

Social Inclusion

Open Access Journal | ISSN: 2183-2803

Volume 5, Issue 2 (2017)

Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research

Editor

Reinhard Haudenhuyse

Social Inclusion, 2017, Volume 5, Issue 2
Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research

Published by Cogitatio Press
Rua Fialho de Almeida 14, 2º Esq.,
1070-129 Lisbon
Portugal

Academic Editor
Reinhard Haudenhuyse, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Available online at: www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion

This issue is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).
Articles may be reproduced provided that credit is given to the original and *Social Inclusion* is
acknowledged as the original venue of publication.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research” Reinhard Haudenhuyse	85–90
Promoting Social Inclusion through Sport for Refugee-Background Youth in Australia: Analysing Different Participation Models Karen Block and Lisa Gibbs	91–100
Being Able to Play: Experiences of Social Inclusion and Exclusion Within a Football Team of People Seeking Asylum Darko Dukic, Brent McDonald and Ramón Spaaij	101–110
Interculturalism and Physical Cultural Diversity in the Greater Toronto Area Yuka Nakamura and Peter Donnelly	111–119
A Part of and Apart from Sport: Practitioners’ Experiences Coaching in Segregated Youth Sport Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere, Jennifer Thai and Bethan Kingsley	120–129
A New Model for Inclusive Sports? An Evaluation of Participants’ Experiences of Mixed Ability Rugby Martino Corazza and Jen Dyer	130–140
Sport and Social Inclusion: Evidence-Based Policy and Practice Fred Coalter	141–149
A Capability Approach to Understanding Sport for Social Inclusion: Agency, Structure and Organisations Naofumi Suzuki	150–158
Complicating Gender, Sport, and Social Inclusion: The Case for Intersectionality Gamal Abdel-Shehid and Nathan Kalman-Lamb	159–162
Peer- and Coach-Created Motivational Climates in Youth Sport: Implications for Positive Youth Development of Disadvantaged Girls Hebe Schailée, Marc Theeboom and Jelle Van Cauwenberg	163–178
Conditions for Successfully Increasing Disadvantaged Adolescents’ Engagement in and Development through Volunteering in Community Sport Evi Buelens, Marc Theeboom, Jikkemien Vertonghen and Kristine De Martelaer	179–197

Table of Contents

Exploring the Sports Experiences of Socially Vulnerable Youth Sabina Super, Carlijn Q. Wentink, Kirsten T. Verkooijen and Maria A. Koelen	198–209
Urban Sport-for-Development Initiatives and Young People in Socially Vulnerable Situations: Investigating the ‘Deficit Model’ Zeno Nols, Rein Haudenhuyse and Marc Theeboom	210–222
The Inclusion Conundrum: A Critical Account of Youth and Gender Issues Within and Beyond Sport for Development and Peace Interventions Holly Collison, Simon Darnell, Richard Giulianotti and P. David Howe	223–231
Football for Inclusion: Examining the Pedagogic Rationalities and the Technologies of Solidarity of a Sports-Based Intervention in Sweden David Ekholm and Magnus Dahlstedt	232–240
Policing the Void: Recreation, Social Inclusion and the Baltimore Police Athletic League Jacob J. Bustad and David L. Andrews	241–249
Our Sports Clubs: The Sport-for-All Dream in Crisis? Book Review of Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis. By Robert Putnam. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015, 400 pp.; ISBN: 1476769893. Reinhard Haudenhuyse	250–253
Corrigendum: What Makes a Difference for Disadvantaged Girls? Investigating the Interplay between Group Composition and Positive Youth Development in Sport Hebe Schailleé, Marc Theeboom and Jelle Van Cauwenberg	254

Editorial

Introduction to the Issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”

Reinhard Haudenhuyse

Sport & Society Group, Department Sport & Movement Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium;
E-Mail: reinhard.haudenhuyse@vub.be

Submitted: 17 June 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

An aspect of sport which is often highlighted is its capacity to alleviate processes of social exclusion that are experienced in different areas of life. Despite its acclaimed inclusionary nature, sport remains a site of multiple and diverse exclusionary processes (Spaaij, Magee, & Jeanes, 2014). To better understand sport’s wider inclusionary outcomes, Ekholm (2013) argued that we should problematize and critically expose the underlying assumptions, distinctions, ideologies, and research positions that constitute the conceptions surrounding sport as a means for social inclusion. If such problematizing and exposing is not empirically done, sport-based social inclusion policies and programs are likely to become inadequate in the face of the exclusionary forces which such schemes seek to combat (Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015). It is precisely the aim of this thematic issue to scrutinize such issues in relation to sport and its acclaimed potential to facilitate social inclusion and combat processes of social exclusion. The issue brings together a unique collection of international articles, written by both rising and leading scholars in the field of social sport sciences. The articles cover a wide variety of themes, theoretical perspectives, and research methods in relation to social in-/exclusion and sport.

Keywords

critical pedagogy; sport; exclusion; inclusion; sport policy; sport research

Issue

This editorial is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

An aspect of sport which is often highlighted is its capacity to alleviate processes of social exclusion that are experienced in different areas of life (Collins & Kay, 2014; Haudenhuyse & Theeboom, 2015; Kingsley & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2015). Despite its acclaimed inclusionary nature, sport remains a site of multiple and diverse exclusionary processes (Kingsley, Spencer, & Tink, 2017; Spaaij, Magee, & Jeanes, 2014). To better understand sport’s wider inclusionary outcomes, Ekholm (2013) argued that we should problematize and critically expose the underlying assumptions, distinctions, ideologies, and research positions that constitute the conceptions surrounding sport as a means for social inclusion. If such problematizing and exposing is not empirically done,

sport-based social inclusion policies and programs are likely to become inadequate in the face of the exclusionary forces such schemes seek to combat (Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015). It is precisely the aim of this thematic issue to scrutinize such issues in relation to sport and its acclaimed potential to facilitate social inclusion and combat processes of social exclusion.

2. Under-Examined Conceptual Slippage

Social inclusion is often defined in relation to social exclusion (and as such often remains undefined). However, social exclusion has been described as a contested, vague and elastic concept which lacks an agreed definition (e.g., Atkinson & Davoudi, 2000; Farrington, 2011; Rawal, 2008). Levitas et al. (2007) have defined social ex-

clusion as “a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas” (p. 9). Levitas et al. (2007) also refer to the notion of “deep exclusion”, when exclusion manifests itself across multiple dimensions of disadvantage, resulting in severely negative consequences for quality of life, well-being, and future life chances. Social inclusion and exclusion are often unproblematically used by policymakers and researchers as “diametrically opposed poles”, encouraging an attitude in which the solution to problems (and mechanisms) related to social exclusion are uncritically reframed into promoting the inclusion of the “socially excluded” (Macdonald, Pang, Knez, Nelson, & McCuaig, 2012; Spandler, 2007). In relation to this, Spandler (2007) argued that:

Just as the conceptual slippage from exclusion to inclusion has happened without much debate, the assumptions which underpin this shift have not been examined. Social inclusion initiatives which attempt to simultaneously fuse the identification of the socially excluded with attempts to incorporate them into the mainstream of society, confuse the identification and tackling of social exclusion with promoting inclusion. In doing so, such initiatives make a series of assumptions about the excluded, the society they are seen to be excluded from, and the solutions that are deemed necessary. (p. 3)

