'Not cricket': A 'nexus of silence' over the cricket match-fixing scandal

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Abstract
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Keywords
Not, cricket, nexus, silence, over, cricket, match, fixing, scandal

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ABSTRACT

An international cricket match-fixing scandal in 2000, the biggest crisis in the game’s 250 year history, disclosed corruption by many players and officials that cricket authorities had failed to address for a decade. Analysis of the case has revealed that institutional-wide behavior, conceptualized as the phenomenon of a ‘nexus of silence’, occurs in organizations and institutions where authorities decide to hide, rather than control, unethical behavior. This paper presents a substantive theory of a ‘nexus of silence’, developing current literature on organizational silence and organizational hypocrisy. Discussion on the applicability of a ‘nexus of silence’ to management theory and directions for future research completes the paper.

Keywords: corruption, organizational silence, organizational hypocrisy, ethics, corporate governance, trust.

INTRODUCTION

On 7 April 2000, the cricket world was shocked by the news that Delhi Police had uncovered evidence that South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje and other players were associated with bookmakers in manipulating the results of international cricket matches. This watershed event created a media scandal with government inquiries in South Africa and India, public release of previous inquiry reports on match-fixing, and the establishment of an Anti-Corruption Unit by the International Cricket Council (ICC) which produced its own report on corruption in the game. The inquiry reports disclosed that, since the early 1990s, cricket was riddled with match-fixing corruption about which authorities had failed to act effectively. Indulging in ‘organizational hypocrisy’, where their decisions and actions were at variance with the espoused values of cricket, national and international authorities had allowed a ‘nexus of silence’ about match-fixing to envelop the institution preventing effective action to remove the corruption.
Corporate scandals, involving long standing unethical or more serious misbehaviour in organizations unconstrained and covered up by management and corporate trustees, are not unusual, but there have been few attempts to conduct empirical research on such cases. The aim of this research into the match-fixing scandal in cricket has been to answer the question – ‘how could authorities allow this scandal to happen?’ - resulting in the development of a substantive theory of a ‘nexus of silence’, linking organizational silence to organizational hypocrisy.

This paper presents a brief explanation of the methodology used, a model depicting the phenomenon of a ‘nexus of silence’, a summarized literature review on organizational silence and organizational hypocrisy, the case study summary, an brief explanation of the ‘nexus of silence’ phenomenon, and short summary of the findings, theoretical contributions, implications of the research for management theory, limitations of the study and future research directions.

METHODOLOGY, MODEL EXPLANATION, LITERATURE REVIEW

Grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), suitable for research in management (Goulding, 2002; Locke, 2001; Remenyi et al, 1998), was used in analyzing documents related to the scandal. Disparate documents were assembled into a case study, with coded data categorized as context, causes, conditions and consequences of the central phenomenon which emerged allowing the story of match-fixing to be told around the silence of many stakeholders when dealing with the problem of corruption. Figure 1 depicts a substantive theory which emerged linking ‘organizational hypocrisy’ and a ‘nexus of silence’.

Figure 1
Model of ‘Organizational Hypocrisy and a ‘Nexus of silence’ over corruption: Context, Core Value Focus, Problem-Solving and Public Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Context</th>
<th>Decreasing nexus of silence</th>
<th>Cleaning the Augean Stables</th>
<th>Scandal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational integrity path</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corruption occurs</td>
<td>Institutional espoused values focus</td>
<td>Sweep under the carpet</td>
<td>Cover up</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public awareness of corruption</td>
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A ‘nexus of silence’, institutional wide silence by stakeholders who become aware of the problem, occurs in a particular contexts where management and corporate ‘trustees’, faced with the issue of corruption or other unethical behaviour, fail to focus on the institution’s espoused values, choosing a path of organizational hypocrisy rather than organizational integrity. They enact and maintain a ‘nexus of silence’ in order to ‘sweep under the carpet’ or ‘cover up’ the problem, which only dissipates when ‘scandal’ breaks and the ‘cover up’ fails, after which they move to ‘clean the Augean stables’ (Sinclair, 2000: 7). The ‘nexus of silence’ concept describes pervasive silence, not just of employees, but of people at all organization levels and of stakeholders. It has previously been found by this researcher in the ‘Holy Watergate’ scandal involving cover up of sex abuse by clergy in the Archdiocese of Boston (Gross, 2005).

