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Citation for published version:

Jarvie, G & Ahrens, S 2019, 'Sport for social justice, capability and the common good: A position statement in honour of Tessa Jowell', *Quest*, vol. 71, no. 2, pp. 150-162.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2018.1547651>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1080/00336297.2018.1547651](https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2018.1547651)

Link:

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

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Quest

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in Quest on 12/12/2018, available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00336297.2018.1547651>

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2 **Sport for Social Justice, Capability and the Common Good:**

3 **A Position Statement in Honour of Tessa Jowell¹**

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7 **QUEST SPECIAL ISSUE**

8 ***Social Justice and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives***

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¹ The authors would like to dedicate this essay in honour of the late Rt Honorable Tessa Jowell MP former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (UK) and Minister for the London Olympics Paralympics and who did more than most to fight for social justice and local communities.

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There is a continuing debate about the contribution of sport and sport for development and peace (SDP) to both the theory and practice of social justice. At the same time the policy world is showing strong indications that it is seeking politically smarter ways of understanding what it means to foster social justice, development, and inclusive peace processes. This position statement is committed to sport actively being seen to be playing a part in addressing the challenges that face humanity in the 21st century. The proposition is that sport and SDP are served well by a capability approach (CA) as a framework that enables the construction of the common good. The article considers a CA for social justice prior to a discussion of sport, capability and the common good which positions sport as a resource of hope in fostering politically smarter cultural relations.

Key Words: capability, common good, influence. social justice, sport

Introduction

I hope always my politics are the politics of aspiration, ambition, possibility and the future (Jowell 2018:1170).

The academic literature relating sport to: *social justice* (Long, Fletcher and Watson, 2017; Reid and Lee, 2013; Watson, Hargaden and Brock, 2018); *human rights* (David 2005; IHRB, 2018; Kidd, 2018) and *development and peace* (SDP) (Coalter, 2013; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016; 2018; Darnell, et al 2018; Darnell and Dao, 2017; Gruneau, 2015; Houston and Jarvie, 2016; Svensson and Levine, 2017) has produced its own analyses about the limits and possibilities of sport contributing intentionally to a set of outcomes in the aforementioned areas. This expanding corpus of research from a diverse range of disciplines has produced a similar set of messages: international approaches are often paved with good intentions, roll out blueprint solutions that fail to sufficiently understand local contexts and do not pay enough

attention to their own politics or the politics of the local context in which they operate.

The politics of the local context, social justice, the public realm and the need to hold open spaces for dialogue is something that Tessa Jowell championed and in whose honour we have dedicated this position statement. In advocating for a shared public realm, that offers choice, opportunity and facilitated aspiration there is much in Jowell's speeches and politics that connects with this proposition on sport for social justice, capability and the common good:

This public realm – broader than the state, much more than the sum of private interests – must serve, equally and simultaneously, people from all walks of life with many different needs, interests and backgrounds. One thing that unites them is their desire for services- common humanity - which meet their needs and aspirations as people, and which they can access on terms that fit the pace and structure of their daily lives. It is through the public realm that we can enhance quality of life and democratic participation and enjoy the fruits of increased prosperity. In so doing, we can deepen the roots of progressive consensus. (Jowell, 2005: 3).

In a tense world there is a need for politically smarter ways of deepening commitments to social justice, peace processes and more effective cultural relations. This is the core recommendation arising out of a sustained body of work analysing the construction of peace agreements, conflict resolutions and cultural relations (British Academy, 2017). At the same time writers such as Molloy (2017) advocate that the current context is one in which the international norms and architecture that have been developed to support peace-building and social justice processes and development are in a period of global re-negotiation and transition. If this is the case then an opportunity exists for sport and SDP to be part of an essential toolbox

involved in the construction of transitional justice³, contemporary cultural relations and peace-building.

This position statement takes up the challenge. It proposes that what is needed is a framework, language and set of principles through which the global and local machinery for building justice and cultural relations can better grasp the potential of sport and SDP. It argues that a CA provides a flexible framework that can guide the development of a negotiated common good. In turn can this assist in the development of transitional justice and more effective cultural relations.

