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Power, Politics and "Sport for Development and Peace": Investigating the Utility of Sport for International Development

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Sport is currently mobilized as a tool of international development within the "Sport for Development and Peace" (SDP) movement. Framed by Gramscian hegemony theory and sport and development studies respectively, this article offers an analysis of the conceptualization of sport's social and political utility within SDP programs. Drawing on the perspectives of young Canadians (n = 27) who served as volunteer interns within Commonwealth Games Canada's International Development through Sport program, the dominant ideologies of development and social change that underpin current SDP practices are investigated. The results suggest that while sport does offer a new and unique tool that successfully aligns with a development mandate, the logic of sport is also compatible with the hegemony of neo-liberal development philosophy. As a result, careful consideration of the social politics of sport and development within the SDP movement is called for.

Le sport est actuellement utilisé comme outil de développement international au sein du mouvement « Sport pour le développement et la paix » (SDP). Encadré par la théorie gramscienne de l'hégémonie et par les études sur le sport et le développement, cet article offre une analyse de la conceptualisation de l'utilité sociale et politique du sport au sein des programmes SDP. À partir des perspectives de jeunes Canadiens et Canadiennes (n = 27) qui ont fait du bénévolat pour le programme de Développement international par le sport (programme financé par Jeux du Commonwealth Canada), les idéologies dominantes sur le développement et le changement social sous-tendu par les pratiques courantes en SDP sont investiguées. Les résultats attestent que si le sport offre un outil nouveau et unique qui s'aligne bien avec le mandat du développement, il suit également une logique compatible avec l'hégémonie de la philosophie néolibérale du développement. En conséquence, il est nécessaire de faire un examen sérieux des politiques sociales du sport et du développement au sein du mouvement SDP.

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> *Sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status. And when young people participate in sports or have access to physical education, they can experience real exhilaration even as they learn the ideals of teamwork and tolerance. That is why the United Nations is turning more and more to the world of sport for help in our work for peace and our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (Annan, UN press release SG/SM/9579, 2004).*

In his 2004 speech, then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan discussed the potential of sport to facilitate social change around the world. His remarks implied sport's global ability to transcend cultural differences and its compatibility with a mandate of international development based on human rights. Annan's statement followed United Nations Resolution 58/5 in 2003, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace," which called for various stakeholders (the UN, governments, sport institutions, and specialized agencies) to promote sport and physical education as part of development programs and policies, (UN General Assembly, 2003) and has been oft quoted since 2004 to justify the growth of the "Sport for Development and Peace" (SDP) movement (see Kidd, 2008).

This study investigated the use of sport as a development tool from the perspective of Canadian volunteer SDP interns. I employed Gramscian hegemony theory which considers the mobilization and implementation of sporting practices and customs to be the result of negotiations within sociopolitical and economic power relations (Ingham & Hardy, 1984). From this perspective, SDP stakeholders, such as volunteer interns, are active in producing, negotiating and/or challenging the ideology that underpins sport as a tool of development. This is important given recent research illustrating the compatibility of sport-based social development programs with neo-liberal philosophy in which the political antecedents of inequality are rarely challenged (Wilson & Hayhurst, 2009). Rather, facilitating the inclusion of marginalized persons within the material relations of capitalism and class takes precedence in a neo-liberal paradigm (see Li, 2007; Ong, 2006). To contextualize the experiences of SDP volunteers, I briefly discuss the relevant history of development and sport. I then detail the Gramscian theoretical framework before presenting results from interviews with SDP interns.

Development and Sport: History and Theory

On January 20th, 1949, Harry Truman delivered his inaugural address as President of the United States in which he spoke of the need for economic, social and political improvements in the world's "underdeveloped areas." Truman urged northern, democratic and "developed" nations to commit to increasing opportunities for production and prosperity among the world's poor. His address served as a watershed moment for the first wave of a global development project characterized by three themes of late modern capitalism—decolonization, rationality, and development—and influenced by free market economics and positivist social science (Sylvester, 1999). Truman's speech imbued development with new meanings, centering capital, science, and technology as the foci of a global revolution designed to meet the

challenges of global poverty, high morbidity due to preventable causes, poor health care, and lack of access to education, among others (Escobar, 1995). Canada was directly involved in this movement beginning with donations and assistance via the Colombo Plan for Co-operative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia in 1950 (Morrison, 1998). Truman's address is now considered the genesis of "developmentalism," a modernist paradigm that, in its various incarnations, espoused three main perspectives: 1) an essentialist view of the "developing world" and its members as a homogenous group, 2) an unyielding belief in progress and the modernization of society, and 3) the centrality of the nation-state as a focal point and lead participant in the development process (Schuurman, 2001).[1]

Early developmentalist interventions led by northern organizations failed more often than not (Bartoli, 2000; Nederveen-Pieterse, 2001) and in fact, many increased the social marginalization of the poor and destitute, solidifying a divide of prosperity between those classified as "developed" and "underdeveloped" (Escobar, 1995). In the 1950s and 60s Dependency Theory, or *Dependencia*, emerged as a response to developmentalism. Using Marxist theories (some borrowed from the Global North) and championed by scholars from Latin American countries that had experienced developmentalism first-hand, *Dependencia* did not abandon a modernist political ethic, but linked the marginalization of the Third World directly to hegemonic global capitalism (Sylvester, 1999) and showed developmentalism's tendency to portray the "Third World" as a cultural caricature, with no claim to history before northern penetration (Slater, 1993). Still, *Dependencia* did not mean the end of state-sponsored development. For example, in 1968, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was created, a symbolic and practical gesture that made Canada a world leader in development aid (Morrison, 1998) and illustrated the continuing interest of the First World in the development of the southern hemisphere. The sociopolitical tension between developmentalism as a solution to Third World poverty and *Dependencia* as a reply to global economic systems led to an impasse in development practices (Schuurman, 1993) and the resulting morass provided an opportunity for new approaches to development.

