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What is This?

Sport and Development: An Overview, Critique, and Reconstruction

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Abstract

"Development" has become both a watchword and a fascination in sporting circles worldwide. Yet sport officials, policy makers, and advocates often have relatively unsophisticated understandings of development and the role of sport therein. This can result in programs and initiatives that are unfocused, ineffective, or even counterproductive. Drawing on critical theory and informed by our own research on sport-based social programs, the authors attempt to impart clarity by distinguishing two different approaches to sport and development: a *dominant vision*, in which sport essentially reproduces established social relations, and an *interventionist approach*, in which sport is intended to contribute to more fundamental change and transformation. The authors develop a critique of the former and elaborate on the latter, focusing on normative visions of the social status quo and the role of sport as an educational tool for otherwise disempowered, marginalized young people. The overarching objective is to show that practitioners interested in using sport for development however defined must recognize these theoretical issues and create appropriate programming if their intended outcomes are to be achieved.

Keywords

development, theory, education, sport

Since the United Nations' (2003) adoption of Resolution 58/5, sport has been a prominent and increasingly powerful tool for development in the international community.[1] As we write, 295 organizations worldwide have officially registered with the International Platform on Sport for Development and Peace (sportanddev.org 2011)—nearly

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double the organizations registered in 2008 (Kidd, 2008).[2] These organizations include multilateral institutions like the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); international nongovernmental organizations like CARE International and Right to Play; governmental bodies like the Australian Sports Commission and UK Sport; international corporations like Nike; local, grassroots organizations like the CAN Fútbol Foundation in Honduras; and even academic institutions like the University of Toronto and the Interdisciplinary Centre of Excellence for Sports Science and Development at the University of the Western Cape (sportanddev.org 2011).

This international movement around sport and development builds upon and is often connected with other efforts to use sport for the purposes of social intervention, crime prevention, and risk reduction (Coalter, 2010; Guest, 2009; Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008). These, too, play off of long-standing beliefs about the power and prosocial character of sport (for extended discussions, see Giulianotti, 2004; Guest, 2005; Hartmann, 2003, 2011, in press; Pitter & Andrews, 1997; Witt & Crompton, 1997). Many of these themes are echoed in the United Nations' explanation of and justification for this emerging emphasis:

> The world of sport presents a natural partnership for the United Nations system. By its very nature sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. Sport brings individuals and communities together, highlighting commonalities and bridging cultural or ethnic divides. Sport provides a forum to learn skills such as discipline, confidence, and leadership and teaches core principles such as tolerance, cooperation, and respect. Sport teaches the value of effort and how to manage victory as well as defeat. When these positive aspects of sport are emphasized, sport becomes a powerful vehicle through which the United Nations can work towards achieving its goals (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003, p. i).

With great optimism, sport is believed to hold the potential to address all eight of the UN's Millennium Development Goals, a set of "internationally agreed upon" goals that range from eradicating extreme poverty to achieving environmental sustainability and universal education by the year 2015 (Beutler, 2008; Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group [SDPIWG], 2008).[3]

While the international community now consistently markets sport as an effective development tool, however, not a great deal has been done to conceptualize, organize, and structure the whole sport and development field (Coalter, 2006). The wide array of practices and implementation strategies that have emerged are not all consistent or compatible (see, for example, Sport in Action, 2004; Swiss Academy for Development, 2010), and there is very little research on which programs work (if they work at all), much less an understanding of the mechanisms by which sport would foster development. With little more than anecdotal evidence, beliefs about the impact of sport in development are driven mainly by heartfelt narratives, evocative images, and quotable

sound bites of individual and community transformation, packaged and delivered more often than not by those running the programs.[4] Furthermore, as these programs confront scarce resources and funding, there is a very real risk of "mission drift" as programs must let slip their social intervention components to focus on simply justifying their sport programs to maintain a consistent participation base (Coalter, 2010; Hartmann & Wheelock, 2002; Kidd, 2008). As a result of all this, we are concerned that sport-based development programs are often not as focused and effective as they could be. Even worse, we believe some of these well-intended initiatives may be not be serving the ends toward which they are directed, or are even having counterproductive results.

One of the first and most basic challenges of the whole sport and development field has to do with the conception of development itself. "Development" is one of those generally appealing but deeply complicated and poly-vocal terms that resonates in scholarly circles and popular audiences. The problem is that it means many things to many people (see, for example, Black, 2010; Cooper & Packard, 1997; Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Escobar, 1995; Holt & Sehn, 2008; J. Sachs, 2005).