This conceptual “slippage” from exclusion to inclusion also seems to have happened “overnight”, and without much debate, in sport policy and research. This is problematic as the concept of social exclusion focuses on power dynamics and the ways in which our institutions and policies generate exclusionary practices leading to the marginalization and discrimination of groups in society. On the other hand, the—often ill-defined—concept of social inclusion largely ignores such power dynamics and unproblematically assumes that our societies—including sport provisions—are inherently and indisputably “good” for everyone. However, sport does not exist in a societal void and is, as such, often implicated in mechanisms of exclusion in society (MacPhail, 2012). It is important to note that, in Levitas et al.’s definition, social exclusion is a process, whereas social inclusion is often conceptualized as a desirable condition (i.e., an outcome) which can be managed and rectified by (sport-based) interventions through normalizing and changing the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of the “excluded”. This might be one of the main reasons why sport-for-social-inclusion policies, research, and practices are often framed within a deficit model (e.g., low aspiration, fatalism, lack of competences) (Coalter, 2015). In this context, Cameron (2006) has stated that because of an insufficient understanding of what social inclusion is, the

focus is often put on the problems and deficits of the “excluded”. In this sense, the notion of social inclusion provides fewer viable opportunities for transformative practices that can challenge social injustices and inequalities, but rather reproduces and legitimizes mechanisms of social exclusion in different life and policy domains, including sport. This may also explain why transformative and critical pedagogical approaches seem to be “nearly” impossible to implement in state-funded sport services in general, and in *sport for social inclusion* initiatives in particular (Coakley, 2016; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom & Nols, 2013; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013; Stenling, 2013). Hence, by uncritically reframing social exclusion as inclusion, the consequence is that only outcomes can be considered for improvement, leaving underlying causes of exclusion largely under-addressed (Farrington, 2011). Applied to sport this implies that sport-for-inclusion (and sport-for-all) policies and practices risk becoming limited to “merely” raising participation rates of specific target/problem groups (and fixing the presumed personal deficits of such groups), thereby leaving the exclusionary mechanisms of such policies and practices mainly unproblematicized and under-examined.

Spandler (2007) reminds us that we need to be mindful of (i) the contexts in which inclusion policies and (sport-based) interventions are implemented; (ii) the assumptions that lie, often implicitly, behind such policies and interventions; and (iii) the consequences of such policies and interventions. Collectively, the articles that are included in this thematic issue address the contexts in which sport for inclusion practices are implemented, the assumptions and discourses that underpin such policies and practices, and the experiences that those involved have (had) in such practices.

3. Structure of the Thematic Issue

This thematic issue brings together a unique collection of international articles, written by both rising and leading scholars in the field of social sport sciences. The articles included cover a wide variety of themes, theoretical perspectives, and research methods in relation to social in-/exclusion and sport. The articles are organized into 4 parts:

1. The use of sport as a means for the social inclusion of groups in society that are being confronted with processes of “deep social exclusion”, with a focus on refugees and people with disabilities.
2. Critical theoretical perspectives on sport and social in-/exclusion.
3. Investigating relations, contexts, experiences, and assumptions in relation to sport and young people who are at risk of social exclusion.
4. Wider organizational and policy issues regarding sport and social in-/exclusion.

The thematic issue is further augmented by a book review by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Belgium) (2017), which investigates the potential implications of Putnam's recent book *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* for the field of social sport sciences. The main themes in Putnam's *Our Kids* are class segregation and the widening "opportunity" gap between the "have" and "have-nots" in American society (Putnam, 2015).

3.1. Deep Social Exclusion: Refugees and People with Disabilities

In the first article, Karen Block and Lisa Gibbs (Australia) investigate different programs and strategies that organizations in various sectors have developed in order to address participation barriers experienced by refugee and migrant youth. The authors argue that in many cases these responses are ad hoc and under-theorized. Based on their findings, Block and Gibbs (2017) identify three distinct models of participation: (i) short term programs for refugee-background children; (ii) ongoing programs for refugee-background children and youth; and (iii) integration into mainstream clubs. In the second article, Darko Dukic, Brent McDonald, and Ramon Spaaij (Australia) also put the focus on refugees. More specifically, their research considers the ways in which playing in an asylum seeker football team, located in Melbourne, Australia, facilitated both inclusive and exclusive experiences for its participants. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, Dukic and colleagues (2017) show the importance of a sporting habitus and physical capital in individuals' experiences of playing football and how this can provide an important site for the development of "poly-cultural" capital. In the following article, Yuka Nakamura and Peter Donnelly (Canada) (2017) research the contribution of immigrants to the social and cultural life of Canada. Based on a living database of the Greater Toronto Area's physical cultural diversity, the study identifies the different trajectories of the lifecycle of activities that immigrants have introduced into the physical culture of the Greater Toronto Area.

Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere, Jennifer Thai, and Bethan Kingsley (Canada) forcefully state that sport opportunities for young people who experience disabilities are often inadequate and inequitable. Sport, as such, can present a site of exclusion for many people who experience disability, even within the context of a social inclusion program. Spencer-Cavaliere and colleagues (2017) explore the experiences of youth sport practitioners who teach and coach youth in primarily segregated settings. Their overall goal is to gain a better understanding of how sport practitioners think about disability and sport within the context of their practices. In their discussion, the authors highlight the need to question dominant assumptions underlying segregated sport. In the final article of the first part, Martino Corazza and Jen Dyer (UK) (2017) investigate the Mixed Ability Model as an innovative approach to inclusive sport by encouraging disabled

and non-disabled players to interact in a mainstream sport (rugby) club environment. From their data, the researchers argue that Mixed Ability Rugby has significant potential for achieving inclusionary outcomes. The mainstream setting is seen as one of the most important factors, while other aspects include a supportive club environment and the promotion of self-advocacy.

3.2. Critical Theoretical Perspectives

In his commentary, Fred Coalter (Ireland, UK) (2017) reflects on his experience of compiling the *Value of Sport Monitor*, an online resource of policy-relevant research on the social impacts of sport. The article critically evaluates the assumption that social science research in sport is cumulative. Coalter also explores sports interest groups' varying attitudes to the nature of evidence. The commentary proposes theory-based evaluation as a way for research to contribute to policy and practice. In the second article, Naofumi Suzuki (Japan) proposes a conceptual framework based on Amartya Sen's capability approach as a way of bringing more conceptual clarity to the issue of how sport can promote social inclusion and contribute to transforming the exclusive nature of social structures. Suzuki (2017) argues that more research needs to be done at the meso and macro levels, as both levels are concerned with the ultimate potential of sport to facilitate structural transformation towards a more socially inclusive society. In the final article of part two, Gamal Abdel-Shehid and Nathan Kalman-Lamb (Canada, USA) (2017) discuss the work of Angela Davis on intersectional theory and look at the potential implications for social sport sciences. The authors suggest that research on sport and social inclusion would do well to consider the work of Davis in forming a more complex reading of what it means to include women and girls in sport.

