Revitalizing the PE social-justice agenda in the global era: Where do we go from here?

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Abstract

Critical theorists have called attention to the intensification of diversity that is now occurring inside and outside of school, while critically engaging with the detrimental effects of globalization on equity, diversity, and social justice. Globalization presents new challenges to education and to issues of social justice. In this article, we argue that there is a need for scholars in the field of physical education (PE) to re-think and re-frame the social-justice agenda to address current inequalities produced by globalization. To support this argument, first, we reflect on the impact of global neoliberalism on PE; second, we discuss the ways in which, as a result of global neoliberalism, public health discourses have an "othering" effect on ethnically diverse young people; third, we propose a theoretical shift from a focus on equality to a focus on difference; and finally, we conclude with considerations for future research and curricula in school PE.

Today's neoliberal agenda in schools promotes the persistent rhetoric that current educational market models can provide an "education for all," while, in fact, they deepen inequality (Torres, 2009). As Macdonald recently suggested, "The field [of physical education (PE)] needs to realize and reflect upon the pervasiveness of neoliberalism" (2011, p. 36). In response, we attempt to make sense of the cultural, economic, and political global forces that function to gloss over differences and silence inequalities. Cultural, political, and economic changes are bearing down on 21st-century society, influencing local and global schooling contexts in significant ways. Globalization presents new challenges to education and to issues of social justice. Critical theorists, critical pedagogues, and teacher educators have called attention to the intensification of diversity that is now occurring inside and outside of schools, while critically engaging with the detrimental effects of globalization on equity, diversity, and social justice. For example, Whiteness, classism, and "popular postfeminism"—which are all embedded in contemporary neoliberal educational practices—play a crucial role in constraining many young people's access to holistic, meaningful, and empowering learning experiences. In addition, globalization implicitly works toward homogenization, deterritorialization, and Westernization, promoting gender-neutral and color-blind thinking and deflecting attention away from issues of social justice that are embedded in local schooling contexts (Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2007). As a result of today's global economy, schools are increasingly under pressure to adopt economic models that move toward privatizing and standardizing education.

In the current global context, several scholars have observed 21st-century education as increasingly being reduced to a commodity—a corporate curriculum—that grants privileges to a few students while marginalizing many others because of their social class, race, disability, and gender/sex. As Giroux (2004) asserted, "Children and young adults are under

siege in both public and higher education because far too many of them have increasingly become institutional breeding grounds for commercialism, racism, social intolerance, sexism, and homophobia" (p. 45). Other scholars have argued that in today's global era, neoliberalism is particularly hard on women (Leistyna, Woodrum, & Sherblom, 1996). In line with Leistyna's viewpoint, Gill (2008) expressed particular concern about the experiences of girls, problematizing how young women's lives are shaped and constrained in postfeminist, neoliberal Western society. From another perspective, scholars invested in issues of race/ethnicity have claimed that in spite of the increased heterogeneity and diversity of urban classrooms, educators have failed to come to grips with diversity, due to color-blind approaches upheld by globalization (Landson-Billing, 2001). Moreover, today's schools compete with other powerful pedagogical sites produced by globalization, such as popular culture, media, and the internet, all of which contribute to forming youths' identities. For young people, media represent sites of both empowerment and oppression that visibly and invisibly mobilize difference by creating narratives of gendered and racialized body ideals, achievement, and success. School PE is not immune from these changes and new challenges but, indeed, "carries the stamp of neoliberal globalization" (Macdonald, 2011, p. 36).

Acknowledging different viewpoints, yet going against a polarized understanding, we suggest that fresh approaches to social justice need to be adopted to deal with the complicated, often hidden, manifestations of inequality in today's schools. This is especially important given that, in the past two decades, critical theorists have witnessed an ongoing fragmentation of the unified social agenda of the 1990s, a precarious social-justice agenda in education that seems to have been comprised of messy contradictions (Apple et al., 2005). In such an educational context, many educators committed to social justice have advocated the development of new forms of critical pedagogy that might be able to tackle the difficult