In different contexts, development can refer to something as philosophical as the progress of humankind or as practical as the social engineering of emerging nations (Esteva, 1992; McMichael, 2004). It can be conceptualized and applied at a very personal, individual level where it is often tied with fairly rigid, normative conceptions of socialization and growth through different life stages or milestones toward a more complete (and desirable) form (see, for example, Perkins, Madsen, & Wechsler, n.d.). This individualist orientation is often reappropriated within a discourse of human capabilities and freedoms as well as within the politics of citizenship and identity (see, for example, Foster, 2006; Sen, 1999; Sharma, 2008). Development also has a broader, more systematic set of meanings and applications that emerged out of the economic growth models of earlier generations of international policy makers. In this context, development can be both a universal (economic) blueprint of social change and a neoliberal (some would argue neocolonial) "method of rule" (McMichael, 2004, p. 31). A series of paradigmatic shifts since the 1960s and 1970s has broadened system-level development discourse even further to include buzzwords like poverty alleviation, local empowerment, and human rights; in the process, development has become synonymous in many contexts with helping the world's poor, transforming conditions of inequality, and engendering social, political, economic, and material change through education (see Finnemore, 1997; Peet, 1999; W. Sachs, 1992).

We believe that the multiplicity and ambiguity around conceptions of development presents one of the most important initial challenges for understanding and theorizing the sport and development field. Too often, different conceptions of development have led to misunderstanding of and miscommunications about sport-based initiatives and applications as well as inconsistently and inappropriately applied programming strategies. Our goal in this article is to impart some clarity on sport-based development by offering a conceptual overview. We distinguish between two different, ideal types that appear in the field: a dominant vision, in which sport essentially functions to maintain

and reproduce established social relations, and a more radical interventionist approach, in which sport is intended to contribute to fundamental changes and transformations in social life.

This theoretical overview and critique is informed by three main sources or sets of material. The first is the critical theoretical literature in sport and social intervention (Coalter, 2010; Darnell, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Giulianotti, 2004; Guest, 2009; Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008). The second is our own empirical research on sport-based education and intervention programs—in particular, Hartmann's work on sports-based social intervention (Hartmann, 2003, 2008) and the risk reduction programs known as midnight basketball (Hartman, 2001, 2011, in press), and Kwauk's ongoing ethnographic study of sport, health, and international development in the Pacific Islands. Though not referenced extensively in this article, our experiences in these research projects have provided a lens onto and concrete illustrations for the description, analysis, and retheorization presented here. Our final and perhaps most innovative contribution involves the literature on education and critical pedagogy. This body of work is invaluable to the critique and reconstruction offered here because we see education as a crucial, underlying, and insufficiently appreciated aspect of virtually all of the various visions of sport and development in the contemporary world.

The Dominant Approach

In dominant, generally un–self-conscious conceptions, sport is believed to be an effective tool of development because involvement in sport is understood to confer life skills (such as self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-discipline), social knowledge and values, and leadership qualities that individuals need to participate successfully in modern social life (Darnell, 2010a; Kay & Bradbury, 2009). Much of this is believed to happen naturally or organically through the competition, respect for the rules, and dedication to a physical craft all believed to be inherent in modern sport. But education and a pedagogical vision are obviously crucial here as well since the qualities, skills, and knowledge necessary for athletic competition all require focused attention and deliberate cultivation through socialization among young people not necessarily inclined toward them. Indeed, the achievement of self-development objectives through a "physical" education[5] is believed to positively and uniquely enable the development of productive selves and communities.

This approach plays off of long-standing, idealized beliefs in sport as a powerful, prosocial force for character building and self-discipline (see, for example, Dovey, 1993; Right to Play, 2008; UNICEF, 2004). These developmental ideals were revalorized and accentuated in the late 20th century with the emergence of neoliberal ideologies and visions of social life (Rose, 1999; see also Heywood, 2007), especially those reemphasizing individualism, competition, and free enterprise in the political milieu of Western societies. Admiration of societies that emphasized the socialized provision of public services, including recreational sport programs, was preempted by a focus on those driven by market- and consumer-oriented politics (Harvey, 2005). The

relationships between the state and the individual became less those in which a socially minded government provided for the welfare of its citizens to one in which citizens were expected to actively self-govern and self-regulate through moral prudence and responsibility (Rose, 2000). Meanwhile, states limited their role in the public sphere to ensure the unfettered operation of free markets. Services became increasingly privatized, and a small number of publicly funded programs were left to fill the void of social welfare. In neoliberal imaginings, sport thus becomes the perfect space for young people to be socialized and refashioned into mature subjects and productive citizens.

These processes of individual socialization and development are seen as especially important for young people somehow lacking in the basic resources and social supports otherwise available to most. Indeed, sport-based development programs are often targeted specifically to such "at-risk" communities and populations. Here, it is probably not too much of a stretch to argue that there are actually two different tracks or tiers of socialization and social service provision in the neoliberal youth sports realm—one oriented to the majority of mainstream, middle-class youth, the other targeted to populations that are (or at least are perceived to be) more impoverished and disempowered. Even more important for the purposes of this article is that most development-oriented programs focus on social intervention and risk prevention among these otherwise disempowered youth. Targeting marginalized young people in both domestic and international locales, sport-based intervention programs resemble experimental social policies aimed at governing the "conduct of conduct" of "unskilled" youth by equipping them with the tools for self-improvement and self-management (Coakley, 2002; Darnell, 2010b). This "new brand of popular social welfare" (p. 90) has become what Robert Pitter and David Andrews (1997) called the "social problems industry," organized minimally by the state and operated primarily by philanthropic, nongovernmental agencies, organizations, and initiatives.