Making the art of the possible, possible

If sport and SDP are to advance a case for their contribution to the common good, then what is required is a flexible normative framework that intentionally delivers outcomes and spaces that work in politically smarter ways. This proposition builds upon suggestions made by Bell (2017), Pospisil (2016) and the British Academy (2017) that spaces are desperately needed to open up the possibility of dialogue involving the interests of more than one group or one state or one community. Such spaces could be provided through sport and SDP. Consider the use of sport in helping the Colombian city of Medellin shake of its violent past or an approach to human rights that includes the right to sport could be understood as a mechanism through which political construction and dialogue can take place on an ongoing basis and in particular during phases of transitional justice or the way in which the 1948 UN Declaration on Human Rights protects the right to health and well-being, rest and leisure.

To talk of sport and the common good means that sport and SDP are part of a set of

³ Transitional justice is taken to mean a response to systematic or widespread violations of human rights. It seeks recognition for victims and the promotion of possibilities for advancing peace, reconciliation and democracy.

commitments and practices aimed at using public power to deliver public goods to people, regardless of their personal identity, political affiliation and or geographic location. Sport and SDP are seen as cost effective social tools and resources through which conversations can take place and capabilities can be built. In this way sport can position itself in spaces where transitional justice is being forged (Duthie, 2017). Thus, sport and the common good is best understood as a project of ongoing political construction, rather than a pre-commitment to any new political order or utopian ideal.

The role of sport in serving multi-lateral organisations, or working to an international humanitarian agenda, or being used as diplomatic tool to carry national or international messages is not new. A point that is exemplified in Millington's (2015) history of the UN involvement in SDP and Murray's (2018) account of the role of sports diplomacy in national and international relations. It is more than 50 years since Chataway and Goodhart (1968) penned their account of the use of sport as *A War without Weapons*. Nor is it the case that the role of sport as a cost effective social and political tool has not been recognised. A series of interventions facilitated by The Commonwealth Secretariat has evaluated the contribution that sport and SDP can make to development and peace (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016; Dudfield 2014; Lindsey and Chapman, 2017; Kay and Dudfield, 2013). Such a position has been nurtured by significant academic interventions relating to SDP, sport and human rights and sport as tool in contemporary cultural relations (Darnell et al, 2018; Darnell & Dao, 2017; Giulianotti, Hognestad and Spaaj, 2016; Gruneau, 2015; Jarvie, 2016; Jarvie and Mackie, 2015; Kidd, 2008; 2018; Murray, 2018; Suzuki, 2017; and Zipp and Nauright, 2018).

The UK House of Lords report - *Persuasion and Power in the Modern World* (2014), pointed to the necessity of balancing hard and soft power tactics while acknowledging that sport had a role to play in development, conflict resolution and international relations. The report demonstrated that sport matters because it has: (i) a universal appeal that crosses

language and cultural barriers and, (ii) the ability to foster conversations between countries and communities. Talking about the impact of sports diplomacy, Wilfred Bolewski (2018) a French Ambassador, suggested that:

'Sports diplomacy as humanist endeavour provides a universal, unifying and peaceful impact on transnational communities. It adds a vivid tool to the diversity of diplomacy and strengthens the attraction towards its enlarging epistemic community.'

Thus, it must be acknowledged that a valuable and growing body of work has been critically sympathetic to sport playing a more extensive role in addressing some of the challenges that face the world in the 21st Century (Lindsey and Chapman 2017). The United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 (UNGA 2015, para 37: 10) has opened the door by publicly providing sport with a stronger international mandate to contribute actively to social change. The growing contribution of sport to advancing development and peace is explicitly mentioned (IHRB, 2018:10) in the following terms:

We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities.

The points to be established here are essentially twofold. Firstly, problems of social justice, cultural relations and peace-building are not new nor is the role of sport in addressing such challenges. What is new is the contexts in which we live in today and what tools we have to resolve such problems and issues. What is new is the realisation that in today's fractured societies and communities, it is the local context that often shapes approaches to sustainable transitional justice. Top down interventions imposed from above through sport or otherwise

tend to be short-term fixes rather than sustainable solutions. A host of writers have pointed out this out and argued that new approaches are needed, with Bell (2006; 2008; 2017) consistently observing that promises of transformation have either not materialized nor been sustained. Collier (2007) called for more compassion in world politics as key to the solution of the bottom billion people living in poverty, while Samantha Nutt, (2013), pointed to the great resilience, courage and strength in countries and communities where none ought to exist because of atrocities suffered and that international support needs to be more than interventions paved with good intentions.