challenges generated by globalization. If educators are to counter the powerful forms and forces of globalization, addressing Kincheloe's (2004) concern about "where we are now and where we go from here" (p. 13) is key to envisioning how to enact forms of resistance and social transformation in schools. In this paper, we rethink social justice in the context of school PE, in an effort to tackle today's complex issues of social justice in the field of PE and health. We argue that scholars in the field of PE need to re-think and re-frame the social-justice agenda to address current inequalities produced by globalization. To support this argument, first, we reflect on the impact of global neoliberalism on PE and health physical education (HPE); second, we discuss the ways in which, as a result of global neoliberalism, PE and public health have an "othering" effect on ethnically diverse young people; and third, we propose a theoretical shift from a focus on equality to a focus on difference. We conclude with suggestions for future research and curricula in school PE.

Global Neoliberalism, Physical Education, Health, and Equity

Much quoted is Michael Apple's position that, "If we were to point to one specific defining political/economic paradigm of the age in which we live, it would be neoliberalism" (2006, p. 14). Macdonald (2011, p. 36) claims, "Physical Education (PE) carries the stamp of neoliberalism and as a field we are keen, it seems, to accept and accrue more of the vestiges of this ideology as a way of buying into the dominant policy agendas (e.g., accountability; reducing health costs; supporting choice)." Neoliberalism refers to complex and contradictory discourses and practices produced by today's new global economies. While we maintain that the intersection of neoliberalism and PE (in the USA) and HPE (in Australia and New Zealand) is not necessarily detrimental to student engagement, there is evidence at the macro (inter/national) and micro (classroom) levels that neoliberal priorities, which aim to limit

government services, promote competition, control via indirect accountabilities, create self-managing citizens, normalize and regulate young people's body weight, and encourage entrepreneurial activities across all sectors, can produce inequitable practices and perpetuate inequities.

Several scholars have highlighted how neoliberalism is playing out globally in PE and HPE (Azzarito, 2009, 2012; Chepyator-Thomson, 2014; Lee, 2014; Macdonald, 2014). The cases of South Korea (Lee & Soon-Mook, 2014) and Africa (Chepyator-Thomson, 2014), for instance, highlight the complexity and impact of neoliberal policies driven by such centralized financial agencies as the World Bank, which have stipulated particular domestic, austere economic strategies in return for financial aid. The downstream consequences in both countries have included a reduction in state investment in schooling and associated services that have had a negative impact on PE and HPE teachers' professionalism, school resources, and the status of the subject. Lee and Soon-Mook (2014) and Chepyator-Thomson (2014) both argue that Eurocentric and/or "global north" neoliberal policies have curtailed the distribution of resources necessary to support healthy learners and balanced schooling, hitting the poorest students hardest. A more recent impact of global neoliberalism in South Korea, as elsewhere, has been the rising incidence of mental ill-health amongst students, as they are under increasing pressure to succeed in world academic rankings that value individual, school and national performance over students' health and well-being (Lee & Soon-Mook, 2014). In the United States, the current business-minded schooling produced by global neoliberalism that emphasizes test scores and standardized education, a top-down approach to education (profit driven), calls for corporate curricula in PE that function as a site for managing and disciplining young people's bodies to produce efficient and fit bodies, "ideal citizens" in the global era (Azzarito, 2009b). The re-organization of school curricula under neoliberal

globalization is based on "competitive-based reforms" rather than "equity-oriented reforms," which, in turn, marginalize the social-justice agenda.

Developing a healthy, active, self-managing, individualistic, and ambitious citizenry is central to neoliberalism (Nadesan, 2008; Rose, 2006). An overt government of citizens becomes an indirect governance of individuals and populations through what has been termed biopower. As McNay (1994, p. 116) explained, biopower focuses on the individual human body as a machine and tries to extort from it greater efficiency, productivity, and economy of movement. At the same time, biopower takes as its target the biological processes of the collective social body by attempting to increase life expectancy, the birthrate, and levels of health. Institutions, such as the family, school, and religion, have become social sites through which state authorities can mobilize strategies of surveillance and normalization to secure continuous regulatory and corrective actions on individuals and the population as a whole. Scholars in the HPE field have examined the implications of biopower for how HPE curricula, pedagogies, and assessment practices have played out for students in terms of the aims of HPE (e.g., for physical fitness and healthy body weight); what knowledge (e.g., biophysical knowledge, games and sports, and health risks) and abilities (e.g., cardiovascular fitness, compliance) are valued; and what pedagogies are employed (e.g., didactic) (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014; Wright & Harwood, 2009). Research has suggested that for students from lower socio-economic and cultural minority backgrounds, and often girls, questions of complying with "dominant" notions of "appropriate" of body weight, physical activities, food selection, and risk avoidance are not "choices" available to them, nor are such "choices" necessarily consistent with students' identities or lifeworlds.