Silence has a substantial literature, but a literature review by Morrison and Milliken’s indicated that “research on silence within organizations is more recent and sparse” (2003: 1354). Organizational silence (Morrison & Milliken 2000, 2004), to which the concept of a ‘nexus of silence’ can be related, is the widespread withholding of information by employees, which occurs in “many organizations… caught in an apparent paradox in which most employees know the truth about certain issues and problems within the organization yet dare not speak the truth to their superiors” (2000: 706). Research on organizational silence has mainly focused on ‘employee silence’ (for example, Hirschman, 1970; Argyris, 1977) which results from negative forces based on shared assumptions (Schein, 1992: 24-25) producing a ‘climate of silence’ on issues where employees believe their views will not be welcome by management, be futile or even dangerous (Morrison & Milliken, 2004). Employee silence research has addressed issues about which employees are silent (Morrison & Milliken, 2000, 2004; Hart & Hazelgrove, 2001; Milliken,
Morrison & Hewlin, 2003; Beamish, 2000); motives including fear about punishment (Ryan & Oestreich, 1991; Milliken and Morrison, 2003), job security (Piderit, 2000), being treated as a whistleblower (Miceli and Near, 1992), being labeled negatively (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003; Creed, 2003; Milliken et al, 2003), not wanting to hurt someone else (Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003), and the belief in the futility of speaking up (Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991; Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Silence of groups and teams has been found to arise from self-censorship by team members, and from a culture of silence (Beamish, 2000; Hart and Hazelgrove, 2001), apathy (Condon, 2001) and ‘social loafing’ (Gabrenya et al, 1981).

Organizational silence has also been noted by researchers in relation to man-made disasters (Beamish, 2000; Hopkins, 1999; Turner, 1978), and in long term professional malpractice (Hart and Hazelgrove, 2001). In a similar vein, ‘moral muteness’ (Bird and Waters, 1989), ‘moral disengagement’ (Beu and Buckley, 2004), and ‘ethical blind spots’ (Moberg, 2006) see managers refrain from talking about ethical issues, asking ethical questions about organizational decisions, and ‘turning a blind eye’ to unethical behaviour. Organization managers may adopt organizational defense routines when faced with situations which are potentially embarrassing or a threat, and where the issue of concern and the defense become ‘undiscussable’ (Argyris, 1990, 1994; Schein, 1992). Implications of silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2004) include a range of consequences including undermining the reporting of unethical and illegal practices and the effectiveness of organizational learning (Argyris and Schon, 1978; Argyris, 1990; Beer and Eisenstadt, 2000; Edmonson, 2003; Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

‘Organizational hypocrisy’ has been defined as voluntary behavior of an individual acting as an organizational trustee whose action does not meet proclaimed values which become excepted expectations (Phillippe and Koehler, 2005), as ‘theory-in-practice’ (Argyris and Schon, 1974) or basic assumption inconsistency (Schein, 1992), inconsistency in talk, decisions and actions (Brunsson, 1989), espoused values and principles at odds with decisions or action (Kouzes and Pozner, 1993) and organizations espousing single norm systems living in reality with multi-norm systems (Huzzard and
Ostergren, 2002). Revealed hypocrisy of individuals or organizations may lead to loss of reputation and trust, restoration of which will be difficult (Dowling, 2001).

THE CRICKET MATCH-FIXING CASE - A THIN DESCRIPTION

Cricket is an open air game, played between two teams of eleven players with bat and ball, where both teams try to win by scoring more runs (between wickets) than the opposition. While betting has had a 250 year association with the game (Rait-Kerr, 1950; Birley, 1999), match-fixing relates to ‘deciding the outcome of a match before it is played, primarily for monetary gain’ through betting (Qayyum, 1999). Besides losing a game deliberately, match-fixing involved betting on individual or collective underperformance by some players, insider information provision and player introductions to ‘bookies’, and ground preparation to guarantee certain predetermined results (CBI, 2000). Between 1980 and 2000, over 50 matches were the subject of match-fixing allegations (Polack and Pettet, 2000; Condon, 2001) focused on six high profile cases involving leading players from five national teams.

