

## **Chapter 4: Sport Development Policy**

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### **Introduction**

Sport development has, in its relatively short history, shared a strong association with sport policy both in practical and academic domains. In terms of practice, sport development can be considered as (one component of) the operationalization or implementation of sport policy. Many important features of what is known as the policy process are considered significant to the practice of sport development, for example decisions regarding the distribution of resources, partnership working and evaluation. On the other hand, the academic study of sport development has commonly been underpinned, both explicitly and implicitly, by theories, concepts and frameworks drawn from the interrelated disciplines of policy and political analysis.

Our purpose in this chapter is to examine policy as it relates to sport development in different international contexts. In particular, we investigate the focus of sport policies and the factors affecting their formulation. There has been a considerable expansion in such studies of sport policy since Houlihan decried the lack of academic interest in the field in 2005. While a significant proportion of studies are focused on single countries or specific geographic areas, there has also been an increased interest in international comparison of sport policies (e.g. Bergsgard et al., 2008; Green and Collins, 2008; Nicholson et al., 2010).

International studies of sport policy are important for, at least, two reasons. First, as Houlihan (1997, p3) indicates, international comparison provides 'an opportunity to avoid the policy mistakes of other countries and an opportunity to identify potentially successful policies which may be imported'. Especially in elite sport development, and in elements of development through sport, such policy transfer and learning has become commonplace. Second, examining the similarities and differences in sport policies in different countries helps to identify the factors that are important in shaping such policies. We hope that this chapter will indicate something of the value of international comparison by offering case studies of sport policy in England, Australia and Tanzania.

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognise the value of theory in guiding the analysis of sport policy
- Consider the value of international comparison in analysing sport policy and development
- Identify reasons why sport may or may not be accorded policy priority in different contexts
- Understand how the context of sport policy influences different aspects of sport development

### **Theories and Frameworks for Policy Analysis**

Analysis of sport policy as it relates to sport development commonly utilises what are termed as meso-level frameworks. Compared to macro-level theories, which largely concern broader distributions of power in society, meso-level frameworks lend themselves to analysis of the policy process in particular sectors, such as sport. There are numerous meso-level frameworks that may be suitable for the analysis of sport policy. Common examples include the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), Multiple Streams Framework, Path Dependency and Punctuated Equilibrium. Considering the application of such frameworks to sport policy enables the identification of important aspects of the process of making sport policy and consequently the implementation of sport development. It is not our purpose here to review or utilise specific meso-level frameworks and those seeking fuller explanations of these would be advised to read Paul Carney's excellent 1,000 word introductions (<https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/1000-words/>) or Houlihan (2005) for assessment of the value of four such frameworks to analysing sport policy. In the remainder of this section, drawing on contributions from different meso-level frameworks, our focus in the remainder of this section will be on identifying how and why there may be policy change and continuity and also the influence of institutions and individuals on the process of policy making.

### Change and Continuity in Policy

In line with authors from mainstream policy analysis, Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) indicate that it is necessary to analyse policy over a timescale of at least ten years in order to be able to appropriately identify the extent of change or continuity in policy. The balance between emphasising policy continuity or change differs across different meso-level frameworks. For example, continuity in policy is a feature of literature on Path Dependency, whereas the Multiple Streams framework emphasises the potential volatility in policy making. The Punctuated Equilibrium framework suggests that periods of relative continuity in policy are 'punctuated' by dramatic changes at particular times.

Meso-level frameworks also vary according to the extent that they suggest that policy making is a result of (reasonably) rational decisions or a consequence of alignment of (somewhat) random occurrences (Hill, 2005). While frameworks that suggest that policy making is an entirely rational process now have little support, others suggest that policy makers may have a 'bounded' rationality based on a necessarily incomplete level of knowledge and understanding (Parsons, 1995). For example, the ACF suggests that learning from existing policy will contribute to development of subsequent policies over the medium-term. Similarly, frameworks that could be more broadly classified as emphasising incremental policy change emphasise how ongoing and relatively minor alterations are made based on analysis of policy approaches and impacts. In contrast, the Multiple Streams framework suggests a greater degree of randomness with the acceptance of new policies based on a potentially coincidental alignment of factors across three 'streams' of problem recognition, suggested policy solutions and politics (Schaleger, 2007). In examining policy in sectors such as sport, therefore, awareness of potentially different ways in which policies come to be developed is necessary.

