Sport and Development in Emerging Nations

For the first time, this book examines the strategies of leaders of emerging nations to use sport as a tool for reaching social, economic, cultural, political, technological or environmental goals and gaining international prestige. It assesses whether sport can really be an effective tool in international development.

The book explores the unique challenges, issues and opportunities offered by sport for development in emerging nations. Bringing together case studies of sport and development in countries including Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, Qatar, South Africa, South Korea and Turkey, the book looks at policies designed to achieve development through, by and for sport, and whether they have achieved their socio-economic objectives. It considers the way that emerging nations have used major international sports events as political and developmental projects, as well as the importance of sporting infrastructure, professional leagues, participation programmes and the influence of nationalism and ideology.

With a truly global perspective, this book is important reading for any student, researcher or policy-maker with interest in sport management, sport development, development studies, international economics, globalisation or political science.

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The Routledge Research in Sport Politics and Policy series aims to give shape to, and showcase, the burgeoning academic field of ‘sport politics and policy’. Highlighting the political nature of sport, the series shows how sport can illuminate our understanding of wider political themes such as, issues around governance; sport, foreign policy and ‘soft power’; gender politics, or the use of sport as a development tool. The series embraces all areas of sport politics and policy, including domestic, international and comparative studies, and includes work by world-leading and emerging scholars.

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Sport and Development in Emerging Nations

Edited by Cem Tinaz and Brendon Knott
To our families (Cem – to Pınar, Mehmet, Kerem, Tuvana and Ege; Brendon – to Kevin, Diane and brothers), thank you for your continuous support, love and inspiration.
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In the opening chapter of this collection, Cem Tinaz and Brendon Knott discuss the variety of interpretations of development in relation to sport. Their discussion captures the multiple interpretations of 'sport development' particularly the extent to which sport development is both an activity of those working in the sports sector and a resource for non-sport businesses, not-for-profit organisations and governments. The plasticity of the concept of sport development is demonstrated to powerful effect in the chapters of this collection. Almost 20 years ago I wrote a book with Anita White which had the sub-title Development of Sport or Development through Sport (Houlihan and White, 2002). Over the intervening years the implied tension between the two interpretations of sport development has remained and has arguably intensified. The range of developmental objectives to which sport has been attached has remained broad with sport being utilised by governments in a wide variety of ways including as a diplomatic resource, a tool of social control, a health strategy, a resource for community integration and a strategy for sanitising corrupt political regimes. Similar examples of the use of sport for non-sport objectives can be found in relation to business involvement in sport. In the last 40 years or so sport development as a business sector has become an important part of many national economies. While the growth of the business of sport development (whether the development of young elite athletes or the provision of community sport opportunities) has widened the opportunities for participation it has also been used by some businesses to project a more positive brand image – a strategy particularly notable among the manufacturers of unhealthy junk food.

One of the principal virtues of this collection is the way in which it demonstrates the variation in the motives of governments, the extent and methods of intervention and the impact of governmental intervention. Furthermore, two important tensions are amply illustrated: the first is between market freedom and government control (Chapters 3, China, and 5, Hungary, are particularly valuable in this regard) and the second is between investing in elite sport (often for nation-branding/promotion purposes) and investing in community sport/sport for all (Chapters 4, Czech Republic, and 7, Indonesia, being good illustrations of this tension). Perhaps the most interesting exploration of the motives of governments
is in Chapter 3 which examines the professional football in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). As the authors make clear achieving international success in football remains a political priority despite the PRC having clearly demonstrated its ‘sports power’ status at successive recent Olympic Games. Sporting success as an indicator of international status and as a measure of national self-confidence needs no clearer illustration.

The increased involvement of governments and large corporations in sport development requires the analysis of not only the motives for involvement but also the distribution and exercise of power in the sport development field. The theme of power was a thread that ran through a collection of studies that I edited in 2011 with Mick Green (Houlihan and Green, 2011). The particular focus was on the attraction of sport development to governments and the ways in which they sought to utilise sport not only for socially beneficial, but also for deeply cynical, ends. The collection demonstrated inter alia that major attractions of sport to government included its relatively low cost, its high visibility and its low risk. Whether the issue concerned youth unemployment, low educational standards, poor health indicators or urban unrest sport was often presented as a panacea. Politicians would regularly refer to the ‘power of sport’ as though it had magical properties. The mythologising of the potential of sport development to address complex social and personal problems has deep cultural roots in many countries making the objective analysis of the impact of sport development a challenge for researchers. As Fred Coalter persuasively argued, ‘such myths contain elements of truth, but elements which have become reified and distorted and “represent” rather than reflect reality, standing for supposed, but largely unexamined, impacts and processes’ (Coalter, 2007, p. 9). The collection of studies in this volume reinforces Coalter’s emphasis on the need to challenge the mythologising that surrounds sport development and to examine evidence from a disinterested and sceptical standpoint.

