

Book - Sport Ethics in the 21st Century - Sport For Development Chapter
Chapter Title - Critical Participatory Paradigm and its Implications

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INTRODUCTION

The once high flying Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) balloon may be deflating hence descending due to several holes piercing through the balloon. In this analogy, the balloon represents the popularity of SDP in the last decade while the holes represent flaws in the conceptualization and consequently the problematic practices and research of the SDP field. One big hole that is rapturing the field since its inception in the late 1990s has been the failure to question its fundamental assumption relating to what knowledge is authentic, how should this knowledge be created, who is researching and being researched? Case in point, the first authorⁱ has observed more than once that SDP champions, who pilot research endeavours, embrace the simple and rigid linearity of the top-down research approaches, as opposed to negotiating balanced approaches which is more in keeping with the rhetoric. Ensuing then that the covert power relations that surround the global north and global southⁱⁱ, results in research continually flowing one way, top-down. Clearly exemplifying research done on, as opposed to done with, end-users (Mwaanga 2012). Certainly Keim & de Coning (ibid.) emphasize this point, noting that in the SDP field, the majority of literature is published in the north, even though the majority of projects run in the south. Consequently research endeavours reach their conclusions based on northern ideological standpoints, while viewing the global south as stereotypically inferior or incapable, hereby reproducing the suppressive dispositions of neo-colonialism, the "cultural

legacy of colonialism" (Mwaanga 2012 pg. 22). As a result, people subject to SDP, under this neo-colonial influence are not the ones deciding the components of their progress, (Mwaanga 2012). Surely, an authentic SDP research will be one that emancipates all vested interests from the shackles of neo-colonialism. As such this chapter presents three critiques of the dominant research paradigms that permeate SDP. These research paradigms draw canons from objectivist and positivist meta-theories, generally centring 'on the idea of using scientific methods to gain knowledge' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 119). Additionally Kuhn (2003) argued, that the dominant research paradigms are 'predicated on the assumption that the scientific community knows what the world is like'; that its means to knowledge, for instance, are not socially constructed (2003, p. 75). This essentially situates them as undemocratic and devoid of political, cultural and social location which makes SDP researchers insensible to how such location effectuates research findings (Hunt, 2010). Consequently we offer the critical participatory paradigm (CPP), as a tool and an alternative paradigm meant to democratise SDP research and knowledge development.

Indeed, our first critique stems from the neo-colonial blanket of SDP, replicated in current SDP research process which often silences indigenous voices, resembling the historical orthodoxy once associated with colonialist practices that place value on northern approaches and view Global Southern ideas as inferior (Annett & Mayuni, 2013). Coalter (ibid.) further references that, SDP research is subdued within neo-colonialist suppression which acts as one of the causative factors of continual uneven power relations. Moreover Darnell & Hayhurst (2012) recognise the neo-colonialist tendencies of SDP research and indeed submit that the time is ripe to pursue a decolonising research process, one which displaces the antecedents of colonialism. Thereby advocating for a postcolonial approach to future SDP research processes, decolonising the structures of hegemony that are in place. Though, we agree with these sentiments (and many more), enduring as a noble and justified cause, given the deep rooted neo-colonial research of contemporary SDP, where the global north dictates the development direction of the south (Mwaanga 2012). We must outline that the current postcolonial critique offers little more than a series of ad hoc criticisms of the neo-colonial research

process apparent in SDP. Indeed McEwan (2008) references that the postcolonial critique has become institutionalised, representing the dominant northern world view, therefore making the current postcolonial critique of SDP research another barren academic endeavour firmly situated within hegemonic theorisation. Consequently we contend that to actually decolonise the research process there is a requirement for a philosophical and methodological framework to guide critical engagement of end-users whose transformed (or untransformed) lives are the paramount measure of authenticity in SDP interventions.

The second critique brings to fore the undemocratic research propensity of SDP, where northern perspectives are "privileged at the expense of other discourses" (Mwaanga & Banda 2014 pg. 175) especially within the knowledge creation process. Highlighted by Spaaij & Jeans (2013) who point to the historical hierarchy of researchers as a limitation to authentic dialogue and genuine democratic action in SDP research because those who consider themselves knowledgeable rarely consider the advice of those they consider to know nothing (Freire 1970). Thus, this historical hierarchy further prevents the development of critical pedagogy in end-users (Spaaij & Jeans 2013).