The preceding debates about the likelihood of policy change and extent to which it may be (ir)rationaly orientated are underpinned by the identification of different

influences on the policy process in various meso-level frameworks. The Punctuated Equilibrium and Multiple Streams frameworks, amongst others, emphasise that major policy change may come as a result of events, for example changes of government or particular crises (including, potentially, moral panics). That such events may not be specific to a particular policy area, such as sport, indicates the importance of 'spillover' between different policy areas. Other than events, policies that 'spillover' may be ones, such as privatisation, that are based on broader governmental agendas or may involve the more specific adoption of particular approaches from other areas (e.g. the use of types of public information campaign in public health). These different types of policy spillover suggest the alternative influences of governmental ideologies or policy evidence. This recognition brings us back to the fundamental importance, identified to various degrees in almost all meso-level frameworks, of the potentially differential impact of knowledge, ideas, values, beliefs and interests on policy making. All of these different elements may originate independently from, or through interaction between, different institutions and individuals and it is to the influence of such 'policy actors' that we now turn.

### The Influence of Institutions and Individuals in Policy Making

Much policy analysis starts from a position that identifies government as central to the policy making process. Beyond such a relatively simplistic assertion, it remains important to analyse the extent of government involvement, as well as its degree of influence, in particular policy areas. Moreover, in line with relatively recent, broader debates about governance (see Bevir, 2011), some meso-level frameworks are particularly useful in examining the ways in which particular branches of (central and local) government interact with other organisations and institutions from both the voluntary and private sectors in the policy process. The ACF suggests that groups of such policy actors form different advocacy coalitions that align around particular interests and it is the interaction (and potential primacy) of these coalitions that is important in determining policy. The Policy Networks framework suggests that policy making in a particular area may be characterised by loose and diverse issue networks or tighter and more exclusionary policy communities (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992). Although the division between issue networks and policy communities may not be as clear cut in reality, the consequences may be that the latter results in more stable policy than the former (Marsh, 1998).

Policy actors are not limited to institutions and organisations and the influence of particular individuals is recognised in some meso-level frameworks. While some individuals may have importance due to their status or position, others may utilise particular skills to a greater extent within the policy process. The Multiple Streams framework highlights the potential of 'policy entrepreneurs' to bring about policy change through efforts to align each of the three streams of problems, policy and politics. Similarly, 'policy brokers' can play a role in mediating between different Advocacy Coalitions in a particular policy area.

### **Implications of theory for practice**

These theoretical considerations can, and have, been used to identify and illuminate important aspects of sport policy. Generally, it can be suggested that sport has gained increasing importance both for institutions of global governance (e.g. the

United Nations) and across different countries (Nicholson et al., 2010). In large part, this increasing salience has been on account of the view that sport can contribute to broader objectives of government. Such a generalisation indicates that sport policy is not made in a vacuum, but influenced by spillover from policies and concerns in other areas of government. Nevertheless, in terms of sport policy, it remains vital to specifically distinguish the level of salience of sport across different countries, the particular aspects of sport that are promoted in policy and the factors that have been influential in such trends. For example, elite sport development has often been promoted across different nations on account of politicians' desire to promote national identity at home and abroad (Nicholson et al., 2010). On the other hand, the policy priority given to youth and grassroots sport development has been more variable both over time and across countries, and has been aligned with a greater range of issues, such as health, crime and education, that may be more locally-orientated and dependent.

