Introduction

Various stakeholders now recognise sports events as sites through which to position sport as a means to achieve social and economic development and peaceful co-existence, particularly within emerging nations and communities in the global South. These sports events include ‘first order’ mega-events such as the Olympic/Paralympic Games and FIFA World Cup, characterised by their global size and scope, through to ‘second order’ events like the Commonwealth Games, Pan American Games and World Championships in sports like cricket and rugby that tend to be pursued by smaller or more peripheral cities and countries, particularly in emerging polities (Black 2008). Indeed, international organizations (IOs) such as the United Nations (UN) as well as other (international) non-governmental organizations [(I)NGOs] now work to promote and leverage the potential impact of sports events in development terms. The term ‘International Non-Governmental Organizations’ describes such organizations that work both domestically and across defined borders (see Boli and Thomas 1997).

Sports events have thus become an important element of the broader and burgeoning Sport for Development and Peace sector (SDP), a loose fusion of organizations and actors characterised by a shared interest in the mobilization of sport to achieve international development objectives such as gender equality, environmental sustainability and conflict resolution. Though the name ‘Sport for Development and Peace’ implies a separation between ‘development’ and ‘peace’, we use the term ‘development’ here to include peace, recognizing conflict resolution and co-existence as fundamental to development processes and struggles. Indeed, NGOs within the SDP sector now attempt to connect to sports events as catalysts for development, peace and social change (see Cornelissen 2011, Darnell 2012b, Schuenkorn and Adair 2013), even though the focus on sustainable, long-range development targets in SDP may differ from sports mega-events that emphasise short-term
logistics and efficiency (see Cornelissen, 2011). Further, some non-governmental actors also use sports events to draw attention to development inequalities or to call attention to the negative development effects of sports events themselves (see Millington and Darnell 2014).

In this chapter, we focus on understanding these activities of (I)NGOs, as well as agencies within the UN system, that work to leverage the development potential of sports events and/or to call attention to development issues related to events. In so doing, we conceptualise and examine the intersections between international development, SDP, non-governmental actors and sports events of various sizes. We do so recognizing the need for: 1) a better understanding of how development is impacted and mediated by the ‘political economy of sport mega-events (or vice versa)’, and 2) consideration of how (I)NGOs and UN agencies use sports events ‘as a catalyst, tool or agent for wider social change’ (Cornelissen 2011: 505). Even though sports events are increasingly positioned as a means to enact (domestic and international) development policies (Black and Westhuizen 2004, Cornelissen 2009, Darnell 2012b), understandings of how (I)NGOs and IOs negotiate development issues related to sports events are still relatively limited. In turn, given that (I)NGOs are now considered political actors within development processes (Clarke 1998, Hudson 2001), the implications of their specific actions are worthy of critical scrutiny.

With this in mind, it is important to state that the purpose of this chapter is not to assess the potential or likelihood of achieving successful, sustainable development through various sports events – indeed, significant research has already been produced on this topic (i.e. Cornelissen 2009, Schlenkorf and Edwards 2010). Rather, we recognise the various and contestable development effects of sports events. On the one hand, proponents tout large-scale events for their ability to lead to urban regeneration, economic growth, tourism and even national unity and pride (see Black 2008) and local events as useful for community development (Schlenkorf 2012). At the same time, many studies on sports mega-events and (international) development conclude that such events have deleterious societal effects such as furthering the distribution of wealth into the hands of local and global elites and privileging capitalist accumulation at the cost of social welfare (Tomlinson 1996, Nauright 2004, Brewster 2010). These findings have led Cornelissen (2011: 508) to conclude that while sport events can contribute to economic growth and infrastructure, they can also facilitate everything from ‘providing incentives to evict or remove the homeless; to expanding the illicit sex industry, possibly making vulnerable groups (children, in particular) more vulnerable; to entailing various encroachments on civil rights’. Given this, a balanced yet critical approach is called for that explores how the effects of sports events are interpreted and negotiated by various IOs and (I)NGOs, particularly those that have a SDP mandate and/or a commitment to political activism and reform.

Recognizing these positive and negative development impacts of sports events, and the diverse geo-political terrain in which events are held and non-governmental actors operate, we advocate here for a critical deployment of stakeholder theory (cf. Carr 2006), informed by a postcolonial approach to international management studies (Westwood 2006, Parsons 2008) in order to examine how struggles over power, politics, legitimacy and representation are negotiated when (I)NGOs engage with SDP through sports events such as the Olympics or even community-based sport festivals. This in turn opens up the analysis of sports events and (I)NGO activity to include activist organizations that challenge development inequality in relation to sport. We suggest that a critical, postcolonial management approach to stakeholder theory helps to recognise and reflect upon the potentially ‘neoliberal and objectivist tendencies’ (Jones and Wicks 1999, as cited in Parsons 2008: 102) within traditional stakeholder theory that often ignore relations of power and geopolitics that fundamentally affect development on a global scale.

With this background in mind, in the following sections we present a descriptive overview of non-governmental actors, and offer a critical, theoretical framework for understanding
(I)NGOs in geographic and political context. Using these theoretical tools, the latter half of the chapter examines how IOs and (I)NGOs use sports events in order to influence policy, mobilise resources and gain exposure for the SDP sector. Finally, we conclude with suggestions for a research agenda focused on (I)NGOs and IOs in relation to sports events and international development.

Overview of the stakeholder group

In this section, we introduce, describe, and provide examples of, various non-governmental actors and organizations – including agencies within the UN system – and their engagement as key stakeholders in sports events. We then consider how and why (I)NGOs and IOs such as the UN should be examined critically in relation to their engagement with sports events of all sizes. We suggest that it is essential to think critically about the extent to which (I)NGO and UN activities are legitimate, democratic, supportive of local agency and/or resistant to structures of dominance.