A second wave of development embraced neo-liberalism, advocating decreased state interventions and increased market freedoms within a global economy intended to alleviate poverty in developing countries (Slater, 2004). Beginning in the 1980s, led by international organizations such as the World Bank, and supported by multinational free trade agreements, neo-liberal development strove to elevate the poor and relatively powerless to the level of rational actors, free from the constraints of government policy (Sylvester, 1999). Neo-liberal development departed from modernization by viewing simple foreign aid as a drag on economic performance and cautioning that Third World states too often enabled and abetted corruption and economic inefficiency (Levermore, 2009, p. 29). A plethora of scholars and activists have illustrated how neo-liberal policies devastated developing economies, particularly the failures of economic-based Structural Adjustment Programs, which became the official policy of the World Bank and made fiscal and policy requirements, or "adjustments," a condition of lending (see for example Rapley, 1996; Slater, 1993; 2004). For the analysis of SDP, it is crucial to note that neo-liberal development has maintained a hegemonic resiliency, evidenced, for example, by the capitulations of African leaders to The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which formally abandoned *Dependencia* in favor of African integration

into the global economy to attract aid and secure debt relief (see Bond, 2002; Owusu, 2003). While still challenged in development scholarship, both critical theorists (Mckay, 2008) and ethnographers (Li, 2007) have illustrated that the rationale and logic of neo-liberal development endures principally because, within the current deregulated globalized economy, the world's poor "have, as always, little or no power either to set their own goals or to mobilize the resources needed to achieve them" (McKay, 2008, p. 73).[2]

This brief history illustrates the importance of analyzing how sport and SDP fits into the historical and political trajectory of development. Levermore (2009) has identified three ways in which the SDP movement potentially aligns with modernization and/or neo-liberal approaches to, or visions of, development in the Global South and Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs)[3]. By focusing on strengthening the physical infrastructure, attempting to improve the social and economic climate for capacity-building and investment, and facilitating the involvement of private business and corporations in development practices, sport as a development tool may align with a world view of competitive and hierarchical social relations (Levermore, 2009). Levermore's analysis encourages SDP scholars to consider that the "success" of sport in meeting (neo-liberal) development goals takes place within power relations that are neither flat nor benign and may secure relations of transnational economic dominance by solidifying the hierarchies inherent in market capitalism. This is not the same as arguing that development (or SDP) is a strategic practice of dominance, as implied in some traditions of *Dependencia* and/or recent conceptions of postdevelopment, but rather that the contemporary global political economy is organized in such a way as to create and sustain fundamental inequalities (Greig, Hulme & Turner, 2007). While developed countries often appear to be advanced—temporally, organizationally or economically—it is more accurate to conceptualize the "developed" world, as compared with LMICs, to be "…in radically different and even divergent situations – of dominance and subordination" respectively (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 282). From this perspective, SDP programs take place within hegemonic relations in which privileged groups (nations, citizens, corporations) maintain a position of benefit and accruement over others through social negotiations, making development a key site of political practice and critical inquiry (Li, 2007). This is not a theoretical dualism but illustrates the context in which the SDP volunteers in this study took up the task of meeting development goals through sport and physical activity.

Given this focus, hegemony theory, in the tradition of cultural studies, offered an appropriate framework to guide the analysis. Andrews & Giardina (2008) recently revisited the importance of cultural studies for understanding sport as a practice negotiated within the complexities, ambiguities and specificities of social relations, not as a politically transcendent activity or institution. Through this lens, understandings of sport as a development tool cannot be separated from social and historical relations, particularly the global political economy, foreign policy, economics and international trade, and sociopolitical hierarchies (see Black, 2010). The SDP movement provides sport scholars an opportunity to "do cultural studies" in the manner called for by Andrews & Giardina (2008), one attuned to the power relations and political structures that shape, and are shaped by, the terrain of SDP. I draw further from Alan Ingham & Stephen Hardy's (1983; 1984) foundational analyses of the utility and logic of sport in my study of SDP.

Using a Gramscian hegemony framework, Ingham & Hardy (1983; 1984) argued that any analysis of sport's socially democratic function must account for how and why sport, as a cultural form, is challenged and renewed through negotiations between dominant and subordinate groups. They showed the social benefits of the 19th century playground movement in the United States to be the result of interplay between owning-class reform sensibilities and working-class demands for safe opportunities to recreate physically. Ingham & Hardy further illustrated that through such processes, sport in the U.S. came to exemplify capitalist logic, shifting from a model of youth sports based on the protection of child welfare, to that of "anticipatory child labor" or sport as a means of producing future workers (1984, p. 96). Informed by capitalism, this "pyramid" structure of sporting achievement became institutionalized to the point that concerns for "public control" over youth recreational practices gave way to "productive control" over children's sporting labor (1984, p. 97). This logic parallels the utility of sport as a development tool in which sport participation is understood to support marginalized persons, often youth, to achieve within a competitive and hierarchical culture and political economy.

Using hegemony in this way remains an important theoretical tool for sport scholars (e.g., Andrews & Loy, 1993; Giulianotti, 2005; Hargreaves & MacDonald, 2000; Rowe, 2004) because it provides a framework that illustrates the ways in which ideas attain a status of commonsense and are reinscribed as such through social experiences and relations (Gruneau, 1983). Behavior and ideology are not solely determined by economics or material circumstances; rather, prevailing ideas are produced by dominant social groups who secure social hegemonies through the interplay between dominance and consent (Rigauer, 2000). Such hegemonies are never fully secured or ideologically fixed, but constantly negotiated and renewed (Williams, 1977). I use hegemony in this study to illustrate how commonsense notions of sport as a means of character-building and upward social mobility, notions familiar to young sportspersons who form the majority of SDP volunteers, were reinscribed within dominant contemporary neo-liberal development philosophy through sociocultural negotiations in the SDP field. While CGC interns did not constitute a stable and homogenous dominant group, it is reasonable to suggest that hegemonic, "northern" interpretations of sport and development influenced interns' work in the field of SDP.

