STRENGTHENING THE PEACE BUILDING AND PEACEKEEPING THROUGH SPORT NEXUS IN ASIA: MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF SPORT, OLYMPISM AND EDUCATION

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Vignette

In busy downtown London a boisterous crowd gather around a large LCD Screen to watch the 2007 Asian Football Championship final between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Everyone is charged with excitement and anticipation. The Saudi team are the clear favourites. But sport has many nuances, twists and turns and as the game concludes the unexpected has occurred. The Iraqi team finds itself the winners of this prestigious tournament. Many in the gathered crowd fall silent and many silently weep. But the weeping, we observe, is not tears of distress but tears of joy. This situation interests us immensely, and as we reflect on this experience a number of questions spring to mind. Why are these Westerners weeping with joy for Iraq? How could a country ravaged by war put together a team to perform so meritoriously in such a prestigious tournament? Why are these Iraqis even here, given their country's situation? How could the players focus on a game when their countrymen and woman are dying in the streets back home? What possible meaning has this for the rest of the world? The more we reflect on this remarkable scene the more we start to ponder the power and potential of sport in the peacekeeping and peace making process. In particular we ponder the current conflict situations in Asia and wonder how sport might be used to make a difference.

Introduction and Background

The purpose of this article is to briefly outline the current conflict situation in Asia, suggest possible reasons for this and then examine how the relationship between sport and peace might provide ways forward in resolving the conflicts. In particular this article will draw on current initiatives which use sport to address conflict affected areas in Asia.

Firstly let's explore the current situation in Asia. For decades, Asia has been affected by violent conflicts of cultural, ethnic, domestic, inter-state, or transnational politics (Croissant and Trinn, 2009). Colonial exploitation, political supremacy of west, continuous economic expansion, western economic affluence and domination, ethno-nationalism, ethno-religious actions have had an immensely influence on different conflicts in Asia (Tambiah, 1996).

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Croissant and Trinn (2009) emphasise that there are non-state actors and state actors involved in conflicts in Asia. Non-state actors have been mostly influential towards many conflicts arose as a result of the imperialism in Asia. On the other hand, state actors contributed significantly for the growth of large number of domestic conflicts in the Asia region. For example, left-wing agitators influenced many anti-regime wars after the Second World War II, and were significantly influential towards the growth of many domestic conflicts in Asian countries. These left-wing actors were mostly involved in intra-state, non cultural conflicts in Asia e.g. freedom struggles in India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. In 1980s and 1990s, some ethnic groups in Asia were involved in separatist conflicts with the governments over cultural and political self-determination or redistribution of economic rights for instance, separation of Pakistan and Bangladesh from India, separation of Singapore from Malaya, and the ethnic conflict in Sri-Lanka. In accordance to activities of the transnational religious groups such as Al-Qaeda and other Jihadist groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia, Croissant and Trinn (2009) reviewed that transnational organised religious groups are the other actors involved in transnational and cultural conflicts in Asia.

Such conflicts stemming from inter and intra state divisions have been almost continuous in Asia for decades. Evidence could be provided from different conflicts such as problems in India and Pakistan, Mao guerrilla activists in Nepal, North and South Korean problem, China and Taiwan problem, China and Tibet problem, the Middle East problem, Iraq and Lebanon civil war, and Indonesian-Timor terrorist activities. Therefore, currently Asia is "a region particularly prone to conflict" (Croissant and Trinn, 2009, P.17). These conflicts have become ferocious and unpredictable causing mayhem where people's particularly children's rights are exploited, existence of labour camps in the form of sweatshops and the recruitment of child soldiers for terrorist activities (Green and Luehrmann, 2003). Conflicts have also made an impact on creating and encouraging social violence and self-destructive behaviour in the Asian communities.

Solutions to problems of inter and intra conflicts have been particularly urgent in Asia. For the future of social, cultural and economic prosperity of Asia, conflict needs to be addressed with processes that are progressive, inclusive and culturally contextualised. It is argued here that sport may provide one of these progressive processes upon which Asia can address conflict.

