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Sport, International Development and Mega-events

Introduction

On 2 October 2009, the IOC awarded the 2016 Summer Olympic Games to Rio de Janeiro, choosing the Brazilian city over northern competitors Madrid, Chicago and Tokyo, and marking the first time the Games had been awarded to a city in South America. The announcement shortly succeeded Brazil's winning, in 2007, the rights to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and thus put the country on schedule to host, within 24 months, the world's two highest profile, and arguably most prestigious, sports events. Indeed, one measure of the size and scope of these events is the amount of money budgeted to be spent, with estimates, according to the Rio 2016 Candidature file, of operating costs for the Rio Olympics of US\$2.8 billion and a total Olympic budget, including capital investments, of US\$11.6 billion. This is in addition to the building of seven new stadiums and the refurbishment of five others for the World Cup at an estimated cost of US\$1.1 billion.

The announcement of, and subsequent plans for, these two events in an emerging, southern economy like Brazil is representative of two broader trends within the relationship between sport and international development. The first is the movement of sports mega-events, particularly the Olympics and World Cup but also 'second-order' games like the Commonwealth Games and Pan American Games (see Black 2008) to the Global South. Indeed, with the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India as primary examples, there is an increasing tendency for southern polities to strive for participation in globalization and globalized sport in and through the hosting of sports mega-events. This tendency is clearly now recognized, supported and ultimately enabled by supranational sports organizations like the IOC and FIFA. This in turn leads to the second trend, namely the sociopolitical construction, and essentially the marketing of these events in the Global South as a legitimate and fundamental aspect of development policy and strategy (see Cornelissen 2009). In addition to the generally and traditionally accepted positioning of sports mega-events as a means to build sporting infrastructure and 'legacies' for citizens of host cities and nations, the movement of mega-events to the South has meant that such events are now positioned more broadly as catalysts for social and economic

development and part of long-term southern development strategies. For these reasons, any analysis of the contemporary connections between sport and international development needs to consider the role of sports mega-events, the interests of the plethora of organizations and institutions that have a stake in the movement of mega-events to the South and the concomitant connection of such events to development policies and discourses.

In this chapter, I offer a critical and theoretically informed research framework for making sense of the connections between sports mega-events in the Global South and the development agenda, or the promises, for sustainable and equitable development that are increasingly attached to such events. I also examine how these promises connect to the SDP sector. The chapter's central argument is that sports mega-events in the Global South are increasingly organized, marketed and celebrated as legitimate components of a sustainable and equitable development agenda but that such invocations often obscure the ways in which such events are themselves embedded in a political economy of inequality and underdevelopment. To construct this argument, I explore the current social and political economy of sports mega-events and their connections – material and discursive – to international development goals. I then advance three theses regarding the implications of positioning sports mega-events as legitimate development policy.

Throughout the chapter, I consider the intersections of economic, political *and* cultural dimensions given the impossibility of effectively separating them in any critical analysis of sports mega-events (Tomlinson 2005). Furthermore, as Cornelissen (2009) has argued, the study of sports mega-events in development studies has suffered from a lack of engagement with development theory. Thus, I attend to the conceptualizations of development promoted by the state, civil society and popular culture, and the interrelations between the three, in making sense of sports mega-events and SFD.

The sociopolitical economy of sports mega-events

Much has been written in recent years about the commercialization and global reach of sports mega-events, the reasons why hosting sports mega-events remain attractive to cities and countries, and the ability or likelihood of sports mega-events to deliver on their social and/or economic promises (see Black 2008; Cornelissen 2008; Hall 2006; Horne 2007; Roche 2000; Swart and Bob 2004, among others). While a full review of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, I do draw attention here to key elements of the political economy of sports mega-events in order to contextualize their movement to the Global South and their discursive connection to, or construction as, legitimate and sustainable development initiatives. I draw principally on Cornelissen's (2009)

argument that sports mega-events in the Global South are used to showcase successful development, particularly for states struggling for legitimacy within competitive globalization, even though the various notions of development espoused through such sports mega-events are rarely problematized within such processes.

First and foremost, then, the development politics of mega-events are evident to the extent that they are explicitly and firmly situated within the broader political and economic sphere. In writing about the Olympic Games, Tomlinson (2005) argues that the primary significance of the Olympic Games is not international sporting competition but rather the connection between the Games and the production and 'profiling' of cities as legitimate spaces within competitive globalization and the expansion of capital and corporate interests into new consumer markets. The organization and hosting of sports mega-events is never a benign act – socially, economically or politically – but always connected to a range of political and economic interests. Particularly since the 'commercial era' of the Olympics, beginning in 1984 with the Summer Games in Los Angeles, it is impossible to separate the Games from corporatization and the pursuit of profit despite the ways in which the Olympics continue to promulgate, if not trade upon, notions of the event in service of tolerance and internationalism (Tomlinson 2005). The result is a dense cultural and political mix of 'sport for profit' and 'sport for good', messages and practices that are ascribed to the Olympics as well as to the FIFA World Cup, which promotes a message of football as a universal language and supports such discourses with the organization and dissemination of Football for Hope (<http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/worldwideprograms/footballforhope>). These meanings are important on a global scale given that sports mega-events require an infrastructure and culture of mass media in order to construct and sustain sporting spectacle (Roche 2006) and therefore have the ability to transmit promotional messages to billions of people (Horne 2007).

