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Sports and the city

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Abstract

This article reviews how sport has been engaged in urban geography and related fields. Across the social sciences, there has been an explosion of research on "sporting mega-events," such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup. While much of this scholarship has examined the effects of these events for cities and city residents, I emphasize a longer and deeper history of research on sports and the city. I trace three lines of inquiry to illuminate the broader state of the field: (1) sport, (post)colonialism, and modernity; (2) sports, identity, and belonging in the city; and (3) sport, neoliberalism, and urban transformation. Not limited to the work of geographers, this review considers important overlaps between sports geography, urban geography, and a number of other disciplines. I suggest that sports studies has just as much to offer urban geography as the other way around, and in closing, I point to some key directions that might deepen urban geographers' contribution to the interdisciplinary research on sport, as well as critical approaches to urbanism.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Sports geography is not a large subfield. Many geographers may generally be aware of its existence, but few claim to be "sports geographers." Sport is a recurring theme in the discipline, however, and, when one stops to look for it, it is clear that geographers are producing some excellent research by taking sport seriously. Due to the longtime marginalization of the topic in geography, scholars of sport often position their research to speak to the discipline's more mainstream subfields (Koch, 2017). The resulting cross-fertilizations can be quite rich, which I illustrate through the case of sport and the city. Urban geographers are likely familiar with the explosion of research on sporting "mega-events," but there is far more research on sports and the city than is reflected in the narrow debates about the politics and legacies of mega-events.

This article reviews how sport has been engaged in urban studies by focusing on three broad themes: (1) sport, (post)colonialism, and modernity; (2) sports, identity, and belonging in the city; and (3) sport, neoliberalism, and urban transformation. Since I cannot exhaustively cover the wide-ranging intersections between "sport" and "the city"—both terms themselves taking on an incredibly diverse set of meanings when explored at different scales and kinds of

practices—these themes have been chosen with the goal of highlighting several lines of inquiry of particular interest to geographers, which might in turn illuminate the broader state of the field beyond recent work on mega-events. This review demonstrates that sports geography has just as much to offer urban geography as the other way around. Because of the sizable amount of excellent research being conducted on sports in the city by scholars in other disciplines, I do not limit myself to the work of geographers. However, in concluding, I point to some important questions that urban geographers might take up to deepen the field's contribution to the interdisciplinary research on sport, as well as to deepen our understanding of how cities impact and are impacted by contemporary sport.

2 | SPORTS AND THE CITY

2.1 | Sport, (post)colonialism, and modernity

In his classic book, *City Games*, US sports historian Steven Riess writes:

> The evolution of the city, more than any other single factor, influenced the development of organized sport and recreational athletic pastimes in America. Nearly all contemporary major sports evolved, or were invented, in the city. The city was the place where sport became rationalized, specialized, organized, commercialized, and professionalized. [...] However, the city's role in the rise of sport was not merely that of a passive geographic unit [...]. As cities underwent the process of urbanization and evolved into larger and more complex units that became parts of regional and national systems of cities, they played an active role in the rise of sports. (Riess, 1989, p. 1).

A great deal of current research on sports and the city has centered on how various actors use sporting events and institutions transform urban landscapes, but Riess' argument is an important starting point for developing a broader approach to the topic that does not assume a unidirectional process of transformation. Though specific to the United States, his observations call our attention to the fact that sporting institutions have themselves been transformed by urban processes. They are not, in short, *a priori* entities that political and economic elites simply import and deploy in the space of the city, or that urban residents choose to engage at will.

Just like the many core concepts that geographers approach as socially constructed (such as the city, state, landscapes, and identities), so too are "sports" sites of social and political contestation, subject to constant negotiation and re-negotiation by the various actors who participate in them and their symbolic economies. Historical approaches are therefore particularly helpful in highlighting the fact that "baseball" was not always the same game (Ross, 2016) nor were the Olympics always the same international spectacle familiar to the world today (Keys, 2006) nor do particular venues, like Seoul's now-demolished Dongdaemun Baseball Stadium, carry the same cultural and political meaning for spectators and urban residents throughout their lifespan (Lee, 2017). From this perspective, then, sport "is not merely a recreational activity that happen[s] to take place in cities, but is an institution that has been shaped, reshaped, and further molded by the interplay of the elements comprising the process of urbanization" (Riess, 1989, p. 259). Beginning from this critical tack, geographers can—and do—open up many critical lines of inquiry about the networks of power and political relations that converge as differently positioned actors participate in (re)producing sports and the city.

