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## Sport, Culture and Society

### Citation for published version:

Jarvie, G, Thornton, J & Mackie, H 2017, *Sport, Culture and Society*. 3 edn, Routledge, London.  
<<https://www.routledge.com/Sport-Culture-and-Society-An-introduction/Jarvie/p/book/9781138917521>>

### Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

### Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

### Publisher Rights Statement:

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## Chapter 27

# Sport for social change

Sport was used in the fight against apartheid South Africa. We regularly hear about the power of sport but what outcomes are actually achieved by sport for change?

### PREVIEW

Key terms defined n Introduction n No normal sport in an abnormal society n Education through football for women n Fight for Peace n Olympic athletes fighting for change in society n Sport and an age of activism? n Sport and social intervention (1) – individual social mobility n The struggle for sport n The struggle for equality n The struggle for opportunity and capability n The struggle for reform n Sport and social intervention (2) – global sport n The struggle to define sport n Beyond Sport n Beyond Sport n Beyond good intentions n Sport for change as intentionality n Sport and social intervention (3) – lessons to be passed on n Summary

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### OBJECTIVES

This chapter will:

n examine ways in which sport has contributed to bringing about social change; n consider examples of campaigns for social and political change through sport; n illustrate that sport is not immune from campaigns for change, not only between groups, but also within and between countries and regions; n examine the distinction between sport and social change and sport for social change; draw on empirical material as a basis for a critique of neo-liberal sport.

### KEY TERMS DEFINED

**Anti-global:** The anti-globalisation movement is critical of globalisation. The movement is also commonly referred to as the global justice movement or alter- globalisation movement, or movement against neo-liberal globalisation.

**Neo-liberalism:** Represents the reassertion of the classical liberal concern to promote the maximum possible liberty and/or economic efficiency. Developed in the 1970s, it advocates measures to promote economic development and is used to guide the transition

from planned to market economies in former communist countries.

**Social change:** Various social processes whereby the values, attitudes or institutions of society, such as education, sport, family, religion and politics, become modified. It includes both the natural process and action programmes initiated by members of the community. Not to be confused with social development or social movements.

**Sport for change:** Where sport is intentionally used to deliver social impact.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1919, Canadian sport was divided between amateur and professional, east and west, male and female, bourgeois and workers' sports organisations – so wrote the Canadian historian of sport, Bruce Kidd. *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* is a text that remains an exemplar for students, teachers and researchers thinking about the capacity of sport to produce social change. Kidd concluded that capitalist sport had triumphed, and that the effort to create alternatives to commercial sports culture continued to be an uphill fight (1996: 270). Any progressive strategy aimed at bringing about social change through sport, suggested Kidd, while fighting for scarce resources and political support, must, at some point, confront consumer loyalties, conventional wisdom, economic power and the political force generated by sports corporations (1996: 270).

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By 2015, a collection of essays celebrating social and political activism, generated by Kidd and others, concluded that the ongoing struggle for sport and recreation was very much work in progress (Field, 2015). Discussing the impact of sport *beyond sport*, many of the contributors were clear that assumptions about simply taking part in sport does not necessarily lead to broader outcomes, unless these are intentionally planned. The notion of *intentionality* is central to any discussion considering the power of sport to bring about change. As a form of popular culture, its visibility makes it an ideal agent for, not just the carrying of ideas, but sport-for-change interventions.

Sport for change suggests that governments ignore the social value of sport at their peril. Far too often, small interventions are dismissed, and yet even small interventions can make big differences. If an intervention has the ability to

move beyond good intentions and positively affect the future of a single youth, or person or community, should this not be reason enough to adopt such an approach? Given the current tense state of the world, with countries experiencing prolonged conflicts and extraordinary refugee tensions, should any impactful, cost-effective option or opportunity to enable sport for change be overlooked? The potential of sport to play its part in bringing about social change can come in many forms. The following examples are drawn from South Africa, Cambodia and Brazil. They illustrate that sport for change can start through different points of engagement, from the state to civil society to the individual.

