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Sports geography: New approaches, perspectives and directions

Nicholas Wise
Liverpool John Moores University
N.A.Wise@ljmu.ac.uk
Corresponding author

Geoffery Z. Kohe
University of Kent
g.z.kohe@kent.ac.uk

Within some disciplines, for example sociology, management, history, media and cultural studies, strong trends on sports research have been established. In some disciplinary spaces, however, interest in sport has content and context has been less marked. Notwithstanding sports inherently geographical characteristics (in particular, concerns with time, space, communities, mobilities and identities), and–with researchers interested in similar phenomena from geopolitics, socialisation and habitation, migration, and structural and ideological forces, there are a limited number of books addressing sports geography.

Early work, for example, was useful in acknowledging the relevance of 'sportscapes'. Seminal work in this regard was Philip L. Wagner's (1981) synopsis of how sports contribute to culture, place, and societal relationships, Martin Barry Vinokur's (1988) look at sport and politics, and Charles Fruehling Springwood's (1996) account of place, time, and the imagination of baseball. In addition to work published by John Bale (see Bale 1982, 1994; Bale and Maguire 1994), these works established meaningful conceptual and practical connections between geography and sports setting. Further adding to this scholarship was Karl Raitz' (1995) edited book which made a substantial contribution to the earlier work on sport and geography by focusing on landscapes of sport and how this impacts participation and involvement. It is, however, arguably John Bale's (2003) text Sports Geography that has been one of the most cited and useful bases for this topic area. What defines Bale's book is both its comprehensive approach to the establishing sports geography as a legitimate domain of academic inquiry, and the extent to which it outlines synergies and disjunctures between formative geographic processes and principles (e.g. globalization, diffusion, regional analysis, location, social welfare, place and geographical imaginaries) within the historical and contemporary structures and landscapes of dynamic sport spaces.

Respecting this body of scholarship in establishing foci, debates and momentum, there remains room for much development, new insight and critical directions as more work continues to inform the sub-field of geography. Building on these points and to expand on the foundation of research written in previous decades, there is a need to bring together a contemporary collection of papers that look at pressing issues impacting places concerning the role of sport in society. What is needed, we believe, to augment the aforementioned seminal works are fresh inductive approaches narrating experiences of sporting participants to reiterate senses of place, community and identity linking the production of new case-specific and critical knowledge that has since been expanded in more recent scholarly commentary. Furthermore, reflecting trends within our own parent disciplines, and wider work with colleagues, to encourage greater interdisciplinarity and cross-sector/space dialogue that might develop our understandings and

unite our interests across the diverse terrains of sport (or physical activity, recreation or leisure so be it).

Since these early books and edited collections, there has been a number of articles on sports geography and sport and geography published across a range of geography (and non-geography) journals, including, for example: Political Geography (e.g. Koch 2013), New Zealand Geographer (e.g. Overton et al. 2013), Journal of Cultural Geography (e.g. Shobe 2008), Social & Cultural Geography (e.g. Conner 2014; Lawrence 2016), Geographical Research (e.g. Harris and Wise 2011), Mobilities (e.g. Cook et al. 2016) Journal of Sport and Social Issues (e.g. Bailey et al. 2016) and Sport in Society (e.g. Wise 2017b). Natalie Koch's (2017) recent edited collection titled Critical Geographies of Sport, assessing the physical and organizational semblances of sport in a contested social and political world, is a key book for this area of study going forward. The guest editors of this collection have published a range of papers on sport that touch upon geographical concepts and issues (see Harris and Wise 2011; Hughson and Kohe 2010; Kohe 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Kohe and Bowen-Jones 2015; Kohe and Peters 2016; Purdy et al. 2017; Wise 2011, 2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Wise and Hall 2017; Wise and Harris 2010, 2014, 2016, 2017a), and their foundation of research linking research across sport and geography was the inspiration for this edited collection in Sport in Society.

