

## Book Review

**Beyond sport for development and peace: Transnational perspectives on theory, policy and practice**

Hayhurst, L.M.C., Kay, T., Chawansky, M. (eds). *Beyond Sport for Development and Peace: Transnational Perspectives on Theory, Policy and Practice*. Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge; 2016, 244pp., £68 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-138-80667-2

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At the dawn of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), persisting development challenges and social and economic inequalities left unresolved at the end of the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000-2015) are compounding with emerging inequities and injustices created by an ever evolving and sometimes volatile global socioeconomic and political landscape. While the 17 SDGs reflect the growing scope and complexity of the world's development problems<sup>1</sup>, their solutions must also embody and encompass the transnational nature of these challenges, the relations of power underpinning them, and the interplay between local and global politics that can either perpetuate or curtail them. Partnerships among academics, practitioners and policymakers are thus vitally important, not only to the production and dissemination of knowledge around effective interventions but also to ensure continuous and critical feedback on policy and practice.

Stepping directly in this space, Lyndsay Hayhurst, Tess Kay and Megan Chawansky have brought together an edited volume, *Beyond Sport for Development and Peace: Transnational Perspectives on Theory, Policy and Practice*, to usher the field of sport for development and peace (SDP) into a new sustainable development era bent not only on eliminating poverty but also achieving peace, stability, human rights, and inclusive social and economic

development through more participatory and collaborative processes. The volume pushes the field of SDP beyond Global North-dominated debates about the utility of sport as a tool of international development in the Global South—although, the volume does anchor itself in the view that the effectiveness of SDP is debatable (several chapters do critically investigate the impact of SDP programs). Through a collective process of “self-critical reflection” (9) on issues of power, knowledge and agency within the field, the volume shines light on the need to enhance the capacity of SDP policy, practice and actors to respond to the global inequities underpinning the development challenges of the SDG era rather than national-level poverty that has traditionally driven Global North-South SDP practice and relationships. Indeed, the volume's extensive list of 36 contributing authors use a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives to engage diverse issues of South-South collaboration (Chapters 10 and 11), gender (Chapters 5, 6, 9, and 11), child protection (Chapter 4), SDP pedagogy (Chapter 8), and youth reengagement (Chapter 7)—issues that go beyond the traditional focus of SDP literature on individual outcome areas like health promotion or peace building. The volume covers 15 countries including the Southeast and East Asian countries within the Confucian Arc and among indigenous communities typically overlooked by SDP actors in the Global North.

Paying particular attention to inclusivity, the editors have raised the bar in terms of the co-production of knowledge in the field of SDP. In a rare example of integrating a diversity of viewpoints in a single edited volume, Hayhurst, Kay and Chawansky have paired traditionally academic chapters with practitioner and policymaker reflections, commentary, and/or responses, making reading the volume akin to observing a discussant respond to a panelist's presentation at an academic conference. When read together, these pairings allow the reader the opportunity to see what aspects of the researchers' findings, conclusions and recommendations are contested or aligned with the world of policy and practice. However, as any conference attendee might attest to, the quality of a panel depends as much on the quality of the researcher's presentation as the quality of the discussant's remarks and what s/he found important to respond to.

Some chapter-response pairings function well, drawing out key points of tension or contestation that help to advance further critical dialogue around specific issues, such as Wendy Lahey's critique of Hayhurst, Giles and Wright's recommendation to align SDP programs targeting indigenous women with other large-scale movements aimed at reducing their marginalization (Chapter 6). Lahey argues that such alignment may result in top-down approaches while ignoring and/or overlooking local issues that may be more relevant. In Chapter 8, Ruth Jeanes and Ramón Spaaij discuss the critical role of the educator in SDP programming especially one who facilitates social change through dialogical methods that are on the one hand situated within the local realities of the beneficiaries, while on the other hand directed at challenging the power relations and structures of authority in which they are embedded. Sarah Oxford follows this discussion with a reminder that the likelihood for an educator to practice such power-sharing, the Freirean facilitation approaches is often constrained by the didactic style of colonial education that the educator most likely received him or herself, as well as the cultural context that structures local social hierarchies of power and authority. Finally, the last two chapter-response pairings (Chapters 10 and 11) explore the sometimes uncomfortable ways in which SDP knowledge is generated through both short- and long-term Global North-South SDP research collaborations. For example, Iain Lindsey and his co-authors (Chapter 10) offer their perspectives on the "practical and moral dilemmas" (205) of achieving in practice a truly collaborative and sustainable SDP project where all partners come together on equal footing and contribute equally in the face of