### **No normal sport in an abnormal society**

The international campaign against apartheid sport in South Africa helped to topple a system of legalised racism in South Africa (Jarvie, 2014). The notion of ‘no normal sport in an abnormal society’ was not the causal factor that brought about change, but it was an important facet of the strategy for reform adopted by the ANC prior to coming to power in 1992 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. Mandela recognised more than most the opportunities sport presented. He knew the language of sport and, more than that, he knew how to harness it. He talked of sport in ways that few do. He said: that sport ‘has the power to change the world’; has the power ‘to unite people in a way that little else does’; ‘It speaks to youth in a language they understand’; and ‘It can create hope where once there was only despair’ (Jarvie, 2014). Social change in South African society and the place of sport are still very much work in progress. During the apartheid era, the policy of the ANC, the South African

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Non-Racial-Olympic Committee and the South African Council on Sport was one of ‘No normal sport in an abnormal society’. It was a policy that called on the rest of the world to boycott the playing of sport with South Africa, a policy supported by the Commonwealth Heads of Government and forged in Scotland. Mandela recognised the power of sport to help in the dismantling of apartheid, but he equally recognised the potential of sport to help with reconciliation. The promise of sport was captured in an ANC slogan of ‘A Better Life for All’. Sport in a post-apartheid South Africa was and has been linked to fostering unity, development, reconciliation and nation-building. The

real change to be brought about through sport for development, sport for reconciliation and sport for nation-building necessitates planned programmes, interventions and outcomes with each of these considerations in mind.

### **Education through football for women**

Many national, local and transnational NGOs have tried to harness the power of sport to intervene in areas made vulnerable by conflict, poverty and inequality. Using sport to ‘build a better world’ has some, social, political and cultural, momentum. International aid used properly has the potential to be of value in tackling systemic injustices and inequities and can be enormously beneficial in improving education and health, strengthening governance and promoting moments of social stability.

There are programmes such as the MG programme, under the auspices of the Sport and Leadership Training Academy (SALT) in Cambodia, which has a mission to empower vulnerable Cambodian girls and promote girls’ rights and gender equality through the use of football-based programmes. Participants are aged 14–22 and come from low-income families. Fifty-two per cent of the Cambodian population are under the age of 25, and financial responsibilities are shifted on to children, with girls at risk from human trafficking, early marriage and domestic abuse. The programme takes a holistic approach to education through football by providing opportunities to receive high-level education and football training and become leaders within their community and beyond. In 2015, 35 per cent of the Mighty Girls came in the top ten of their class, with everyone passing final exams, and 90 per cent of the girls significantly increased awareness and knowledge about gender equality, with 87 per cent of parents supporting their daughter’s participation in the football activities. Significant mind-set changes within the local communities towards girls’ activities were noticed.

### **Fight for Peace**

Fight for Peace (FFP) uses boxing and martial arts combined with education and personal development to realise the potential of young people in communities that suffer from crime and violence. In 2000, former University of Edinburgh student Luke Dowdney founded a small boxing club in Complexo da Maré, a deprived area of Rio de Janeiro. The club grew into FFP, an organisation that uses boxing and martial arts as a form of outreach

work with the children and youth of local favelas involved with violence, guns and drugs. In 2005, the FFP Sports and Education Centre was constructed, providing training facilities, classrooms and an IT suite. In April 2008, Dowdney opened the first FFP centre in Newham, London. FFP works through a theory of change built around 'five pillars' that encompass a more holistic approach to education. As well as teaching sports combat skills, the organisation teaches personal development and citizenship and provides mentoring and vocational training to help students into employment. It strives to provide a pathway out of dangerous circumstances.

In 2011, FFP worked with accounting firm PwC to develop a roll-out approach for the UK programme that would have an impact in communities beyond the main FFP academies, by training people involved with other community-based organisations in FFP methodology.

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Between 2011 and 2016, FFP trained at least 140 community-based organisations, with more than 72,000 participants. FFP annual reports, monitoring and evaluation build a picture of data-driven social impact, with: 79 per cent of those trained no longer involved in fights at home, in the street or at school; 68 per cent feeling happier about themselves; 75 per cent having passed literacy tests; and 68 per cent being less likely to commit a crime or carry a weapon. Local partners are now trained in twenty-five countries.

These examples are not utopian and show how sport for change can make a difference. There remains the challenge, alluded to by Kidd and others, that global sport runs the risk of being a standard bearer of the triumph of capitalism. Although some businesses have embraced social responsibility, others have not - even the international aid business can be problematic. The myth of humanitarian assistance, and aid more generally, is that there is a simple linear relationship between good intentions and improved lives. *The story of globalisation and capitalism is still that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, and the story of sport for social change and plus sport interventions recognise that interventions paved with good intentions do not always work.*

Neo-liberal thinking about sport wrongly implies the end of politics because of the centrality of the market as the resource allocator and the submission of public life, the commons and humanitarian assistance to commodification. But

what if this does not work? What if social groups, many of them local, that wish to bring about change recognise that they need to bypass the conventional channels? To accept the logic of global sport *uncritically* would be to akin to succumbing to the rhetorical promotion of globalisation as capitalism and the submission of public life and the commons to commodification. To accept such logic would render insignificant the many opportunities for social change presented through sport. This would be just as utopian as thinking that life-chances cannot be altered, and that closing the gap between rich and poor is impossible. In the end, politics are thought and fought for, policies are forged and implemented, and political ideas wax and wane within an increasingly global space that is geopolitical and socio-economic. Opportunities for social change through sport exist at both these levels and present themselves in intended and unintended ways.