There are also some useful collections that address sport from social perspectives that integrate questions and issues of geography, for instance addressing: events and communities (e.g. Jepson and Clark 2015), social and cultural aspects (e.g. Dashper et al. 2014; Wilcox et al. 2012), event impacts (Richards et al. 2013) and recent edited collections that one of the proposing editors addressing the wider areas of sport, events, tourism and regeneration (Sam and Hughson 2010; Lindsay 2018; Wise and Harris 2017b) and sports volunteering at events and as part of sport for development strategies (Benson and Wise 2017). Gammon and Elkington (2015) published a geographically focused collection on leisure, but the aim of this collection was concerned more with the social construction of landscapes regarding leisure spaces and places. While there are key books in the discipline of geography that critically explain and overview the notion of place (e.g. Cresswell 2015), these books do not focus specifically on how people and places are impacted by sport.

Critical sports geographers are concerned with societal impacts and how sports contribute space and place meaning. How we understand sport and recreational approaches in different places aligns with the continued transformation of space and attitudes towards sport. Thus, the objective of this issue is to bring together a collection of papers that discusses critically informed geographical issues in a single collection to display the range of approaches and work conducted in the area of sports geography. Not unlike scholars working in similar and overlapping disciplines (e.g. Sociology, Anthropology or Cultural studies), Geographers seek to better understand the significance of a sports team in relation to the culture and political identity of a place (Shobe 2008), investigate issues relating to inclusion and exclusion (Spaaij et al. 2014; Wise and Harris 2014) or to address why people migrate to particular countries (Waite and Smith 2017). While specific research foci may vary, at a fundamental level Geographers interested in sport seek to explore spatial awareness, contested histories, migration and mobility, and complexities of place (Andrews 2017; Collison et al. 2017; Cook et al. 2016) and debating notions of scale and existing designations of power as it relates to sports governance (Chatzigianni 2018; Harris and Wise 2011; Wise 2017b). Geographically orientated critique of sport has also emerged in a range of other contextual examinations. For example, interest has been demonstrated in work related to post/de/colonial power relations,

connections and process (e.g. Kohe 2011, 2014; Liston and Maguire 2016), sport development (e.g. Collison et al. 2017; Cornelissen 2017) and sport diplomacy (e.g. Pamment 2016; Postlethwaite and Grix 2016). In continuation, we are challenged to ask questions that relate to geography when watching the Summer or Winter Olympics or understanding politically contested histories, such as when England and Argentina meet in the FIFA World Cup, or when Real Madrid play against FC Barcelona. Alternatively, professional sports teams spread their influence through their brands to develop global fan bases and gain media contracts in new markets; we see this with football clubs such as Manchester United, Liverpool or Chelsea from England or professional baseball teams such as the New York Yankees or Los Angeles Dodgers from the USA. The elite leagues in the world are thus able to attract the best talent from around the world which gets us looking at issues surrounding athlete and talent migration (see Elliott and Harris 2014; Overton et al. 2013). These are just a few questions and points of interest to geographers, as and athletes continue to be mobile fans begin to learn about the places they are from, we as academics are encouraged to assess understandings of mobility and place associations and imaginations. Moreover, in and through our work that plays on the shared geography-sport borders we might, ideally, also bring to the fore critical issues, resolutions, opportunities and possibilities that might challenge inequities and inequalities and recraft spaces anew.

