THE INTERNATIONAL SPORT REGIME

A RECONSIDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT’S POLITICAL STATUS

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THREE KEY QUESTIONS

- What is an international regime?
- Is international sport a regime?
  - Are the definitional elements observable?
  - Is there an enforcement framework?
  - Is sport politically significant?
- What are the implications for state involvement in sport governance?
INTERNATIONAL REGIMES

A negative connotation?

Regimes are “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1982)

- Principles – beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude
- Norms – standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations
- Rules – specific prescriptions or proscriptions for action
- Decision-making procedures – prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice

Examples: international law, monetary exchanges, trade agreements
“Changes in rules and decision-making procedures are changes within regimes”

“Changes in principles and norms are changes of the regime itself”
INTERNATIONAL SPORT PRINCIPLES

- Sport as tool for social development
  - Olympism’s goal: “To place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind”
  - SportAccord’s objective: “To promote sport…as a means to contribute to the positive development of society”
  - UNESCO: “For society at large, physical education, physical activity and sport can yield significant health, social and economic benefits”

- Political autonomy

- Non-discriminatory
INTERNATIONAL SPORT NORMS

- One international organization per sport
- One national governing body (NGB) per sport per nation
- Similar organizational structures for sport orgs. (exec. board and general assembly)
- Competition cycles (biennial, quadrennial)
  - Individual sport championships
  - Multi-sport championships
- Attitudes toward and approaches to regulating doping
- Methods for adjudicating legal disputes
International sport is governed by a complex network of organizations.

Despite rhetoric to the contrary, sport is not apolitical.
IMPLICATIONS FOR SPORT GOVERNANCE

- States are reluctant to exert direct oversight/influence over international sport governance because the regime is defined in terms of non-intervention.

- State intervention (if desired) may need to be reframed in terms of state (not sport) interests.

- Altering the degree and frequency of governmental involvement may require changing regime principles and norms, not merely rules and decision-making procedures.