Different people, at different times, have made a stand and used sporting moments to speak out for changes in their world or society. Sport in Focus 27.1 provides examples where sport became active in fighting for social and political change. All of them challenge racism and all use sport to call for change. This might include (1) struggles for social change within sport itself; (2) Sport Plus or Plus Sport interventions, where sport has been part of a broader initiative for change; and (3) sport-for-change interventions where sporting activities are *intentionally* used to deliver social and political impact.

### **SPORT AND AN AGE OF ACTIVISM?**

The historian Eric Hobsbawm conveniently divided eras of history into the Age of Empire (1789–1848), the Age of Revolution (1848–75), the Age of Capital (1875–1914) and the Age of Extremes (1914–91). Writing in March 2011, Feffer noted that the world is convulsed in protest (2011: 1). It is worth reflecting on whether the world has entered the Age of Activism (1991–present). Certainly, during 2010 and early 2011, people filled the streets in different places in the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa and parts of the US. Their targets

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### **SPORT IN FOCUS 27.1: OLYMPIC ATHLETES FIGHTING FOR**

## **CHANGE IN SOCIETY**

### **‘We all have dreams’ – Jesse Owens, 1936**

In 1936, the Olympic Games were held in Berlin, and Hitler wanted to use them to prove to the world that the Aryan people were the dominant race. To the German leader’s obvious anger, Jesse Owens won four gold medals. He was and still is an inspirational figure to millions.

We all have dreams. But, in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort.

### **‘Black America will understand what we did tonight’ – Tommie Smith, 1968**

On October 17 1968, at the height of the civil rights struggles in America, two black athletes – Tommie Smith and John Carlos – made a silent protest at the presentation for the 200-m race by raising their fists in the Black Power salute during the playing of the US national anthem. They were subsequently suspended from the team, banned from the Olympic Village and stripped of their medals. At a later press conference, Tommie Smith gave the following reason:

If I win I am an American, not a black American. But if I did something bad then they would say ‘a Negro’. We are black and we are proud of being black. Black America will understand what we did tonight.

### **Basketball great Charles Barkley talking of Muhammad Ali’s impact on his life**

‘Muhammad Ali let me know I could have opinions and express them. I cannot do justice in words to express what that meant to a young black kid growing up in Alabama.’

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were invariably local autocratic leaders, unelected governments and poorly performing economies. Since 2015, a rising number of refugees and migrants have made the journey to the EU to seek asylum and better living standards, and that has triggered different reactions in different states.

Activism is caused by a number of factors including: the economic recession, a call for transparency, increased capacity to network socially through technological advances, civil unrest or conflict, or lack of food, water and energy. The confluence of these factors is different in different places. Rising



food prices caused considerable discontent in Egypt; limited economic opportunities created frustration and anxiety in Tunisia; and austerity

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## **SPORT IN FOCUS 27.2: SPORT AND SOCIAL INTERVENTION (1) – INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL MOBILITY**

### **The women from Colombia**

The normative potential of sport to produce social change is self-evident in the following example from the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. Maria Isabel Urrutia was a gold medal winner, having lifted 75 kg in the clean and jerk weightlifting category. The Olympic gold medal winner represents a country where young athletes have had to pass through guerrilla and paramilitary roadblocks while travelling between cities to national competitions. Colombia holds the unfortunate distinction of being the world's leading country in terms of kidnapping, with some 3,000 reported cases per year. Commenting on her gold medal victory, Urrutia said that 'she hoped that her victory would reach others like her – poor, black and female' (Sunday Herald, 1 October 2000: 18). She went on:

As a poor person, I hope others see that you can make a living, see the world and get an education through sports or even music and other arts. As a woman, I hope that girls who are now 13, like I was when I started, now realise that they don't have to become teenage mothers and as a black person I hope the country sees that there's another Urrutia besides the white man who signs our pesos.

