

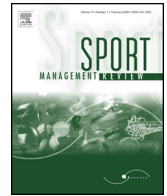


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr



Full length article

Equity-based sustainability and ecocentric management: Creating more ecologically just sport organization practices

Melanie L. Sartore-Baldwin^{a,*}, Brian McCullough^b

^a Department of Kinesiology, East Carolina University, 152 Minges Coliseum, Greenville, NC 27858, United States

^b Seattle University, 901 12th Ave, Seattle, WA 98122, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 April 2017

Received in revised form 1 July 2017

Accepted 22 August 2017

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Shared responsibility

Systems thinking

Equity

Sustainability

Ecocentrism

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the shared responsibility all entities with a vested interest in keeping the Earth habitable possess, the authors propose ways in which sport organizations can take action by incorporating ecocentric management principles within their organizational practices and thus become more ecologically just. First, by drawing upon the tenets of the systems thinking paradigm and the four levels of thinking model, the underlying beliefs and values guiding current practices within sport organizations are identified. Next, the authors offer a series of propositions to suggest that by adopting an equity-based perspective, recognizing the interdependent relationships between humans and the natural environment, and acknowledging the manner in which sport organizations hinder the opportunities of the natural environment to thrive, sport organizations can contribute to the health of the planet and all of its inhabitants through their own organizational practices. Additionally, sport organizations can also serve as ecologically just exemplars for organizations in other industries to emulate.

© 2017 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, sport and sport organizations have taken a great deal of responsibility in addressing their past, current, and future impact on the planet (McCullough, Pfahl, & Nguyen, 2016). Indeed, many sport organizations, sport leagues, athletic departments, and the like are now implementing environmental initiatives (Trendafilova, Babiak, & Heinze, 2013; Trendafilova, McCullough, Pfahl, Nguyen, Casper, Picariello, 2014). Within the United States, for example, the four major sports leagues have partnered with a national environmental group that actively advocates for the protection of natural resources (i.e., National Resource Defense Council (NRDC)). A global example, the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has been involved with environmental protection programs for nearly a decade. Regional and local sport leagues and organizations have also formed partnerships with the intent of implementing pro-environmental strategies (Trendafilova, Kellison, et al., 2014; Trendafilova, Kellison, & Spearman, 2014). Despite these efforts, however, the climate continues to change, species continue to become extinct, sea levels continue to rise, temperatures continue to fluctuate, and so on (e.g., Bellard, Leclerc, & Courchamp, 2014; Urban, 2015). Thus, there lacks an adequate focus on the underlying reasons for these changes in the natural environment and the role that sport organizations play in these changes.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: sartorem@ecu.edu (M.L. Sartore-Baldwin), mccullo@seattleu.edu (B. McCullough).

Most environmental initiatives are based on the tenets of environmental justice. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines environmental justice as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Environmental Justice, 2016, p. 1). Fair treatment, in this context, refers to the way in which no group of people should be disproportionately impacted by negative environmental consequences or the industrial, governmental, and commercial policies in place to regulate the environment. A substantial portion of the environmental justice literature within the United States has focused on the disproportionate distribution of environmental risks and negative consequences between races and socioeconomic classes (i.e., environmental injustice or environmental racism; see Bullard, 2000; Davies, 2017; Turner, 2017).

Whereas environmental justice is concerned with the impact of environmental change and consequences as it relates to humans, ecological justice is much more inclusive. Recognizing that environmental harms threaten the ways of life for both human and nonhuman animals, the traditional focus of ecological justice is that of fair and equitable distribution of environments to all of earth’s inhabitants: plants, animals, organisms, and ecosystems (Low & Gleeson, 1998; Schlosberg, 2003). Simply put, ecological justice is being just to nature. We consider nature, in this context, as “the physical and biological world not manufactured by people” (Sandifer, Sutton-Grier, & Ward, 2015, p. 2), and people primarily value it in two, often conflicting, ways – intrinsically and instrumentally. The instrumental value of nature relates to the value that humans assign to and the benefits received from ecosystems, or communities, in which all living and nonliving entities are linked (Pelenc, Lompo, Ballet, & Dubois, 2013). Intrinsic value refers to valuing something for its inherent worth (Comberti, Thornton, Wyllie de Echeverria, & Patterson, 2015; Pelenc et al., 2013). Humans are an integral component of ecosystems and almost entirely dependent upon nature for survival; yet, they often fail to recognize the intrinsic value of the natural world (Pelenc et al., 2013). This is a profound shortcoming, particularly to the extent that human behavior negatively impacts the ecosystems in which they live.

Researchers once focused on the natural environmental and natural geological changes occurring on the planet (i.e., the Holocene epoch; Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000). As a result of excessive human consumptive behaviors, researchers now view the current era as Anthropocene and thus focus on the central role humans have played in the profound environmental, geological, and overall planetary changes of the past two centuries (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000; Steffen, Crutzen, & McNeill, 2007). While specific individuals, groups, and communities cannot be identified as solely responsible for these changes, every person on the planet bears some degree of responsibility for correcting them if the Earth is to remain habitable. Referred to as shared responsibility, this type of responsibility stems from “belonging together with others in a system of interdependent processes of cooperation and competition (Young, 2006, p. 119).

While the issue of shared responsibility has not been applied to issues other than physical and emotional harm and injustice within the sport context (Sartore-Baldwin, McCullough, & Quatman-Yates, 2017), we extend its application to issues of sport organizations and ecological justice. Several authors have focused on the responsibilities that sport organizations possess in relation to environmental sustainability, yet there has been an overwhelming focus on social and economic motivations, not the ethical motivations. Thus, drawing upon the profound impact that sport has amongst individuals, groups, communities, and beyond (see Spaaij, 2009), the shared responsibility, as discussed in this work, refers to the ethical responsibility sport organizations, sport spectators, sport consumers, and so on have in addressing justice to the natural environment. First explaining the interdependent relationship between humans and the natural environment, we employ systems thinking to identify the underlying ideologies and practices that have established and maintained ecological injustice in society-at-large and within sport. Next, specifically focusing on the ecological injustices within, and the result of, sport and sport organizations, we propose that by focusing on equity-based sustainability, sport organizations can adopt ecocentric management principles. Finally, we present the capabilities approach to justice as an essential moderator to the attainment of equity-based sustainability and more ecologically justice organizational practices.

2. Conceptual framework

Sport is a unique context with a profound reach (Spaaij, 2009). Culturally, sport is entwined with society such that fans psychologically attach themselves to teams and players and physically dedicate a great deal of time and money to its consumption. Environmentally, sport’s impact is evident in the sizable ecological footprint that results from sport organization practices. As Casper and Pfahl (2015) pointed out, the effects of the sport experience (e.g., automobile emissions, food waste, water usage, energy usage) highlight the necessity to not only create change, but to also use sport as a platform in which change is evidenced. This is similar to Schmidt (2006), who noted that sport can both reduce its ecological footprint and raise ecological awareness. Indeed, several authors have investigated sport from these vantage points. To date, sport management researchers have not investigated the underlying complexities that have maintained and supported continued environmental degradation despite efforts to correct it. Recognizing this, we offer a ‘new way of thinking’ about social-ecological systems by employing the systems thinking paradigm within the sport context (Bosch, Maani, & Smith, 2007, p. 1).

2.1. Systems

Systems exist as two or more working parts that have an effect on one another and the operations of the system as a whole (Ackoff, 1994). Systems cannot be separated from these parts, as they are fundamental to the system’s existence and

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6576055>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6576055>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)