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Social entrepreneurship as cultural intermediation: Negotiating support for breaking in the Olympics from Japan

ABSTRACT

With breaking set to debut at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, apprehensions have emerged around the World DanceSport Federation's scope of control and representation of the dance. However, some of Japan's breaking communities have placated these concerns as they hastily organize in anticipation. With the multi-dimensional appreciation for hip hop in Japan – visible across cultural communities, creative industries, non-governmental organizations, government agencies, small- to medium-sized businesses, global conglomerates and educational institutions – the work of passionate community leaders and cultural intermediaries is critical as ever in navigating institutional interventions in breaking's Olympic co-option and representation. This article draws on ethnographic research and a series interviews conducted in Japan during 2016–21 to explore the conditions that foster favourable local reception to breaking in the Olympics. Using the case study of b-boy Katsu One – the director of the Japan DanceSport Federation Breaking Division and Japan's breaking Olympic Coach – this article explores how Japan, an East Asian centre for hip hop globalization, is repositioning breaking

KEYWORDS

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dance
cultural and creative industries
cultural economy
industrialization
institutionalization

as a cultural disruptor within institutional frameworks as the art form enters the world of sport. Katsu's work highlights the importance of exerting agency between institutions and cultural communities in negotiating new perspectives and prospects for generations to come.

INTRODUCTION

With breaking set for its main series debut at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, the co-option of this athletic-artistic practice into the world of competitive global sport has been contentiously welcomed and critiqued. The recent institutionalization has also been complicated by the move to a self-governing model among action sports which was originally thought to provide more agency to communities over rules and regulations (Wheaton and Thorpe 2021). Unlike other new Olympic categories, like skateboarding, which has federated representation, breaking's Olympic association is dependent on the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) known typically for its ballroom association. Given the need for intermediating organizations recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the WDSF association enables breaking's co-option while simultaneously adding complexity to this fast-developing Olympic category. While they facilitate part of breakings' mainstream rediscovery and 'legitimization', the WDSF have also done so for their own ends – given their desire, and previous unsuccessful attempts, to induct ballroom dancesports into the Olympic Games.

While there is a notable divergence around breaking's Olympic adoption (Li and Vexler 2019), there is increasing support mounting for breaking in the Olympic Games from a committed group of practitioners working as intermediaries between national and global dancesport institutions and the hip hop cultural community. I have theorized such 'cultural intermediaries' who, in their cross-cultural capacity, are known to 'create new cultural businesses, tastes, flows of cultural products and ways of participating' that extend across the globe (Ng 2019: ii). There is a long history of these enterprising characters in hip hop culture who have worked between corporations, the state and cultural community to produce new experiences, opportunities, events and prospects for breakers (Ng 2019; Lombard 2012). Working across media, art and commerce, as well as between grassroots communities and the state, these individuals can appear in a number of roles, drawing on their cultural origins, intercultural fluencies, commercial practices and community ethics. Notably, their practices are diverse with many appearing as cultural and social entrepreneurs, activists and communitarians.

Cultural intermediaries have been of paramount importance, given the compressed timeline from the initial proposal to include breaking as a new Olympic sport in 2017 to its official debut at the 2018 Buenos Aires Youth Olympic Games (IOC 2018). They also play an instrumental role in co-ordinating efforts within their own countries, often tending to multidirectional negotiations between cultural communities and various stake-holding institutions such as local dancesport organizations, sponsors and governments. Working transnationally, these individuals developed systems such as the Trivium judging system (Fahr et al. 2018), support various WDSF World Breaking Championship events (WDSF 2021a, 2018) and offer public seminars as part of the WDSF Breaking Congress (2021a) – helping to establish the dancesport paradigm. With a multitude of organizations involved across

the globe, negotiating support for breaking in the Olympics is an increasingly multidirectional process – emphasizing the need for savvy and passionate cultural intermediaries. This research considers these salient navigators of the Olympic moment worthy of investigation, especially given the dearth of research currently available on dancesport, business and entrepreneurship in breaking communities, not least in the Asia-Pacific region.

In Japan, the role of cross-cultural intermediaries has been a critical part of developing local hip hop creative industries, social infrastructure for youth and, as will be shown in this article, a variety of new opportunities for dancers surrounding breaking's emerging dancesport and Olympic co-option. One intermediary of note is breaker Katsu One (Katsuyiki Ishikawa) from Tokyo, Japan. Katsu's experience as a breaker, mentor, community leader and social entrepreneur have all been essential for negotiating support for the Olympic co-option of breaking, while similarly looking to refract its hip hop contextuality into the emerging dancesport paradigm. Katsu is also a notable figure in the history of hip hop cultural and social work that has enabled breaking with the help of external partners in Japan – contributing to a local appreciation of commercial and state interventions of varying scale (Ng 2019). With the 2024 Paris Olympics fast approaching, intermediaries like Katsu now play a critical role in determining how the national cultural response is shaped, what degree their local communities are engaged with the Olympic moment and the prospects available to them.