Sport has a universality which is valued across continents and cultures (Arnold, 1997). It enters into the most varied spheres of life and has numerous social, economic and cultural interfaces and points of contact. It is considered by many as an innovative instrument which benefits social integration and the development of social capital (Swiss Agency for Development and Peace, 2005). Sport can assist in the prevention and reduction of conflict increasing social cohesion and contributing to community economic development (International Working Group for Sport and Development, (IWGSD) 2006). Sport has long been utilized by governments of all complexions and ideologies and at varying stages of their country's history to fulfil specific political roles (Horton, 1998).

A number of researchers (Gasser and Levinsen, 2004; Norman, 2005; Kidd and MacDonell, 2007; Kidd, 2009; UN, 2009) have explored the socially transformative capacity of sport in peace building. Gasser and Levinsen (2004) stress the value of

participative sport in building relationships between members of divided societies. Reaffirming this argument Norman (2005) argues that there is evidence to suggest that sport can have a positive impact on relationships between members of antagonistic groups in divided societies. Highlighting the educational value of sport Kidd and MacDonell (2007) emphasise that sport is a positive tool for the promotion of goals such as unity, peace and education. Kidd (2009) further emphasizes how sport and physical activity can be used for reconciliation and intercultural communication in areas of conflict. United Nations (UN), (2009) endorses that sport builds bridges between individuals and cross communities. It also sees sport as a fertile ground for planting the seeds of development and peace.

The nexus of contemporary sport and Asia demonstrates in order to enhance the unity and cooperation among Japan, China and Philippiens, in 1913 The Empire of Japan, Philippines and The Republic of China together created the "Far Eastern Championship Games" (Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), 2010). Despite World War II disrupted the continuity of this competition, most of the Asian countries were succeeful in gaining independence from the Empires during this period. As a result, many new independent countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Singapore, were recognised and these countries embraced the concept of 'Asian Games' with the purpose of strengthening mutual understanding among all Asian countries (OCA, 2010). In 1949 the Asian Athletic Foundation was formed and organised the 1st Asian Games in 1951 in New Delhi. Thereafter it was held once every four years (OCA, 2010) and Asian nations have the opportunity to cooperate in sport.

The European Commission's (2007) "White Paper on sport" articulates that sport promotes a great sense of belonging and participation and is an important tool for the integration of immigrants for colonised countries e.g. Asia. Sport is a way of representing strong cultural identities and the qualities of people in an environment which is based on agreed rules, fairness, equity, and protocols of behaviour. It has the capacity to change and bring together deeply polarised societies. Sporting experience can promote genuine contact as it includes physical confrontation and thus, creates a unifying and consolidated environment for not only participants but for wider communities. It possesses the ability to encourage communication and cooperation without establishing barriers relating to race, gender, class, religion or age. Therefore, it is argued here that sport, when appropriately structured and delivered is maybe a useful conflict resolute vector.

Of course Arnold (1997) and Parry (2007) remind us that the above can only be achieved when sport is practise in a moral ethical sense. Parry (2007) argues that sport can have a strong education function where participants learn goal setting, interpersonal relationships, team work, tolerance, respect and community sharing. This is what Arnold (1997) and Parry (2007) argue is the educative and social value of sport. An example of what Arnold and Parry argue is manifest in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict lasting three decades between Liberation Tamil Tiger Elam (LTTE) terrorists and government forces (Singhalese). Despite this ethnic conflict the Sri Lankan National Cricket Team formed a cohesive national identity by encouraging Sinhalese and Tamil players to compete together and positively and peacefully demonstrate how a contribution can be made,

through sport, to reduce conflicts and strengthen national pride by winning the 1996 World Cup and being the runners-up in 2007 and 2010. Another example is where, in 2000 and 2004, North and South Korea athletes marched together in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. Other instances of sport working for peace are: even while engaged in conflict over Kashmir's rule, Indian cricketers (Anil Kumble, Rahul Dravid) and Pakistani cricketer (Misbah Ul Haq) played together for the team of "Bangalore Royal Challengers" in the Indian Premier League Cricket Tournament in 2008. On a micro level, these three examples demonstrate the power of sport in integrating people who have been at conflict on a macro level for many years.

