Introduction

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Biographical notes: Jon Welty Peachey is an Associate Professor in the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research centres upon sport for development and social change, particularly examining inclusive leadership strategies, effective program design modalities, and program impact. He is the author of more than 70 articles and book chapters, speaks around the world on sport for development issues, and serves as a consultant to various organisations on the use of sport for social change and development.

With its roots based in the ancient philosophy of the Olympic Games, the field of sport for development and peace (SDP) has grown tremendously over the past two decades, with many organisations and scholars around the world, in the Global North and Global South, exploring the possible contribution that sport can make to peace building, development, and social change (Coalter, 2013a; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). While there is no concrete definition of the field, or movement, Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) have offered a helpful synopsis of SDP's broad-based agenda, elucidating SDP as using sport as an engine of development through intercultural exchange, conflict resolution and peace building, assisting marginalised populations, or through focusing on public health.

In ancient times, the Olympic Games often supported truces between nations during times of war, giving grounding to the idea that sport can potentially be used in service of peace building (Welty Peachey and Cohen, 2012). However, the idea that sport could be tapped for public good did not really develop in policy circles or with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) until after World War I, when sport became seen as a viable avenue for helping veterans transition back into society (Burnett, 2001). Since then, SDP has gained much traction with governments, NGOs, non-profit organisations, and academics around the world, with the United Nations even establishing an Office of Sport for Development and Peace to align with its millennium development goals (Beutler, 2008). From a scholarly standpoint, more and more academics have become interested in SDP, situating their conceptual and empirical work within the field and publishing in many top tier journals in sport management, sport sociology, and other disciplines. Recently, there has even been a journal emerge with a sole focus on SDP – the *Journal of Sport for Development* – and the first comprehensive review of the SDP academic literature to date has been published (see Schulenkorf et al., 2015).

In general, the SDP literature suggests that if sport is designed and managed well, it has the potential to bring about social change, enhance peace-building, and contribute to other individual and societal outcomes, although certainly not in all cases (Coalter, 2007, 2010, 2013b; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011; Schulenkorf et al., 2015). Social capital

can be enhanced for participants in SDP programs (Sherry, 2010; Sherry and Strybosch, 2012; Spaaij, 2012) and even for volunteers in these initiatives (Welty Peachey et al., 2015a). Sport, when packaged with other aspects of development (education, cultural arts, training) can also be influential in facilitating conflict resolution between cultures and communities historically in conflict (Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011; Schulenkorf et al., 2011; Sugden, 2008) and in reducing prejudice and fostering understanding between disparate individuals (Welty Peachey et al., 2015b). Other work has situated SDP within policy-related discourse (Darnell, 2010; Darnell and Hayhurst, 2011; Kidd, 2011) and has examined challenges and strategies with regards to establishing and sustaining research partnerships (Welty Peachey and Cohen, 2015).

What has not been engaged in to any great extent is the process of theory building in SDP related to program development and design (Coalter, 2007, 2013a; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011; Schulenkorf, 2012), or even whether or not there can be an overarching theory of SDP given the varied contexts associated with the field, and cultural complexities that must be addressed. As indicated above, most of the scholarly literature has centred upon program evaluations and policy discourse. Therefore, the aim of this special issue on SDP theory building and program development is to provide a platform for the examination of theory building as related to program development and implementation within the SDP arena. This is a critical need within the field and will contribute to the ongoing discourse regarding the long-term viability and sustainability of SDP programs, and to the undergirding theory and program design components which may serve as foundational frameworks.

The contributions to this special issue are diverse, novel, and address theory building and its role in program design and development along a number of fronts. First, Darnell and Kaur (2016) advance the need to recognise and appreciate the historical context in which SDP initiatives and programs take place, and that this historical backdrop, particularly with regards to colonialism, is essential when considering building robust theories within the field. As a specific application, they explore the work of C.L.R. James in relation to postcolonial theorising, and offer some concrete insights gleaned from James' work for theory development in SDP, most notably focusing on social actors in context. While Darnell and Kaur advance the importance of history in shaping SDP theory and program delivery at the macro level, Massey et al. (2016) offer a work focused on integrating micro- and macro-level change, centring upon the use of systems theory to facilitate more robust and rigorous program design, implementation, and evaluation. They argue that SDP is predicated on an assumption that individual level change will somehow lead to greater societal change at the macro level, but that this is not necessarily always the case in reality. Thus, programs at the more micro level need to understand how they can affect relationships between systems factors in order to best effect broader social change. Massey et al. position systems theory as a way to integrate across sectors and blend micro-level programming with macro-level change.

One area of SDP that scholars have elucidated as needing further theorising and empirical study is the nexus between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and SDP (Levermore, 2011). Taking up this challenge, Holmes et al. (2016) examine a CSR scheme in Zambia, where SDP initiatives have had to rely heavily on foreign and corporate sponsorship. Through an empirical study with one SDP organisation in Zambia, they identify different forms of partnerships within the CSR context, and importantly, challenges associated with these forms. Drawing from their findings, they then interpret how CSR funding in this landscape impacts program design, development, and

sustainability. Next, Baker et al. (2016) focus on the evaluation mechanisms of a sports diplomacy initiative, and how this form of empowerment evaluation can contribute to effective program design and management. They advocate, through empowerment evaluation, that power in evaluation should be shifted from the evaluator to participants and staff, and that by doing so, it places the evaluation in the hands of stakeholders who are implementing and managing the program, which will be advantageous for SDP programs promoting social justice, self-determination, and capacity building. This approach fosters program ownership, investment, and sustainability over time. To conclude the special issue, Schulenkorf and Spaaij (2016) provide synthesising and interpretive comments drawn from the special issue contributions and articulate further thoughts and future directions on the role of theory in SDP.

Taken together, all of the contributions in this special issue wrestle with the important connection between theory and program design, implementation, and evaluation in SDP. This collective work can hopefully be a stimulus for other scholars to further engage with questions revolving around theory and program design in SDP, from both conceptual and empirical standpoints. As noted, there are many questions yet to be answered regarding appropriate theoretical frameworks and program design and implementation in SDP (Coalter, 2013a; Lyras and Welty Peachey, 2011). Can there be unique program theory (ies) specific to SDP, or is this an insurmountable or even inappropriate task given the widely varied contexts, mission, and foci of SDP initiatives? Hopefully, the special issue has contributed to this discourse by illuminating several intriguing and thoughtful insights on theory building and program design that can perhaps provide an impetus for other scholars to expand upon the work here, or contribute additional insights and critique. Any and all contributions are certainly welcome and needed.

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