(Sunday Herald, 1 October 2000: 18)

### **The man from Sudan**

Luol Deng left Sudan, age 5, just one of many forced into exile by a civil war that, at the time, had claimed 1.9 million lives. The refugee turned basketball player gained fame and fortune playing for the Chicago Bulls and secured a contract worth £52 million. He is reportedly Obama's favourite player, but he is also a hero in Sudan, where he returned from exile for a spell in 2010. In one youth centre visited by the player, they had a song, 'The Luol Deng Referendum'. He guested for the then South Sudan Basketball Association in a game where he met a teammate from the same Dinka tribe – a fellow lost boy – who tried to escape to Ethiopia. Whereas Deng went to London, his friend moved to Somalia and then Kenya, and Luol moved on to the US. Sudan's lost boy, who found fame in Chicago through sport, acknowledged that he was lucky, and that they so easily could have traded places. Sport was the key to social mobility for Luol Deng, a resource of hope for an athlete who hasn't forgotten his roots or lost the ability to see

beyond the abnormal world of the wealthy sports star into reality and try to help.

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measures imposed by the Greek government brought hundreds of thousands of protesters on to the street. In Croatia, protesters nearly brought the country to a standstill by drawing attention to the lavish lifestyles of Croatian politicians. In China, apartment owners complained about the management of their buildings in attempts to bring more democracy. This is the same class of people who occupied Tahrir Square in Egypt and pushed out President Hosni Mubarak. This is the first generation to use the Internet and, for some, thinking about the possibility of owning their own home. The influence of new technologies and the capacity of new media such as Twitter and Facebook have made it easier to coordinate movements, communicate and mobilise groups ahead of the state being aware of any tensions. The impact of technology has meant that global civil society and grass-roots globalism can mobilise much more effectively.

Protesters have been working against authoritarian governments, but they have also been present on the streets, protesting against democratic governments, fighting over single issues and collaborating internationally against systemic and anti-systemic local and global fault lines. Waves of activism continue to challenge the state as a vehicle for the enrichment of elites at the expense of the common good. There are numerous points of entry for sport to take its place in politics for social change. Sport in Focus 27.2 illustrates the normative potential of sport to help with social mobility for some, but the question remains how to bring this about for many.

Kareem Abdul Jabbar was offered US\$1 million by the Harlem Globetrotters to drop out of college, but he refused because he valued what education could give him in life. He went on to be an NBA basketball all-star with the Milwaukee Bucks and the Los Angeles Lakers. Living through the era of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965) impacted on the NBA hero, who once commented that, 'players of today don't understand what the struggle was all about, they have reaped the rewards of the players who went before and prepared the world to accept basketball, but this history is often lost

on them' (Broadbent, 2015: 60). Basketball for Kareem Abdul Jabbar was not divorced from society and not divorced from sport for change. Commenting on Britain, he notes:

that Great Britain ended slavery (1833) and it took until 1865 in the US but our system of slavery was started by Great Britain and while the US has got to the point of having an Afro-American President, Great Britain has not and furthermore the dearth of black managers in British soccer is an uncomfortable fact for a multicultural Britain.

(Broadbent, 2015: 60)

There are a number of fault lines running through the different worlds of sport that have sustained progressive agendas for change. Any number of entry and exit points may be chosen as a basis for substantiating the transformative capacity of sport. Forms of action may be classified along the continuum from reformism to radicalism, or from ideological to non- ideological, or from individual or issue-orientated to more collective forms of action. Forms of change may also have both intended and unintended outcomes, but, whatever the basis for thinking about sport for social change, it is imperative to acknowledge that the parameters of sport for social change are both geopolitical and socio-economic. In the different worlds

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of sport, these two fault lines highlight, not just the particular social patterning of movements for change, but also that the impetus and pressure from various fault lines.

Effective reform, whether it be radical or evolutionary, can only be based on an understanding of current local, global or international pressures, tensions or fault lines that are continually shifting. Much attention has been focused in recent years on the notion of a global civil society with the power to engage with and challenge institutions of global governance. But, the place of sport has not figured enough within such actions. Where sport has figured, it has mainly been as a means to an end, rather than a progressive end in itself, with its own house in order. Sport for social change must continue to encapsulate both forms of activity. It may refer to social change within sport itself, but also the way in which sport has contributed to broader campaigns for social and

political change across the world. The following themes encapsulate some of that promise.

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR SPORT**

At the time of writing, the struggles for sport that continued to hit the headlines were matters of governance, trust, corruption, athletes' rights, difference, barriers to involvement, racism, visa restrictions and the vast wealth inequalities. Manchester United broke the world transfer record by paying more for a player than some nations would spend on sport. The struggle for sport and reform of sport has often been a struggle of power and inequality over who is involved, under what circumstances, and who controls the involvement of people and the distribution of wealth. The struggle for the heart and soul of global sport is one that is fought over by different nations and transnational organisations, as well as whether sport is above or below the law. If the struggle over sport in the nineteenth century was epitomised by the struggle between amateur and professional values, and, in the twentieth century, by the struggle between participation and medals, local and global, then what is the key struggle over sport today? Is it, or should it be, any or all of the following?