In attempting to draw the relationship between sport and peace the philosophy of the Olympic Movement provides a useful starting point. The International Olympic Committee's (IOC) goal is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values(IOC, 2010). The goal of Olympism is

> to place everywhere sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity. To this effect, the Olympic Movement engages alone or in cooperation with other organizations and within the limits of its means, in action to promote peace (IOC, 2010, P.2).

And a definition of Olympism adopted from the Charter (IOC, 2010) is blending sport with culture and education. It promotes the way of life based on:

- Balanced development of the body, will and mind;
- The joy found in effort;
- The educational value of being a good role model for others;
- Respect for universal ethics including tolerance, generosity, unity, friendship, non-discrimination and respect for others

It is clear from this goal that the IOC sees a strong link between sport, education and peace. Indeed even ancient Olympic festivals developed an association with peace, and this peace association has grown stronger as the modern Olympic Movement has matured (Reid, 2006). Olympism is central to the IOC's promotion of peace and while there is no definitive or immutable international definition of Olympism; Olympism can be seen as the inner faith of people in themselves. It is a constant effort of physical, intellectual and spiritual enhancement (Filaretos, 1993).

A useful example of the peace forming behaviours of Olympism can be seen in the treatment of others as equals. This is highlighted when the nudity of the ancient Olympic athlete's demonstrated equality under the law:

> Once clothes are stripped off the human figure, it is difficult to distinguish the rich from the poor, the smart from the dumb the aristocrat from the king or the democrat (Muller, 2000).

The athletic contests at ancient Olympia were primarily intended for the religious purpose of attracting pilgrims and especially paying homage to the gods. The effects of such gatherings transcended the religious however, and apparently resulted in feelings of community and solidarity among those gathered (Reid, 2006). In these times the Olympic sanctuary was a special place in which diverse peoples, who might otherwise be strangers or enemies, united for a common purpose separate from worldly concerns and conflicts (Reid, 2006). This is an example of how the Olympic festival integrated sport, culture and education, and taught the ancient Hellenes about peace by obliging them to set aside their conflicts, treat others as equals, and tolerate differences. Arguably today the Olympic festival is a celebration and manifestation of Olympism much like Christmas is a celebration of Christianity.

From a contemporary perspective, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) claims it has the power to spread peace among nations. The founder of the modern Olympic Movement de Coubertin spoke about "all sports for all", reflecting on sport as a vehicle for well-being, education, health and the physical and intellectual development of human kind (Samaranch, 1998). This was de Coubertin's humanism which sought to employ sport as an effective diplomatic tool that would bring people together and ultimately contribute to world peace (Athens Round Table forum, 2004). Even in de Coubertin's time he sought "peace among nations" and saw sporting participants as ambassadors of peace (Muller, 2004). He tried to establish interaction between nations united by enthusiasm for peace and an internationalism that would set a ceremonial seal on their peaceful ambitions. De Coubertin was of the opinion that the building of trans-cultural tolerance was a prerequisite to lessen the chance of war (Samaranch, 1998). This he saw as the power of Olympism for peace.

The Olympism conceived by de Coubertin was built on three pillars: sports, ethics and peace (Muller, 2004) and in 1993 the IOC and United Nations collaborated to encourage member nations to abide by a truce for the duration of the Olympic Games. The truce demands that nations follow the athletes' example and put aside their political differences at least for the duration of the games (Reid, 2006). It is claimed in the IOC Charter (2010) that sport can cultivate peaceful attitudes in three ways: first, by carving out space and time for putting aside conflicts (truce and friendship), second, by treating individuals as equals under the rules of the game (equality and justice) and third, by tolerating and even celebrating differences (mutual understanding, tolerance, non discrimination and solidarity).

Given the rhetoric from scholarly claims for sport, Olympism and peace, it seems many organisations and agencies around the world including Asia have attempted to contribute to the enhancement of the discourse of peace and sport. This can be described in two folds. Firstly, Asian societies which have been deeply divided by internal conflicts have used sport as an educational tool for human integration. The Peace and Sport organization (2009) reported that peace and sport initiatives have been active since the past in Timor-Leste, in order to address major social conflicts. These sport and peace initiatives involved the use of sport as a tool to educate gang members to help their transition into the society, and facilitate education and mitigation of vulnerable youngsters living in areas of the city of Dili. "Run for Peace" was one of

the main sport and peace events that discouraged social mitigation between people in the city of Dili and promoted national union in Timor.

