Sport, Transnational Peacemaking, and Global Civil Society: Exploring the Reflective Discourses of "Sport, Development, and Peace" Project Officials

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been considerable political and public interest in the "sport, development and peace" (SDP) sector. SDP agencies employ sport as an interventionist tool to promote peace, reconciliation, and development in different locations across the world. This article examines how SDP officials view their work and the sector in general. The analysis situates the SDP sector in relation to contemporary transnational processes and the global civil society. The article draws heavily on wide-ranging primary qualitative research (interviews and fieldwork) with SDP officials who operate at different levels (from very local projects through to transnational SDP agencies) and in different settings, notably in Europe, the Middle East, the Balkans, and South Asia. Four key sociological themes were identified within the discourses of SDP officials, such as, the transnational ethics of SDP work, the anthropolitics of practice (notably in relation to user groups), the national and transnational 'interrelationships of SDP officials, and SDP officials' wider, transnational sector relationships. Various issues within each theme are identified and explored. The article concludes by reflecting on how analysis of these discourses serves to enhance understanding of transnational processes and the global civil society and, by suggesting some ways in which the SDP sector may be positively transformed.

Keywords: sport, development, peacemaking, transnationalism, global civil society.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been considerable political and public interest in the role of sport in promoting peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction within divided societies. In the past decade, many governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) have established projects within conflict-ridden regions, notably the Balkans, the Middle East, West and Central Africa, Sri Lanka, and

South America, in an endeavor to "break the ice" and to foster more positive social relationships between divided peoples (see Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Whitfield, 2006). These initiatives must be located within the broader context of the expanding "sport, development and peace" (hereon, SDP) sector, which uses sport to advance personal, social, and community forms of development. The SDP expansion has been driven in part by the United Nations, which dedicated 2005 to be its International Year of Sport and Physical Education (see UN General Assembly, 2006a, 2006b).

As more SDP projects were introduced from the late 1990s onward, various researchers examined the broad utility of sport in promoting development and peace (e.g., Armstrong, 2004; Calloway, 2004; Darnell, 2009; Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Höglund & Sunberg, 2008; Kidd, 2008; Lea-Howarth, 2006; Schulenkorf, 2010; Willis, 2000). Although various strengths and possibilities were identified, three general types of shortcoming were identified within SDP projects.

First, *technical* weaknesses occur in project implementation. For example, resourcing and sustainability problems arise through short-term funding or failures to plan for the breakdown of sport equipment (see Armstrong, 2007; Lea-Howarth, 2006).

Second, *intersubjective* or *practical* flaws relate to poor dialogue between service providers and users. In some circumstances, project workers may have weak understandings of local conditions, or poor engagements with client groups and other non-sport development initiatives (Armstrong, 2004; Giulianotti, 2004; Hognestad & Tollisen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010).

Third, *political* or *critical* weaknesses centre on how SDP projects reinscribe imperialistic and neocolonial (indeed, NGO-colonial) relationships between Global North and Global South (see Cohen et al., 2008; Sampson, 2002). Projects may function to manufacture self-governing, responsible, neoliberal subjects in line with the Global North's dominant ideologies (Darnell, 2009; Kidd, 2008). SDP supporters may underplay sport's contribution to deep-seated ethnoreligious and ethnonational conflicts, as in the former Yugoslavia (Vrcan & Lalic, 1999; see Armstrong, 2004).

These criticisms valuably inform understanding of SDP projects that operate within contexts of conflict and division. However, I would argue here that research into the SDP sector still harbors two main limitations. First, research has yet to engage fully with the *transnational complexity* of the SDP sector. There has been limited sustained, comparative research across the different

geopolitical conditions and contexts in which the SDP sector operates—for example, in the Middle East, the Balkans, West Africa, and South Asia. Moreover, prior studies have not examined adequately the different scales, tiers, and professional networks which have rapidly grown up across local, national, and transnational levels within the SDP sector. Thus, research that is more comparative and cognizant of organizational complexity will be better placed than single-site studies to provide accurate and plausible analyses of the SDP sector.

Second, prior research into the SDP sector has also yet to explore fully *the meanings, motivations, and reflexivity of SDP officials*. This is a significant gap in knowledge for a variety of reasons: the number of SDP officials has grown substantially in recent years; they play crucial roles in planning, implementing, and evaluating SDP projects; and, at least in theory, as reflective social actors, they are able to adapt, modify, and transform their practices and strategies in response to changing circumstances or outside criticisms. Thus, knowledge of the SDP sector would be significantly enhanced through gaining greater understanding of how officials view this field and their practices.

In this article, I endeavor to advance understanding of the peace-building dimension of the SDP sector by filling these research lacunae. This analysis is *not* intended to evaluate SDP projects. Rather, my aim here is to draw on cross-cultural research to advance understanding of the transnational connections and reflexivity of SDP officials. The article is strongly empirical, and places significant emphasis on the substantial comments of SDP officials regarding the sector and its work.

Methodological Framework and Research Contexts

The article draws on primary research undertaken with three types of agency:

1. *Community-based organizations (CBOs)*, which implement SDP projects in grassroots settings. Eighteen interviews were conducted with CBO officials; most worked for small-scale, local organizations that implemented specific sport projects with strong peace-building dimensions. Seven interviewees were participants at training workshops controlled by international NGOs.