Secondly, those working in sport and related areas are not alone when it comes to challenging the experts or body of expertise. Post liberal advocates such as Chandler (2015) and Kennedy (2009) point to the need to let go of liberal interventions rooted in a post-liberal rejection of binary approaches such as international/local; universalist/relativist and agent/structure. Academics working with sport need to continue to be nuanced about what works where, when and under what circumstances. They also need to be more nuanced about the growing challenges to expertise, the difficulties of critical friendship and the unpredictability of states, territories and or communities undergoing fast paced multiple political transitions.

The contemporary global picture is a messy one. With each challenge there is often a temptation to simplify matters, find a quick solution and identify, often wrongly, aggressors, transgressors and or victims. But humanity like power politics is not that simple. Three recent UN reviews of the contemporary global peace-making architecture described the current state of affairs as being fractured (UN 2015a; 2015b; 2015c) and call for greater inclusiveness in the forging of social justice and peace. The issues to be confronted may be imposing in their scale but they need to be faced with fortitude and with co-operative and collaborative spirit.

Capability, Social Justice and Human Rights

154 So much for the problems and global context, but what can be done? We need to continue to
155 find effective frameworks, principles and language through which sport and SDP can make the
156 art of the possible, possible more often. There are no simple solutions but safe and secure
157 spaces are needed through which social justice, cultural relations and peace-making processes
158 can be negotiated and constructed on an ongoing basis.

159 A flexible CA provides *but one* flexible normative proposition that can help to guide
160 such challenges. In reaching such a position this article considers a CA to social justice and
161 human rights within the work of key writers associated with the development of CA, namely
162 Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

163 *CA and Social Justice*

164 The CA approach to social justice grows out of the work of Sen (1999, 2004; 2009; 2012;
165 2017) and Nussbaum (1997; 1999; 2000; 2003; 2011). A body of work that has been reviewed
166 and critiqued (Alkire, 2002, 2008; Crocker, 2008; Fukuda-Parr, 2011; Robeyns, 2006, 2017;
167 Zimmermann, 2006, 2017) and belatedly entered the consciousness of scholars and researchers
168 thinking critically about sport and SDP (Darnell and Dao, 2017; Jarvie and Sikes, 2012; Sikes
169 and Jarvie, 2014; Spaaij, Oxford and Jeanes, 2016; Svensson and Levine, 2017; Zipp and
170 Nauright, 2018). It is not necessary to review in depth here the CA to sport and SDP since this
171 is extended further in Jarvie and Ahrens' (2019b) contribution to this special issue on sport and
172 social justice. Crucially a CA approach to SDP would not see sport for development but sport
173 as development in the sense that Sen (1999) talked of development as freedom, positioning
174 sport not just as individual capability but as broader community capability and agency.

175 According to Sen (2009), capability and freedom are the raw *materials* of social justice.
176 Freedom refers to the availability of choices and the ability to make a choice. The more freedom
177 people have, the more opportunities they have. Sen's capability approach to development rests
178 upon a person's well-being. This is based upon their actual ability to achieve a combination of

things that enable them to do or be (Sen, 1993, p. 30). Real freedom is taken to mean effective collective choice. A socially just society is seen as one that offers this freedom to the maximum degree for the largest number of people. The more capabilities a person has, the greater is their effective freedom to make choices about life, work and development.

For Sen (2009), freedom of choice is important because an individuals' true freedom depends upon whether they can choose of their own free will and not choose simply because of the options available to them. Recently, Sen (2017) argued that freedom should be the primary aspect of development for two key reasons. Firstly, that the only acceptable evaluation of human progress was ultimately the enhancement of freedoms and secondly, that the achievement of development was dependent on the free agency of people. Thus, aspects of freedom are linked to opportunity, process and agency. Social justice is to be understood as equal opportunities for everyone to develop their capabilities. Such an approach focuses upon an individuals' internal understandings of what it means to attain their well-being and how they can live the life they want to live. A just society is viewed as one in which an individual's origin should not affect their life chances. The redistribution of economic resources are viewed as not being sufficient to achieve a just society, rather just societies needed to make sure that everyone has equal opportunities, for example, for social, educational, political and sporting participation, but also for access to health care and employment.

