

Globalization of Sport: An Inconvenient Truth¹

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The purpose of the 2008 Earle F. Zeigler Lecture was to highlight some of the issues involved in the globalization of sport that affect the field of sport management. In particular, four issues were presented: a division of labor undertaken on an international scale where transnational corporations are drawing on developing countries' work forces to manufacture sportswear and sport equipment; the increasing flow of athletes where country of birth and origin are no longer a limitation on where an athlete plays and competes; the increased involvement of global media conglomerates in sport; and the impact of sport on the environment. The impact and *inconvenient truths* of these issues on sport management were addressed.

“When academics write about sports, they are capable of accomplishing the impossible: sucking all the pleasure and fun from the spectacle” (Foer, 2006, p. 86). I begin with this quotation because I believe that, that is, in part, what I am about to do in this paper. I chose to discuss the globalization of sport for the Earle F. Zeigler Lecture for a number of reasons. First, although the topic has been addressed by our colleagues in sport sociology (cf. Andrew & Grainger, 2007; Bairner, 2005; Hargreaves, 2002; Harvey, Rail, & Thibault, 1996; Maguire, 1999, 2005), it has not been extensively studied by sport management and sport policy scholars. Some exceptions include the work of Allison (2005), Henry and [the] Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy (2007), Houlihan (1994, 1999), Mason (2002), Mason and Duquette (2005), Means and Nauright (2007), and Wheeler and Nauright (2006). As well, a number of textbooks and chapters aimed at sport management students on the importance of globalization in sport management have been published (cf. Fay & Snyder, 2007; Gratton & Leberman, 2006; Thoma & Chalip, 1996; Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). These works have all addressed issues of global governance and the marketplace in an era of global prominence. Second, it is clear that a number of controversial issues affecting professional and ‘amateur’ sports are global – for example, the use of performance enhancing drugs, the migration of athletes and coaches, the environmental impact, the use of developing countries’ workforce for the production of sportswear and sport

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equipment, and the general commodification and commercialization of sports in society. Third, there are a number of sport organizations that yield a great deal of power in the world. Organizations such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the National Basketball Association (NBA) play an important role in the ‘new sport world order.’ Finally, it is increasingly imperative for sport management students to understand globalization and its impact on sport as they embark on careers in the field.

Although globalization has led to positive outcomes in sport management, it also presents important drawbacks that must be understood and respected. At the very least, sport management students should be sensitized to issues of multilingualism, multiculturalism, and multidisciplinary in the delivery of sport in a global context. Before addressing these issues, it is important to define globalization. For the purposes of this paper, I have relied on Robertson’s (1992) interpretation of globalization, that is, the consolidation of the world into a whole space – in other words, a “global community” (p. 9). Robertson (1992) further explains that globalization is “the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (p. 8).

In the numerous works on globalization, several factors have been identified as playing a key role in the increasing movement toward globalization (cf. Marchak, 1991; Robertson & White, 2007; Teeple, 2000; Thomas, 2007; Wolf, 2004). These factors include: pressures from transnational corporations, international capital, neoliberal economies, and right-wing governments where markets have become deregulated and trade relations among countries have increased (Marchak, 1991; Teeple, 2000; Thomas, 2007; Wolf, 2004). In addition, progress in communication technologies has enhanced the ability of exchange among individuals, organizations, and governments. All this, in turn, has contributed to globalization in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres (Neverdeen Pieterse, 1994; Robertson & White, 2007). The focus of these spheres has been addressed in various contexts: politics and international governance, economics, business, media and technology, health, education, development, environment, and culture, to name a few (cf. Ritzer, 2007). Sport has not been excluded from these discussions of the application of the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres (cf. Andrews & Grainger, 2007; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007a, 2007b; Harvey & Houle, 1994; Harvey et al., 1996; Taylor, 1988; Wright, 1999).

In the context of sport, Tomlinson and Young (2006) and others (cf. Wertheim, 2004; Westerbeek & Smith, 2003) remind us that the FIFA is more ‘global’ than the United Nations (UN) since the FIFA has a membership of 208 countries while the UN’s membership is 192 countries (cf. FIFA, 2008; UN, 2008).² Along similar lines, the IOC is also larger in scope than the United Nations. Giulianotti and Robertson (2007a, 2007b) note that “Olympism has a global political reach, with 203 National Olympic Committees affiliated to the IOC, giving 11 more national members than the United Nations” (p. 108).³

Tomlinson and Young (2006) write “in participatory terms, the World Cup and the Olympics offer a platform to all nations, and most of all to small nations of the world, that is unrivaled by any other cultural or political body, even the United Nations” (p. 2). Sport is so prominent in the world that the Vatican set up a sports department in August 2004 under the leadership of the late Pope John Paul II. In the announcement of this sports initiative, a spokesperson from the Vatican notes

that “the church . . . is called upon without doubt to pay attention to sports, which certainly can be considered one of the nerve centers of contemporary culture and one of the frontiers for new evangelization” (The Associated Press, 2004, paragraph 7).