Increased competition and the expansion of the global economy and pressures to adapt to transitions and new developments are challenging geographers to rethink the impacts of sport, both locally and globally—which is changing and challenging the way we think about spatial transformation and place meaning. We are seeing this with popular sports from the USA being staged and performed in England, with the NFL and NBA already in London, and MLB to commence in June 2019 showcasing the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox. Sports spaces have thus become 'known' to communities and individuals in varied and nuanced ways (Baller 2007; Gaffney 2008; Vertinsky and Bale 2004). One predominant way in which space and place narratives of sport are crafted and mobilised is via media and media processes (see Bailey et al. 2016; Rowe 2017; Shears and Fekete 2014; Wilson and Hayhurst 2009; Wise and Harris 2010). Sports are, for example, increasingly broadcasted as spectacles through the media and our knowledge of places is communicated to us through newspapers, television, film, photographs and more recently social media. Nations, regions and cities are places imagined (and reimagined) through various cultural elements, political situations or economic bases. Therefore, sports have become an extension of place narratives that often fulfil how people come to know or associate with places because they are so widely publicized through links to particular sports or iconic individuals. In this sense, sport becomes synonymous with places and identities that connect people (many of these ideas are explored within this special edition). Here, again, the notion of geographical imaginations are important to highlight as Wise and Harris (2010, 2017a) and Hylton and Lawrence (2015) argue how we read into, associate, challenge and contest the meanings of places and individuals (or teams in some respect) help create or reinforce geographical imaginations.

This international collection includes contributions from academics based in Brazil, China, England, Hong Kong, Norway, Scotland, South Africa and the United States. Drawing on an array of global examples and contexts, the 11 articles included in this collection address sports geography based on various perspectives. The first paper in this collection by Stephanie Merchant focuses on running with an "other" and how landscapes are negotiated and inter-relationality differ in the sport of Canicross. Offering an auto-ethnographic narration, Merchant tells the story of learning to run with a canine companion and evaluates their routine through conjoined habitus. They are connected by equipmental prosthetics and both have a shared

history of the landscapes traversed. The paper draws on earlier experiences and participation in amateur competition to highlight the importance of thinking about significant others in sport and leisure activities. The paper also illustrates shifts in human and dog perception, as well as behaviours and attitudes associated with running in particular landscapes. Key arguments brought forward in this paper suggest that by being attentive to the influence and action of "others" in specific spatial contexts we are able to discover a plethora of new and exciting calibrations of how human-landscape negotiation takes place through sporting and leisure experiences.

The next paper, by Flávia Ulian and Ricardo Barbosa da Silva, also visualises, interprets and addresses sport, leisure and physical activity, but tests a very different methodological approach using mobile methods; specifically Whatsapp and the Moves application. The paper offers a timely initial attempt to measure the impact of sport, leisure and physical activity after the FIFA World Cup in 2014, focusing on the Itaquera neighbourhood of São Paulo. Itaquera is identified as an important area to conduct such research because the locality witnessed an increase in real estate values given its proximity to the location of São Paulo's new stadium (Arena Corinthians) built for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Furthermore, planning and development for the stadium and event did not actually result in major changes to the district's infrastructure. The aim of this preliminary study, thus, is to understand how some residents of Itaquera travel for leisure activities that involve sport and physical activity. Participants recorded their experiences and perceptions of travel around the area and through the city. Their methodology is based on mobile methods, where participants were asked to create time-space diaries in the form of audio recordings using a Whatsapp group as they travelled. Movement was also measured using the Moves application. The results showed that participants made many motorized trips out of the neighbourhood and that they walked little, with such early results suggesting an apparent fallibility of a sporting legacy and the persistence of neighbourhood infrastructural problems.

The next chapter by Kari Jæger examines how the Finnmark Race in Norway helps create new pathways for sport, place and tourism development by focusing on a key moment and four post-moments. The dogsledding race event has influenced tourism development and has helped create new tourist products its rural locale. The study presents data from qualitative interviews with 19 informants who were each involved and connected to sport and race events. The paper considers how event start-ups have contributed to new 'path-creations', considering the active development of Finnmark as a winter tourism destination, and dogsledding as a new nascent domestic tourism product. A process of path-creation, involving volunteers and lifestyle entrepreneurs has resulted in a meeting place for the event and for other stakeholders, enabling the sustainable development of attractive, locally-run tourism products based around this sporting event that defines Finnmark.

