

BOOK REVIEW

On the Uses and Disadvantages of Fragmented Governance
for Sport

Thomas M. Hunt. *Drug Games: The International Olympic Committee and the Politics of Doping, 1960–2008*. Foreword by John Hoberman. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011. xii + 217 pp. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$50.00 (cloth).

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. *Jimmy Carter, the Olympic Boycott, and the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. xiv + 340 pp. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$90.00 (cloth), \$28.99 (paper).

Over the past decade, there has been a dramatic increase in archive-based studies on international relations and sport. A large and growing body of literature has investigated the role of sport in the process of globalization. These works have moved on from easy answers to the question if sport is instrumentalized by governments in pursuing their propaganda goals or, contrariwise, is able to resist political pressure and to undermine authoritarian regimes. Nicholas Evan Sarantakes and Thomas M. Hunt contribute two important case studies to this ongoing debate. Both authors underline the fact that the institutional system of global sport is highly fragmented, which hinders any governing body from easily implementing its decisions worldwide. The two works under review reveal, however, that the lack of a power center in global sport could have diametrically opposite effects in different contexts.

On the one hand, Sarantakes shows that U.S. President Jimmy Carter's attempt to organize a worldwide boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow failed not least because the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was *not* a world government of sport able to enforce directives within hierarchical power structures. Therefore, it was not enough for state actors to address their boycott decision to the IOC. They should rather have tried to convince many different sport bodies on different national and international levels in order to successfully boycott the Moscow Games. Thus, its fragmented institutional design eventually protected the world of sport from political interference. On the other hand, Hunt demonstrates that the fragmented structure of global sport turned out to be extremely troublesome in the fight against doping. Lack of executive power and clearly defined responsibilities prevented the IOC

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from establishing effective anti-doping policies. It was not until the stronger involvement of state actors at the end of the Cold War that the fight against doping in sport was seriously pursued. Thus, sport as a global system of its own proved to be unable to transform its propagated values into a universal system of compulsory regulations as long as it did not cooperate with state authorities that have the power to enforce these regulations.

Hunt provides the first comprehensive study on the IOC's doping policy from its beginnings during the Cold War to the present day, the turning point being the creation of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 1999 as a result of the common effort of the IOC, International (Sport) Federations (IFs), National Olympic Committees (NOCs), athletes, intergovernmental organizations, and national governments. Based on sources from the IOC archives and several U.S. archives, he identifies four main reasons why anti-doping policies in sport took so long to become effective.

The first reason was the lack of interest in the subject by Avery Brundage, Lord Killanin, and Juan Antonio Samaranch. These presidents of the IOC perceived doping in terms of an image problem of the Olympic Movement, which had to be concealed by public relations methods. They also treated it as a secondary issue that should not divert attention from enforcing the Olympic ideal of amateurism (Brundage) and the struggle for a solid commercial base of the Olympic Movement (Samaranch). Therefore, a "culture of denial" (p. 85) and ad hoc reactions after events, such as the death of cyclist Knud Jensen, prevailed over systematic steps against doping. The second reason was ambiguity concerning the definition of doping from an ethical and scientific point of view. Those sport officials and physicians who treated doping seriously (e.g., the Medical Commission of the IOC) faced the problem of how to distinguish punishable performance enhancement from medical treatment necessary to an athlete. They also had to resolve the dilemmas of defining adequate penalties for cheating athletes and of punishing or not punishing the whole team if one team member was using performance-enhancing drugs. The third point is the scientific challenge of detecting illicit substances in the athletes' bodies and methods such as blood doping at an affordable cost. The competition between those who tried to develop new doping methods and those who tried to improve the detection of doping was most intensive during the Cold War. Given the fact that the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Soviet Union and its satellites had state-sponsored doping programs, Western coaches and athletes were also looking for loopholes in order not to lose the pharmaceutical arms race. Hunt's fourth argument is the above-mentioned fragmented nature of the international sport system and its relationship to the national legal systems. As a consequence of the diffuse governance system of global sport, the responsibility in doping issues was divided among several levels of international and national federations, the IOC, NOCs, and organizing committees of individual competitions. There were significant variations between the rules in different IFs and countries

but also in the level of their enforcement. Contradictory regulations and fragmented jurisdiction allowed athletes sentenced for doping simply to contest the right of the respective court to decide their case. Some of them even sought recourse in their national judicial systems.

In his analysis of these perpetual problems, Hunt gives a concise chronological account of focusing doping events since the end of World War II and the half-hearted establishment of regulations by the IOC. He traces the evolution of doping methods from anabolic steroids to blood doping, erythropoietin (EPO) and eventually gene doping. He reports the search for adequate testing methods as well as the shift from performance enhancing and testing during competitions to doping between competitions and out-of-competition testing.