Presented in rough chronological order here, case 1 concerned the exploits of former Pakistan Cricket Captain Salim Malik who, subject of allegations by fellow team member whistleblowers in 1995 and 1997 initially treated by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) investigators as an internal team conflict, was exonerated to continue his corrupt activities. In Case 2, leading Australian players Mark Waugh and Shane Warne in 1994 accepted money from a ‘bookie’ they knew as “John” in exchange for what seemed innocuous information. Discovered early in 1995, they were fined by the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) after a private, informal inquiry, but not banned from cricket, a fact known to the two ICC officials. Disclosed late in 1998 after a media leak, the ACB were accused of hypocrisy (Head, 1998) after which a second inquiry admonished the ACB for their judgment (O’Regan, 1999). Case 3 saw Australian players Waugh and Warne, together with team member Tim May, after a media leak in 1995 allege that Pakistan’s Salim Malik offered them money to throw matches on two occasions in 1994, which they declined. A PCB Inquiry (Ebrahim, 1995) into these allegations were not subjected to a process of cross-examination after the ACB refused to let them travel to Pakistan, resulting in exoneration for Malik as in case 1. Addressed again in 1998-9 by a Pakistan Government Inquiry (Qayyum, 1999) during which time
the ACB handling of case 2 became public, evidence against Malik and other Pakistan players resulted in them being found guilty, but only in 2000 when the report was released after nine months in the hands of the Pakistan government.

Effectively ‘swept under the carpet’ in mid-1995, match-fixing allegations resurfaced on 11 June 1997 in case 4 with news stories and allegations in the Indian magazine *Outlook India* about match-fixing by Indian players (Bahal & Prasad, 1997). Examined and dismissed by an Indian Cricket Board (BCCI) Inquiry (Chandrachud, 1997), this inquiry report too was not released until 2000 shortly before an Indian government Police investigation in 2000 disclosed evidence of corrupt dealings between Indian bookmakers and international cricketers (CBI, 2000). Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin was banned for life and other players fined and banned for varying periods by the BCCI (Madhaven, 2002). Case 5 comprised allegations by England player Chris Lewis that approaches were made to him by ‘Indian nationals’ in London. Passed to Metropolitan Police by the ECB in 1999, the case became somewhat of an embarrassment when made public with no action taken to prosecute the villains. Up until the scandal in April 2000, cricket and government authorities did their best to ‘cover up’ the corruption. However, case 6 comprising the allegations against and confession of South African captain Hansie Cronje proved to be a watershed event that prodded hitherto reluctant and apathetic authorities into more resolute action. Cronje was banned for life and other South African players given lesser bans and fines, but the ‘scandal’ dragged on for 15 months during which time, and since, authorities struggled to ‘clean their Augean stables’.

**CONTEXT OF CRICKET MATCH-FIXING**

The context in which match-fixing occurred is provided because, as noted by researchers, “…particular phenomena occur in dynamic, complex social milieu” (Snook, 2000: 26), and contexts are shaped by their increasingly complex external and internal environments (Capon, 2004). What is important is that contextual factors, both historical (1744-1980) and contemporary (1980-2000), provided antecedent conditions, or ‘exacerbating influences’ (Moberg, 2006), for a ‘nexus of silence’ about match-fixing.
Cricket developed as an imperial English sport in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India (now India and Pakistan after the 1947 partition), West Indies, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and more recently Kenya, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe (Williams, 1999: 12-13). Embraced by English clerics and schools as Christianity in practice (1999: 5-7; 142-145), cricket was seen as “…more than a game; it was invested with special moral worth with cricketers” (1999: vv). Influenced by Lord Harris both in Britain and abroad in cricket’s golden ages (Morrah, 1967; Howat, 1989) on the techniques, rules and spirit in which cricket was to be played, by 1905 the word ‘cricket’ was synonymous with everything regarded as fair, straightforward and right (Coldham, 1983: 105).