3.3. Relations, Contexts, Experiences and Assumptions

Hebe Schailleé, Marc Theeboom, and Jelle Van Cauwenberg (Belgium) (2017) examine the relationships between perceived coach- and peer-created climates and reported developmental gains among disadvantaged girls participating in sports programs. Their analysis reveals that a mastery-oriented coach climate is a strong predictor of perceived Positive Youth Development. However the observed interaction effects did not show that disadvantaged girls necessarily gain more from their involvement in the sport programs. This raises fundamental questions about the broader social inclusionary potential of such sport-based programs. In their article on sport volunteering and its contribution to human capital development of young people in disadvantaged situations, Evi Buelens, Marc Theeboom, Jikkemien Vertonghen, and Kristine De Martelaer (Belgium) (2017) analyze the conditions necessary to develop human capital. Their findings show that although the researched pro-

grams made use of a more critical pedagogical approach to youth development, critical youth empowerment was not achieved in the majority of programs. Through interviewing young people in socially vulnerable situations who play sport at a local sports club, Sabina Super, Carlijn Wentink, Kirsten Verkooijen, and Maria Koelen (The Netherlands) (2017) focus on the question of whether such clubs can offer a setting for positive youth development. Findings from their study reveal that sports coaches played an important role in installing and maintaining a supportive environment in which the youths could have meaningful sports experiences. However, Super and colleagues conclude that it is not self-evident that young people in socially vulnerable positions can have positive and supporting experiences through their sport involvement. In the final article of this part, Zeno Nols, Reinhard Haudenhuyse, and Marc Theeboom (Belgium) (2017) scrutinize the dominant “deficit model” assumption underlying many sport-for-development and sport-for-inclusion policies and programs: that young people from disadvantaged areas are uniformly deficient and in need of development. Their research data refute the supposition that young people are unvaryingly in need of more perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem (the household concepts in many sport inclusionary and developmental policies and practices) and furthermore show that there is no simple and predictable change in participants’ “development”.

3.4. Wider Organizational and Policy-Related Issues

In their article Holly Collison, Simon Darnell, Richard Giulianiotti, and David Howe (UK, Canada) focus their attention on the “who” of sport-for-development policies and program. Drawing on extensive research conducted in Jamaica, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, Collison and colleagues (2017) critically investigate the idea of sport-for-development as an inclusionary practice. They critically argue that, while sport-for-development may “give voice” to participants, the extent to which this creates social contexts that are inclusive remains open to discussion. David Ekholm and Magnus Dahlstedt (Sweden) analyse a sports-based social intervention carried out in a “socially vulnerable” area in Sweden. Ekholm and Dahlstedt (2017) analyse how sport (i.e., football) is highlighted and used as a means of fostering citizens according to specific ideals of solidarity and inclusion. They conclude that inclusion seems to be possible as long as the “excluded” adapt to the dominant norms. In this sense, as the authors argue, sports-based interventions often maintain rather than reform the social order that creates these very tensions. In the final article of this part, Jacob Bustad and David Andrews (USA) explore the relationship between public recreation policy and planning, and the transformation of urban governance in the context of the Police Athletic League centers in Baltimore, Maryland. Through their case study, Bustad and Andrews (2017) illustrate the social and political rationales mobi-

lized in order to justify recreation policy and programming, the framing of sport and physical activity as preventative measures towards crime and juvenile delinquency, and the precariousness of such initiatives.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Ulf Hedetoft (University of Copenhagen, Denmark) for giving me the opportunity to act, once again, as the guest editor of a thematic issue on the broad theme of sport and social inclusion. The first thematic issue, entitled “Sport for Social Inclusion: Critical Analyses and Future Challenges” (edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse and Marc Theeboom), appeared in 2015. A word of gratitude also to António Vieira (Cogitatio Press) for his upmost professional approach in coordinating and managing this thematic issue. Finally, I would like to thank all the authors and reviewers that have contributed to the current thematic issue.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

- Abdel-Shehid, G., & Kalman-Lamb, N. (2017). Complicating gender, sport, and social inclusion: The case for intersectionality. *Social Inclusion, 5*(2), 159–162.
- Atkinson, R., & Davoudi, S. (2000). The concept of social exclusion in the European Union: Context, development and possibilities. *Journal of Common Market Studies, 38*(3), 427–48.
- Block, K., & Gibbs, L. (2017). Promoting social inclusion through sport for refugee-background youth in Australia: Analysing different participation models. *Social Inclusion, 5*(2), 91–100.
- Buelens, E., Theeboom, M., Vertonghen, J., & De Martelaer, K. (2017). Conditions for successfully increasing disadvantaged adolescents’ engagement in and development through volunteering in community sport. *Social Inclusion, 5*(2), 179–197.
- Bustad, J. J., & Andrews, D. L. (2017). Policing the void: Recreation, social inclusion and the Baltimore Police Athletic League. *Social Inclusion, 5*(2), 241–249.
- Cameron, C. (2006). Geographies of welfare and exclusion: Social inclusion and exclusion. *Progress in Human Geography, 30*(3), 396–404.
- Coakley, J. (2016). Positive youth development through sport: Myths, believes, and realities. In N. Holt (Ed.), *Positive youth development through sport* (2nd ed., pp. 21–33). London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2015). Sport-for-change: Some thoughts from a sceptic. *Social Inclusion, 3*(3), 19–23.
- Coalter, F. (2017). Sport and Social Inclusion: Evidence-based policy and practice. *Social Inclusion, 5*(2), 141–149.
- Collins, M., & Haudenhuyse, R. (2015). Social exclusion and austerity policies in England: The role of sports