This political and cultural economy points towards the fact that while contemporary sports mega-events are products or phenomena of global modernity (Roche 2006), in their current construction and organization they are principally constitutive of, and constituted by, neoliberal policy and philosophy (Hall 2006). This means that sports mega-events are of the same tradition, share many of the same limitations and are open to the same criticisms as neoliberal policy and neoliberal approaches to international development. For example, Gruneau (in press) illustrates how the prestige and wealth ascribed to sports mega-events beginning in the 1980s increased at the same time as economic inequality was exacerbated around the world through anti-Kenyesian economic liberalization, reductions in public spending and the increased mobility of capital. This relationship is not causal; the competition to host sports mega-events did not/does not invariably lead to inequality. However, it is significant that the 'economic scale and significance' of sports

mega-events increased as part of the same political economy that privileged deregulation, growth and social policy based on individual rights and did so at the expense of more direct analyses and responses to development inequality (Gruneau, *in press*: 21).

As a result, sports mega-events now offer states a political instrumentality (Cornelissen 2008) and/or a means of competing for, and establishing, a global identity (Black 2008) that is ostensibly or theoretically open to a range of orientations towards development, but in political and economic practice, and particularly in relation to development, tends to privilege neoliberalism by mobilizing capital and seeking to attract foreign investment. Indeed, it is within the neoliberal political economy that mega-events have thrived (Hall 2006) and in turn come to constitute an important, although I will argue ultimately limited, element of a long-term, sustainable development agenda. This is particularly the case for southern states, traditionally marginalized geopolitically and therefore increasingly desperate to attract foreign money and participate more robustly and effectively within competitive global capitalism. In addition to the political limits identified by Gruneau, whereby sports mega-events for development become more about the improved facilitation of capital and less about redressing inequality, at least three others critical issues can be identified within an analysis of the sociopolitical economy: limited sustainability, chronic overspending and consumption as a form of cultural education/exclusion.

While the hosting of sports mega-events has increasingly become part of broader state-led development policy and goals in southern countries like South Africa (Cornelissen 2009), hosting remains, in many cases, beholden to the goal of an improved domestic sports industry and athletic success, a focus with inherent limitations. The finite number of sports mega-events in the world limits the sustainability of development for cities deemed worthy enough to host. The result is that the development boons of hosting lead to the propensity, if not the necessity, to host again and again in order to maintain a global identity and economic stimulus within competitive capitalism (Black 2008). South Korea provides an interesting contemporary example, whereby the hosting of mega-events (beginning with the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul and continuing through the 2002 FIFA World Cup, co-hosted with Japan) has led the country to aggressively pursue subsequent mega-events and commit to producing world-class, high-performance athletes who win medals at a rate beyond that expected by their population size. This is, ostensibly, a form of SFD whereby Korea seeks political and economic benefits as a hosting nation.

On the one hand, this strategy is led and supported by the state, which suggests the possibility of an alternative to neoliberal, market-driven and/or civil society development initiatives. However, such strategies have, in the Korean case, arguably had less to do with shifting from competitive development logic to a social development strategy (as suggested by dominant SDP rhetoric) and

more to do with a strategy of mobilizing sport as a means of better participation within competitive globalization with benefits for the state (Kwon 2010). By this logic, being a sports powerhouse through hosting mega-events and/or performing well on the pitch, court or ice at major games is understood to represent, or even directly lead to, success within the globalization of sport and the challenges of development.

Success in hosting sports mega-events is fleeting at best, though, particularly if the media coverage and political instrumentality afforded by the act of hosting cannot be extended beyond the time frame of the games themselves. Successful hosts like Korea therefore find themselves striving to host subsequent events.¹ In turn, given the issue of chronic overspending (discussed below) sports mega-events can become developmental spending handcuffs for the hosting state. Perhaps more importantly from the perspective of critical development studies, if the competitive political economy of international development (and SFD) continues unchallenged, and sports mega-events become an increasingly legitimate means of success within competitive development, then it necessarily structures a world where not all can be successful. In such a model, the success of Korean development *depends on* the underdevelopment of sport elsewhere given that only a small number of mega-events (not to mention Olympic medals and World Cup titles) are available to be won. From this perspective, *dependencia*, underpinned by the Marxist tradition, remains an important critical lens through which to analyse SFD and mega-events because winning the development game – a cultural and political logic particularly palatable in and around sport – is reduced to the importance of ‘not losing’ at development. Thus, while on the one hand, the active developmental state, such as in Korea, appears beneficial in the face of retreating state participation and amidst neoliberal development, in the case of sports mega-events the developmental state appears to buy into, rather than challenge, competitive globalization, a strategy that requires massive public spending on elite sport and international mega-events at the expense of other development priorities.