Nevertheless, the aim of this chapter is not to simply discredit current SDP research paradigms, but to draw attention to the inadequacies in order to effectively highlight a framework for change. Indeed, it challenges and templates how the majority of SDP development scholars can begin to include their marginalised research subjects in the knowledge creation process. Eventually displacing the long standing undemocratic vertical relationship of SDP, were the SDP policy end-user knowledge is under-valued, replicating the arrogance that comes with many conventional northern development programmes (McGee 2002).

The third critique recognises the naivety of researchers and practitioners in SDP, were we (the global north) neglect or deny to subjectively critique our biographical background in the knowledge creation process. Without doubt, this lack of encouragement to emancipate ourselves severely hinders the possibility of emancipating others through our research. In his research, Mwaanga has used participatory workshops as platforms were all vested interests in the research

process present and discuss their biographical background. For that reason, Mwaanga (2012 Pg. 295) has called for scholars to step out of their "comfortable zones of privilege", a plea reflected in 'Freire's' critique. Freire (1970) suggested that all merchants of revolutionary change must first deconstruct themselves to attain the knowledge of reality before they can deconstruct the current practice at hand. Otherwise the cyclical process of SDP will continue with undemocratic research, faulty policies leading to ineffective outcomes. Easterly (2007) exemplifies this cyclical process in relation to 'foreign aid' where celebrities continually raise money in an attempt to abruptly end world poverty but 'Easterly' details their misguided beliefs as ignorant to the knowledge of reality. Of course, if poverty and underdevelopment were that easy to solve, it would have already be solved, (Easterly 2007). Mwaanga's experience as a global southern practitioner, have taught that cultural problems, such as poverty, underdevelopment or HIV/AIDS cannot be solved simply through funding, foreign aid or intensified global northern campaigns. Those who still believe in these approaches need to emancipate themselves if we are to attain sustainable progress in international SDP (Mwaanga & Banda (2014).

Easterly (2007) labels the un-emancipated as 'planners', who view the world homogenously and believe they have in their research conclusions the answers to the global south's problems. Whereas the 'searchers' are emancipated to recognise social reality, trusting their global southern opposites, asking questions to how they can aid local communities and recognise the need to include their global southern partners in the process of decision making. Unquestionably the dichotomy of the 'planner' and the 'searcher' is established out of the cultural divide between the outsider and the insider (Easterly 2007). Subsequently, outsiders tend to be 'planners' whilst 'insiders' tend to be 'searchers', therefore the global northern outsider (the powerful) survey the world from the top and see almost nothing of the bottom (Easterly 2007). Mwaanga an advocate of 'home grown' development argues, that is one reason why many northern academics, who have researched SDP in Zambia have never taken the cognisance of Ubuntu, the organisational philosophy of the EduSport Foundation. Ubuntu's primary focus is the people; indeed EduSport programmes are "centred on the interests and needs of the people

we serve". Clearly this is crucial in understanding the development mechanisms within the EduSport Foundation, yet its presence has eluded many northern academic research reports on the organisation, (www.edusport.org.zm).

Now we propose the CPP both as a philosophical and pragmatic remedy for the critiques presented above. The CPP through its set imperatives encourages direct lines of communication and collaborative community building (Mwaanga 2012) and can be defined as 'critical' because it does not pretend that history, culture, gender, race, geography or power, plays no part in research but looks to these important variables as launch-pads for a realistic option. Furthermore the CPP is participatory because it aims to work in collaboration with indigenous people allowing policy end-users to be placed alongside the researcher in the knowledge creation process. In addition, the CPP is also 'emancipatory' to the extent that it aims to awaken critical consciousness in indigenous people so that they may adequately interact with others and change their social world. This way the authenticity of research conclusions is validated because end-users have a sizeable input on such conclusions.

The critiques presented in this chapter are supported by two main sources of evidence. Firstly the chapter draws evidence from the empirical investigation of the first author's post-graduate research, which focussed on empowering girls and people living with HIV/AIDS through SDP in Zambia. Secondly the first author, as a colonised 'other' and a leading Sub-Saharan SDP activist of close to 20 years has lived and struggled through the imperialistic notions which betray SDP and thus provides critical insights from personal experiential knowledge. Indeed the first author's development of several indigenous SDP initiatives including Go Sisters, peer leadership, Kicking AIDS Out, stand as testament to this struggle.

CRITICAL PARTICIPATORY PARADIGM

This section will attempt to explain the CPP through its underlying philosophical principles, framed as ontological, epistemological and political, imperatives for research practice.