2. *External international NGOs*, which establish transnational networks to support CBOs. Twelve officials from two European NGOs were interviewed. The first agency is relatively small, with only one full-time official plus various consultants; works with individuals and projects in five specific conflict zones; and, is financed by public and private donors. The second

international NGO is large, with more than 20 staff, and annual turnover of over €2 million; links to CBOs in over 60 nations; and financed by public and private sources but primarily through long-term links with a leading sports federation.

3. *Local or national NGOs*, which are usually pre-established, and which connect between CBOs and international NGOs, often to implement projects. Twelve interviews were conducted with these officials; researched focused mainly on four NGOs in two different regions. Eight other officials were interviewed from national agencies—such as NGOs, sport federations, and state bodies—which support SDP projects, such as by supplying sport coaches or facilities.

Interviewees were accessed in three ways: through prior social contacts with SDP officials; through use of gatekeepers, particularly leading NGO and CBO officials, to "snowball" more interviewees; and, through interviewing SDP workers and participants during fieldwork. The usual ethical foundations for research—guaranteeing confidentiality of information, and securing informed consent for participation—were implemented with all respondents.

The interviews were semi-structured and focused largely on the officials' roles and views in respect of the SDP sector, leaving discussions to flow in a relatively open manner. The methodology was largely inductive, in terms of open interviews being conducted with SDP officials, while keeping in mind a diversity of key concepts in globalization studies. The analytical framework for this article, deploying the concepts of "global civil society" and "transnationalism" (explained in the following section), evolved more fully as the interviews were transcribed and analyzed. The research generated additional articles on the SDP sector which set out, respectively, three categories of SDP project, and four social policy models that are favored by the main institutions and agencies within this field (Giulianotti, 2011a, IN PRESS).

Most research was pursued in two locations—the Serbia/Bosnia region, and Sri Lanka—with supplementary studies undertaken in the Middle East. Bosnia suffered large casualties during Yugoslavia's civil war (1992-1995): some estimates suggest over 150,000 civilians killed or missing, and over 1.4 million people displaced, amidst mass genocide, ethnic cleansing, and rape (Allen, 1996; Burg & Shoup, 1999, pp. 169-171). Postwar, two regional divisions were founded within the new state of Bosnia-Herzegovina: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (populated mainly by Muslim Bosniaks), and Republika Srpska (the vast majority being Serb) (Cousens & Cater, 2001). Social relationships across these divisions are very limited. One town in Republic Srpska was the site for interviews and fieldwork. Prewar, the town had been over half

Muslim; but, having been the scene of ethnic cleansing and mass rape, only a handful of non-Serb families remained, and several combatants were later convicted of war crimes (Hagan, 2003). Indicatively, during research, a predominantly Muslim Bosniak town was less than 30 km away, but relationships between the two communities were reported to be "virtually non-existent."

In Sri Lanka, three major ethnic groups are prominent with distinctive national, linguistic, and religious characteristics. Sinhalese-speaking peoples, following Buddhism, constitute around 74% of the population; Tamil speakers following Hinduism, located principally in the north and east, comprise around 8.5%; and Tamil-speaking Moors, following Islam and resident mainly in cities, the centre, and east, comprise around 7.5% (CIA, 2008, p. 585). The 26-year civil war between the national army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was at its height during research, and concluded in May 2009 after a full-scale government offensive in the LTTE-controlled north. During the conflict, up to 2004, more than 80,000 people had been killed and around 800,000 displaced; up to 20,000 Tamil civilians may have died in the final phase (Levy & Sidel, 2007, p. 433; Ward, 2009). Beyond the war, some tensions were evidenced among Sinhalese and Muslim populations, notably through occasional irruptions of rioting and violence.

Global Civil Society and Transnationalism

This study of the SDP field features a dichotomous analytical framework. First, the SDP sector is located firmly within the emerging *global civil society*. The idea of a global civil society has been given substantial exploration by social scientists in recent years, largely as a way of exploring the social aspects of globalization, notably regarding themes of human development, transnational interdependency, peace, environmental sustainability, and social justice. The concept itself is highly contested, and is understood in a variety of descriptive, strategically political, and normative ways (Keane, 2003).

In this discussion, I follow the broad approach of Kaldor (2003a, 2003b) which understands global civil society as a strongly contested idea and political platform, in which various social groups argue over and contest "the arrangements that shape global developments" (Kaldor, 2003b, p. 591). In this way, global civil society may be understood as a competitive "field," in a Bourdieusian (1984) sense that is, constituted by different institutional and political forces, including nation-states, IGOs, NGOs, new social movements, and transnational corporations (notably through "corporate social responsibility" programs).[i] All of these institutional and political forces seek to shape the field of global civil society according to their distinctive interests and ideologies (see Anheier, Kaldor, & Glasius, 2007; Chandler, 2005; Kaldor, 2003a).

For example, IGOs like the World Bank and United Nations favor a global civil society marketplace, wherein pragmatic NGOs compete to win contracts to carry out development work within a broad neoliberal context. Conversely, new social movements favor a more politically active global civil society that is committed to policies which pursue social justice, such as human rights, gender equality, and fair industrial relationships in developing nations.

In this context, I understand the SDP sector to be a significant component (or subfield) of global civil society, which features a range of institutional actors with diverse political agendas. A crucial issue here is, how officials work on sport projects, how they understand themselves within the SDP sector vis-à-vis other key institutions and social groups, such as national and IGOs, NGOs, private donors (including TNCs), national and international sport federations, diverse social movements.