This, then, leads to the second development limitation related to the political economy of sports mega-events: chronic overspending. Sports mega-events regularly exceed their budgets and place the hosting state/city in a precarious position whereby they cannot afford *not* to cover extra costs and risk the Games being a failure (Black 2008). The track record and body of research related to spending on sports mega-events suggests that overspending is the normative experience, not the exception. As Horne (2007) shows, overspending on mega-events remains couched in a political ethos whereby supporters consider it to be an ‘unknown known’ or a recurring tendency but one best left unexplored or unacknowledged. At the least, whether the tendency to overspend is admitted or not, any development strategy based on an economic track record as dubious as that of contemporary sports mega-events appears limited at best.

Furthermore, for peripheral or emerging states, or for LMICs, the stakes associated with hosting are significantly higher both in terms of economic standing and international prestige (Black 2008). Certainly, the popular discourse surrounding the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi positioned the event as an international sociopolitical referendum on the competencies of the Indian economy and state functioning. At issue is that placing such a development burden on something as economically precarious as the hosting of a sports mega-event almost necessarily resigns states in the Global South to overextend in order to achieve, a burden likely passed on to domestic spending or the social safety net. This is particularly likely when the goal of hosting is to perform and assert state prestige and development as the world watches.

In turn, then, a third limitation inherent to the current sociopolitical economy of sports mega-events is that the champions of staging such events regularly trade on the universality of sport amidst the globalization of the political economy but rarely acknowledge the role of sports mega-events in effectively demarcating who is included and/or excluded socially and economically. As Roche (2000: 65) has demonstrated, the ‘universality’ of mega-events – such as world’s fairs or Expos in the nineteenth century and the modern Olympics – employed several ‘exclusionary features’ that secured racist, sexist and classist ideologies in and through the construction of a presumed collective social progress. Given the intensity of the commercialization of the modern sports mega-events, exclusionary practices continue in a similar fashion. In this regard, the particular and privileged experiences and politics of sports mega-events, by which I refer to the fact that hosting, attending and/or consuming sports mega-events remain an opportunity available to a privileged sociopolitical class, are positioned as a universal sporting experience as if to suggest that the entire world has access to, and indeed does, consume sports mega-events. This is a limit of the universalization discourse at it is constructed at the confluence of sports mega-events and international development; the culturally specific and socially exclusive sporting experience is deemed to be applicable to all and/or comes to stand as evidence of the sporting underdevelopment of marginalized communities, nations or populations. This ‘universalist’ discourse of sport is one that scholars like Roche (2000) and Peacock (2011) show connects particularly well to the establishment of global sporting governance that the IOC carved out for itself in the twentieth century. This discourse, coupled with the forces of economic and cultural globalization, takes the particular experience of bourgeois consumption of the Olympics and renders it a universal experience and repositions those unable (or unwilling) to consume as ‘underdeveloped’. Such markers of underdevelopment then become licence for SFD initiatives, enabled by the movement of mega-events to the South. The Olympics as a form of modernity is imported into a development discourse as a new means of spurring development and justifying the expansion of mega-events to the South and the spending that this requires. Those privileged

enough to consume can then employ universal discourses of sport and development as a means of 'educating' themselves about the need for, and role of, sports mega-events in contributing to the 'un-underdevelopment' of Others (Biccum 2010).

With these limits in mind, I suggest that sports mega-events are best conceptualized as a means of, or approach to, development that privileges a philosophy or approach based on more effective and/or more competitive participation within the global economy rather than one that challenges the politically economic order or the structures and institutionalization of inequality. Indeed, following Hall (2006), sports mega-events are quintessentially neoliberal in championing an ethos of global competitiveness and constant economic and political regeneration. What is crucial for the purposes of this chapter is that, based on early analyses of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in particular, simply moving sports mega-events to the Global South does little, if anything, to make such events any more accountable to the public good (see Desai and Vahed 2010). In the next section, I examine more closely the ways in which sports mega-events have been positioned as central to broad, sustainable development in the Global South.

The development agenda of sports mega-events in the Global South

To this point, I have offered arguments about the limitations of the type of, or orientation towards, development often ascribed to the hosting of sports mega-events, particularly in the Global South. Here it is important to consider that political and institutional forces, as well as relations of power, are also in play and serve to encourage or drive sports mega-events to the Global South. These forces are framed by the notion that sports mega-events can showcase the development of the South, which arguably holds greater weight than the actual contributions of hosting for southern states (Cornelissen 2009). Two forces in particular, then, can be understood to work in self-referential and mutually constitutive ways to drive mega-events to the South: the new, yet historically informed, development agenda espoused by sports mega-event organizations like the IOC and FIFA and the relative desperation of southern states to 'get a piece of the sport mega-events pie globally' (Swart and Bob 2004: 1313).