But this espoused ‘spirit of cricket’ was not practiced over the next sixty years. Firstly, it was breached by the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in the infamous ‘bodyline’ test series in Australia in 1932-33 (Douglas, 2002; Fingleton, 1946; Frith 2002a, 2002b; Jardine 1933) with ‘fast leg theory’, involving bowling at the body of the batsman, “…perfectly within the Laws of Cricket, but seen at an early stage by many and later by most to be contrary to the spirit of cricket” (Benaud, 2005: 38). Secondly, it was breached by practices such as throwing, ball tampering, sledging and arguing with the umpire on-field, and lower standards of social behaviour off-field (Smith 2000: vii). Authorities failed to act on these deviant practices until 2000 when it was seen as necessary to expand the Laws on unfair play and to write a Preamble to those Laws entitled “The Spirit of Cricket” to publicly educate players and officials (Oslear, 2000; Smith 2000).

Another contextual factor was the commercialization of cricket with its transformation from a sport to a media–entertainment, changing its values and the focus of cricket administrators. Commercialization began with World Series Cricket (WSC), established by Australian media owner Kerry Packer in 1976 in response to the refusal of the ACB to grant him media coverage of cricket, creating a schism in the game with the best players moving to WSC as highly paid professionals. WSC popularized the shorter version game, the one-day international (ODI), before a compromise in 1979 ended the schism providing Packer with TV rights for Australian cricket, and the ACB again with sole administration of cricket in Australia (Blofeld, 1978; Haigh, 2000; McFarline, 1977; Piesse, 2000;
Significantly, WSC cricket was criticized at the time that it was played for money, not love of country; and early exciting games were written off as rigged, like professional wrestling (Stone, 2000: 146). Increasingly, as in other sports, media would reshape the game to serve the public, whose interests were represented by media and sponsors.

During the match-fixing period, commercialization was accompanied by growth of the popular ODIs with consequent media coverage and sponsorship, neutral venue development, illegal betting on cricket in India, and technology development (the spread of TV and mobile phones in India) shaped the cricket environment. Commercialism transformed cricket “from a participatory to a popular culture” (Pathak, 2004), with media and sponsorship income the driving force in the game, and a source of a power shift in cricket from west to east during the 1990s (Bose, 2002; Guha, 2002). This popularity saw ODIs increasing in number from 34 in 1971-75 to 635 in 1996-2000 (Wilde, 2003: 20-22). But players thought there were too many games “with nothing at stake in terms of national pride or selection” (Condon 2001, para 79) where, according to Australian player Mark Waugh, they were “like so much confetti” (Knight, 2002). Various countries such as United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Canada developed new venues where the operators created ODI tournaments with a carnival atmosphere, and which Condon found to be locations where players were “treating these events with indifference and the opportunity to maximize the receipt of gifts or indulge in under-performance for betting purposes” (2001: para 92). In India and Pakistan, illegal betting on cricket increased with the renewal of the matches between India and Pakistan in 1978 (2001: para 68) to which regulatory authorities ‘turned a blind eye’ and lack of regulatory control allowed corruption unhindered by police (CBI, 2000). Finally, technology proliferation with “live television coverage of matches and growth …of ODIs created an environment where it was possible to watch and bet on cricket almost every day of the year”, and mobile phone technology enabled communication during matches between bookmakers and punters, and in match-fixing, between ‘bookies’ and corrupt players and journalists (Condon, 2001: para 69).