(I)NGOs

Political scientists have described (I)NGOs as ‘the plethora of private, non-profit, and non-governmental organizations that have emerged in recent decades . . . to provide vehicles through which citizens can exercise individual initiatives in the private pursuit of public purposes’ (Salamon and Anheier 1997: 60). Mercer (2002: 6) distinguishes (I)NGOs from grassroots organizations by defining (I)NGOs as ‘those organizations that are officially established, run by employed staff (often urban professionals or expatriates), well-supported (by domestic or, as is more often the case, international funding), and that are often relatively large and well-resourced’. These non-governmental organisations tend to focus on global policy and advocacy and connect through transnational networks designed to link different stakeholders in order to pursue development goals (Hudson 2001).

There are a variety of development focused (I)NGOs that have an interest in, and connection to sports events. The UN-sponsored SDP networking website sportanddev.org currently lists 499 organizations that implement sport into their development programs and events, the vast majority of which are (I)NGOs. These organizations range from the community development organization ‘Mathare Youth Sport Association’ in Kenya that uses sport to promote environmental stewardship within the Mathare slums of Nairobi and engender broader socio-economic development, to the more multi-national, corporate-led ‘Nike Better World: Game Changers’ that seeks to provide access to sports, sport equipment and education to children globally. For our purposes here, we outline two SDP (I)NGOs in some detail, and elaborate upon them in the second half of the chapter.

As one of the largest sport-related (I)NGOs, Right to Play has from its outset shared a close relationship to sports events. Inaugurated in 1992 as ‘Olympic Aid’, the organization sought to utilise the platform of the 1992 Lillehammer Olympics, and the visibility of athletes at the Games to generate funds for people in ‘war-torn countries and areas of distress’ (Right to Play 2013a). Within a decade, and under the direction of four-time Olympic Gold medallist Johan Olav Koss, Olympic Aid transitioned from a fundraising-focused entity into Right to Play and began to implement aid programs directly in the global South. In keeping with their original mandate to ‘improve the lives of children in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world by using the power of sport and play for development, health and peace’ (Right to Play 2010: para. 2), Right to Play capitalises on sport celebrities from more than 40 countries – such as Wayne Gretzky and...
Dikembe Mutombo – who act as ‘role models’ for children in development programs and refugee camps (see Right to Play 2013b). Although Right to Play is no longer an official partner of the Olympic Games, due in part to a series of corporate sponsorship conflicts with the Olympic system (Canadian press 2009), the organisation continues to use sports events and the Olympics to promote its cause. For example, Right to Play hosted an SDP event called ‘Let’s Move’ with US First Lady Michelle Obama on the day of the Opening Ceremonies of London 2012, and also uses a variety of smaller-level sports events and partnerships with the UN network of SDP activities and events to promote the organisation (see Right To Play 2013a).

Right To Play is also recognised for its significance in relation to SDP policy (Hayhurst 2009). As the former Secretariat of the SDP International Working Group (SDP IWG) – which was launched during the 2004 Athens Summer Olympic Games – Right To Play played a crucial role in articulating and determining SDP policy recommendations to governments. In this role, its staff carried out background research and briefing papers and connected with key lobbyists and government officials (see United Nations 2013b). Subsequently, as Chair of the SDP IWG Executive Committee at the 2008 Beijing Games, Right To Play (alongside representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF also in attendance) was heavily involved in contributing to, and formalising, a report document. Thus, it is fair to suggest that the recommendations of the SDP IWG that were eventually included in the 2008 final policy report at the Beijing Olympics were significantly shaped by Right To Play (Hayhurst 2009).

In comparison to organisations like Right to Play, there are also (I)NGOs that engage with the issues of SDP from a more critical/activist perspective. One such organization, Rio Olympic Neighborhood Watch or RioOnWatch, a politically oriented, activist, non-profit organisation, was launched in 2010 to bring visibility and voice to favelas (informal settlements or shanty towns in Brazil) in advance of the 2016 Olympics. The blog RioOnWatch.org has subsequently been used by grassroots organisations and activists to bring attention to some of the more detrimental and divisive ambitions of the Games, such as the re-development of poor neighbourhoods. In documenting these issues, RioOnWatch and organisations like it (including, for example Christopher Gaffney’s Geostadia blog, www.geostadia.com) provide critical and counter-narratives to popular understanding of the development potential of sport-events such as the Olympic Games.

United Nations (UN) system

Although the previous section explored various non-governmental actors related to sports events, it is also important to recognise the interest in development and sports events from the perspective of the UN system. Often conventionally thought of as an organisation centred on peace and security, the UN has long been at the forefront of international development. As part of its mandate to promote ‘higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development’ (United Nations 1985: article 55), the UN has shaped economic and social policy globally since 1945, and has helped to set a development agenda through a series of 10-year International Development Strategies from the 1960s onward (United Nations 2013a). Through its Development Program (UNDP) and Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the UN has worked closely with (I)NGOs – notably the World Food Programme (WFP), the largest international food aid organization for both emergency relief and development – to promote sustainable development and the ‘advancement of women, human rights, environmental protection, and good governance – along with programmes to make them a reality’ (United Nations 2013a: para. 5).
The UN is central to this chapter given that over 1,200 (I)NGOs are currently registered with the UN system, a number of which use sport, and sports events, to support their initiatives. Yet, it is also important to note that the UN negotiates a tenuous position as an intermediary between governments, (I)NGOs, and the people to whom its development efforts are directed. Some critiques of the UN have centred on:

- its capabilities in conflict prevention/peace-keeping (Bertand (1995: 350), for instance points to what he calls ‘an accumulation of failures’ in peacekeeping operations since the early 1990s such as the genocide in Rwanda);
- the UN’s effectiveness in global governance given its reliance on (I)NGOs to execute most of the ground work, which at times has been seen as ineffective and leading to competition between organizations (Gaer 1995); and
- the UN’s failures in international development given what many see as a stalled development landscape (Ilcan and Phillips 2010).