CA and Human Rights

Just as we were careful earlier to define what is meant by the common good, the same caution is needed with regards to human rights. As the term is used here it refers to the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that are given legal definitions within international treaties which most states have signed up to. The local context in which human rights are negotiated during conflict or the peace-making approaches is a vital space. A central problem with the construction of human rights is that visions of the state during periods of transition often serve

the interests of only one group. The value of an approach that allows for negotiated human rights and a negotiated common good, is that it offers the possibility of a much more shared concept of the state and or community; one that is capable of serving a broader set of interests operating beyond that of the individual and a single interest group. Sport and SDP can be viewed as a social tool and space that facilitates the construction of a common good while fractured communities and societies move through phases of transitional justice.

Carlson, Nguyen and Reinardy (2016) have recently argued that while Sen captured the external conditions that allow individuals to practice their rights and live to the fullness of their capabilities, such an approach failed to outline how this might be achieved. In a series of interventions that questioned Sen's thinking on the relationship between capabilities and human rights, Nussbaum (1997, 2003, 2011) argued that if such a relationship was to be meaningful then it was vital to define what basic capabilities and/or rights it was important to protect. Nussbaum consistently pointed out that the improvement of one individual's freedom was not inconsequential freedom as the promotion of one person's freedom could curtail another's freedom and a baseline set of capabilities had to be defined. This she did by endorsing a list of 10 central human capabilities (Nussbaum, 1997).

In both the work of Sen and Nussbaum, the CA developed beyond the foundations laid in their earlier work to an approach in which human rights have to be actively protected and secured. Public action is therefore required to secure not just basic capabilities or individual welfare but both individual and collective action is required to advance individual and combined capabilities. A CA allows scope, for example, for conventions, charters and declarations as expressions of public action that are designed to bring about outcomes beyond that of the personal individual.

It is crucial to point out that a CA to social justice and human rights requires not only a normative framework but also a practical set of guidelines or principles through which such

ends might be realized. There is an opportunity for reworking the normative dimensions of a CA to sport that are not locked into an individualist approach to agency. An approach that allows a CA to provide a flexible normative framework for sport and SDP that forges not just individual but collective forms of agency- or what Frenzel (2016, p. 180) calls agency in common and Jade (2017) refers to as the construction of the common good.

A CA to social justice, human rights and effective cultural relations allows scope to focus beyond the resources required to foster individual welfare, into wider spheres of public action. Romaineville (2015) reminds us that even if Sen and Nussbaum did not share the same understanding of the relationship between human rights and capabilities, it is possible to reconcile both authors on the fundamental role of culture (including sport as culture) as a condition for the exercise of various functionings and as a capability that must be supported.

It is advocated for here because it helps sport and SDP focus upon vulnerable populations, socio-economic and geo-political inequality, human rights and to support fractured societies and communities. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs emphasise the integrated and indivisible nature of sustainable development. Human right laws seek to protect and promote economic, social and environmental development but they also reach further into civil and political aspects of life that can support efforts to enable sport, peace and justice. A proposition that extends Nussbaum's (1997, 2011) call for capability building as a basis for a common humanity. A proposition that enables sport and SDP to have a more influential part to play in making the art of the possible, possible and foster a broad set of interests operating for an expanded common good.

Sport and the common good – Making things possible

If one accepts the observation that the international peace keeping and development community is at a critical moment and take up the invitation to seek new solutions and act in politically smarter ways, then we need a new language and set of principles by which sport and SDP can

serve social justice and the creation of a negotiated and sustainable common good. It is difficult to find agreement on the right language for such a proposition that seeks to foster social justice and more effective cultural relations. For some it would be about constructing public authority and power (Hoffman and Kirk, 2013); for others a social contract (UNDP, 2012) and yet others, a search for a shared future and enlarged common good (Jade, 2017). The problem with many of these options is that they point to a state-building end point or a one-way process, when in fact what is needed is a greater shared mutual understanding of the common good.