Many of the factors that are theoretically identified as influencing policy can similarly be readily identified as important in sport development. For example, there has been increasing examination of sporting mega-events, not only in terms of the systems of elite sport development designed to bring national success, but also in the way such events may be leveraged to produce other sport development legacies (e.g. Gratton and Preuss, 2008). Globally, the influence of particularly prominent individuals on sport policy, for example Sepp Blatter of FIFA, have often be debated (for a further and recent examination of this organisation and individual, see Pielke, 2013). Across various aspects of sport policy, there has also been increasing calls for, but also critiques of, the use of evidence to underpin the development of sport policy. Fred Coalter has been a particularly strong voice in such debates and has provided comprehensive reviews of evidence (for example in Coalter, 2007) whilst also being critical of sport policy being made on the basis of poorly-informed beliefs (Coalter, 2013).

Institutions and organisations are also particularly important to both the making and implementation of sport policy. Like other policy sectors, there is typically a wide array of institutions across the different dimensions of sport development. As each institution comes with their own interests and resources, examination of their different influences on sport policy and its implementation is necessary. Beyond the governments of different countries, institutions such as national sports councils and national governing bodies of particular sports may both be influential in, and affected by, sport policies. The existence, extent and arrangement of an array of more local bodies, including sub-national tiers of government, private and voluntary clubs and schools, can also be influential on the scope and orientation of sport policy. As a result, alongside the consideration of sport policies in different countries, our analysis of the following case studies will focus in significant part on how sport policy takes into account various factors including interaction between different institutions.

### **Policy Case Study 1: England**

The year 1990, which saw John Major installed as British Prime Minister, has been commonly cited as a significant turning point in sport policy in England (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). Before this point, certainly under the previous premiership of Margaret Thatcher, sport had largely been neglected by government. Initially, it was

mainly John Major's personal interest in sport and prime ministerial intervention that led to sport gaining in importance as a policy concern for government and this salience has continued across subsequent Labour (1997-2010) and Coalition (2010-2015) governments. However, this overall trend does mask variation in the extent to which different aspects of sport development have been prioritised and more nuanced shifts in the approaches to achieve policy objectives, as well as the reasons for these variations.

Elite sport development has been a consistent policy priority across the period since 1990. Perhaps John Major's single most long-standing achievement as Prime Minister was the instigation of a National Lottery from which a significant proportion of funds have been used to develop an elite sport development system and support individual athletes towards success in the Olympic Games and other international events. The approach to elite sport development has been based, initially, on policy transfer from other successful countries and, more recently, on an increasingly evidence-based approach to both prioritisation of sports and preparation of athletes. In line with the Path Dependency framework discussed above, the prioritisation of elite sport can be seen as continually self-reinforcing. As funding has led to success, this has not only strengthened those policy actors lobbying for elite sport but also made it harder for politicians to remove or reduce support for elite sport. As an example, even in a time of wider governmental austerity, budgets for elite sport were increased after the success of British athletes at the London Olympic Games in 2012. More generally, support for elite sport development has been further fortified by Britain hosting a number of other high profile international events, although the evidence of the wider benefits of this hosting policy was weak when first instigated in the Labour government's Game Plan policy document (Department for Culture Media and Sport / Strategy Unit, 2002).

Alongside elite sport, youth sport development has become an increasingly prominent aspect of policy. Green (2007) argued that the focus on young people could be regarded as a 'social investment' in terms addressing long-term policy concerns such as rising obesity across the population, addressing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving educational attainment. In this regard, Baroness Sue Campbell, then Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust, was very influential as a 'policy entrepreneur' in convincing government ministers of the potential benefits of using sport to address these wider agendas (Houlihan & Green, 2006). As a result, the Labour government began investment of substantial funds into school and youth sport, although there were some continued debates and variations in implementation as to the use of funds to support Physical Education, competitive sport or physical activity respectively. Initially, the advent of the Coalition government in 2010 appeared to signal a change in policy with the Education Minister, at first, unilaterally removing previous Labour government funding. However, the increasing strength of a network of youth sport advocates (including high profile elite athletes) led to the reinstatement of funding, albeit through a new system of distribution. As with elite sport, this development indicates the importance of considering factors, such as public opinion and advocacy, that can constrain any attempts at significant policy change.