As suggested, the neoliberal market economy also drives international, national, and local provision of services and resources, creating a particularly vibrant market with which PE and HPE are seduced to engage (Macdonald, 2011; Williams, Hay & Macdonald, 2011). Coming from the United States to global markets are products and services such as Fitnessgram®, Spark® and Dr Oz's HealthCorps®; from Europe, the EPODE International Network, and pan-nationally, the Lions Clubs International Foundation' LionsQuest. The term "seduced" is not intended to be provocative or pejorative but employed to suggest that as schools are required to compete in the marketplace for students, their engagement with prestigious, "evidence-based" programs and resources enhances their "performance" as a contemporary, engaged learning environment. Again, questions should be asked about the values underpinning the products and services, the beneficiaries of the products and services, their fit with students' needs and interests, and the extent to which teachers can tailor them to create contextually appropriate learning experiences (Evans & Davies, 2014).

Shifts towards purchasing external products and services, under the rubric of "outsourcing" to the market what the stated has traditionally provided, has opened the way for HPE, in part or whole, to be provided to schools at a cost. There are many instances where school funds no longer support the employment of an HPE specialist or program with the following consequences: Schools no longer offer HPE; schools offer a HPE program through an external provider, which is paid for by the school; or students' families are asked to pay the cost of participation in an externally provided HPE program (Williams, Hay & Macdonald, 2011). Again, these scenarios raise questions for those schools and families with scant resources about their access to regular, high-quality HPE taught in a culturally appropriate way in an educative and nurturing environment. As has been demonstrated repeatedly in physical activity and health education research, for many students, schools are the key or only

provider of HPE-related opportunities and without ready access to these, their lives and learning are diminished. As a result, many poor and minority young people are suffering from a diminished school curriculum, and/or often from a reduced time devoted to PE to spend more time on areas of curriculum that are tested (Nichols & Berliner, 2010).

Whiteness and Global Neoliberalism: 'Othering" Bodies-at-Risk

Neoliberal and neoconservative governments throughout the Western world have emphasized individual responsibility for health through PE, public-health policies, and media campaigns. Within these policies, young people who are living in deprivation and are ethnic minority group members are categorized as "healthy" or "unhealthy," and even as "good" or "bad," depending on their disposition to physical activity and their involvement with physical culture and performing the health discourse (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2013). Neoliberalism is a social and political doctrine that governs people to be responsible for their own personal choices for health, education, and lifestyle, having consequences for the way societies view the maintenance of good health (Macdonald, 2011). As a result of global neoliberalism, individuals are called upon to self-monitor and to invest in successful selves, taking on healthy and physically active lifestyles that are highly individualistic and relying on the individual's capacity to self-manage and make the "right" choices (McRobbie, 2007).

Nevertheless, personal responsibility assumes that people have the capability and sociocultural and financial resources to make informed choices about good health (O'Sullivan, 2012). Rose (2006, cited in Macdonald, 2011, p. 38) explained that, in neoliberal societies, "the maintenance of health and quality of life has become obligatory; negative judgments are directed towards those who refuse to adopt active and healthy behaviours." Furthermore, Macdonald (2011) concluded that "the pervasiveness of neoliberalism can make

the neoliberal approach to health appear somewhat natural and logical and thereby shift critique" (p. 42). What needs to be acknowledged, however, is that driven by popular consumption and commodities in a global fitness and health market, choices, opportunities, and lifestyles available to young people are highly classist, racialized, and gendered. For many Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) (Flintoff & Webb, 2012) groups, structural and environmental barriers restrict the individual's capability to make the "right" choice. For those bodies outside the norm, implicit cultural and economic assumptions about making the "right choices" have an "othering" effect, through which Whiteness operates to normalize and naturalize "difference," locating "other" people as inferior to White norms, and thus maintaining social inequality in health (Bowleg, 2012).