In this system, sport is not only posited as an intelligible tool for normative, reproductive development but also believed to function as a mechanism for educating and recalibrating underprivileged or deviant individuals into "upstanding" citizens (Darnell, 2007). Development in this context is, to put it even more strongly, about the discipline, socialization, and social direction of otherwise problematic populations. And this logic of development as risk reduction extends to entire communities. That is, the community becomes a secondary object to be modified. Specifically, sport enthusiasts justify development initiatives on the grounds that they generate much-needed social capital for disaffected groups. By bridging and bonding communities, sport creates access to resources, information, social networks, and economic opportunity from which marginalized individuals were once estranged (Blackshaw & Long, 2005; Spaaij, 2009a, 2009b). In creating these networks, sport-based interventions are thought to do more than just grant a space to play—now they engender the "right" environment for individuals to lift themselves (and eventually) their communities out of their otherwise challenging and marginalized circumstances. Much like the ethics driving neoliberal development, sport is assumed to level the playing field by giving

individuals and communities a fair chance at looking and behaving like those in more affluent (and "developed") settings.

Characteristics and Critiques

There are two particular aspects of this dominant, ideal-typical vision of development and sport that we want to highlight and discuss. One has to do with the presumptive role of sport in development implementation and practice; the other involves the normative vision of social life, social change, and the status quo embedded in this dominant vision.

The Role of Sport

The implementation and practice point begins from the observation that many sport-based development initiatives and proposals have extremely idealized beliefs about sport's positive, prosocial force. In a nutshell, they assume that simply having a sport program or initiative of some kind will automatically and inevitably serve the development goals of socialization, education, and intervention. Nothing, in our view, could be further from the truth. Sport is a powerful social force, but it is not necessarily a positive, prosocial one. Indeed, there are numerous instances in the literature and in social practice where sport programming can be ineffective, counterproductive, or even misused. "By itself," as Jay Coakley has summarized, "the act of playing a sport leads to no regularly identifiable pattern of development or developmental outcomes. Instead, developmental outcomes are related to and dependent on combinations of factors" (Coakley, in press, pp. 4-5).

When it comes to development and social intervention, the power of sport is better understood as what John MacAloon (1995; see also Brownell, 1995) has called an "empty form," that is, "like any other tool, technology, or social practice whose meaning, use, and impact is dependent on the ways in which it is employed on how and to what ends it is used" (Hartmann, 2003; see also Coakley, 2002). The extent to which positive, prosocial developmental outcomes are achieved in and through sport is contingent on many factors: the ends to which the sporting experience is organized and directed, the programming and interventions that are conducted in concert with sport, and the resources that are devoted to any such initiatives. If sport is to have a productive effect in development (and it can and often does), it is typically when sport programs are organized and structured in purposive, systematic ways to achieve them.

Based on research into sport-based crime prevention initiatives in the United States and the related work of other scholars (Black, 2010; Darnell, 2010a, 2010b; Giulianotti, 2011; Guest, 2009; Kidd, 2008; Levermore & Beacom, 2009a, 2009b), Hartmann has identified several key elements required for effective sport-based social intervention. One of the first and most basic is the recognition that sporting activities play a crucial role in outreach, recruitment, and retention of participants. Sport provides the "hook" that draws otherwise disconnected, marginalized young people into a program, and

then that gets them actively involved and invested in its activities taken as a whole. The importance of recruitment and retention is important for any social program, but it cannot be overemphasized for those aimed at development among otherwise marginalized, disaffected youth who can be difficult to locate much less engage. One of the reasons midnight basketball programs have proven so popular among urban policy makers is that they are one of the few crime prevention initiatives to successfully attract the target, at-risk population.

Outreach, however, is just the first step in any program. Hartmann goes on to insist that once participants are recruited, a successful sport-based intervention must be about much more than sport. In fact, "The success of any sport-based social interventionist program is largely determined by the strength of its non-sport components, what it does with young people once they are brought into the program through sport" (Hartmann, 2003, p. 134). Fred Coalter's (2009) conceptual framework of *sport plus* and *plus sport* helps us make sense of this point as well as where such programs can go awry. On one end of the spectrum are "sport plus" programs that "give primacy to the development of sustainable sports organizations, programs and development pathways" before going on to address broader social justice issues (p. 58). On the other end are "plus sport" programs that focus primarily on achieving nonsport objectives such as preventing youth crime, gender empowerment, or HIV/AIDS intervention while incorporating sport as a component of their programming. In reality, of course, many sport and development programs tend to lie somewhere in the middle, attempting to balance their sport and nonsport programming as program officers attempt to attract youth to their programs while simultaneously satisfy and appeal to funders in the corporate world and in the development world (see Coalter, 2010). But the key point, for the moment, is simply that to the extent that broader developmental ends can be expected to be achieved through sport, it is most likely to occur when we are talking about "plus sport" programming, that is, programming oriented and aimed not to sport development but to development through sport.[6] If development is to be accomplished, in other words, sport must be "part of a whole package of resources and social supports [which requires] a level of investment and intensive, day-to-day involvement far beyond that of most sport-based intervention programs" (Hartmann, 2011). In a sense, then, sport-based development workers have a double-burden: They must offer successful athletic activities as well operate sophisticated, self-conscious development programming.