In contrast to elite and youth sport development, (adult) community sport has been at best an inconsistent aspect of policy, if not one treated with a degree of indifference.

One reason put forward for this lack of policy priority has been the absence of a single organisation or collective lobbying to promote grassroots sport agendas (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). While National Lottery and governmental funding has been made available through Sport England, there have been relatively frequent changes of strategy in terms of the types of organisations in which funding has been invested and also the extent to which this has attempted to increase participation in competitive sport and / or other forms of physical activity. That increases in levels of participation have been marginal at best could be suggested to be both a factor and a consequence of this inconsistent policy. In this regard, grassroots sport policy can be seen as the 'opposite side of the coin' from the continuity associated with elite sport success.

In terms of institutions and organisations involved in sport policy, there has long been a recognition of the inefficiencies resulting from the fragmented nature of the English sport system (Roche, 1993). Linked with their broader 'modernisation' agenda that affected many different policy sectors, the previous Labour government made substantial efforts at reform of the sport system. As a result, a process of modernisation was enforced on the national sport agencies, Sport England and UK Sport, that resulted in a weakening of their earlier independence from government. In turn, National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have been increasingly subject to direction from both national sport agencies, although for particular NGBs this has been accompanied by greater funding. By contrast, local government has become increasingly marginalised both in policy and in terms of receiving funding and, as a result, its position as a key provider of local sporting provision may well be dissipating (King, 2014). In a further example of inconsistency in approaches to achieve policy objectives, the Labour government's attempts to overcome fragmentation in school and youth sport by instigating local partnerships across England was subsequently undermined when the Coalition reoriented funding directly to individual primary schools.

## **Case Study 2: Australia**

Australia is frequently described as a 'sporting nation' (Hoye and Nicholson, 2010) but this perception of a fanatical sporting country has not necessarily translated into coherent sport development policies. The Australian Sports Commission provide the federal lead for sport development and perform this role predominantly in conjunction with National and State Sporting Associations, as well as local government. The challenges of this structure will be discussed further in the case study.

The election of Gough Whitlam's Labour party in 1972 marked a significant development for sport policy in Australia (Hoye and Nicholson, 2009). Until that point the government had provided limited intervention in sport beyond federal government funding for Olympic participation; State governments supporting lifesaving and water associations; and local government financing sports grounds and facilities (Cashman, 1995). Whitlam's election saw the introduction of a tourism and recreation portfolio which provided grants for community sports and the improvement of recreational facilities. In 1973 the federal government commissioned the Bloomfield Report on community recreation and in 1975 the Coles Report investigating Australia's declining performance at elite tournaments. This period marked an important milestone: for the 'first time in the history of Australia, sport was

politically recognized as an integral part of Australians' lives and received federal government attention' (Sotiriadou, 2009: 854).

The 1980s saw the introduction by federal government of two key national sports governance bodies, the Australian Institute of Sport in 1981 – whose remit was to develop high performance sport – and the Australian Sports Commission in 1985 who performed a wider mandate from providing ministerial advice on sport development to consulting with federal and state authorities. In 1989 the two organisations were merged with the ASC as the overall overseeing body. The ASC to the current day is 'charged with achieving two outcomes: an effective national sport system that offers improved participation in quality sports activities by Australians and excellence in sports performances by Australians' (Hoye and Nicholson, 2009, 235). However, Magdalinski (2000) argued that the establishment of these bodies mainly demonstrated federal government's priority on restoring Australian performance in elite sport. Whenever links between elite and grassroots participation have characterised sport policy documents in Australia until the present day, then priority has repeatedly been placed on elite development over grassroots (Green and Collins, 2008).