In many ways, globalization has been beneficial for sport. Among the evidence, I note the spread of sports throughout the world: the diversity in athletes’ origins participating in many of the professional leagues around the world (e.g., the Ladies Professional Golf Association, the Association of Tennis Professionals, the Women’s Tennis Association, the NBA, and the English Premier League). Also noteworthy is the increasing number of countries participating in international sport events. For example, Azerbaijan, Kenya, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, and Venezuela participated in their first Olympic Winter Games in 1998 in Nagano, Japan (cf. International Olympic Committee, 2008a). In addition, an increasing number of athletes are participating in a diverse range of sports often crossing some gender and religious lines and climate barriers. For example, Muslim women participating in sport such as rugby and football; the gold medal victory of Nawal El Moutawakel⁴ from Morocco in 400-meter hurdles at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles; the participation of Jamaican athletes in bobsleigh at the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary; the Australian gold medal victory (i.e., Steven Bradbury) in short track speed skating at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City; and an increased access to winter sports in tropical climates (e.g., in the countries of Dubai, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Taiwan) via snow domes where sports such as downhill skiing, snowboarding, and ice skating take place indoors. The evidence also includes the increasing opportunities athletes, coaches, and leaders have been able to access because of the global nature of sport.

In praising the virtues of globalization and sport, Wilsey (2006, p. 47) argues that football (i.e., soccer) is “unique in its ability to bridge differences and overturn national prejudices.” As evidence, the author uses one example of the collaboration that took place among the two host nations for the 2002 FIFA World Cup. It is no secret that the occupation of South Korea by Japan between 1910 and 1945 led to strong tensions between the two countries. As Wilsey (2006) explains,

In less than half a century South Korea had gone from not allowing the Japanese national team to cross its borders for a World Cup qualifier, to co-hosting the tournament . . . Give the world another 50 years and we might see the Cup co-hosted by Israel and Palestine. (p. 47)

On the topic of relations between Israel and Palestine, grassroots sport programs such as *Building Bridges Basketball Camp* and *Playing for Peace* have been developed as strategies towards peace, collaboration, and unity among youth of these nations (Ford, 2006a, 2006b; International Platform on Sport and Development, 2005; Quinn, 2006). There is no shortage of examples of the ‘power’ of sport to bring people together. Several authors have discussed the global appeal of sport and the power of sport to transcend borders, culture, language, gender, race, religion, and socio-economic status (cf. Andrews & Grainger, 2007; Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 2001; Thoma & Chalip, 1996; Wertheim, 2004). As Miller et al. (2001) explain, “sport is probably the most universal aspect of

popular culture” (p. 1). Along similar lines, Riordan and Krüger (1999) argue that defenders or promoters of sport, at the turn of the 20th century, could not have predicted the power sport leaders and sport organizations would have in influencing “social and cultural life, in politics and economics” (p. ix). In a concrete example of the power of international sport, several sport researchers would identify the 1995 Rugby World Cup held in South Africa where Nelson Mandela shared in the victory of the South African Springbok team against the New Zealand All Blacks (cf. Crawford, 1999; Moodley & Adam, 2000; Steenveld & Strelitz, 1998). As Crawford (1999, p. 134) explains, “Mandela’s presence and persona at the 1995 World Cup were a spellbinding moment, a fragment of transcendent time in which a country with a bitter history of racism, bigotry, and oppression displayed bright hopes and youthful optimism.” South Africa Springbok’s World Cup victory not only led to a successful nation-building achievement, it put the country of South Africa and the new anti-apartheid regime on the global map.

Sport has always included an international dimension but this dimension appears to have intensified. The evidence that sport is globalized is uncontested. For example, Wright (1999) notes the increased involvement of global media conglomerates (e.g., Disney, News Corporation, Time Warner) in acquiring sport properties (i.e., franchises, leagues, sport stadia); the growth of international sport management firms (e.g., IMG) and their involvement in all facets of sport events from the management of athletes, the creation of events, and the media production of these events; transnational corporations in the sport industry drawing on developing countries’ work force to produce sportswear and sport equipment; international sport federations that are increasingly finding new sources of capital from the sale of broadcasting rights (e.g., IOC, FIFA, IAAF); and the increasing flow of athletes and coaches where country of birth and origin are no longer a limitation on where an athlete plays or where a coach coaches.