Coalter (2006; see also Coalter, 2010) elaborated on this double burden of sport and social intervention, calling to attention a distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions for development and social change. Put simply, participation in sport may be a useful mechanism for development, but it alone is not sufficient to engender social change. Rather, the nature, quality, and salience of the sporting experience, or more specifically of the educational experience within the sporting experience, is the more critical space in which development is achieved.

A final aspect of successful sport-based development and interventionist programs that Hartmann suggests is beginning to be understood and addressed by scholars is

their powerful symbolic role in disadvantaged communities and the broader public consciousness—the way in which such programs typically generate a good deal of public attention, much of which appears to be positive and affirming. This, too, can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the attention and publicity devoted to sport-based developmental initiatives can help build public support and legitimacy for the whole idea of development and a broader set of development-driven programs and initiatives. On the other hand, as marketing materials from organizations like "Right to Play" illustrate, sport-based social programming can reproduce troubling racial and gender (and other) stereotypes about cultural difference and social risk. The assumptions underlying such imagery often make it appear as if the challenges individuals from these "underdeveloped" communities face are their own doing rather than the result of the structural predicaments in which they find themselves (for a fuller treatment, see Hartmann, in press). Furthermore, the positive attention to sport-based initiatives can distract attention away from policy cutbacks and transformations at other systematic levels. This has often been the case for midnight basketball: These leagues are championed as new, innovative, and cost-effective initiatives precisely because of more fundamental cutbacks and reductions in other, related areas of social policy and practice—which brings us to the second, more substantive sociological critique of the dominant developmental vision in the sporting world.

A Reproductive Vision

Although proponents of sport-based development initiatives typically frame their objectives and outcomes as mutually beneficial for marginalized individuals and the society at large (see, for example, Kay & Bradbury, 2009; Spaaij, 2009b), the reality is that many sport-based "development" programs have been stifled by persistent inequalities and failed to bring about notable social change. But in many ways, this may be precisely the goal and intended function. For the dominant vision we have sketched here is not really about structural transformation and change. Rather, it is primarily about sport's ability to resocialize and recalibrate individual youth and young people that, in turn, serves to maintain power and hierarchy, cultural hegemony, and the institutionalization of poverty and privilege. It is, in other words, a fundamentally reproductive vision of development.

There are many different visions and variations of how sport-based intervention programs end up serving the interests of those already privileged and in power. In sport-based crime prevention initiatives, for example, Hartmann (2003, 2011) identifies a fairly soft, liberal version predicated on character building as well as a stronger, more disciplinary approach oriented toward social containment and control.[7] In her research in Sāmoa, Kwauk has seen how sport-based development programs serve to impose Western visions of health, education, and social development in Pacific Island communities. Their target groups in such programs are youth who need to be taught life skills and healthy living by a group of elite, often Western-trained athletes and

coaches, and there is little indication that the relations of power and privilege mediating their encounter are critically examined.

What strikes us as particularly noteworthy about sport-based intervention and development programs like these (or the one featured in Kay & Bradbury, 2009) is the deliberate attempt by development workers to socialize youth *into* a predetermined world. These assumptions about proper behaviors, rules of engagement, and personal aspirations embedded within the intervention leave little room for youth to reciprocate and influence society with their own understandings. Education obviously plays a crucial, if often hidden, role in such reproduction-oriented sport and development programs.

The hidden curriculum behind the intervention (related to anticriminal behavior, HIV/AIDS awareness, lifetime fitness, etc.) is intended to be deposited into the minds—or perhaps, in the case of sport, embodied and inscribed onto the "bodyminds" of youth by passionate volunteers, coaches, and development workers (Fahlberg & Fahlberg, 1997).[8] Defrance (1995) explained that the struggle over what Bourdieu famously called *habitus*—what can be conceptualized as a way of being—is not just about competing over the ways one speaks or moves but also very much about one's "social vision of the world, of the relationships that individuals maintain with each other, [and] of the universe of bonds and shared beliefs" (p. 125). Indeed, the knowledge, experiences, and perceptions of those who have benefited from social hierarchy and market-based competition are privileged as the standard to which others must emulate. In short, the socialization or education of youth through sport is as much about recalibrating identities as it is about developing skills and values.[9]

More subtle and even insidious, the assumption that sport is all about "fair play" engenders an ethos of universal egalitarianism that can and often does serve to legitimate and rationalize the existing social order to both organizers and participants. In a seemingly meritorious, market-based system, after all, everyone has the same chance of success and social mobility so long as they have the right mindset and skills. The result of all of this is that the whole concept of development is depoliticized and serves to reinforce and reproduce the social status quo.