Generations for Peace (2007) launched its first global "Peace through Sport" initiative through a camp in Jordan which integrates younger generation all around the world to cooperate in sport. This initiative consists of interactive classroom sessions of peace education, combined with practice in and games of football, basketball, softball and volleyball. The peace education lessons covered the important aspects of peace building among nations. Techniques of building tolerance, teamwork, leadership, building dialogue between teams, respect, anger management, conflict transformation, ethics when working with children and youth, self-confidence, sport, religion and politics stressed throughout. Positive outcomes have been reported.

The Sport and Development Organization (2010) describes how the National Federations of Chess and Karate in Palestine helped to promote peace by addressing issues of social cohesion through sport. Particularly, sport and peace projects in Palestine and Jerusalem suburbs such as Hebron, Bethlehem, Kafar Akeb and Dahiat El Sallam have used sport as a medium to provide basic education to vulnerable youth and to encourage youth leadership and creativity. In part this involved the promotion of sport values to martial arts practitioners.

Schulenkrof (2010) investigated the extent of reconciliation between desperate communities in ethnically divided Sri Lanka and their inclusive social change influenced by the sporting events. He revealed that intercommunity sports events have real value not only in establishing individual friendships but also in building group ties and feelings of national identity.

Plowman (2011) reports on a project to promote peace and reconciliation in a particularly strife-riven part of Sri Lanka. The project was carried out as a collaborative effort between the Mercy Corps, a nongovernmental organization and Ampara District Football Association. It aimed particularly to train Sri Lankan youth as community sport leaders, community facilitators and coaches and strengthen them to act as a force for peace and reconciliation. Included in the programme was instruction in how to combine sport and peace projects and conflict management. Youth from 12 Sri Lankan districts were brought together for this project which included multi ethnic sports tournaments. Positive outcomes were reported.

Secondly, social development organisations in the world have used sport as a tool for social cohesion. For instance, the Salt Lake City Round Table Forum was organised by the Canada based humanitarian organisation "Right to Play" with the collaboration of the IOC and the United Nations. The Report of the Salt Lake City Round Table Forum (2002) stated that their major outcome was the establishment of the United Nation's (UN) Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace in order to promote equality through sports as an idea for peace building (the report of Salt Lake City Round Table Forum, 2002).

The UN Inter Agency Task Force Report (2003) highlighted the importance of integration of sport for development and peace in the development agendas of UN agencies, governments and national and international development organisations. In

addition, they recommended the mobilization of resources amongst UN agencies, governments and sport organisations for Sport for Development and Peace programmes.

'Right to Play' hosted the Athens Round Table Forum with the collaboration of the IOC and the United Nations in 2004. The Athens Round Table Forum (2004) stated that the major outcome of the Forum was the establishment of the International working group on Sport for Development and Peace (the Report of the Athens Round Table forum, 2004). The main aim of this group was to produce a best practice collection of sport for development and peace initiatives and to develop guidelines for inclusion of sport for development in national programmes and policies leading to national policies on sport for development and peace.

A number of initiatives around the world have made these Forum outcomes evident. For instance, National Olympic Committees play a vital role in promoting peace. The Netherlands Olympic Committee with the collaboration of the Confederation of Sports and the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Dutch National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development hosted the Next Step Amsterdam Sports for Peace conference in 2003. The Brazzaville Declaration Report (2007) highlights that the IOC, the association of National Olympic Committees of Africa and the African Union have proposed to join their efforts with those of governments, NGOs and private partners to create a fund for sport and peace initiatives. A number of International Frameworks report on the relationship between sport and peace. The UN Inter agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) identified that well designed sport based initiatives that incorporate the best values of sport can be powerful, practical and cost effective tools to achieve development and peace objectives. The report of the Magglingen Declaration (2003) highlights the link between sport and physical, mental and social development expressed in the field of sport and peace, sport and health and sport and education.