These critiques notwithstanding, the UN remains the foremost body overseeing and enacting international development policy and practices. In turn, the UN has also played a central role in the growth of the SDP sector, in part since sport has a well-entrenched history within the UN system. The 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights held a clause that all persons have the right to ‘rest and leisure’ and the ‘International Charter of Physical Education and Sport’ adopted thirty years later by UNESCO guaranteed ‘access to physical education and sport’ to all human beings (Beutler 2008; SDP IWG 2008). Even still, it was not until the early 2000s that the UN began to support sport specifically as a means to achieve its development goals. In July 2002, then Secretary General Kofi Annan introduced the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP). In 2003, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the role of sport as a means to promote health, education, development and peace, and, through the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, called for the incorporation of sport and physical activity into development policies for southern nations, most notably by outlining the contribution of sport to achieving all eight Millennium Development Goals (SDP IWG 2008). To make further visible the development potential of sport and sports events, the UN proclaimed 2005 as the International Year for Sport and Physical Education, and sponsored the Magglingen Conference on Sport and Development, calling upon various stakeholders – including (I)NGOs to contribute to SDP (Lemke 2008).

In response to this call, there are now a variety of UN agencies involved in SDP initiatives, programs and policy-making. Within the UN, these agencies include ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Volunteers, UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Each of these bodies promotes the contribution of sport and sports events to international aid and development. The UNOSDP for example, as the primary UN agency tasked with addressing SDP, focuses on two pillars or strategies to ‘sustain momentum around the development potential of sport’ including ‘advocacy and guidance’ and ‘facilitation and coordination’ (UNOSDP 2013). Importantly, under the ‘facilitation and coordination’ heading on the UNOSDP website, it is clear that the organisation strives to bring development stakeholders together through sports events:

In the lead-up to and during major global sports events, UNOSDP works on fostering UN-wide coordination and representation. In relation to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008 for instance, UNOSDP was instrumental in collecting and
disseminating information on the projects undertaken by the UN system at headquarters level as well as in China.

Similarly, UNESCO highlights the ability of sports events to bring distanced and diverse people together and promote peace through the common ground of sport and play ‘as it disregards both geographical borders and social classes’ while espousing the values of fraternity, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and justice, and contributing to economic development (UNESCO 2013).

Not only do UN organizations participate in, and use, sport and sports events in order to promote SDP efforts, but various UN agencies are also involved in sports events and partner with (I)NGOs and sport organisations. As the ‘intellectual and ethical arm of the UN’, UNESCO is charged with instituting new techno-political systems in pursuit of the MDGs. Through its work, UNESCO has supported several initiatives with (I)NGOs in the global South, including: Sport for peace in Central American countries, an El Salvadorian organisation that promotes physical education and sport as a means to prevent violence, delinquency and drug consumption; Sport for peace in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a project ‘aimed at using sport to forge greater cohesion and cooperation in the West Africa region’ (UNESCO 2013: para. 4) and DIAMBARS, a UNESCO supported football school to train and educate children in Senegal (UNESCO 2013). Similarly, UNICEF partners with the IOC, the International Cricket Council, Special Olympics International and FIFA on multiple SDP-focused events (UNICEF 2013).

An example of a recent collaboration between UNICEF and FIFA is ‘Goals for Girls!’ which used the platform of the 2007 FIFA Women’s World Cup in China to ‘highlight the importance of gender equality, educating girls and the establishment of child-friendly schools’ (UNICEF 2013: para. 2). In February 2013, the UNEP also partnered with the Paul Tergat Foundation, Athletics Kenya and the IOC to promote a 21-kilometre celebratory run to ‘boost Kenya’s global standing in international and environmental affairs’ and to support the ‘Sports for Peaceful Elections Campaign, started in January by the UN, the Sports Association, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and Google Kenya’ (UNEP 2013: para. 4).

Key themes and challenges: (I)NGOs and UN agencies

With the preceding overview in mind, recent years have seen researchers, particularly in sport management, focus on the organisation and deployment of sports events to meet development and peace goals. These studies have analysed the effects of sports events on local people (see Schulenkorf and Edwards 2012) and theorised the processes through which sport may or may not achieve desired results of development and peace (Lyras and Welty-Peachy 2011, Schulenkorf 2012). Other research has examined the ways that (I)NGOs negotiate complex organizational values and dynamics around high performance sport and social development through their SDP work with diverse stakeholders involved in sports events (Hayhurst and Frisby 2010, MacIntosh and Spence 2012). While these have been important contributions, a gap remains in this literature regarding the history and politics of development inequalities and conflict, and the political dimensions and implications of the activities of (I)NGOs and organisations within the UN system.

In fact, the sport-based initiatives and partnerships led by stakeholders within the UN system, and by the (I)NGOs discussed above, remain open to critical analysis not only because of the negative impacts of sports events, but also because many (I)NGOs are implicated in the divisive politics of international development. As Mercer (2002: 20) states:
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despite increasing support for NGOs in their assumed democratizing role, the outcome of NGO involvement in the politics of development is far less predictable than the liberal democratic view imagines, and . . . the contributions made by different types of NGOs to development differ spatially and temporally.

From this perspective, (I)NGOs and IOs should be viewed through a critical lens of geography, politics and power, particularly in the context of globalization and postcolonialism. The next section outlines initial steps towards a theoretical framework of this kind.

Conceptualising (I)NGOs and IOs: theoretical perspectives

In this section, we offer a theoretical framework for understanding (I)NGOs as political actors and for analysing globally oriented (I)NGOs through a postcolonial approach to stakeholder theory.

(I)NGOs as political actors

(I)NGOs are notable for the role they play in civil society – or the ‘realm of autonomous group action distinct from both corporate power and the state’ (Cox 1999: 11). Civil society can be understood as a platform through which people gather to take collective action on a given issue (Edwards 2001). As key contributors to the civil society landscape, (I)NGOs have the ability to act as catalysts through which ‘those who are disadvantaged by the globalization of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives’ (Cox 1999: 11). This is particularly significant for the study of SDP, as the sector is led primarily by civil society organisations, including prominent and active INGOs such as Right To Play. Giulianotti (2011: 54) states that the SDP sector can be considered ‘a significant component (or sub-field) of global civil society, which features a range of institutional actors with diverse political agendas’. Civil society, in this instance, does not presume a rigid distinction from the state, but rather draws attention to relations of civil society actors with the state as well as to corporate power. Thus, civil society actors may legitimate state power as well as act as a check against it (Giulianotti 2011). For our purposes, such conclusions necessitate an analysis of the relations of power and modes of politics that are enacted through (I)NGO activity in SDP.

