
Playing a game of 'catch-up' in addressing wider social agendas: A case of three Zambian quasi-governmental organisations.

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Abstract

Sport is increasingly being recognised for the contribution it can make to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, in particular, the response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (see The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2003). The use of sport to address HIV/AIDS prevention has also provided 'greater coherence' of sport-for-development work within local and international organisations (Coalter, 2007: 69). In Zambia, the HIV/AIDS and sport-for-development sector gained more momentum through the work of civil society organisations. These were indigenous organisations that pioneered the use of peer education for HIV/AIDS prevention using sport as a tool before central government acknowledged the potential of sport to address wider social agendas (Banda, 2011). While most of the sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS policy research has been focused at the micro level, the aim of this study was to critically analyse the role of three meso-level National Sports Associations (NSAs) in developing and implementing policy towards the Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) (or HIV/AIDS as will be referred to) in Zambia. The three cases were: Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), Zambia Basketball Association (ZBA) and Netball Association of Zambia (NAZ).

Centring on the three purposively selected NSAs due to their popularity in participation rates and gender representation, the study adopted a case study approach which utilised qualitative methods of data collection. Most of the literature around sport-for-development and HIV/AIDS mainly focuses on knowledge generated from civil society organisational activities. This study purposed to critically analyse the organisational responses of quasi- autonomous organisations at meso-level of policy analysis towards the HIV/AIDS multisectoral approach in Zambia.

The data collection methods utilised semi-structured (face-to-face and telephone), interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis. Thematic data analysis was later utilised to analyse the data generated from interviews and focus group discussions. Further cross case analysis revealed differences in how each case mainstreamed HIV/AIDS based on organisational power (Scott, 2008), resources and forms of collaboration. Though focusing on meso level, the study utilised macro level theories of the state to understand the distribution of power in Zambian society. Thereafter, meso-level analysis was conducted. This involved the application of the policy network theory to analyse how each of national sport association responded to mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS. The findings initial findings showed that, among all three cases, the power of football as a national sport and the availability of foreign resources from the governing body FIFA rendered football to be the most active in influencing policy design and implementation.

The study concludes that lack of resources results subsequently in lack of political steer from the top. This has re-introduced a new 'foreign' top-down approach as those with resources from the Global North tend to influence policy formulation and implementation. The conclusion also found useful the application of 'post-colonialism and development' (Darnell and Hayhurst, 2011) theories when examining international sport-for-development practices. This finding revealed the power imbalances between Global South practitioners and Global North funding partners.

References

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