Drawing on ethnographic research in Japan and interviews spanning six years (2016–22), this article explores breaking's latest institutionalization with respect to Katsu's notable intermediary work as a hip hop community leader, social entrepreneur, Olympic breaking coach and director of the Japanese DanceSport Federation (JDSF)'s breaking division. Set against a historical backdrop of social conservatism and policing social dance and delinquency in Japan (Yoder 2011; Veemees 2011; Hartley 2015), this case study considers developments associated with breaking's sportification and local social entrepreneurial practices that have enabled the hip hop practice to thrive in new ways. This research looks to new linkages between state, commerce and cultural community, with respect to Katsu's example, to ask: how do social entrepreneurs as cultural intermediaries negotiate support for breaking in the Olympics? Further, how does corporate and state intervention impact local receptivity to breaking in the Olympics? Given the size of the participating breaking community and industry in Japan (which dwarfs other Asia-Pacific locales, with perhaps the exception of South Korea), organization is no small feat. Katsu's intermediation therefore represents one of the most critical cultural practices in negotiating support for breaking's Olympic co-option from Tokyo.

LOCAL–GLOBAL HIP HOP IN JAPAN

Since its inception in the 1980s, Japan's historical embrace of hip hop culture has been one of relative intensity when compared to neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific. It remains one of the few sites in Asia which has seen significant scholarly investigations into its regional prominence as an alternative centre for hip hop globalization, as well as the localized practices that have developed aside a substantial creative industry (Ng 2019; Manabe 2015; Osumare 2007; Condry 2006). Japan's early adoption of hip hop can be traced back to the first wave of cultural exports from the United States such as the

feature film *Wild Style* (Ahearn 1983) or the touring live performances of Rock Steady Crew in the 1980s. Ian Condry's (2006, 2007, 2013) influential work historicized this Japanese connection to the United States with reference to key hubs in Tokyo, namely Shibuya for music and Yoyogi Park for dance. Given the increasing size of contemporary local hip hop communities and the slowly adapting creative industries, community leaders now approach hip hop in Japan with an enterprising intensity to enable increasingly sustainable types of participation and professionalization. It is unsurprising that this early adopting East Asian centre for hip hop arts has generated one of the world's most organized and prompt responses to breaking's DanceSport association and Olympic adoption.

Historically, the uptake of hip hop dance in Japan is also set against a backdrop of political conservatism and censorship. Prior to Second World War, Japan's home ministry was set on eliminating foreign cultural influences from local consumption, leading to a legislative war on the jazz and dance industry (Atkins 2001). Notably, the National Spiritual Mobilization campaign positioned dance as a 'bad influence on the nation's public morality' (Atkins 2001: 139), in a response to the emergent popularity of dance styles from the United States, dance halls and dance schools in the 1930s. A range of impasses were also felt by Japanese youth over the inter-war and post-war periods as public morality laws 風俗営業取締法 (*fuzoku eigyo torishimari ho*, commonly shortened to *fueiho*), and delinquency prevention programmes worked to further restrict youth expression in public (Yoder 2011: 21). The result has shaped how and where dance was performed and in what capacity dance was legitimated as a profession or as leisure. Until 1984, individuals under 20 were not allowed to attend dance schools, which were further restricted under the *fueiho* legislation until 1998, as dancing had typically been regarded with suspicion by the state, given the need for close proximity between partners. Notably it was the Japanese Ballroom Dance Federation (under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology [MEXT]) that instigated the first major revisions for social dance freedoms away from stringent legislation and public security review (Veemees 2011).

This history of conservatism towards social dance in Japan also has distinct cultural impacts, given the decades of socialization around notions of body and expression, which are now often met with 恥かしい (*hazukashii* used interchangeably for shyness, embarrassment and shame) from both practitioners and audiences (Veemees 2011: 11). These systemic impasses have created a particular discomfort around dance experienced in Japanese culture, especially around more intimate forms, problematizing perceptions of public social dance among the general public in Japan. However, these historical determinants now contrast with the overwhelming size of the practising Japanese breaking communities and the broader embrace of 'street dance' that is now present in schools, circles and clubs across Japan (Gilhooly 2019).