- in a new area of social polarization and inequality? *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 5–18.
- Collins, M., & Kay, T. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Collison, H., Darnell, S., Giulianotti, R., & Howe, P. D. (2017). The inclusion conundrum: A critical account of youth and gender issues within and beyond sport for development and peace interventions. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 223–231.
- Corazza, M., & Dyer, J. (2017). A new model for inclusive sports? An evaluation of participants' experiences of mixed ability rugby. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 130–140.
- Dukic, D., McDonald, B., & Spaaij, R. (2017). Being able to play: Experiences of social inclusion and exclusion within a football team of people seeking asylum. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 101–110.
- Ekhholm, D. (2013). Research on sport as a means of crime prevention in a Swedish welfare context: A literature review. *Scandinavian Sport Studies Forum*, 4, 91–120.
- Ekhholm, D., & Dahlstedt, M. (2017). Football for inclusion: Examining the pedagogic rationalities and the technologies of solidarity of a sports-based intervention in Sweden. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 232–240.
- Farrington, F. (2011). Towards a useful definition: Advantages and criticisms of 'social exclusion'. *GEOView: Online Undergraduate Review of Geography and Environmental Studies*.
- Hartmann, D., & Kwauk, C. (2011). Sport and development: An overview, critique and reconstruction. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 35(3), 284–305.
- Haudenhuyse, R. (2017). Our sports clubs: The sport-for-all dream in crisis? Book Review of *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. By Robert Putnam. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015, 400 pp.; ISBN: 1476769893. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 250–253.
- Haudenhuyse, R., & Theeboom, M. (Eds.). (2015). Sport for social inclusion: Critical analyses and future challenges [Thematic Issue]. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3).
- Haudenhuyse, R., Theeboom, M., & Nols, Z. (2013). Sports-based interventions for socially vulnerable youth: Towards well-defined interventions with easy-to-follow outcomes? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(4), 471–484.
- Kingsley, B., & Spencer-Cavaliere, N. (2015). The exclusionary practices of youth sport. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 24–38.
- Kingsley, B., Spencer-Cavaliere, N., & Tink, L. (2017). So all kids can play? Looking beyond the rhetoric of an equal playing field. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 9(4), 418–434.
- Levitas, R., Pantazis, C., Fahmy, E., Gordon, D., Lloyd, E., & Patsios, D. (2007). *The multi-dimensional analysis of social exclusion*. London: Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Retrieved from <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/6853/1/multidimensional.pdf>
- Macdonald, D., Pang, B., Knez, K., Nelson, A., & McCuaig, L. (2012). The will for inclusion: Bothering the inclusion/exclusion discourses in sport. In S. Dagkas & K. Armour (Eds.), *Inclusion and exclusion through youth sport* (pp. 9–23). London: Routledge.
- MacPhail, A. (2012). Young people's voices in sport. In S. Dagkas & K. Armour (Eds.), *Inclusion and exclusion through youth sport* (pp. 141–154). London: Routledge.
- Nakamura, Y., & Donnelly, P. (2017). Interculturalism and physical cultural diversity in the Greater Toronto Area. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 111–119.
- Nols, Z., Haudenhuyse, R., & Theeboom, M. (2017). Urban sport-for-development initiatives and young people in socially vulnerable situations: Investigating the 'deficit model'. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 210–222.
- Putnam, R. (2015). *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rawal, N. (2008). Social Inclusion and exclusion: A review. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 2, 161–180. doi:10.3126/dsaj.v2i0.1362
- Schaillée, H., Theeboom, M., & Van Cauwenberg, J. (2017). Peer- and coach-created motivational climates in youth sport: Implications for positive youth development of disadvantaged girls. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 163–178.
- Spaaij, R., & Jeanes, R. (2013). Education for social change? A Freirean critique of sport for development and peace. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18(4), 442–457.
- Spaaij, R., Magee, J., & Jeanes, R. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion in global society*. London: Routledge.
- Spandler, H. (2007). From social exclusion to inclusion? A critique of the inclusion imperative in mental health. *Medical Sociology Online*, 2(2), 3–16.
- Spencer-Cavaliere, N., Thai, J., & Kingsley, B. (2017). A part of and apart from sport: Practitioners' experiences coaching in segregated youth sport. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 120–129.
- Stenling, C. (2013). The introduction of drive-in sport in community sport organizations as an example of organizational (non-)change. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27, 497–509.
- Super, S., Wentink, C. Q., Verkooijen, K. T., & Koelen, M. A. (2017). Exploring the sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 198–209.
- Suzuki, N. (2017). A capability approach to understanding sport for social inclusion: Agency, structure and organisations. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 150–158.

About the Author



Reinhard Haudenhuyse holds Master's degrees in Physical Education and in Conflict and Development, both from Ghent University. In 2012 he received his PhD in Physical Education and Movement Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He currently works as a part-time professor and post-doctoral researcher at the Sport and Society Research Unit and the Interdisciplinary Research Group Voicing At-Risk Youth at Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Article

Promoting Social Inclusion through Sport for Refugee-Background Youth in Australia: Analysing Different Participation Models

Karen Block * and Lisa Gibbs

Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC 3010, Australia; E-Mails: keblock@unimelb.edu.au (K.B.), l.gibbs@unimelb.edu.au (L.G.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 3 February 2017 | Accepted: 6 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Sports participation can confer a range of physical and psychosocial benefits and, for refugee and migrant youth, may even act as a critical mediator for achieving positive settlement and engaging meaningfully in Australian society. This group has low participation rates however, with identified barriers including costs; discrimination and a lack of cultural sensitivity in sporting environments; lack of knowledge of mainstream sports services on the part of refugee-background settlers; inadequate access to transport; culturally determined gender norms; and family attitudes. Organisations in various sectors have devised programs and strategies for addressing these participation barriers. In many cases however, these responses appear to be ad hoc and under-theorised. This article reports findings from a qualitative exploratory study conducted in a range of settings to examine the benefits, challenges and shortcomings associated with different participation models. Interview participants were drawn from non-government organisations, local governments, schools, and sports clubs. Three distinct models of participation were identified, including short term programs for refugee-background children; ongoing programs for refugee-background children and youth; and integration into mainstream clubs. These models are discussed in terms of their relative challenges and benefits and their capacity to promote sustainable engagement and social inclusion for this population group.

Keywords

integration; migrant; participation; refugee; social inclusion; sport; youth

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Each year, Australia settles approximately 13,500 people on humanitarian visas, with recent temporary increases to these numbers announced to accommodate more refugees fleeing conflict in Syria. While the source countries for refugee-background migrants to Australia vary from year to year, in the two years from July 2014 to June 2016 the top five countries of origin were Iraq, Syria, Burma, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo and the intake included just over 10,500 young people under the age of 18 (Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2017). More than a

quarter of the total settled in the state of Victoria with the majority in Melbourne, where this research was conducted (CMY, 2016).

Sports participation can offer a range of physical and psychosocial benefits likely to foster health, well-being and social inclusion (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013). This potential has resulted in sport being seen as an important instrument in social policy with the capacity to promote not only physical and mental health but also to reduce youth antisocial behaviour, improve community cohesion and safety, and reduce health inequalities (Hoye, Nicholson, & Brown, 2015; Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009). It may also assist re-

cently arrived young people with language acquisition, self-esteem, confidence and social connectedness. Participation by refugee-background migrants in community clubs can play an important role in fostering a sense of community belonging (SCOA, 2012; Spaaij, 2012), perhaps particularly so in Australia given the popularity and pervasiveness of sport within Australian culture (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010).

The potential benefits are particularly salient for disadvantaged and marginalised young people at risk of poor educational, health and social outcomes associated with social exclusion. Risk factors for exclusion commonly experienced by refugee-background young people include residing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, disrupted education prior to arrival in Australia, poverty, discrimination, trauma-associated mental and physical health problems, and living in families torn apart by war and violence and struggling with multiple settlement challenges. This group has low participation rates however, with identified barriers that include costs; lack of access to transport; a lack of cultural sensitivity in sporting environments; a lack of knowledge of mainstream sports services on the part of refugee-background settlers; culturally determined gender norms; competing settlement priorities; and family attitudes (Caperchione, Kolt, & Mummery, 2009; O'Driscoll, Banting, Borkoles, Eime, & Polman, 2013; Olliff, 2007; Rosso & McGrath, 2013; Spaaij, 2013). A report by Olliff (2007) on the potential role of sport and recreation as an aid to integration of refugee young people argues that targeted programs can facilitate settlement, promote health and wellbeing and be an entry point to broader participation and social inclusion.

There is however, a dearth of robust evidence to either support or disprove many of the benefits intuitively attributed to sports participation. A systematic review has identified a lack of research into participation by culturally and linguistically diverse migrants as a key gap in the literature (Kay, 2009; O'Driscoll et al., 2013). Moreover, sports interventions and programs targeting refugee-background young people frequently lack a clear theoretical rationale and are often short-term, ad hoc and difficult to sustain (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010). Several researchers have emphasised that the capacity of sport to promote social inclusion is limited and shaped by broader social and structural exclusionary processes rendering the social impacts of sport highly contextually dependent (Coalter, 2015; Hoyer et al., 2015; Kelly, 2011; Spaaij, Farquharson, & Marjoribanks, 2015). Theoretically informed investigations are therefore needed that take into account factors such as cultural and social diversity, gender and local processes of inclusion and exclusion.