It is evident that organisations mentioned above see the potentiality of sport to convey harmonious messages effectively to promote social cohesion reduce crimes and facilitate the power to influence peace positively. It would appear that these organisations have identified four aspects of sport as tools for social integration and the peace building process. These tools are:

1. Sport as so called non verbal means of communication;

2. Sports programmes as occasions of collective experience and direct physical contact;

3. Sport as a medium which transcends divisions of class;

4. Sport as an instrument of culture (Harms, 1982).

The instrumental use of sport in the promotion of peace is not only limited to organisations and agencies associated with reducing war and terrorism. There are initiatives around the world that use sport on a more micro level to address specific local and regional problems. For instance, a study conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology has identified that the use of sport for youth crime prevention has shown that sport and physical activity can combine with other interventions to reduce crime in particular groups and communities (Cameron & MacDougall, 2006).

The role of sport in diverting young people from criminal activities or rehabilitating them and reducing the amount of crime in local areas has been stressed by researchers (Coalter et al, 2000; Keim, 2003; Amara, 2002; Benefort and Cunningham, 2002). Sport was most effective when combined with programmes addressing wider social development (Cameron and MacDougall, 2006). Another Australian example demonstrates how sport benefits Aboriginal communities. Australian sport carnivals organised by local indigenous communities have been described as pivotal events for social and traditional cohesion largely because they are organised and managed by indigenous communities themselves (Benefort and Cunningham, 2002). The use of sport at the more micro and personal level indicates that the social aspect of it is important in the development of individual traits that promotes social cohesion (Keim, 2003) particularly in the form of self concept, self esteem and self worth-all characteristics important in developing harmonious relationships (Amara, 2002).

There is evidence that sport acts as a positive vehicle for addressing issues of social cohesion, inclusion, the development of life skills and the prevention and resolving of conflicts. For instance, in the United Kingdom, asylum seekers and refugees experienced sport programmes in order for them to learn cultural understandings and integrate them into British society (Amara, 2002). In El Salvador, the Scotiabank Salud Escorlar Integral programme used sport, play and physical activities to teach life skills (the Brazzavile Declaration, 2007). In particular, programmes for conflict prevention and non-violent conflict resolution were taught to primary and secondary school children in order for them to make healthy choices in their lives. Choices that included positive behaviours reduce conflicts.

The Derby Bosnia-Herzegovina community association and the Zimbabwean Association Football team both have provided opportunities for members of their national community to participate in regular team sports and in so doing, have built stronger bonds within their own communities and greater opportunities for mutual social support (International Working Group for Sport and Development, 2008). Stakeholders in these two latter programmes indicated that bonding had overcome some of the ethnic, political and religious divides which were endemic in their country of origin. The National Republic of Tanzania's Sport Development Department has been particularly successful in using sport to address conflict among Tanzania's refugee population (International Working Group for Sport and Development, 2008). Projects involved mixing refugee children from different groups in supervised sport and play activities, encouraging them to form friendships across ethnic and cultural boundaries and building in conflict prevention messages and skill building.

Critiques of the Sport-Peace Nexus

The sport-peace nexus and the promotion of Olympism within that nexus are not without critics and is an academically contested area. Giulianotti,(2007); Jarvie, (2002); Ewing et al.(2002); Schwery, (2003) for instance provide useful critiques of this relationship. In the former colonies, sport brought a clear division between the colonial powers and the indigenous populations and sport such as rugby and cricket reinforced

social divisions and ethnic segregation (International Working Group for Sport and Development, 2008). Sports activity may very well lead to a channelling of aggression and that there is a negative correlation between the amount of training and the tendency to use violence (Giulianotti, 2007). Ewing et al (2002) sharing this view report that sport may be a domain that suspends moral obligation or encourages unethical behaviour for strategic gain particularly in competition. The analysis of sport's potential as a medium for securing peace is particularly problematic, as sport releases emotions that can lead to nationalism and xenophobia (Ewing et al, 2002).

Despite the criticism levelled by scholars it is our argument that it would be irresponsible and even naïve to subscribe to a view that contributes to the expectation that sport per se is a panacea for the development of peace. The sport-peace nexus needs to be essentially an education issue. The thesis of our argument is that the sport-peace nexus can only be a strong one when there is a coherently, educationally, justifiably and pedagogically driven programmes that are specifically designed to strengthen this nexus.