The historical complexity surrounding local-global intersections in music and dance in Japan have now made these forms critical ways Japanese practitioners negotiate intercultural distinctions. In the same way that Jazz artist Hino Tesumura suggested 'jazz is like a bridge for understanding between Japan and America' (cited in Atkins 2001: 276). Ian Condry argues that hip hop can 'deepen both American and Japanese understandings of difference – but also that a historical perspective on ideas of race and nation must be

acknowledged in order to comprehend the voices and messages that make hip-hop in Japan distinctive' (2007: 642).

Similarly we can look to how local distinctions surface in the Japanese response to breaking in the Olympics, and how they are linked to historical determinants, cultural norms and nationalism. While hip hop dislocates many in Japan from traditional cultural social norms – such as Confucian filial piety and contemporary collectivism (Miyanaga 1991) – by also bringing complex notions of originality and individualism into practice, its communitarian ethics otherwise compliment Japanese cultural attitudes. As such, hip hop, and in particular breaking, given its community-engaged ethos, offers a recalibration of the dominant ideology in Japan, that the 'harmony of the group should come before individual expression' (Condry 2013: 248), in favour of something more nuanced. Such nuance is similarly refracted in local hip hop entrepreneurship which balances individual gain with a reciprocal ethic of providing service to cultural communities.

These historical underpinnings and cultural specificities inform the critical paths that intermediaries take to create new outcomes for hip hop locally. One way this leadership manifests in contemporary breaking culture in Japan is through social entrepreneurship and programmes that demonstrate this prioritization of community outcomes over individual wealth generation. As the Olympics presents distinct opportunities for value creation – and by that same measure, value extraction – social entrepreneurs as intermediaries appear as one of the more crucial and desirable hip hop cultural actors and gatekeepers, given their experience in parlaying between industries at the local–global nexus.

HIP HOP SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS CULTURAL INTERMEDIATION

Social entrepreneurship is an increasingly typical and important type of cultural intermediary work appearing across the globe, given its potential to support communities in various ways. It has a number of unique characteristics which distinguish it from traditional entrepreneurship. For example, in contrast to the economic impetus the 'core assets [of the social entrepreneur] are forms of social capital – relationships, networks, trust and co-operation' (Leadbeater 1997: 11). The social entrepreneur often works between communities, government structures and private business on projects that tend to unmet social needs and social development.

This type of social capital approach is 'distinctive from the individualistic and commercially driven capitalist narrative' (Naudin 2018: 17) and instead tends to social issues through a type of entrepreneurial intervention. In hip hop, social entrepreneurship typically sees practitioners engaging in social action and philanthropy as part of their work, providing social infrastructure for hip hop cultural communities through events, workshops and other forms of support (Ng 2019; Lombard 2012). While social entrepreneurs have traditionally been discussed as a response to the failures of the state, the role of government is perhaps understated as they have become critical enablers of this type of work in hip hop communities (Ng 2019; Lombard 2012). The potential for this type of entrepreneurship to create social value makes it a particularly attractive approach to governments, often aligning with social objectives, by enabling communities and cultural practices that might be misunderstood, mismanaged or otherwise imagined subversive or delinquent by the state.

Many social entrepreneurs favour communalism and social capital creation in search of more egalitarian outcomes like human welfare, empowerment and community connection. In hip hop, these interventions appear in a number of ways – as workshops, youth programmes, community events or providing professional support and skill-building opportunities for practitioners (Ng 2019; Lombard 2012). Despite the economic potential of their practice, social entrepreneurs often focus on moral or ethical dimensions of their work, often taking only what they need, redistributing resources for other programmes that service communities under their purview. Kara-Jane Lombard (2012) details this redistribution in alignment with socialist principles as these resources are used for critical social infrastructure useful in empowering individuals. Accordingly, many social entrepreneurs also adopt this not-for-profit mentality to ensure greater sustainability of their programmes, relieving the need for communities to expend their limited resources. Katsu One similarly reflects on the creation of his social enterprise as a way to find a more economically sustainable model for community-engaged work:

> I knew that I would never be able to continue volunteering on my salary alone, so I decided that […] I would have to start my own business. […] I wanted to do something that would help the younger people around me, my generation, my seniors, and even myself, to make ends meet, to relieve the anxiety about what to do in the future, even if things are going well now.
>
> (Ishikawa in Yacheemi 2018, translation and brackets added)

This framework highlights a critical modality of engaging with state and commercial support to satisfy new social, cultural and economic ends where the community is unable, unwilling or uninterested. Such unprecedented and pressurized conditions for the development of systems and infrastructure around breaking and the Olympics call on intermediaries to respond with haste. In Japan, this response has benefitted from a local history of hip hop social entrepreneurship, specifically the work of Katsu One, which is concentrated in Kawasaki City in Kanagawa.