From this perspective, the interns interviewed in this study contributed to the construction of the ideological meanings of sport, development and SDP through their service time. While sociomanagerial research has been able to make some claims about the positive impacts as well as the limitations of sport-focused development programs (see, for example, Burnett & Hollander, 1999; Burnett, 2001) studies in SDP have rarely examined, or deconstructed, the sociopolitical philosophies underpinning sport, development, and SDP. Focusing on the front line workers of SDP allowed for an exploration of dominant understandings of sport in development, the interpretation and dissemination of these meanings through SDP service, and the implications for SDP ideology, policy, and practice. CGC's volunteer interns were not wholly responsible for determining and directing the development agenda of the CGC program, or their partner organization, but they were in a prime position to speak to the understandings of sport and development that influenced their attempts at development and social change. Their perspectives offered important insights into the ideologies and workings of power that shape the SDP field.

Methodology

Research participants were recruited from Commonwealth Games Canada's (CGC) *International Development through Sport* (IDS) program. Under the banner of IDS, CGC organizes the Canadian Sport Leadership Corps, which facilitates overseas internships for Canadian professionals and retired athletes and coaches aged 19–30. CGC interns spend eight months living abroad in a Commonwealth country in the Caribbean and/or the African continent and work for one of CGC's partner organizations. The primary goal of the program is to support the development of CGC partners through interns' skills, knowledge and labor. In turn, young Canadian volunteers can improve their professional skills and gain work experience. The program receives public funding from CIDA, the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy, and the Canadian Heritage International Sport Directorate. By placing qualified candidates directly with a sport and/or health partner organization in the Global South, the CGC program is uniquely positioned within the SDP movement; other sport NGOs and their volunteers often work independently of, or in conjunction with, but not for local organizations. All the research participants worked directly for their placement organization to facilitate the use of sport and play to meet development goals. In the majority of cases, these development goals focused on health promotion, education, and youth development in the placement community.[4] While each of CGC's partner organizations is unique in size, scope and focus, they all use sport and physical activity to attend to social development issues such as education, nutrition and health, HIV/AIDS, and gender equality. In turn they are compatible with the general mandate of the CGC program to provide an opportunity for young Canadians to participate in international development by using and mobilizing sport toward the goal of effecting sustainable social change (CGC, 2008).

The CGC program itself was chosen for the study because the transnational partnerships that it facilitates between the Canadian government, Canadian volunteers and sport/health organizations in the Global South are unavoidably situated within the contestabilities of the global economy. In particular, the hegemonic relations of transnational capitalism and free trade which result in relatively powerful nations and communities enjoying prosperity largely at the expense of others (Cammack, 2006; Petras & Veltmeyer, 2001) frame the CGC program and the experiences of interns. As well, by employing a development mandate, the CGC program is implicated in the political challenges of international development practices and its volunteer interns must engage in the sociopolitical process of facilitating development and redressing inequality through the use of sport and physical activity.

A semistructured interview protocol that attended to ideological and philosophical issues of sport, development and the implementation of SDP was developed. Interviews were chosen as a means of reflexively and actively producing texts that reflect social performances (Denzin, 2001) and as a form of exploring alternative meanings (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). All interviews took place between March 28 and August 21, 2007, 14 in person and 13 over the telephone. In-person interviews took place in four cities across Canada. Given the location, travel cost, and research timeline, telephone interviews were deemed a reasonable research tool when former interns were overseas. None of the participants located overseas were still

participating in a CGC internship at the time of the interview; they were working or studying. One of the phone interviewees, however, was studying international development while another was still involved in sport development related work, albeit in a paid position. Specific biographical information was not collected during the interviews because it was not deemed necessary to attend to the core research questions. However, all interns were under 30 years of age during their time serving in the CGC program, university-educated (often in sport/health related disciplines such as physical education or kinesiology), and had extensive sport and physical education backgrounds as athletes, coaches, teachers, administrators, and/or fans. Two of the interviewees were former Canadian Olympic athletes. 12 of the interns served in countries in the Caribbean and 15 served in Africa. 21 of the interviewees were women, and of the total sample of 27 interns, two self-identified with an ethnic identity that was not White. Pseudonyms were used in the final analysis to maintain, as much as possible, the anonymity of the participants.

The study was limited because partners with whom CGC interns were working, and the participants in the programs which they organized, implemented or oversaw, were not interviewed. While understandings of power were captured in the interviews, no observations or reports from the perspectives of persons living in LMIC's who encountered CGC interns were documented. Thus, it remains difficult to offer a clear assessment of the ways in which hegemonic relations were maintained and/or countered through the interplay between different groups within the SDP partnerships facilitated by CGC. As well, the managers and policy-makers of the CGC program were not included in the study, so their influence on the ideology and mandate of sport and SDP cannot be assessed here. Despite the limitations, however, the deployment of hegemony theory did allow for a critical analysis of the CGC program focused on the dominant understandings of sport as a tool of social change within a development mandate.

Results

I begin this section with an overview of CGC interns' goals and tasks during their service time abroad to contextualize the CGC internship experience before exploring interns' understandings of sport in the service of development.[5]

Types of Work

The majority of CGC interns were positioned as project managers by and within their partner organization. Interns were either responsible for designing new programs to meet the goals of their organization or took over an existing project and sought to improve its capacity or secure its sustainability. In all cases the projects that interns worked with had a sport and/or physical activity focus and in most cases, projects focused on youth and youth development. Randall, for example, created a youth football league in his placement community to identify young leaders and create spin-off programs for leadership training and youth-center workshops.