To begin, the CPP ontology or simply the way we think or theorise about what it means to exist in the social world, champions the idea of a subjective-objective ontology which submits that there is a deeply participatory feeling to all things, a felt 'reciprocity' (Abram 1996). In this subjective-objective ontology, Heron & Reason (1997) contend that to experience anything is to participate, and to participate is to mould, alter and shape. Consequently the world is an interactive and participatory network that exists between the researcher and the indigenous (Reason & Bradbury 2008). This reciprocity is the connection 'felt' between people and communities, it is a 'fertile soil' through which to grow and maintain relationships that pave the way for positive mutual exchange with the potential to result in authentic collaboration in both development and knowledge creation. Hence the ontological imperative recognises the importance of a positive connection with indigenous people leading to reciprocal partnerships, breaking what Freire (1970) called the 'culture of silence'. Besides, the indigenous understanding of their locality makes them invaluable for any potential social change. As Easterly (2007) demonstrates that reversing the effects of colonialism requires the indigenous, to participate in their development suggesting reforms influenced by home-grown knowledge and people, who recognise and respect local customs. It is partly this ontological belief that humbles 'searchers' in their SDP engagement and sets ontological cornerstones for the inclusion of research subjects in the research process thus overthrowing the neo-colonial divide of SDP.

Indeed Grix (2002) suggests that ontology forms the foundations of research endeavours, after which ones epistemological position must follow. Certainly then epistemology is what we think can be learnt about the social world (Fleetwood 2005). CPP epistemology or called the extended epistemology extends beyond theory into experience and practice, obliging the researcher to engage in research with people as opposed to on or about them (Reason & Bradbury 2008). This extended epistemology brings experiential knowledge to the centre, and thus stands in opposition to common practices, which for example allows parachute academics to 'float in and out' of local communities with preconceived and rigid notions of indigenous knowledge. A common practice opposed by Spaaij & Jeans

(2013) who have recommended that all so called 'researchers' should spend time in the community they are researching to gain knowledge and democratically engage with local groups. Therefore this imperative sees the production of knowledge as an interactive process, between the researcher and research subjects, in a collaborative exercise searching for truth (Mwaanga 2012). All collaborators in this process must appreciate that the production of knowledge is a positive process of engagement, commitment, communication, action and reflection (Finn 1994) but also one that is underpinned by strong invincible current powers. In short, the extended epistemology forces us to see knowledge creation both as a relationship building and emancipatory process.

Within the extended epistemology the 'searchers' engage the world in four inter-reliant ways (i.e. experiential, presentational, practical and propositional) allowing interaction with the social world; be it people, societies or events in a proximal manner (Reason & Bradbury 2008). Firstly experiential knowledge is attained via the direct contact with people and places, therefore is subjective to the 'searcher' and difficult to explain. Secondly, presentational knowledge develops through the filtering of experiential knowledge, represented as ideas, descriptions and narratives told by the 'searcher'. Thirdly practical knowledge is developed through increased exposure to practical experiences and becomes the intricate knowledge of how things work and how to do certain things, embodied in the skills and practical capabilities (Breu & Peppard 2001). Fourthly, propositional knowledge is the 'searchers' theories regarding the social world and is expressed by the knowledge formulated in research conclusions. Therefore, this imperative challenges the positivist dichotomy that separates the researcher and the end-user, helping to realise that knowledge is relative to surroundings and promoting this as 'true knowledge' is power. Therefore the epistemological imperative empowers policy end-users through the creation of a systematic framework that questions the dominant knowledge systems from the reference point of local knowledge.

Lastly, the political imperative represents the subjective consciousness of the CPP, underpinned by the philosophies of praxis and reflexivity. Praxis according to Freire (1970) is the 'reason for existence', a practice of freedom that advocates

authentic liberation through awakening the critical consciousness of research participants, so that they might act and reflect upon their world, in order to transform it. It is this critical consciousness that begins the development of praxis, which is the organised struggle to regain power through the development of knowledge (Freire 1970). Giving the aforementioned neo-colonial origins of SDP research which has allowed the 'powerful' to interfere, decide and state the development path of the 'less powerful' (usually global south) it is essential that praxis is used to reclaim power, history and knowledge, (Mwaanga 2012; Smith 2012). Indeed, it is only when the 'less powerful' discover their oppression by the powerful can there be an illumination of intellectual understanding, beginning the struggle for freedom, (Freire 1970). Though, praxis cannot be reduced to mere intellectual capabilities or the attainment of theoretical knowledge, as the idea of true praxis is 'action' committed through human activity, therefore praxis is the combination of theory and practice to develop critical awareness, (Mwaanga 2012; Freire 1970). Together praxis and reflexivity occur simultaneously as the achievement of end-user praxis is reliant on the reflexivity of researchers to trust in their research participants abilities to reason and contribute to their local community. As a result end-user praxis will lead to the increased development and identification of local 'searchers'.

