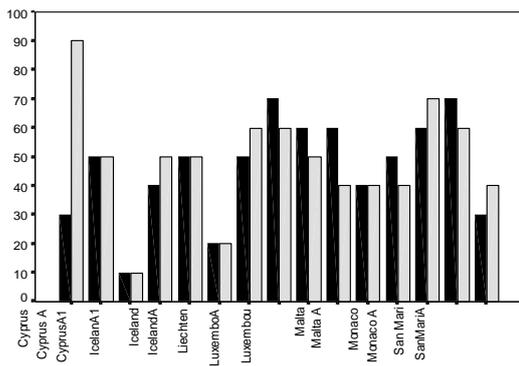


Figure 4. Affective - Neutral

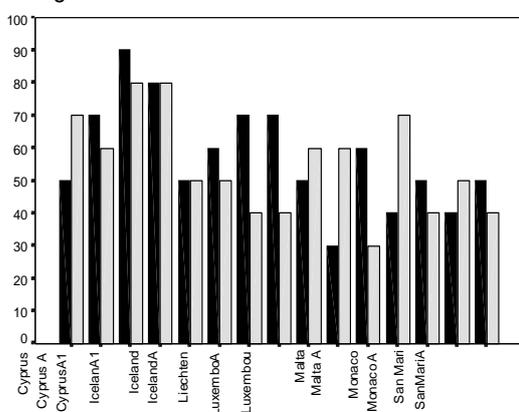
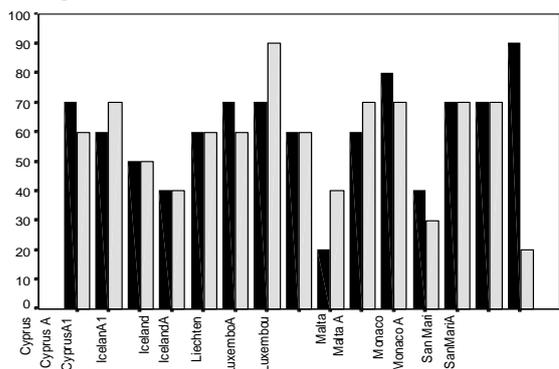


Figure 7. External - Internal



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