

Article

## “Community Cup, We Are a Big Family”: Examining Social Inclusion and Acculturation of Newcomers to Canada through a Participatory Sport Event

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### Abstract

While sport is widely understood to produce positive social outcomes for communities, such as the inclusion of diverse and marginalized groups, little researched has focused on the specific processes through which these outcomes may or may not be occurring. In this paper, we discuss the Community Cup program, and specifically a participatory sport event which seeks to connect newcomers to Canada (recent immigrants and refugees) in order to build capacity, connect communities, and facilitate further avenues to participation in community life. For this research, we worked collaboratively with the program to conduct an intrinsic case study, utilizing participant observation, document analysis, focus group, and semi-structured interviews. We discuss how the structure and organization of the event influences participants' experiences and consequently how this impacts the adaptation and acculturation processes. Using Donnelly and Coakley's (2002) cornerstones of social inclusion and Berry's (1992) framework for understanding acculturation, we critically discuss the ways that the participatory sport event may provide an avenue for inclusion of newcomers, as well as the aspects of inclusion that the event does not address. While exploratory in nature, this paper begins to unpack the complex process of how inclusion may or may not be facilitated through sport, as well discussing the role of the management of these sporting practices. Furthermore, based on our discussion, we offer suggestions for sport event managers to improve the design and implementation of programming offered for diverse/newcomer populations.

### Keywords

cultural/ethnic minorities; events; inclusion; multiculturalism; sport management

### Issue

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### 1. Introduction

Sport is increasingly being used as a catalyst for building capacity, and developing healthy, inclusive communities (e.g., Casey, Payne, & Eime, 2009; Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Misener & Mason, 2006; Schulenkorf &

Edwards, 2012). It is widely believed that sport and physical recreation can positively contribute to the overall health and well being of individuals in these communities, and yet very little is actually known about the management of these types of projects and programs in order to attain positive social outcomes.

Further, there is also very little known about the experiences of the participants in community-based participatory events that are being utilized to engage and integrate typically excluded members of their communities. It is necessary to understand both the managerial processes and participant experiences in order to critically reflect on the role and value of sport for social change projects (Levermore, 2010). With this in mind, we worked collaboratively with a community-based organization that utilizes sport as a tool for social inclusion of newcomers to Canada (recent immigrants and refugees): the Community Cup. We focused our research on the role of an annual participatory sport event run by this program, which aims to bring newcomers together to build capacity, connect communities, and facilitate further avenues to participation in community life. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine how a participatory sporting event can influence the acculturation processes of newcomers to Canada. In particular, we are interested in the value and perceptions placed on involvement in the event for newcomers, as framed through the lens of social inclusion. In this paper, we utilize a case study of the Community Cup soccer tournament, held in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada to address the following research objectives: (a) to examine the potential of sport to play a role in social inclusion for newcomers to Canada, and (b) to examine participants' experiences in this participatory sport event, and the potential of sport events (and organizational practices related to these events) to play a role in newcomers' transitional and acculturation experiences.

## 2. Literature Review—Sport as a Driver of Social Inclusion

Participation in sport events can provide opportunities for people to come together to socialize and be entertained, and to develop contacts, friendships and networks (Misener & Mason, 2006). The outcomes of these activities can be improved community spirit and pride, enhancement of cultural traditions, attitudes, beliefs and values, intercultural learning, and potentially enhanced social capital (Green, 2001; Misener & Mason, 2006; O'Brien, 2007; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2013). In other words, from a purely positive perspective, sport events can act as a driver of social inclusion and integration into community life (Kidd, 2008; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). However, more critical approaches to the study of sport emphasize that sport in and of itself is not a sufficient condition for any social outcome and more scrutiny in the methods of monitoring and evaluating outcomes is necessary (Coalter, 2010; Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). Despite the increasingly widespread work on sport events for community and social impact, little research has addressed the potential value of sport events, in particular participatory sport events (i.e., event where participants are actively

involved in playing sport rather than merely observing the sport event as a spectator), such as the Community Cup, in the social inclusion of newcomers. In order to provide a nuanced discussion, we first outline the demographic and political context in which the Community Cup was developed in order to situate the guiding body of literature on the use of sport and leisure for inclusion.

Berry (1992) described the process of acculturation as both a group and individual process of culture change that occurs as a result of continuous or repeated interactions between two or more groups. More specifically, Berry (1992) also identified acculturation strategies of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Based on the current policy framework, the Canadian government has articulated a desire for an integrative approach to acculturation throughout all sectors of Canadian civil society. Notably, Canadian immigration policies and services are supported through social policy programs at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. However, as noted by Stodolska and Alexandris (2004), "despite the growing interest in issues of immigrant leisure, this strand of research remains in an early stage of development" (p. 50). Leisure and sport related research pertaining to newcomer populations has generally focused on the nature of immigrants' participation, and the factors influencing that participation, particularly constraints such as discrimination, language, and finances (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Taylor & Frisby, 2010; Taylor & Toohey, 2001; Yu & Berryman, 1996).

### 2.1. *The Role of Leisure and Sport in Community*

Research has demonstrated that leisure seems to play a key role in new immigrants' adaptation to stressors and challenges in a new environment (Sharaievska, Stodolska, Shinew, & Kim, 2010; Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004; Tirone, Livingston, Miller, & Smith, 2010). It is readily believed that involvement in sport and physical activity can assist with positive identity construction, social inclusion, and the adaptation processes that recent immigrant youth face (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). However, there is actually very little tangible evidence, beyond anecdotes and inconclusive research that demonstrates sport has the potential to fulfill this role in communities.