In other words, when success is not achieved (i.e., bodies-at-risk), these modes of self-governance leave the individual to self-blame for deviating from the White upper-middle-class norm (McRobbie, 2007), "othering" those bodies through negative lenses (Bowleg, 2012). For instance, epidemiological studies in the United Kingdom and national health surveys (Department of Health (DoH), 2011) have repeatedly identified specific groups in society (mainly BME groups) "as *problematic* [emphasis added]*"* (Bhopal, 2007, p. 63). Furthermore, in contemporary neoliberal societies, normalizing health discourses operate to create a sense of moral obligation to monitor and regulate bodies (Nelson, 2012) through statistical analyses of ill health (see Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Protection [2011]). These data create a sense of (false) moral panic, which also promotes segregation, in that they position specific kinds of bodies as different and reinforce negative views of "brown" (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014) bodies.

The predominant framework in the context of medicine and healthcare glosses over

difference, focusing on evidence-based medicine, randomized control trials (RCTs) and large-

scale epidemiological studies, which in turn, may exclude the experiences of minority

populations or negate the impact of population complexity on health outcomes. As such,

RCTs have created an ethos of data (UK Census Data, 2011) that feed into (worldwide)

policies on physical activity and public health pedagogy that ignore people's (especially

young people's from BME groups) specific needs, cultural background, and individual

agency. Such reports (Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and

Protection, 2011) ignore specific individual sociocultural characteristics and fail to allow for

the exploration of commonalities and differences across diverse ethnic groups.

In many national health surveys (Department of Health 2011) and studies, the inclusion of

black and ethnic minority (BME) groups as a homogenous group under a numerical statistical

representation collapses important personal, cultural, ethnic, psychosocial and environmental

characteristics. As such, the value of ethnic categorization as a means of delivering culturally

appropriate health education and services, and as indication of disease or ill health, is

diminished with homogeneity being established and promoted (Flintoff & Fitzgerald, 2012).

Ahmad and Bradby (2008) have claimed that this argument is rooted in an ideology of

Whiteness that is embedded in popular culture and institutions, which in turn disadvantage

the "racialised" (p. 9). Combining minority ethnic groups as one group can be perceived as a

color-blind approach, which has proven to be problematic, because it further normalizes

Whiteness discourse, promoting racialization and marginalization of the *other*. For Gillborn

(2005), this is another prime example of Whiteness as a racial discourse that feeds into health

and education policy. In this sense, because *othering* and marginalization occur in today's

global society more than ever before (Macdonald et al. 2012), the need to explore and interrogate issues of body pedagogies as "fluid, culturally encoded within and between multiple contexts" (Evans and Davies 2011, p. 278) should be at the forefront of a social-justice agenda. *Othering* means treating difference between people hierarchically, for example, in terms of superiority and inferiority, thereby dismissing the needs of others as invisible or unimportant. The *other* not only functions as a way to maintain the interlocking systems of race, class, and gender, but also as a way to reproduce a social, moral order in which people are positioned at the margins (Dagkas, 2014); the difference of the marginalized *other* maintains the mainstreamed center, the normal (Azzarito & Solomon 2005).

According to Gillborn (2005, p. 487), Whiteness is not a culture but a social concept and a racial discourse. As such, those who identify as non-White are denied the privilege of normativity and are marked as inferior, marginal and "other" (Gillborn 2005). Whiteness has developed as a taken-for-granted experience structured in various settings, such as sport, medicine, and education. According to Gillborn (2010), race and social class interests intersect so that, under certain conditions, both middle-and working-class Whites benefit from a shared White identity that shapes current health discourses, permeates health education and public policy, and normalizes specific body discourses and alienates others. According to Ansley (1997, cited in Gillborn, 2005, p. 491), Whiteness is a political, economic, and cultural system in which one race (White) overwhelmingly controls power and material resources.