structural inequalities that exist across the partner countries (Australia, Ghana, and Tanzania). Clare Barrell responds with a candid discussion of the challenges of North-South collaborations when such endeavors rest upon "crude assumptions" (211) made by the North about the South and when the South is positioned as recipients rather than founders of and/or partners in SDP.

Weaker pairings like Robbie McRobbie's commentary on Roger Levermore's overview of SDP in "Confucian Asia" (Chapter 3), fail to take up the editors' call to self-critical reflection. For example, Levermore notes the relative paucity of SDP programming in the Southeast/East Asian region, attributing this largely to the region's emphasis on competitive sport and its differing attitudes toward, definitions of, and approaches to development. McRobbie's commentary follows by discussing ways in which the region can possibly overcome its "antipathy towards sport" (70) as well as the physical obstacles like air pollution that may discourage wider participation in sport. However, this pairing misses an important opportunity to critically question the underlying assumption that countries *should* take on and/or develop further a SDP agenda, or that the underlying issue for "Confucian Asia" is a matter of translation rather than perhaps the sociopolitical insignificance and historical irrelevance of SDP in societies where institutions—not projects—are traditionally expected to improve standards of living.\*

Nonetheless, one must acknowledge the back-end challenges that this sort of editorial endeavor must have entailed, while also appreciating the chapter authors' openness to putting their research and work in such positions of vulnerability. In terms of the utility of these chapter-response pairings for readers, academic faculty may find these the most useful especially for starting seminar discussions among advanced students of sport studies, development studies, gender studies (especially Chapters 5 and 6) and research methods (particularly Chapters 10 and 11). Practitioners and policymakers may also find both the individual chapters and the responses enriching for their work and understanding of SDP. And, finally, SDP researchers may benefit the most from the more traditional academic chapters, described below.

For example, Simon Darnell and Robert Huish (Chapter 2) use an international relations framework to analyze the gap between Cuba's aspirations to facilitate South-South technical cooperation and the local realities in Zambia that thwart the "development" that is expected to take place

\*See for instance Brownell, S. (1995). *Training the Body for China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

shortly thereafter (Chapter 2). Jimoh Shehu (Chapter 1) in addition to Megan Chawansky and Marisa Schlenker's (Chapter 5) contributions provide important theoretical insights to the volume. In particular, Shehu's discussion of how the United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) engages in a process of "manufacturing consent" (20) and "bad faith" (21) point to the ways in which discourse perpetuates unequal relations of power within the field of SDP. And Chawansky and Schlenker's insights from girls' studies highlight how "future girl" (99) discourse within the Nike's Foundation's Girl Effect functions to valorize a particular kind of "self-making, resilient, and flexible" girl (99) while blaming those who fail to become such ideal citizens. Also, Marianne Meier's theorization on sporting role models in SDP provides important clarification into how such individuals (celebrities, coaches, leaders, etc.) may actually influence the lives of their intended observers (Chapter 9).

Despite the minor shortcomings mentioned above, Hayhurst, Kay and Chawansky's edited volume offers a timely and critical look at the field of SDP. Expanding the field's scope to issues like child protection (Chapter 4) and youth re-engagement (Chapter 7), its geographical reach to regions like Southeast and East Asia (Chapter 3) and indigenous communities in the Global North (Chapter 6), and its understanding of relationships to Global North-South research collaborations (Chapters 10 and 11) alongside Global South-South technical cooperation (Chapter 2), the volume delivers on its promise to push SDP into a new era of sustainable development. As students, researchers, practitioners and policymakers carry forward the critical discussions initiated by each chapter-response pairing, the knowledge that was co-produced through many collaborations will continue to reverberate and evolve around the world. It is not often that a text can embody and incite such movement.

## REFERENCES

1. United Nations, 2015. Accessed on July 16, 2016 from <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.