

Towards an Ontology of Development: Conceptualising Development amongst Experts within Sport-for-Development and Peace

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Abstract

In the mass mobilisation of movements in recent years to tackle global inequalities, the sport-for-development and peace (SDP) movement, which at its core aims to use sport as a tool for development, has gained prominence. However, the term *development* in social science is one without a uniform definition. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to attempt to understand the meaning of development amongst academics within the SDP field in an effort to bring greater clarity around the ambiguous notion of development. Through interviews with six SDP experts, an attempt is made to conceptualise development within SDP.

Keywords: development, sport, experts

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Introduction

When psychologists speak of the development of intelligence, mathematicians of the development of an equation or photographers of the development of a film, the sense they give to the word 'development' is clear enough. Its definition is shared by everyone working in those areas. The situation is quite different, however, when it comes to the use of the word in ordinary language to denote either a state or a process associated with such concepts as material well-being, progress, social justice, economic growth, personal blossoming, or even ecological equilibrium. (Rist, 2014, p. 8)

Immediately, a cursory glance at the quote above should highlight that the meaning and terminology of the word *development* in social science is entangled in a semantic web of meanings pertaining to growth, progress and advancement (Omar, 2012). One understanding of the term comes from Esteva (1992) who suggests that 'development' implies a favourable change, from inferior to superior, a step from poor to rich. What are the facets of a favourable change? How is development conceptualised to achieve such favourable changes? How do the frameworks of discourse and power shape the conceptualization of development? How does the vehicle of sport aid towards the destination of developed? These are the questions we will explore from the perspective of experts currently working in the field of sport-for-development and peace (SDP). Further justification as to the rationality of using experts is discussed in the methods section. SDP is an emerging (and possibly established) field of research and practice which looks at using sport as a tool to stimulate positive social change (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2019). Arguably, the most

international example of SDP is the United Nations (UN) declaring sport as a meaningful vehicle to achieving their Millennium Development Goals, and subsequently declaring 2005 as the first international year of development through sport (Mwaanga & Adeosun 2019).

To contextualise the reasoning for this line of enquiry the first author will share a personal narrative. The first author is a Nigerian male in the diaspora who is privileged to have also become a British citizen. Within the first author's cross-cultural background, and working in sport, the questions of development and its meaning became fascinating. Upon visits to my birth country (Nigeria), I started to consider the possible individuality of the term development. For instance, upon conversing with Nigerian family, neighbours, and people with varying social status in Nigeria about the idea of development, answers ranged from constant electricity, to lack of corruption, and a reduction in street begging. Conversely, when people were asked similar questions about the concept of development in the United Kingdom, ideas ranged from a reduction in poverty, progress in the form of social relations, environmental gains, reduction in global warming, more equality and equity for all.

Unsurprisingly, given that many of these conversations were held with different people within the first author's social and professional circles, from wide-ranging geographical locations, and with differing social status, it is not surprising that conceptions of the term development were so varied. However, the term development is universally used with very diverse meanings, and is a global phenomenon (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2017; Rist, 2014). Hence, the term development is worthy of continual analysis.

Development

The authors appreciate that the above sub-heading is a multifaceted term with layered and complex semantics which cannot be discussed in full within one academic paper. As such, the next section may read as a rather limited depiction, as opposed to expansive description of development and the authors intend this to be so. The genesis of modern 'developmentalism' began with the inaugural speech of President Harry S. Truman in 1949 who urged the 'developed', democratic and northern nations to commit to improving the worlds 'underdeveloped' areas (Rist 2014). This speech spurred the first wave of global development projects with the enthusiasm and passion now associated with development thinking today. However, as Mwaanga (2013) adeptly asks: Who is developing? What is development and how do we measure it? These questions are difficult to answer as 'development' is a term without an ontological reality, but it is instead a discursive term used by organisations, people, and nations usually residing within the core countries to maintain their dominating influence on those in the periphery (Rist 2014).