In addition, identity discourses are constructed based on White superiority and relations of White dominant and non-White subordination that are reenacted daily across institutions and

social settings. As such, specific identities in relation to the health discourse are normalized and legitimized through many acts of reinforcement and reiteration. According to Gillborn (2010), it is this constitution of particular identities that lends Whiteness its deep-rooted high status. Furthermore, these identities are normalized through many public health schemes that, as mentioned earlier, negate specific socio-cultural and environmental factors and contribute to institutional and social racism and "visual fascism" (Dagkas, 2014). Therefore, specific bodies and identities in relation to the health discourse are normalized, celebrated, and legitimized in pedagogical settings (i.e., school PE) through many acts of reinforcement and reiteration. Furthermore, these processes of normalization through pedagogical settings negate specific socio-cultural and environmental factors and contribute to institutional and social racism.

Researchers in the area of social justice and racialized bodies and identities need to recognize that individuals differentially negotiate multiple and complex layers of identity (Dagkas, Benn, & Jawad, 2011; Hylton, 2010). If we are to address existing inequalities in today's society, practitioners and researchers need to move away from pedagogies that are reflective of monocultural perspectives (Burrows 2009) to avoid further marginalizing those outside of the dominant White culture (Dagkas and Quarmby 2012). Corroborating Hill and Azzarito's (2012) comments, to address issues of social justice within health, sport, and PE/HPE, more data are needed that the way that diverse populations or those identified as "at risk" identify the multiple ways that they "value" their bodies. More specifically, more research *with* young populations that represent "at-risk" communities is needed to uncover the multiple ways that the interplay of various informal *pedagogical contexts*, such as family, social class, ableism, culture, religion, race (and gender), affect health dispositions (and inequalities), practices, and views of one's own body. Most importantly, making racialized bodies visible by engaging

with them in research that allows for the elicitation of dispositions to be explored by voicing the bodies of the *invisible* and *non normative* should be at the forefront of a social-justice agenda (Azzarito & Hill, 2013).

From Equality to Issues of Difference and Pluralism from Globalized Views

While Whiteness, consumerism, and popular media construct healthy and fit able bodies that are highly classed, racialized, and gendered, globalization is producing complicated local/global relations, presenting a vital opportunity to deal with *difference*. There is no question that the ability to work with *difference* in contemporary global times is at the center of revitalizing and reconceptualizing the social-justice agenda in PE and HPE. As an alternative to the predominant framework adopted in medicine and healthcare, to address health disparities, a theoretical framework is needed that can shed light on *difference*, as well as, in particular, how multiple and interlocking systems of privilege and discrimination result in multiple institutionalized social inequalities (Bowleg, 2012). Focusing on *difference*, however, poses a new set of requirements for re-thinking the current social-justice agenda to survive the difficult challenges posed by global neoliberalism. Contemporary critical work in education emphasizes the importance of three types of efforts: permitting *difference* to emerge, establishing experience as contradictory, and recognizing identity as plural. We suggest that adopting a range of critical theoretical approaches to theorize *difference* might raise the consciousness of multiple and interlocking oppressors to dismantle and subvert hegemonic dominant discourses of the body, physical activity, and health, and thus, such approaches would advance research on contemporary inequalities in PE and HPE.

Rather than implementing a single theoretical frame, drawing connections and commonalities between postfeminism and Critical Race Theory (CRT) can provide a useful approach for

addressing the complexity of today's social justice issues in schools. Postfeminism, for instance, has taken feminist theory forward by focusing on issues of *difference* and *pluralism* from a globalized perspective. Notably, postfeminism framed within feminist academic discourses is distinct from "popular postfeminism" (Brooks, 1997). "Popular postfeminism" has offered a conceptual repertoire embraced by the media beginning in the 1980s that expresses anti-feminist views and proclaims achieved gender equality through the circulation of such images as "girl power" and the "new woman" in sport, thus proposing a new set of feminine White ideals: confidence, independence, skillfulness, self-reliance, strength, and competitiveness (Azzarito, 2010). While "popular postfeminism" is sustained by neoliberal globalization in an attempt to depoliticize feminist aims, postfeminism brings third-wave feminist theories together to forward a social-justice agenda, giving voices to marginalized, Black, indigenous people, and thus, "writing back to the center" from a globalized view (Spivak, 1988). Postfeminists attempt to understand some of central concerns considered in the current debates around social-justice issues, proposing a shift from a focus on *equality* to a focus on debates around *difference* and *pluralism* to embrace anti-racist and postcolonial work without abandoning gender.