Darnell (2010b) has postulated that sport is popular in development circles for precisely its reproductive qualities. Given its history and ideology,[10] sport is easily understood by the dominant class as a socially beneficial and culturally normative "character builder" and because the symbols, emotions, and dominant meanings of sport-based development "motivate individuals to transform life through sport-based processes of body management" that fall within lines of reproduction (p. 398). This bio-power of sport, what Foucault (1978) theorized as the control and influence of knowledge/power over the trajectory of human life, is what makes the possibility for more radical vision of social change through sport dissipate.

This is the beginning point of a fairly fundamental critique. Rather than alter or redress the institutions and practices that can lead to youth disaffection, sport-based intervention in this dominant mode enables one class of citizens (oftentimes those running the program) to change the tastes and conduct of others (Darnell, 2010a; Guest, 2009). Echoing

Bourdieu's theorization of capital, Blackshaw and Long (2005) remind us "'the profits of membership' of civic associations and social networks are not available to every-body . . . [T]he point of all 'capitals'—not just social capital—is that they are resources to be exploited and it is their exclusivity in the battle for distinction that gives them their value" (p. 251). Blackshaw and Long's exposition of social capital discourse in leisure studies shows how dominant groups shape cultural practices like sport in such a way that they not only function to legitimize a system of meaning (and movement) that represents their own interest but also work to maintain and normalize extant structures that prevent the benefits of social connectedness from being experienced universally (see also Clément, 1995; Defrance, 1995; Fernández-Balboa, 1997). In this way, less powerful actors seeking to gain access to and acceptance in a world constructed and controlled by the dominant class must first adapt the "commonsense" behaviors, norms, and dispositions of that class while discarding, relinquishing, or hiding those of their own community (see Bourdieu, 1978, 1988). As others have noted, too, Blackshaw and Long saw socially marginalized or underprivileged youth (re)calibrated to fit into dominant society without opportunity to question how their transformations were happening (see also Coakley, 2001; Fernández-Balboa, 1997).

Without critically analyzing how identities are prescribed, knowledge is (re)produced, and relations of power are (re)enacted in the context of sport in development, deploying sport may actually extend Western cultural neocolonialism in the name of education and development.[11] The social effect of sport-based intervention then is not so much to emancipate the oppressed but to normalize the existing relations of subordination that protect the social space of the privileged by controlling the bodies (and thus the identities) of those who are different (see Sage, 1993). Thinking about youth development in these terms suggests an alternative critical approach to sport-based development.

A More Critical Alternative

According to Simon Darnell (2010a), a more truly progressive sport-based approach to development would "consider counter-hegemonic approaches to and *through* [sport for development] that would engage directly with the political economy and the relations of dominance that produce the need for development in the first place" (p. 71). Such an approach would start from a critique of the existing social order and its attendant power relations and social inequalities. Education in this context would not be understood or intended to be a means for socializing otherwise deviant or marginalized, at-risk individuals into the mainstream social order; rather, it would take on a more radical social change emphasis, focusing more on the empowerment of otherwise marginalized, at-risk youth and young people through an understanding of the broader structures of power and privilege within which they are contained. Development would thus involve a much more radical vision of social change in which actors would be empowered to participate critically in the transformation of not only their own experiences in society but also of the world itself through a collective resistance against the hegemonic structures and relations of inequality that get reproduced through sport.

This vision draws upon the radical alternatives to development championed by Latin American and Indian theorists, liberation political ecologists, and even developmental economists in the 1970s and 1990s (Freire, 1970/2008; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997; W. Sachs, 1992; Sen, 1999). In response to the negative social, cultural, and environmental effects wrought by dominant development practice (and direct parallels to colonial visions), these scholars argued that the neoliberal vision of development is an ideology "born and refined in the North, mainly to meet the needs of the dominant powers in search of a more 'appropriate' tool for their economic and geopolitical expansion" (Rahnema, 1997, p. 379). As a result, mainstream development practices ignore local practices, local knowledge, the sociocultural and political-economic contexts as well as the needs and desires of communities themselves. Furthermore, the "underdeveloped" get positioned as incapable of governing, developing, liberating, or transforming themselves without technical assistance from experts, teachers, development practitioners, and policy makers from the North (Escobar, 1995; Rahnema, 1997). Instead of being generative, then, development is rendered destructive, spreading a homogenizing global imagination to all pockets of the world (Peet, 1999). Wary of this reproductive vision, these critical, anticolonial, and postdevelopment scholars argued for a radical vision of development that centers on processes of empowerment, emancipation, and liberation involving the full and active participation of those previously marginalized.[12] Development, in this sense, comes to be, not something that can be done *to* or *for* people, but a process that must be undertaken *with* others (Sharma, 2008).

This radical shift involves more than simply restoring local control. It also requires that structures of human inequality, oppression, and exploitation be recognized, challenged, and actively transformed. Central to this transformative vision is an alternative vision of education that defies and resists conventional understandings of intervention. The work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970/2008) is crucial here, especially at its more micro levels of practice and application.