It should be mentioned that the aim of this narrative is not to simply discredit the intentions of 'developmentalists' as tyrannical or to vilify the term 'development'; the aim is to promote a better understanding of the term development and its principles for SDP conceptualization, to better

understand when to act, how to act or even if to act. Indeed, those who work, advocate, and study in development believe that inaction is not an option; but that actions should follow understanding and principles. Further, they think that actions based on the wrong assumptions simply add to the process of 'creative destruction' and can equally contribute to underdevelopment (Black, 2010; Easterly, 2007). For example, Easterly (2007) references an event in the mid-1980s when musicians gathered to attack world poverty through the Live Aid musical festival, which also sought to increase awareness of this reality. More importantly, the event also aimed to raise funds to help communities escape poverty. Though a noble and justified cause, without full understanding and appreciation of the processes and intricacies of development which may cause global poverty, this festival did little more than promote the image of a seemingly deprived and helpless people of the south.

The difficulties and intricacies of understanding social development can be seen when we refer to the opening quote by Rist (2014). In building on the difficulties in defining development in social science, Rist (2014, p.11) further suggests that “the principal defect of most pseudo definitions, practices, and approaches to development is that they are based upon the way in which one person (or set of persons) pictures the ideal conditions of social existence”. While this particular quote seems to attack a consensus-driven definition of development, Rist (2014) later equally states that personal predilections concerning development are often inviting and desirable; and indeed, it would be in bad taste to attack an approach to defining development in this way. Furthermore, Gasper (2004) argues that this way of proceeding has the added advantage of at least ascertaining some degree of consensus about the development phenomenon with little financial implications. Definitely, there is value in ascertaining the views of experts, not only to define development, but to also determine where development does or does not exist.

However, to determine where development does or does not exist is to attempt to distinguish between developed and developing which has traditionally relied on a global Northern understanding and/or perspective. This means that the common language of developmental discourse “often use language whose Western origins ultimately define the parameters of SDP rationality” (Mwaanga, 2013, p. 326). Hence, the provocative notion of development is a dominant discourse of Western modernity (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2019). In spite of these criticisms, there is still much to appreciate regarding the idea of development. The undying enthusiasm, passion, optimism and zeal of those who wish to make a difference in the lives of marginalised, deprived, and sometimes war-torn people are commendable and praiseworthy (Black, 2009). However, the rapid growth of sport-for-development and peace (SDP) projects as a means of initiating development is together intriguing and worthy of further examination.

The work of Black (2009), who discusses the ambiguities and inconsistencies of development practice within sport, is an adequate site for further analysis. Black (2009) takes the approach of the 'academic sceptic' and deconstructs development thinking by given a definition and

highlighting some of its challenges and ambivalence in contemporary SDP practice. The simple yet profound definition Black (2009) provides describes development as an organised intervention for a standard of improvement. Two key ideas are important from this definition. Firstly 'development' is noted as an intervention and, secondly, what constitutes 'improvement' is vague and ambiguous depending on who you talk to (Black 2009). From this, Black (2009) highlights that 'improvements' are based on an over reliance on large scale organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGO's) and their projects of change, capitalist's inclinations, born out of neo-liberal philosophical thinking, and the focus on elemental aspects of development.

On this last point, some research within SDP, especially in its earlier literature, discussed 'life skills' as a key element of development (see Mwaanga, 2010). However, whilst acknowledged as a key component of development thinking, Forde (2014) adeptly notes that 'life skills' is a development buzzword which in itself is ambiguous. Furthermore, terms such as 'life skills' are often applied to deprived and marginalised people who are measured by their position in society, usually by privileged white males, without uncritical analysis of people as human beings (Forde, 2014). It is certainly important to question, as Forde (2014) did, why is it that it is marginalised and deprived people who require life skills, and not privileged people who can be said to have the tools to limit marginalisation and deprivation. In any case, development in this example, as is often remarked, is a practice which seems to consistently ask those who are considered deprived and marginalised to make up for it, politically, socially and economically (Gasper, 2004). This sympathetic approach to development thinking makes for an understandable combination when applied to sport (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2017).