Reflexivity, on the other hand, urges the researcher to continually question their biographical make-up in relation to the construction of research policies, breaking down pillars of positivistic evidence allowing the researcher to acknowledge their contribution as an outsider, (Mwaanga 2012). As indicated previously there is a cyclical process to SDP research, because the SDP movement does not offer clear guidelines for researcher reflexivity resulting in the positivistic orientation of research which advocates neutrality and objectivity of researchers (Mwaanga 2012). Though, any researcher who has recognised, researched and hereby written about the neo-colonial and hegemonic compression of SDP, is truly committed to transforming the un-just order, but because of their background, believe that they must be at the vanguard of that transformation, as they do not trust the indigenous to carry it out, (Freire 1970). A detrimental act as Freire (1970) further details that the necessary requirement of revolutionary change is 'trust'. Therefore, reflexivity emancipates the researcher to attain the knowledge of

reality, to trust in their research participants and discover themselves simply as collaborators to the transformation; it is in this reflection that the dichotomy of the 'planner' and 'searcher' is bridged.

Ultimately, praxis and reflexivity function as instruments to further view SDP from alternate paradigms reminding the researcher to factor in their backgrounds, while awakening the critical awareness of end-users to struggle for their liberation (Mwaanga 2012).

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

To summarize, this chapter has identified a number of flaws found in the current SDP research processes, bringing forth key issues that limit the development of effective and community specific programmes. As a springboard, this chapter has critiqued the neo-colonial compression of SDP research, which silences indigenous voices and gives precedence to 'research experts' in deciding the development path of their research subjects. Further to this, the assumptions of knowledge made by the global north corrupt social reality circulating the myth that outsiders know best, as a result there is an undemocratic research process which distances end-users in the knowledge creation process. Unquestionably, unless SDP encourages its researchers to subjectively critique and deconstruct themselves, the uncontrollable descent of the SDP balloon will continue. Therefore, to re-inflate the SDP balloon this chapter has argued for the CPP through its set imperatives to decolonise, democratise, emancipate and subjectively critique in the research process drawing us closer to authentic and legitimate development outcomes within SDP.

To sum up, the need to adopt a process which engages with end-users as the spearhead of policy development has been stated, and the CPP is a means to achieve this. Firstly the CPP presents a philosophical and pragmatic framework that permits end-users a sizeable input in documenting their existence and future, deconstructing conventional power relations and ideologies, while conversely allowing researchers to humbly negotiate the complexities of research phenomenon. Secondly its awakening of praxis and reflexivity aids the researcher

in replacing their conventional characteristics which obstructs revolutionary change and maintains their position as a 'planner'. However, as Mwaanga (2012) contends that the awakening of praxis and reflexivity must be followed with action. Certainly, to change social reality it requires a researcher who is willing to act and reconstruct themselves from their "traditional sovereign positions" (Mwaanga 2012; Pg 293) and equally join the struggle for liberation. It is in this show of solidarity that end-users will discover they are themselves the praxis of their liberation, realising human beings as the foundation of knowledge, information, enterprise and labour, (Freire 1970).

At this juncture though, it is important to state that SDP is still in its infancy (Kidd 2008) and the CPP is an early remedy to wrestle SDP from the shackles of neo-colonialism. Clearly, knowledge creation and research are the suitable starting point in the emancipation and empowerment of SDP end-users.

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ⁱ The 1st author, Dr Oscar Mwaanga, is the founder of EduSport Foundation which is the first SDP organisation in Zambia which he set UP in 1997 and formerly registered in 1999. Oscar is renowned as one of the leading activists of the Sub-Saharan SDP movement of the last century.

ⁱⁱ The binary of Global North and Global South is 'of course, geographically inaccurate and too generalised to encompass the complexities within and between nations, but it is perhaps the least problematic means of distinguishing between relatively wealthy countries and continents [Europe] and relatively poorer ones [Africa]' (McEwan, 2009, pp. 13-14; see, Dodds, 2008).