This general definition of (I)NGOs and their relation to civil society suggests both positive and negative implications of (I)NGO development activity, particularly in political terms. On the one hand, when viewed through the lens of service provision, (I)NGOs are generally revered for building transnational networks and strong linkages between disillusioned citizens and political actors, with some suggesting that (I)NGOs act as ‘conveyor belts’ stimulating the exchange of political strategies and ideas while building ‘potential for mutual transformation of participants’ (Keck and Sikkink 1999: 100). According to Mercer (2002), those who employ a classic liberal view of politics see (I)NGOs as fundamental agents of democracy that add new voices to the political dialogue, work on behalf of the poor and marginalised and act as a check on undue state power. In light of this somewhat adverse delineation, it follows that (I)NGOs, in an ideological sense, have become characterised as separate from the state, and are deemed to be essentially voluntary in nature (Anheier and Salamon 1998). In more progressive terms, (I)NGOs are also sometimes viewed as the ‘“discursive opposition” to the neo-liberal project of market-driven globalization’ (Hudson 2001: 333) as they work on behalf of the world’s poor and under-served. At their best, then, (I)NGOs focused on, and committed to, international development are seen to emphasise a ‘bottom up’ approach led by, or on behalf of, those who are marginalised and exploited, even striving towards ‘counter hegemony’ (Clark 1995, Cox 1999).
On the other hand, despite the positive claims attributed to the work of (I)NGOs, critics contend that (I)NGOs are often merely ‘providers or agents of a political body’ (Tousignant 2002: 76). That is, the notion that (I)NGOs are inherently democratic rests on a simplified, liberal ideological assumption that civil society is separate from politics, when in practice civil society is better understood as a ‘sphere of competing interests’ (Mercer 2002: 10) in which (I)NGOs struggle to secure their own interests and impart their own political worldview. As a result, (I)NGOs, particularly those based in the global North, consistently face challenges as to their political legitimacy and/or right to partake in governance on a global scale (Hudson 2001).

From this perspective, the governance leadership assumed by (I)NGOs can create tensions in terms of their claims to represent others, particularly the poor and citizens of the global South. Some analysts have largely rejected the idea that civil society groups – and (I)NGOs in particular – are able to lay claims to legitimacy because they are not accountable to ‘the people’ in the way that governments are (Mundy and Murphy 2001, Scholte 2005). Development (I)NGOs have also been criticised for being rooted in a philosophy of modernization, in which they attempt to export and implement liberal democracy to places and cultures deemed to lack an adequate civil society (Mercer 2002). Further, the increasing reliance of (I)NGOs on international donors complicates their claims to solidarity with the world’s poor. In Mercer’s (2002: 14) words:

if NGOs are taking up greater roles in social welfare activities as more donor funding becomes available, then the legitimacy of their claims to work with and represent the interests of the poor and disenfranchised on a political level, thereby building a broad-based civil society, comes under threat.

The rejoinder to such criticism is that undue focus on NGOs potentially distracts from the need to question all existing political institutions (Price 2003), and that (I)NGOs are now important and visible actors in the field of international development and peace building, illustrative of the changing face of global governance over the past two decades. Prior to the 1990s, development practices were largely centred on structuralist and socio-economics perspectives; economic dependency was seen as the crux of inequalities between the global North and South (Levermore and Beacom 2009). By the mid-1990s, however, analysts, scholars, and international organisations like the UN began to adopt a more comprehensive and contextual approach to development and increasingly included non-state actors – such as international organizations and (I)NGOs – into their analyses (Ilcan and Phillips 2010). With more (I)NGOs and IOs entering the development field during this time, the UN increasingly took an active role in overseeing development initiatives. Notably, this new development paradigm also provided the impetus for sport-based development programming and has helped to legitimise SDP activity (see Coalter 2013).

These differing perspectives on (I)NGOs as political actors in development beg for a specific means by which to make sense of their activities and implications; in the next section, we consider the potential of postcolonial theory for positively contributing to the analysis of SDP (I)NGOs.

**Postcolonial approaches to stakeholder theory**

Given the issues of democracy and legitimacy raised above, we suggest that critical, postcolonial theory can aid in the analysis of sport-based (I)NGO activity. Though there are studies that advocate for critical theory within the study of sport management and sport-focused policy-making (e.g. Frisby 2005, Chalip 2006, Babiak and Thibault 2009, Thibault 2009), there remains a general absence within sport management of a postcolonial approach to understanding stakeholder theory. This is a significant gap since postcolonial theory is similar in ways to critical perspectives:
both view capitalist structures as barriers to the participation of marginalised groups in sport, and draw attention to unequal relations of power. Both theories, moreover, operate as conceptual frameworks that challenge singular, ahistorical, and homogenising epistemologies, recognize competing truths, and seek out the lived experiences of marginalised populations (Dirlik 1994).

Given this, we draw here primarily on the work of critical and postcolonial international management theorists from beyond sport (e.g. Carr 2006, Westwood 2006, Banerjee 2008, Parsons 2008). We do so in order to better understand two key aspects of the process by which (I)NGOs and IOs leverage sports events to promote/engage with SDP: relations of power and stakeholder tensions. The former refers to the power structures that underlie the political processes (e.g. policy and strategy) through which SDP (I)NGOs and UN agencies partner with sports events. The latter draws attention to the multiple ways that stakeholder relations and tensions – particularly between organisational actors in the global North and South involved in SDP-related activities through sports events – are produced, constrained and regulated by macro and even hegemonic structures such as neoliberal objectives.