> I was part of, um, a project that sort of was brand new. We were sort of implementing it and it was basically to set up a youth development league within this village and then within the surrounding villages. So sort of, when I say

> youth development, sort of organizing young people, getting them to sort of take control of the program and starting up a football league so we basically organized something around 60 to 70 teams of sort of young kids in different age categories and whatever and sort of through that sport structure we sort of identified young leaders and from there we started developing other things outside of football like some training workshops and stuff. —Randall

Similarly, Jessica worked to set up sporting and physical activity programs for youth to serve as a platform for health education and encourage volunteering and training.

> The purpose (of the program I worked on) was twofold. One, to initiate sports events (for youth) in their community and use those as a platform to do peer education on relevant social issues like HIV AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual reproductive health, things like that. And two, to assist in other events that were being initiated in the community and to act as a pool of volunteers for those events. —Jessica

Most of the CGC internships, therefore, combined administrative responsibilities with work on the sporting field or court as a sports leader. In this way, many interns drew on both their sporting backgrounds as athletes and coaches and their administrative, organizational, and leadership skills. James, for example, started new sport programs in his placement community with the understanding that they would be of benefit to the community after he left. He also was one of the few able to see the benefits of his organizational work before his internship ended. For many, the eight-month internship was too short a time period to witness the results of their work themselves.

> I was hosted by…the municipal government. They were the ones who kind of hosted the project…but I was able to work also, like at the community level with the local chiefs and also at the national level with the national sport development program as well. But in terms of actual developing sport programs within the village, there were four villages within the district, um, it was an initiation project so a lot of the work that I did was laying down the framework and the logistics that helped kind of move those things forward. —James
>
> SD—So more administration than actual working with, sort of games and kids, or?
>
> Yes and no. We were able to get things moving pretty quickly because there were some individuals already in the community that were interested. There was one individual in particular who had been trying to start a youth football league for quite a while and so he was thrilled that there was now some sort of guidance to help put that together so we were able to move into that quite quickly so we did actually um, produce some tangible results while we there as well but in the beginning it was a lot of admin. —James

For some interns, though, the CGC service experience was principally administrative or managerial, a process of overseeing and organizing sport-related infrastructure and contributing to development goals. While some of these interns expressed frustration that their work was less tangibly and directly involved in sport and physical activity, others saw the administration and organization of sport to be the

best use of their time while working for their partner organizations. Carol expressed this latter view.

> I did more administrative work for sure. Uh, yeah, I spent a lot of time in the office y'know writing chapters in our organization's manual. So that was probably 50 percent of my job. I also spent time training, recruiting the teachers, the sport volunteers and we involved some youth as well to be sort of y'know help and like meeting with them and meeting with principals for schools and administration and that sort of thing to get everyone on board. I didn't actually, with this project, deliver a lot of sport programming myself. And, y'know, to be honest, partly that was by design, um, partly it was just how it works I guess but I didn't see my value as delivering sport programming myself as much as helping get the project off the ground because I knew when I left if I was the one who was doing the after school y'know "soccer with a message" class, it would end when I left. —Carol

Other interns were charged primarily with organizational development and facilitation between various stakeholders related to sport, physical activity and broad community development. Interns such as Maureen worked to bridge various local organizations and build partnerships to improve the delivery of sporting opportunities.

> Well my main focus was to do a pilot study and develop sport councils in around the region. So basically their government, their structure and the government system was not well set-up so I was to set up like a pilot program in three of the ten regions in (country name). Just bring people together from the Education faculties, from the sport community, and bring them together and set up like a sport council in those regions. But on the side as well I also did basketball coaching. So I set up some clinics for basketball, for coaching basketball, girls after school programs as well, I went into the regions, where there is, they don't even have roads, nothing there so we would actually build a basketball, sort of like a basketball court, and net and everything. —Maureen

Finally, in some cases interns experienced nearly complete autonomy, or conversely, very little strategic direction from their partner organization in terms of their goals, work and approach to be taken. In these cases, a large component of the CGC internship was devising a strategic use of time and developing a plan to enact social change and meet development goals given the available time and resources. Esther was effectively left to her own devices to determine the best use of her time for contributing to community development.

> I was based with the Ministry of Education, Special Education Unit. And there wasn't, to be honest, there wasn't actually a program, when I got there. Um, there wasn't really a program in place when I got there. It was, the CGC, it's kind of changed now so that they have specific programs that they're going to in places but I was one of the first interns so it was a bit different. Some of those programs were being implemented in certain places and other places you were just kind of "develop your own." So, my title was Disability Sports Program Officer so I knew that I was working in disability but I was in the special education unit so I worked with special schools to work with the teachers

> to try and make things sustainable. Um, and then it was up to me to develop whatever programs I could and put them in place and basically just facilitate their development. —Esther

Regardless of the size and scope of the project, all interns understood their service time as contributing to some measure of social and/or community development and strove to organize their projects to these ends. Interns situated their SDP work and experiences against a backdrop of service and international development and through the interviews they spoke of the utility and philosophy of using sport to facilitate change within this paradigm.

With this context in mind, the remainder of this section explores specific ways in which CGC interns' understood sport to be a part of international development and the improvements that they sought through their work. Interns commonly understood that sport in the service of development contributes to the production of empowered, healthy, responsible, selfless leaders, better prepared to participate in the development of their communities. While these are laudable goals, they call for analysis within the history and politics of both development and sport. The results, I suggest, speak to the hegemony of class-based, and in some cases neo-liberal, ideology in sport and development and its compatibility with the SDP movement. This is not the same as arguing that SDP programs organized by CGC interns were ineffective, for the results below do highlight several success stories related to sport and social mobility, empowerment, improved organization, and infrastructure. I do, however, craft a critical analysis of the sociopolitical vision of SDP and advocate caution regarding the notions of social change through SDP. Further, I question the broader impact of this philosophy for SDP policy and practice.