Internal conditions conducive to match-fixing were ‘benevolent’ cricket authorities, weak governance control systems, lack of accountability of authorities, political conflict inside the ICC, a
culture of elitism, tolerance of deviance, and policy, practices and norms that required organizational silence, player dissatisfaction over pay and conditions and their lack of say in the game, and limited knowledge of the nature of the corruption. Cricket’s traditional authority by the MCC “…has been more paternal and benevolent than punitive and rigorous,…rested on tradition and custom,…using discretion and tact…with a code of honour put before a set of rules, regulations and provisions” (Williams, 1999: 20, 24). The MCC was regarded as “a private club with a public function….it reigns but it does not rule” (Brayshaw 1985: 13). Changes to cricket Laws featured long deliberation where anything that mattered in cricket was, in the Lord’s Committee Room, “…at an early stage, discussed, weighed up, argued over, referred back, resurrected for more discussion, and finally pronounced upon with resonance” (Moorhouse, 1983: 41). Notionally, the governing body of cricket in an operational sense from 1909 was the ICC (Halbish, 2003:13), but had little power to act because its members liked it that way (Haigh, 2004: 191). Despite its relatively high status, the low governance capacity of the ICC was recognized by Condon as a problem, where for “almost half its history, the ICC was a loose and fragile alliance with a small central administration based at Lord's in London with limited budgets and powers” (Condon: para 102). With no full-time secretariat until 1993, the ICC was required to act according to the collective wishes of its national members on all matters including the issue of corruption. The ICC was aptly described by cricket writer Gideon Haigh as the dog in the night-time that didn't bark (2004:185-198). National cricket boards lacked control systems to manage corruption, and a uniform or cooperative approach to addressing problems in the game, prevented by political conflict which dominated the ICC from 1993-1998 with a struggle between traditional (west) alliances and newer (east) alliances (Bose, 2002; Guha, 2002; Halbish, 2003; Majumdar, 2004) over issues of hosting of major events and leadership of the ICC between 1990 and 1998 (Halbish, 2003: 8-26; Majumdar, 2004:411-422). Nor were most cricket authorities accountable to higher authority, the exception being Pakistan, so not brought to account. Players were generally dissatisfied with their boards over their views being ignored in the running of the game, conditions for players on some tours and their share of increasing cricket revenue. Typical of the authorities was the ACB, which made all the players’ decisions, refused to accede to player requests over pay and conditions,
used an ‘upstairs-downstairs’ attitude with players, while advising them not to publicly air their
grievances (Coward, 2002: 15-17). Their dissatisfaction was regarded as among the reasons match-fixing
developed (Condon, 2001: para 74).

The culture of cricket (Schein, 1992) changed noticeably with its artifacts (clothing, equipment,
technology use, game duration and playing times) and in the practice of its traditional espoused values
which required the game to be played in accordance with the ‘spirit of cricket’. What did not change was
a shared basic assumption, a ‘belief-in-practice’ of individual and collective stakeholders, that speaking
up about issues ‘likely to bring the game into disrepute’ was dangerous (Argyris, 1990; Schein, 1992).
Williams states that in cricket, on

“incidents that could not be approved of, there has, by common consent, been a policy of hush.
Cricketers have never believed in washing dirty flannels in public places. Away at Lord’s, hidden
in recesses called ‘Private’, there is a wash-house with a squeezing machine. The dirt flows down
the drains…Even reproof has been gently administered at Lord’s” (1999: 24).

As in other sports, leading players are regarded as elites on the basis of competence. Moberg
(2006) argues that control of their moral behaviour then becomes problematic. In cricket, over-the-top
misbehaviour in public was traditionally addressed by having ‘a quiet word’, while on technical and other
behavioural issues on field technical matters under the Laws were dealt with by the umpires, but with
many related to excessive competitiveness, authorities exhibited a tolerance for deviance, evidenced by
their slowness to act on sledging, ball tampering, chucking and the like. The mandatory requirement
enforced was a Law 42 and related contract provision for organizational silence by players that they not
‘bring the game into disrepute’. This underlying concern to avoid scandal in cricket is evidenced by
former ACB CEO Graham Halbish who stated in a 4 Corners interview Fixing Cricket in 2000 that
“[c]ricket is very traditional … in much preferring not to air its linen in public. It’s always preferred to
deal with matters behind closed doors, you know, rightly or wrongly. But that is effectively the way the
game has been administered over a long period of time”.

NEXUS OF SILENCE - A RICH /THICK DESCRIPTION OF THE THEORY
In this context, the first signs of match-fixing appeared in 1975 and 1980 with two stories of predetermined toss incidents. Between 1987 and 2000, over 50 international matches would be named in various investigations (Condon, 2001; Polack & Pettit, 2000). Cricket’s institutional stakeholders exhibited a ‘nexus of silence’ between 1992 and 2001 over match-fixing corruption which, I argue, were caused by sense-making, ambivalence, loyalty, and enactment of the culture in cricket.