Critical and postcolonial approaches to stakeholder theory differ from traditional approaches. In the broadest terms, a traditional neoclassical approach to stakeholder theory tends to focus on understanding the connections, interests and relations between an organisation and its stakeholders (Freeman 1984). From this perspective, stakeholder theory is useful primarily for improving stakeholder decision-making in management through rigorous monitoring and evaluation strategies (Freeman 1984). Indeed, Friedman et al. (2004: 186, drawing on Wartick 1994) charge that by methodically monitoring stakeholder relations in sport event management, ‘companies and managers should be able to identify constituents, prioritise their claims, and understand the goals and behaviour expected by constituents’. Furthermore, sport event management scholars concur that stakeholder theory is beneficial for identifying – and giving voice to – those who are impacted by sport events (Friedman et al. 2004, Leopkey and Parent 2009). Thus, a traditional model posits that all stakeholders – and their interests, concerns and actions – are equally valuable to any strategic decision-making processes that may impact their organization. A neoclassical approach to stakeholder theory, then, can help sport event managers to safeguard mutual benefit (for primary stakeholders, such as sport organisations) and ensure that secondary stakeholders (e.g. the general public) ‘win out’ in terms of stakeholder relations in a given sport event.

These foundational perspectives retain some valuable insights in understanding the stakeholder landscape and process in sport. However, the global reach of sports mega-events, the unequal distribution of their benefits, and the postcolonial context in which many sports events and related SDP initiatives now take place means that critical theoretical insights are called for when studying sports events from a stakeholder perspective. Postcolonial theory expands upon key neoclassical principles in productive ways.

Arif Dirlik (1994: 332) defines the postcolonial as a tripartite description of a) conditions in formerly colonial societies, b) the period after the era of colonialism proper that resulted in the creation of the ‘Third World’ and c) a discourse that is informed by the epistemological orientations that are products of those conditions. Where once the ‘Third World’ was defined strictly in relations to its position in the capitalist worldview, postcolonialism has attempted to reclaim Third World identity and expand understandings of it to include its discursive position. A postcolonial understanding of stakeholder theory broadens critical approaches by overtly questioning and foregrounding western discourses of stakeholders, development, knowledge and ‘progress’ that can serve to maintain forms of colonisation (Westwood 2006, Parsons 2008). Grounded in a radical critique of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism, a postcolonial approach serves to contest and critique modern Western colonialism and Eurocentrism while focusing on the dismantling of dominating understandings of Western culture and epistemologies (Narayan 2000).
Specifically, Prasad (2003, as cited by Banerjee and Prasad 2008: 91) contends that the post-colonial standpoint is beneficial for reconfiguring traditional management studies because ‘it can reveal the neo-colonial assumptions that underlie management disciplines, especially international management and cross-cultural management’. Postcolonialism instead inspires attention to localism, collectivity and mutuality and recognises that certain stakeholders may be marginalised and co-opted more than others when it comes to – for example – strategic decision-making and sport event management processes. For instance, (i)NGOs working in the development context – including those related to sport and sports events – often mobilise discourses of ‘partnership’ to describe North-South relations, a term that attends to power relations with ‘donors attesting that they no longer seek to impose their vision of development on poor countries, but instead wish to be partners in strategies determined and “owned” by recipients themselves’ (Abrahamsen 2004: 1453). Yet, as Abrahamsen (2004) argues, partnerships invoke specific technologies of global governance that articulate with the production of neoliberal citizens and states. In other words, a postcolonial approach would interrogate how discourses of ‘partnerships’ can veil what is essentially just a repackaging of various governmental apparatuses; for example, approaches to development such as ‘Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers’ invoke partnership discourses that entrench, rather than subvert, conventional development practices and global North-South power relations (Abrahamsen 2004).

This theoretical approach does not presume that those with relatively peripheral positions within stakeholder relations are ineluctable or passive, mere consumers, or simply recipients of – for example – SDP-focused events, but rather that understanding and where appropriate challenging, relations of power is central to ethical stakeholder analyses. As Abrahamsen (2004: 1454) writes:

Power is certainly present in these partnerships, but its forms, structures and technologies cannot be encapsulated solely in terms of domination or coercion. Instead the power of partnerships is voluntary and coercive at the same time, producing both new forms of agency and new forms of discipline.

The point is that while relations of power should inform critical studies of (i)NGO activity and sport events, a postcolonial understanding of history and identity draws attention to hybrid-ity, meaning that development programs or initiatives are rarely reducible to a simple process of ‘invade’ and ‘resist’ (see Asher 2009). Though we argue that a postcolonial understanding of sport event management provides useful insights that assist in disrupting the presumptions of universal western knowledge, this requires recognising the nuances of international capital and business. Thus, while critical analyses are called for, it would be incorrect to presume that neoliberalism and global capitalism – as taken up by neoclassical versions of stakeholder theory – are uniform systems that inevitably mark, and destroy, non-Western targets (Westwood 2006).

There is a nascent group of scholars in international business and stakeholder management studies that employ postcolonial perspectives to stakeholder theory in ways that are productive for this chapter. For example, a recent special issue of *Critical Perspectives on International Business* features a number of researchers engaged in such studies (Banerjee and Prasad 2008, Parsons 2008). This work explores how neoclassical stakeholder theory has the potential to perpetuate what Banerjee (2008: 53) refers to as ‘stakeholder colonialism’ by upholding western discourses, silencing the voices of marginalised and oppressed groups, and ignoring the specific, local, historical and cultural elements in stakeholder relations. For example, Parsons’ (2008) study on Indigenous communities as ‘stakeholders’ in engagement strategies of two Australian minerals corporations, employed a discourse analysis and illustrated how understandings of ‘development’,
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‘business’ and ‘industry’ vary widely between Indigenous communities and mining corporate executives. Parsons (2008) concluded that development and management discourses were central to corporate constructions of community engagement and indigeneity. In a similar vein to Abraham (2008), he also highlighted how it is often presumed that the term ‘stakeholders’ indicates equal partners, which he suggests simply masks ‘capitalism’s legitimacy and colonialism’s power relations’ in lieu of promoting authentic, meaningful and ethical engagement with Indigeneity:

Discourses of stakeholder capitalism, CSR, sustainable development and, more recently, community engagement may be seen as strategic responses to perceived threats to corporate autonomy . . . Mineral companies perpetuate their right to operate on indigenous land by ‘engaging,’ rather than ignoring, local Indigenous people.