Sport is seen as a compassionate arena, capable of evoking the zeal and can-do attitude needed for development, thereby making sport, on the surface at least, a desirable partner to development (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2016). Therefore, sport and development are inextricably linked, as sport is seen as a panacea to many of the component issues of development thinking. However, sport also harbours some of the worst traits which can be associated with non-developmental and progressive thinking, including elitism, exclusivity, and inequality (Levermore, 2008). In truth, at the outset of the SDP movement, it was not considered whether development is too great a load for sport (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2019). Perhaps this is why in the SDP field there has been a wealth of literature that argues for more insightful or different theoretical approaches to SDP work: better evaluative approaches, more inclusion of indigenous knowledge, a greater consideration of particular philosophies, and how sport should be used in development projects (Coalter, 2010; Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2019; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013).

Whilst all these remain noble and worthy considerations, ultimately the fundamental issue is that many SDP scholars do not appear to be clear on what development is; and if they are, this clarity is often personal. Are we all aiming for the same thing and should all theoretical, philosophical and evaluative approaches to SDP work be evaluated at the same standard? The lack of answers

to such questions may account for the reason why the SDP field today is such a competitive market, reflecting much of the neo-liberal ideals criticised in its practices and theories. Critiquing someone else's work, theory, approach, philosophy or practice is often more likely to gain attention than the actual development work that is done. As a result, this research paper aims to bring greater clarity to the development question in SDP by asking academics working in the SDP field what development means or how it should be defined to determine whether consensus can be reached.

Methods

This paper attempts to understand in greater detail the conceptualisation of development amongst chosen SDP experts, and how this influences the practice of development within the SDP field. These experts have been involved in the SDP field in different capacities for over ten years as practitioners, academics and activists. They are all lecturers and/or senior lecturers within academic institutions, and all hold doctorates in the area of sport for social change. Furthermore, all experts frequently write and research in the area of SDP, and have common interests, specifically in the understanding of development, and its delivery and administration, especially through sport.

Semi-structured interviews were mainly employed as a means to gather rich information regarding their conceptions. Interviews were usually conducted over Skype and in English, with further discussions conducted informally and on a face-to-face basis after the primary data collection phase. Face-to-face discussions were periodic and only occurred with three of the six participants, whereas the interviews were more definitive and in-depth. The shortest interview lasted fifty minutes, with the longest interview extending to eighty minutes. The interviewees included one female and five male participants, and given the positions, prominence, and authority of the participants, pseudonyms have been used to protect their identity.

Participants were asked four types of questions to understand: (1) personal information relevant to the study; (2) their general ideas of development; (3) their ideas about development within SDP; and (4) their ideas around power and knowledge. Prompts were used to clarify questions or to help the respondents' flow ideas. One example of a question and a prompt was "If this development did occur within SDP, how long should it take". The associated prompt with this question was "Can development occur in a set time"? It should be noted that prompts were minimally used and the authors attribute this to the clarity and appropriateness of the questions, along with the expert nature of the respondents.

The interview data were transcribed verbatim by the first author and collaboratively analysed following Braun et al.'s (2016) six step thematic analysis process. Because reflexive thematic analysis was employed, and given the nature of the study, saturation was not considered important

to this process (Braun & Clarke, 2019). During the thematic analytical process, we systematically coded all broadly related development conceptualisation data into organised groups and then proceeded to develop candidate themes to answer the research questions. Initially, we identified four themes, but upon revisiting the research questions and aims, the themes were reduced into three broad themes that best aligned with the research question. These themes include *participatory development*, *sport and reality*, and *eurocentrism and power* and are used to structure later sections of the paper. However, before moving on to the discussion, the authors noted in the introduction that further rationality and justification of using experts would be discussed in the methods section.

