

The Role of Sport as a Mediator in International Relations

Prof. Dr. Robert C. Schneider

Director, Sport Management Program

The College at Brockport, State University of New York

International Eurasian Conference on Sport, Education, & Society
Organized by: International Science Culture and Sport Association



The College at
BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



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**



3. GLOBAL PROBLEMS RESOLVED BY SPORT?

Sport Bringing People Together, International Sporting Events

(Tomlinson & Young, 2011)

Poverty, Peace & Security, Disarmament, Human Rights, Democracy, Demography, Ecology, Energy, & Medical Care (Valeryevich, 2015)



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 Official**
- **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

Director, Sport Management Program