In the academic context, there has been an increase in sport management programs in universities and colleges worldwide and in the number of organizations at the continental and regional levels and within countries (e.g., North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Asia). There has also been a proliferation in the number of journals related to the management and business of sport originating from various countries (e.g., Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, Egypt and Arab, Asia, France, Japan, Korea) (cf. Thibault, 2007). Evidence of the globalization of sport, it seems, is all around us.

As you have noticed, *the inconvenient truth* is part of the title of this article. What is *this inconvenient truth*? The *inconvenient truth* is that although there are many virtues associated with the global movement in sport, globalization has not been favorable for all. In fact, some argue that the globalization of sport has been achieved at the expense of individuals, organizations, and countries with limited resources (cf. Foer, 2006; Play Fair at the Olympics, 2004; Sage, 2005; Wertheim, 2004). The globalization of sport may, in large part, have been achieved on the backs of the poor.

For all its virtues, globalization [is] not without its drawbacks: widening chasms between rich and poor societies, plummeting environmental standards and increasing dependence on outsourcing. Peril [is] riding tandem

with so much promise. Which is to say, globalization is like sports: For all the winners there are necessarily, losers as well. (Wertheim, 2005, p. 79)

For the purposes of this article, I will address the *inconvenient truths* for the following four elements: a division of labor undertaken on an international scale where transnational corporations (TNCs) are drawing on developing countries' work force to manufacture sportswear and sport equipment; the increasing flow of athletes where country of birth and origin are no longer a limitation on where an athlete plays and competes; the increased involvement of global media conglomerates such as Disney, News Corporation, Time Warner, Vivendi Universal, and Bertelsmann AG in sport; and the impact of sport on the environment. There are many more issues related to the globalization of sport but I believe these issues capture fundamental problems and *inconvenient truths* associated with the globalization of sport. Labor issues are addressed in the first two elements of this article. The first part of labor issues is focused on developing nations' manufacturing of sportswear and sport equipment for consumers of developed nations.

Labor Issues Part 1: The Use of Developing Nations' Workforce by TNC's for the Production of Sportswear and Sport Equipment

In the sport industry, the production of goods is largely achieved in developing countries through the use of subcontractors hired by major corporations such as Nike, adidas, Puma, and Fila. The workforce responsible for the production of these sporting goods endures, to this day, pitiful working conditions. Even with public pressure originating from special interest groups such as the International Labor Organization, the Worker Rights Consortium, and Fair Labor Association based in developed countries (cf. Hussain-Khaliq, 2004; Sage, 1999, 2005), TNCs are still complicit in perpetuating the poor working conditions in the factories. Even though TNCs have developed codes of conduct and ethical guidelines, these codes and guidelines have not, for the most part, translated into real positive changes in the operations of subcontractors and the treatment of workers in developing countries (cf. Adams, 2002; Lim & Phillips, 2008; Maquila Solidarity Network, 2008; Play Fair at the Olympics, 2004). TNCs have to assume part of the responsibility for the low wages, long hours, lack of job security, and dismal and dangerous working conditions. As noted in the Play Fair at the Olympics (2004) report,

If (labour) exploitation were an Olympic sport, the sportswear giants would be well represented among the medal winners. While the industry can boast its commitment to some impressive principles, enshrined in codes of conduct, its business practices generate the market pressures that are in reality leading to exploitative labour conditions. The consequence is that millions of workers are being locked into poverty and denied a fair share of the wealth that they generate. (p. 4)

In addition, the employees of these factories do not have the time to participate in sports nor do they have the resources to buy the products they create. As Sage (2005, p. 363) notes, “it is their labor that allows all of us to play, watch, coach, and administer sports. Their labor, in effect, is the very foundation of our sporting experience.” This fact is often forgotten as we individually and collectively benefit from our involvement in sport.

Transnational corporations in the sport industry have experienced important increases in their profits in recent years (cf. Laurent, 2008; Ram, 2007; Rusli, 2007). These TNCs have also been involved in multi million dollar deals to sponsor sport teams, leagues, and/or events and pay athletes millions of dollars to endorse their brands and products. While these TNCs are investing in the marketing of their brands, they have been slow to invest in the enhancement of working conditions and wages of employees in the factories. In fact, some argue (cf. Lim & Phillips, 2008; Maquila Solidarity Network, 2008; Play Fair at the Olympics, 2004) that the [traditional] business model is encouraging the status quo. As outlined in the report Play Fair at the Olympics (2004), the business model is

based upon ruthless pressure on prices, a demand for fast and flexible delivery, and a constant shift in manufacturing locations in pursuance of ever-cheaper production costs. Global sportswear companies link millions of workers to consumer markets via long supply-chains and complex networks of factories and contractors. Market power enables global companies to demand that their suppliers cut prices, shorten delivery times, and adjust rapidly to fluctuating orders. Inevitably, the resulting pressures are transmitted down the supply-chain to workers, leading to lower wages, bad conditions, and the violation of workers’ rights. (p. 5)