### **The struggle for equality**

The notion of inequality can be limiting, as a focus on any one aspect of inequality can detract from additional freedoms that can be won at any given point in time. Different individuals, groups, communities, nations and organisations have different degrees of freedom. The sporting limits and possibilities open to people are partially shaped by social inequality, where the essence of social inequality is taken to mean different degrees of freedom, choice and actions that can be taken to enable involvement in sport. The struggle for sport in the twenty-first century necessitates that it enables a wider range of freedoms, choices and possibilities for those on the margins - including the bottom billion.

### **The struggle for opportunity and capability**

The notion of sport and social inequality currently in operation needs to be broader so that it means more than material conditions of inequality. As such, sport and social inequality

might be thought of in terms of: (1) inequality of condition, (2) inequality of capability and (3) inequality of opportunity.

Inequality of condition may refer to variations in factors such as income, education, occupation or the amount of time available to spend on sport, exercise and recreation. Inequality of opportunity focuses more on the individual and is concerned with the degrees of freedom that people have in moving within and between the restrictions set by a reward structure. Inequality of capability may refer to the differences that individuals or groups have as a result of inequalities in power and capability. Each of these has both socio-economic and geopolitical fault lines running through sport, and each of these is a point of entry into the struggle for sport.

### **The struggle for reform**

We should acknowledge that the values associated with globalisation and global sport have come under pressure to change. The movement for global change is most commonly referred to as anti-globalisation. There are at least two competing concepts of anti-globalisation, one termed 'radical' and one termed 'moderate'. The radical wing views globalisation as a process largely designed to ensure that wealthy elites become wealthier, at the expense of poorer countries. It would argue, for instance, that globalisation undermines the working conditions and pay of sports personnel in wealthy countries, while, at the same time, exploiting cheap sports labour in other parts of the world. The radical wing sees TNCs as the main cause of the problem, viewing them as undermining the power and decision-making of national governing bodies of sport or local NGOs. The view expressed here is that globalisation as a process is fundamentally flawed, anti-democratic and immoral.

Various solutions to these problems are offered by the radical wing, depending on the situation. Reforms to combat global intervention in sport might include some or all of the following strategies: (1) reassertion of the power of national and local sports organisations; (2) the return of economic, political and cultural power to localities; (3) quotas on the migration of sports talent into the country; (4) re-evaluation and redistribution of wealth derived from sport to alleviate poverty; and (5) support for campaigns such as Sport Relief and critical evaluation of the role of companies paved with good intentions that use sport

for social purposes but cause harm in the localities in which they operate.

The moderate wing, although more difficult to define, tends to share the view that globalisation has the potential to be good or bad. It has the potential for sharing the benefits of the economic growth provided by free trade, but, because ruling institutions are currently controlled by wealthy elites, inequality, instability and injustice are inevitable. In a sporting context, a corollary of this might be to argue that traditional cultural rights and sporting traditions need to be recognised to be equally as important as market-supported forms of commercialised sport. For the moderate wing, the solution to many of the above problems lies with reforming the institutions that govern world sport. These proposed reforms might include some or all of the following: (1) a tax on international transfers of sports labour, the revenue of which could be used to promote sports development in poorer countries; (2) a total reformulation of rules and remits of international sporting bodies to allow for greater representation from poorer, low-income, non-Western countries; and (3) a greater role for the international court of sports arbitration in supporting the role that sport can play in the promotion of justice, the environment, human rights and loss of work.

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The struggle for reform of global sporting patterns of involvement and consumption is complex but possible. The differential relationship between sport and power in different parts of the world requires a greater recognition of other places and communities. The worry is that continuing injustices in sport and the failings of global sport will contribute to the undermining of trust, not only in sport, but also between local, regional and international communities. Sport in Focus 27.3 addresses this issue.