Rhetorically, national sport policies have also focused on mass participation programmes and increasing participation within particular target groups (women, indigenous people, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse). However, such policies have received a fraction of the funding awarded to elite sport development making the translation of policy rhetoric into sport development practice difficult in reality (Hogan and Norton, 2000). Whilst, during the 1980s and 1990s federal assistance led to the 'emergence of a systematic, planned and increasingly scientific approach to developing the countries elite athletes' (Green and Collins, 2008: 232), the development of community sport was significantly more ad hoc. Consequently there has been limited change in levels of sports participation over the previous three decades (Stewart, et al. 2004). During the 2000s increasing levels of obesity and declining levels of physical activity led to greater connections between health and sport development policy particularly focusing on children and young people. The Active-After-Schools Community program funded by federal government was developed in 2004 with the aim of increasing participation amongst primary school children. This initiative continues currently but has not led to a significant 'long term shift in the prioritisation of grassroots sports as an area of sport policy development' (Green and Collins, 2008: 235).

A further potentially significant turning point for sport development policy arose with the change of government in 2007 from Liberal to Kevin Rudd's Labour party. The incoming government commissioned an independent report of sport development and policy that was eventually released in 2009 and is known as 'the Crawford Report'. This was critical of the ongoing focus on elite sport, outlined the need for more coherent national sport development participation policies, greater investment in grassroots sport and a broadening of understanding of what constitutes sporting success in sport development policy. For a period of time it appeared as though fundamental shifts in Australian Sports policy would arise from the report, in particular a rebalancing of the elite/grassroots focus. However, the perception that Australia performed poorly at the 2012 Olympics has resulted in a retreat by federal government to traditional approaches with continued heavy investment and priority

placed on elite sport development as the latest national strategy 'Australia's Winning Edge 2012-2022' (Australian Sports Commission, 2012) demonstrates.

Whilst within this brief overview we have focused on sport development policy and direction at the national, Federal level, it is important to acknowledge that Australia's sports governance system is complex and there can be significant deviation amongst states and sporting codes as to how policy is developed. Each state has a sport and recreation division within State government and, whilst this department receives federal funding via the ASC, the State government may also decide to invest further funding potentially leading to greater investment in sport development in some states compared to others. Additionally each sport has its own national and state association, with links between the two varying across states. Although national organisations provide funding for state bodies, the latter still have a reasonable amount of autonomy to develop their own sport development policies and priorities. It is not unusual for State Sporting Associations (SSAs) to lead in the development of policies and approaches which are then adopted at National Level (Magee et al. 2013). At the very local level, minimal funding is provided for voluntary sports clubs and as a result these tend to operate independently. Although frequently charged with the task of operationalising grassroots sport development policy, there are limited structures in place for the various sports governance agencies to support clubs which, again, reduces capacity to achieve broader policy goals for grassroots participation in sport. As illustrated previously, the elite system has far greater connections and cohesion between the main stakeholders of NSAs, the ASC and the AIS.

### **Case Study 3: Tanzania**

As in the other two case studies, the wider context of the east African country of Tanzania is significantly influential on the country's sport policy. In global comparison – and in contrast to the case studies from England and Australia – Tanzania suffers from significant poverty, being placed 196<sup>th</sup> of 213 countries in terms of Gross National Income per Capita (World Bank, 2015) and 159<sup>th</sup> of 187 countries according to the broader Human Development Index (UNDP, 2014). The difficulties facing Tanzania frame the country's key policy priorities, namely: developing infrastructure; agriculture; industry; human capital; and tourism, trade and financial services (United Republic of Tanzania, 2012). Next to the scale of these significant policy issues and priorities, it is unsurprising that sport policy has received extremely limited attention or resources in Tanzania. Reflecting this, Tanzania's sole, documented sport policy was published in 1995: prior to this and subsequently, overarching aspirations that sport organisations may work towards, have been lacking.