We argue that the coherence and educational soundness, potentially exists within the contested philosophy of Olympism. Notwithstanding this potential, scholars Damkjaer(2004), Simonovic (2004) and Wamsley (2004) challenge the relevancy of the whole concept of Olympism and argue that it is a conceptual and philosophical remnant of the fixed order of the modern age. Implicit in this criticism is that Olympism is immutable and its educational legitimacy questionable. Wamsley (2004) further argues that Olympism is Eurocentric, complicit in the colonising process and used for legitimising the commercial world of capitalism. In particular, Wamsley (2004) asserts that Olympism and the Olympic Games are so intimately associated with the political economy of Western Capitalism and Eastern Bloc state capitalism that the Olympic Movement cannot achieve the objectives it proclaims in its Olympic Charter. Conversely, and equally as strongly, Parry (2007) argues the philosophy of Olympism is the most coherent educational explanation for the educative and social value of physical education and sport. He argues that the universal richness in its philosophy can be contextualised for different cultures and is relevant today as it was in the 20th century. Horton (1998) earlier makes equally strong claims. He stated that:

"the ideals of Olympism are most laudable, have a quasi religiosity and really are the only set of ascribed ethical principles that can be applied to the conduct of sport. No other code which is centred on sport is available; no other code elevates sport to moral, cultural as well as athletic levels of significance" (P.20)

In a similar manner mounted earlier, we acknowledge that Olympism has its critics. However we argue that many of the scholarly criticisms are directed not at the actual philosophy of Olympism but instead with its association with the Olympic Movement, Olympic Games and the problems both the Movement and Games face. Our position is that with well structured, coherently systematised and pedagogically driven Olympism programmes, existing outside and independent of the Olympic Games, and drawing on the power of sport, education and culture the sport-peace nexus can be a powerful and effective one.

Sport and peace practice in Asia

Although there are above mentioned criticisms (Giulianotti, 2007; Jarvie, 2002; Ewing et al, 2002; Schwery, 2003) relating to the relationship of sport and peace Asian countries have begun to realise the instrumental value of sport, particularly for reconciliation purposes. This realisation has contributed to the governing bodies of Asia, including sport organisations, like the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), to promote, and facilitate the establishment of a number of sub regional, regional and continental sporting events (The Olympic Council of Asia, 2007) e.g. South Asian Games, East Asian Games, West Asian games, South East Asian games and Central Asian Games, and the larger more prestigious Asian Games. The concept of peace through sport in Asia is predicated on the assumption that sporting events such as these provide valuable opportunities for the integration of people on a sub regional, regional and continental basis. This integration is designed to achieve social cohesion cultural understandings and harmony amongst ethnic groups (The Olympic Council of Asia, 2007).

Further to these large events, in 2007, the Olympic Council of Asia established a "Peace through Sport Commission" under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Feisal Al Hussein of Jordan (The Olympic Council of Asia, 2007). The Olympic Council of Asia implemented "Generation for Peace", a project that educates youth in conflict affected areas on Sport, Peace Education and Peer to Peer learning models. They also have over 50 "peace through sport" projects and pilot programmes based in Afghanistan, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Palestine. The Olympic Council of Asia are targeting youth in these programmes in order to reduce conflicts and promote reconciliation for the next generation in Asia.

Similarly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2001) introduced a "Sport for Peace" programme worldwide including Asia to endorse sport activities and progress them productively for the genesis of a peace reconciliation process in the countries with ongoing conflicts. Non-Governmental Organisations have also implemented projects to enhance peace through sport in Asia. For example, former Israel Prime Minister Shimon Peres established the "Peres Centre for Peace" to encourage Palestine and Israel children to practise peace through sport activities.

Given the plethora of sport- peace projects and programmes one could expect that there would be significant evidence as to their effectiveness. To date there seems to be little research done in Asia to determine the effectiveness of these 'peace through sport' programmes. However, some preliminary results emerging from a research study done in Sri Lanka through the University of Canterbury, New Zealand (Nanayakkara, 2012) suggests that well structured and coherent education programmes promoting the philosophy of Olympism through physical education and sport may make a difference in young people's knowledge of conflict resolution and in their ability to apply this knowledge to reduce conflict.