In the European context, Amara, Aquilina, Henry and Taylor (2004) demonstrated that the contribution of sport, as an instrument of informal education, to the multicultural dialogue between young people is an important element in promoting the integration of recent immigrants. Their research provided some evidence that sport can play a role in breaking the state of isolation and depression that newcomers go through during their settlement processes. While there is some evidence to suggest that sport and leisure can play a role in adaptation processes of newcomers, research also

demonstrates that newcomers typically are significantly less involved in physical activity. The Canadian Community Health Surveys (Ali, McDermott, & Gravel, 2004; O'Driscoll, Banting, Borkoles, Eime, & Polman, 2013) confirmed lower levels of physical activity undertaken in leisure time by immigrants compared with non-immigrants, and a decline in immigrant health status directly related to socioeconomic, political, and cultural transitions (Frisby, 2011).

All too often, immigrants are blamed for their lack of participation, which ignores the constraints to participation for those who may be unfamiliar with policies and delivery systems in the sport and recreation sectors. Frisby (2011) also noted that new immigrants often face barriers to participation including language, culture of gender, and class variations. Further, the lack of pathways to participation is a significant deterrent to participation and thus finding ways to bring immigrants together around leisure opportunities is fundamental to successful engagement in physical activity. In the international context, there has recently been much attention focused on programs that work to use sport for development and/or peace (Coalter, 2013; Kidd, 2008). Indeed, around the world, sport-based programs are used to facilitate a variety of outcomes, some of which include peaceful coexistence (e.g., the Football 4 Peace Program in Israel/Palestine; Sugden, 2006). While these programs often seek to accomplish ambitious goals, there are also many criticisms around practices of monitoring and evaluating outcomes of these programs as well as their neo-imperialist nature (see Coalter, 2013). For example, Darnell (2010) purported that the philosophical (neo-liberal) underpinnings of international development through sport programs work without questioning social, cultural, and political contexts which preclude the very inequalities that these programs seek to address, thus making them less effective for promoting "development" or "social change". While less attention has been given to similar programs that seek to facilitate social outcomes in developed countries, such as the Community Cup, comparable critiques can be applied to leisure services agencies whose operational practices (e.g., focusing on revenue production and promotion of customer loyalty) prevent them from meeting the needs of disenfranchised groups (Scott, 2000). Similarly, Kelly (2011) discussed the effectiveness of sport-based social inclusion interventions in the United Kingdom, noting the limited effect that sport based interventions have on decreasing social exclusion, as well as their risk in de-emphasizing social inequalities and highlighting personal deficits. In order to situate the program and our research, we elaborate on the Canadian context in which the program operates.

## 2.2. Canadian Political Context

Canada was the first country in the world to adopt a

Multiculturalism Policy (Government of Canada, 2013). The Federal Government's approach to diversity has evolved over the years and is embedded within a broad policy and legislative framework. Multiculturalism is about ensuring that citizens are empowered to retain their ethnic identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging in their new communities. In recent years, there has been a shift in the rhetoric of immigration policies focusing on multiculturalism whereby there is a much greater expectation that the arrival of people and their integration into Canada maximizes their contribution to the country while protecting the health, safety, and security of Canadians (Government of Canada, 2013). The focus of multiculturalism policy in Canada has been about preservation of racial and ethnic identities ensuring support for all cultures, assisting newcomers in navigating constraints to participation in society, and promoting opportunities for experiencing socially inclusive activities. Thus, sport and leisure constitute an area to which Canadians with diverse backgrounds should have equitable access.

In Canada, the Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada, 1998) is a guiding framework for integration and inclusion of newcomers to Canada. In essence, this act is about recognizing and promoting the understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity of Canadian society, while acknowledging the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage. Foundational to this opportunity is the promotion of full and equitable participation of individuals in society, and attempts to remove barriers to participation. This approach is distinctive in that it recognizes the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and encourages social, cultural, economic, and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character. This approach may include encouraging understanding and creativity through respectful interactions to promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of cultures. In this way, it would seem vital to ensure that there are specific opportunities for newcomers to interact and celebrate their culture while learning about opportunities for better integration into Canadian societies (Government of Canada, 1998).

## 2.3. Social Inclusion

Given the aforementioned discussion of multiculturalism in Canada, it seems logical to utilize the theoretical notion of social inclusion to frame our analysis. Importantly, when social inclusion theory is considered in relation to multiculturalism policy, it takes on a number of different meanings. The processes of social inclusion can also be understood in the context of integration and individual freedoms, which allows for the development of new skills and knowledge about the new

country. In the context of sport and recreation, Kelly (2011) discussed the limited effectiveness of sport-based intervention in providing pathways to education and employment in the UK, and cautioned against the ways that these individualized programs risk problematizing individual deficits rather than addressing structural inequalities. In regards to sport organizations, Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) have advocated for an organizational culture of diversity which encourages and celebrates unique cultural positions within an organization, as opposed to traditional organizational cultures of similarity that promote assimilation to an expected norm. This culture of diversity is proposed as an avenue for sports organizations to diversify their operations and support the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Interestingly, the two aforementioned examples (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Kelly, 2011) highlight the importance of considering the individual as well as the environment when discussing social inclusion and diverse groups of people.