Colonialism is one particularly important theme in historical analyses of sport and power. If colonial administrators and other elites harnessed urban space to produce landscapes of control during colonial rule (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988), then we are bound to find insights about how this control was exercised in and through sport. In Zambia, for example, Hikabwa Chipande (2016) notes how football (soccer) was introduced by colonial administrators, industrialists, and missionaries, who saw physical education and sport as part of their civilizing mission.[1] But more than that, sport became aspirational for African urban residents, who appropriated the game after seeing Europeans playing it in the country's emerging towns. Football's rise was thus linked to the rise of urbanism in Africa, as the "development of copper mines on the Copperbelt led to massive industrialization, urbanization, and population increase, which

provided very fertile grounds for the popularization of the game from the 1920s to the 1940s" (Chipande, 2016, p. 57). For Chipande, colonialism and urbanization jointly contributed to a dramatic shift in how Zambians conceptualized leisure time and space, though like nearly all sports at this time, standardized rules of play had not been globally institutionalized, and local norms naturally arose (Keys, 2006). This notwithstanding, given how readily "urban" and "modern" are equated around the world, new subject positions could be crafted by merely engaging in the unique sporting pastimes found in the city. The Zambian case exemplifies how sport has historically been implicated in various aspects of colonialism, exemplifying how it works through various forms of pleasure, rather than simply being an oppressive, top-down process.

In its many guises, past and present, colonialism characteristically revolves around binaries of imperial centers as modern and civilized in contrast to local practice as backward and uncivilized. At the most basic level, imperial visionaries have tended to stamp out local sporting cultures and promote "modern" sport in the space of the city. The latter is seen in Clifford Geertz's (1972) classic account of cockfighting in Bali, which was first banned under Dutch rule as a sport running counter to their modernizing ideals. It was thus pushed out of prominent public spaces into more private venues. Yet as Geertz stresses, it was not just Dutch administrators with a "puritan" attitude toward cockfighting in town centers. After independence, Indonesia's postcolonial elites maintained the ban for similar reasons:

> The elite, which is not itself so very puritan, worries about the poor, ignorant peasant gambling all his money away, about what foreigners will think, about the waste of time better devoted to building up the country. It sees cockfighting as "primitive," backward," "unprogressive," and generally unbecoming an ambitious nation. (Geertz, 1972, p. 2).

Colonial and neocolonial paternalism is here seen to accord special significance to public displays of sport, which are interpreted and coded as symbolic indicator of a group's modernity or backwardness. Given the pervasiveness of sport, and the highly public nature of its performance, it predictably attracts attention from those who are fixated with the visual display of social or cultural practices in the city. Indeed, this visual display has been taken to an extreme in the form of spectacle in various authoritarian states throughout history, putting exemplary sporting bodies on display in the city streets of Moscow during the Soviet physical culture parades (Petrone, 2000; Rolf, 2013) or North Korea's famous mass gymnastics spectacles in Pyongyang (Lee & Bairner, 2009; Merkel, 2010, 2013).