This article reports findings from an exploratory qualitative study that examined the variety of sports participation models available to young people from refugee backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia. The project aimed to clarify the underlying assumptions and implicit concep-

tual frameworks supporting different participation models and examine the respective benefits, challenges and shortcomings of each from the perspectives of those providing the programs. Three distinct models of participation were identified, including short term programs for refugee-background children; continuing programs for refugee-background children and youth; and integration into mainstream clubs. These models are discussed in terms of their impacts and their capacity to promote sustainable engagement and social inclusion for this population group.

2. Theoretical Frameworks: Social Inclusion and Social Capital

Optimistic views of the social impact of sports participation often focus on its potential to build social capital (Coalter, 2007; Hoyer et al., 2015). Social capital can broadly be defined as 'a range of thinking around norms and networks; the values and resources that both result in, and are the product of, socially negotiated ties and relationships' (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne, & Solomos, 2007, p. 25). This broad definition encompasses the two most common, yet distinct, ways in which social capital is conceptualised—as either an individual or a collective asset. Network conceptions of social capital (based on the work of Bourdieu, 1986) focus on resources that flow differentially through personal networks to individuals, whilst communitarian conceptions (based on Putnam, 2000) are concerned with positive social norms, created by community level connectivity and available to all (Hawe & Shiell, 2000). Both are likely to be important for facilitating social inclusion.

Distinctions are also made between bonding social capital, drawn from networks where there is a shared identity such as between family and close friends, and bridging social capital, which refers to informal or formal groupings that cut across 'ethnic, gender, caste, class, wealth, religion, location or any other characteristics which distinguish social groups' (Narayan, 1999, p. 7). Linking social capital can be conceptualised as a variant of bridging capital comprising connections between individuals and institutions (Woolcock, 2001). These distinctions are particularly relevant when considering the capacity of social capital to promote broader social inclusion for refugee-background young people. While there is general agreement in the literature that social connections and networks are vital components of refugee inclusion and wellbeing, there is less agreement over the assigned value of different types of social capital. Some authors emphasise the importance of both bonding and bridging ties. Others note the limitations and potential negative effects of exclusive reliance on bonding ties for migrants, arguing that strong ties within disadvantaged communities can contribute to exclusion (Eriksson, 2011; Wakefield & Poland, 2005). Many scholars correspondingly stress the value of bridging capital for providing additional resources to such communities (Ager & Strang,

2008; Beirens, Hughes, Hek, & Spicer, 2007; Field, 2003; Hardwick, 2003; Korac, 2003).

A conceptual framework for understanding domains of social integration has been developed by Ager and Strang (2008). The model is based on research with refugee background settlers in the UK and proposes ten domains of inclusion. While the authors of this framework refer to integration (rather than inclusion) the framework effectively captures the multidimensional and interactive nature of domains that constitute social inclusion or exclusion. Education, employment, housing and health are described as both ‘markers’ and ‘means’ of integration. Having access to these domains both represents the state of inclusion and the *means* for bringing it about. The model explicitly incorporates theories of social capital by positioning bonding, bridging and linking connections as key mediators of inclusion. Facilitators of integration comprise social capabilities represented by language and cultural knowledge; and having a sense of safety and stability. All of these domains rest on a foundational domain of rights and citizenship. The model thus draws together a number of theoretical and conceptual frameworks—including social inclusion, social capital and human rights—and emphasises the co-dependence and links between domains.

The diagram (Figure 1) below depicts Ager and Strang’s (2008) framework. Based on the evidence cited earlier in this paper, we would expect that a range of these domains—including social connections, facilitators and markers and means—have the potential to be enhanced by sports participation.

Building on this model, Spaaij (2012) has suggested that recreational sport may be viewed as an additional marker and means of integration. The following discus-

sion uses this conceptual model and embedded theories concerning social capital to discuss the conditions and contexts through which sports participation may contribute to integration and inclusion.

3. Method

A qualitative exploratory study was conducted in a range of settings offering sporting activities for recently arrived young people in Melbourne, Australia. Ethics approval for the project was obtained from the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee and data collection took place between June and December 2014.

Interview participants for this research were drawn from non-government organisations, local governments, schools, and sports clubs—including elite clubs providing outreach programs and grassroots clubs attempting to integrate refugee-background young people into their teams. Potential participants were identified through discussions between the researcher and representatives of relevant organisations such as sports governing bodies, local councils, community clubs and schools in areas with significant numbers of refugee-background settlers. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants representing programs and settings that provided a range in terms of sports being undertaken; age and gender of participants; school and community-based programs; and program models.

Interviews were semi-structured to allow unanticipated as well as anticipated themes to emerge. They were conducted at a time and place convenient to the interviewee and lasted an average of 60 minutes with a range of 30 to 90 minutes. Interview prompts focused on elucidating the objectives (and implicit or explicit theo-

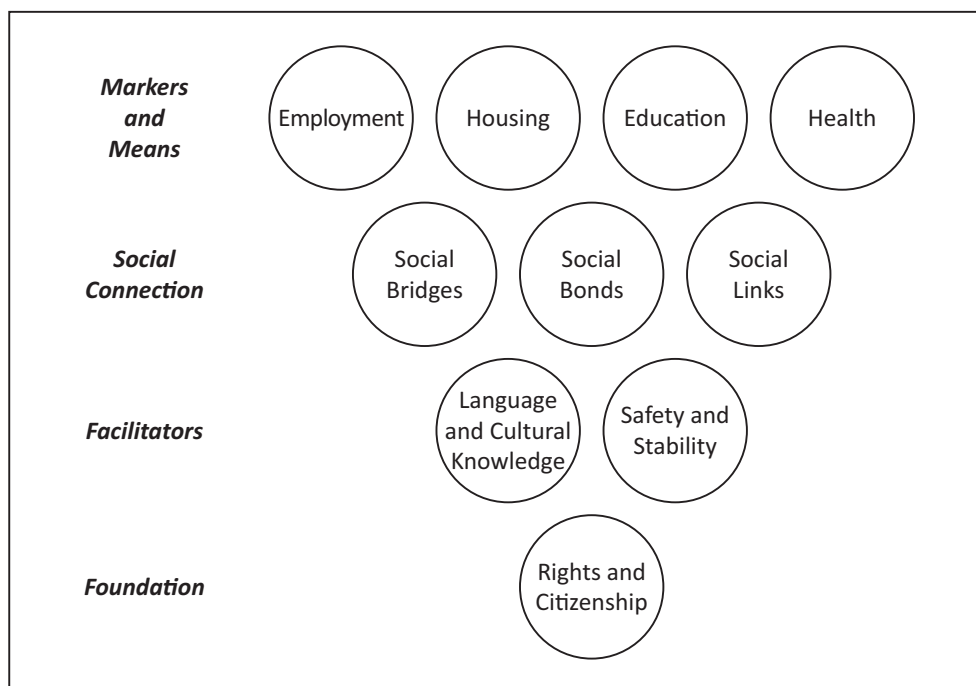


Figure 1. A conceptual framework defining core domains of integration (Ager & Strang, 2008).

retical underpinnings) of programs and their consequent capacity to promote inclusion; identifying contextual and other factors (barriers and facilitators) leading to successful (or unsuccessful) and sustainable (or unsustainable) attempts to include refugee young people in sports; and identifying key features of high quality practice within schools and community settings to inform development of future interventions.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim with NVivo 11 (QSR International, 2015) used as a data management tool. Transcripts were analysed using inductive and abductive qualitative methods, examining the data for patterns and themes and using existing theoretical frameworks as sensitising concepts against which emergent themes were continually tested (Charmaz, 2003).