DEVELOPING REGIONAL HIP HOP GEOGRAPHIES THROUGH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Katsu One's social entrepreneurship and history of cross-cultural intermediation is one of the many contributing factors to Tokyo's fast development and receptivity to breaking's expansion into the Olympics. Katsu's preceding work in developing hip hop in Kawasaki city – where he created the social enterprise IAM Co. Ltd – established the networks that are now critical for the cross-pollination of hip hop and dancesport. His social entrepreneurship began in Kawasaki and was focused on one of Japan's most prominent breaking hubs and hip hop cultural geographies, Musashi-Mizonokuchi Station, which sees 'new b-boys and b-girls [visit] from all over the world: from Chile, from Brazil, from Korea, Russia, England, US, you know, every week' (Ishikawa 2022, interview with author). Despite the long history of breaking in the region, with participation dating back to Fireworks crew in the 1990s, the Musashi-Mizonokuchi community practice spot has regularly been at the mercy of police and conservative citizens who have taken issue with dance and music in this unofficial space. Paradoxically, this history of low-level oppression is

also useful in enabling cultures like hip hop, as it has prompted entrepreneurs like Katsu to find ways to resist or 'work the system' via cultural businesses in which authorities and a conservative citizenry have little recourse to interfere.

Katsu's WeAre[1] studios is symbolic of this very desire to find autonomy while also relieving perceived anxieties around subversion by permitting them an alternative space for congregation and participation. The studio is one characteristically social entrepreneurial intervention he has developed to circumvent these cultural tensions:

> Always we practice in the street, you know? Like, sometimes public people complain and shit and some police men come in. It's not [an] official place so that's why. Still, I love it, but I thought I need some base. If someone from far away […] comes to Mizonokuchi [station] to practice, what if police come? We can't practice. 'Okay, let's go to the studio'.
>
> (Ishikawa 2016 interview with author)

This is further remedied by the value that its government-endorsed subsidiary youth programmes produce, such as the annual hip hop kids camp that brings together local Japanese youth (with growing inter-city participation) alongside a network of mentors and interdisciplinary hip hop enthusiasts.[2] Programmes like the kids camp notably deliver social value and community connectivity through the cultivation and mobilization of social capital, alongside the development of technical (dance) and formal skills (cooking, cleaning, communicating and communitarian ethics), while providing economic outcomes for mentors who face precarious conditions for work.

Katsu's demonstrated ability to organize community events, to deliver social outcomes and to create employment for dancers via his social enterprise has established trust from the hip hop community, while seeing an increasing number of commercial partners, such as G-Shock, Columbia, Tokyu Sports and Sony Xperia, offering support and sponsorship for events, such as local breaking competitions like King of College, Dream Cup, Destructive Steps qualifiers or Vibeout. Katsu's work has also won the favour, endorsement and support of Mayor Norihiko Fukuda who lends Katsu's practice further legitimacy among mainstream audiences unaware of breaking and more broadly hip hop culture. Remarkably, Fukuda's interest is largely on hip hop dance, noting 'that Kawasaki has a culture of flexibility and nurturing, and I would like to think about how to create an environment that allows more dance' (in RB 2017). With respect to Katsu's work and the various events hosted in Kawasaki, Fukuda stated:

> I would love to see Kawasaki host a variety of events next year, and I would like to make it the Mecca (for hip hop dance) in Japan, as it seems to already be called this. It was a great opportunity for me to learn about breakdancing, and it was great for the administration to know that people are coming to Kawasaki from all over the country to dance.
>
> (Cited in RB 2017: n.pag., translation added)

With Katsu's social entrepreneurial work aligning with the creative ambitions of Kawasaki City, it has become a means for the government to incorporate hip hop into their city-building initiatives. Similarly, Katsu leverages this relationship to his advantage to dignify hip hop in new ways, while demonstrating the potential of his social entrepreneurial approach to other dancers as

1. Katsu has now passed on operations of WeAre studio to other dancers as he is no longer able to tend to the business while working on the Olympic project.
2. The kids camp was suspended throughout the period of this research due to COVID-19 lockdowns and public health measures that curbed social gathering.

many 'don't know how they can work with breaking' outside of dancing (2021, interview with author). Rather than assuming external partnership is inherently extractive or exploitative, Katsu explains his relationship with the state as mutually beneficial, noting that it's not just about 'how we can work with the city' but also 'how can the city work for us?' (2021, interview with author). Since 2016, this city support has become increasingly apparent as they have provided more access to funding for local events, opened new official spaces for dancers' participation (such as a local cultural centre), and supported the preservation of critical hip hop geographies like Musashi-Mizonokuchi Station.