In regards to acculturation, Berry (1992) noted two important issues (which can be considered at the individual or environmental level) faced by migrants that may contribute to acculturative stress: (a) the importance of retaining ethnic distinctiveness, and (b) the desirability of inter-ethnic and societal connectivity. Further, the acculturation process can be understood at three different levels: a) psychological; b) sociocultural; and c) economic. It is then not only about one level of adaptation but about how individuals find good health, well being and sense of self, and how they are able to navigate society in a productive and supported manner. This process is also mediated by the ability to find satisfactory financial security. As Berry pointed out, together different experiences in adaptation will influence the overall acculturation process. Thus, in order to facilitate an inclusive environment that reflects an integrative approach to acculturation, a desire to both maintain ethnic distinctiveness, and interact with other ethnic groups should be facilitated and encouraged, along with considering the dynamic and multifaceted nature of acculturation. While programs that align with this approach to acculturation reflect the current policy approach to multiculturalism in Canada, it is important to note that it is not necessarily an ideal approach for all individuals or communities. For example, a program that encourages an integrative approach to acculturation may not be effective for individuals/communities that do not value or support inter-ethnic and societal contact. This sort of misalignment may result in varying adaptation/acculturation experiences, which will not lead to the intended experience of integration. While facilitating an integrative approach to acculturation may be effective for some individuals in some communities, it is clear from the literature reviewed above that single approach programs are likely to experience limited success in reaching all newcomers effectively.

In regards to sport and recreation Donnelly and Coakley (2002) drew upon the well-recognized five cornerstones of inclusion: (1) valued recognition, (2) human development, (3) involvement and engagement, (4) proximity, and (5) material well-being. Valued recognition refers to the acknowledgment and respect of individual and group distinctiveness, while human development refers to the encouragement of diverse talents, skills, capacities, and choices and their recognition as worthwhile (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). Involvement and engagement refers to ensuring the necessary support and encouragement for individuals to be involved in decision-making processes that have implications for themselves, their families, and their communities. Proximity is discussed as the opportunity for individuals and groups to interact in shared social and physical spaces, and material well-being refers to the condition of having the resources available to fully participate in community life (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). It is important to note that these cornerstones are guidelines proposed to promote social inclusion in the sense that they will not promote social exclusion. Indeed, it is necessary to distinguish the differences between inclusive programming and that which promotes social inclusion and/or integration. While these cornerstones for inclusion do not map directly onto modern sport practices (i.e., simply engaging in sport does not facilitate inclusion), we argue below that the innovative structure of the Community Cup event lends to a discussion of all five of these cornerstones, consequently enabling a platform (inclusive sport experiences), where an integrative approach to acculturation may then be realized in a sport context. In order to assess this possibility, we employed a case study methodology to examine the potential of sport to facilitate inclusion by exploring the conditions created by the Community Cup Soccer Tournament and the resulting newcomer participants' experiences at the event.

### 3. Methodology

For this study, we utilized an intrinsic case study methodology and thus employed multiple methods to collect data (Yin, 2014). These methods included overt participant observation at the Community Cup, document analysis of Community Cup materials, as well as semi-structured and focus group interviews with organizers, volunteers, and participants of the event.

The first author participated in the 2012 Community Cup event in Ottawa, Ontario, (the original and most established event location) as a volunteer and subsequently remained with the organization, acting in a support role for the planning of other programming (not the soccer tournament) throughout 2013. The second author observed the 2013 event in London, Ontario (a pilot site for the expansion of the event) as a spectator. In both cases, the authors engaged in overt

participant observation of the event and the day's activities. Observing two separate events in different cities allowed for a rich discussion of the diverse management practices and their impact on the potential for these events to produce positive social change, that is, to facilitate the acculturation process of newcomers. It should be noted that while we observed the event in London, the data we discuss here is focused only on the Ottawa event due to the nature and structure of the events. The third author is the program manager of the Community Cup and was involved throughout the research design, data collection, and analysis processes. Throughout the organizing process, the authors conducted document analysis of Community Cup material including, but not limited to: promotional material (flyers, brochures, web pages, social media, etc.), meeting minutes, volunteer manuals and resources, as well as past evaluations and assessments (conducted by the host organization).

Following the 2013 event, we also interviewed organizers, volunteers, and participants of the Community Cup. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two staff assigned to the Community Cup, one of which was the founder and manager of the event. In these interviews, we discussed the structure and organization of the tournament, the role and impact of sport and recreation opportunities for newcomers, as well as the intricacies of working with newcomer populations, both generally and specifically in regards to sport and recreation. Focus groups were also conducted with nine newcomers (eight of whom were immigrants and one refugee) who were involved with the Community Cup in various capacities including players ( $n = 3$ ), volunteers ( $n = 5$ ), and a coach (who runs a pickup soccer program for newcomer youth and organizes one or two teams each year for the event). Participants were recruited based on availability and included six males and three females originating from a variety of geographical locations (Burundi, Russia, China, Argentina, Algeria, the United Kingdom, Somalia, and Senegal). Although the Community Cup focuses specifically on newcomers within their first three years in Canada, in recruiting these participants, we did not limit our search so as to gain representation of a variety of newcomers who could speak to the role of sport and recreation at different stages of the acculturation process. Thus, our participants included four newcomers in their first year in Canada, one who came between one and three years prior to the interview, and four newcomers who lived in Canada for more than three years. The newcomer participants included students (who had immigrated with their families), recent immigrants, as well as one refugee. In these focus groups, we discussed sport and recreation in different contexts (country of origin vs. in Canada), the role of sport and recreation in the adaptation/acculturation process, as well as the newcomers' experiences with the Commu-