Colonial actors advancing such imaging agendas did not just aim to remove local sporting practices from view but also to displace them by promoting what they deemed appropriately modern sports. For example, European colonizers introduced urban car racing across Africa, including large races like the Italian Tripoli Grand Prix (1925–1940), the French Moroccan Grand Prix (1925–1958), and the Portuguese circuits introduced in Mozambique and Angola in the 1960s (Inside F1., 2017). Likewise, in East Asia, the still-running Macau Grand Prix got its start in 1958 under Portuguese rule. For privileged elites in the first half of the century, car racing was the epitome of modern sport. Indeed, in many corners of the world today, it clearly retains the image of hyper-modernity—especially since the rise of Formula One racing in the 1950s. Leaders in the Arabian Peninsula have actively sought to advance their cities' modern image through developing Formula One tracks, with Bahrain hosting the first Grand Prix race in the Middle East, upon opening its International circuit in 2004. Shortly thereafter, leaders in Abu Dhabi followed suit by opening the stunning Yas Marina Circuit, where spectators can watch the car races from their yachts—a development that cost upwards of US$1.3 billion (Bromber, 2014; Bromber & Krawietz, 2013). Likewise, in Azerbaijan, image-conscious political leaders successfully lobbied to have the capital's new Baku City Circuit introduced to the Formula One calendar in 2016, in addition to a range of other high-profile sporting events (Valiyev, 2016). These recent examples are not externally imposed by colonial power centers but grow out of a distinctly postcolonial sensibility, in which elite car racing is positioned as a marker of modernity and a tool to advertise that status to a global audience.

Such enthusiastic embrace of elite or globalized sport represents only one end of a spectrum, however. On the opposite end, some postcolonial settings are characterized by a significant degree of popular anxiety about colonial sporting influence—frequently manifesting as a suspicion of certain sports as relics of foreign influence or in efforts to reinvigorate "lost," indigenous, or otherwise precolonial sporting cultures (Bale & Cronin, 2003; Conner, 2017;

Crampsie, 2017; Hallinan & Judd, 2013; Khalaf, 1999; Koch, 2015; Krawietz, 2012; LaFevor, 2016; Lee, 2017; Majumdar & Brown, 2007; Park, 2003, 2011; Raento, 2017; Storey, 2012, 2013; Wise, 2011). As this work shows, sports can be especially political in postcolonial settings, where competing geopolitical affinities and allegiances are meted out in the decisions that individuals make regarding which games to watch, promote, and play. These contests most often unfold in the space of the city, where differently positioned actors are able to mobilize the resources at their disposal to perform their understanding of what it means to be modern or true to one's culture. For city planning elites, this might take the shape of demolishing a stadium that is associated with the colonial past, building a new one to advertise the country's postcolonial modernity, or investing in new urban infrastructure to promote sport and healthy populations. For less elite urban residents, their performances may be limited to something simpler, such as choosing to attend a baseball game or a cricket match, or participating in Gaelic football or Association football. In this case, ordinary citizens' understanding of what it means to be modern subjects (defined globally, locally, or nationally) may shape this decision (and usually implicitly), but their choices are largely structured by the sporting spaces that urban elites have chosen to prioritize, allow, or disallow.

2.2 | Sports, identity, and belonging in the city

Questions of space and place have figured prominently in the earliest sports geography research, but that work typically did not foreground critical analyses of power and subjectivity (e.g. Bale, 1982, 1989, 1993, 1994; Carlson, 1942; Eichberg, Bale, Philo, & Brownell, 1998; Pillsbury, 1974; Rooney, 1969, 1974, 1975). In recent research on everyday sport, by contrast, geographers have explored how individuals move through urban spaces and in the process, develop particular "sporting subjectivities" (Cook, Shaw, & Simpson, 2016, 2017; see also Larsen, 2017; Norcliffe, 2015; Spinney, 2009). This work adopts a critical lens to identity politics but largely continues the tradition of early sports geography research in that its empirical and theoretical contributions center on the nature of sport itself. A different critical tack is found in the spatially informed research on sports, identity politics, belonging in the city. This work is instead oriented toward making theoretical contributions to broader discussions about differential forms of inclusion and exclusion, rather than sports *per se*.