With respect to the former, it is reasonable to argue that the interest in SDP on the part of the IOC and FIFA works to 'construct' a development agenda in and through the bestowing of the Olympics or World Cup to southern polities. If sports mega-events are understood to constitute an event whereby southern development can be and is showcased, then the awarding of the Games, by powerful supranational organization, or sporting Business International

Non-governmental Organizations (BINGOs) like FIFA (Sugden and Tomlinson 2005) and the IOC, is an active part of the setting of development standards and parameters. Through such processes, southern development through sports mega-events is repositioned as a means by which to recognize and reward appropriate and politically palatable development processes, rather than a means by which to support the struggle for sustainable self-determination and development for the world's poor. The awarding of the Games to the South comes to constitute a development achievement award, more than support for development struggles and local self-determination.

In turn, the development activism taken on by BINGOs like the IOC, through Olympism in Action and its support for Development through Sport, and FIFA through Football for Hope, expectedly aligns with neoliberal development philosophy because to challenge such thinking would undermine the political and institutional primacy and authority of the organizations and their events.

This logic, of course, is not solely constructed by institutions and forces in the Global North, but, as understood in and through Gramscian hegemony, results from the interplay and negotiation between northern and southern interests. The bestowing of the Olympics or World Cup to the South as part of the sociopolitical construction of international development clearly adds a layer of prestige to the hosting of the mega-events from the perspective of the South as well. Despite the track record of overspending, and the opportunity costs that remain incredibly high for marginalized polities, supporting mega-events as a development project becomes attractive, or even a necessary evil, for states wishing to get in the globalization game. This is what Swart and Bob (2004) refer to as the 'seductive discourse' of development for mega-events in the South; development becomes the only way to justify the desire for, and hosting of, mega-events, even though they likely will not or cannot fulfil development promises. The temerity of these promises is played against the notion, supported by the North, that the successful hosting of Games will offer proof of southern development and inclusion within the dominant cabal of global capital's beneficiaries. Following Gramsci, while open to refinement and consistent negotiations, such a relationship of dominance and consent is fundamentally hegemonic and disproportionately beneficial to powerful groups, in this case those within the political economy of globalized sport.

With these ideas in mind, it is reasonable to argue that the development agenda increasingly ascribed to sports mega-events in the Global South is connected to, but markedly different from, the traditional sports mega-event vernacular of 'legacies'. Specifically, whereas the term legacies is often conceptualized primarily in terms of sports development, with a focus on increased sports participation and improved sporting facilities and infrastructure, development here extends the notion to the broad social, political and economic development

of a region or country, with sport or the hosting of sports mega-events as its catalyst. Compared to legacies, then, the development agenda ascribed to sports mega-events in the South can be thought of as both broader and deeper in its social and political importance and stakes, and arguably more inclusive of the social, political and health dimensions of development. At the same time, as noted above, such notions of development often trade on the idea of both sport and international development as universal goals and phenomena, which in turn increasingly position the hosting of Games as a means of asserting international prestige and a development agenda within competitive globalization. Again, this is particularly the case for the BRIC economies and other emerging powers in the Global South.

This difference between legacies and development can be understood or theorized through the sociopolitical urgency ascribed to the opportunities that sports mega-events represent for southern stakeholders. As Swart and Bob have demonstrated, the potential to host sports mega-events in South Africa offered a political and economic opportunity for the nation that was constructed and represented as too good to pass up. Similarly, Mourao (2010) found that residents of Porto Alegre, Brazil overwhelmingly supported public expenditures for the hosting of the World Cup in 2014 given the potential for economic and infrastructure development, and despite a general scepticism regarding government competency to deliver on promises like human security. For those living in Porto Alegre, the hosting of the event was understood as one of the best opportunities for the Brazilian people to share in the benefits that regularly accrue through the globalization of capital and sport. There is a level of social, political and economic urgency for southern states in hosting that extends well beyond the legacies of sport facilities and sports participation. It is perhaps an unintended outcome of the linking of sport and sports mega-events to a broader development agenda that this process increases the urgency to leverage the opportunities that sports mega-events afford. Efforts in South Africa, for example, to ascribe a public health or community development agenda to the FIFA World Cup are exemplary of this. While no one would begrudge southern stakeholders for using every opportunity to combat, for example, the devastation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, such leveraging of the World Cup calls into question the extent to which the desperation of southern states, resulting from the entrenchment of their global subordination within the political economy, contributes to a political environment in which the benefits of hosting sports mega-events are oversold and the opportunity costs of hosting under-examined (Black 2008).

In sum, the sociopolitical economy of sports mega-events, coupled with their increased positioning as catalysts for long-term sustainable development, particularly in the Global South, means that sports mega-events are increasingly important features of the SDP sector. In the next section, I offer three theses to further conceptualize these connections.