In their study on Nike and its corporate social responsibility initiatives, Lim and Phillips (2008, p. 152) also conclude that the implementation of the code of conduct “was hampered because Nike utilized the market-oriented production system.” They further explain the importance of partnerships between suppliers and contractors in order to encourage compliance with Nike’s code of conduct. The production of sport-related goods is a complex process involving a number of stakeholders. In their position at the top of the production chain, TNCs operating in the sport industry have the power to make a difference in improving the work conditions of employees who produce the sportswear and sport equipment. Unfortunately, evidence of achieving this is very limited. This issue will be further discussed at the end of the article. In the following section, the migration of athletes is examined as another labor issue in the globalization of sport that is worthy of consideration.

Labor Issues Part 2: The Migration of Athletes

In the context of a global economy, the free movement of workers between countries is not unusual. In fact, in many cases, it is encouraged. In sport, the migration of athletes refers to the movement of athletes from one country to another, generally to access more resources whether it is financial compensation or better coach-

ing, equipment, and support services for their sport involvement (Bale, 1990; Bale & Maguire, 1994; Lafranchi & Taylor, 2001; Weston, 2006). Migration may also occur to facilitate the athlete's achievement of his/her ultimate goal of being selected to a country's Olympic team or signing on to a professional league. In the recruitment of international athletes in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Weston (2006) writes:

Player movement in international athletics is, essentially, sports' version of free trade. The global connection through sport and the increasing presence of international athletes are generally welcome and beneficial. The expanded market of talent increases the quality of competition for the consumer fan and the strength of athletic programs at colleges and universities. (p. 831)

Although athlete migration has been favorable for the coaches, teams, leagues, organizations, and nations benefiting from the access to better talent, it has also been identified as problematic (Bale & Maguire, 1994; Bale & Sang, 1996; Lafranchi & Taylor, 2001; Milanovic, 2005; Nafziger, 1988; Weston, 2006). For example, concerns over the massive exodus of Kenyan athletes to other countries and the drain on their talent pool have been raised by Kenyan officials when eight Kenyans migrated "to the affluent Persian Gulf nations of Qatar and Bahrain . . . Qatar and Bahrain lured the athletes with promises of generous benefits and lifetime pensions" (Carlson, 2004, p. D1). When a developing country's investment in its sport system are reaped by other countries (often affluent developed nations), it is disconcerting. Although Kenyan athletes who migrated have personally benefitted from the opportunities offered by Qatar and Bahrain, Kenya's sport system was 'deskilled' with the loss of these athletes (Maguire & Bale, 1994).

Increasingly, countries' sport leaders appear to be involved in the recruitment of athletes from other countries in order to be competitive in international sport events.⁵ For example, prior to the 2006 Torino Olympic Winter Games, leaders from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were recruiting Canadian talent (with Macedonian heritage) to field their Olympic team (Kingston, 2005). Citizenship and affiliation are, it appears, easily exchanged for the right sport skills and abilities. As noted by Weston (2006), the IOC has a rule that addresses nationality where athletes are required to "be citizens of the country which they represent in the [Olympic] Games. Despite this, application of nationality rules becomes dubious when countries grant citizenship to star foreign athletes on the eve of the Games" (p. 837). Along the same lines, Nafziger (1988) also identifies as problematic, "the growing practice of states to grant "quickie" citizenship to star foreign athletes" (p. 79). Athlete migration has led, in some instances, to what Maguire and Bale (1994, p. 282) term the "deskilling of 'donor' countries." They argue that "Latin and Central American countries . . . regularly experience the loss of baseball and soccer player to the USA and Europe" (p. 282). They further explain:

Less developed countries have invested in nurturing athletic talent. Once this talent reaches maturity, more economically developed leagues, such as Major League Baseball, cream off the best. Native audiences are thus denied direct access to native talent nurtured and developed in their countries. (Maguire & Bale, 1994, p. 282)

As further evidence of the impact of athlete migration, the Greek softball and baseball 2004 Olympic teams are examples where most of the athletes on both teams were born in the United States. Even though the United States did not qualify for baseball for the 2004 Olympic Games, American baseball players were well represented. Twenty were Americans (with Greek heritage), one was Canadian (with Greek heritage), and two were Greeks (Carlson, 2004; The San Diego Union-Tribune, 2004). For softball, the situation was similar. Fourteen athletes were Americans while two were Greeks (Softball West Magazine, 2004). These athletes all became Greek citizens in time for the Olympic Games and they were excused from Greece's 2-year required military service (Carlson, 2004). Although this provided the chosen athletes with opportunities to participate in the Olympic Games, Greek-born athletes (i.e., domestic athletes developed in Greece) were essentially overlooked when team members were selected.