This approach is exemplified in Lise Nelson's (2017) study of new migrant destinations in the US South, in which she shows how Latino migrants in Rabun County, Georgia, have been denied access to municipal sports fields—forced to instead play football in concrete parking lots and other substandard places. She traces the story of how established residents and local authorities worked to exclude migrant players and spectators from accessing regularized public spaces for sport, allegedly because of the noise and trash that accompanied their games. But in addition to this form of exclusion, she demonstrates how football became a site of inclusion, with practices and games being an important venue for migrants to connect with one another and feel a sense of community that they could not find elsewhere in the United States. Nelson's work builds on a key strand of research on sports and the city, which examines how immigrants negotiate their identities and develop a sense of belonging through the sports they play and have access to in various urban destinations (Amara, 2013; Conner, 2017; Cronin & Mayall, 1998; Dwyer, Shah, & Sanghera, 2008; Kleszynski, 2013; Santos Gómez, 2014).

Research on migrants and sport in the city is part of a wider subset of the literature on identity politics and sport, which centers on similar questions about the geographies of inclusion and exclusion. In another study from the US South, P. Caleb Smith (2012) explores racialized landscapes in Mississippi through the history of municipal swimming pools. With their introduction in northeastern cities such as Boston and Philadelphia in the 1880s, public pools were both gender- and race-segregated. While "white-only" pools flourished into the 1930s, most cities did not open pools for African Americans, despite the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal" legal mandate. Some city leaders would promise their black constituents pools "when funds were appropriated" but systematically delayed such projects "by pushing them perpetually into *next year*" (Smith, 2012, p. 41). Yet where they were built, "colored-only" pools were much-loved spaces for communal interaction, as attendees did not fear retribution for transgressing "white-only" spaces. Later, with new legal and social forces aimed at dismantling segregation, municipal swimming

pools became critical sites for the country's shifting racial politics. Attendance at city pools was already in decline by the 1950s, but Smith shows how many white-only pools in Mississippi were simply closed or privatized to avoid the mandates for integration.

As the work on identity politics and sport in the city makes clear, there is no linear relationship between sports and inclusion/exclusion. The various practices involved in playing or watching sports can sometimes facilitate the inclusion of minority groups and lead to a deeper sense of solidarity across ethnic, racial, or national divides. But they can be equally conducive of entrenching hostilities between groups and even result in communal violence (Bloom & Willard, 2002; Edensor & Augustin, 2001; Giulianotti, Collison, Darnell, & Howe, 2017; Shihade, 2011, Shihade, 2015; Sterchele, 2013; Wise, 2011). As this work emphasizes, and both Nelson's and Smith's case studies show, sporting practices *simultaneously* involve inclusion and exclusion. This is especially apparent when viewed through an intersectional lens on identity politics, which does not focus on one element of a person's identity alone (such as migrant status or race) but also takes into account how they work alongside other modes of identification, such as class, gender, or religious affiliation. These overlaps are explored, for example, in research on sports involvement of Muslim women, for whom questions of participation are especially politically sensitive because of cultural and religious norms about how they should behave and display their bodies in public—both in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries (e.g. Amara, 2012, 2013; Burrmann & Mutz, 2016; Erhart, 2016; Hargreaves, 2006; Hargreaves & Vertinsky, 2006; Harkness, 2012; Samie, 2016; Sehlikoglu, 2016).

Research on masculinity and sporting culture opens up similarly incisive questions about the intersectional nature of identity politics, as both men and women are forced to contend with social norms in publicly engaging in sport. Though much of this research focuses on gendered and racialized media portrayals of elite athletes, more grounded research highlights the crucial role of urban space and place for how sports—and identities—are performed (e.g. Koch, 2015; Mangan, 2010; Messner, 1992, 2007; Sherouse, 2016; von der Lipp, 2016; Weningera & Dallaireb, 2017; Woodward, 2009, 2011). For example, in his study of sport in the Chinese city of Dalian under Japanese colonial rule, Tiantian Zheng (2007) argues that Chinese boys came to understand male gender identities through two contrasting sporting experiences: military calisthenics in Japanese schools and street soccer. He shows how, in playing soccer, the city streets became a place for boys to challenge the strict norms of obedience imposed upon them in schools. If colonial ideology works, as Zheng (2007, p. 449) suggests, through "an overt homology between power/powerlessness and male/female," then unsanctioned play in the city's abundant open spaces and public squares allowed them to simultaneously challenge the paternalist logic of colonialism and reassert a resistance-oriented ideal of masculinity. Of course, sport has long been a way of challenging paternalism and patriarchal power structures for women, and doing so in the city streets or municipal sports fields rather than more private venues can be a loud proclamation of resistance (Hargreaves, 2006).