(Parsons 2008: 122)

We suggest that these insights from postcolonial management scholars should provoke critical reflections for sport event management practitioners and scholars engaged in SDP-focused work in specific ways. First, these studies emphasise the importance of questioning taken-for-granted truths and (Western) frameworks that often pervade definitions of ‘stakeholder’ and ‘community engagement’ in organisational relationships. Second, this work underscores the need to better understand the dynamics of power, control and resistance in stakeholder relations and event management, especially between diverse groups from different cultures and geo-political positions. In this way, postcolonial – or even post-development – critiques are useful in conceptualising power in, and desire for, hegemonic forms of development that can be produced and perpetuated by the professional (I)NGO sector (cf. Gidwani 2008). Thus, we support Westwood and Jack’s (2007: 256) charge that the ‘North/South divide is radically understudied in [International Business Management Studies]’. With a few major exceptions (e.g. Schlenkorf 2010, 2012, 2013; Corneliseen 2011; Darnell 2012b; Schlenkorf and Adair 2013), we would suggest the same concerns are evident within the field of sport event management.

From this perspective, Frisby’s (2005) critical social science paradigm is a useful departure point for considering the utility of a critical, postcolonial understanding of stakeholder theory to sport event management. Here, organisations are understood, and best viewed, as ‘operating in a wider cultural, economic, and political context characterized by asymmetrical power relations that are historically and deeply entrenched’ (Frisby 2005: 6). This kind of framework can stimulate a human-centred approach to management studies that interrogates relations of power in order to examine how sports events may impact disadvantaged communities (Hayhurst and Kidd 2011) and is also valuable for identifying whose voices may be excluded and silenced in sport event policy-making, planning and programming. For example, while most neoclassical scholarship on sport mega-events understand events’ developmental impact in terms of how ‘the development of new physical infrastructure associated with the event prompts a “trickle-down” effect that can leave both material and long-term economic growth and employment opportunities’ (Cornelissen 2011: 508), the critical, postcolonial stakeholder approach described here would strive to examine how access to the benefits of sports events are managed and delivered and how various non-governmental actors work to access and leverage the development benefits of sports events from their respective geo-political and institutional positions.

Similarly, a critical postcolonial understanding of stakeholder theory prioritises the diversity and fluidity within stakeholder groups, rather than merely across these entities (Wolfé and Putler 2002, Chauhan 2008). As Wolfe and Putler (2002: 65) argue, ‘although assuming homogeneity simplifies stakeholder theory, this assumption can have powerful, unanticipated, and undesirable consequences’. From a SDP perspective, viewing (I)NGOs as homogenous stakeholders may
ignore potential power inequities – particularly in terms of access to resources and (global) policy influence – between (I)NGOs with headquarters in the Global North such as Right To Play, and smaller, more localised NGOs such as Empowering Women of Nepal’s (EWN) ‘3 Sisters Adventure Trekking’, a locally-focused, self-sustaining social enterprise that seeks to support Nepalese women and girls by hiring them as guides and assistants for female trekkers in Nepal (EWN 2013). Right To Play differs from EWN not only in the scope and scale of its projects, but also in terms of its access to, and reliance upon, corporate donors and celebrity athletes. A postcolonial stakeholder analysis of these different organizations requires understanding their very different positions within the global (I)NGO and SDP sectors.

Critical discussion of (I)NGOs and IOS in normative aspects of sports event management

Thus far, we have called for a critical, postcolonial approach to understanding the intersections between international development, SDP, non-governmental actors and sports events that emphasises and questions the putative homogeneity between SDP (I)NGOs. This approach should also draw attention to the relationships between (I)NGOs and other SDP stakeholders. For example, corporations have recently expanded CSR endeavours into the realm of international aid and development, including SDP programs (Levermore 2010, 2011). Some corporations have even created their own SDP programs (including, for example, the National Basketball Association’s Basketball Without Borders program). Not only do these increasing linkages between corporate capitalism, consumerism and development illustrate neoliberal ideology that underpins portions of the SDP sector, they also demonstrate the need for a critical approach to stakeholder theory so as to recognise that stakeholder relations are often ‘systematized and controlled by the imperatives of capital and accumulation’ (Banerjee 2008: 73). In the next section, we summarise recent research and provide a critical discussion of (I)NGOs and IOS in normative aspects of sports event management in terms of policy, programming and promotion, community-based SDP sports events, and activism and resistance. Finally, and, where appropriate, we offer insights from postcolonial theory to extend these analyses.

SDP policy, programming and promotion

A central aspect of the relationship between SDP (I)NGOs and sports events is the formulation of policy. Political scientists have noted that (I)NGOs of all sizes and descriptions regularly play a significant policy role in an array of areas – including human rights, environmentalism, and gender equality (see Sundstrom 2005). In fact, (I)NGOs maintain power and influence by their ability to focus on and draw attention to specific issues that are often ignored by the state (Clark 1995). Indeed, Gordenker and Weiss (1995) suggest that influencing policy is one of the primary functions of (I)NGO activity. Strategic events such as conferences, meetings and protests are ideal platforms for (I)NGOs to leverage and solicit resources while also igniting policy-making actions (Betsill and Corell 2001, Humphreys 2004). This literature also suggests that (I)NGOs are able to exert concerted influence over government and UN agendas when they form networks with other organizations (Keck and Sikkink 1999).

In the realm of SDP, various studies have similarly demonstrated the importance of sports events in providing crucial platforms for (I)NGOs to launch policy advocacy strategies, lobby sport, UN and government officials, and build fertile networks to support the SDP cause. By connecting through sports events and building strategic transnational networks, SDP (I)NGOs are able to consolidate power and influence, creating linkages around the world that strengthen
citizens’ voices and bring domestic attention to NGO advocacy platforms (Hayhurst 2006). As discussed in the earlier half of this chapter, Right To Play is a useful example of a SDP INGO that has successfully engaged in these types of policy influence and advocacy strategies through various sports mega-events.