The concept of *transnationalism* provides a second theoretical focus for this article. This concept reflects the transnational concerns of the article, helps to capture the worldwide dimensions of the SDP sector, and serves to embellish further the idea of global civil society. Vertovec (2009) identifies six main ways in which "transnationalism" tends to be used in social science, and these relate to

• social morphology, such as networked relationships
• type of consciousness, such as dual or multiple national identities
• mode of cultural reproduction, such as fluid and hybrid cultural styles
• avenue of capital, such as through transnational corporations
• site of political engagement, such as international NGOs that promote human rights
• (re)construction of "place" or locality, such as "translocal" communities and deterritorialized identities. (pp. 4-13)

Vertovec's categories are largely derived from the different ways in which the concept of transnationalism has been used to examine migrant groups. In this article, these different usages of transnationalism are deployed to explore the SDP sector, and in particular the discourses and reflexivity of SDP officials in relation to their work. In this way, Vertovec's categories are used selectively to explicate in more extended, social scientific terms, the transnational perspectives and practices of SDP officials. Taken solely as a category, we find that SDP officials would fit most obviously into Vertovec's "site of political engagement," in being engaged in NGO-type work. Here, however, I explore how the discourses of SDP officials connect to the other

transnational categories that are advanced by Vertovec, notably in regard to social morphology, type of consciousness, and site of political engagement.

Research Findings: Four Main Sociological Themes

Four main sociological themes emerged from research with SDP officials. These are, respectively, the broad *transnational ethics* of SDP work; the *transnational anthropolitics of practice* that underpin SDP work with client groups; *national and transnational social relationships* developed by SDP officials (in effect, the creation of their own transnational society); and, *transnational sector relationships* with non-sport agencies across global civil society. Each of these themes was generated from the analysis and selective classification of interview data. I would argue that these themes may be employed elsewhere, beyond the SDP sector, to explore any development agency that is conducting transnational work. In this context, each theme contains several subthemes which are more specific to the SDP sector per se. These subthemes engage in particular with Vertovec's categories on transnationalism. The themes and subthemes are set out and are discussed in detail in Table 1.

Transnational ethics. Three broad subthemes were central to SDP officials' discourses on transnational ethics. First, the SDP officials' statements indicated that a form of *dual identity differentiation* was critical in establishing the *raison d'être* of their work vis-à-vis other sport or development initiatives. SDP officials insisted that they are not engaged in the "development *of* sport"; that is, their goal is not to advance the growth of particular sports, including the mobility and exploitation of Global South athletes. As Christian from one international NGO explained,

> There's often confusion between development through sport and development of sport. . . . We would not admit as a member of our organization a pure sport academy like there are many now being created in Africa and elsewhere, where they would pretend to do something positive in the social aspect whereas in reality they would be turning more meat into the talent machine. This is something that we would never support.

However, SDP officials did indicate that the two goals—"development of sport" and "development through sport" - were not always oppositional but could be mutually advantageous. For example, at everyday level, SDP projects teach coaches to use sport as a development tool. As Annette from one national NGO explained,

> We certainly will not teach better football to a football coach. But we can get them to think about how in football training they can use dialogue among conflicting groups as part of the sports team, or how they can ensure conflict

among the team will be sorted out in a non-violent way, and this is a bigger goal, on how they can get communities involved, or how they can get spill-over effects from what they do in sport into the community, within families and neighbourhoods.

Table 1. Main Sociological Themes and Subthemes

Sociological themes	Sociological subthemes
Transnational ethics	Dual identity differentiation
	Microconnectivity
	Ethical universality
Transnational anthropolitics of practice	Reflexivity on criticism of SDP sector
	Contextualizes peace-building work
	Ethnocentric political engagement
	Gender
Transnational social roles	Familial/parental groups
	Local communities
	Local political authorities
Transnational sector relationships within global civil society	NGO–CBO relationships
	Donors
	Relationships within SDP sector
	Relationships with development sector

Some SDP officials differentiated themselves from the wider development sector, notably by contrasting the innovative, energetic, and positive culture of sport-related work with the more staid and mundane aspects of non-sport agencies. Anna, an international NGO official, explained her initial decision to enter the SDP field in these terms:

> I liked the concept, I never was into aid and development themes much in the past. I had an internship at one major NGO, I found it interesting but at that time I also thought, it's not easy to work in that field, many people were quite depressed, it seemed! When I saw the job announced here I thought the connection between sport and development aid was really perfect, that it would work, so that's why I applied.

Overall, a dual identity differentiation occurred among SDP officials, as the principal transnational ethics of the wider NGO sector were endorsed but not its particular practices. This identity differentiation underscored how SDP officials looked positively on the distinctive position and practices of SDP institutions within the social development dimensions of the global civil society.

A second subtheme emerging from SDP officials' discourses was the use of sport to promote *microconnectivity* between divided communities. SDP officials were convinced that sport provided

an exceptional medium for nonviolent contact between rival or divided communities (see Gasser & Levinsen, 2004; Schulenkorf, 2010). In some circumstances, early transnational engagement may inspire new CBOs (local projects). For example, Joachim explained how he was motivated to found a small SDP project within a highly violent context, to "break the ice" across divided communities:

> I decided to leave an academic career, to move into development through sport, to see if I could develop the social benefit and development side of sport, through the power of sport. And that first led me to introduce a programme that was tailor-made for the urban situation in South America that involved armed gang violence. So we tried to address the young people who normally were involved actively and passively in this conflict. We tried to create a model of playing sport that would allow them to use the playing of sport itself as a communication platform, as a way of having people stop shooting each other.