This is not to say that policy decisions that affect sport have not been made but the following examples of particular decisions are both a representation and a consequence of the lack of policy value attached to sport. First, responsibility for sport has been passed between various ministries within the Tanzanian government. At various times since the 1960s, sport has been associated with, for example, Ministries of National Culture and Youth (1961), Prime Minister's Office (1984), Ministry of Education and Culture (1990), Ministry of Labour, Employment, Youth and Sports (1995) before being currently situated in the Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sport. With different ministries have come different priorities for



sport and a resultant lack of continuity in policy for sport. Second, from 2000 to 2008, national governmental policy precluded the practice of sport in Tanzanian schools in order to prioritise subjects viewed as having greater academic importance. That the Tanzanian parliament assented to such a policy speaks to the commonality amongst national politicians of a view that represents sport as a relatively inconsequential leisure activity. As shall be indicated later in the chapter, the consequences of this policy on school sport continue to affect the development of sport to this day.

Within sport, the key state agency associated with all aspects of policy and development is the National Sports Council (NSC) which was established by statute in 1967. The stated vision of the NSC is 'to lead Tanzanians towards healthy, active lifestyles and sporting excellence for community development, unity and identity' (NSC, 2013). This vision indicates both an aspiration for sport to contribute to wider development and a commitment to a holistic and integrated approach to the development of different aspects of sport. In practice, both challenges to, and consequences of, this holistic vision can be identified.

Within Tanzania, elite sport development receives the greatest share of financial resources. The meagre allocation of governmental budgetary funds for sport is primarily allocated to competing internationally in a small number of sports, such as football, athletics, boxing, netball and Paralympic sport, chosen respectively for their popularity, historical international success and equity reasons. Moreover, the profile of and commercial sponsorship available to national level football has the potential to skew overall priorities to a particular aspect of this single sport within Tanzania. Such a distribution of financial resources is common across other African countries (Akindes & Kirwan, 2009), as is the use of funds to hire foreign coaches in football and other sports. International influence and elite prioritisation can also be identified in the construction of the first, modern national sport stadium in 2007, catering for football and athletics. Funding for the stadium came equally from the Tanzanian and Chinese governments, as part of growing co-operation between the two countries.

However, in contrast to the other two case studies presented in this chapter, Tanzania has not been successful in international elite sport: the country has not won an Olympic medal since 1980 and, in men's football, has never qualified for the FIFA World Cup Finals. In terms of Tanzanian elite sport policy and development, some specific difficulties can be identified as important. For example, the geographic size of the country, being the 31<sup>st</sup> largest land mass in the world, presents particular challenges for talent identification. More generally, Tanzania has insufficient resources to support its athletes, develop elite sport expertise or build an elite sport development system to achieve success in increasingly competitive international competition.

Beyond elite sport, the NSC's work to develop participation in sport is predicated on, and subject to, varied rationales and influences. The prioritisation of young people is justified both in terms of talent identification and as a social investment in addressing health. If the latter is an example of spillover from other governmental priorities that would have resonance in other national contexts (Houlihan and Green, 2006), there are also examples of alternative influences on priorities in Tanzanian sport. Increasingly emphasis has been drawn towards encouraging participation amongst

females and people with a disability both as a result of their wider political importance and the advocacy, influence and significance of both international and indigenous non-governmental organisations within Tanzania. As a result of the resources that can be garnered internationally by some of these organisations, they have also become increasingly important in the development and delivery of community-based sport programmes. Even if some financial support can be secured through international project funding, there remain significant problems in the implementation of sustainable grassroots sport development.

In terms of implementation, the economic context of Tanzania means that sport infrastructure, in terms of school and community facilities and equipment, is commonly limited. Neither has the sport policy context been supportive of grassroots sport development: the previous policy precluding sport in schools resulted in an ongoing lack of teachers with expertise in sport or physical education, despite the instigation of a National Sports College and the University of Dar es Salaam's degree programme in Physical Education and Sport Sciences. Combined with the limited policy support, the limitations of financial, human and infrastructure resources continue to present significant challenges for sustainable sport development in Tanzania.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

An underpinning understanding of the salience, or importance, of a particular issue is common to most policy analysis. The three case studies in this chapter demonstrate the importance of placing analysis of the policy salience of sport in the broader context of other governmental interests and constraints. In Tanzania, for example, the low salience of sport as a policy issue can significantly be accounted for in terms of the prioritisation of other areas of governmental activity considered more fundamental to the country's development. Nevertheless, what is notable across all three countries is a degree of continuity over extended periods of time in terms of the overall level of policy priority accorded to sport. This points to a lack of significant overall difference across the political spectrum, but not necessarily amongst individual politicians, in respect of views regarding the importance of sport.