In the case of professional baseball, and Major League Baseball in particular, questions about siphoning talent out of the country or what has often been called 'poaching' along with exploitative practices in recruiting players from Central and South America have been raised (Bretón, 2000; Maguire & Bale, 1994). The unequal access to resources in Central America and South America relative to the United States has, in some cases, facilitated the migration of athletes and has, as well, perpetuated these inequities. For example, Miguel Tejada, initially shortstop for the Oakland Athletics,⁶ came from very poor circumstances in the Dominican Republic. As Bretón (2000) explains,

Knowing he had no alternatives, the Athletics acquired Tejada's considerable talent for \$2,000. By comparison, Tejada's white American teammate, Ben Grieve, received a \$1.2 million signing bonus. Similarly, the Texas Rangers acquired Sammy Sosa's services in 1986 for \$3,500—the exact amount the Brooklyn Dodgers paid to sign Jackie Robinson in 1946. (p. 14)

Furthermore, Bretón (2000) reports the following statement made by Dick Balderson, vice-president of the Colorado Rockies at the time of publication, "instead of signing four [American] guys at \$25,000 each, you sign 20 [Dominican] guys for \$5,000" (p. 14). As is the case for labor issues that occur in the sporting goods industry, standards for the acquisition of talent in developed countries are not maintained when talent originates in developing countries.

The true (e.g., monetary) value of the acquisition is not fully recognized and shared with the athletes, their clubs, teams, leagues, and/or sport system. Equitable exchanges of resources are not occurring. Although athletes may personally gain, the real beneficiaries are typically the professional leagues and teams in developed countries. From a global perspective, the acquisition of talent by developed nations' leagues and teams is largely carried out at the expense of developing nations' sport systems. The depletion of athletes with promising talent from developing countries is rarely replenished, in any form, by the organizations responsible for its depletion. Athletes are poached to enhance the quality of a sport team and league in affluent countries.

In other cases, the internationalization of leagues such as the NBA or football in Europe may have enhanced the profile of teams in these leagues among fans, media, sponsors, and advertisers across the globe, however, it may have

undermined the success of domestic leagues in certain countries, for example, the Chinese Basketball League (Yao Ming) and the Brazilian Football League (Ronaldo Luís Nazário de Lima). Related to professional basketball, Wertheim (2004) explains that even though the internationalization of the NBA has greatly enhanced its prominence in the global marketplace, this prominence has not translated into similar success for other professional basketball leagues. Wertheim (2004) writes:

Stern evangelizes that the NBA's worldwide sprawl is a blessing to leagues in other nations—his rising tide lifts their boat—but it doesn't always play out that way. It's not only that the U.S. has become the destination of top Chinese league players . . . , but also the increase in NBA telecasts and webcasts siphons fans from the CBA [Chinese Basketball League]. Why pay 40 yuan (\$5 U.S.) to watch the Beijing Ducks play the Guangdong Southern Tigers when you can stay home and watch decidedly superior NBA games for free on television or broadband? Chen Quanli, head of CCTV's [television network of the People's Republic of China] sports division, claims that ratings for NBA games outdraw the CBA's 3 to 1. (p. 79)

As for professional football (i.e., soccer), Foer (2004) explains that approximately 5,000 Brazilians have contracts to play football outside of Brazil. Wertheim (2004) argues that Brazil is the largest producer of football talent in the world, but as he explains,

European leagues, taking advantage of the downtrodden South American economy, have aggressively pursued all the best players. Brazilian teams, often owned by multinational corporations, have been all too happy to sell stars overseas for transfer fees that can top \$10 million—and it's not as if that money goes back into the team. So while Real Madrid fans can cheer for Ronaldo [Ronaldo Luís Nazário de Lima], clubs in Brazil have second-rate rosters playing before disaffected crowds. (p. 80)⁷

In the American context, there have been important increases in the level of participation from international student-athletes in NCAA competitions. For example, in 2005, Weston (2006) reports that “in NCAA tennis, 63 of the top 100 men's single players, and 47 of the top 100 women players were international student-athletes” (p. 841). Although more opportunities have been available to international athletes to train and compete in U.S. colleges and universities, Weston (2006) notes where concerns have been expressed by Americans about their diminishing domestic opportunities in college and university tennis and the possible link between these diminishing opportunities and poor rankings of American athletes in professional tennis.⁸

Related to the migration of athletes, foreign ownership of professional sport franchises has also generated a great deal of controversy. Vecsey (2007) writes:

When the Glazer [Malcolm Glazer] family from the United States took control of Manchester United in 2005, many loyal fans rushed the city walls with pitchforks and pots of boiling oil in a vain attempt to save the purity of British soccer. Yet the foreign hordes of investors keep arriving, bringing

dollars or rubles or even Thai baht or Icelandic krona to the flourishing Premier League, by far the best soccer league in the world. (p. D4)

Fans were very vocal in expressing their concerns because they believed foreign ownership would compromise the cultural and social identity of their sport, their teams, and/or their leagues. There are several examples where public concerns about foreign ownership of sport teams have been expressed. For example, when the Seattle Mariners (MLB) was purchased by Japanese Hiroshi Yamauchi in 1992; when the LA Dodgers (MLB) was purchased by Australian Rupert Murdoch in 1998; when the Montréal Canadiens (National Hockey League) was purchased by American George Gillett in 2001; when Chelsea Football Club (English Premier League) was purchased by Russian Roman Abramovich in 2003; when Manchester United (English Premier League) was purchased by American Malcolm Glazer in 2005; and when Liverpool FC (English Premier League) was purchased by Americans George Gillett and Tom Hicks in 2007 (cf. Bonham & Hinchey, 2008; Howell, 2005; McRae, 2008; Rovell, 2008; Vecsey, 2007; Weiner, 2008).

The next topic to be addressed in this article relates to the role media have played in the globalization of sport.

Global Sport-Media Complex

Some researchers have termed the interrelationship between TNCs, media, and sport organizations as the global sport media complex (cf. Jhally, 1989; Miller et al., 2001; Raney & Bryant, 2006; Rowe, 1996; Scherer, Falcous, & Jackson, 2008). Others have called it the sport media nexus (cf. Grainger, Newman, & Andrews, 2005; Messner, 2002; Nicholson, 2007), the golden triangle (cf. Honeybourne, Hill, & Moors, 2000; Nixon, 2008), or the love-match (cf. Rowe, 1996). In my class, I call it *ménage à trois*. For me, *ménage à trois* seems to capture well the interplay of media, TNCs, and sport as all three ‘players’ are involved in the most intimate relationships . . . and they all benefit from what they bring to the relationship. Media have the expertise and technical equipment to produce sport into a package that can easily be consumed by spectators. Media are also involved in providing important financial resources to sport in the form of broadcasting rights. TNCs provide sponsorship money to sport organizations in exchange for visibility of their products and they also buy advertisement time and space from media to ensure visibility of their products. In turn, with the resources from broadcasting rights and from sponsorships, sport organizations are able to invest in developing a better product that will have more appeal to audiences favoring mutual and reciprocal benefits to all the ‘players’ in the *ménage à trois*.

There are several examples where sport has changed to accommodate media’s interest (cf. Miller et al., 2001; Nixon, 2008; Rowe, 1996), for example, stoppage in play to allow commercial breaks in telecasts of events, changes in sport rules to enhance the appeal of the sport for fans, for sponsors, and for media (mixed martial arts is a good example), and the creation of new sports (and/or events) to target new audiences for TNCs and media (extreme sports, ESPN’s XGames).

In addition, several global media conglomerates are increasingly involved in the acquisition of sport properties (teams, leagues, stadia) (cf. Gerrard, 2000,

2004; Grainger & Andrews, 2005; Harvey, Law, & Cantelon, 2001; Law, Harvey, & Kemp, 2002; Wright, 1999). As examples of media conglomerates involved in the business of sport, we could include: Disney (based in the U.S.), News Corporation (based in Australia), Time Warner (based in the U.S.), Vivendi SA (based in France), Viacom/CBS Corporation (based in the U.S.), and Bertelsmann AG (based in Germany). Media's involvement in the business of sport can be problematic on several levels. As a number of media conglomerates increase their ownership of sport properties, we may see a decrease in the diversity in sport and sporting heritage. In addition, while media conglomerates increasingly gain control of sport properties, we can foresee a situation where only sports that can be commodified and commercialized will thrive. The value of sport will be determined by the size and composition of audience available for media, advertisers, and sponsors. As well, critical accounts of sport and the reporting of controversial stories may disappear as media that own the sport teams have no interest in supporting negative coverage.

The final issue I want to address is the environment in the context of the globalization of sport.