Bob Ross's (2016) recent book on the 1890 Players League also highlights intersectional identity narratives and imaginaries, albeit with a focus on class. Informed primarily by Marxist geography, his historical analysis traces the class conflicts that unfolded among baseball players and team owners around pay and reserve rules, ultimately resulting in some ballplayers initiating their own league to challenge to established National League. Ross takes a wide-lens approach, which shows how the disputes that gave rise to the Players League trickled down to the spectators, as the new league successfully promoted its teams as representing working class ideals, in contrast to their allegedly elitist, anti-union National League competitors. The league's imaging project had important material implications for the cities, manifested in contests over the siting of Players League stadiums, crowd demographics, and what sort of behaviors were allowed at the city ballparks. In selecting venues for their new stadiums in cities like Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, Players League leaders made a concerted effort to ensure that they were near public transportation hubs and thus easily accessible by the working class. And whereas the National League prohibited alcohol in order to create an environment that would deter recent immigrants and attract women—the former being treated as low-class and the latter as icons of high-class aspirations—the Players League instead sought to appeal more to the masses without the same pretension to elitism (for a similar set of concerns about crowds at US horseraces in the late 1800s, see Riess, 2011, p. 30–34). In focusing on class politics, Ross vividly illustrates how it intersected with other modes of identity

that were performed in America's cities in the late 19th century, even if the racialized and masculinist culture of baseball is a passing theme in his book.

Much of the work on sports, identity politics, and belonging in the city takes a bottom-up approach, which ethnographically explores how communities negotiate these tensions, though there is also a large tradition in sports studies literature that explores how state-based elites seek to mobilize sport as a form of nation-building that can transcend various socio-cultural divides (e.g. Dennis & Grix, 2012; Gagen, 2004; Grix, 2008; Horton, 2013; Houlihan, 1997; Jensen, 2010; Koch, 2013; Mangan, 2013; Moser, 2010; Okay, 2003). In some cases, state- and nation-builders have sought to use sporting events to link a country's diverse regions and cities, such as the Giro d'Italia or Tour de France (Cardoza, 2010; Vigarello, 1996).

Political elites around the world have supported more grassroots efforts to build a sense of national unity and promote healthy and patriotic subjects, akin to—and even part of—the social engineering ideals of modernist city planning. One of the most famous historical examples of this is how Mustafa Kemal Atatürk worked to craft his capital Ankara as "the ultimate embodiment of youth and health, and these attributes found their more literal spatial expression in places of public recreation and collective sports where the regeneration of the body and, in turn, of the nation was to take place" (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 75). Indeed, the city's first master-planner Hermann Jansen is quoted as saying, "It is interesting to observe how sports and an interest in sports have become so nationalistic ... Once Ankara's construction is complete, it will have everything for training people's bodies" (quoted in Evered, 2008, p. 336). Arising from a widespread anxiety about urbanization corrupting both minds and bodies, manifested in the globalization of the "garden city" concept and diverse urban health campaigns around the world (Cooke, 1978; Evered, 2014; Rabinow, 1989), Atatürk's effort to engineer healthy national subjects through city planning was a product of his time—albeit one that persist to some degree in Ankara's numerous parks and extensive array of outdoor fitness equipment for public use. Though using public space to encourage healthy lifestyles is now common practice around the world, it can also arise from bottom-up processes rather than the top-down approach found in Kemalist Turkey. The question of *who* is working to shape urban landscapes for and around sport is thus a key question that critical scholars continually find themselves excavating, as they explore sports and the city.