In divided societies, sport events may provide the only occasions for children from different communities to interact directly. Some SDP projects have founded multiday sport camps, to provide the first space for this sustained interaction. As Selina from one CBO in Sri Lanka stated,

> The perception here is that the Other is from a different part of the country, so there is very little contact. . . . But what we found is when the children get together and train, from the start, when they do it together—rather than them playing team A against team B from different districts—and they are practising together, there is a building that takes place there that is the first step towards finding out more about the Other, just by having people come together to play sports. So sports are very important for breaking the ice between the children.

Overall, the goals of SDP projects, in building microconnectivity across divided communities, were "cross-national" rather than "transnational," in that they seek to bring together specific ethnonational groups. However, using Vertovec's categories, these projects may also be seen as functioning at several transnational levels, in terms of facilitating new kinds of social morphology (new cross-community social ties), types of consciousness (new understandings of other ethnonational groups), political engagement (promotion of human rights and citizenship agendas in divided societies), and constructions of place (more inclusive conceptions of "territory" and place). More broadly, for SDP officials, "breaking the ice" appeared as the principal contribution of these projects to building, in a pragmatic way, a peaceful form of global civil society.

A third subtheme emerging from the officials' discourses related to the *ethical universality* of projects. All officials emphasized sport's "higher values," most obviously the "fair play" ethos of sport that is also strongly promoted by many sport governing bodies. However, two different

tendencies were evidenced over the implementation of ethical universality. On one hand, some SDP officials inclined toward a "conflict realism" approach, with sport understood as providing "lessons for life," notably in learning how to engage fairly and competitively with peoples from rival communities. As Colin from one NGO stated,

> And then they [project participants] get this kind of sense . . . of using fair play also in their daily matches, the idea is that over years, they can change rapidly. We need also to change the attitudes in real life. At some point there again comes a situation where conflict could happen, they will probably say, "OK I played with this guy, he is quite OK." Playing competitive but playing fair. Life is competitive, we cannot put them in a glass tower and say, "OK you don't compete, you don't have problems." It's about . . . some kind of civil education. It's kind of OK to say something, "It's my right to confront Others, to discuss the conflict that I'm experiencing," and to work it out.

Accordingly, this type of discourse also argued that participants should be immersed in competitive contact sports that involve representative teams from rival communities.

On the other hand, other SDP officials favored a"harmonised idealist" model, which promoted cross-community teams of players, often in noncompetitive forms of play. This strategy reflected a commitment to sport's universalistic properties, in transcending social divisions through intersubjective play. As Sunil from one of sport federation explained,

> Competitive sport is not the answer for peace-building between communities. We should go for team sports, and mixed sports—look, you have a white skin, I have a black skin, we form a team and we play another group on the other side. I have to talk your language, you talk my language, learn the strong points of the two of us, that way you can build a very strong relationship between the two groups.

Overall, the subtheme of ethical universality reflected different understandings of the possibilities of SDP work with regard to Vertovec's categories of transnationalism. The "conflict realist" model was notably less optimistic than the "harmonised idealist" model in regard to the possibility of constructing new kinds of social morphology, consciousness, cultural reproduction, and senses of place among the SDP project users. The "conflict realism" model assumed that these categories would continue to be shaped strongly by competition, and obdurate social and ethnonational rivalries. This led to SDP projects that sought to cultivate individuals as self-aware, self-controlling participants within competitive environments. Alternatively, in the "harmonised idealist" model, these categories may be reconstituted to produce fully transnational forms of identification that supplant old social divisions.

Transnational anthropolitics of practice. This theme addresses the political and crosscultural issues that emerge from SDP work with different user groups. Four subthemes came to the fore here. First, several officials were *highly reflexive toward criticisms of their potential neocolonial or imperialistic development strategies.* In other words, these officials had reflected substantially on critiques that are often directed at their work. Two types of criticism are noteworthy here, and each tended to produce a different response from officials. On one hand, "externalist criticisms" of SDP practices came from outside the development sector. Some SDP officials tended to reject these criticisms by reaffirming the contribution of SDP projects to the capacity-building and empowerment of user groups. As Joachim from one NGO stated,

> In general, for the people we work with, it's about access to information in order to make your own determinations; how to get people into a position where they can self-determine their lives, whatever that means in the local context, it's what we're looking to allow. We're not trying to make everybody as we are, or to believe in what we believe in. . . . The criticism on development should focus very much more on the fact that development is just not happening to the point where people really are able, educated enough, to take their own decisions, and we would like to contribute to helping people to make their own decisions. Sport is a tool to get people engaged, to activate them, to make them interested in their society, and become an active player in that society—that's all we want to do, not to get involved in any other things . . .

On the other hand, SDP officials indicated that they reflected more fully on "internal criticisms" that came from user groups. As Anna from one international NGO stated,

> I do encounter criticisms about imperialism and I really take them seriously. Would you like to hear a very recent example from the Middle East? Some people have said, "You talk about peace but peace for us is so imperialistic. Peace for us means I have to shake hands with them." And once you hear this notion you realize a lot of work has been done to bring the concept of peace to this. But I think it should be taken seriously, you know, if peace is a deeply unjust concept to you, then you're not interested to work towards peace. I talked to a lot of people from there, and they told me, "If I hear what you're planning with this organization, I really don't want to join it."