Environment

Sport makes a significant impact on the environment. A study was undertaken at the Centre for Business Relationships Accountability, Sustainability and Society at Cardiff University in Wales where the ecological footprint of rugby supporters was assessed during one game (Wales against Scotland) of the 2006 Rugby's Six Nations tournament. Although the researchers (Centre for Business Relationships Accountability, Sustainability and Society, 2007; Collins, Flynn, Munday, & Roberts, 2007) acknowledge the important economic benefits of this event for the Cardiff economy, they also point out the significant environmental cost paid by the city. Their research demonstrates that the "energy and resources used by 85,499 rugby supporters . . . resulted in an ecological footprint equivalent to the area of 3,578 rugby pitches" (Centre for Business Relationships Accountability, Sustainability and Society, 2007, paragraph 5; Jones, 2007, paragraph 6). Furthermore, the researchers argued that the largest impact on the ecological footprint resulted from supporters' food and drink consumption. A total of 66.5 tons of waste were generated during the event of which approximately 1% was recycled (Centre for Business Relationships Accountability, Sustainability and Society, 2007; Jones, 2007). The ecological footprint was further affected by the travel to, and from, Millennium Stadium. The researchers estimated a total of 24.3 million kilometers travelled by the supporters for the game. This translated into an average of 284 kilometers per supporter. Based on the number of sport events held throughout the world, our ecological footprint related to sport is immense and, for the most part, goes unnoticed.

Another example where sport has not been so kind to the environment is in downhill skiing. In preparation for the Nagano 1998 Olympic Winter Games, the Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS) wanted to extend the length of the men's downhill course by 120 meters (395 feet), however, Japan and Nagano officials did not want to extend the course because it would be damaging to an ecologically sensitive area of the mountain. In the end (after a 5-year impasse blamed on

“cultural differences” by the IOC), the Nagano Organizing Committee agreed to extend the start line by approximately 85 meters (i.e., 279 feet) (New York Times, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). Initial concerns for vegetation and wildlife were set aside to ensure a longer downhill ski course for athletes.

Still on the theme of winter sports, is the building of snow domes to allow individuals living in countries where they do not experience the ‘real’ winter to practice sports such as downhill skiing, snowboarding, and skating. There are approximately 50 snow domes currently operating in 20 countries (UK, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia, China) (Wilson, 2005). These facilities cover the space of 3 football fields and use the equivalent of 15,000 domestic refrigerators to keep the dome’s temperature between -1° and -7° Celsius to support snow-making equipment that make 30 tons of snow every night to maintain snow levels in the facility (Agence France-Presse, 2005).

In another example of sport’s impact on the environment, golf has been a concern. Even though golf is often associated with the great outdoors and individual’s harmony with nature, the development and maintenance of golf courses negatively affects wildlife and vegetation, not to mention the depletion of water resources required for the upkeep of the greens (cf. Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, & Bradley, 2002; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). Golf courses are usually built in, or near, ecologically sensitive areas (e.g., forests, marshes, lakes, rivers, fields) and then, once developed, chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides are used to maintain the greens, further damaging the environment. As explained by Maguire et al. (2002), “building a golf course involves the clearing of natural vegetation and destroys natural landscapes and habitats. Trees, shrubs, hedgerows and plants are destroyed, hilltops are bulldozed and valleys are filled in to create an artificial golf landscape” (p. 93). The impact of golf on the environment has led to the development of an organization, Global Anti-Golf Movement, in 1993 (cf. Global Anti-Golf Movement, 2004; Maguire et al., 2002; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006) to increase awareness among the public about the negative impact golf has on the environment. As part of their manifesto, the Global Anti-Golf Movement (2004) states,

In the face of growing criticism of the adverse environmental impacts of golf courses, the industry is promoting the notion of “pesticide-free,” “environmentally-friendly” or “sensitive” golf courses. No such course exists to date, and the creation and maintenance of the “perfect green” comprising exotic grass inevitably requires intensive use of chemicals. (paragraph 6)

These are just a few examples of how the globalization of sport has had negative consequences for the environment. Several other examples could be used to further illustrate cases where the environment is consistently compromised to accommodate participants’ involvement in sports.

Discussion

In choosing labor, media, and environmental issues as evidence of some of the *inconvenient truths* of the globalization of sport, I am not suggesting that we stop taking part in sport, that we stop buying sportswear and sport equipment, that we prevent athletes from migrating to other countries, that we stop building sport

facilities, or that we stop holding sport events. The point of this article is to increase awareness regarding the perils of globalization. In developed countries, the level of consciousness about the ‘other side’ of the globalization of sport is not always high as individuals (including sport management students and scholars) are bombarded by positive examples and outcomes of globalization. I am calling for increased sensitivity regarding the cost of globalization for individuals in developing countries, for their sport system, and for their country.

It may be inconvenient for us to ask, “What are we willing to give up to protect sport and the sport industry and to ensure a more globally egalitarian situation with respect to sport?” In other words, are we (in developed nations) willing to share the wealth with all countries and organizations involved in all of the labor used in sport? Should rich professional sport leagues in developed countries invest a portion of their profits in the countries where they acquired talent for their teams/leagues? These profits could be invested in the sport system to ensure talent development and ongoing support for the countries’ sport systems.