Organized Sport and Social Inequality

Sport was understood by many CGC interns to meet the goals and mandates of development because of its ability to overcome social inequality. Sport, therefore, lent itself to the egalitarian mandate central to the dominant development ethic. In the political and social context of international development—as well as the material context of interns' placement communities, marked by stark inequality and underserved, underprivileged populations—sport offered a brief respite through which to level the metaphorical playing field. The following quotation is exemplary of such understandings of sport:

> I think (sport's) an equalizer. So you know you have these people that come from different backgrounds, people that are from any context, and they come on the field or the pitch or the ground or whatever and they're all the same level. No one cares at all if your mother died of AIDS or cares if you're raising your three kids at home even though you're only 13 years old. And they just don't care about that. They care about getting the ball in that net and whether or not you're a good basketball player or a good soccer player. (Sport's) pretty powerful, I think it's one of those things that's been overlooked, quite a lot. —Melanie

Sport, in Melanie's experience, was effective in integrating young people into development programs by overcoming, if only briefly, the social and health challenges within communities in LMICs. If the context of international development is

marked by inequality, and the goal of development programs is to overcome these inequalities, then this quotation suggests that sport is uniquely suited to this work because it offers a meritocratic activity and a space insulated from social injustices. From this perspective, development work was facilitated through sport because the democratic goals of development aligned productively with sport's meanings and values and the nature of participation within a team structure. Interns' statements illustrated the ideological importance of facilitating opportunities for young people to enjoy sporting successes. Using Gramscian theory, though, equality or meritocracy in and through sport is produced and constrained through negotiation. More pointedly, not only is the competitive logic of sport often largely undemocratic, but the structures that govern participation, and the meanings ascribed to sport, are inseparable from, not transcendent of, social inequalities (Gruneau, 1983). Linking sport to "equality" potentially overlooks or disavows the importance of "equity," which requires recognition and understanding of historical and structural inequalities in the social domain. This is particularly important in the context of international development where inequality predominates and the focus of development programs is ostensibly on addressing and redressing inequality (Greig et al., 2007). The interviews illustrate, though, that the notion of sport as a tool of social equalization was reinforced through, and perhaps required by the SDP movement. It is reasonable to suggest that sport had to be understood as a meritocracy if it was to be used in programs of international development and thus interns relied on these notions as an ideological anchor for emancipatory development interventions.

> I think (sport) helps break down barriers in terms of religion and social class and um, yeah, economics. Once you have a soccer field y'know, you just go out into the middle of the field, anyone can play. It doesn't matter how much money your Mom makes or even if she has a job. So I think that was a big part of it. —Serena

Understanding sport as either a leveler of inequality or a means of transcending it, positioned sport, for many interns, as a social institution in which to include development partners and through which to address development issues. Not surprisingly, then, the benefits of sport within SDP programs were understood by interns to come primarily from and through organized sport and play, and reflected and referenced interns' own experiences within structured physical culture in Canada. While several interns did experience and embrace less rigid forms of sport and play in and through their placements, there was still a ideological underpinning of the utility, and therefore the importance, of organized activity insofar as it attended to the social change mandate central to SDP. If the emancipatory benefits of sport within the context of development are maximized through structured activity, then interns' tasks were to facilitate these benefits through the organization of sport on behalf of developing countries and communities.

> We just have this structure organization in, just such a formal approach to youth sports in y'know, North American that they just, it's just completely is absent there. And that's what we were seeking to create…you sort of register at age five in soccer or ice hockey and you have coaches and uniforms and just all that and they didn't have any of that so I think that was something that we were trying to communicate to them. —Randall

The results suggest a complement between the establishment of, and participation in, organized sporting forms among interns' development partners and the countering and prevention of "underdevelopment," the social, political, and economic lack through which interns recognized the development context and the importance of their work. Sport as a counterbalance to underdevelopment revolved principally around the utility of organized sport and play in providing opportunities for participants and partners, particularly youth. Interns' perspectives and experiences suggested that the benefits of sport participation were derived, in large part, through the disciplinary structures of organized sporting activities. The majority of SDP interns saw themselves as being charged with the task of facilitating the organization of sporting events, facilities, bureaucracies, teams, administrators, and athletes in their placement communities.

In this sense, there was a necessity, if not a demand for organization and development of sporting infrastructure that reflected the athletic experiences of CGC interns and also aligned with the traditional class-informed utility of sport (Ingham & Hardy, 1983; 1984). For Randall, above, the frame of reference of development in and through SDP was the competitive, class-based Canadian model, a perspective that highlights the tendency in international development to charge communities in LMICs with the task of becoming "un-underdeveloped" (see Esteva, 1992). It is important, therefore, to note the ways in which the utility of sport as a development tool not only references, but is produced and constrained within, dominant forms of social and political organization.

Leadership and Responsibility

The organized sporting forms, and the process of organizing sport, described above, was supported by interns' understandings of sport's utility in facilitating leadership and responsibility. Interns spoke of leadership resulting from sport participation—understood to require and reinforce selflessness, teamwork and accountability—and through the use of sport as a forum to promote these values particularly among youth in placement communities. In this way, interns echoed familiar refrains regarding the character-building capacities of sport participation.

> What did (sport) offer? I think it offered, for the individuals to develop other skills, not just physical skills, but also leadership skills, communication skills, team, how to be a team player. So those sort of skills that were not physical, not sport related but often you don't see those skills develop because you think you're playing basketball, you're developing basketball skills but there's other skills that always get developed at the same time which are kind of hidden I guess. —Maureen

The links between sport and leadership in SDP were further evident when sport was linked to facilitating and promoting responsible behavior. The understanding of sport as a development tool referenced traditional disciplinary notions of sport as an institution of responsibility, respectability and also in terms of opportunity costs by providing an alternative to deviant behavior. The utility of sport as a way to build character was, therefore, hegemonic in the development context: using sport to facilitate and promote time management and responsibility underpinned interns' SDP work.