nity Cup. Following the interviews, all data were compiled and subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For our analysis, the first author coded transcripts from the interviews and focus groups as well as notes taken during observations. From these codes the first author then established higher order themes (e.g., organizational practices, sport participation, etc.). These themes were then verified and discussed by the second and third authors in relation to their experience, observations, and the previously reviewed literature. This process also allowed us to assign these themes clear and concise names that were reflective of the data collected. As a final step we selected the most meaningful excerpts from the transcripts and notes that reflected the data collected.

We would also like to make a brief note regarding some of the difficulties we faced in recruiting newcomer participants for this study. The difficulties we faced are not dissimilar to others who have done research with immigrant populations. For example, Tirone et al.'s (2010) research with immigrant sport key informants in eastern Canada demonstrated similar constraints resulting in a sample of only six. In attempt to alleviate some of the constraints of previous research, we recruited through a targeted exit survey distributed after the 2013 event with verbal confirmation of participants. Despite scheduling and confirming participants, we had a turnout of less than ten percent. Subsequently, we had more success in recruiting participants through a snowball sampling method (which led to four participants attending focus groups on the same day that they were called) and then by organizing a game of pickup soccer in a local park (where we recruited another four participants), the latter of which was suggested by the Community Cup organizers. We raise this point in order to highlight the tensions that arise between "gold-standard" procedures (e.g., random sampling) and the realities of working with diverse populations. While recruiting from the entire pool of newcomer participants at the tournament would seem to be the most appropriate method of recruitment, it proved to be largely ineffective. It should be noted that creative recruitment strategies developed with input from the communities in which the research is happening proved to be more effective. While some may criticize these recruitment strategies, as they do not provide a "representative" or adequate sample, we argue that this was necessary to recruit any sample at all. In order to mitigate some of the shortcomings in sampling, we have attempted to provide rich insights into participants' experiences through a contextualization of interviews by including extensive descriptions of the program management and the way that these practices relate to participants experiences. Furthermore, themes that emerged from the data collected regarding participant experiences were discussed with the program staff, who in many cases had developed close



relationships with program participants, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the data collected. While program staff and participants were familiar with each other, the data were discussed in general rather than in relation to specific cases (in the interest of confidentiality). Given the exploratory nature of this study, the sample that we obtained along with the observational and document data collected was deemed sufficient to explore our research objectives.

#### **4. The Community Cup Event: Organizational Characteristics**

Given many of the unique characteristics of the Community Cup, we feel that it is pertinent to include a brief description of the history, structure, and current operating and organizational practices of the event and organization. This information is crucial to understand as it maps directly on to what many of the participants highlighted as important aspects of the tournament that influenced their experiences with the event and consequently their acculturation in Canadian society.

##### *4.1. Origin and History*

The Community Cup soccer tournament was first organized in 2005. Originally, the event was conceived to remedy a shortage of local male mentors in a buddy program that matched newcomers with locals to create social networks. A sport event was perceived as a valuable way to create social opportunities between newcomers and local residents without the “awkward feelings of commitment” (Program Manager). As the event developed into an annual tournament and newcomers became engaged in the planning process, a common trend was noted in that newcomers often devoted the majority of their available time to writing resumes and searching for new/better employment while neglecting important social and physical health promoting activities such as sport and/or exercise. As described by the Program Manager newcomers indicated that they had “no time to “selfishly” spend on sports.” Thus, the Community Cup was organized as a way of connecting these newcomers to local professionals, adding experience to their resumes, and encouraging participation in sport in a friendly and welcoming environment that would enhance their professional opportunities. After the tournament developed into an annual event, the Community Cup’s capacity broadened to include connecting newcomers not only to local professionals, but also to a variety of local sport and recreation organizations and opportunities, while also providing many newcomers with volunteer opportunities through the organization of the event, a valuable asset for those looking to improve their resume. As noted in the program’s funding agreement:

The project will use community engagement activities to: expand social networks for immigrants and refugees; actively promote civic participation of newcomers as volunteers; increase the capacity of organizations to create partnerships; use public spaces to facilitate the integration of newcomers and the community-at-large; use shared interests to engage people with dissimilar backgrounds.

In order to achieve these ambitious goals, the Community Cup adopted some innovative management practices and organizational features.