Sense-making (Weick, 1998) explains how individuals made sense of match-fixing behaviour they experienced retrospectively, through an ongoing process of interaction with others and the cues received, and intuitively formed opinions or made decisions on the basis of the incomplete information. In 1987, when allegations of payments by bookmakers to the Pakistan team first surfaced, team management adopted ad-hoc methods to discourage thrown matches. Australian team management, until 1998, became aware of, but remained silent about, approaches to team members in 1992. Increasingly, some team captains and ‘bookies’ fixed aspects of play in some ODIs or tests at neutral venues. Individual players and officials not involved, without knowledge or education on how the corrupt ‘bookies’ established their connections and activities behind an image of benevolence and playfulness, despite signs that “something is not right”, and amid “buzz” in the form of stories, ‘circuit’ talk and rumors, struggled to make meaning of the disjointed information. The scale of match-fixing was small compared with betting on cricket by the public, so unnoticed by many. New team members, unable to assert themselves or recognize manipulation by their captains, misunderstood more overt discussions and offers; for example, some South African players thought Cronje’s discussions with them in 1996 were a morality test, while others more knowing but able to resist the offer simply kept silent (King, 2000). Team outsiders were in the dark about the nature and extent of match-fixing. Condon reported, in regard to some board members, on the “ignorance of worldly wise and mature individuals whom I genuinely believe had no idea what was going on” (Condon, 2001: para 14), but perhaps this was board members maintaining ‘ethical distance’ (Mellema, 2003). Collective sense-making at team and board levels was also affected, probably by organizational silence requirements reinforcing a ‘climate of silence’ (Morrison and Milliken 2004: 3).
Condon found such a ‘climate of silence’ in 2000 when investigating the corruption for the ICC (2001: paras 11-16). Aimed at avoiding scandal, the first cases were dealt with in an informal, ad-hoc way, without policies, orally but sometimes in writing, addressing symptoms rather than causes, using vague language in sparse communications. In 1995, a two-person ACB management team handled case 2 by private discussion, informing the Board at the end of its meeting to avoid dissent or discussion, and hiding the issue until 1998. Shortly afterwards, the Ebrahim Inquiry, a quasi-legal internal PCB effort, sought evidence from their team members (Case 1) and the Australians (Case 3) about the allegations against Malik, but lack of protection for witnesses, lack of evidence, and the non-cooperation and sharing of knowledge of the Australians, coupled with the written counsel of the ICC on 13 February 1995 to the PCB to “always [bear] in mind the damage to the image of cricket if allegations were made public in any way”, resulted in dismissal of the cases until 1999.

Ambivalence explains the attitude and behaviour of some players and officials who may have experienced conflicting thoughts and feelings about reporting or acting on the information they had (Baumann, 1991; Merton, 1976; Piderit, 2000; Smelser, 1998), resorting to silence. Psychological ambivalence saw players caught between supporting/being silent about fellow players and admonishing/reporting them. Australian team captain Mark Taylor’s comment - “To be totally honest, I hoped for the sake of Mark and Shane that the bookmaker story would never become public” (Taylor, 1999: 150), and his own silence until 2000, indicates his ambivalence. Sociological ambivalence saw Australian managers caught in two minds about how to deal with their elite players with whom there were both personal and professional relationships. Ambivalence as a ‘definition problem’ saw many in cricket, such as former England captain Nasser Hussain, hold the view that information selling was not match-fixing – “…the ‘crime’ Shane Warne and Mark Waugh admitted…is not match-fixing at all in my book” (Hussain, 2004, 274).