Given the success of Katsu's skill set in attracting external state and commercial support for hip hop social and cultural projects, he now draws on this same intermediating capacity for negotiating support for breaking in the Olympics. Notably his networks of social capital developed from work across sectors as a practitioner, social entrepreneur and community leader have been critical for opening pathways for his success in developing breaking as a dancesport category. Among early adopters, Katsu has become a key figure in organizing, hosting and judging local and global 'dancesport' breaking events, while working on new institutional frameworks and securing new funding for breaking, following his appointment as the JDSF breaking division director in anticipation of the 2018 Youth Olympic Games (YOG).

NEGOTIATING SUPPORT FOR BREAKING IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

In the first volume of this Special Issue, Michael Holman (in Ng and Holman 2023) reflected on common apprehensions towards commercial intervention experienced in the hip hop community – historically rooted in caution in favour of an authenticity that rejects commercial intervention rather than seeing collaboration with external partners as fertile ground for dancers to organize and seize new prospects. As breaking's co-option has been strategically part of a broader attempt to bring in new audiences in the wake of a diminishing traditional Olympic viewership (Wheaton and Thorpe 2021), Katsu rightly identifies the potentials for intermediaries to also procure new opportunities for breakers in Japan. For Katsu, the Olympic co-option presents a set of potential opportunities for dancers distinguished from what exists within the current hip hop cultural domain. In our interview prior to the Olympic co-option in 2016, he had already considered how the Olympics might develop the breaking scene in Japan reflecting on skateboarding's similar trajectory from 'street scene' to 'action-sport' and the various government subsidies they received alongside mainstream cultural recognition. As a result, Katsu's social entrepreneurship similarly seeks out social, cultural and economic changes with a focus on 'pull[ing] in money from outside this scene' for 'the children and the culture to make it better' (2017, interview with author). Despite the willingness to work with commercial external partners such as the WDSF, Katsu's Olympic work aligns with typical social entrepreneurial philanthropic goals that look to enhance community conditions. In view of the above, his practice seeks to harness economic capital in the pursuit of alternative community-oriented outcomes, such as youth development, and to create less precarious conditions for careers in breaking.

Tending to community unrest ahead of breaking's Olympic debut at the YOG, Katsu campaigned for support through a series of public talks and engagements with hip hop community leaders. One example is the lecture titled 'Culture or sports? The Olympics and culture can coexist' presented at

the University of Tokyo's 'Street Culture Academy' seminar series hosted by hip hop not-for-profit Raw School (2017: n.pag., translation added). The session highlights breaking's extended modalities within the world of competitive sport – signalling the precedent which already exists in large commercial world cup events such as Red Bull BC One – while discussing new opportunities associated with Olympic co-option, setting new community ideals to pursue. In many ways Katsu asks the many pertinent questions around corporate intervention that many music cultures have typically rejected in fear of 'selling out' and exploitation (Hall and Jefferson 1975; Heath and Potter 2004), such as what can new partnerships and new modalities for participation offer (rather than take from) the hip hop community? To those who suggested the Olympics will 'destroy the culture', Katsu inverts these critiques, highlighting the importance of participation and representation to 'introduce our culture' into the Olympic and dancesport contexts as has been done with Red Bull (2021, interview with author).

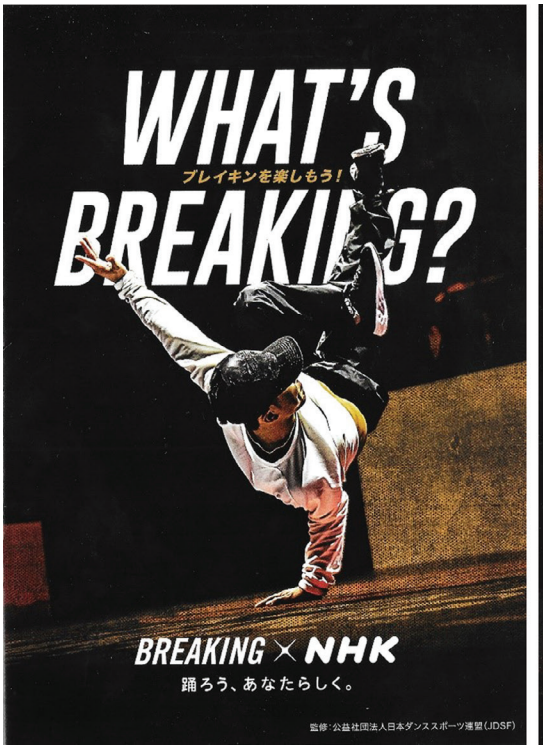
Red Bull once held a similarly contentious position to the WDSF but has now come to be appreciated as a pollinator of scenes, at times bringing holistic experiences of hip hop to mainstream audiences (see Charles 2018). While the Olympics requires new frameworks and shifts in the collective hip hop consciousness, Katsu argues that there are distinct opportunities that can benefit the breaking community at large. He notes the limited opportunities that currently exist for professionalization, given that 'even if you win a big competition' with breaking 'your life will not change that much, but you sacrifice a lot of things' (Ishikawa cited in Yacheemi 2018: n.pag., translation added). The sport modality seemingly broadens the roles for employment, events for participation, opportunities for recognition and reward, as well as diversifying flows of economic capital available to dancers. Japan's respect for Red Bull and other commercial organizations that have industrialized the scene – through providing support for events or sponsoring dancers, such as breakers Taisuke or Ami who now similarly advocate for the Olympics alongside Katsu – also inform the type of receptivity to the new dancesport framing among the broader breaking community in search of new opportunities.