Playing on common ground, by Geoffery Z. Kohe and Holly Collison, addressing spaces of sport, education and corporate connectivity, contestation and creativity. The paper interrogates connectivities within the 'messy' organisational commons of sport, education and corporate partnerships. Key stakeholders within the commons, the authors contend, have set agendas, occupied ideological and physical terrain, and legitimised a presence and authority in sport education domains that warrants our sustained attention. Drawing on the work of spatial theorists, Henri Lefebrve and Yi Fu Tuan, and focusing on examples from FIFA and the IOC, Kohe and Collison present a holistic conceptual framework as a means to understand how global stakeholder relations manifest in regional/local settings. Focusing on processes of thought, production and action, they offer an intersectional critique of the Sport-Corporate-

Education nexus and argue that within the nexus there exist possibilities and potential for sport education spaces to be reconfigured anew.

Nicholas Wise and Seth I. Kirby look at the Jacksonville Jaguars 'home away from home' in London to assess the NFL's established international presence—suggesting a semi-deterritorialization approach to interpret the recent expansion of American Football into a new consumer market. In 2012, the Jacksonville Jaguars announced a partnership with the city of London to play one home game each year. This paper frames the Jaguars 'home away from home' to the London Jaguars amidst American sports expansion. As addressed above, critical and conceptual discussions and reflections, Wise and Kirby, link to wider sport, geography, neoliberalism and deterritorialization debates. The paper contributes to the literature on sports geography as it ascribes and applies the notion of semi-deterritorialization: given the Jaguars have their base in Jacksonville, Florida and have an agreement with London to play one home game each year there—making them the ephemeral quasi-London home team. Ultimately, the work seeks out and evaluates meanings presented through online media to interpret the place and presence of the Jaguars in London and new permutations of semi-deterritorialization based on the Jaguars temporary (but emerging) presence.

Building on localised geopolitical conflict and spatial tensions, the focus of the next study by Ashwin Desai and Brij Maharaj focuses on the contested identities surrounding cricket in South Africa concerning race and class. As is well known, the collapse of apartheid in the 1990s saw the rapid re-entry of South Africa into international sporting fields. This move was backed by the African National Congress and was given Nelson Mandela's endorsement. This was seen as a strategy to attain two objectives: to cut-off the White right wing threat by placating the fears of the White population, and to bring in revenue that would be used to redress the legacy of apartheid sport. This article seeks, through a case study of cricket, to assess the effects of this strategy, especially in relation to the latter goal of redressing inherited socio-spatial inequalities. A key contention of this article is that spatial apartheid and inherited racial boundaries has remained in play, and this has influenced who could be selected to place professional cricket and who is excluded. Two and a half decades since cricketing unity, race and class remain central to public and political sport discourse.

Issues of identity and belonging are explored further in Catherine Waite's paper on enabling and constraining migration. Engaging with the geographical concept of scale, and concerned with how the concept is manifest within the management of temporary, skilled, international migration of English Professional Cricketers study helps progress debates about how the process of international migration is operationalized. In particular, the paper explores how individuals, organizations and policies interact to determine the characteristics of a migration flow by focusing on the temporary migration of English professional cricketers. It is common for English professional cricketers to make seasonal moves to Australia, and this paper looks at the complex nexus of actors and institutions at the micro-, meso- and macro-scales that influence migration. Interviews with current (and former) English professional cricketers suggest there exist a wide range of intermediaries concerning how migration can both be enabled and constrained to contend that a multi-scalar approach is vital to more fully understand how migration flows are operationalized—offering unique insight to the sports geography literature and work on skilled sports labour migration.