In addition to policy, SDP (I)NGOs and non-governmental actors leverage sports events to promote and implement their activities. Darnell’s (2012b) research with program officials from SDP (I)NGOs found that sports events are now deemed to be useful by those working in the sector for implementing an SDP agenda or program for two primary reasons. First, the organising bodies of sports events themselves are increasingly interested in and amenable to SDP philosophy and supportive of the efforts of SDP actors, including (I)NGOs. In 2009, the IOC was awarded Permanent Observer Status at the UN and now operates *Olympism in Action* (OIA), a program it defines as the manifestation of the three Olympic values (excellence, friendship and respect) through ‘six fields of activities’: development through sport; peace through sport; education through sport; sport at a grassroots level; sport and the environment and women in sport (International Olympic Committee 2009).

Second, this interest in development programming by the likes of the IOC, as well as FIFA, attracts SDP (I)NGOs to events and encourages these non-governmental stakeholders to align their efforts more directly with the Olympics and World Cup (see Darnell 2012b: 113–115). As a result, SDP (I)NGOs may now attempt to tailor or focus their efforts in ways that leverage the enormous media and economic activity that sports mega-events produce. From the viewpoint of SDP (I)NGOs, sports mega-events offer a visibility to SDP that was previously absent, and such events have in turn become strategically significant within the competition for funds and desire for media attention within the (I)NGO landscape (see Cottle and Nolan 2007).

Of course, in the critical, postcolonial approach that we are advocating in this chapter, important questions remain as to whether all (I)NGOs are likely to enjoy similar access to the benefits – material and discursive – that sports mega-events afford to SDP. Similarly, it would be inaccurate to expect a single or firm political orientation to be easily ascribed to the various (I)NGOs working to attach their SDP programming to sports events. In fact, previous research suggests evidence of competing ideologies and discourses of development within the various policies and programming that connect sports mega-events and SDP initiatives (Darnell 2012a). These competing discourses range from advocating traditional notions of development based on economic and infrastructural growth to understandings of development as the struggle for local, community-based self-determination and sustainability. In any case, we argue that the different non-governmental stakeholders that work to secure development benefits from sports events should be analysed in relation to their differential power and privilege within the postcolonial landscape.

The ‘festival effect’

In addition to sports mega-events like the Olympic Games, recent research also suggests that the type of SDP mandate pursued by (I)NGOs can be leveraged and boosted by the strategic organization and hosting of sports events at a community or local level (see Schlenkorf and Edwards 2010, Schlenkorf 2012, Adair 2013). When combined with existing SDP programs, small- and medium-scale events can widen participation and scope in SDP, particularly if attention is paid to issues of TTR – temporality, transience and regularity (Schlenkorf and Adair 2013: 100). In addition, as the momentum of medium- to long-term SDP programs wanes, local special events can inject a sense of excitement and re-focus the development mandate of SDP programs (Schlenkorf and Adair 2013).
This suggests that the actual planning and organisation of many local sports events now takes place specifically to support SDP programs and the work of (I)NGOs. This work draws on notions of the diverse benefits of sports events – economic, physical, socio-cultural, psychological, political and environmental (Schulenkorf and Edwards 2010: 102) – but also stresses the importance of the event for reaching community members and facilitating participation more easily and readily than mega-events. From this perspective, strategic management of local sports events can lead to direct impacts and to positive longitudinal outcomes of community development if and when community members themselves are involved in the process of SDP (Schulenkorf 2012).

These types of conclusions provide useful insights for the postcolonial framework we advocate for in this chapter. If communities are to be meaningfully included in the process of leveraging the development benefits of local sports events, this likely requires examining, recognising, discussing and even confronting and challenging the structures of power, both historical and contemporary, that tend to stimulate conflict and/or preclude agency and self-determination at a community level. For example, while Schulenkorf and Edwards (2010) are correct that sports events can be organised in response to ethnic conflicts, a postcolonial approach insists that the roots of such conflict, and associated structures of power and dominance, be considered alongside the application or delivery of sports events for peace. This is particularly important since the geographic areas Schulenkorf and Edwards (2010: 379) identified – ‘Israel and Palestine, Cyprus, Yemen, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and the Catalan and Basque areas in Spain’ – all have histories of colonialism that likely underpin contemporary ethnic conflict to varying degrees. The point here is not that (I)NGOs, particularly those who organise and leverage sports events, need to renounce political neutrality, but rather that a social justice mandate requires confronting the historical and political barriers to self-determination, as well as to material resources, that colonialism traditionally exacerbated and that continue in postcolonial communities and nations. Practical steps in this direction may include organising sports events that call explicit attention to colonial legacies or providing opportunities within or alongside events for public truth and reconciliation discussions regarding historical injustices and their contemporary effects (see Darnell and Hayhurst 2014).

**Activism and resistance**

Finally, it is important to recognise that the role of (I)NGOs in SDP is not restricted to instrumental processes of policy, promotion and programming. Like the aforementioned RioOnWatch, there are a plethora of (I)NGOs that engage with SDP from a more critical position, and utilise sport events as a platform/target for doing so. Certainly, much of the discourse surrounding sports events and SDP from official (i.e. the UN, the IOC, and SDP (I)NGOs) and media sources tend to promote the ability of sport and sports events to contribute to social, political and economic development in global South nations. Yet, organisations like RioOnWatch and Human Rights Watch have also carved out space in the SDP landscape to offer counter hegemonic discourses that disrupt the generally positive, apolitical and ahistorical depictions of SDP (Millington and Darnell 2014). These (I)NGOs call to attention the more deleterious effects of SDP, particularly as they relate to sport mega-events like the World Cup and Olympic Games where such events often result in an unequal distribution of wealth, environmental degradation and the disenfranchisement of marginalised populations as it relates to housing, security and human rights (Horne and Whannel 2012, Millington and Darnell 2014).