Three theses for understanding sports mega-events in/as development

Sports mega-events, and their governing bodies, increasingly desire to be involved with international development

Given the compatibility between sports mega-events and neoliberal development philosophy, and the popular rhetoric surrounding SDP and the ‘power of sport’, ascribing a development agenda to sport generally, and mega-events in particular, is an increasingly attractive proposition for BINGOs like FIFA, the IOC and other transnational or supranational sport organizations. Support for international development positions these organizations as legitimate stakeholders within socially progressive movements. According to those working in the SDP sector, this can be attributed to a desire to allocate funds from sport in support of development in a way that benefits international, elite sport at the same time. As a key international SDP stakeholder/manager explained in interview:

We have, for example, the IOC promoted to donor status so now they’re very much wanting a closer partnership with the world of development or the United Nations. Very much so. So they want the expertise of the world of development to assist them in their programmes. They have their pot of money; they don’t know how to spend it. They want to spend it on doing good; they want to reform the image of themselves as a sports organization, to go beyond the games – Jennifer (SDP advocacy organization).

For FIFA and the IOC, the organizations responsible for the biggest sports mega-events in the world, development now constitutes an approach to good global citizenship or, in management vernacular, corporate social responsibility. These organizations can be situated within the CSR for SDP model (Levermore 2010), a fact that should inform the ways in which we make sense of the development implications of hosting of mega-events. For example, in October 2010, FIFA hosted a 3-day workshop in Ghana to showcase the start of a development partnership with adidas. According to FIFA.com:

The programme is part of the FIFA Partners’ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programme, a collaboration between adidas and FIFA on CSR and implemented through Football for Hope, a movement led by FIFA and streetfootballworld, which uses the power of the game for social development.

Not only do sports mega-events offer the developmental state in the Global South an opportunity to participate within competitive global globalization through hosting, but the organizations that allocate the rights to Games, and benefit from the competition over the right to host, now position themselves as socially responsible development actors. While this does not mean that the hosting of mega-events constitutes the same sociopolitical activity as development itself, it does suggest that the messages of SFD and of the SDP

sector are increasingly attractive to sports mega-events stakeholders and arguably substantiate the notion that such events contribute to sustainable development, despite the limitations identified by critical scholars.

The clear critique of this perspective is that it constitutes little more than the cynical attempt by these supranational sport organizations to manage their brands and divert negative attention, particularly through the media. As Littler (2009: 61) describes, CSR 'offers a form of reputation management in the face of criticism: it offers a damage limitation or risk avoidance strategy'. This is arguably important for the IOC and FIFA whose links to corruption, and an inherent lack of social and economic transparency, veritably cry out for the management of reputation (Jennings 1996; Sugden and Tomlinson 2005). Given that CSR is never something simply performed upon unsuspecting consumers, of sport or otherwise (Littler 2009), and that the discourse of benevolent Olympism has always been resisted and reinterpreted by people around the world (Guest 2009), the effectiveness of such management techniques remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the politics of the visions and implementation of international development championed by supranational sport organizations is worthy of ongoing critical analysis.

SDP NGOs are increasingly attracted to mega-events

The second thesis to consider in relation to sports mega-events and development in the Global South is that the increased mobility and movement of sports mega-events to the southern hemisphere, coupled with the institutionalization of the SDP sector as a legitimate part of civil society development, results in mega-events becoming increasingly important and attractive to SDP NGOs and other civil society stakeholders working within the sector. A desire to be associated with, if not latch onto, the profile and development opportunities that sports mega-events afford is increasingly important to NGOs working to mobilize SFD. This is evidenced, at the least, in the scramble for funds, access and exposure amongst NGOs within recent sports mega-events, particularly FIFA 2010 in South Africa, and the opportunity that sports mega-events afford NGOs to promote their work and extend its social and political momentum. Both of these 'utilities' of sports mega-events were evident in interviews I conducted with programme officials from SDP NGOs. For example, an NGO manager told me the following:

We definitely have used and plan to use the World Cup because it's the biggest sports event in the world, maybe the biggest ever. We see it as a stage, a visibility stage, an awareness creating platform of the work that we do in using football for social change – Sven (SDP advocacy organization).

The point here is not the objective effectiveness of football (or sport) for social change (though this remains an important strand of social and political

inquiry). Rather I draw attention to the ‘spectacularization’ of sports mega-events, supported by media, capital and consumption, that becomes attractive to the civil society sector. These actors work constantly and genuinely to justify and promote their work to a broad audience in order to (a) build popular acceptance and support and (b) maintain access to funding from donors and sponsors interested in, and attracted to, high-profile and politically palatable support for international development. In turn, mega-events like the World Cup become increasingly attached to a mediated identity as catalysts of social change, an effect that serves to attract more development stakeholders eager to leverage the promotional opportunities:

With the World Cup being given to South Africa, I think a lot of people realized that a World Cup in Africa will be about so much more than just the matches that will take place in multi-billion rand stadiums and that it really had a powerful impact on development and reintegration. As a result, we’ve seen so many new actors in the field, some of them are just actually following the World Cup and coming to South Africa and they’ll be leaving in 2011 going to Brazil – Henry (SDP NGO).