The Delphi Technique

The study used the Delphi technique to gather specific respondents to contribute to the research topic. The Delphi technique is an analytical and systematic technique to research which relies on the judgement of individuals presumed to be experts in a particular field of study, in this case SDP (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005). The Delphi technique therefore attempts negotiating reality through expert opinion in an attempt to move a particular field forward (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005). Thus, philosophical underpinnings of the Delphi are more concerned with how knowledge shapes reality as opposed to defining universal law.

However, the Delphi method has been criticised by the believers of purist science suggesting the Delphi does not allow a researcher to fully understand social phenomena (Albert, 2014). Even though experts are used, subjective biases still exist in human judgement therefore accurate accounts of reality are not always given. Furthermore, there can often be an inability to group together results due to the multiple conceptualisations of experts who, no doubt, have wide ranging knowledge and views regarding their particular field (Albert, 2014). Despite these perceived limitations, the successes of the Delphi technique lie in the philosophical assumption that “multiple heads are better than one” (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005, p. 239). This observation implies that if multiple experts articulate similar thoughts; there is cause to consider such knowledge as common consensus within a particular field of study. As such, panel selection is crucial within the Delphi method. Sprenkle & Piercy (2005) report that expert panellists must be chosen to meet certain criteria which include: multiple years of experience in a particular field; a qualifying doctorate in a particular field; and published authorship within a particular field of study (Sprenkle & Piercy, 2005). Hence our experts in this particular study are SDP academics who fit the criteria outlined above, and whose conceptions are detailed in the next section in accordance with the themes discussed.

Discussion

This section details how the experts responded to the idea of development based on their own experiences and understanding. It also demonstrates how certain terms come to characterise development thinking intentionally or unintentionally especially within SDP. As noted, the themes derived from the data are participatory development, sport and reality, and eurocentrism and power.

Participatory Development

As a component in what Rist (2014, p. 21) calls an “element in the religion of modernity,” development thinking is based on “indisputable truths which determine obligatory behaviour.” Put another way, a performative act (in this case of development) is built on a particular belief system, which guides a person’s behaviour and approach to development work. Hence, to satisfy the components of a definition, several philosophical viewpoints must be explored in order to understand how development is viewed and conceptualised (Easterly, 2007). Participants Steve, Tony, and Remy highlight the importance of participatory viewpoints when approaching development work:

Well, if you’re trying to develop skills, the only way to do that is through participation, is through volunteering; it is through allowing people an experience of organisational skills. Unless you allow people to organise and provide for themselves, the skill they are learning is very limited. Educationally you learn by doing.

I think there are various principles. Trying to make it valuable to the field of sport for development has always underpinned it. I think, from that, some principles of ways of going about research. Do it on the basis of really involving people in the country in the research process as far as possible.

But realising that for change to occur, there are certain routes and if you keep on suggesting that participative and participant – everything that post-colonialism stands for, for me, ideologically – that’s exactly the right way to go.

These emergent conceptualisations are unsurprising as participation is seen as both a 'means' to accomplish the plans of a development endeavour quickly, economically, and successfully; and an 'end' where the locality eventually takes control of the processes of their own development (Easterly 2007). Natasha, Bruce, and Clinton further support these opening statements by detailing participatory development to be typified by involvement and input, where locals along with the researcher and/or practitioner look to generate authentic indigenous knowledge specific to the locality in question:

I think, if I look at all those terms and the ones that connect most with me are participatory, sustainable and community. I think those are central; you need the whole community involved. It's got to be driven by the whole community, and through that, hopefully it will be ongoing.

It can be using very good participatory approaches within those discussions so that when we come to conclusions, they are able to see their own voices within those conclusions. That's a conclusion we reached and be able to identify their own voice within those conclusions.

When I speak and also write about sport and development, I would say it is closer what you would say. I guess in English the best word is community or participation.