##### *4.2. Structure and Organization*

An interesting characteristic of the Community Cup is that the organization strives to achieve its goal of connecting newcomers not only through participation in sport, but also through the organization of the sporting event. The Community Cup is organized each year by over 20 planning teams, each of which is required to have at least one newcomer and one local volunteer, and ideally a post-secondary student. These planning teams work together, meeting and communicating for an average of six months on specific tasks and key aspects of the event’s organization. All participants are residents of Ottawa and have access to meeting rooms in the centre where the Community Cup is located. These tasks and projects require that planning teams work together, and develop relationships with each other, as well as with other community members and organizations, thus achieving the goal of connecting participants through the volunteer process. It must also be noted, that in order to recruit and manage this number of volunteers, particularly from such an unpredictable demographic (i.e., always changing, varying levels of education/experience/language skills, having many other priorities), requires an organizational culture that strongly values inclusion and providing a welcoming environment. Indeed, as the reason many newcomers volunteer is to gain experience to eventually find employment, often the success of the program is contingent upon newcomer volunteers not returning as they secure employment and no longer have the motivation or time to invest in the program. That is, in an ideal scenario, a Newcomer who volunteers with the Community Cup to get experience in order to obtain employment, and then obtains this employment, will no longer volunteer and therefore exit the program achieving the desired outcome. Therefore, the success of the program is often inversely proportional to the number of returning volunteers, contrary to traditional organizational models, which rely on volunteer retention and repeat customers. Without the dedication to non-judgmental and friendly organizational practices, success in recruiting and engaging these volunteers would prove extremely difficult.

Another unique characteristic of the Community Cup is the way that the sport is played during the tournament. The rules of the tournament also reinforce the Community Cup's values of being a welcoming and inclusive organization. Rather than standard soccer rules, there are several variations that are made to the version of the sport played at the Community Cup. Firstly, games are played on a field half the size of a standard pitch, teams field seven players at a time, two of which must identify as female, and the nets are small practice nets, thus eliminating the keeper position. There are also no formal referees for games played at the Community Cup, rather two volunteers are assigned as judges who award each team spirit points for their style of play and attitude throughout the match. In order to reinforce the importance of friendly play, interaction, and positive attitudes, the outcome of each match is based predominately on the number of spirit points a team earns; whereas scoring more goals can earn a team up to five points, the way they play the game can earn them up to another five points. Therefore, the way the game is played is equally as important as the number of goals scored. This scoring method allows teams with less experience, skill, or physical prowess to excel in the game and further reinforces the goals of the Community Cup. Tournament participants may register to play as a team or as an individual and be placed on a team, and in fact, many corporate organizations register teams with fewer players than required and request to have individual newcomers added to their team in the spirit of the event. The result of these unorthodox characteristics is a unique event that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism through sport, recreation, and play. Furthermore, the event also hosts a community tent where sport and volunteer organizations are invited to set up booths in order to reach out and connect with the newcomers and all community members on site. Given the unique approach used by the Community Cup, the event provides an interesting platform for the discussion of the role of sport in the acculturation process and the potential of sport to facilitate social inclusion. In order to discuss these topics, we turn to the experiences of event participants.

## 5. The Community Cup Event: Participant Experiences

Following thematic analysis of the focus group and semi-structured interviews, we identified two main themes in the data. Firstly, participants discussed explicit differences in sporting practices in different contexts. Secondly, participants spoke of the unique characteristics of the Community Cup related to the role that the tournament played in the acculturation process. Note that we made every effort to preserve the voices of our participants in these results. As the focus of this research is inclusion, it is necessary that we ex-

PLICITLY note that we felt it more appropriate that participants' voices were heard, despite the language and use of grammar therein. Therefore, direct quotes were maintained despite their length and the sometimes cumbersome use of language.

### 5.1. Sporting Practices in Different Contexts

Notably, participants discussed the remarkable differences in sporting practice between Canada and their countries of origin. Some participants felt that the Canadian way of participating in sport was overly structured and thus made it more difficult to find ways to participate prior to involvement in the event:

A big difference you know, because in my country, like in Senegal, you can play soccer anywhere you want...the difference I have seen here is...here people, you know, they pay [for] their kids to go play soccer...the whole day we are soccer lovers. So I was doing it like every day, but since I get here I am kind of like, I have no way to do it. So its a big difference...you can just walk outside with a ball and you don't need that kind of special ground or the field for it, you know what I'm saying. You can do it anywhere, and any time you feel like it (Eric, Volunteer).

While the constraints to participation in overly structured environments was a concern by many participants, others noted that there were in fact more opportunities to participate in Canada due to a different lifestyle:

Because over there, there is no more time for these activities, you know...you were always walking or looking for money. But when I come here, I discover that there is more fun, more activities, and I got involved more on soccer (Allison, Player).

In a similar vein, another participant who lived in Canada for an extended amount of time noted that there is more support for individuals to participate in sports in Canada, as long as they know where to seek it out which proved a constraint without the guidance of an event such as the Community Cup. Many of the participants discussed the financial constraints of broader participation in sport but saw the event as a means of engaging in activities and finding the pathways. The availability of sport more broadly in Canada was important, but certainly without the avenues to discover these opportunities, participants would struggle with participation:

There is more available for you to do [here in Canada]. For example, you can find ways if you can't afford the sport, you can find a way to help pay for it here. Whereas back in Russia, you can't. If you

don't have the money you won't be able to play. That's kind of how it is (Emily, Volunteer).

It is clearly expressed by these participants that access to sport and recreational practices varies greatly in different contexts, and this event provided an opportunity to consider the points of access in the Canadian setting. Furthermore, individual characteristics within these situations will also impact whether or not individuals will perceive sport systems as more or less accessible. While for some, like Eric, structured sport in Canada sets up a barrier to participation, others, like Allison perceived this structure in a positive light, making these opportunities more accessible. Nonetheless, the tournament was viewed as a way to negotiate the access issues and overcome some of the constraints.