The movement of sports mega-events into the regions and countries where the work of development NGOs is most heavily concentrated, and the popular development agenda increasingly connected to these events, means that more and more NGOs strive to connect their initiatives to the social, political and mediated momentum that the events construct and provide. While the promotion of SFD in the Global South is not problematic in and of itself, the processes described above do call for the need for caution and critical analysis. Indeed, the attraction that sports mega-events present to SDP NGOs holds a possibility for the development agenda ascribed to the World Cup and the Olympics to be potentially reduced to a single stop on an international tour of SFD. While sports mega-events may draw important attention to social issues such as HIV/AIDS in South Africa or income inequality in Brazil, the rush to be part of the development agenda of sports mega-events as they move around the world suggests, at the least, a limited commitment to long-term and sustainable development.

Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that the attractiveness of sports mega-events to NGOs and the connections that ensue would not have an impact on the political orientation of SDP NGOs themselves. As Littler (2009: 56) has articulated, NGOs generally tend to support, at least ideologically, an anti-corporate politics, ‘but they are frequently afraid of developing their practice to that conclusion for political reasons’. From this perspective, the desire to be associated with sports mega-events and their development agenda likely reduces the ability or likelihood of SDP NGOs to question or criticize the political orientation of the events themselves, which, as discussed above, are generally understood as constituted by and constitutive of corporatization and neoliberalism. Again, results from interviews I conducted with SDP programme

officials are illustrative here, particularly the perspective of this SDP official working with football programmes in Africa:

Even people who sat, historically, on the other side of the debate and said 'I believe that sport has yet to be justified as a valid tool for achieving social change and development, however you want to call it, however you want to define it', when something like the World Cup comes along, all of a sudden that debate is still kind of being had, but everyone is like, 'Ok, should we talk about this later?' – David (Professional sports club).

The opportunities for development that is led by civil society, and the promotion of international development efforts that sports mega-events offer, likely mean that the SDP NGOs that hitch themselves to the development opportunities of sports mega-events also put themselves in a position whereby they, at the least, refrain from critical analysis of the possibilities and limitations of SDP (Gruneau, in press). They may even (have to) conform to the corporate logic by which contemporary sports mega-events operate and thrive. As a result, the political orientation of SDP NGO policy and practice, particularly in relation to the hosting of sports mega-events in the Global South, is worthy of ongoing critical analysis.

There are competing discourses of development related to sports mega-events

The third thesis that I put forth regarding international development and sports mega-events in the Global South is that there are competing discourses between the notions of development and SDP put forth by supranational sport organizations like the IOC and FIFA versus the actual development politics and effects of hosting mega-events like the Olympics and World Cup. In other words, the ways in which the IOC and FIFA construct a development agenda for sport – and position themselves as international development stakeholders – do not necessarily align with the political and economic machinations of actually hosting the Games, even though the two are seemingly conflated within the rhetoric and justifications of hosting mega-events in the Global South.

For example, and as I have explored elsewhere (Darnell, in press), the IOC has gone to lengths to solidify its commitment to SFD by partnering with the United Nations. In 2009, the General Assembly of the United Nations granted observer status to the IOC, so that the IOC may now take the floor at the General Assembly and participate in consultations, though it holds no formal voting. The IOC, in turn, has also participated in two United Nations–IOC Forums, the first of which, in May 2010, resulted in the publication of 19 recommendations 'on how to maximise the impact of various activities in the field of development through sport'. Several of these recommendations connect sport to development in ways that potentially challenge modernization, top-down or neoliberal development and position the IOC as a progressive

stakeholder. For example, Recommendation #2 encouraged the IOC to build better relationships with government authorities to leverage the opportunity that sport affords to achieve development goals, a departure from neoliberal development policy that tends to eschew state interference and potentially recognizes calls for the sport/development relationship to be put more squarely on the public policy agenda (Kidd 2008). Recommendation #4 also called for a stronger relationship between the IOC and the United Nations in order to move towards 'the mainstreaming and embedding of sport within UN programmes for humanitarian development', which suggests a commitment to the broader international development agenda and for SDP to attend more directly to the politics and challenges of development, as opposed to the mere application of sport to tackle social issues (Coalter 2010a).²