While the previous paper addressed issues of migration and regulation, the next paper by John Cullen and John Harris considers migration and eligibility concerning three members of Scotland's national rugby team who were born outside Scotland and represented the nation at

the 2015 Rugby World Cup. This paper offers a different approach to research into the representation of migration and explores national identities in international sport. This paper focuses on how the print media portrays national identities at a major-sporting event, looking at the ways in which rugby union players representing Scotland at the 2015 Rugby World Cup were portrayed across four newspapers during the six weeks of the tournament. Specifically, Cullen and Harris identify how national identities came into focus through newspaper narratives surrounding these three individuals born outside Scotland. This work highlights the contested terrain of the rules around player eligibility and broader notions of acceptance of these players as representatives of the Scottish nation.

The final three papers in this collection are critical reflection papers that offer some key insights for the field of sports geography or sport and geography going forward. David Storey discusses how sport provides a useful lens for studying the complexities of national identity, migration and citizenship. Congruent with ideas expressed in the previous papers, Storey addresses how a combination of national citizenship requirements, residency qualifications and the shifting regulations of sporting bodies has seen an increasing number of 'transfers' of national allegiance in international football competition. The paper interrogates participation in the most recent 2018 FIFA World Cup where a number of African teams draw heavily on their European-born diasporas, based on colonial pasts and deeply entrenched migration routes. Moreover, national teams such as France and Belgium are composed of many players with close family links to Africa, which result, Storey remind us, in national identity being complex, multi-layered and contingent.

Adding to these critical insights, Doyeon Won and Weisheng Chiu compare the hosting of mega- and major-sporting events in Korea and Taiwan. There are a range of geographical complexities surrounding facing the hosting of sporting events in these countries given contested politics, border relations and discussion of each nation. Both countries utilise sport events to develop international relations and enhance their national image, and South Korea and Taiwan have endeavoured to host mega- or major-sporting events for these reasons. Nonetheless, as Won and Chiu articulate, there are vast differences in hosting such events over the last three decades, where Korea has hosted a series of mega- or major-events including the 1988 Summer Olympics, co-host of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, 2014 Asian Games and 2018 Winter Olympics, while Taiwan's events portfolio only includes 2009 World Games and 2017 Summer Universiade. To understand these vast differences, it is important to address and discuss the political geography of each country at both local and national levels, as this accounts for the success and failure (or difficulty) of hosting mega- and major-sporting events. This paper frames a number of perspectives and arguments that conceptually and practically help us understand why Korea has seen success whilst Taiwan continues to build an international events portfolio given the different regional and political experiences.

The final paper in this collection by Tian Enqing offers some different directions by addressing a prospect for research in sports geography going forward in the age of big data. This work frames the ever-accelerating updates in computer science to addresses some important questions: Will this trend bring any changes in sports geographical research? Which challenges will geographers have to encounter? This paper reviews the relationship between sport and Big Data and offers insight into some possible paradigm shifts in the area of sports geography, arguing that a new paradigm can have significant impacts on the directions of research in this area. The take-away message of this paper based on a range of examples is an emphasis on how Big Data can provide theoretically and empirically-(re)constructed/informed geographical intelligence for research on modern sport that is also inherently geographical.

In attempting to address some of these debates and concerns, the papers included in this special issue on sports geography are both timely and warranted. This special issue brings together scholars with a vested interest in the topic area to further conceptual approaches and critical understandings to not only promote geographical research in sport, but to present new complexities of understanding by adding spatial elements and differing (and sometimes contrasting) conceptual and theoretical perspectives. What is more, and as the articles in this special issue also show, is that the study of sport geography or sport and geography is approached and assessed from multidisciplinary perspectives. Moreover, that such intersectionality and interdisciplinarity is not only valuable, but indeed may be needed as our collective efforts to respond to and address global to local concerns and issues. For these reasons, in proposing this collection we felt Sport in Society was an ideal journal because it furthers the focus area and understanding among academics from a range of fields. Sport in Society is an interdisciplinary journal, and many academics writing in the area of sports geography come from a range of disciplines, and allows for the papers to be disseminated widely given the readership of sports scholars. We hope readers enjoy the contents and we look forward to how the ideas contained within transpire in future scholarship.

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