Although the starting point for CRT is a focus on racism and Whiteness (Gillborn, 2005), CRT and postfeminism (Brooks, 2007) share a common agenda toward intersectionality to theorize the hidden ways racism, sexism, classism, ableism take form in today's global society. In line with these aims, Bowleg (2012) suggested that "intersectionality provides a more comprehensive insight into how multiple social identities intersect in complex ways to show social inequality" (p. 1269). A central goal of postfeminism and CRT is the breaking down of dichotomies of gender/sex, social class, disability, and race through acknowledging *difference* and *diversity*, as well as multiple, intersecting social categories. Drawing from

these critical standpoints, the primary objective of the contemporary social-justice agenda is to destabilize identity categories, while simultaneously working toward increasing visibility of the multiple ways that ethnically diverse young people take on subject positions , registering *difference*, yet denaturalizing heteronormative understandings of classist and racialized abled bodies. Intersectionality provides an analytical framework to understand how cultural identities intertwine at the macro and micro levels, yielding health disparities and advantage. Through the lens of intersectionality, drawing from postfeminism and CRT, processes through which young people of different ethnicities come to experience themselves as subjects having particular subjectivities are not denied but rendered visible (Brooks, 2007). Such critical theoretical positions can be particularly useful in the realm of kinesiology (including exercise science) and/or PE, considering the absence of culturally relevant pedagogies, the lack of racial diversity, and the marginalization of postfeminist research paradigms in this field. Many scholars in kinesiology, for instance, have advocated for the necessity of integrating a critical perspective into the study of human movement, PE, and exercise science to raise awareness around issues of social justice and health disparities and to challenge color-blind positions while working toward inclusion, understanding difference, and intercultural sensitivity (Azzarito, 2010; Burden, Harrison, & Hodge, 2005; Burden, Hodge, O'Bryant, & Harrison, 2004; Douglas & Halas, 2013; Flintoff, Dowling, Fitzgerald, 2014).

Using Postfeminism and CRT to Unveil the Hidden Curriculum in PE

To open up the possibility for creating new sites of meaning and new identities, cultural representations of the body must be understood as complex processes of production, circulation, and consumption. Considering the media as powerful sites of learning for young people, critical questions need to be raised not simply around critical readings of media texts,

but also around whose interests the media serve, how fit and healthy body representations are circulated, and how social subjectivities are constructed (Brooks, 2007; McRobbie, 2007). The early feminist emphasis on the study of media representation in terms of gender must shift toward broader conceptualizations of *different* body representations in today's cultural context of *diversity* (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Globalization demands that critical scholars consider issues of representation in terms of a wider framework of culture, politics, history, and the economy. As viable means of popular consumption for young people, the media create local and global sites of culture through which young people create their own imaginary social space at home, at school, or in youth clubs.

Throughout globalized society, young people are mass consumers of corporatized media (Bruce & Saunders, 2005; Fisette & Walton, 2013, 2014; Gard, Hickey-Moodey, & Enright, 2013; Millington & Wilson, 2010a, 2010b), and this relationship is supported by the media triad of producer/product/consumer often used in literary studies and physical culture (Mcdonald & Birrell, 1999; Walton 2005). Although young people are most often the *consumers* of media and mediated products, they can also be *the products* (Burrows, 2005) or the *producers* (Fisette and Walton, 2013, 2014). Despite young people's gluttonous media consumption, few of them are *critical* consumers or readers of culture and mediated texts (Gard et al., 2013), and thus, most view these mediated products as " truth" (Mcdonald & Birrell, 1999), which influences their embodied identities and enhances social inequalities. As Gard and colleagues (2013, p. 102) argued, "Media texts as youth culture only matter to the extent they have significance in the lives of young people." Because of the pervasiveness of the media in today's global society, however, the media are increasingly becoming one of the most powerful sets of sites for learning about fitness, health, and ideal bodies.