In reflecting on these "internal" criticisms, SDP officials were willing to explore new types of political engagement (in how they understood the contexts of client groups) and modes of cultural reproduction (in how they engaged with client groups). Moreover, these officials accorded user-groups a positive and prominent position in conceptualizations of global civil society.

A second subtheme centered on how SDP officials *contextualized their work within broader peace-building processes*. To draw on Vertovec's categories, some SDP officials showed strong recognition of the influence of complex, wider social morphologies on their user groups and their work. These SDP officials appreciated that, unless projects were sustainable, the old social morphologies that breed social divisions would continue to dominate. As Lisa, a CBO official in South Asia, reported,

> You know that's the problem, the environment also matters, the political environmental also matters otherwise we are just . . . you know . . . playing games. We bring together people from different ethnic groups and ask them to play sports together as friends, but what they hear daily is different, that's their reality. They play together for two days, three days, one week, and after that they go back to their home, back to their realities, back to the war zone and back to where the Sinhalese are their enemies, the Tamils are their enemies. That will not heal their wounds, and that will not serve any purpose.

These comments also served to differentiate SDP officials from the evangelism of some sports officials and politicians regarding the essentialist, world-changing power of sport. As Clive from one international NGO indicated, SDP projects must consider their location within a wide repertoire or morphology of peace-building initiatives:

> Of course it [the SDP project] is not more than it is. It is not the magic potion, it is really one of many. For example, in Sri Lanka, by having a cricket tournament between Tamils and Sinhalese, you're not going to have peace. You couldn't even show how you'd begin to do that. So you have to be a bit honest about the problems involved and what you can promise. You have to ask: "What is the project's contribution to the overall peace architecture?" I would refuse to have any project that failed to look at this, which did not say how their individual stone would fit into this building.

Third, in contextualizing their work, several SDP officials avoided *ethnocentric forms of direct political engagement*. For example, several CBO officials reported that, in building user group interest, their SDP events tended to publicize sport activities, rather than advance any ponderous, didactic statements on "peace-building." This tactic maximized children's participation without patronizing or alienating local people, who are often wary of external agencies. SDP officials indicated that their broad strategy was to engage local expertise, and to initiate contact between different communities, while ensuring the participatory roles of communities in reconstructing their social networks and forms of "place." In Vertovec's terms here, the initial priority was on the practicalities of building new social morphologies across communities, as a prelude to developing new kinds of political consciousness or territorial identification. As Radko, a CBO official, explained,

> If you start doing your project from the immediate position, you know, "This is for inter-cultural dialogue," people don't like it. If someone is trying to sell that story of conflict resolution, it's almost a psychiatric approach—I don't like it. These communities did not come from the sky. They've lived together for centuries, for ages, they know themselves. They've lived in towns and villages that might be half-Serb and half-Bosnian, half-Orthodox and half-Muslim. They know the customs, they've lived together for 300 years. There's no point in them speaking about how each other live, they know that, they've lived together. It's not reinventing their relationships. It's trying to find a way for these communities to reduce their tensions, how they can start communicating in different spheres, to overcome what you might call the hard work that's been done by the bad people in dividing them.

The most critically reflexive SDP officials on issues of ethnocentric engagement tended to work for agencies that had their roots in relatively small-scale, sustainable projects.

Fourth, *gender* provided the strongest, recurring subtheme for SDP officials. Officials needed to manage their dual commitments, to the broad transnational developmental objectives of full female participation and gender equality (in line with the Millennium Development Goals), and to respect for local cultural values while not alienating client groups. Three points on gender emerged, relating to the macrocultural, microcultural, and communicative media. In "macro-cultural" terms, officials endeavored to accommodate local value systems, particularly in Muslim regions, as Christine from one NGO explained,

> That [gender] is such a sensitive topic and crucial to the success of the project. So of course if a project is about to start in a Muslim country, if you plan on co-education or a mixed sport team, then your project is bound to fail, certainly, because that just can't be. And of course such mistakes in planning happen if these are planned from the outside—so it comes back to local ownership. Our experience is that local people know best what's important and what's not . . .In some countries it might be important to have the sport away from the public, to give the girls perhaps the safety to do sports and that's only possible if it's not in public.

"Micro-cultural" questions related to how girls' participation in sport impacted on boys. Several CBO officials reported that popular transnational sports were dominated by boys, and often had playing methods which vitiated the full SDP message. As Selina in Sri Lanka explained,

> That is the challenge—I think that football, volleyball, cricket would be the more attractive but these are mainly for males because girls don't play these sports. Even if girls play you can say that the team should be mixed, but it becomes less competitive and less attractive to many of the boys, especially the "tough guys," so traditional sports have that problem, and that's a little bit against the message.

The practical response of many officials was to create new games for both boys and girls, or to modify the sport's rules to promote female participation (e.g., awarding extra points for female goal scorers).

On "communicative media," several officials indicated that girls' participation benefited the dialogical and peace-building aspects of play. As Werner from one international NGO explained,

> Normally, in South America, and in Europe, the girls are better communicators than the boys are, so when the match gets rough the girls are more likely to say, "Stop, listen, we have to calm down a bit." So that was one reason for the idea that boys and girls should play together.