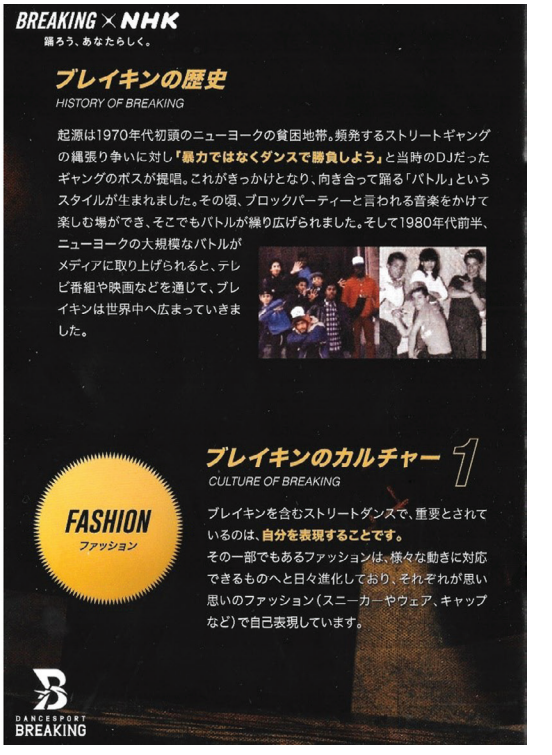
This process of working between receptive and resistant community contexts add to the nuance of his intermediation. Further it highlights the importance of savvy interpreters like Katsu who are establishing new markets and opportunities for the local breaking scene. This is especially important, given that the scene responses in Japan to breaking's Olympic future followed a similar disparate pattern to skateboarding, where many critics 'considered Olympic inclusion to be an unforgivable compromise' (Wheaton and Thorpe 2021: 177) and others saw it as a natural progression to the industrialization and commercialization that had already been underway for decades. The appreciation of commercial intervention is obvious within Japan's sizable hip hop industries where many dancers who lived their young adult lives practising breaking have, like skateboarders, 'transitioned into roles where their livelihood is dependent on the continual economic growth' (Wheaton and Thorpe 2021: 178) of the breaking industry. While Katsu similarly occupies a leadership role entangled with this industrial model his practice eschews some of the neo-liberal individualism in favour of a hip hop communitarian reciprocity, challenging the authenticity of remaining underfunded: 'If the scene becomes more prosperous because of this (the Olympics), we may then be able to make a living from it' (Ishikawa cited in Yameechi 2018: n.pag., translation added). His practice now rests on building community prospects, such

as shifting cultural perceptions around the legitimacy of breaking careers, providing social infrastructure for youth participation and leveraging the sport distinction to access new funding for breaking events and initiatives that bridge the arts–sport distinctions.

SPORT AS A LEGITIMATING FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONALIZATION

Athleticism has long been a mainstream tool for prestige building in the local and international spheres via elite events like the Olympics (Grix and Carmichael 2011) and is particularly useful for reframing practices like dance which were historically entangled with public morality legislation in Japan. Despite the dancesport category still developing, it has already brought breaking an alternative type of legitimacy to breaking in Japan, creating a farther-reaching normalized appreciation of the form amongst mainstream audiences and the federal government. Given that sport is familiar to audiences *en masse*, there has been increasing support from structural institutions, aligning with Katsu's intermediary practice of collaborating with city governments and corporations, who in turn help diversify and captivate new audiences in new and accessible ways. This expansion into the mainstream also enables Katsu to engage with media to not only discuss dancesport in the Olympics but also recount breaking's traditions and historical connections to the South Bronx (Nishimura 2022; Ueshima 2021).





Figures 1 and 2: Pages from an educational resource distributed by the JDSF in partnership with Japan's largest public broadcaster the NHK, 2023.