### 5.2. *The Role of the Community Cup*

Participants also discussed the various roles that the Community Cup played in their social lives and acculturation processes. Importantly, soccer was identified as a "common interest" that allowed participants to relate to one another and the Community Cup event provided a space for participants to engage with each other and their community. As noted by Jackson (Player) "they like soccer, you like soccer...there are so many things to talk about!" In another particularly positive example, Eric (Volunteer) summed up his experience with the Community Cup as follows:

You know, newcomers, when we come to Canada..., we have a different point of view before we get to the country. You know what I'm saying. So once they get here, it's something else...In my case I was ready to say...you know I think I made a big mistake of...stopping here man. You know, it's just like, you come to the country and you're going back to school. Can you imagine, you feel you have to start again at a low level? No matter, you can bring your resume, you know I did this, I did this, and they say you know what? You don't have a Canadian experience. You know, that really starts to knock you off. But once you start socializing with people, being involved with programs, such lovely programs as the Community Cup, they make you forget about that negative aspect you had you know...Once I met those guys at the tournament, I am feeling myself to be at home. (Eric, Volunteer)

Other newcomers used their experience at the Community Cup specifically to gain this "Canadian experience". Dawson (Volunteer) described the way in which he learned social norms through his work with the Community Cup, which he hopes in the future will help him find employment:

I am searching for jobs and Canadian experience is something that we really need. And you need to have references and, well, this was a way to get my Canadian experience...For me it's more to know the Canadian approach in the workplace. It's the structure, the way that Canadians relate to each other, we have a difference approach in Argentina. It's cultural, and it's not completely different, it's very close but there are some subtle details that it's good to know. Personal space, when you ask a question well that's a personal question, [or] it's not a personal question. In Argentina we ask a question, people can answer, or no, or they change the subject. Here you have to be careful because personal questions, people get really invaded. So, I don't know, you have to manage that space better, and that was good to know (Dawson, Volunteer).

Finally, other participants perceived their engagement with the tournament as a chance to meet people from different cultures and countries. As Canada is understood to be a multicultural place, participants valued this opportunity:

People come from different countries so you will be able, actually, to know people from different countries. You know, like in Canada, it is very multicultural, like there are countries that I have never seen in my life and I have met people that [come from these countries at the Community Cup] (Jackson, Player).

The biggest [outcome] I'm gonna say, is giving me the opportunity to meet people from different countries. You know, it was like, in one place you know, buying one ticket and you go all around the world. So the Community Cup make it happen, I have met people from England you know, from Somalia, just in one place. And through that place, you learned a lot because they expose their culture you know, the way they behave the way they exchange...so that was like, it gave me a lot of big experience if I can call it like that (Eric, Volunteer).

While the participants in this study had varied experiences with sport in Canada, they unequivocally valued their experience at the Community Cup tournament for the opportunity to interact with other newcomers from different cultures in a welcoming environment. It was also noted however, that not all participants understood the premise of the event, nor did they enjoy their experience with the tournament. This was illustrated by the following example:

It's a different spirit. I invite a newcomer from Peru and he was annoyed because...he said well, he



wasn't expecting this kind of tournament. He wanted something more competitive. And I said well, you haven't read the materials or you haven't listened to me when I explain to you what kind of tournament it was. So you came to the wrong place if you were looking for that (Dawson, Volunteer).

The Community Cup's unique approach is clearly highlighted from the aforementioned quotations. While sport in general played diverse roles in the acculturation process of newcomers, the Community Cup provides a unique site which may facilitate the inclusion of newcomers both on and off the field of play. The results demonstrate the unique role of this small participatory event in impacting the acculturation of newcomers in one Canadian community.

## 6. Discussion

The Community Cup presents an interesting case where not only the event in and of itself but also the organizational structure facilitates meaningful experiences for the participants. Here, we return to our two research objectives as they relate to the organizational structure and the context of the event: (a) the role of sport in facilitating inclusion, and (b) the role of the event in the acculturation process of newcomers.

### 6.1. Sport and Social Inclusion

In the focus groups, participants discussed varying experiences with sport since coming to Canada. While some felt that the very structured nature of sport participation in Canada represented a barrier to participation, others felt that it made opportunities to participate more obvious and accessible. These contradictory responses speak to the notion that sport, in and of itself, is not a sufficient condition to promote inclusion (Coalter, 2013; Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). That is, offering opportunities to participate in sport (through minor sports associations, drop-in leagues, tournaments, etc.) is likely inadequate to effectively impact the inclusion or acculturation processes of newcomers as these opportunities are not accessed or sometimes even perceived as opportunities by all newcomers. This is partly due to the varied understandings of sport and how it can and should be played. As noted by Eric (Volunteer), he was accustomed to an environment where "you can just walk outside with a ball" and play without needing "special ground or the field for it". Consequently, if sport is undertaken with the goal of a producing a specific social outcome (such as inclusion or integration), it must be intentionally crafted to produce this outcome and targeted for the specific audience, which the outcome is intended to affect. Thus the spatial dimension of a participatory event is vital in bringing potential participants together to foster increased participation.