> It's like a little community-based organization that I worked with and the kids are responsible for almost everything, they're responsible for their equipment, they're responsible for getting to and from the games, most of the time it's walking because no one can afford to get on the bus but they do have to coordinate themselves and in a sense those are life skills, those are things that will help them in an office, one day. That's something that might not be the case for every team but I think in our NGO, it's happening. —Loreena

From interns' perspectives, sport was an effective means of promoting responsibility and leadership. What requires critical attention is the hegemony of the sociopolitical imagination understood in and through these processes. The reliance upon sport as a tool of leadership and responsibility—and development as a process of formulating individualized notions of success and achievement—suggests a form of neo-liberal citizenship of which sport participation can play a formative role. As Harvey (2007) has argued, there is a link between the privileging and defense of an individualist ethos and the substantiation of increasingly global neo-liberal relations that solidify and justify material inequalities by presupposing that marginalized people have failed to reach full self-actualization. Sport as a development tool was particularly susceptible to this ideology given sport's historical (Bouchier, 1994) and contemporary (see Donnelly et al., 2007) connection to the development of character, particularly among youth. Thus, interns' reflections suggest that the logic of SDP came to center on the development of character more than, and perhaps at the expense of, the confrontation and redressing of inequality and the complexity of its antecedents. Bouchier (1994) argues that in 19th century Canada, the use of sport to facilitate character was a particularly pernicious form of social control in which social elites solidified their racist, sexist, and classist vision of an "emerging" nation through the organization of sport and its connections to a national identity. In the case of SDP, the logic of sport as a facilitator of young persons' development continues, even if the ideological underpinnings are clearly less malicious. Instead, in SDP, social hegemony is reinscribed and implication in, and responsibility for, geo-political privilege and power is potentially overlooked or even absolved. Hegemonic forms of sport as an act of character-building and development as a process of motivation and self-actualization were effectively linked through SDP practices.

The culturally material is also important here because interns offered several success stories which illustrated that participation in SDP did improve the material well-being of SDP participants. Many CGC interns argued their efforts had improved the sporting infrastructure, the health conditions, and/or the local capacity of partner organizations. Their experience served as affirmation of the utility of sport in meeting the goals of youth and community development as they were laid out in placement communities.

> I feel like in this particular case, (sport) was the most effective development tool because it's what, I mean the program was targeted at youth primarily, um, and youth, and the youth there really wanted to play sports. It was something, I can only speak for the community I was in, it was certainly something that was lacking in that community, that the kids weren't, that they didn't really have something that they could do, in the little amount of time that they got to play, they didn't really know where to go or what to do. So, in this particular case I

> think sport was the most appropriate development tool to, for community and cultural development and HIV-AIDS education as well. —James

Similarly, Barbara recognized success through individual change and improvements in the personal development of partners resulting from sport participation. Sport provided a tool for education and training and offered a particular utility in relation to capacity building and sustainability. In this way, interns viewed their work as successful to the extent that they had contributed to local empowerment, facilitated leadership and laid groundwork for sustainable programs.

> Very effective, very effective. I mean, if I hadn't believed it, or as Adolf Ogi says, if I hadn't have seen it with my own eyes, I probably wouldn't still be here. I mean, after seeing people grow as individuals, I think I've seen in my experience, probably I've seen more positive results with the actual leaders who have been empowered or capacitated with the ability to lead the sport even more than the participants who get the chance to participate in the games. —Barbara

Such success stories should not be dismissed for clearly health education, empowerment, and leadership are important and beneficial in any community and particularly among marginalized and underserved populations in LMICs. Yet, situated within the broader political economy, these successes may contribute to a justification of inequality, perhaps even inadvertently, as it is linked to a lack of empowerment or education on the part of the poor, and not to the inequitable workings of social and political structures. In other words, within a political landscape influenced by neo-liberal development, these types of successes could, in effect, solidify the hegemonic notions of competitive sport and capitalist achievement which align with the SDP movement. Despite the benefits of SDP in effecting change, there remain important ideological and sociopolitical implications to any "successful" implementation of SDP programs.

Social Mobility

The results also illustrate connections between SDP and an individualist ethos and a politics of competitive advantage in which sport served development by supporting and preparing partners and participants for the challenges of global, neo-liberal citizenship. During one interview, an intern made a series of social and political connections in his reflections on the utility of sport in his placement community, in which he had worked to increase opportunities for athletes with a disability, and to encourage more persons with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity. In an attempt to clarify and summarize his perspectives on sports' utility, I suggested that he was speaking to the utility of sport participation for social mobility.

> SD —So being an athlete then (in your placement community) was sort of socially mobilizing?
>
> Yeah, exactly. Very much so I would say. I would say that in terms of, I mean, I don't have any sort of data for you, but I can say anecdotally that a lot of the people that get involved with this program…if you look at the ones that have been involved in sports, and what they're doing now, the number of them that

> are employed, the number of them that have been educated, versus the people who aren't involved in sports, and the y'know, sort of criminal activity and the drain on sort of the social services, um, the athletes tend to do far far better in my view. Um, a lot more jobs, a lot more education, y'know, willing to give back a little bit. Because (country)'s not really a volunteering society, everybody wants to be paid for what they're doing. Now that's a bit of a generalization I realize, but… —Alexander

While this statement should not be generalized to the entire sample of interns interviewed in this research, the above description of social mobility draws together various strands of the social politics of SDP and illustrates its compatibility with neo-liberal development philosophy. SDP, in Alexander's experience, supported and standardized a sport-based citizenship based on employability, education, motivation, responsibility, selflessness, and a willingness to give back. This citizenship position was familiar to interns like Alexander who were upwardly mobile sportspersons themselves. They worked to support its achievement despite the cultural and societal characteristics of their placement communities ("not a volunteering society"). Supporting and facilitating upward mobility is not without benefits for clearly the attributes listed above are ones worthy of aspiration. Given the tasks and goals with which interns were charged, the resources at their disposal, and the hegemonic terrain into which they were invited through the CGC program, such goals have a practical attractiveness and carry a sense of *realpolitik*. However, it is important to consider the ease with which Alexander's description aligns with neo-liberal development philosophy in which the structures of inequality are largely ignored given the focus on improving the conduct of marginalized groups, an enduring feature of contemporary development initiatives (Li, 2007).