Throughout our globalized society, for young people, media represent sites of both empowerment and/or oppression that visibly and invisibly mobilize *difference* by creating narratives of gendered, classist, and racialized body ideals, achievement, and success. Based on young people's media consumption and schooling experiences with older students (e.g., Veldhuis, Konijn, & Seidell, 2014), researchers have found that many girls and boys within PE contexts perpetuate and conform to gendered bodily norms and ideals portrayed in the media, while others resist the socially constructed ideologies of the gendered and racialized portrayals of what it means to be female, male, African-American, Hispanic, White, Muslim, etc. (e.g., Azzarito, 2009a, 2012; Azzarito & Hill, 2013; Azzarito & Katzew, 2010, Azzarito & Sterling, 2010; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010, 2012; Hill & Azzarito, 2012). Depending on whether young people conform to or resist these socially constructed ideals, as well as their social capital within public movement spaces, such as PE, many ethnically diverse young people struggle to be active and comfortable movers in and outside of PE. They struggle because their identities are denied in the media and/or the only way to recognize themselves and to be interpellated in society is in negative terms through Whiteness and/or through body-at-risk global discourse.

An ongoing challenge facing scholars and educators of PE and HPE is how to unveil the hidden curriculum of today's media, which functions to discipline young people's bodies to heteronormative and racialized norms and ideals. In other words, girls and women are supposed to have bodies that are thin and lean and have the ability to expose such an ideal body through form-fitting and short clothing attire, whereas boys and men are expected to have muscular bodies, especially the "show me" muscles of the chest, biceps, and abdominals. Although some young people are aware of these exaggerated expectations, they still believe, buy into, and/or desire to have bodies that align with these socially constructed

gender norms (Spurr, Berry, & Walker, 2013). Although a variety of media forms (e.g., Internet, television, health, and fitness magazines) perpetuate this feminine/masculine dichotomy, the sub layer of the hidden agenda is *how* these White idealized gendered bodies are mediated by ethnically diverse young people. Ethnically diverse young people's embodiment, especially of White idealized bodies, might dangerously alienate their sense of identity and impact their body image in detrimental ways. Although numerous scholars (e.g., Enright & O'Sullivan, 2010; Fisette, & Walton, 2013; Hill & Azzarito, 2013) have researched the media's influence on girls' embodied identities in PE and HPE, many critical questions remain with regard to the ways culturally relevant pedagogical curricula might be integrated in diverse coeducational PE and HPE settings to research *difference* by assisting ethnically diverse girls and boys in deconstructing media-driven mediated messages to shed light on "othering" processes. Such an effort would help them find affirming and confident identities in culturally relevant PE and HPE settings.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Global neoliberalism, which is driven by global market forces and financial imperatives and tends to reinforce inequality, has "high consequence risks" for ethnically diverse young people in "peripheral" spaces and places, and thus, it can lead to deeper disadvantage and discrimination (Apple et al., 2005). Discrimination against those identified as disadvantaged within the public health policy and discourse takes concrete forms when health disparities and embodiment of physical culture are the result of structural, economic, and socio-educational barriers. Thus, understanding ethnically diverse young people's embodiment and ways in which their embodiment is affected by pedagogical practices in PE, sport, fitness, health, and the media is important to developing effective strategies for including diverse lived experiences and realities. To sustain a social-justice agenda in today's increasingly

globalized world, first, we suggest that combining critical theoretical frameworks (e.g., CRT, feminisms) and innovative research methodologies (e.g., visual methodologies) can help researchers broaden frames of reference and explain multiple positionalities of physical culture, which, in turn, can provide valuable insights into the effects of the hidden curriculum of PE and healthism in schools and beyond (Azzarito and Hill 2013). Second, researching *difference* from globalized perspectives is vital to the survival of a social-justice agenda in which PE and HPE can work toward asserting and affirming a denied or alienated subjectivity. The voices of youths of different races, genders, and social classes must be heard and legitimated in PE and HPE as part of health education policies (Azzarito & Solmon 2005) to be able to provide effective learning environments that respect diversity and individuality.

