Critically Exploring The Institutional Work In Sport-For-Development: The Case Of A Local Sport-For-Development Programme In Swaziland

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Aim of the research

Sport-for-development (SFD) has exponentially increased in practice, research, and policy in recent years — yet, despite this, a need for further research into the intricacies of sport and development has been identified (Coalter, 2013; Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016). The purpose of this critical institutional ethnographic case study was to explore how SFD is understood and implemented within a complex, power-infused, local Swaziland sport organization, the Sport Success Centre (SSC), and how the institutional work of actors is shaped by and shapes 'SFD' at the local level. The guiding questions of inquiry for this study were:

1. How is sport-for-development understood and implemented at the local level?

1a. What role do the organization's executives, members, volunteers, and programme participants have in creating, shaping, and influencing SFD and sport development programme policy and activity?

2. How does the institutional work of organizational actors and agency create, maintain, or disrupt the institutionalized ideas associated with SFD and the cultural context in which the programme is located?

2a. How does race and gender shape underlying power relations of institutional work?

Literature review

The call for adopting a critical lens when investigating SFD has been accompanied by scholars' increasing emphasis on the need to understand the cross-cultural relations involved in the environment of SFD and how the local context of programmes and their actors are influenced by broader ideas or ideologies that inform organizational policy, practice, and knowledge (Coalter, 2013; Hayhurst, 2016). Coming to understand the social relations and processes involved in SFD programming at a local level and connecting these relations with broader institutional arrangements may allow a researcher to exploit how a programme is further oppressing Others or, conversely, may be contributing to transformation of the societal status quo. In an effort to address this call, and consider the processes and practices that are shaping the development of SFD programmes, the conceptual lens of institutional theory frames this study. The recent contributions that recognize that within institutional fields there are particular institutional logics (i.e., ideas; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012) that are socially constructed organizing principles and ideas shaping the institutional work or practices of organizations are emphasized (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Lawrence and Suddaby (2006, p. 215) coined the term "institutional work" to refer to the "purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions." Exploring institutional work (i.e., practices and processes) enables a closer examination of the tensions placed on programmes and those who implement them at the local level by potentially conflicting institutional ideas about SFD and local organizational practices.

Methodology, research design, and data analysis

In this study, a critical institutional ethnographic case study approach was adopted with a postcolonial perspective to explore the institutional work and social relations of a local Swaziland sport organization (called the Sport Success Centre) implementing SFD programming. Fieldwork was undertaken from May to August 2016 and involved multiple data collection strategies. The main source of data was through means of participant-observation of the daily work of the SSC. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 staff and volunteers. In addition, publicly available and organizational documents totaling 302 were also analyzed. Analysis involved an iterative process moving between the data, reflexive journal memos, and the literature. NVivo qualitative analysis software was used to support the analysis and emergent themes.

Results, discussion, and implications/conclusions

Findings suggested that organizational actors were involved in a complex of social relations at the SSC that contributed to shaping (and resisting) two forms of institutional work, including: (1) the teaching of the TRRFCC (trust, respect, responsibility, fairplay, caring and community) values; and (2) the work of a young woman at the SSC named Thembile to challenge gender norms in the SSC and Swaziland. Additionally, the SSC as an organization was embedded in a neocolonial management style privileging Westernized ideas and white authority structures, as well as perpetuating gender inequalities in the workplace. Although SFD and sport development benefits were discussed, a blurriness between what constituted 'sport develop-

ment' and 'SFD' also emerged in SSC practices. Increasing the reliance on local knowledge and working towards an equal gendered structure in the SSC is needed to improve the postcolonialized environment of the organization. Further research is needed in the field of SFD utilizing new theories (such as institutional work or the institutional logics approach) to examine organizations implementing SFD and sport development at the local level and how SFD is inherently underlined by both opportunities to contribute to and hinder social and SFD goals.

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