Alexander's reflections further illustrate that while neo-liberalism is rightly critiqued for effectively "excepting" persons from the benefits of citizenship, it also serves to include. Ong (2006, p. 6) shows neo-liberal reform policies to be based upon "…a positive decision to include selected populations and spaces as targets of 'calculative choices and value-orientation.'" To sustain its practical and ideological utility as egalitarian, often despite the evidence to the contrary, neo-liberalism requires upwardly mobile citizens and the promulgation of the notion that all may achieve within its competitive culture. Sport, in Alexander's experience, was useful in supporting this process. To be clear, that Alexander effected change is commendable. Yet, if this change, and the focus of SDP programs, centers solely on the ability of the physically active individual to better participate in a fundamentally inequitable system then it is reasonable to suggest that it is neither far-reaching or sustainable. Even though particular individuals may benefit, facilitating upward mobility, education and employability through sport, as Alexander describes above, potentially secures the myth of individual achievement as a response to the limits of market capitalism rather than securing opportunities for prosperity and self-determination through challenges to inequality. Worse may be that such a vision and practice of SDP potentially serves the ideology that all members of LMICs can be a success in the current neo-liberal organization if they learn (enough, or at least more) discipline and character through sport. In this way, the reduction of government regulations and social support that constitutes the neo-liberal paradigm allows for malleable policies that subsume individuals and populations into the dominant political apparatus perhaps even more frequently than they abject them.

Critical Reflections

With these results in mind, and in keeping with the productive tensions in Gramscian theorizing, it is crucial to explore interns' self-reflexivity when considering the utility and benefits of sport as a development tool. While their experiences as athletes, coaches, and administrators primed them to understand and appreciate the "power of sport" and its benefits within development, some interns suggested that these experiences also clouded their ability or willingness to recognize the challenges of implementing sport programs. From this perspective, presumptions about the utility of sport itself were detrimental because they facilitated a lack of recognition regarding the importance of social context and the political mandate of development programs. In other words, while an understanding of, and belief in, the benefits of sport participation was necessary, a tempered view was important, according to interns like Steven.

> I think that we've been so positively influenced by sports that we have a kind of rosy view of the kind of potential of sport and that everybody's going to have the same experience that we had and that it's going to have such a powerful change in other people so I think that just the recognition that at least, a lot of what is really learned through sport is dependent a lot on not so much sport itself but the things surrounding it, the values, the priorities of the people that are implementing it. And that again, sport is a great tool, I would say, for social change, but it's not an automatic one. It has to be done deliberately and conscientiously. —Steven

For other interns, their experiences with sport, combined in some cases with critical perspectives developed in postsecondary education, encouraged them to reconsider whether sport was inherently good and to view sport (in development) as susceptible to abuse and the promotion and solidification of social inequality. In this regard, some interns suggested that readily intelligible interpretations and understandings of sport as beneficial, ideas that interns themselves often espoused during interviews, in fact contributed to a momentum in the SDP movement that precluded a reflexive and critical perspective.

> Like every time I turn around, there's a new NGO that's popped up using development through sport, people are starting to write PHD's on it. Like it's an easy sell like I said, and I do believe in it, but when you actually break down how to use it, it becomes a lot more challenging and there's a lot of negatives to sport too, so trying to balance that and channel the positive attributes, like those are a lot of questions that nobody's really explored… I think that development work in general is fraught with those challenges at any level, it doesn't matter what NGO, or what entry point, whether you're doing environmental work or health related work. —Jessica

Jessica's perspective illustrates that interns did not passively accept sport, in and of itself, as a useful tool for international development. Sport, in other words, was not ideologically fixed. Rather, the utility of sport was produced in and through interns' experiences and subjectivity, and in relation to the specificities of their placement communities and the social and political negotiations in which they took part as a SDP intern. To conclude, I consider the sociopolitical implications

of these results and offer a critical analysis of the utility of sport in development and the SDP movement.

Discussion

Interviews with CGC interns suggest a dominant ideology within the current SDP movement that sport participation, and increased opportunities to be physically active, furthers the successful participation of the world's poor and marginalized within capitalist relations. CGC interns offered that the optimal sporting experience in SDP was an organized and disciplinary one given that it facilitated success for development partners within class relations. Sport as a development tool was compatible with the hegemony of neo-liberal inclusion (Ong, 2006) which privileges notions of individual responsibility, economic prosperity, personal esteem and success.

No one would begrudge SDP stakeholders for celebrating such success stories, continuing to seek economic prosperity, or supporting the self-esteem of development partners through physical activity programs. However, it remains of paramount importance, for both SDP scholars and practitioners, to situate such results materially and ideologically. Interns' commitment to an ethic of responsible choices and personal emancipation often overrode analyses of the broader political economy and relations of dominance that contribute to the inequality to which SDP programs attend. Their experiences with sport led to a reliance upon the enduring logic that sport participation supports social mobility within a competitive political economy. While interns did not seek to dominate, neo-liberal ideology precluded politically radical engagements with inequality through sport. As a result, the CGC internship may support, even inadvertently, sociopolitical processes that respond to the material limits of capitalist relations by focusing on the (failed) conduct of marginalized groups (Li, 2007). The results also offer empirical evidence to support Levermore's (2009) theoretical links between sport and neo-liberal development philosophy.