Cleaver (1999) critically notes that as a researcher or practitioner, it is virtually impossible to do a good job in development by yourself; therefore, researchers and practitioners require the co-operation and contribution of locals, if only to provide information or allow access to people. Accordingly, within SDP, the attraction of this approach is that it puts into action the requirement of a conversation between the researcher and the participant, a much-needed exchange between SDP academics and participants.

Participation in the context of development is best described as a process in which all members of a locality or organisation are actively involved, and influence decisions which affect 'their' development (Cleaver, 1999). Indeed, participatory development viewpoints give principal attention to the promotion of human agency and highlights the fact that the many shortcomings of development today are due to positivist philosophies of international development approaches (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2016). However, it is important to note that participatory development paradigms have been labelled with wide ranging criticisms, and at times have been likened as the new tyranny in development thinking (Cleaver 1999). Some have considered its claims as excessive with little evidence to support it, while others argue that within participatory thinking lies too many techniques and approaches. Cleaver (1999) later refers to this as the 'tyranny of techniques'. As such, participatory development techniques are carried out on faith because the idea of participation is intrinsically and extrinsically a good thing (Cleaver 1999). Thus, conceptualising development as participatory, even by experts, creates more questions than answers: What participatory technique? How are issues or discourse and power negotiated in participatory development? How do we ensure participation is truly horizontal? Indeed, it seems the conceptualisation of 'development' is and will remain a plurality as noted by Remy:

It's pluralistic. I guess it has to be. Whilst I have my own views on development as essentially participatory, my ideologies of development are changing to be more plural than it ever has been.

Sport and Reality

In assuming our experts work from a participatory approach to development, we returned to one of the fundamental questions of the study: How does sport contribute to development, especially within this participatory conceptualisation? Indeed, the contribution of sport to encouraging positive participatory development has been arguably idealistic rather than realistic. In reality, contemporary sport is more like a prison of measured time (Brohm, 1978). Where modern sport and its definitions are born out of Northern capitalist outlooks, once implemented in development focused areas, such efforts restrict and constrain the freedom of choice for people, thereby acting as an overwhelming form of power. This results in a negative viewpoint of sport, especially as a participatory tool in development. Nevertheless, some experts in our study argue for the use of sport as a development tool in the community namely, Bruce, Clinton and Tony:

We could use sports' unique aspects, the unique attributes of sport such as it's a social mobilisation, it has youth appeal, it's a youth language, everyone understands it, so those are attributes of sport.

Sport is always there in the community, so sport can always be used and they can always use sport.

You can take a sport with a colonial history and use it to challenge that colonial history.

Although widely accepted that sport can build bridges and get a message to people in a way politicians/governments cannot, sport still needs to be demystified, demythologised, depoliticised, and evaluated relative to the society and conditions where it is implemented and considered, along with other engines of development (Black, 2009; Levermore, 2008; Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2016, 2017, 2019). On this last point, Natasha details a related but pertinent thought about how sport should be used in conjunction with other tools:

Other activities can do the same as sport. Art, drama, music, can all do the same as well. So, I don't think sport's any different from that, but I think it's a platform that appeals, so I think it is just a piece of the jigsaw really.

Natasha's description of sport as just a jigsaw puzzle piece as opposed to the whole picture reflects largely the current literature on sport and its uses within development. Undeniably, sport like development has wide ranging definitions (Levermore, 2008). In one sense, sport can be considered a form of physical activity, organised and requiring skill. Alternatively, sport can be considered a form of play involving social interactions and recreational activity that contributes to physical activity. Both examples recognise sport as a form of physical activity but the second example emphasises sport as a holistic tool more akin to the nature of development. However,

given the heterogeneous nature of SDP, adopting any one definition would have implications for development practice (Mwaanga, 2013). In speaking of development practice through sport, Steve argues that for sport to achieve particular development objectives, it requires a form of thinking that combines sport with other activities:

I think ... people are increasingly recognising that you have to add other things to it to develop young people, particularly if we're aiming towards the labour market. I think there's an increasing awareness it has to be 'sport-plus' other focused employability skills. That would be my argument.