Freire argues that education must be viewed and practiced as *freedom*. "Freedom," here, is not the same as the neoliberal market-based freedom to participate in (or to consume) sport (Newman & Giardina, 2010; see also Harvey, 2005), nor is it simply referring to the right or the free will of an individual to reject indoctrination or to critically question the assumptions, myths, and relations of power in operation around him or her (Giroux, 2010; Suoranta, 2005). Rather, freedom is the persistent struggle and the "indispensible condition for the quest for human completion" (Freire, 1970/2008, p. 47). The goal of education, then, is to raise the awareness of individuals to existing structures and relations of oppression and, through a collective struggle over meaning, representation, and identity, enable them to decode and to act upon these realities (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005). Education as the practice of freedom is thus invested in the *conscientization*, the "authentic liberation," and the humanization of marginalized youth in which their experiences are legitimated and their critical praxis, their action and reflection, upon the world is directed toward transforming it (Freire, 1970/2008; hooks, 1994; Kincheloe, 2008).

Within this framework, education and social development take on new meaning and application. No longer defined by the skills and knowledge deposited into learners

by teachers, coaches, or social workers, true education (and by extension development) is defined by its emancipatory and liberatory capacity (Kincheloe, 2008). According to critical educator Donaldo Macedo, such education involves youth not only becoming knowledgeable about their own histories, their own experiences, and the culture of their everyday environments but also entails that youth become critically aware and capable of discerning the codes and signifiers of the dominant culture (Kincheloe, 2008; Mahiri, 1998). In this way, an educational context centered on the practice of sport as liberatory action and driven by the practice of an emancipatory knowledge means teachers, development practitioners, and social workers must constantly teach a dual curriculum that "both empowers students to make sense of their everyday life and gain the tools for mobility valued in the dominant culture" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 85). And the learning of this curriculum does not start and end with student participation. According to bell hooks (1994), the empowerment of students "cannot happen if we [teachers] refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risks" (p. 21). Developmental education as a practice of freedom is thus a space in which all of its participants, including those standing at the front of the classroom, recognize the political nature of difference and structure relations and interactions in order to critically engage and then transform those that perpetuate the subordination of others.

Sport in the Transformative Vision

So what is the role of sport in this more radical vision of development? Some might argue that sport has no place here—that it is either a distraction from the more fundamental structural and systematic political interventions that are demanded or that it is necessarily and inevitably bound up with the discipline and control of athlete-subjects through the socialization requirements and processes of sports participation. This is not our position. We do not believe that intervention and development programs should abandon sport. Rather, just as scholars in the field of international development and education have deliberately attempted to critique and deconstruct the mainstream, normative components of education in order to redirect its practice in development (see, for example, Bartlett, 2009; Tikly, 2004; Vavrus, 2003), so too scholars and practitioners in the field of sport will need to begin to rethink sport as a tool of development.

A full exposition of this transformation is obviously well beyond the bounds of the current exposition. However, a few key points should help illustrate and elaborate the new framework that we believe would be necessary. One basic point is that it is not enough to simply do development better by running more responsible, culturally appropriate, sport-based programs. Such intervention must also involve a concomitant attempt to alter the conditions of inequality. Sport, in this more critical context, will remain an ever-useful "hook" that grants mainstream development practice a classroom and public audience unlike any other tool. However, if the ultimate goal is about liberation, then sport-based intervention and development programs must radically rework the rationale, approach, and implementation of their programming and deliberately plan and design interventionist components that transform the educational

space and experience of sport. The challenge, in short, is to harness the energies of sport and direct them toward this more radical vision of development and social change.

Practitioners and scholars interested in a more transformative development must begin interrogating the relations of power underlying sport-based interventions as well as their own assumptions about sport and development more generally. In doing so, we would begin to demonstrate and recognize that "sport and physical education are practices which are socially constructed within the culture in which they exist," and we begin to move toward an understanding of sport in development in which "any adequate account of [sport] must be grounded in an understanding of power, privilege, and dominance within society" (Sage, 1993, p. 153; see also Anderson, 2006). Furthermore, those who are running such interventions must work intentionally and dialogically with participants and others to create the sufficient conditions within sporting contexts in which conscientization and the struggle for liberation can occur. Sport-based outreach and intervention in this more radical mode must be directly connected with a much larger array of social change–oriented initiatives and programs. This goes back to our earlier points about the mechanisms by which sport can play a role in social intervention and change—not automatically or on its own but in combination with other programs and initiatives.