Apart from the critical examination of the claims made on behalf of sport development the other strength of this collection is the focus on a range of countries that are often on the margin of Western academic research. As an academic community we know far too little about the policy and politics of sport and sport development in the majority of the 207 countries that attended the 2016 Olympic Games, the 61 national members of the International Council of Sports Science and Physical Education, the 53 member states of the Commonwealth who subscribe to the organisation’s strategy for development and peace through sport (Dudfield, 2014) or many of the states who contributed to the UN report the role of sport in peace and development (United Nations, 2020). The focus of this volume on analysing the interpretation and implementation of sport development policies in countries from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South America and Eastern Europe greatly enriches our understanding of sport development as a global phenomenon. Furthermore, the collection of studies in this volume will be of particular interest to scholars whose research focuses on the tension between
attempts to maintain a set of national policy objectives and the priorities of global sports organisations, broadcast media and sports businesses. Understanding how, and the extent to which, emerging nations are able to develop strategies singly or collectively to protect their interests is an important direction for research that this volume indicates.

by Barrie Houlihan

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Chapter 1

Introduction
Defining sport and development in emerging nations

Cem Tinaz and Brendon Knott

The sport industry has been enjoying increased benefits and expanded opportunities through the process of globalisation. As Jarvie (2006) has stated, the global era of sport has presented fundamental challenges for sport organisations. Still, it has also created the opportunity for sport to be a social force for internationalism, reconciliation and international development.

Sport is currently linked to a wide variety of development initiatives as it is often posited as a tool to assist in economic and social development. With great optimism, many countries facing acute demographic shifts towards youth tend to see sport as a means to suppress delinquency, unemployment and drug use. Each month multiple new organisations using sport to achieve specific results have been established (Hayhurst and Frisby, 2010).

At the same time, sport can provide physical, mental and social benefits to improve the well-being of an ageing population. It can be used to promote social inclusion of otherwise marginalised people. As Kay and Bradbury (2009) have suggested, involvement in sport is understood to confer life skills, leadership qualities, social knowledge and values. However, it would be very naive to say that such positive outcomes happen naturally or organically through participation. In other words, solely playing sport does not lead to developmental outcomes; in order to have a productive effect on development, sport programmes should be organised and structured in purposive, systematic ways. According to Coalter (2009), although participation in sport can be a useful mechanism for development, it is not sufficient alone to engender social change. Hartmann (2003) emphasised that the non-sport components of any sport-based social interventionist programme are what define its strength.

Houlihan and White (2002) argued that the area of sport development is not static; the objectives, practises, primary agents and resources change over time as does the definition of sport development. Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) stated that one of the most critical initial challenges for understanding and theorising the field of sport and development is the ambiguity and multiplicity around conceptions of development. Furthermore, the interpretation and definition of sport development has different meanings to different agencies, such as sports governing bodies, clubs, corporations and NGOs. In its most comprehensive meaning, sport development refers to participating in sport itself and promoting the opportunities
and benefits of such participation, and as Kidd (2008) argues, it is a project of sport organisations. The potential outcomes of sport development may include betterments of the sport itself, plus individuals who are involved in sport for various benefits and experiences, and in a wider sense nations and communities. From a practitioner’s perspective, Astle (2014, p. 15) defined sport development as:

The sustainable provision of, and access to, integrated pathways of relevant, appealing and affordable sporting opportunities for individuals, irrespective of age, ability, interest or gender, to participate, enjoy and progress in a supportive environment that has the infrastructure and services, capable of offering high-quality experiences, that satisfy their diverse and changing needs, motivations and expectations, and ensure their continued involvement in sport.

Initial attempts to define sport development considered two aspects: the development of sport and development through sport (Houlihan and White, 2002). Intending to build sport capacity, development of sport refers to the development of the sport itself or, in other words, the creation of opportunities for participants and the enhancement of the sport. Mainly, these are the activities designed both to excel in performance and increase participation. On the other hand, development through sport focuses on the role sport can play in enhancing the well-being of individuals, communities and societies (Ha, Lee and Ok, 2015). According to this approach, sport constitutes a powerful tool for social integration, promotion of health and disease prevention, creating physical and psychological benefits for individuals, development of the community and social capital and empowerment of minorities, girls and women (Levermore, 2008a). As a result of this approach, recently sport has gained increased importance as a tool to promote health, education and peace. Nevertheless, as Levermore and Beacom (2009) have expressed, we should bear in mind that these socio-economic aspects and sport are not mutually exclusive. As they state, different social aspects such as leadership, inclusion and capacity building are linked to sport aspects such as coaching, performance and physical skills.

In his conceptual framework, Coalter (2009) defined two ends of sport and development: sport plus and plus sport. In this conceptualisation, sport plus programmes focus on the development of sport-oriented initiatives such as sustainable sport organisations, programmes and development pathways, while plus sport programmes focus on achieving non-sport goals, such as social or economic development. The main concern of plus sport programmes is how sport can aid social and economic development.

Astle (2014) reworked these definitions by providing the following six subcategories of sport development:

- Development IN sport: the extent to which authorities adapt sport to make them more attractive to audiences.
- Development OF sport: breaking down barriers to participation.