This is not to say that there have not been different political and governmental influences on specific aspects of sport policy. Notably, the implications of the switching of responsibility for sport amongst different government ministries in Tanzania is resonant of similar effects previously recognised by authors who have undertaken more in-depth analysis of sport policy in both England and Australia (Houlihan and Lindsey, 2013; Stewart et al., 2009). A further, significant aspect indicated by our comparative and historical analysis is the shifting agendas and prioritisation in respect of particular dimensions of sport development. In all three countries, a rhetorical commitment to both grassroots and elite sport has been countered by the greater commitment of resources to elite sport development. Whilst generalisations should not be drawn from three case studies, it is possible to identify the relevance of particular factors, including those identified from theory at the start of the chapter, in influencing different aspects of sport policy.

Perceptions of policy makers may align with a 'virtuous cycle' (cf. Grix and Carmichael, 2012) which has contributed to greater continuity in elite sport

development policy in Australia and England especially. In such a virtuous cycle, the input of resources in support of policy may help generate levels of success, which is then presented as necessitating the allocation of further resources to continue such success. Even in the case of Australia, which has lately seen a decline in rates of success, the weight of public opinion and the influence of international competition between countries have contributed to the continued prioritisation of elite sport. The international dimension of elite sport has further implications as comparison between countries in practice, including England and Australia, has generated learning as to the most effective policy and developmental approaches (Houlihan, 2009). Implementing such approaches is, however, dependent on resources of a scale that are beyond countries such as Tanzania which, in comparison, has struggled to compete internationally given the development undertaken in other countries.

The need to consider sport policy developments over a period of time is also demonstrated with regard to grassroots sport. It can be identified from the case studies that that past policy decisions condition and constrain future possibilities. A prime example can be found in the Tanzanian decision in the early part of this century to precluding sport within schools, with this decision continuing to affect capacity for sport development years after a change of policy. Similarly, in England, ongoing changes in the particular policy approaches to grassroots sport have contributed to a lack of success in increasing sport participation and also, in a potentially vicious cycle, a continued lack of enthusiasm amongst policy makers to provide the drive and stability required for improvements in participation. Examining grassroots sport policy also helps to identify the importance of advocacy undertaken by different agencies in affecting sport policy decisions. Such advocacy limited potential change in youth sport policy in England. In Tanzania, the advocacy for gender and disability equity in sport development has come, in part, from international and issue-specific non-governmental organisations with this being representative of the greater influence of such organisations to generate policy spillover in a country such as Tanzania.

In conclusion, the various influences on, and distinctions within, sport policy that have been identified across the chapter have important implications for the possibilities of sport development in particular contexts. As well as being demonstrated in other chapters in this book, the influence of policy on sport development is also indicated in literature cited throughout the chapter. Such literature also demonstrates the value of meso-level theories and frameworks as well as international comparison in the analysis of sport policy. Hopefully, this chapter also demonstrates the value of these approaches in developing a more informed analysis of the development of sport policy.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How does the overall policy importance / salience of sport vary across these case study and other countries?
- Why may different aspects of sport be prioritised differently in country's sport policies?
- What are the most important factors that influence the adoption of particular sport policy approaches?

- How do national sport policies constrain or influence the practice of sport development?
- How might opportunities for involvement in sport by under-represented groups (e.g. people with a disability, females, ethnic minorities) be affected by the context of sport policy in each of the three case studies?
- What effects do sport policies have on achieving positive outcomes in and through sport?
- What further investigation and analysis may be valuable in order to answer these questions?

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