Incidentally, Steve indirectly connects to the issue of discourse and power by using terms such as 'sport-plus'. Coalter (2010) notes the idea of 'sport-plus' as the use of sport to achieve development goals, by incorporating development objectives (such as employability skills, life skills, education, health tests, trade skills, etc) into a sport programme. This term was originally used by a prominent Western SDP academic, but the term is now used widely in SDP literature, and even refers to the name of a prominent non-Governmental organisation in sub-Saharan Africa. While this idea of sport-plus remains an understandable one, the coining of the term and its prominent use within SDP reaffirms the power-relations and nature of authoritative and discursive language which can permeate SDP literature. The question arises: Should the nature of discursive language and power relations in literature really be a concern if terms such as 'sport-plus' provides a conceptual framework that helps us make sense of the use of sport in development? On the other hand, if such language recreates the evangelical status often associated with sport and development thinking which can lead to simplistic beliefs that sport is the panacea for development, then the issues of discourse and power in terminology must be further explored. Steve's last point elaborates on this and speaks to the idea of participation when considering the tool(s) for development work:

There are so many disparate organisations that are doing very different things. For example, take sport and HIV Aids and education. One is working in the area of medical interventions and medical health, and the other is working in the area of educational development, cognitive development. Now these are very different intellectual fields. I'm not sure sport can connect those up because I think to understand these fields you've got to go to health education experts; you've got to understand the nature of health interventions; or, if you go to education, you've got to understand educational theory. And I think the problem is that sport is a very loose way of holding quite disparate intellectual themes together. I think that people should get closer to the experts.

Eurocentrism and Power

This theme, which seeks to answer how power and discourse shapes the nature of development conceptualisation in SDP is addressed directly by Bruce's comment:

I think the conceptualisation of sport for development has come from groupings of forums involving wealthy stakeholders organised within Europe, and it's from those conferences where I would say different people from different parts of the world were brought to those forums and they contributed to that, so there is a sense of Eurocentrism within SDP.

What Bruce is alluding to is the Eurocentric discourse that permeates development work in SDP. Eurocentrism refers to the models and patterns of European economic history which have shaped mainstream development work today (Hettne, 1995). Hettne (1995) asserted that Eurocentrism has served as a handbook and permission of colonial management in the global South. This in effect determines who, and in what geographical location, development is controlled and by whom, as further suggested by Bruce:

The initial office for sport for development, even though it has been going on in the South but the head office was set up here, in Europe, Geneva, and whether that party at that time had the representation from the South to show that we want to have indigenous knowledge influence the shaping of sport for development, I doubt whether it had. So, in a way, we still see a lot of Eurocentrics in sport for development and when it goes out there, it goes out there in the shape of Europe.

This last quote certainly speaks to the ideas of influence and control of development within SDP. Although Bruce's quotes are specific to what might be termed the global South (Africa, South America, parts of Asia) – and of course development work is by no means specific to those regions – when we examine SDP, the majority of development work is carried out in these regions (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2019). Therefore, it makes Bruce's conceptions of Eurocentrism pertinent in unveiling the foundations upon which SDP work is built: lacking representation from the South at the outset; and its head office located outside of the southern regions in which much of its interest lies, and thereby revealing a historical relation of power. Hence, the SDP movement is conveyed in a manner described as attuned to discursive power relations of Eurocentrism that identifies, suitable ways of writing, speaking, thinking and practising development (Mwaanga, 2013).