A new era dawned with the positive testing of Ben Johnson at the Olympic Games in 1988 after he had won the 100 meters, setting a new world record. This event, which led to the establishment of WADA some decade later, happened when Gorbachev's reforms made the Soviet Union more affirmative to doping regulations than ever before. On the one hand, in 1984 it had been beaten in Sarajevo for the first time by its satellite GDR, which was not willing to share its doping know-how. On the other hand, *perestroika* caused a situation in which the Soviet Union was likely to fall behind Western standards of pharmaceutical research for economic reasons. The end of confrontation between the superpowers made possible a broad initiative of national governments and private sport organizations in the international fight against doping. The involvement of state authorities in sport issues was acceptable for the IOC and the IFs because governments agreed to finance half of the budget of WADA.

In sum, Hunt offers a coherent explanation for the inertia in the fight against doping during the Cold War and the establishment of a more effective anti-doping regime in the last two decades. As to the chance of definitively winning the war against doping, however, Hunt is pessimistic. For one obstacle remains: We live in a performance-enhanced society where doping in sport is not an aberration, but rather the apogee of a general trend.

Sarantakes gives a lively, sometimes journalistic account of the Olympic boycott in 1980, which he calls a failure because the United States, West Germany, Japan, and China were the only important powers boycotting the Moscow Games. It denied athletes from the United States and the other boycotting countries the chance of winning Olympic medals and nearly destroyed the Olympic Movement, but it did not have any influence on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

This failure had several reasons. According to Sarantakes the initial mistake was the announcement of the boycott by the U.S. president without previous consultation with the allied countries and representatives from the world of sport. The ignorance of the Carter administration about the governance of global sport resulted in weak alliance management. It limited its diplomatic activity to intergovernmental channels, neglecting the fact that the NOCs were not dependent on national governments in their decisions to send a team to

Moscow. This became most dramatically evident when the British Olympic Association decided to participate in the Olympic Games in spite of Margaret Thatcher's support of the boycott. In this situation the Iron Lady could have enforced the boycott only through police-state methods such as seizing the athletes' passports, which was not acceptable in democratic societies.

In the United States there was, however, no way back after the boycott had been announced by the president himself, who was in desperate need of a success in order to be re-elected in 1980. The U.S. Olympic Committee eventually supported Carter's boycott both out of patriotism and because of financial threats by the government.

Another reason for the failure was that the Carter administration did not have a consistent strategy as to the possible alternative to the Moscow Games. It was not aware of the time necessary for the organization of a counter-event, and it underestimated the idealism of the Olympic Movement. Both the interference of the state into sport and the attempt to cancel or postpone the games, which were conceived of as a place of peaceful integration of all nations, targeted the core of Olympic ideology. Thus, IOC president Killanin reacted with strong resistance, although he certainly did not favor the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Sarantakes stresses that Carter's inability to decide the conflict between his two main foreign policy advisers, Cyrus Vance and Zbigniew Brzezinski, led to an incoherent policy, which the Soviet Union had to interpret as an attempt to relaunch the Cold War. He even argues in a highly controversial manner that "it was the Olympic boycott (. . .) rather than the invasion of Afghanistan that killed détente" (p. 13). Furthermore, he insists on the "incompetence of the Carter Administration" and persistently criticizes the president's "reputation for indecision" and his "difficulty setting priorities" (p. 261). This would be much more convincing if Sarantakes presented his material in a less anecdotal style and analyzed his sources more systematically. It has some satiric taste that he quotes Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko: "Carter did his best, but when he tried to pronounce the names of towns and regions in the Soviet Union all that came out was a sequence of incomprehensible noises. More worryingly, we quickly discovered that he had difficulty in grasping even the most elementary basic features of the Soviet-US relationship" (p. 56). Clearly the intention is to expose the U.S. president to ridicule, although the author himself systematically misspells Leonid Brezhnev's first name (see register), wrongly explains the acronym of the Soviet News Agency TASS¹ (p. 105) and declares the German politicians Helmut Schmidt and Helmut Kohl members of the same party (p. 272). The list of foreign newspapers Sarantakes used for his study is impressive, but when it comes to languages other than English, his selection criteria remain mysterious. Another weakness of the book is that it hardly touches on the Soviet activities

1. TASS stands for *Telegrafnoe agentstvo Sovetskogo Soiuza*.

against the boycott and that it summarizes the reaction of the Soviet population on a single page (p. 229) although one central argument in favor of the boycott was that it would make an enormous impression on Soviet citizens and destabilize the Communist regime.

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Sarantakes's study is worth reading due to the rich material from a large number of archives and the attempt to focus not only on the United States, but to integrate different points of view based on newspapers and sources from several countries.

Sarantakes's and Hunt's books demonstrate that despite the autonomy of sport from politics, the Cold War had a deep influence on the Olympic Movement. The fragmented nature of sport governance worked as a system of checks and balances protecting sport from direct intervention by the state, but it also inhibited the enforcement of universal rules in the internal affairs of global sport.