4. Participants

Ten participants (three female and seven male) took part in interviews. Their organisation type, roles, sports and participation models covered by each are summarised

in Table 1 below. All participants had roles that were specifically focused on facilitating sports participation (primarily in team sports) by refugee background migrants and they included representatives from NGOs providing settlement support and sports programs, grassroots and elite clubs, schools and local government. A number of interviewees oversaw or had a role in promoting more than one model of participation while others were involved in promoting a single model. The three distinct models that were identified—short term programs or events; continuing programs for refugee-background children and youth; and integration into mainstream clubs were fairly evenly represented across the project.

5. Perceived Benefits Associated with Each Participation Model

Interview participants were generally enthusiastic about each of the participation models in which they were involved and felt that sport was an effective way to connect with young people and influence their behaviours and values.

Table 1. Summary of interview participant characteristics.

Participant	Type of organisation	Position/Role	Sports	Participation models*		
				1	2	3
1	NGO providing settlement support	Program coordinator	All sports—especially football (soccer) and basketball	X	X	
2	Grassroots sports club	Multicultural liaison worker	Basketball			X
3	Primary school with large numbers of refugee-background families.	Community and family engagement	All sports—especially football (soccer)	X		
4	NGO providing sports program	Executive Director	Basketball		X	
5	Primary school with large numbers of refugee-background families and grassroots sports club	Assistant principal of school and senior coach at sports club	All sports—especially cricket		X	X
6	Elite sports club	Community and diversity manager	Australian rules football (AFL)	X		
7	Local government	Sport and recreation development officer	All sports—especially football (soccer)	X	X	X
8	NGO providing sports program	Chair of the board	All sports	X		X
9	Grassroots sports club	Volunteer committee member	Football (soccer)			X
10	NGO providing sports program	General manager	All sports	X		X

Note: * 1 = Short term programs and events, 2 = Continuing school or community-based programs, 3 = Supporting integration into mainstream clubs.

Discussing short term sports activities run in her primary school, Participant 3 explained how she valued the connections developed between children and adults and amongst the children themselves.

Those programs, they're short and they're fun! So fun. I like the fact that they are exposed to adults having fun with them. I know, as a parent, when was the last time I played kick to kick? Certainly these parents don't....These adults act in a different way to teachers and a different way to parents, so that is probably the number one thing...

I was there for that first cross country where all the kids were training and it was amazing! Looking at those kids and the way they supported each other and the way that they cheered each other on... that was really what it was about, getting to the end of it. (Participant 3)

A continuing program based in a secondary school was seen as having similarly positive outcomes.

The school said that the one thing, the one positive in their lives is soccer....These group of boys that all we hear is they're trouble, they're this, they're that. When they're playing soccer they're perfect. Focused, teamwork—it's incredible. The power of the passion....It's exciting to be on a program that kids respond to. A lot of youth work it's like "meh", but when kids respond so positively to it it's just a joy to work on it! (Participant 1)

The third participation model, integration into mainstream clubs, also received glowing reports. Despite being warned by a youth worker who referred some of the young people to the club that 'there might be behaviour problems', a volunteer committee member reported:

The kids were so pleased to join a club and be able to play. That's what they really wanted. Really super enthusiastic to get to training, very enthusiastic at training and wanted to do everything. Very easy to get along with, listened to instructions, got on well with the other kids. (Participant 9)

5.1. Markers and Means of Inclusion: Health, Wellbeing and Education

Interviewees representing each of the different participation models saw associated benefits in terms of health and wellbeing. A number of participants emphasised the physical health benefits associated with being fit and active. More commonly however, they spoke about benefits contributing to mental health and wellbeing such as self-esteem, positive self-image, goal setting and leadership skills. Providing an opportunity for young people to experience success and a sense of achieve-

ment was seen as an important outcome by many of those interviewed.

For a lot of our refugee population the kids are struggling at school. They're finding school quite difficult and then they'll get involved in sport and they're actually pretty good at sport. It's their own self-efficacy and just to be able to have something that they're really good at and they can achieve well. I think it does wonders for the way they view themselves in the world. (Participant 5)

We're going to get [the year 9 boys] to develop a sport skills building program that they can deliver to primary schools and then that kind of builds their confidence up and it shows off the skills that they've learned (Participant 1)

Similarly, each of the participation models was regarded by participants as having flow on benefits for education. Several interviewees felt that values and interpersonal skills developed through participation in sport were transferable to the classroom. Participant 1 coordinated a 'soccer scholarship program' which offered weekly lunchtime and after-school coaching sessions to refugee-background students regarded as being at high risk of disengagement. It was anticipated that the program would help to keep these young people at school and it also used rewards such as new soccer boots to encourage improved classroom behaviour.

Participant 5, who was both an assistant principal at a school and a sports coach saw distinct educational benefits associated with young people's participation in sport. He spoke about them learning to apply values and skills that they learned from playing sport such as 'working hard', 'persistence' and 'bouncing back from disappointment' to other aspects of their lives including their education. He also described ways in which he was able to use some of the boys' enthusiasm for cricket in the classroom.

Some of my Grade 5/6 boys who are really into their cricket will do stuff around maths...lots and lots of maths with the scoring... (Participant 5)

Several of the participants were also involved in linking sports programs to mentoring programs that offered educational and social support to students. An interview participant representing an elite Australian Rules Football club discussed a partnership the club had formed with a local primary school in which they ran short term sports programs in the school and also mentored refugee background children. He saw tremendous value in the positive male role models offered to the children, many of whom had no father at home, and offered the following anecdote:

Then there's also a literacy program which we've just launched...it started with the idea of having us read-

ing in front of the class...to become socially acceptable amongst the kids for boys to read books. So apparently the next day the library was sort of emptied which is [amazing]! (Participant 6)

Two of the interview participants had supported refugee-background young people who had gone on to receive basketball scholarships to colleges in the United States.

5.2. Social Connections

All interview participants spoke about the impacts of sports participation on social relationships and connections. Participation in enjoyable group activities—even short term or one-off events was seen as strengthening bonding connections and sometimes also linking connections. Three different participants mentioned, for example, how Victoria Police had engaged in their sport programs to strengthen relationships with refugee-background communities.

Both short term and continuing programs were also explicitly used by interviewees and their organisations to build an array of linking connections between community organisations and institutions and refugee-background young people. Participant 1, described how her organisation used sport to link participants into other youth supports.

You probably know—traditionally refugee and CALD [culturally and linguistically diverse] kids don't go to generalist youth services and across the board...local youth services find it hard to engage with these kids...We use [sport] in a lot of our programs as a tool of engagement...we feed the boys, bring them down, have soccer, and talk about what's going on....So sports is great because kids open up. They're running around kicking a ball, they sit down for a break, you sit down beside them. It's perfect when you're working with young people. Very important. (Participant 1)

When it came to building bridging connections across ethnic divisions, and with the broader Australian community, supporting integration into mainstream clubs clearly was seen as having the greatest capacity to make a difference.