Most notably, participants articulated very clearly that sport, and specifically soccer was valued as it was "common interest" that allowed them to connect to each other as well as locals both on and off the pitch. While this is far from the rhetorical claims of a "universal language" or a "level playing field," the importance of a commonality that two people can easily discuss when the end goal of the activity is making connections and promoting social interactions should not be undervalued. This is particularly salient when many participants may not fluently speak either of the official languages, potentially preventing full social participation in society. Consequently, and not surprisingly, the value placed on this common interest was of high importance to our participants. Furthermore, the identification of soccer as it is played at the Community Cup as a common interest also suggests that soccer itself is a fluid construction. Many individuals, newcomers or otherwise, would argue that the version of soccer played at the Community Cup is not a "sport" in its common understanding, but rather a "soft" version of the game. This approach in using play as sport aligns with the approaches used by many sport for development and/or peace organizations seeking to produce social change in international contexts (Coalter, 2013). While it was noted by Dawson (Volunteer), that some participants do not enjoy this version of the game, he attributed this discontent with a failure of the participant to align his goals in participating with the goals of the Community Cup, that is, the participant wanted to play for competition while this event provides an opportunity to play for social connections. The understanding of the Community Cup version of soccer as a "common interest" between participants who are consumers (players, fans, supporters) of the professionalized game demonstrates that the sport can be understood and constructed in various, fluid forms to serve the interests of its consumers. This is an important consideration when discussing the role of sport in inclusion as it disrupts our understanding of sport and the way that it may be applied to produce social outcomes. As participants valued the alternative form of soccer and equated it with the more commonly practiced version of the game (in turn using it to connect with others), this alternative version may be a useful way of promoting shared physical and social spaces. While this shared space maps directly onto the "proximity" cornerstone of social inclusion (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002), this is one of the few direct links that can be made between the act of participating in sport and these cornerstones. It is through the act of organizing the event, as we will demonstrate in the following section, that the tournament relates most directly to conceptualizations of inclusion, which we argue has the biggest influence newcomer on participants in terms of a multi-level understanding of adaptation/integration.

## 6.2. Organizational Practices

In order to effectively examine the role of the Community Cup in the acculturation processes of newcomer participants, there are two groups of these participants that must be distinguished: the players and the volunteers. Despite the small number of participants in each group, the insights provided by these groups offers an avenue for important discussion as well as the direction for further research. As such, here we discuss the role that the event played in the acculturation processes of these two groups of participants while considering the five cornerstones of inclusion (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002) as well as how they related to the identified strategies of acculturation (Berry, 1992). In moving into this discussion it is important to note that our focus will shift away from the sport aspect of the Community Cup and more towards the event and its management in general. As this event clearly fits the “plus sport” model identified by (Coalter, 2007), utilizing sport as the hook to attract participants but then explicitly aiming to produce social outcomes, we must consider the event more broadly to fully understand the outcomes it may be producing.

**Player participants.** For players in the Community Cup, it was noted that the event provided an opportunity to create social networks in a welcoming, friendly, and multicultural sport environment. Furthermore, players appreciated the opportunity to learn about Canadian society and the various cultures and national identities. We interpret this appreciation in regards to the cornerstones of valued recognition and proximity. As participants acknowledged and appreciated the celebration of multiculturalism that is characteristic of the Community Cup, it is apparent that they feel comfortable maintaining and expressing their own ethnic distinctiveness and also value the interactions among ethnic groups that this celebration affords. According to Berry’s (1992) framework for understanding strategies of adaptation, these two characteristics are indicative of an integration approach to acculturation, which allows for “a selective adoption of behaviour from the repertoires of the two societies” (p. 74). This acknowledgement and encouragement of individuals to express and celebrate their distinctiveness is also indicative of the cornerstone of valued recognition (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). Furthermore, as noted above, the shared physical space of the tournament venue as well as the shared social space of play and the common interest of sport/soccer allow the cornerstone of proximity to be enabled through participation in the Community Cup. Given the comments expressing appreciation for the multicultural environment of the Community Cup, we suspect that the event reifies newcomers’ perceptions of Canadian society as a welcoming and multicultural entity. Thus, by foregrounding the discussion of the event itself rather than the sport practice under-

taken, we can begin to understand how the dramaturgy and liminality (Lugosi, Walls, Ziakas, & Boukas, 2013) created around an event can be an important factor in producing social outcomes such as integration. Furthermore, through examining these participants experiences, it appears that valued recognition and proximity (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002) are understood to be vital for creating an inclusive environment that may promote the integration (Berry, 1992) of newcomers in a sporting context. While these outcomes for player participants are interesting and important, they are less remarkable than the implications for volunteers involved with the event.

**Volunteer participants.** The five volunteer participants in this study occupied a variety of roles in the event from supporting community organizations in the community tent to playing active roles on the planning teams. One participant even wrote a theme song for the event (*Community Cup, We are a Big Family*); an aspect that he felt was missing from the celebratory experience. What may or may not have been apparent to volunteer participants, but which was made explicit to us by program administrators was that these participants were selectively placed in these roles based on their skills, abilities, and the potential for the event to offer them the most benefit. The loosely structured event and organizing practices allow for the administrators to place newcomers into a variety of different roles, and even create roles for newcomers, based on what is most realistic for their needs and abilities. Paired with the welcoming and accepting culture, this aspect of the organization allows structured organizational processes to adapt and change to meet the needs and desires of its participant volunteers, thus ostensibly embodying a culture of diversity (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). While this practice is not made explicit in any of the program documents, we feel that it is a redeeming practice that affords the organization the ability to meet the very diverse needs and interests of the many participants it encounters. Of course, these practices are also accompanied by downfalls. While there are no official statistics to report, the administrators do not count on a high numbers of volunteers to remain committed to positions for the duration of the event. As Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) noted, there are inefficiencies of working in diverse environments in sport organizations. Nonetheless, encouraging and embracing diversity entails tolerating challenges of these inefficiencies as they continue to adjust, adapt, and compensate accordingly in order to work with as many participant volunteers as possible.