His directorship at the JDSF has also seen to their communications retaining connections to breaking's cultural history as a hip hop cultural practice, referencing dancesport only as its newest mainstream extension (JDSF 2020) – unlike official dancesport federations elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific (e.g. in Australia, Singapore, Thailand or Malaysia) which at the time of writing this article make no effort to address the form's cultural history.

As the dancesport paradigm opens up a new mainstream discourse around breaking and its cultural history in Japan, it also appears useful in challenging conservative parental cultural norms which reject breaking and street-dance as a legitimate career pathway. With a history of legislative impasses that have also restricted a culture of social dance in Japan, the transformation of leisure into competitive sport has been one way to address some of the conservatism around the practice, study and watching of dance (Veemees 2011). Given this controversial path for acceptance for other popular dance forms in Japanese society, the dancesport reimagining represents an important development for broader social acceptance of a number of contextualities, not least 'battle culture' (JDSF 2020). The Olympic connection to dancesport also imbues the dance with cultural capital recognizable outside of hip hop culture, legitimating once marginalized practices. In China, BMX was lent similar legitimacy and mainstream recognition through its Olympic co-optation, shifting parental concerns around action-sport careers (Ding 2019). Given the Olympics also brings with it alternative markers of prestige that are supported, endorsed and validated by grassroots community leaders like Katsu, authenticity appears fluid, subjective and negotiated from both sides having impacts within and outside of the hip hop community.

One outcome of Katsu's intermediation as the JDSF breaking director is the overlap between creative and sport employment which further diversifies professional pathways available to dancers. This is especially significant as full-time dance-related careers appear scarce in relation to the sizable cohort of breakers in Japan. Furthermore, individuals who are unable to amass the sufficient skill, reputation or cultural capital – which are important legitimating resources for hip hop entrepreneurs – also face issues with precarity in a gig economy. For Katsu, the Olympic moment presents a unique opportunity to create new economic outcomes as labour volunteered and motivated by the communitarian ethics that hold scenes together often do not provide enough support for the increasing amount of dancers looking to find economic stability. In this instance, breaking's expansion is consistent with other music scenes where do-it-yourself grassroots approaches typically make way for entrepreneurial intervention and industrialization (Peterson and Bennett 2004). While sportification seemingly dislocates the dance from its original hip hop contexts, it otherwise enables a broader industry of professionalization in line with the Olympic adoption. Expanding traditional trajectories from practitioner to judge, teacher, event manager or business owner, sportification also offers dancers an opportunity to leverage their expertise outside of the hip hop field by realigning their skills for specialization in dancesport (Yang et al. 2022: 3). A diversity of roles have stemmed from this process as dancers appear in new roles in Japan such as coaches, physiotherapists, sport-scientists, researchers and an array of other supporting roles that engage with breaking in new ways. With sport finance already surfacing in Japan, Katsu's intermediary work now paves the way for new economic prospects for the breaking community that has for long been 'lacking commodity exchange-value' (Fogarty 2012: 449).

EXPANDING STATE SUBSIDIZATION AND ECONOMIC OUTCOMES OF INTERMEDIATION

Today, dancers and event managers benefit from funding allocated to both arts and sport industries provided by both federal institutions like the MEXT and regional city governments (KC 2018) – a pattern reprised, albeit unevenly, elsewhere across the world (Wheaton and Thorpe 2021). New funding offers significant expansion in city-based initiatives that support young breakers in Japan, while offering employment to established dancers. This is particularly important as few social entrepreneurs are privy to ongoing or scalable arts-funding for hip hop programmes, imparting cyclical pressure on them to volunteer their own resources, or seek out new funding that is often scarce, highly competitive and held captive by organizational or institutional gatekeepers. With commercial and state partners investing in breaking across Japan, Katsu's work with the JDSF and Kawasaki City government, leverages the city's historical hip hop prominence, hip hop partnerships and its production of high-level competitive dancers (Red Bull BC One competitors like Ami and Taisuke, as well as Olympian breaker Ram) to secure significant funding for events and social infrastructural development.

With greater recognition across Japan, Katsu has also supported hip hop cultural and dancesport events with the help of state-sports funding, such as the 2018 WESF Youth Breaking Championships in Kawasaki, and the annual Kawasaki Street Culture Festival (ISFK 2018–present) out of which he runs the Super Break international breaking competition.

Figure 3: Imagery from the Kawasaki City's ISFK website, 2021.