The idea that sport as a tool can serve as a resource of hope, build capabilities and work to expand a common good is a proposition that diplomats, peacemakers, civil servants, and development actors should consider. Should we not use any means at our disposal to strive to make the world a less tense, more just and better place? Should we not argue that an opportunity exists to enable sport to be part of the essential toolbox for anyone involved in social justice, peacemaking, forging effective cultural relations and/or building capability? Should peacebuilding and development actors, foreign diplomats, ambassadors, civil servants, cultural agencies, NGO's, international aid agencies and academics, not recognise fully the full range of social and political tools at their disposal when navigating the peace building process, fighting for social justice, upholding human rights and creating influence within and through sport?

The role played by a host of non-state institutions working below the level of government is crucial. These may include sports institutions, clubs, agencies, universities and more. Sport has a role to play in making things possible. It is not a utopian proposition to argue that sports policy, sports investment, sports research, sports advocacy, commitment, alignment, and the power of universities and civil society working for people, places and communities are real resources of hope or provide spaces where the negotiation of the common good can be fostered, enabled and transitional. However, the sport and SDP sector have to be better at

securing normative propositions within the non-sport or SDP sector such as the development sector. Sport needs to be better at talking to other sectors.

Successful peace negotiations, conflict resolution, calls for social justice and effective cultural relations all involve compromise and seldom evoke a pre-commitment to the common good. Rather they require the common good to be constructed in an ongoing way and they require spaces where this can happen. The common good is therefore best understood as a project of ongoing political construction rather than a pre-commitment to any one party, one state, one community or one nation. Sport like human rights commitments should be understood as but one mechanism that holds open a space through which social and political construction and transition can take place. Marchesseault's (2016) analysis of the place of the bicycle and the cyclist in post-conflict Rwanda provides but one example of a study that evidences both the role of the cyclist as an active agent and form of agency in the construction of and transition to a more peaceful Rwanda. It is not utopian to suggest, in the language of Sen and Nussbaum, that within this context sports functioning can enable a common conversation about key drivers of conflict, inequality, safety, rights and much more. Nor is it utopian to suggest that the role of sport in forging cultural relations is more than diplomacy or soft power, in that it evokes mutuality and some sort of conversation over common values and a wider common good.

Successive *Global Impact Reports of Sport* (GIS 2015, 2016, 2017) point to the fact that one in five people in the world connect with sport in some way. We need to maximise influence both within sport itself but also through sport. To forge long standing meaningful cultural relations issues of mutuality, reciprocity, trust and co-operation have to be further enabled. This is more than diplomacy and more than soft power. For effective cultural relations to operate through sport it needs to be recognized that good cultural relations is at least a two-way process. Diplomacy often follows foreign policy and, in this sense, it is what one country

or community does to another. Cultural relations, on the other hand, seeks to create, as the name suggests, a relationship. The medium of exchange is culture, and what is created is a relationship, something that should be mutual and something that should be valued in common.

It is argued here that there is value in a CA that frames sport and SDP to assist with the creation of an expanded common good. An approach that contains a social common core that can be negotiated rather than prescribed. An approach that recognizes the importance of hybridity and local voices in forging the common good. Hugman (2010, p.57) argues, for an approach that sees capabilities as representing the agreed common elements for attaining a fully human life but realizes that such capabilities may vary widely between different cultural contexts. An approach that acknowledges that the construction of transitional justice is not a short-term project.

There are lessons for academics and practitioners working through sport and SDP to create social change. The academic literature on SDP as a whole appears to underwrite and support the push for a more nuanced political approach. If there is a common thread across policy and academic worlds, it is that practice needs to be more critical of the politics of international intervention in support for social change and more attuned to local political struggles that they seek to affect (MacGinty and Richmond, 2013). It is worth calling upon the work of the Welsh writer Raymond Williams who penned an important intervention in the 1990s called *Resources of Hope* (1991). The writer championed the need for commitment and argued that artists, writers and academics had to balance their freedoms with a duty to strive to help others, what he called the art of the possible. Given the Welsh origins of the writer, it is perhaps surprising, that the author forgot to include sport in the resources of hope social tool box. Sport can be part of making the art of the possible, possible, in so many ways, and we should exploit it to the full. Making sport work as a resource of hope for more people, places, communities is complex, but not impossible.