Overall, gender issues served to foreground the work of SDP officials in respect of the wider development objectives that are prominent within the global civil society. SDP officials sought to reshape their social relationships among client groups according to transnational standards of gender equality and equity, while being empathetic toward local value-systems. Officials also sought to move beyond the gendered divisions inherent within transnational sports (such as football and cricket), to maximize girls' participation. This also had positive practical consequences, in terms of improving mediation between social groups during play.

Transnational social relationships. The transnational social relationships here concern the ties between SDP project officials and their partners in specific theatres of operation. Three types of relationship are highlighted here which centre on different types of social network.

The first subtheme centered on how SDP projects' social morphologies engaged with *familial and parental groups*. To use Vertovec's terms, familial and parental groups contributed substantially to new modes of cultural production among SDP projects. SDP officials drew on crucial parental influences to facilitate several transformations among children, in terms of consciousness, political engagement, types of social morphology, and reconstructions of place; all changes were centered on new kinds of relationship and understanding toward the Other. Moreover, SDP projects were also intended to transform parental and familial relationships and perspectives in respect of the Other.

Some officials reported that grassroots engagement with parent groups inspired CBOs to begin using sport as an interventionist tool. As Ravi from one CBO reported,

> It was very recently that we focused on sports and peace. We were used to education and efforts to bring peace and understanding to the communities.

> But the families intervened, and they were asking us for sport, so we thought peace through sport would work.

Several CBO officials also reported that parents actively persuaded children to join projects. Where SDP projects met strong local scepticism (such as in some Balkan towns), CBO officials introduced "parent councils" to facilitate dialogue and participatory roles for these critical stakeholders. Officials also sought to persuade parents that children constitute the "post-conflict" generation, which will resolve community divisions on their terms rather than by inheriting old enmities. Moreover, children returning from multiday camps are intended to assist transformations in parental and familial perspectives, by reporting their positive experiences of the "Other community."

A second subtheme concerned social relationships between *local communities* and SDP officials. Several local SDP officials exploited existing social morphologies — particularly people with strong social and political capital—to get SDP projects started. In developing nations, some SDP officials sought out support from "village elders"and other local figureheads. In the Balkans, one project sprang from an informal transnational social network that involved the town mayor, a local man (based in Belgrade's sport system, but an adept networker), another local man who runs a popular pub, and an international NGO official originally from Belgrade.

Project officials stated that SDP work could germinate new social morphologies and types of consciousness within local communities. For example, "training the trainers" (TTT) projects feature a pyramidal or cascading method whereby, during multiday camps, local participants learn to establish and build up SDP projects within their own communities. TTT projects do help to build new social relationships and outlooks among delegates. Yet, the absolute efficacy of TTT initiatives is hard to monitor. During training camps, officials routinely speculate on which delegates are willing to learn or are there for the fun. One major difficulty faced by project officials is staying in touch with delegates and monitoring how this training is implemented in local settings.

In more unusual circumstances, projects may pull the local community into a wider network of transnational social relationships, for example by attracting foreign journalists, sports officials, and celebrities. Yet struggles remain in overcoming external assumptions and commercial pressures to disseminate messages on SDP projects. For example, as Robert from one international NGO explained, sports media remain unconvinced about the newsworthiness of SDP projects:

> The social power of sport is not always top of the agenda. And so it's a challenge, I mean we had a delegate journalist at an international festival that we ran, and that's one journalist from across Europe. It isn't easy to sort of . . . to place these stories. I mean its something that the journalists struggle with even if they are interested themselves. They go back to their editors and their editors say, "Well, no one is going to read this. They want to know about maybe Ronaldo going to Real Madrid, that kind of stuff."

A third subtheme concerned the engagement of SDP officials with *local political authorities*. Some officials built effective "pragmatic partnerships" by working with state education authorities, sport institutions, and well connected local gatekeepers to create and maintain projects.

However, this coalition-building is not always best for making projects function. In developing nations, some SDP officials implemented a policy of "careful separatism," partly to ward off political interference from state institutions. Some officials complained that state authorities might impose excessive or unexpected obstacles, such as restricting the accreditation of specific NGOs or failing to grant visas to project workers. One official reported that a "theatre" of friendly diplomacy would be staged by state authorities toward NGOs but with no tangible results. More serious problems centered on state institutions attempting to influence or control SDP projects through formal "partnership" agreements. Several officials reported that they had declined such tendentious offers of support from state institutions, to safeguard the project's core objectives in terms of building new social morphologies, kinds of consciousness, and types of political engagement. Those officials who were most reluctant to accept state interference tended to be from smaller SDP agencies that were particularly committed to autonomous practice and highly sceptical toward the high-end politics and celebrity culture surrounding significant parts of the SDP sector (see Giulianotti, 2011a, IN PRESS).

Transnational sector relationships within the global civil society. This section considers how SDP officials understood their relationships with agencies within the broad development sector. Four subthemes have emerged.

First, *NGO-CBO relationships* were characterized by forms of "mutual capital reciprocity." In line with Vertovec, these relationships functioned as avenues for transnational capital movements; here, however, to extend Vertovec's categories, I am using "capital" beyond the economic realm. Officials working for CBOs reported that they gained from the economic and cultural capital of larger NGOs, in terms of receiving financial support and other resources to implement projects, professional training to help local officials, and general guidance on the management and implementation of SDP activities. Alternatively, CBOs provided larger NGOs with social and

political capital, notably by establishing direct links with influential gatekeepers, and by offering insider knowledge on local conditions for implementing projects.