The city has also utilized these events for their own city-building purposes and plans for cultural tourism which also benefit from federal initiatives such as the 'Promotion and Enhancement Project for Expanding Sports Tourism Demand' that explicitly highlights breaking as popular Olympic category (JSA 2021). Funding also appears to be mobilized by the Kawasaki City government, which has already allocated over 20 million yen (2022–24) to the development and operations of a cultural and creative youth centre (1,179.77 m^2) in partnership with local infrastructural developer Keihin Electric Express Railway Company, Ltd (KC 2021a).

Emerging as a prominent region for dancesport, Kawasaki City has also established the 'Community Development through the Dissemination of Youth Culture' policy that focuses on developing new programmes, spaces and events for youth participation, alongside other Olympic urban-sport categories (KC 2018). This has benefitted events like the ISFK which is able to leverage the expertise and resources from the Japan Double Dutch Association, Kawasaki Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Kawasaki City Tourism Association. Other regional development initiatives see state subsidies for registered businesses (like Katsu's previous social enterprise) to create and run breaking events in Kawasaki to boost local community engagement while raising awareness of breaking alongside other urban-sport categories (KC 2021b). With the state providing support via social infrastructural investment, it also alleviates pressure on independent social enterprise owners like Katsu who once tended to this gap under much more precarious contexts. Such notable increases in the willingness of the state and commercial partners also have the potential to free up scarce resources being volunteered by social entrepreneurs and the broader hip hop cultural community for programmes which tend to other important community needs.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated social entrepreneurship as an intermediary practice useful for negotiating and harnessing state and commercial support for breaking in Japan. While funding accounts for one key way the state aims to support cultural and social entrepreneurship in Japan, it is the symbolic partnerships with influential public figures, politicians and administrative offices that impact the speed that intermediaries are able to deliver community-oriented outcomes and programs. In the case of Katsu One, one of Japan's most esteemed breakers and community leaders, his entrepreneurial interventions in the scene have been instrumental for brokering and leveraging partnerships for a range of outcomes that now impact local hip hop communities across the nation. Katsu's work with city government and commercial enterprises in negotiating support for breaking in the Olympics further highlights the role of external partnership in pollinating hip hop in new ways. Kawasaki has become a significant location for these very reasons, rapidly developing as a consequence of this very type of intermediary work and embrace of collaborations around hip hop dance and its new dancesport modality.

Despite the success in contributing to new pathways for the legitimization of hip hop dance as sport, there are of course risks associated with this type of work. Social entrepreneurs like Katsu have to be aware of the potential shortcomings in communicating hip hop's communitarian ethos through these types of partnerships. In this case he works to take calculated risks that can benefit

and strengthen community alongside providing new avenues to make a living through breaking. The harnessing of the sport paradigm for breaking has opened up an entirely new mainstream discourse around the dance, its history and its evolving formats that offers complexity to global hip hop culture and, in Japan, legitimizes the cultural form in new ways. The collaboration with governments and dancesport organizations has been critical for mediating hip hop, and its historical and emerging practices through different channels – captivating new audiences while negotiating breaking's value against a historical conservatism around dance. At the very least, breaking has been dignified in new ways with shifts in mainstream cultural perceptions around youth practices, as the state increasingly supports the dance's development and invests in social infrastructure for youth. This has further benefitted from federal funding for dancesport – which is in part a consequence of intermediaries like Katsu – which supports an increasingly viable new domain for employment, community events and cultural tourism. Given that the dancesport remains a burgeoning space and that this case study focuses on how social entrepreneurship has impacted local receptivity to breaking's Olympic co-option in Japan, further investigation and research beyond what is explored in this article is still necessary.

While the WDSF (and their national representatives) have broached a new-found legitimization with the help of hip hops' cultural intermediaries, the organization is also positioned as an interceding force which in part rejects breaking's autonomy and denies bids for true self-governance on a global scale. The JDSF is notably a more receptive national division that contrasts with other global counterparts. They demonstrate a particular willingness to engage breaking practitioners as representatives of their own culture and traditions at an institutional level. It is perhaps because of this that this type of hybrid communitarian–commercial relationship has also been less threatening in Japan. Despite this, the centrality of the WDSF may remain unchangeable for the foreseeable future making the work of intermediaries as social entrepreneurs as important as ever for negotiating how the dance is represented and understood within and outside of these organizations. Already adapting at a hastened pace while working with these gatekeepers to secure new outcomes for the hip hop community, cultural intermediaries have never been more critical for breaking culture. There are, however, a number of uncertainties around the future of breaking in the Olympics despite the impressive foundations laid for its success in receptive early adopting nations like Japan. It is yet to be seen if the Olympic category continues beyond the 2024 Paris games, but at the very least some intermediaries like Katsu are hopeful for a scene that sees beyond the art–sport distinctions and seizes the opportunities for a more sustainable future.

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