Loyalty norms prevented many players from ‘speaking up’, as Condon identified (2001: para 12) was the result of “(p)layers [not wanting] to be branded an informant and risk being ostracized by team mates…”, an example being Michael Slater, who only revealed his information on room-mate Mark
Waugh’s dealings with ‘John’ (*Case* 2) in 2004 ([Slater, 2004: 113-114](#)). Loyalty norms of teams are a defense against ‘outsiders’, known in cricket to include cricket administration. Team conflict in the Pakistan team in 1994 was preceded by stories of players and managers endeavouring to dissuade match-fixing inside the team since 1989 ([Imran Khan in 4 Corners interview *Fixing Cricket*, 2000](#)). At board level, Majid Khan, former player and CEO of the PCB, advised South African CEO Ali Bacher privately of his knowledge of match-fixing in 1999, but Bacher only admitted to having that knowledge, and his source, when the scandal broke in 2000. Even then, he was criticized by then ICC President Dalmiya for raising the issue publicly. For others who had knowledge, stakeholder loyalty to the institution, resulting from their ‘capture’ by the institution, resulted in silence about known or suspected corruption by journalists or other institutional supporters ([Magazine, 1998, 2000](#)), who become ‘moral bystanders’ ([Bansal and Kandola, 2004](#)), protecting it from scandal. An exception was Cronje’s father who, believing his son was a scapegoat for many other players, accused the South African Board (UCBSA) of knowing of the corruption problem years before but doing nothing to warn the players ([Roebuck, 2002: 19](#)).

Finally, board apathy was named by Condon as a cause of the match-fixing scandal ([2001: para 10](#)). O’Regan and Qayyum inquiries were critical of the ACB, the ineffectiveness of the BCCI in addressing corruption in India commented on publicly by the CBI. ICC President Malcolm Grey, admitted to 4 Corners in 2000 that “We should have acted sooner…with greater alacrity…better…we didn’t”. Even the Pakistan Government sat on its Qayyum Inquiry report for over six months, releasing it only when the scandal broke.

Intervening conditions ([Glaser, 1992: 66](#)) affecting the extent of the silence were the whistle-blowing from Pakistan and India, investigative media (for example, Bahal and Prasad, 1997; [Magazine, 1998](#)), sports correspondents who were not ‘captive’ of the institution (for example, Ahmed, 1995; Bose, 1995; Dean, 1995; Roebuck, 1995), and commissioned judges and lawyers who published inquiries held from 1997 ([Chandrachud, 1997; O’Regan, 1999; Qayyum, 1999; Yousuf, 1998](#)). However, with the exception O’Regan’s report, other reports were not released until 2000. While ‘east-west’ politics in the ICC prevented collaboration between Australian and Pakistan boards until late 1998, other information
leaks which became news from 1992-2000 were mostly ignored, minimized or dismissed by cricket authorities as allegations without the foundation of evidence.

Moderator conditions which increased or decreased the level of silence inside the institution were the organizational defensive routines enacted by cricket authorities in order to avoid embarrassment or threat and prevent actors from discussing the defense (Argyris, 1993: 15), and legalistic approaches (Sitkin and Bies, 1994) in the form of internal inquiries to formally address the problem of publicly known unresolved allegations. National cricket authorities, and the ICC executive, initially reacted by ignoring signs of corruption (PCB from 1990-4; ACB from 1992-4), addressing corruption allegations as internal conflict issues (PCB in 1994), holding ad-hoc, non-transparent inquiries (ACB in 1994, PCB in 1995), lack of systems to receive and deal with complaints and allegations, enacting a policy of silence (ACB and ICC executive in 1995), punishment of whistle-blowers (PCB in 1995) and fragmenting the cases (ICC, ACB and PCB in 1995), with the effect that the corruption issue was ‘swept under the carpet’ until 1997. In the following ‘cover-up’ period, cricket authorities resorted to quasi-legal inquiries (BCCI in 1997, PCB in 1998), the continued policy & practice of silence (ACB until 1998), punishment of whistleblowers (PCB in 1997), where there was “…the justified fear that ‘whistleblowers’ would be penalized rather than supported, …fear that their international careers would have come to an abrupt halt if they had voiced their anxieties about corruption”(Condon, 2001: para 12), non-collaboration with other national boards resulting in fragmenting the cases where there was “…no obvious or credible person or place to report matters,” (Condon, 2001: para 12) and failure to disclose to the public the pattern of corruption. They failed to engage external assistance until 2000, with the exception of PCB CEO Majid Khan, who initiated a powerful and productive government inquiry (Qayyum, 1999). Denial, minimizing corruption, or blaming the media were the substance of the few communication responses by authorities. Even in 2000, the defensive routines continued marked by non-cooperation with external authorities by the South African and Indian Cricket Boards (UCBSA and BCCI), and even with the ICC Anti-Corruption Unit under Condon who found a ‘climate of silence’ able to be partly overcome by education and persuasion, but still only revealing ‘the tip of the iceberg’ (Condon, 2000: para 11). Legalistic
approaches (Sitkin and Bies, 1994) saw the problem addressed during the period 1995-1999 by use of internal quasi-legal inquiries seeking evidence of corruption to determine a player’s guilt, rather than the presence of multiple signs as a pattern indicating the presence of corruption. By looking for evidence without affording witnesses libel protection or clarifying the level of proof required, many potential allegations were silenced and their information dismissed. In internal reviews that followed the external inquiries, many players denied their previously admitted involvement (Madhaven, 2000: paras 41,71; Melick, 2001).