2.3 | Sport, neoliberalism, and urban transformation

In investigating how cities, built landscapes, and urban imaginaries are produced and contested, urban studies has a strong record of examining the positionality of situated actors. This has been productively brought to bear on research about how cities in much of the world have been reshaped around the political economic imperatives of neoliberalism, as well as other state-led forms of developmentalism. Sport has figured prominently in many of these initiatives, with state and city planners frequently using sports to craft their cities as attractive places to live and visit by catering to a sports-oriented "visitor class" (Eisinger, 2000) or "creative class" (Florida, 2002) to promote urban transformation (De Martini Ugolotti, 2017; Dinces, 2016; Friedman, 2017; Gratton & Henry, 2001). As John Bale (1993, 2000) points out, urban regeneration agendas designed around sporting teams and complexes are contentious because of the uneven distribution of positive and negative effects within the city.

For example, hosting professional teams and their stadiums can appeal to city managers because, in addition to the direct and indirect tax benefits they generate, they publicize the locale that they nominally represent. Yet urban taxpayers, regardless of whether they have an interest in sport, become responsible for new costs, such as policing, while communities in the immediate vicinity of a stadium are disproportionately impacted by "nuisances such as traffic congestion, crowding and hooliganism" (Bale, 2000, p. 92). As one of the most prolific advocates of sports geography, Bale has led the way in analyzing a city's "home team" and sporting complexes with a critical eye to the role of space, place, and competing identity narratives that go well beyond simple questions about their economic profitability (e.g. Bale & Moen, 1995; Davidson, 2013; Gaffney, 2008, 2014; Horne, 2011; Köhring, 2010; Lee, 2017; Maennig & du Plessis, 2009; Modrey, 2008; Ren, 2008, 2009; Schultz, 2003; Shobe, 2008; Vertinsky & Bale, 2004).

Critical research on stadiums has deep roots in geography, though it has gathered steam recently because of the proliferation of research on "sporting mega-events" (SMEs). The literature has grown so rapidly, partly for the same reasons that any topic becomes academically trendy but also because of the growing international profile of these events and their more significant role in what Thomas Carter terms an "economy of appearances," in which cities "have to be *seen* to be dynamic, progressive, modern—in a word, 'global'—before actually becoming so economically. The ability to host sport-related mega-events is increasingly an essential capacity for cities to strategically claim status as a global city" (Carter, 2011, p. 133). Given that SMEs are marketed globally, the associated imaging projects are necessarily undertaken by elites. Much of the research on mega-events therefore focuses on elite-level politics, examining how planners have used high-profile sporting events (e.g. the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup) as a platform to narrate a particular identity for their city or state, while also serving as a justification for revamping local infrastructure, reconfiguring and "beautifying" large swaths of a city, and developing costly new facilities with government funds or public–private partnerships (e.g. Ahmed, 2011; Andranovich & Burbank, 2011; Broudehoux, 2007a, 2007b; Chalkley & Essex, 1999; Dawson, 2011; Gaffney, 2010; Garcia-Ramon & Albet, 2000; Golubchikov, 2017; Grix, 2014; Hiller, 2000; Horák, 2017; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Kassens-Noor, 2016; Klauser, 2012; Koch & Valiyev, 2015; Manzo, 2012b; Müller, 2011, 2014, 2017; Tasgold, 2010; Trubina, 2014; van der Westhuizen, 2004; Whittle, Lomax, Heppenstall, & Brerton, 2017). Others have focused on hotly contested bid process, which itself becomes an important site in which urban politics and competing identity narratives play out (e.g. Alberts, 2009; Cornelissen, 2004; Lauermann, 2016a, 2016b; Lauermann & Vogelpohl, 2017; Oliver, 2011; Swart & Bob, 2004).