Further, CGC interns recognized and supported the ideology that sport offered a tool for the improvement of Others, and a means of facilitating and achieving modernization with the physically active body as its conceptual and practical center. The critical issue is not the importance, legitimacy or appropriateness of promoting physical activity and health (or even the notion of "improvement" per se) but rather the limitations of sport and physical education in attending to the antecedents of inequality (Heywood, 2007). While the promulgation of a self-made, entrepreneurial citizen is understandably attractive in response to poverty, when situated within the hegemony of a deregulated political economy, neo-liberal citizenship holds potentially "…dire implications for the delivery of public services…" because it makes no commitment to sustainable, equitable and fairly distributed resources and policies of social development (McCarthy and Prudham, 2004, p. 278). Absent of such commitments, inequalities in and of LMICs are downloaded onto marginalized persons and understood as a logical outcome of individual failure instead of a result of the sociohistorical workings of power. As this study shows, sport is used as a tool to help persons overcome such failures, an ideological linking of SDP to the dominant ethic of neo-liberal development.

At the same time, CGC interns actively and critically negotiated the historical, material and discursive terrain of SDP. Several interns recognized the depth of the exclusions and inequalities in their placement communities and they looked to mobilize sport to attend to these inequalities. As well, several interns retained a critical perspective on sport as a development tool. Despite the tendency to universalize sport, some interns actively questioned the extent to which their own sporting knowledge served, or hindered, the development goals to which they attended. Still, interns were rarely encouraged, through their training or service abroad, to question the structures and relations into which people were being included through SDP or to question how such inequalities came to be in the first place. Despite interns' efforts to think critically about sport, the hegemony of neoliberal inclusion, combined with the enduring "universality" of sport, contributed to the construction of sport as a means of capitalist success. Such logic potentially (and likely) left central issues of SDP's political dimensions unexamined within the CGC internship experience.[6]

While the conclusions of this study could be used to justify abandoning SDP programs for fear they may secure hegemonic relations, leaving the world's marginalized persons to their fate to avoid reinscribing dominance is ethically and ideologically fragile (Matthews, 2008). It is important, rather, to consider counter-hegemonic approaches to and *through* SDP that would engage directly with the political economy and the relations of dominance that produce the need for development in the first place. Programs such as CGC's could support interns in exploring, theorizing, and situating their work within the broader politics of development and global inequality and to think directly about the approaches to social change that their use of sport facilitates. Traditional notions of sport and individual achievement are susceptible to the neo-liberal development vision and, as such, are likely to fall short of the sustainable change envisioned by the SDP movement. A more progressive approach to SDP would view sport as a tool to challenge the ideology of individual achievement that can be used to justify inequality.

Notes

1. Like most terms in development studies, "developmentalism" is contestable, insofar as it represents conflicting notions of what development is, or should be. For critical and postdevelopment scholars, in the tradition of Escobar (1995), developmentalism references the modernist compulsion to develop constitutive of globalization and the colonial gaze. For others, state-sponsored developmentalism offers an attractive alternative to the unfettered capitalism, supported by military juntas and incursions, such as Pinochet's Chile of the 1970s and 80's and the current occupation of Iraq (Klein, 2007). I use the term here to clarify that the various imaginations of international development, and concomitant interventions, carry political baggage that requires critical scrutiny.

2. Though not dealt with directly in this article, it is important to note that critical studies of development responded to the inequalities exacerbated by neo-liberal development through postmodern, feminist and postcolonial theory (see Levermore, 2009, p. 38). They argued that development practices are based on and (re)produce Eurocentric knowledge and reflect the construction and maintenance of hegemonic power relations and First World authority rather than international benevolence or a commitment to global social justice (see Escobar, 1995; Sardar, 1999; Tucker, 1999, among others). In this way, the very term "development" requires and solidifies knowledge of those who are underdeveloped (Escobar, 1995) and development

interventions charge communities in developing countries with the nearly impossible task of becoming 'ununderdeveloped' (Esteva, 1992). The postdevelopment critique destabilized development studies and scholars continue to try and reconcile power and privilege with an ethical responsibility to address inequality (Matthews, 2008).

3. Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) are those nations that are deemed to be at an economic disadvantage relative to the rest of the world. According to the World Bank:

> "Low-income and middle-income economies are sometimes referred to as developing economies. The use of the term is convenient; it is not intended to imply that all economies in the group are experiencing similar development or that other economies have reached a preferred or final stage of development. Classification by income does not necessarily reflect development status" (World Bank, 2008).

LMIC is thus a useful term for referring to those nations that are generally understood to be targets of development interventions and logic; at the same time, the use of the term should be accompanied by a critical understanding that it references and privileges a dominant, yet benign First World, and affords an authority of voice (Said, 1978) to speak about southern nations and communities in attempts to better them.

4. I use the term "placement community" to describe, first and foremost, the communities in which CGC interns were placed during their 8-month service abroad. It is, in this sense, a descriptive term. Of course, the term is also weighted with sociocultural and political meanings and contestabilities that recur throughout this document; it suggests a rather benign sense of transnational entitlement that potentially obscures post- and neo-colonial relations and overlooks the ways in which being placed in a community with a mandate of development and social change is an entirely political act. Such politics are central to this analysis.

5. It is important to note that although I follow Kidd (2008) in referring to the "Sport for Development and Peace" movement, none of the CGC interns interviewed for this study worked for partner organizations with an explicit mandate of peace-building and/or conflict resolution. Thus, it is beyond the scope of this paper to speak to the ideology or philosophy of sport as a catalyst for peace, reconciliation or nonviolence.

6. Conclusions of this sort may be interpreted as holding interns themselves to a particular standard of critical sociology and political theory. The intent here is not to argue that interns themselves should have behaved differently during their placements; rather this analysis illustrates the hegemony of neo-liberal logic that largely precludes explorations of broader issues of inequality. The experiences of CGC interns illustrate, theoretically and empirically, that a focus on using sport as a successful development tool may usurp sociopolitical understandings of the antecedents of neo-colonialism and "underdevelopment."

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