The opportunity exists for sport and SDP to be part of this global re-negotiation. Academia and those working both within and outside of the university have a huge opportunity not only to continue to influence the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the role of sport in this process, but also cement sport as having a more effective role within a global context. We pointed out earlier that key messages emanating from a range of disciplines suggested that international approaches paved with good intentions often fail, were not sustainable and that rolled out blueprinted solutions often fail to sufficiently understand local contexts and cultures. We need to do things better. In suggesting that sport and SDP initiatives need to act in politically smarter ways at least three observations might be offered.

Firstly, long term approaches to social change and the construction of the common good are necessary. Secondly, the implementation of sport and SDP commitments, if they are going to affect development, social justice, the peace-making process and/or more effective cultural relations then they need to be seen as a means of assisting local actors to hold open political spaces where dialogue can take place rather than unthinkingly assist those who seek to close such spaces. Finally, a level of risk is involved and while international interveners need to be prepared to take on a level of risk it should be supported to think through how risk can be mitigated (Social Change Initiative, 2016).

We acknowledged earlier the invaluable ongoing contribution made by those working in universities to social and political intervention through sport and SDP, but that changing global contexts have also thrown up challenges to the role of the expert, the role of the university, the role of the academic. In drawing to a conclusion, it is worth warning against any complacency that assumes the platforms provided for the expert, the university and/or the academic will remain unchallenged (British Academy, 2017; Jarvie, 2013; Jarvie, Thornton and Mackie, 2018). If we are to reach common ground about ways of doing things differently, then there is a need for reflexive responses to challenges to expertise. There is a need for better

dialogue between practitioners and academics about the challenges of new world contexts in producing and disseminating knowledge. Who has the capacity and right to produce relevant expertise to assist new worlds or communities in transitions?

Finally, there is a need to know how to best embrace critical friendship. Global processes of transition and transformation clearly seem to be rejecting liberal peace values and architecture. Some of the most insightful interventions from sport and SDP, but not just sport SDP, have come from critical social and political theorising in which theory might be viewed as much as a useful resource as any new technocratic advice. However, the question remains as to whether academics are involved in a project of critical friendship to provide interventions that seek to grow the common ground, or one of pure criticism that views all interventions as inevitably flawed without providing suggestions about what should be done.

Conclusion

This position statement on sport for social justice, capability and the common good has attempted to draw upon a flexible CA as a basis for sport being enabled to address the challenges that face humanity in the 21st Century. It has acknowledged the value in a CA that positions sport as contributing to the common good. It has observed that the current context is one in which the international norms and structures that have developed to support social justice, development and international cultural relations appear to be in a period of global re-negotiation and it has suggested some ways of working through this. It has suggested that sport and SDP can be part of capability building which assists fragmented societies and communities move through periods of transitional justice.

Sport will not solve the world's problems but it can make an effective contribution. The global balance of power is tense, in a state of flux and countries and cities need effective cultural relations. Sport has a part to play in helping with global tensions and perhaps more importantly, winning friends in a mutually supportive way. We have tried to suggest that the

framing of social justice and cultural relations should consider a capability approach, matters of mutuality, trust, and co-operation but most importantly consider the space needed to foster an enlarged and enabled common good. Today's foreign diplomats, civil servants, activists and universities should use sport to the full. We need to re-think and continually evaluate what social justice and cultural relations means today.

Those working in and through sport are well served by the notion of sport enabling capabilities and being seen as a resource and public space which can help with forging a common good, making the art of the possible, possible and the shaping of transitional justice. Something that the late Tessa Jowell supported, fought for and understood.

Notes

1. A number of people have read earlier drafts of this position statement and provided feedback for which we are grateful. Mairi Thornton in particular has to be thanked. The feedback from the external reviewers was constructive and thoughtful. The position statement is stronger as a result of this feedback.

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