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### **SPORT IN FOCUS 27.3: SPORT AND SOCIAL INTERVENTION (2) – GLOBAL SPORT**

It is not necessary to view sport as irrelevant to the geopolitical concerns that might figure in the reform of sporting structures and power balances that cause fissures within the North–South fault line or between the South–South coalition. Some or all of the following actions might figure in the reform of neo-liberal or global sport:

- ⁂ reform global sporting institutions to permit greater representation of currently under-represented groups and regions of the South and beyond;
  - ⁂ develop sporting treaties and legislation to secure better universal working conditions and the end of child labour in sport;
  - ⁂ recognise that the primary causes of child labour lie in poverty, and, traditionally, sport has been an avenue of escape from poverty in many parts of the world;
  - ⁂ support and publicise attempts by women from Islamic countries to participate in international sporting forums and competitions;
  - ⁂ draw on existing charters, declarations, covenants and laws that point the way to a more humane form of international sport, not only within, but also between, countries and communities;
  - ⁂ monitor and evaluate the profits made from migrant sports labour and sporting exiles and ensure it returns South rather than remain circulating within the North;
  - ⁂ legislate to ensure that sport addresses and chases corruption with the same zeal that it chases the ideal of drug-free sport;
  - ⁂ recognise that the Olympic Games have never been held in Africa; ⁂ recognise that all forms of humanitarian aid, including sport, have to move beyond good intentions and deliver sport for change through planned intentionality, supported locally;
  - ⁂ recognise the common concerns of activists demonstrating at successive major international sporting events; ⁂ make sporting exchange and trade work for the poor;
  - ⁂ enable an aspirational public realm, common ground for one global humanity.
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### **The struggle to define sport**

The struggle to define sport itself continues. Vested-interest groups from within the world of sport have advocated for division, which has resulted in the possibility of the power of sport being diluted. Whatever the social and political tensions between the sports faction or the physical activity faction or the exercise faction or the coaching faction or the development faction or the

anti-global sport faction, the different factions are stronger together than apart. Some nations embrace physical activity within sport, and others go separate ways, divide budgets and constrain choices, freedoms and actions. To some extent, we need a new language for sport.

The promise and possibilities of sport may well be served by accepting international definitions of sport, such as that provided by the UN Task Force on SDP:

All forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction such as play, recreation, organised or competitive sport and indigenous sport or games.

([www.un.org/sport/content/why-sport/overview](http://www.un.org/sport/content/why-sport/overview), accessed 27 March 2017)

## **BEYOND SPORT**

The use of sport to help realise other goals is not new. Initiatives that have used sport as a means to health, to aid social control and to enact a war without weapons have a long history. Although the struggle to define sport remains fluid, the recognition that sport can help by being a means to an end has gained considerable international traction, a traction that is symbolised in a number of *Beyond Sport* organisations that evoke the ideal of Sport Plus or Plus Sport. The then UN secretary-general, Ban-Ki Moon, talking about the future, commented that, ‘The post -2015 development agenda is about building a better future. The future means youth’ (Bersagilo, 2015). Post-2015 development initiatives have created a significant shift in the conception of the role of youth in the international community, and, as with foreign diplomats, civil servants and community leaders referred to in Chapter 25, the opportunity exists to move Beyond Sport and implement more effective sport for change.

### **Beyond Sport**

In 2001, Kofi Annan appointed the first Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, who assisted with the creation of the UN Office for Sport for Development and Peace. By 2002, the UN-convened Inter-agency Task Force on SDP had reviewed activities involving sport within the UN system. UN Resolution 58/5 notes the role of sport as a means to promote



health, education, development and peace (United Nations, n.d.)). The year 2005 was marked as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. That same year, the SDP International Working Group was formed, and NGOs and practitioners entered the SDP movement. One year later, the working group reported on the way forward: the platform for sport for development was created, as was CABOS. By 2008, a second special adviser had been appointed, and UN Resolution 63/135 placed the working group under

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the leadership of Special Adviser Lemke. In 2010, the UN secretary-general attended an Olympic Congress for the first time. UN Resolution 67/296 secured the enactment of 6 April 2014 as thereafter being the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. In 2016, on the same day, the UN launched 'Let's Play for Sustainable Development Goals', outlining how sport can advance the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. (See Chapter 4 for a more extensive coverage of sport, development and peace.)

Commensurate with the increased recognition of SDP, the language of sport was advanced further through the introduction of terms such as Sport Plus and Plus Sport. Those who claimed that sport could be a force for good without providing the evidence were taken to task, as sport moved its way through the UN and other transnational agencies (Darnell, 2012; Coalter, 2013). Sport Plus approaches are seen to utilise secondary benefits, such as life skills, as a result of participation. In contrast, Plus Sport approaches and organisations are seen to focus on non-sport objectives while incorporating sport as pillar of delivery. The approach encourages a logic model that sees sport as an input rather than an outcome and encourages a raft of indicators, monitoring and evaluation, depending on the problem that is being addressed - for example, sport for health, sport for education, sport for peace, sport for gender and sport for development.