As a result, arguably the SDP movement (re)produces Eurocentric discourses and is reflective of the production and preservation of power relations and global northern authority in the field. While Eurocentric discourse of power is well articulated in the literature, it unfortunately does not transpire into practice, with many developmentalists in SDP work unaware of their influence and power in the field, as Remy notes:

People who are in positions of power don't always realise it and the response you have is a pragmatic one that, yeah, ok, you have to work with it somehow.

Bruce articulates a similar thought in describing how people engaging in development work in Africa view the continent, often subconsciously unaware of their privilege and power:

So, when they go out to Africa, some of them, even students when we prepare them to go out, they still have notions of their going out to the Dark Continent and if they are going out to the Dark Continent, they have notions of going to modernise groups where they are going to work, and in that way, they have a certain power that they go with them. They are coming from very privileged background.

This idea of the Dark Continent is often referred to, and recreated in development work, which was originally propagated by European colonialism of the African continent (Easterly, 2007). Invariably, this connotation brings with it a stereotype of savagery and barbarity of a diverse and different continent that needed to be controlled in order to be tamed and humanised. This historical viewpoint still stands to some degree in SDP work today (Mwaanga & Adeosun, 2019). Despite the best intentions of many northern SDP practitioners and academics to mitigate these historical circumstances (which is not of their own creation), Steve, a participant expert highlights that:

There are no relationships without power in them somewhere.

Conclusion

In this article, we have examined the concept of development from the perspectives of SDP experts. Alongside this, we have attempted to discuss how sport, power, and discourse may intersect with the conceptualisation of development within SDP. To do this, we addressed some of the original questions of the study: How is development conceptualised to achieve favourable changes? How does discourse and power shape development conceptualisation? How does the vehicle of sport aid towards the destination of being developed? We believe that the evidence provided gives some answers to the questions asked, albeit at a surface level. As acknowledged numerous times throughout the article, development is a complex term to conceptualise, and these complexities are reflected in the data.

For instance, the first theme that emerged from our analysis, ‘participatory development,’ refers to a technique of development practice as opposed to a specific definition; and the term ‘participatory’ in itself has many definitions and conceptualisations. Similarly, in our second theme, we see that ‘development’ can be classified in different ways across diverse fields such as education, health, and life skills. Thus, the claim that sport can be applied across all classifications of development might be problematic. Our third theme explored the Eurocentric discourse of SDP which can perpetuate unequal power relations in SDP work between those from the north and those from the south. However, this is not to suggest that those from the South are always at the receiving

end of unequal power relations. Further research is needed in SDP into the conceptualisations of experts to bring further depth to some of the themes discussed. This is particularly pertinent as we live in an age in which the Millennium Development Goals have shifted into the Sustainable Development Goals, inferring an achievement of the original goals which now need to be sustained. Nevertheless, there is still ongoing debate in and out of SDP about the meanings of development and how the problems of global inequalities should be firstly understood and secondly tackled.

One such debate is posited by Rist (2014) who argues that the very idea of development itself is the problem. For development to occur, there must be underdevelopment; for there to be developed, there must be the undeveloped. Therefore, in this semantic web, there are varied social actors including, rich and poor, black and white (usually), powerful and less powerful. In other words, the developed world does not exist without the underdeveloped world. Hence the problem with the idea of development is that it puts the blame on those requiring 'development' and removes those who have arrogated the need for development from the discussion altogether. In short, the focus of development becomes those who are seen to require development as opposed to the corporations or governments who sanction it. Therefore, it is crucial that critical scholars continue in their attempts to understand and conceptualise development, its origins, its owners, its recipients, and the issues of power and discourse which may come with it, as this paper has attempted to do.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that none of our experts conceptualised development as the Nobel prize winning development economist Amartya Sen conceptualised it, as freedom. Such an idea puts the emphasis on the capability of individuals to make meaningful choices which are autonomous, directive, and independent (Sen, 1999). Whilst this does not make our experts' conceptualisations wrong, it is surprising, especially because Sen's conceptualisation forms an integral part of modern development thinking. This simply demonstrates the diversity of the development discussion.

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