Wherever they're playing, they have a chance to integrate with anyone and that's what will make them socially adapt to know how Australian people are, how they can be friends with anyone in Australia. As they're growing up they will have the possibilities of walking in anywhere and they know how to team up with anyone. That's why I want to encourage kids... (Participant 2)

I've worked with refugee communities now for over twenty years and I've seen over that time the benefits not just for their children but also for their

families in linking into the community through sport. (Participant 5)

I'm a big believer that if you know someone's story...that racism doesn't exist if you get to know someone....Even now our under 17 boys—we've got South Sudanese boys, we've got Afghani asylum seekers, we've got Indian and Pakistani boys—we've got a real mixture and often at that age there can be that tendency to you know—but they know each other and they respect each other. (Participant 5)

Some of the participants argued cogently that for sport to promote social inclusion and broader social cohesion, integration into mainstream clubs was vital.

Ultimately you want to take the young person and put them in a club structure so they can develop their inclusion and the parents can get involved as well...it's how they build networks, a sense of belonging, health and academic abilities as well. (Participant 10)

It's obviously some small way of helping to maintain and create some cohesion in our local area. To break down barriers and just for the members of the club, it's going to be great to meet and talk to people from different backgrounds. (Participant 9)

6. Key Barriers and Facilitators

Interview participants all discussed barriers for refugee-background young people joining mainstream clubs and these reflected the same challenges as those identified in the literature. Many of those offering short term or continuing programs for refugee young people acknowledged that opportunities to participate in mainstream clubs would be ideal but felt that this was unlikely to be feasible for many.

If they want to get involved in a team it's hard. It's all those surrounding barriers, getting to training. With basketball it's venues scattered around Melbourne that might not be accessible by public transport. A lot of the parents are single parents....A lot of these people are at home dealing with the other six or seven they've got at home. (Participant 4)

It would be perfect if there was a [local soccer] club. Because that would be at the end of their list [of goals] to be registered in a club but because there's no club we can't have that as a goal...so that's a shame because that's what they want. (Participant 1)

Lack of knowledge of systems, gender norms, and competing family priorities—with parents preferring their children to focus on education—were all mentioned; but costs and, to a lesser extent, transport were seen as the key barriers to participation.

You're talking \$500 memberships [for soccer] and it's things like that. And having to travel halfway across the state to play a game on a Sunday and all those sorts of things. It's not accessible. (Participant 5)

I think finance is an issue. How we're going to do something that's sustainable. As I said, joining the club is expensive. How are we going to fund the players that want to play that aren't able to? So there's a whole lot of questions there. Whether we can do it with our own internal fundraising or apply to various other organisations. So that will be one of the challenges. Then obviously transport. (Participant 9)

Most of the continuing and short term programs for refugee-background children and youth were designed in response to these barriers and were provided free of charge. They also generally countered the transport barrier by being provided where children and young people lived or were attending school. However interviewees involved in providing these programs almost universally regarded the challenge of finding and continually needing to apply for funding a major barrier to sustainability. An additional concern with respect to sustainability was that many of the activities relied on the vision and drive of a single person, without whom it was feared many would 'fall over'.

The experiences of the interviewee who was both an assistant school principal and a cricket coach made him a particularly strong advocate.

I just think that if we're really serious about trying to cut down on crime and trying to cut down on drug abuse. The research is there....If kids are playing sport they won't get involved in those things. And particularly from low socio-economic groups....[Those kids] don't have access to sport and they will get involved in those harmful activities. I just think that there's got to be some sort of way I think in a country like Australia, where we can provide families with an opportunity for their kids to be able to access sport for free. (Participant 5)

Integrating young people successfully into mainstream clubs was in each case dependent on having someone associated with the club making the effort to reach out to families and assist with communications and transport. In two cases, people who were themselves from refugee-background communities were employed specifically in community liaison roles and this model was reported to be an extremely effective way of engaging and supporting young people to participate. In case 1, a club had secured sponsorship in order to waive membership fees and then:

[We employed] two (what we call) multicultural sports aides or MSAs for short....I guess to be able to communicate information, build trust and also to help

provide much needed support with transport....We've had a couple of other clubs replicate it on a smaller scale and it seems to be working quite successfully for them as well. (Participant 5)

In case 2, a Multicultural Liaison Officer (Participant 2) was paid on a part-time basis by the local council to perform a similar role. He described how he helped to organise transport, met with parents to explain the benefits of their children being involved in sport and provided a communication link between coaches and young people, helping to educate the latter about the importance of regular and punctual attendance at training and games as well as expectations about behaviour.

Other interview participants also spoke about the value of having someone in that type of role if trying to integrate young people into mainstream clubs.

You could potentially have people who are champions within those clubs to allow the [right] environment to exist....Because otherwise, it's good luck—go to a club, turn up to training, it's just a normal football training session and it can be a bit daunting I guess. (Participant 6)

That go-between. Because the whole system of okay, here's the tryouts, giving that information out to parents. It just doesn't work. So you need an intermediary to go between. (Participant 4)

Other key facilitators of successful participation discussed by virtually all participants were the need for flexibility around what was offered and the value of partnerships between different organisations offering services to this population group. Two of those interviewed also recounted instances where refugee-background young people had faced overt racism in mainstream sports settings and stressed the importance of developing improved systems and responses to such incidents.

7. Capacity of Sports Participation to Promote Social Inclusion

Interviewees representing each of the participation models spoke about their programs promoting integration and inclusion. For all models, sport was seen as a means of helping young people to understand and participate in Australian culture; a way of benefiting health, well-being, self-esteem and confidence; and as an activity that contributed to behavioural attributes supporting education. The opportunity to experience success and reward for effort—otherwise not available to those whose educational background meant they struggled in the classroom—was seen as particularly valuable (Block, Cross, Riggs, & Gibbs, 2014). All models were also viewed as fostering bonding and linking social connections. Thus, in terms of Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework, even those participation models that stopped

short of integration into mainstream may have substantial potential to promote inclusion by supporting health, education, and bonding and linking connections.

Integrating refugee-background young people into mainstream clubs had the additional capacity to directly support development of bridging social connections likely to be particularly critical for promoting inclusion. While bonding social capital is essential for wellbeing, bonding ties are also responsible for creating social boundaries. The development of group identity and social capital *within* groups is, by its nature, exclusionary with respect to those with different norms and identities. This raises difficulties for attempts to couple this type of social capital with social inclusion (Eriksson, 2011; Field, 2003; Wakefield & Poland, 2005). Unlike bonding networks, bridging networks are invariably depicted as positive for collective wellbeing (Narayan, 1999). Connections across social boundaries have also been characterised as providing instrumental returns to individuals. They are useful for obtaining new knowledge and resources (economic, political and social) not already possessed by an individual or group (Portes, 1998). Linking social capital, refers particularly to relationships between individuals and institutions. It implies a capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from institutions and agencies and is regarded as particularly important for marginalised individuals and communities (Domínguez & Arford, 2010; Warr, 2005). Thus, an optimal balance between bonding, bridging and linking social connections is likely to be most effective in facilitating inclusion and wellbeing (Szreter, 2002) and also for supporting those domains labelled facilitators of inclusion: language, cultural knowledge, and a sense of safety and stability.