These resistive politics have taken a variety of forms, including condemning reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch [see for example the Human Rights Watch.
The non-governmental agency perspective

documentation of human rights abuses at the 2008 Beijing Games that included forced evictions, abuses of migrant workers, media censorships and a clampdown on civil society (Human Rights Watch 2013), and organised protests where as many as a million people have demonstrated against the Olympics and World Cup in Rio de Janeiro (Hearst 2013). Furthermore, as Millington and Darnell (2014) note, one of the most effective means of activism and resistance as it relates to SDP has been the blogosphere, where local bloggers and activists have been able to gain traction in bringing attention to some of the more problematic aspects of SDP. As Millington and Darnell (2014: 16) argue, blogs have been a central way in which otherwise marginalised voices have been able to challenge the dominant understanding of SDP put forth by the IOC, UN and other (I)NGOs, so as to ‘maintain a critical focus on the material inequality of everyday life in Rio and Brazil at it relates to the Olympics’.

Conclusions and future directions

Summary and discussion

In this chapter, we have examined various non-governmental actors that work for development and peace through sport and considered their relationships to sport events of different sizes. We have argued for the need to consider the activities of these organizations within a global political economy of development that is marked by unequal access to funds and resources and in which powerful voices, identities and political orientations may dominate. To challenge these tendencies, we have outlined a critical, postcolonial framework of stakeholder management that draws attention to relations of power and authority amidst the ostensibly progressive mandate of (I)NGO activity.

In effect, our overview and analysis concurs with the notion that (I)NGOs are political actors and should be considered as such, with different political orientations, goals and perspectives. (I)NGOs can participate in and legitimise neo-liberal tendencies (Mercer 2002) and/or act as a discursive and institutional alternative to market-led globalisation (Hudson 2001). In the case of sport, this means that it is important to acknowledge that not all (I)NGOs embrace the same political orientation. While Right to Play tends to focus on the (presumed) positive aspects of sport in the pursuit of development in underserved communities, it tends not to draw attention to, or organise against, exploitative forces of capitalism or neo-colonialism. By contrast, RioOnWatch is explicitly interested in exposing oppressive practices related to sports events and fomenting opposition to them.

Thus, when considered through a lens of postcolonial and critical stakeholder theory, sports events are best understood as sites for a range of (I)NGO-related activities, none of which should be considered homogenous by virtue of their position within civil society. As we have argued, the development implications of sports events as promoted and pursued by (I)NGOs and UN agencies need to be considered within differing power relations on a global scale and in relation to the various effects of events themselves. In turn, recognition should be given to the ways in which (I)NGOs may organise against sports events in order to draw attention to the inequitable and even destructive effects of planning, implementing and hosting.

Further, the legitimacy of (I)NGOs in relation to sport and sports events remains an ongoing process of negotiation. Following Hudson (2001), issues such as legitimacy, accountability and democracy are not tangible items that an (I)NGO can materially possess; rather, legitimacy is a social construction that will be interpreted by different stakeholders depending on their social and political positions.

What these conclusions suggest is that the analysis of sport-focused (I)NGOs would benefit from a critical engagement with the notion of political responsibility. Hudson (2001, drawing on
Jordan and Van Tuyil 2000), argues that a commitment to political responsibility can aid (I)NGOs in overcoming the limits of claiming representation for the interests of the world’s poor and marginalised. The notion of political responsibility is diverse and complex but ultimately focuses on an organisation’s accountability to the people it claims to represent, rather than solely to its funders. From this perspective, agenda setting, information flows, financing and transparency ought all to be approached in ways that pursue the interests of stakeholders in non-leadership positions. Not only will this likely lead to more transformative practice, but it also offers a framework through which (I)NGOs can assess how and indeed whether they are managing the risks and challenges of international development (Hudson 2001). We suggest that the future analysis of sport-related (I)NGOs would also benefit from employing these types of theoretical frameworks.

**Future research**

There is significant research to be conducted still on the topic of non-governmental actors and sports events. The following are several topics worthy of ongoing analysis:

First, further investigation is needed to understand the extent to which non-governmental agencies – or IOs and (I)NGOs more specifically – seek, develop or acquire a measure of political legitimacy in relation to development and sports events. This is of particular importance considering the burgeoning institutionalisation of the SDP sector. For example, how do high profile (I)NGOs like Right to Play establish legitimacy within the broader development sector? What negotiations or compromises take place within these processes? How might these organisations go about interpreting and implementing their political responsibilities in the manner discussed by Hudson (2001)?

Second, given that (I)NGOs are political actors and that a range of political perspectives are encapsulated by non-governmental actors within sport and SDP, what tensions are produced within the sport-focused (I)NGO sector and how are these negotiated? Future research could bring an important comparative and/or network analysis to bear on diverse INGOs like Right to Play and RioOnWatch.

Third, given its somewhat nebulous, yet high profile position within the field of development, sport and SDP, how does the UN system and various UN agencies negotiate the political and geographic specificities of sports events? What is the role of the UN at the intersection of civil society, SDP and sports events?

Fourth, will the development agenda increasingly connect to sport events, and have an effect on the future of sports events themselves? It is reasonable to suggest that the non-governmental interest in the development effects of sports events will have some bearing on how these events are pursued, bid upon, organised, implemented and assessed, though much work remains in order to understand whether or how these changes may take place for future events.

Fifth, further consideration is needed with regards to how researchers, activists, policy-makers and practitioners can mobilise a postcolonial perspective to the SDP context. In what way can sport management further engage with postcolonial methodologies as outlined by Parsons (2008) and Banjeree and Prasad (2008)? How can a postcolonial perspective understand – and theorise – stakeholders differently? Finally, what impact has the resistive and activist politics of (I)NGOs had on hegemonic understandings of SDP and sport events and how might these effects be mobilised further?

**Suggested readings**


References


Sport for development and peace international working group (SDP IWG) (2008) Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace: Recommendations to governments, Toronto: Right to Play.