Similarly, FIFA's flagship development programme, Football for Hope, suggests a political orientation to international development – and the role of sport and sports mega-events within development – that builds on the limits of neoliberal development. The programme, in collaboration with self-described 'social profit organization' streetfootballworld, lends its support to non-profit and socially oriented programmes in five substantive areas: health promotion, peacebuilding, education and children's rights, anti-discrimination and social integration, and the environment. Football for Hope proceeds from a philosophy and *modus operandi* that seeks 'to maximize the potential of football by making a concrete contribution to sustainable development' and does so by attempting to centre social development programmes based on football within the efforts of five development pillars: public sector, private sector, civil society, multilateral institutions and the world of football.³ While the concept of global football as an equal stakeholder or contributor to international development is perhaps debateable, the conceptualization and partner-based approach put forth by Football for Hope does potentially support a sustainable development praxis. Football for Hope also focuses its efforts on supporting local organizations, which is a significantly different approach and orientation than organizing and implementing 'top-down' SDP programmes (Black 2010). In addition, Football for Hope is notable as a SDP organization that can be considered truly international or global in that it supports programmes in Europe, North America and Australia as well as the stereotypical 'development laboratories' of Africa and Central and South America, a fact which ostensibly challenges the modernist notion of development as the stewardship of the South by the North.⁴

These examples of the orientations towards SFD of the IOC and FIFA do ostensibly recognize the limits of modernist, neoliberal development. At the same time, as discussed above, neoliberal development philosophy remains hegemonic in relation to the hosting of sports mega-events (Hall 2006; Gruneau, in press). This suggests, on the one hand, further corroboration of the SDP as CSR thesis, as development commitments may offer sports

mega-events and their organizing bodies a chance to construct a positive image. It also suggests that the political construction and mobilization of SDP in and around mega-events, and the promulgation of SFD by the IOC and FIFA, need to be considered in connection to, but different from, the social, political and economic processes of actually *hosting* the Games. Little is understood, in other words, and even less evidence available, of the connection between the international development philosophies and commitments of the IOC and FIFA and the activities and processes that lead to the staging of the Olympics or World Cup. How does, for example, the Olympics as an event, particularly one often paid for with state support, actually create 'a climate for peace' or move beyond the competitive nature of elite sport? Does the construction of 20 Football for Hope centres within South Africa as a benefit of hosting the 2010 World Cup offset the incredible public spending and opportunity costs accrued by the people of South Africa? Does it constitute a legitimate form of sustainable development? As it is currently organized and implemented, it is difficult to imagine or conceive of the highly commercialized, spectacularized and elite sporting competitions of the 30 days of the World Cup or of an Olympic fortnight contributing to such goals in meaningful or radical ways. What this suggests, then, is that the international development agenda of these mega-events is less connected to the hosting of the Games themselves, which still constitute primarily a neoliberal project, and more to the external advocating for sport and SDP that the IOC and FIFA take on. Given then, that the neoliberal development agenda of sports mega-events and the softer, social development orientation of SDP are arguably conflated amidst the rhetoric of the benefits of hosting, critical analysts of sport and international development should pay close attention to the different orientations of development connected to, and mobilized through, sports mega-events and their organizations.

The development possibilities and limitations of sports mega-events

To this point, this chapter has primarily examined the political orientation and implications of connecting sports mega-events to international development, particularly in the Global South. The preceding analyses, I argue, suggest the need for a critical sociology that considers both the development possibilities and limitations of sports mega-events. In this section, I consider the implications of these perspectives.

First and foremost, the perspectives of those working in the field of SDP do suggest that the spectacle of sports mega-events, particularly as they are animated within the globalization of sport and the intensifying global media apparatus and culture, potentially lends important attention to development issues and struggles, both within the Global South and in connection to sport and

sporting culture. That is, the sheer popularity of sports mega-events, intensified by media coverage, and the fact that huge audiences consume the games, means that when connected to a broader development agenda, mega-events can help to bring such issues to the fore. Mega-events serve to articulate development issues within the collective consciousness of a global sporting community and the broader culture who may pay attention to sports mega-events more so than they would other sports events. For example, the regular promotion of Football for Hope on sideline signage during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa likely raised an awareness of the efforts of the organization, if not the increasingly institutionalized connections between sport and development initiatives. As well, for SDP NGOs who struggle to mobilize funds, and who operate within relative anonymity outside of sport spectacles, the opportunity for promotion that sports mega-events afford should not be dismissed. That is, the opportunity for development 'education' that mega-events proffer is clearly an important possibility, though it does beg for continued analysis of the messages, meanings and political orientations disseminated and interpreted and the social and political actions that result.

Similarly, it is reasonable to argue that the SDP sector, coupled with the hyper profile and attention paid to sports mega-events, has propelled the organizers of such events, particularly BINGOs like the IOC and FIFA, to embrace, adopt and mobilize a SFD agenda in new ways and to significant degrees. The spotlight shone on sports mega-events as the world's premier sporting spectacles is arguably part of the same politically economic processes that encourage, if not demand, that sporting BINGOs act in a progressive manner in order to establish and maintain their global sporting authority and brand image as socially responsible. Clearly, some of the lessons of the limits of traditional development can be seen in the IOC–UN recommendations and FIFA's Football for Hope policies, as discussed in this chapter.