We argue that the volunteer engagement practices of the Community Cup seem to procure feelings of valued recognition, human development, involvement and engagement, as well as (in some cases) material well-being. The recruitment and screening process of volunteers is quite openly non-exclusive, and volunteer

positions are ostensibly flexible in order to meet the diverse needs and abilities of participants. This flexibility provides a sense of valued recognition in that it respects the distinctiveness of participants and values their input no matter how small it may seem in relation to the larger event. Similarly, the Community Cup encourages the contribution of diverse talents that newcomers bring to the organization (human development). A prime example of this is the participant who composed the theme song for the 2013 event. While the administrators may have never thought that it would be important to develop this aspect of the event, they embraced the contribution. Furthermore the process of including newcomers in the decision-making processes involved in all aspects of organizing the event is indicative of the cornerstone of involvement and engagement. Finally, as noted by Dawson (Volunteer), the Canadian experience gained through volunteering at the Community Cup was important for him not only to build his resume, but also to learn social conventions and workplace norms that would aid him in finding employment. Thus, his experience with the Community Cup was perceived to be actively contributing to his process of achieving material well-being. By valuing participants' diverse contributions to the organization as well as providing them with an opportunity to benefit from interacting with locals and other newcomers through the process of organizing the event, it is apparent that the Community Cup provides an environment that supports volunteer participants in maintaining their distinctive ethnicities and valuing interaction with individuals of other ethnicities. Thus, as noted above for player participants, volunteer participants are also afforded the opportunity for an integration strategy of acculturation (Berry, 1992) should they choose to pursue this avenue.

While there are clearly many layers to participants' diverse experiences with the Community Cup event, we argue that these experiences (and consequently the outcomes stemming from them) can be discussed in relation to all five of the cornerstones of inclusion (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). Furthermore, the event offers both players and volunteers the opportunity to maintain and celebrate their distinctive ethnicities while valuing interactions with other ethnicities. Consequently, the event offers a platform for all participants to pursue an integration strategy of acculturation, which is appropriate for acculturation into an ostensibly multicultural society (Berry, 1992) and endorsed by the Canadian policy on Multiculturalism (Government of Canada, 1998). Based on participants' experiences with the event, it is also apparent that engaged newcomers are effectually taking advantage of the aspects of the event that may influence the acculturation process. However, it must also be noted that this approach to acculturation is not necessarily effective for every individual. Consequently, while this research, in some ways,

validates Donnelly and Coakley's (2002) "five cornerstone" approach to social inclusion for an integration approach to acculturation, it may not necessarily be effective for newcomers experiencing separation, marginalization, or assimilation. Indeed, diverse contexts and individual characteristics must be considered in order to craft appropriately inclusive sport and play experiences for different communities and individuals.

## 7. Conclusion and Future Directions

The Community Cup event offers a unique case study through which we can begin to unpack the complex processes involved in attempting to use sport to facilitate the inclusion of newcomers to Canada. While it is important to note that our analysis provided above is limited by the scope of the study, it nonetheless offers important insights into the role of a small-scale participatory sport event in the process of acculturation. We do not wish to generalize these findings to the experience of all participants. Indeed, it is likely that our participants were among the most positively affected by attending and participating in the event. However, rather than dwelling on this as a limitation, we wish to emphasize the importance of understanding how this event was successful in affecting these individuals' experiences of acculturation through the lens of social inclusion. We highlight this focus assuming that if we can provide a thorough understanding of the conditions and circumstances in which the event has positively influenced the acculturation process of some newcomers, we will be able to generate discussion and a better understanding of how we can craft future opportunities to produce similar outcomes for other newcomers and potentially other marginalized populations. Furthermore, we call on other researchers to also begin to broaden future analyses to the organization and broader experience of sport events and programs attempting to produce social outcomes. Indeed, it has been repeatedly stressed in the literature and confirmed in this research that sport in itself is not a sufficient condition to produce social change. Yet, we continue to interrogate and examine sport opportunities for the potential to produce these outcomes. We argue that future research should shift their focus away from the sport itself and to the broader organizational and engagement practices that may allow many events to produce tangible and important social outcomes and consequently develop and perpetuate a privileged status in current societies. Such research may have wide-reaching implications and the potential to inform program design, volunteer management, and event leveraging strategies. In relation to social inclusion and acculturation, further inquiry may consider the relationship(s) between inclusion strategies (e.g., the five cornerstones), adaptation and acculturation strategies (Berry, 1992), and sport experiences to deter-

mine more clearly how organizations can produce social outcomes in diverse contexts. Finally, in order to fully understand the production of social outcomes through sport events and programs, future inquiry should consider the compatibility of sport and diverse worldviews and philosophies in ostensibly multicultural states. As the discussion of multiculturalism and sport remains underdeveloped, we will continue to have an underdeveloped understanding of the potential of sport to promote inclusion and influence the acculturation process. However, we hope that this contribution provides a platform for future research to examine these intersections more thoroughly as they are important considerations for future policy, program, and partnership development strategies.

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### Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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