Some of the more critically reflexive NGO officials also indicated that their relationships with CBOs helped them to grapple with power issues regarding their interventionist work. As Stefan from one international NGO states,

> We very much struggled with arguments about colonialism in the first period . . .The South American region is very much marked or associated with fears of globalization, and being again colonized—so it was through dialogue that we came to the point where we had common goals so we worked on these common goals. And there's no approach of imposing anything on anybody. So that was just on the level of local organizations. It's still an issue, because obviously the local view on these things is not always the same as the global one, so we overcame these issues with all the organizations that were in the network.

Nevertheless, fractured transnational liaisons may jeopardize relationships between NGOs and CBOs. Due to inaccessibility or ineffective monitoring, some NGO officials suspected that local CBOs did not transfer all their earmarked revenues into designated projects. Alternatively, some local CBOs complained that NGOs failed to provide expected levels or standards of support for work that was undertaken at grassroots level.

A second subtheme centered on SDP relationships with *donors*. The comments here had strong parallels with those offered by officials on relationships with political authorities (see above). SDP officials indicated that the transnational social morphologies established through donors were double-edged, in ensuring sustainability, but having uneven ideological, financial, and political consequences. Several officials insisted that they would not abandon their core philosophies to secure funding. As Valerie, a fund-raising official, from one NGO stated,

> It's tricky to find a balance between the project that you want to get funded, and the funding body itself. We try not to adapt too much, to make sure that you keep what is good. Here, there is the very strong belief that you do not give up your core values for money, and I think we would never do that even if it was €40 million.

More positively, transnational donors helped to embed some SDP institutions within key social spheres. Stefan from one international NGO explained his ties with a leading sports federation,

> It's certainly opening doors but our donor also has restrictions on who they're able to work with. So anything must be limited to the donor's partners. We cannot speak to certain sport companies so long as we're involved with this

donor because the donor has a partnership with a rival company. So, they have their own interests and partners, they're quite strict. But it's opened doors for us — we're talking with companies which are partners with donor about possible ideas to develop our work—for example with one Japanese company we're talking about how we might use new media to present our ideas—so in that sense it opens doors.

Donors may be problematic partners when holding different goals and strategies to those of the SDP agencies. For example, disputes may surface when donors and SDP officials seek to influence the selection of project participants. Clive from one NGO, which runs TTT workshops in Europe, explained his experience:

Our first two programmes were funded by governmental institutions—so diplomats and government officials in the countries that we were targeting did the selection of the delegates for our workshops. So later on we got into more and more trouble with these diplomats, because they said, "We made a nice list, it would be good for their careers if they could come to Europe," and so on. So we had a lot of fights. We asked them to propose six people for a three-place course, for example, and then we would make the choices. And of course they were always unhappy with our choices. We had some real clashes with these diplomats.

Overall, as in relationships with political authorities, SDP agencies which had their roots in small-scale and focused projects tended to be the most cautious in protecting their decision-making autonomy when building relationships with donors (see Giulianotti, 2011a, IN PRESS).

A third subtheme centered on transnational relationships *within the SDP sector*, notably "divisions and hierarchies" between agencies. Several officials reported fragmentary or restricted relationships with peers in similar agencies, in terms of communication, knowledge transfer, and complementary partnership. Various explanations were put forward, and included the strong competition for funding and local access in the sector; differences in philosophy and practice between agencies (e.g., implementing different sports); and, having ties to donors who were often in opposition to each other (e.g., different sport federations or rival companies). Many SDP NGOs have extended the sector's transnational capacity by publicizing "toolboxes" and "how to" manuals for teachers. The reluctance of some agencies to share this expertise perplexes some officials, as Magda from one international NGO explained:

It just doesn't make sense to reinvent the wheel all the time, and often I have the feeling that some NGOs are concerned that they'll have their ideas stolen. But that's the biggest complement, you know, go and steal our ideas, we'd be more than happy. That would show we're doing good work or this is somehow useful.

Officials in smaller NGOs lamented power inequalities between institutions, in terms of resource scales and working practices. Several officials criticized powerful, global NGOs for prioritizing economic, political, and symbolic capital, while failing to show "best practice" in the field, for example through a lack of full engagement with user groups. As Anna from one small NGO stated,

> They [smaller NGOs in the SDP field] have the feeling that a few very big organizations with methods and approaches, which are not 100% great, collect all the money and for them it's easy to collect it, they have the VIP ambassadors, the government connections, PR is great, the branding looks good, but nobody really works too detailed on methods, and I'm thinking of examples like local ownership — literally local ownership. This is something I gather as the most important factor for project success. Nowadays the most "reputed" projects are somehow run from a Western country, they send college students to those projects and those college students somehow are in South Africa or in Sierra Leone and say, "Yeah, let's start a volleyball project and I'll be gone in six months," six days sometimes, and this very often seems to be the method the projects are working with. And I'm a bit scared that the reputation of these big organizations will spill over onto the others that are trying to do honest and sustainable work in this field.

Thus, one anxiety of officials from smaller agencies centers on the potential damage that may be caused to the entire sector by their larger peers in terms of transnational status and political engagement.