Recent academic writing on the urban impacts of sporting mega-events has largely been informed by and put in conversation with the literature on neoliberalism and the "urban growth machine" (Jonas & Wilson, 1999; Molotch, 1976). Joining with a longstanding concern for social justice issues within sports studies (Jansson & Koch, 2017), nearly all of this work is skeptical of the claims and promises of hosting major sporting events (for an overview of the varying strands of critique, see Bélanger, 2009). In line with David Harvey's (1989) famous critique of "urban governance in late capitalism," scholars researching SMEs highlight their role in entrenching corruption and elitist development patterns that are a staple of urban boosterism. While their arguments largely ring true, it is useful to remember what Clifford Geertz (1980, p. 123) once wrote about analyzing spectacle in Bali: "Whatever intelligence it may have to offer us about the nature of politics, it can hardly be that big fish eat little fish, or that the rags of virtue mask the engines of privilege." That is, it is hardly novel to conclude that urban boosterism connected to hosting sporting events works to re-entrench unequal power structures. For Geertz, there is much more to be learned about power dynamics that goes beyond a simple critique of inequality. Critical scholars interested in going one step further have crucially done so through adopting more ethnographic approaches than is the norm within research on SMEs (Wise, 2017).

Several recent ethnographies of SMEs, including one on favela tourism in Rio de Janeiro ahead of the Olympic Games (Broudehoux, 2016) and another on the experience of migrants as "Olympic citizens" in Beijing (Shin & Li, 2013), are exemplary of how more grounded empirical methods can shed light on the many contradictions of exclusionary urban development. By taking ordinary people and their decisions seriously, these studies do not reduce them to passive victims but show how they become enlisted as more *and* less willing subjects in the production of sporting spectacles. Other research on sports in the city has similarly worked to de-center elite-dominated frames by engaging a wider range of individuals who are impacted by sporting events, such as competitors, spectators, volunteers, facilities construction workers, business owners, and city residents (e.g. Attali, 2016; Dittmer & Dodds, 2008; Giulianotti, 2002; Keys, 2006; Ross, 2016; Shihade, 2011). Some of the most creative work on sporting events, large and small, is linking the themes of neoliberalism and urban transformation back to the field's earlier research on sports facilities and the multi-scalar politics of place-based identity narratives and subject-formation. Indeed, this sharp focus on shifting political economic models and subjectivities harnessed by urban planners and ordinary residents alike will be increasingly important in future research on sports and the city, as both the mega-event model of the Olympic Games and neoliberal ideology are coming under increasing scrutiny around the world.

3 | CONCLUSION

Sports and the city intersect in so many ways that scholars have arguably only scratched the surface. Because of the historic marginalization of sports geography as a subfield, those working on the topic have developed creative synergies across their other subfield specialties and with disciplines like history, anthropology, sociology, and sports studies. This review has touched on a handful of these synergies through the case of urban geography and sport studies. Given the prominence of recent research on sporting mega-events in urban studies, I have worked to provide a fuller picture of the existing scholarship on sports and the city within and beyond geography. In this rich, interdisciplinary research, critical approaches to space, place, and power have opened up fascinating insights into the relationship between urbanism, sport, (post)colonialism, identity and belonging, neoliberalism, and urban transformation.

Going forward, urban geographers stand to advance this work through a deeper commitment to ethnographic methods that might capture the multi-scalar effects of sports, sporting events, venues, and related practices and performances in a huge array of socio-cultural contexts. The intensity with which fans incorporate the wide-ranging semiotic repertoire of sport into their own sense of self and subjectivity can offer key insights into how urban elites and residents engage or resist sports-related transformations in their neighborhoods, cities, and states. These questions of scale are *temporal* just as much as they are *spatial*, and geographers' unique ability to hold this unity in focus through historically informed analysis has much to offer the interdisciplinary research on sport. Similarly, recent geographical scholarship on space and subject-formation has the power to ground and contextualize the global pervasiveness of sport and to explain how and why cities are differentially impacted by sport. Lastly, the theoretical and methodological pluralism of geography is arguably the discipline's greatest merit. It is precisely this openness to new approaches and new sites of analysis that will allow geographers to expand the scope of research on urbanism and one of the world's most influential cultural phenomena: sport.

ENDNOTE

[1] The contemporary "sport for development" programs carry many of the same transformational ideals of the colonial attitudes toward sport. The research on this topic does not have a strong focus on urban space, but see Darnell, 2007, 2013; Manzo, 2012a.

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