The consequences of the ‘nexus of silence’ were the development of widespread corruption, the scandal throughout 2000-1, the resulting economic loss to cricket and loss of reputation and trust of authorities and many players in the institution of cricket (Condon, 2001; Haigh, 2004).

**DISCUSSION**

Research on the cricket match-fixing scandal indicates that a ‘nexus of silence’ about corruption or other unethical practice in organizations, indicative of hypocrisy by management or trustees, occurs under certain conditions. Firstly, certain external and internal contextual factors provide antecedent conditions and become exacerbating influences in the way managers react to allegations of corruption. They exhibit benevolent / benign authority, weak control systems, non-accountability, and tolerance of deviance by their elites. They seek to avoid scandal and are apathetic to the risk the real problem creates. Secondly, early signs of a problem may be ignored because of collective sense-making and various types of ambivalence. Thirdly, a critical choice to take the path of hypocrisy rather than integrity initiates the ‘nexus of silence’ and reinforces it through organizational defensive routines which prevent participative and collaborative problem-solving.

**Theoretical Contributions**

This case makes three theoretical contributions – first, it provides a new substantive theory of a ‘nexus of silence’ linked to organizational hypocrisy in certain organizations and institutions over corruption or other unethical behaviour; second, it suggests that organizational silence over ethical issues will affect not just employees but managers and other ‘captive’ stakeholders; third, it suggests the
incorporation of context factors identified as additional ‘organizational and environmental characteristics’ in Morrison & Milliken’s model of organizational silence (2004) about ethical issues.

**Implications for management**

This case is indicative of the damaging outcome for an organization or institution when management allows unethical behaviour contrary to its publicly expected espoused values. Organizational hypocrisy involved the failure of moral leadership by cricket authorities in not adhering to the organization’s corporate purpose (Springett, 2004), resulting in scandal, loss of reputation and public trust, restoration of which was difficult (Dowling, 2001). Organizational integrity, the constant practice by an organization of its espoused values, is necessary for stakeholder trust (Longstaff, 1994) “which must not be compromised for financial gain or short term expediency” (Longstaff, 1996: 7). Ethical practice “…implies one will act with integrity” (Longstaff, 1992: 9). Governance failure to foster ‘moral responsibility’ (Bird & Waters, 1989) in leaders in addressing corruption or other unethical behaviour in organizations can result in scandal, loss of reputation and public trust, restoration of which will be difficult (Dowling, 2001). A ‘nexus of silence’ is an indicator of the existence of such a risk. Risk management practice in organizations, including examining the identified context factors, causes and moderator conditions found here, would help develop risk strategies to solve the problems.

**Limitations of the study and future research directions**

The research findings have the limitations of an empirically based substantive grounded theory. Findings of this researcher in regard to the sex-abuse scandal case in 2002 in the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston (Gross, 2005), and the presence of pervasive silence noted by other researchers (Beamish, 2000; Hart and Hazelgrove, 2001; Morrison and Milliken, 2000, 2004; Cabban and Salter, 2005), suggests that the theory of ‘nexus of silence’ may have greater applicability in management research. Further directions for research might involve testing this theory in other scandal cases involving cover up of unethical behaviour, its absence where organizational integrity is chosen to address unethical behaviour, and study of the national cross-cultural aspects of the theory. Investigation into the inefficiency of a ‘nexus of’
silence’, that is, the cost of consequences of organizational hypocrisy versus organizational integrity, both
during the ‘nexus of silence’ pre-scandal and post-scandal, might also be beneficial.

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