Should sport management students and scholars be sensitized to the impact sport has beyond economic and financial terms of developed countries’ sport teams and leagues? How do we ensure that these students understand the impact that sport has on developing countries, on sport systems from poorer countries, on workers producing our sportswear and our sport equipment? What choices and decisions can we make as consumers, as sport participants, as teachers, as researchers, as sport leaders to redress the imbalances that have occurred in sport as a result of globalization?

Can we exercise pressure on TNCs and media conglomerates to change their labor practices? Otherwise are we not complicit in perpetuating the perils of globalization based on our inactions? As a collective, we would not endure the working conditions and human resource practices of subcontractors involved in the production of our sporting goods—so what are we doing to change these poor labor practices? We need to ask ourselves, what role can we play in mobilizing the stakeholders involved (TNCs, governments, sport organizations, media, sponsors, advertisers, and individuals) to effect real change? Can we leverage sport sponsors to support sport systems beyond the borders of their head offices? For example, can the IOC solicit from its TOP 12 sponsors support for the sport systems of developing countries to reduce the sport performance and the resource gaps between developing and developed nations?

As discussed earlier, globalization has led to prosperity for many sport stakeholders, for example, media conglomerates, professional sport teams, franchises, and leagues, the IOC, and sport-related TNCs. The question we must ask, particularly with the *inconvenient truths*, is . . . has globalization deepened inequality or has it reduced it? Who has benefited from the economic wealth and growth originating from the globalization of sport? Who have been “winners” and who have been “losers”?

Has economic growth been used to benefit those who do not have access? How has access been defined and who has defined what sport is important? For example, in global initiatives where sport is used for development, who defines sport? Is it defined locally or by developed countries coming in to “help”?

Are sport organizations in developed nations increasing their wealth at the expense of developing countries’ sport systems? What can we do as teachers and

researchers to ensure this imbalance is redressed? Should we ensure that globalization of sport is critically discussed within the sport management curriculum. I would also suggest we encourage sport management students to critically investigate the *inconvenient truths* when pursuing their research. Has the globalization of sport meant that the unique cultural experiences of sport in various countries such as Afghanistan (e.g., buzkashi), Australia (e.g., Australian rules football), Bangladesh (e.g., kabaddi), Brazil (e.g., capoeira), Canada (e.g., lacrosse and ice hockey), China (e.g., table tennis), Cuba (e.g., baseball), India (e.g., field hockey), Jamaica (e.g., cricket), Japan (e.g., sumo), Korea (e.g., taekwondo), Lithuania (e.g., basketball), New Zealand (e.g., rugby union), and the United States (e.g., baseball) are valued equally by those of us in sport management? Should we and our students be sensitized to social and cultural differences between countries' sport priorities and systems?

The *inconvenient truths* regarding the globalization of sport need to be exposed and strategies to address the negative consequences of globalization of sport have to be devised and implemented. To conclude, as we reflect on the power of sport, we need to keep a critical lens on our understanding of the interrelationships between all the stakeholders involved in globalization.

Notes

1. Part of the title of this manuscript, *An inconvenient truth*, originates from the title of an American 2006 documentary film on global warming directed by Davis Guggenheim and starring former U.S. Vice President, Al Gore (Paramount Picture, 2006).
2. These membership numbers are based on 2008 data.
3. As of May 2008, the IOC reported a total membership of 205 National Olympic Committees (NOC). Each NOC represents one country (International Olympic Committee, 2008b). Given the membership for the United Nations in May 2008 (i.e., 192 countries), the IOC has 13 more member-countries than the UN.
4. Nawal El Moutawakel was the first woman from Africa to win a gold medal at the Olympic Games. She was also the first Muslim woman and the first Arab woman to win gold at the Games (cf. Hargreaves, 2000).
5. Migration of athletes may originate from different sources. For example, the choice to migrate may come from the individual who moves to another country in order to train and compete, and perhaps to represent that country in international competitions while migration in other cases, may be based on the active recruitment of talent by leaders of other countries' sport federations (cf. Bale & Maguire, 1994; Carlson, 2004).
6. Following his tenure with the Oakland Athletics, Tejada played for the Baltimore Orioles (2004-2007) and for the Houston Astros (2008-) (Major League Baseball, 2008).
7. Between 2002 and 2007, Ronaldo Luís Nazário de Lima played for Real Madrid. Since 2007, he has played for AC Milan.
8. In her study, Weston (2006) refers to the Association of Tennis Professionals' rankings reported on August 21, 2006 and the Sony Ericsson Women's Tennis Association Tour rankings reported on August 26, 2006.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge Drs. Lisa Kikulis and Richard Wolfe for their insight and constructive feedback on this and earlier versions of the manuscript.

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