Furthermore, as researchers and practitioners, we suggest critical reflection on pedagogical practices that normalize, regulate, and naturalize bodies to Whiteness and that alienate those non-conforming as ill or at risk, which in many cases is pure color-blindness. In many cases, these non-normative diverse identities in the context of PE and HPE curricula are ignored or channeled to play specific sports based on a dominant racialized discourse (i.e., cricket, American football, etc., based on skin color). Within these pedagogical contexts, hierarchies and power relations influence agency, while, in contrast, other bodies are legitimized and naturalized (lisahunter, 2013) based on the Whiteness discourse. For instance, in the context of Australia and the United Kingdom, for example, "curriculum policy skeptics" suggest that teachers do not read curriculum documents, with many tending to teach what feels appropriate and familiar thereby leading to a range of outcomes in terms of relevance, engagement, and learning. A contrary position is that our curriculum policies provide a vision for what HPE can and should be. Recent examples of "back-to-basics" shifts in school

curricula, such as England's School Games competition as part of what Ball (2013, p. 19) described its "cultural restorationism" policies, suggests that curriculum can indeed have some bite.

With a commitment to the importance and consequences of curriculum policy, the Australian HPE community has engaged in curriculum renewal (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012). Key ideas in the curriculum (educative intent, strengths-based approaches, development of health literacy, valuing of movement, inclusion of critical inquiry) together reflect priorities for a futures-oriented HPE experience for *every* student (Macdonald, 2013). These key ideas, which are intended to build personal and community capacities for lifelong, healthy active living, are complemented with national cross-curriculum priorities (e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures) and capabilities (e.g., personal and social capabilities; intercultural understanding) (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013).

In the U.S. context, working against corporate curricula, creating culturally relevant, community-based curricula that meet the specific needs of ethnically diverse young people in the local contexts of their daily lives might open up possibilities for them to find socio-educational spaces where their subjectivities are not denied but legitimated. In such spaces, their identities would not be marked in negative ways through Whiteness but honored, valued, and appreciated, enabling them to insert themselves safely as confident movers in affirmative ways for a lifelong active and healthy lifestyle. To come to grips with diversity in school PE and to challenge color-blind approaches upheld by globalization, CRT and postfeminism both insist that the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and ableism needs to be placed at the center of a critical analysis that can reject, deconstruct, and dismiss patterns of oppression and exclusion. In an effort to reframe and sustain the social justice

agenda in the current global times, the implementation of a *Body Curriculum* might engage young people in becoming active agents in negotiating issues of inequalities, Whiteness, bodies, and identities (Azzarito, 2014; 2016; in press). Drawing from CRT and postfeminism, the use of storytelling, and counter-storytelling narratives (Brooks, 2007; Gillborn, 2006), the *Body Curriculum* embraces the idea that young people have the potential to challenge the mainstream stereotypical construction of the body sustained by neoliberal globalization (Azzarito, 2016). Recent research on social justice and body issues in PE has demonstrated how the implementation of a *Body Curriculum* promotes critical thinking, encouraging both girls' and boys' "storytelling" that makes the complexity of their body experiences and practices visible and sheds light on the interlocking sites of oppression and exclusion they negotiate in their daily lives (Azzarito, 2014; 2015; in press). In these studies, the visuals (e.g., photography, media photos, and videos) the *Body Curriculum* used engaged girls and boys in thinking critically about issues of difference, invisibility, and exclusion, enabling them to express their subjective experiences of the body in contextualized, creative, and thoughtful ways. Young people's visual narratives of their own body experiences worked as counter-hegemonic narratives of the body against the media's hegemonic, gendered, and racialized representations of the body, raising self and social awareness around issues of difference and inequalities. The integration of a critical and sociocultural perspective into a *Body Curriculum* then can create possibilities for sustaining the social justice agenda in PE and HPE depoliticized by today's neoliberal global trends, creating possibilities for social change and transformation of power relations institutionalized in local and global sites.

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