### **Beyond good intentions**

One of the key dangers here is that the social toolbox that is sport either gets marginalised, or at least not optimised, rather than being recognised as the key ingredient in the mix. The myth of sport for development and Plus Sport is that there is a linear relationship between good interventions and improved or

changed lives. The landscape and language of sport are unclear, but the principles on which sport for change can be effective should not be underestimated either. Above all, the sports sector and all who embrace it must reaffirm its commitment to do no harm in the localities in which it moves. Rather than sport being marginalised, the effectiveness of sport must be enabled as a result of a better understanding of what works, where and when and under what circumstances. Thus, boxing and martial arts became the key to unlocking reduced crime rates in Rio de Janeiro and Newham, and running in Eldoret became the mechanism by which women athletes were able to redistribute wealth to non-athletes, to support business creation and further freedoms for women. Rather than create a crisis of monitoring and evaluation that lets private-sector organisations complicate the sport-for-change landscape, why not allow the independent local university gather systematic evidence and enable upskilling locally? To improve its effectiveness, the sport-for-change movement might consider recalibrating to focus more on knowledge transfer, training, reducing the obstacles to local engagement and recognising that sport can be a resource of hope in some of the most challenging circumstances.

### **Sport for change as intentionality**

Sport for change is sometimes taken to mean sporting activities that are intentionally used to deliver social impact for individuals and communities, beyond increasing participation or performance. The logic of sport for change needs a clear set of outcomes stating the intentional wider social impacts that intervention *a*, *b* or *c* aims to achieve. The ground is then cleared for initiatives that produce change in areas such as health, education, community empowerment, justice, safety, enterprise, employability and much more.

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The practical lessons learned from change interventions are varied and context-specific. Sport in Focus 27.4 provides an insight into some of these responses around three areas: sport for health, sport for social inclusion and sport for conflict resolution and peace.

Although sport for change can be a resource of hope for many individuals, communities and groups, it should not be at the expense of recognition of the capabilities that are demonstrably delivered through sports participation or performance, nor should it be at the expense of the role of sport in voicing

social alternatives, or being a critique of the triumph of capitalism – the point that was raised at the start of this chapter.

The humanitarian aspect of the Olympic Movement should come more to the fore than medals or the hosting of major sporting events that many cities and countries cannot afford. There is a substantial body of work that shows sporting mega-events as adversarial sites and draws these into the politics of place and time. There needs to be at least a common narrative throughout these events if they are going to live up to the promise of the term social movement or a humanitarian resource of hope. They certainly need an alternative to the neo-liberal narrative. Forms of activism around major sporting events invariably fall into categories such as spontaneous uprisings, grass-roots mobilisation and protest and special interest groups. Such events can act as soft power through arguments for transparency, accountability, local involvement and increased capability in community outreach, with measured intentional social impacts.

There needs to be more agreed common ground about sport for change and the language of sport for change where it is agreed that sporting initiatives should not produce harm, unwittingly or otherwise, and any divisions within sport about the language of sport need to be inclusive and recognise that sporting factions are stronger together than apart. We should not underestimate the capacity of sport to collapse social barriers, nor should we ignore the lack of access to sport for youth living in poverty in many parts of the world. It is crucial to acknowledge the capacity of sport to facilitate social change. The strength of sport's capacity to produce change lies in its popularity in different parts of the world, its capacity to symbolise graphically, but more poignantly, work for social and political change, acknowledge success and learn the lessons from political failures through sport. Such alternatives both influence and are influenced by different visions of a world that continues to struggle with inequality, turmoil and lack of clarity about the nature of both capitalism and democracy. Contemporary researchers, teachers and thinkers about sport in the world today and those working with sport are having an impact, but more needs to be done.

If those supporting sport for change move Beyond Sport as it is currently operating, invoke the idea of intentionality and maximise the social toolbox that is sport, then it might just be that an aspirational politics of the possible

might be grasped, if not realised.

## **SUMMARY**

In this chapter, we have examined different ways in which sport has contributed to bringing about social change. It is crucial that workers in the field do not lose sight of the many forms

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### **SPORT IN FOCUS 27.4: SPORT AND SOCIAL INTERVENTION (3) – LESSONS TO BE PASSED ON**

#### **Health**

n ‘Our intervention taught us to always look beyond the obvious, that we set our goals from day one with community members and that we use our child protection policy and measurable activities to ensure that we are making positive differences in children’s lives.’

n ‘The power of [[AQ181]]parents, parents and dedicated community members are integral to creating community ownership of a health problem that has dramatic impact on their children’s wellbeing.’

n ‘The biggest practical lesson we have learned and already shared is the use of local talent who are hungry for opportunities to learn and succeed. As Rwanda is experiencing high levels of youth unemployment participants graduating from our programmes are in desperate need to support themselves and their families, Retaining them within our programme has enabled us evolve, increasing the number and quality of services while at the same time supporting local communities and national goals for youth engagement.’

