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Steger (2010) posits that globalization studies (aka global studies) studies is a new trans-disciplinary field dedicated to the study of globalization and its impacts. Mittleman (2002) while predicting globalization studies’ heightened academic status and prestige stated its parent disciplines, (e.g., international relations, sociology, economics, and anthropology) were unable to capture the nuances of globalization. Chalip (2006) provided similar rationale for considering sport management as a distinct discipline, claiming sport management is a “hybrid discipline” that must consider both “sport and management”—arguing alternative strategies (e.g., publishing in home discipline journals) would support thinking of sport management as a derivative discipline. As sport management and globalization studies continue to mature as academic disciplines, sport management scholars have the opportunity to help shape the sport management and globalization discourse. This presentation demonstrates sport management’s relevance to globalization (and vice versa), the challenges and issues globalization is presenting to sport management, the need to clarify theoretical and conceptual issues related to sport management and globalization, and, ultimately, advocates developing a practical sport management-globalization studies research agenda.

Globalization is an on-going, yet historical, multi-dimensional phenomenon that is currently happening at unprecedented levels of speed, scale and volume (Friedman, 2002; McNeil, 2008). Globalization related phenomena, such as increased interconnectivity, diminishing importance of traditional boundaries, emergence of a powerful global media and improvements in communication, information and transportation technologies (Giddens, 1990), impact how sport managers perceive and ultimately manager sport business. Globalization is changing how sport managers strategize, conceptualize, and behave. These changes are expected to continue, as sport is a highly profitable, largely popular, and globally networked cultural form (Smart, 2007). Houlihan (2008) reiterates the importance of globalization, stating globalization has become one of the most prominent research concepts in the social sciences, including sport studies.

Sport management has not been blind to globalization, as scholars have produced conceptual, theoretical, and empirical studies. For example, conceptual and theoretical pieces have questioned how sport is being used to further nationalistic, capitalist and democratic agendas (Zielger, 2011), contended globalization is not experienced the same by all (Eitzen, 2008), proposed alternatives to the local-global continuum (Andrews and Ritzer, 2007), commented upon global sport governance (Forrester, 2006), and claimed sports (e.g., baseball) are constructing and expanding world-wide business networks (Klien, 2006). Empirical studies have focused on numerous issues including, but not limited to sport labor migration (Macguire, 1999; Stead and Macguire, 2000; Aggergaard, 2010), developed typologies (Maguire, 1999; Love and Kim, 2011), impacts of commodification (Rasul and Profitt, 2011), effects of mega events (Lin, Lee and Chang, 2010), and media attention and mediate images (Macguire, 2011).

Nevertheless, these efforts have barely scratched the myriad of sport management and globalization topics remaining to be examined. Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) agree stating the sport and globalization nexus has not received the adequate attention from global studies. This dearth of literature is especially concerning being sport has been characterized both as a source and product of globalization (Eitzen, 2008), and, on a more practical level, as a global product and service (Rattten and Ratten, 2011).

Globalization presents a number of challenges to sport management scholars, challenges that can hinder the advancement of the sport management discourse. These challenges include but are not limited to gaining access to global sport governance institutions (e.g., International Olympic Committee and World Anti-Doping Agency), capturing the globalization experience in a holistic manner (i.e., from all perspectives), developing better defined continuums to access globalization of sport phenomenon, evaluating the impacts of sport commodification and sport diffusion on local cultures, developing integrative techniques to specifically demonstrate particular globalization effects and utilizing acceptable frameworks to predict how globalization will impact the future of sport and sport management. While this is not a complete list, it demonstrates several diverse and prominent issues facing sport
management scholars concerned with globalization. Until these challenges are addressed, work in this area will continue to suffer.

This presentation has four objectives. First, to demonstrate and describe potential intersections and relevance between sport management and globalization, and how these connections should be approached. Second, to show how these linkages are presenting sport managers with a number of methodological, conceptual and theoretical challenges. Third, to show how conceptual clarification can bring clarity as well as illuminate future steps. Fourth, and finally, it is to provide a practical research agenda that can move the sport management and globalization studies discourse forward.

Many agree that the outcomes of globalization are highly contested and ultimately unknown (Miller, Lawrence, McKay & Rowe, 2001), but fewer agree on what exactly is being globalized, what constitutes a globalization process or, even, how to define globalization. Agreeing with Costa (2005) that ongoing discussion about the status, directions, and sport management research is fruitful because it nurtures the field’s growth and development, this presentation calls for a discussion concerning sport management and globalization studies, and concludes with a practical research agenda, while not currently fully developed, designed to advance and clarify sport management’s interactions with globalization studies. This research agenda includes discussing sport marketing in global marketplace, sport development on a global level and global sport governance.