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The Role of Sport as a Mediator in International Relations

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International Eurasian Conference on Sport, Education, & Society
Organized by: International Science Culture and Sport Association
1. MY 12TH TURKEY VISIT

• Happy & Flattered

• Antalya, Izmir, Mugla, Erdine, Aydin, Denizli, Kayseri, Istanbul, Ankara, & and Many More
2. CENTRAL QUESTION

Can sport have a mediating effect on international relations?

• Negative vs. Positive

[Checkmark] Positive
[X] Negative
3. GLOBAL PROBLEMS RESOLVED BY SPORT?

Sport Bringing People Together, International Sporting Events
(Tomlinson & Young, 2011)

4. EXTENSION OF SPORT’S POSITIVE IMPACT

• Challenge: Deep Seated Generational Conflict

• Positive Impacts beyond the Sporting Event
  • e.g., Government & Common Person
5. REALITIES OF SPORT’S NEGATIVE SIDE

• Anti-Social Behaviors  (Marasescu, 2013)
• Win-At-All-Cost Mentality
• Ruthlessly Compete
• Disrespectfulness and Uncivility  (Zivkovic, Stamenkovic, & Makovic, 2013)
6. INCITING POOR RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NATIONS

• Sport as Vehicle To Promote Negative Agenda

• e.g., Terroristic Activities Against One Another (Clark, 2004)
  - Negligible in Comparison to Other Risks (Shaver, 2015)

• Sport Is Merely a Vehicle (not the Cause)
7. IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CANNOT BE DETERRED

• Potential For Negatives through Sport is Reality

However:
• Good From Sport is Frequent
• Sport Focus: Spread Goodwill Across Nations
8. RESILIENCE OF SPORT AMIDST INTERNATIONAL DIFFERENCES

• Sport’s Staying Power (Tope, 2008)
• Shared Commonality Between Countries
9. PERSEVERANCE OF SPORT ACROSS DEMOGRAPHICS

• Adults
• Children Resiliently Improvise; Streets & Playgrounds
• Natural Desire to Compete across Demographics
• Sport: Common Interest between Nations & People
10. FRIENDSHIPS, BONDS, & LOYALTIES THROUGH SHARED SPORTING EXPERIENCES

• Loyalty: Bond Shared by “Insiders” *(Fletcher, 1993)*

• Insider Experiences through Common International Sporting Experiences

• Bonds and Loyalties between Nations
11. OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL SPORT

• Develop or Reinforce Friendships, Loyalties, and Bonds (Darnell, 2010; Darnell & Black, 2011)

• Bonds & Loyalties Include:
  • Family, Friends...Sporting Community
  • Those Who Share Common Experiences
12. LOYALTY CONTINUUM

• Competitors, Coaches, Administrators, Fans
• Type of Fraternity
13. OLYMPIC BOND (CASE IN POINT)

• Olympians Share a Bond without Ever Having Met
• International Athletes
• Members of International Sporting Community
14. SPORT AND GOODWILL BETWEEN NATIONS

• International Goodwill Not Guarantee
• John Lennon “Give Peace A Chance”
• Starting Point for Positive Conversation
• Mutually Positive Experiences
15. GOVERNMENT INFLUENCE OVER SPORT

• Minimizing Government’s Role (Purify Sport)
• Sport as Promotional Tool for Government
• Governments Sole Directors Of International Sporting Contests
  • Government’s Political Agenda Promoted
16. SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY TO SPORT GOVERNING BODIES

• Allows for an **Apolitical** Impression of Nations
• “Temporary” Moment to Form Positive Relationships
17. RELINQUISH CONTROLS FOR QUALITY

• Government Incentive to Relinquish Control to Sporting Experts
  • Higher Quality
18. NATIONALISM EMBRACED AND REINFORCED THROUGH SPORT

• A Note on Globalism
19. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN NATIONS ARE USUALLY FOR SELF-SERVING PURPOSES

• Sport Used to Establish National Identity (Field, 2014; Gorokhov, 2015; Lenger & Schumacher, 2015)

• National Agendas to Promote Nationalism

• National Participation in International Sporting Events & Good
20. SPORT AS A PATH TO POSITIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN NATIONS

• Mediator of International Relationships
  • Sport Often Subtle, yet Effective Role
• Large Scale Improvements between Nations, Unlikely
• A Beginning to Positive Dialogue
• Path to More Substantive Positive Outcomes
21. OPEN MIND & PROGRESS

• Progress toward Removing Learned Prejudices
  • In-person Interactions Characteristic Of Sporting Events
    (Allport, 1954)

• Open Mind Necessary
22. **POSITIVE DIALOGUE**

- International Sporting Events
- International Teaching & Study Exchanges
- International or Interregional Congresses

- May Not be the Sporting Event Itself
  - Process of the Event; Positive Interactions
- One-day Event
- Several Days
23. NOT ALLOWING IMPEDIMENTS TO DETER CHANGE

• Impediments to Protect Status Quo
• Interactions between Nations Required to:
  • Improving Poor Relations
  • Reinforcing Good Relations
24. SPORT MEDIATING PROPAGANDA AND STEREOTYPES

• Propagandistic Misinformation
  • Difficult To Overcome With Grass-Roots Interactions
• Opportunities for Genuine Exchanges
• Dramatic Changes of Long-Standing Perspectives? No
25. HOSTING & GOODWILL

• Cultural Opportunities to Create Goodwill
• Host & Guest Gain Cultural Understanding During Tourism Interactions (Canavan, 2016)
• Feature Attractions
26. PROCESS OF INTERACTING

- Interacting
- Strengthen or Weaken
27. HELP MEND STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS

• Sport or Sporting Event **cannot** Fully Repair
• Can Spread Goodwill; Help Mend
• Support Societal Problem Progress  *(Burnett, 2015)*
• Putting Aside Governmental Differences
  • (if Only Temporarily)
28. LARGE SCALE INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS

• Convenient Opportunities for Government Officials
• Social Gatherings & Tourism
• Goodwill Interactions
• Fans, Citizens, & Even Government Officials (Brownell, 2014)
29. SAFE & SECURE INTERNATIONAL SPORTING ENVIRONMENT

• Unassuming Kindness
• “On The Ground” Interactions
• Regular Everyday People
• Hospitality that Guarantees Favorable Impression
30. TURKEY & HOSTING

• Fascinating Culture
• Natural Landscape
• Breathtaking Sea
• Delicious Food & Tea
• Turkish People: Warm, Kind, & Generous
31. SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Role of Sport as a Mediator in International Relations

• Nations Take Advantage Of Any Opportunities Where Sport Can Be Used To Support Goodwill

• Sporting Events Can Help Mediate Positive Progress Between Nations

THANK YOU
Prof. Dr. Robert C. Schneider
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