A fourth subtheme centered on *relationships between SDP agencies and the wider development sector*. The strongest links featured international SDP NGOs, either through partnerships with influential local agencies, or through good connections with particular IGOs, nation-states, and sport governing federations. However, SDP officials routinely reported that social networks with other NGOs were limited and, unless necessitated by specific projects, simply were not priority issues. Nevertheless, several officials did state that the SDP sector might be used as a future model for institutions working more broadly in the development sectors. As Volker stated on football-related work,

> We believe very much that we have the potential to be a model for other sectors, not just in sport, but also across the investment in social change area. Football is definitely the best tool in the world to work with: It gives the best communication platform, it's a global language, and it is a tool to address all relevant topics for social change—for environment, for poverty, health, education. I think we are really looking to create a model that is replicable in other sectors. Finding that has been a real success for us.

In this way, SDP officials see their work as making a broader contribution to the shaping of development practices within the global civil society. To draw on Vertovec, SDP work may therefore be seen as having effects not just on formal "client groups" but also on the wider development field. For example, such work does point to new transnational social morphologies, such as between SDP officials and donors, and new modes of cultural reproduction, such as in the use of sport and popular culture as effective interventionist tools for aid agencies.

Concluding Comments

This article has sought to advance understanding of SDP projects with reference to theories of the global civil society and transnationalism. The article has sought to address several knowledge gaps, notably in regard to capturing the transnational complexity of the SDP sector, in drawing on multisite and cross-cultural research into the SDP sector, and in reflecting the critical reflexivity of officials, particularly concerning their sector. Four main sociological themes were identified, by drawing on substantial qualitative research with SDP officials, as well as visits to SDP headquarters and projects.

Three broad conclusions may be advanced. First, many SDP officials demonstrated strong commitments to a dialogical and participatory engagement with client groups. These commitments were underpinned by two wider concerns over transnational processes and the global civil society. In *transnational* terms, drawing on Vertovec's categories, officials sought to facilitate the construction of new (transcommunity) social morphologies and types of social consciousness; and, the longer term transformation of political engagements and reconstructions of locality across divided communities. These aspirations were evident in several forms of practice: for example, in transnational social relationships between SDP officials and local families, communities and political figures; and in officials' commitments to avoid ethnocentric forms of political engagement. In terms of the *global civil society*, SDP officials sought to draw local user groups into transnational peace-building and developmental processes, for example, through promoting gender equity. Many SDP officials also sought to sustain their core objectives when engaging with political authorities and donors.

Second, SDP officials displayed substantial critical reflexivity in regard to their practices. For example, some officials reflected on the possibility of quasi-imperialistic activities, were sceptical about the "ethical universality" of their projects, and were cautious about building close relationships with key stakeholders, notably donors.

Third, the SDP sector is not comprised of homogenized projects and agencies, but harbors instead a broad range of differences and conflicts among its various constituents. Notable differences here centered on harmonized idealist or conflict realist types of project; relationships with donors and political authorities; degrees of critical reflexivity toward issues regarding ethnocentric practice; and, views on power divisions and hierarchies within the SDP sector. In broad terms, SDP agencies which had roots in small-scale projects tended to have more critically reflexive approaches toward these issues. I consider these differences in greater detail elsewhere (Giulianotti, 2011a, IN PRESS).

In the final part of the discussion, it was noted that some SDP officials viewed the sector as a potential model for the wider development field. If this is to be realized fully, then SDP officials might look to introduce two distinctive changes to the sector. First, SDP officials might "transnationalize" their work through a more concerted engagement with the wider development sector. This would involve establishing more extensive social morphologies and networks among the different development institutions that are active within specific locations. It would involve new forms of political engagement with a wider set of NGOs. It would also involve more diverse forms of capital exchange, for example in terms of providing social, political, informational, and economic support between institutions in ways that are mutually advantageous.

A second form of transformation that should be encouraged would see SDP officials engaging more fully with new social movements within sport and beyond. Opening links with more radical NGOs and new social movements may place SDPs in uncomfortable positions with particular donors, such as national governments or some sport governing bodies. Yet such dialogue will serve to enhance the self-critical development of sport NGOs and CBOs, and to assist in the transformation of consciousness and types of political engagement with the different user groups.

Overall, these two prospective transformations—building closer ties with the wider development sector and with new social movements—would allow SDP agencies to break into new territory. The work of SDP agencies would be more carefully and concertedly integrated within wider development and peacemaking initiatives. The work of SDP agencies would also acquire a longer term, justice-driven approach that would be more open to pursuing new forms of sports-based intervention.

In regard to theories of transnationalism and global civil society, this study has had two main outcomes. First, the study has demonstrated the versatility of the concept of transnationalism,

beyond the field of migration studies. In extending the theory, as set out by Vertovec, research with SDP officials has underscored the *multiple* "avenues of capital" that are at play, and which go well beyond the economic. The research has also demonstrated that, rather than constantly build and extend transnational networks, many agencies and officials actively *restrict* the range and scale of these social morphologies, as witnessed in relations with certain donors and political authorities.

A second focus here has been on the reflexivity of social actors in regard to the contested field that is the global civil society. We have noted that the SDP sector is often marked by internal competitions and divisions, and this reflects prominent understandings of the global civil society *per se.* However, here I have sought to look beyond those divisions, to explore the potential for *cooperative* and *interdependent* relationships between different officials and institutions. In the case of the SDP sector, the move toward such partnerships and coalitions is a partial one and far from complete.

Note

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[i] A *field* is defined as a "network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 97). Social actors within fields are engaged in game-like relationships; each actor holds varied volumes and kinds of capital or power (Bourdieu, 1984).

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