#### **Social inclusion**

n ‘The single biggest learning is that the significant challenges faced by a programme and/or organisation will have solutions, but you need to engage members and those involved to find solutions from within rather than look to external agencies for support. Believing in each other and providing the resources and tools primarily from within provides the platform from which sustainability is created.’

n ‘Our biggest single insight is local ownership of the programme which for us involves a

blend of sport development and sport for development.’

n ‘We learned that volunteer coaches need more than just initial training but ongoing support to foster their development, confidence and effectiveness.’

### **Conflict resolution and peace**

n ‘A wide network, a willingness to be transparent and strong partnerships are vital. The ethos of sharing and partnership increases our ability to help refugees.’

n ‘Young leaders who are free of the baggage that so many of this and the past generations carry with them are ideally placed to actively contribute to creating a more stable and peaceful society – in our context they are the fourth vital pillar of community relations.’

n ‘Start small – because we started small and listened to the community we could identify strengths to build on like recognising that many people believed in themselves.’

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n ‘While conflict resolution content is crucial high calibre competition is no less important – it helped us engage participants on a long-term basis – an essential factor in effecting meaningful positive change.’

n ‘We have learned that success of our intervention in a conflict environment is dependent on long term activities that adapt to change on the ground. Long term programming is essential in order to support and gauge the gradual process of perception change among people and communities.’

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of intervention that have contributed to sport’s role in the world today. Legislation, declarations of policy, political party manifestos and single- and multilateral-issue campaigns about sport have all had an impact and are continually in a state of flux. This chapter questioned the comprehensive nature of capitalist triumph in sport by drawing attention to interventions that effectively challenged the values of global sport. It has built on the old and new political successes and failures of sport outlined in previous chapters.

Any number of entry and exit points may be chosen as a basis for

substantiating the transformative capacity of sport. Forms of action may be classified along the continuum from reformism to radicalism or from ideological to non-ideological, or from issue-orientated to more collective forms of action. Change may also have intended and unintended outcomes, and the parameters of sport for social change are both geopolitical and socio-economic.

The chapter also noted that, although the struggle for sport itself is important, its capacity to be a resource of hope must not be limited to an inward-looking world of sport, but must help to enable different worlds beyond sport, where sport for change in low-, medium- and high-income countries is much more intentional and continues to move beyond being a vehicle for good intentions to being an important, recognised, impactful resource of hope, providing a pathway for many and helping to make the politics of the possible, possible.

## **GUIDE TO FURTHER READING**

Bass, A. (2002). *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Field, R. (2015). *Playing for Change: The Continuing Struggle for Sport and Recreation*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Hayes, G., and Karamichas, J. (eds) (2011). *Olympic Games, Mega-Events and Civil Societies: Globalisation, Environment and Resistance*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Kidd, B. (1996). *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Nauright, J., and Wiggins, D. (2015). *Sport and Revolutionaries: Reclaiming the Historical Role of Sport in Social and Political Activism*. London: Routledge.

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## **KEY CONCEPTS**

**Anti-global** n **Anti-systemic** n **Capability** n **Capitalism** n **Civil society** n **Inequality** n **Intentionality** n **Logic model** n **Neo-liberalism** n **North–South divide** n **Power** n **Reform** n **Social change** n **Social intervention** n **Social movements** n **Sport for change** n **Sport Plus and Plus Sport** n

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## WEBSITES

### **Sport and Development Platform**

[www.sportanddev.org/](http://www.sportanddev.org/) The platform is a website dedicated to sport and development. It is an online resource and communication tool.

### **United Nations and Sport**

[www.un.org/sport/](http://www.un.org/sport/) Explore the role of the United Nations in promoting peace and development through the resources on this website.

### **The Academy of Sport – University of Edinburgh**

[www.ed.ac.uk/education/academy-of-sport](http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/academy-of-sport) Two premises guide the work of the Academy: that sport has a part to play in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the twenty-first century, and to serve as an independent think tank that addresses such challenges.

### **Peace and Sport**

[www.peace-sport.org/](http://www.peace-sport.org/) An international forum supported by the UN, dedicated to peace, sport and development.