Enhancing the sport- peace nexus in Asia

The development of sport across the Asian continent has exploded over the last two decades (The Olympic Council of Asia, 2007). The reasons for such rapid development are complex and multi-variant. However, with the West's promotion of economic globalisation the East (Asia) maybe attempting to emulate the West in the use of sport as a global commodity in order to advance their societies. Emulation or not, what is very clear is the plethora of initiatives across the Asian continent that unashamedly and seemingly uncritically promote sport as a vehicle for peace. This promotion is on a massive scale involving world-wide, continental, regional and sub-regional agencies and organisations. The intended outcomes of such initiatives are to achieve more social cohesion, cultural understandings, cultural integration and harmonious development, including economic development, in order to contribute a better and more peaceful Asia. Central to this process is education and despite the lack of substantial research, qualitative or quantitative, on the effectiveness of such initiatives vast amounts of monies continue to be ploughed into them. This situation seems likely to continue for some time yet.

Notwithstanding the lack of substantial research it is argued here that if sport and peace projects are to be effective then coherent, well structured and pedagogically sophisticated education programmes need to be put in place. Such programmes firstly need to be directed at, and capitalise on, the schooling process to ensure the vast numbers of youth are reached and secondly programmes need to be tailored toward and contextualised for family situations.

In regards to the schooling process we return to, and argue for, the philosophy of Olympism. In particular we argue that through Olympism education useful direction can be found.

> Olympism education is a culturally relevant experiential process of learning
> an integrated set of life principles through the practice of sport (Culpan and
> Moon, 2009)

In arguing for Olympism education we draw the distinction between this and Olympic education which we see as education about the Olympic Movement. We are not advocating for this. Instead we argue that if programmes want to maximise the sport-peace nexus then examining, learning and critiquing Olympism allows individuals and groups to locate themselves within such a philosophy, which indeed, may provide an effective educative pathway for achieving peace through sport. In promoting this arrangement we strongly advocate for such an initiative to be integrated but contextualised into school physical education curriculums that are then mandated by the state and therefore become a requirement in the overall holistic education of the young person. This arrangement also requires the adoption of appropriate pedagogies (Culpan and Wigmore, 2010) and as Piaget (cited in Wood, 1998) reminds us "action and self directed problem solving" is at the heart of this learning development. Here we believe that scholars and teacher educators need to work collaboratively with teachers and curriculum decision makers to foster such appropriate pedagogies.

The second strategy which we suggest to enhance the sport-peace nexus in and across Asia is education for family units. It is suggested that adults as well as youth need to realise the worth of sports programmes in encouraging the establishment of positive and harmonious family environments. We argue that well structured and coherent sport programmes based on Olympism education for families may have the potential to address issues associated with family violence and sexual abuse within the family. However, many countries promote sports activities for the family in an unsystematic way and those activities are not instructed by professionals, they are not necessarily educative, do not draw on Olympism and nor are they developed with the sport peace nexus in mind. A possible spinoff for such family programmes may also see the reduction in discriminative gender and cast behaviours where traditionally women, girls and marginalised ethnic groups in Asia are socially disadvantaged.

Of course to successfully implement such sports programmes, more sport facilities need to be made available. This has important implications for land use such as school grounds for community sports after school will require significant inter and intra government collaboration. It is through the implementation of coherent education programmes based on Olympism with strong elements of collaboration that the sport, peace nexus for both family units and the schooling process can be maximised.

Conclusion

This paper contends that the lifestyle of pre-colonial times in Asia was disrupted by imperialism and the colonising process. The disruption and consequences of colonialism from an economic, political, social, cultural and ethical perspective are still acutely manifest today. The evidence is partly manifested in the significant number of ethnic conflicts throughout the region. In this paper we suggest that progressive and transformative approaches be considered to address conflict in the Asian continent. One such approach is advocated. This is to capture the power and potential of sport by utilising its instrumental value to promote peace in what have become highly charged and deeply polarised societies. We outline a number of projects undertaken particularly by The Olympic Council of Asia who have adopted many steps towards implementing peace through sport in the Asian regions. However in outlining these projects we suggest that to have effective ways forward and to strengthen the sport-peace nexus more coherent and educationally sound strategies involving the promotion of the philosophy of Olympism would be advantageous.

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