A similar process occurs, I would argue, at the level of the emerging or LMIC state, whereby the sheer intensity and scope of the hosting of sports mega-events, coupled with the broadening of the SFD agenda beyond the level of mere legacy, encourages states to do more than just host sports events, but to at least attempt to leverage the opportunities that such events afford into sustainable development projects and processes. Such opportunities to raise awareness should not be dismissed out of hand. Still, whether considering BINGOs or states, the 'encouragement' towards development that might result from the profile and prestige of sports mega-events does not preclude, but in fact explicitly begs for, analysis of the political orientation and implementation of development policies and practice.

Of course, in keeping with the critical praxis at the core of this book, there are also significant limitations to the relationship between sports mega-events and international development. Principally, there are the limits of universality as a basis of sport and development, respectively. Significant work remains, particularly in places like South Africa, India and Brazil, to decouple and then

reconcile the recurrent and even dominant narrative of sport as a tool for social good against the actual hosting of a sports mega-event, particularly because the connecting of sports mega-events to a broader development agenda conflates the two. That is, popular rhetoric about the universal nature of Olympic sport, or the incredible popularity of football around the world, lends itself to popular constructions of sports mega-events as celebrations of this common humanity, rather than political and economic decisions about how best to organize the social and material world. In turn, the particular attractiveness of a universal humanist discourse in and through sports mega-events aligns with similar notions or philosophies of development that often overlook how the social and economic inequalities that development is concerned with disproportionately advantage some over Others along lines of race, class, gender and geography (McEwan 2009). The invocation of sports mega-events as key components of development policy and strategy in the Global South runs the risk of positioning elite commercial sport, and its myriad stakeholders, as the stewards of development, or even trading on sporting nationalisms, as reified through spectacle, to flatten the politics of development and construct singular or dominant development narratives.

Indeed, as this chapter has argued, there is a strong case to be made that the political economy that contributes to the institutionalization and maintenance of global inequalities is the same political economy that allows sports mega-events to thrive and to be increasingly fawned and fought over by polities including those in the Global South. This suggests the continuing need for analysis of the extent to which the IOC and FIFA invoke or even trade upon universalist or populist discourses of sport and development to secure their relatively privileged positions as the simultaneous stewards and beneficiaries of international, competitive, elite sport and now SFD. If the processes and policies connecting development to sports mega-events are more concerned with the rehabilitation of the neoliberal political economy, the inclusion of new neoliberal states and the charitable aspirations of northern sporting institutions, then its sustainable development prospects, particularly for addressing inequality, are clearly limited.

Finally, then, the limitations of sports mega-events for development can be conceptualized along the lines of the limits of neoliberal policy, in a manner similar to the critique laid out by Gruneau (in press). While the neoliberal environment that encourages the expansion and prestige of sports mega-events secures a political economy that does little to challenge inequality, it also secures a political economy based principally on economic growth. As a result, the material limitations of expanding sports mega-events around the world, and particularly to the South, are called into question. At issue is the understanding that the constant or infinite growth of the world's emerging economies is incompatible, if not diametrically opposed, to the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in relation to the environment, climate and natural resources (de Ciochetto 2010). This does not mean that the residents of the

Global South are less than entitled to the boons of development enjoyed by those in the North, but rather that the neoliberal development agenda, with its focus on competition and the movement of global capital, is specifically based on the notion of relative competitive advantage whereby equality is eschewed in the name of success relative to competitors. Such philosophies of, or approaches to, development are likely unsustainable and pose an ongoing challenge to the invocation of sports mega-events as catalysts of sustainable international development.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that issues of the competitive global political economy and the hegemony of neoliberal development philosophy are called to the fore when sports mega-events are positioned and understood as drivers of development. I have also drawn attention to the ways in which sports mega-events effect the efforts of various actors in the field of SDP, such as NGOs, who are drawn to the attention of SFD that mega-events create, if not always sustain. The cautions that I raise stem, at least in part, from the argument that in the current cultural and political economy, '[m]ega-events in sport are staged for corporate profit, personal aggrandizement and for state driven national pride' (Sugden and Tomlinson 2005: 43).

At the same time, the limits for sustainable international development that I have identified do not inevitably proceed from sports mega-events, particularly given that the move to the Global South and increasing institutional connections to international development may, at least to a degree, represent a new era in the organization, and social and political significance and impact, of sports mega-events. In other words, perhaps the institutionalization of SDP offers or presents an opportunity to reform the meanings and hosting practices of mega-events (see Kidd and Dichter 2011). Similarly, the linking of sport to international development may offer a means by which to re-conceptualize the role and contributions of sports mega-events to the broader social good. Such opportunities would clearly be in line with FIFA's goals through Football for Hope and the IOC's historical presentation of themselves as not only the stewards of international sport but also contributors to global solidarity and peace (Peacock 2011). At the same time, given that resistance to the Olympic Games as an event or social phenomenon rarely challenges the construction and organization of elite, competitive or 'prolympic' sport itself (Heine 2010), it may be the case that what is called for in reforming sports mega-events for development is not only a critical analysis of and resistance to the institutions and political economy of such events but also resistance to the hierarchical, competitive politics that are often hegemonic and mobilized in and through the use of SFD and the SDP sector.