And there is a more specific and more substantive dimension of sport-based practice that we want to signal and elaborate here as well. It has to do with education and socialization. If sport theory has led us to understand the importance of sport as a hook, we must now attempt to understand the experiences of youth in these programs and whether and how sufficient conditions for their full participation in their development/ liberation/emancipation have been created. At present, officials often ignore the ways in which youth interpret and actively and creatively negotiate poverty and inequality as well as the ways in which their sport-based interventions actually commit symbolic acts of violence while reproducing conditions of marginalization (for examples of research that attempt to highlight the perspective of participants see Guest, 2009; Kay, 2009). Instead, youth participants should be seen as subjects who know and are enabled to act upon their world (Freire, 1970/2008; Mahiri, 1998). Sport by way of liberatory action is thus reconceptualized as a space of "physical" education that begins with the interests, knowledge, histories, identities, and experiences of marginalized youth and works toward developing their capacity to decode reality and the ability to distinguish between and "to deal with ways of seeing and being that are not their own" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 85). From here, sport becomes a critical praxis in which marginalized youth can begin to act upon the world and to make their own futures. Also, development gets redefined as the transformation of society and the liberation of subjects who by existing in the world rather than merely living in the world are repositioned to challenge and change society (Freire, 1970/2008; Mahiri, 1998).

Within this framework, education, mentorship, skills training, and intervention—or what Joe Kincheloe (2008) called "liberatory action"—become central, rather than the actual sport program itself, in the development of youth and communities. In this

sense, recruiting participants onto the court is only part of the deal; the other more crucial, challenging, and humbling part is to provide an educational program alongside and in the sport program that actively seeks to engage participants in a mutual process of grappling with power, inequality, and identity. Especially crucial to this model of sport as liberatory action is the changed culture and pedagogical practices of sport-based intervention and, in particular, the nature of the facilitator, mentor, and coach as well as his or her relationships with his or her youth participants. This is the final and perhaps most distinctive and radical dimension of the more radical vision of development through sport that we want to highlight.

Currently, many sport-based development and intervention initiatives carry three assumptions about the teacher-coach: (a) The teacher is the sole owner of knowledge and his or her role is to inculcate that knowledge to his or her students; (c) because that knowledge is universal, static, and neutral, it can be taught unproblematically and in fact transfers relatively easily; and (c) teaching is a matter of manipulating deposits of knowledge in ways that recalibrate the attitudes of students, reducing the practice of teaching to strategies in behavior modification (Fernández-Balboa, 1997; see also Kirk, 2006; Macdonald, 2002). Based upon these assumptions, identifying and training "good" coaches who embody the values and attitudes intended to be passed on to youth tends to be a top priority and goal for program implementation (see, for example, Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). This model, however, not only reinforces a conservative model of social change in which the "right" coach teaches the "right" values youth need to better fit society; it also too easily slips into a disciplinary educational regime in which the coach, community organizer, or development worker subjects his or her gaze over marginalized youth as the expert policing those who are in need of reeducation (Blackshaw & Long, 2005).

Shifting the emphasis of sport-based intervention to a more radical conception of development suggests the coeducation of youth *and* coach, participant *and* program officer. Both programming staff and youth participants must cointentionally reflect on (a) how sport reproduces inequity, injustice, and marginality; (b) the location of sport in relation to the political, social, and economic arrangements of society; and (c) where their lives intersect both as products of the past and as agents of a transformed collective future (Kincheloe, 2008). In addition to critical reflection, there must also be opportunity for acting upon these reflections—a critical sport praxis grounded in retheorizing sport *and* development and in repracticing sport *for* development in ways directed toward struggling against and transforming extant realities of inequality. Infusing critical pedagogy in sport in development thus moves beyond simply devising "better" teaching and coaching practices and/or revising interventions to be more student centered and dialogical; it is about reconceptualizing the project in its entirety.

In summing up, let us make manifest that many sport-based development initiatives are undertaken with laudable ambitions, ideals, and objectives for social intervention and change. However, in current practice the assumptions underlying dominant conceptions of development color the lenses from which many sport-based intervention and development program officers approach their social-change endeavor. Such

sport-based interventions may be able to help marginalized communities do better in society, but they do little to change the institutions, policies, practices, and more fundamental conditions that have helped to produce and maintain the marginality of the oppressed. As a result, while existing structures and relations of power are (often unintentionally) reproduced, the majority of marginalized youth and young people continue to be subordinated and disempowered. If taken seriously, the critical framework developed in the latter half of this article would allow sport scholars, policy makers, and practitioners interested in more interventionist forms of development to shift from using sport to change the individual toward using sport to challenge the commonsense notions and relations of power.

Conclusion

There are, in the contemporary world, many different and not necessarily compatible ways to understand development and the role of sport therein. In this article we have distinguished two ideal types: a dominant vision wherein sport functions to socialize individuals into the existing order, maintain that order, and reproduce relations of power and inequality, and a more radical approach where sport is retheorized in its political engagement and educative practice to contribute to more fundamental, systemic changes in social life. It should be obvious where our political sympathies lie as well as how difficult and challenging we think it would be to move toward a more radical, transformative vision. But we also want to point out that one need not necessarily agree with our specific substantive views about social life, social inequality, and the need for more transformative change to benefit from our more general point: that if sport practitioners are to be serious about development, they need to figure out what they believe development should be and construct sport programs and education initiatives designed specifically to address these ideals and objectives.

With this point in mind, there are two more points about the role of sport in development—or any kind of social intervention through sport, really—that we want to reiterate by way of conclusion. One is that sports programming and participation does not automatically and inevitably lead to prosocial outcomes and effects: these effects accrue only under the right or sufficient conditions, with appropriate resources, and with self-consciously designed and directed programming. The second point is that sport programming must be combined with other, nonsport programming and investment if broader developmental goals (whatever the specifics) are to be achieved. In other words, truly effective, sport-based, sport-oriented development will almost certainly be unable to achieve its effects on its own. Not to realize these two points is to both overestimate the social power of sport and to underestimate the depth, scale, and scope of the challenges of development, education, and intervention. And the failure to recognize these points in theory and in practice not only compromises the effectiveness of sport-based development (however conceived) but can actually undermine such initiatives and programming, producing outcomes and effects that are actually quite the opposite of those that were intended.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. While Resolution 58/5 officially recognized sport as a tool to help nations achieve their economic, social, political, and health-related development goals (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003), sport had already been established as an international development practice since the 1960s and1970s experiencing increased momentum especially since the 1990s after the Commonwealth Heads of Government acknowledged the role of sport in development and after the creation of Olympic Aid in (see Dohrmann, 1991, 1993; Olympic Solidarity, 2006; Pound, 1992a, 1992b; Right to Play, n.d.; SDPIWG, 2008).

2. Although the number of organizations has increased, Kidd (2008) reminds us that this number should be taken as a select sample of the total existing organizations, as many programs, like the United Nations Development Program's Kick out Poverty campaign (http://www.kickoutpoverty.org/) or Nike's RED campaign (http://www.nike.com/ nikefootball/red/home?locale=en_US), have not made the official connection to the Platform, and many more grassroots programs have limited Internet capacities to support an online presence.

3. See *Harnessing the Power of Sport* (SDPIWG, 2008, pp. 11-12) for a table that illustrates how the United Nations views the role and contribution of sport to the achievement of each of the eight MDGs.

4. The lack of research is complicated by the tendency for impact studies and monitoring and evaluation strategies to operate with the goal of proving the success of sport-based development and intervention programs (Coalter, 2010; see also *Beyond Sport*, 2010; Doherty, 2011; Irvine, 2007).

5. We use the term "physical" education in quotation marks in order to distinguish this form of education from traditional *health education* classes that occur in classrooms with textbooks from which students (presumably) learn about subjects like hygiene, nutrition, or the reproductive cycle and to distinguish it from traditional *physical (fitness) education*—or P.E.—classes that usually occur in school gyms or on school sports fields and involve equipment and a predefined curriculum. The term *physical education* is meant to convey a more generic form of embodied education in which ideologies are *inscribed* and *ascribed* upon the body through physical practice.

6. Just to be clear here: There is nothing inherently wrong with the development of grassroots sports programs or elite-level competitive athletics. However, such initiatives and emphases have little or nothing to do with development in the larger, more social sense —which is how the term more generally understood and being used in this article.

7. Hartmann (2003) further suggests that there is a deep racial consensus underlying these two different approaches as well: one which assumes that it is poor, young men of color who are the primary threats to social order and thus primary targets of discipline and control.

8. Feinberg and Soltis define hidden curriculum as the "organizational features and routines of school life [or sport-based intervention] that provide the structure needed to develop the psychological dispositions appropriate for work and citizenship in an industrial society' (p. 21). This curriculum, however, works differently for different communities, subordinating marginalized groups through the legitimization and reproduction of the symbols and culture of dominant communities without having to resort to physical violence or obvert coercion (Feinberg & Soltis, 2004).

9. A more potent example comes from a program report of the Ishraq Program in Egypt in which sport became a platform in which young Muslim girls could "develop acceptance of their bodies," shed themselves of their traditional dress ("sometimes with pants underneath"), and "[don] track suits and sneakers for a few hours each week to play with their [female] peers and learn new sports and games" (Brady et al., 2007, p. 16).

10. It is important to acknowledge that sport has often been an important part of neocolonial processes (Giulianotti, 2004; Nicholls & Giles, 2007). Nicholls and Giles argued that "understanding the ways in which sport has been used as a form of assimilation and domination is necessary in order to create sport in development models that challenge, rather than re-inscribe, colonial legacies" (p. 64). This recognition is crucial for both domestic and international sport in development programs, as the risk of recolonization extends along multiple axes of identity, including race, gender, and indigeneity (see also Hokowhitu, 2008; Theokas, Danish, Hodge, Heke, & Forneris, 2008).

11. While Giulianotti (2011) makes a point to note that sport in development officials are aware of criticism about being neocolonialistic, the notion that there are specific kinds of sports deemed legitimate to use within sport in development contexts (i.e., basketball and soccer) raises questions about cultural imperialism as well.

12. As with any buzzword, "participation" and "empowerment" must be carefully defined and theorized, as they can be easily co-opted into a benign methodology that legitimizes a neoliberalist agenda to train the disenfranchised and the disempowered in the logics of free markets (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Crewe & Harrison, 1999; Rahnema, 1992; Sharma, 2008). Without a collective struggle to resist and transform power relations, these terms become beacons of a reproductive approach to development centered on self-help, self-regulation, and responsibilization.

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