Models which employed bicultural workers were not only the most successful at integrating young people into mainstream clubs but also provided an important avenue for communicating with parents and family members. Couch (2007) has suggested that involving families and the wider community is crucial for developing effective participation strategies for refugee-background young people to ensure their support. Failure to do this risks straining family bonds as well as the sustainability of participation.

8. Conclusions

Findings from this research indicate that the three identified participation models were all perceived as having significant benefits for refugee-background young people. While each of the models has the capacity to support a number of domains of inclusion, integration into mainstream clubs has the additional capacity to promote the development of bridging social capital with consequent greater potential impact. Both short-term and ongoing programs specifically for refugee youth were clearly valued but it was reported by many of the participants that facilitating integration into clubs remained the ideal.

Although barriers to implementing this model successfully were substantial, key facilitators emerged. These included fee subsidies and having someone who actively linked young people and their families into clubs, assisting with communication and transport. Given that this outreach role appeared to be a critical ingredient of successful integration into clubs, a key recommendation is that sporting associations and governments fund and evaluate participation models employing bicultural workers in community liaison roles with a view to expanding this practice.

This study suggests that drawing on a theoretically informed model of integration can assist with analysing the relative benefits of differing sports participation models and with designing future interventions. The study also has a number of limitations. The sample included only service providers and its size was small—although analyses suggested that data saturation was reached for this category of participants. Additional research is clearly needed to investigate the experiences of refugee-background young people and their families themselves; and to assess the impacts of sports participation interventions on outcomes associated with social inclusion.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by a generous donation from Marie Kinsella and David Conolly. The authors gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the research participants in sharing their time and experiences. The late Professor Elizabeth Waters is also warmly remembered for her role in supporting this study.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(2), 166–191.
- Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection. (2017). Humanitarian programme statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.border.gov.au/about/reports-publications/research-statistics/statistics/live-in-australia/humanitarian-programme>
- Beirens, H., Hughes, N., Hek, R., & Spicer, N. (2007). Preventing social exclusion of refugee and asylum seeking children: Building new networks. *Social Policy and Society*, 6(2), 219–229.
- Block, K., Cross, S., Riggs, E., & Gibbs, L. (2014). Supporting schools to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(12), 1337–1355.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.

- Caperchione, C. M., Kolt, G. S., & Mummery, W. K. (2009). Physical activity in culturally and linguistically diverse migrant groups to Western society: A review of barriers, enablers and experiences. *Sports Medicine*, 39(3), 167–177.
- Charmaz, K. (2003). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubrium & A. H. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 675–694). Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Cheong, P. H., Edwards, R., Goulbourne, H., & Solomos, J. (2007). Immigration, social cohesion and social capital: A critical review. *Critical Social Policy*, 27(1), 24–49.
- CMY. (2016). *Information sheet: Youth arrivals to Victoria*. Melbourne: Centre for Multicultural Youth.
- Coalter, F. (2007). Sports clubs, social capital and social regeneration: ‘Ill-defined interventions with hard to follow outcomes’? *Sport in Society*, 10(4), 537–559.
- Coalter, F. (2015). Sport-for-change: Some thoughts from a sceptic. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 19–23.
- Couch, J. (2007). Mind the gap: Considering the participation of refugee young people. *Youth Studies Australia*, 26(4), 37.
- Domínguez, S., & Arford, T. (2010). It is all about who you know: Social capital and health in low-income communities. *Health Sociology Review*, 19(1), 114–129.
- Eime, R. M., Young, J. A., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J., & Payne, W. R. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for children and adolescents: Informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 10(98).
- Eriksson, M. (2011). Social capital and health: Implications for health promotion. *Global Health Action*, 4, 5611–5621.
- Field, J. (2003). *Social capital*. New York: Routledge.
- Hardwick, S. W. (2003). Migration, embedded networks and social capital: Towards theorising North American ethnic geography. *International Journal of Population Geography*, 9(2), 163–179.
- Hawe, P., & Shiell, A. (2000). Social capital and health promotion: A review. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51(6), 871–885.
- Hoye, R., Nicholson, M., & Brown, K. (2015). Involvement in sport and social connectedness. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 50(1), 3–21.
- Kay, T. (2009). Developing through sport: Evidencing sport impacts on young people. *Sport in Society*, 12(9), 1177–1191.
- Kelly, L. (2011). ‘Social inclusion’ through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126–150.
- Korac, M. (2003). Integration and how we facilitate it: A comparative study of the settlement experiences of refugees in Italy and the Netherlands. *Sociology*, 37(1), 51.
- Narayan, D. (1999). *Bonds and bridges: Social capital and poverty* (Vol. 2167). World Bank Publications.
- O’Driscoll, T., Banting, L. K., Borkoles, E., Eime, R., & Polman, R. (2013). A systematic literature review of sport and physical activity participation in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) migrant populations. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1–16.
- Olliff, L. (2007). *Playing for the future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting young people to ‘settle well’ in Australia*. Melbourne: Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24(1), 1–22.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- QSR International. (2015). NVivo qualitative data analysis software; Version 11. Melbourne.
- Refugee Council of Australia. (2010). *A bridge to a new culture: Promoting the participation of refugees in sporting activities*. Sydney: Refugee Council of Australia.
- Rosso, E. G., & McGrath, R. (2013). Beyond recreation: Personal social networks and social capital in the transition of young players from recreational football to formal football clubs. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(4), 453–470.
- SCOA. (August 2012). *Discussion paper—Sports and settlement*. Sydney: Settlement Council of Australia.
- Spaaij, R. (2012). Beyond the playing field: Experiences of sport, social capital, and integration among Somalis in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(9), 1519–1538.
- Spaaij, R. (2013). Cultural diversity in community sport: An ethnographic inquiry of Somali Australians’ experiences. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 29–40.
- Spaaij, R., Farquharson, K., & Marjoribanks, T. (2015). Sport and social inequalities. *Sociology Compass*, 9(5), 400–411.
- Szreter, S. (2002). The state of social capital: Bringing back in power, politics, and history. *Theory and Society*, 31(5), 573–621.
- Vermeulen, J., & Verweel, P. (2009). Participation in sport: Bonding and bridging as identity work. *Sport in Society*, 12(9), 1206–1219.
- Wakefield, S. E. L., & Poland, B. (2005). Family, friend or foe? Critical reflections on the relevance and role of social capital in health promotion and community development. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60(12), 2819–2832.
- Warr, D. (2005). Social networks in a ‘discredited’ neighbourhood. *Journal of Sociology*, 41(3), 285–308.
- Woolcock, M. (2001). The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes. *Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 2(1), 11–17.

About the Authors



Karen Block is a Research Fellow in the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program in the Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health. Her research focuses on social determinants of health inequalities and wellbeing. She has a particular interest in building a deeper understanding of the issues impacting on social inclusion for immigrant and refugee-background children and families in Australia and aims to inform policy and program development for this population group.



Lisa Gibbs is Associate Professor and Director of the Jack Brockhoff Child Health and Wellbeing Program in the Centre for Health Equity, and Co-Chair of the Children's Lives Research Initiative at the University of Melbourne. She explores sociocultural and environmental influences on health and wellbeing to develop solutions and enhance opportunities for children and young people to thrive.

Article

Being Able to Play: Experiences of Social Inclusion and Exclusion Within a Football Team of People Seeking Asylum

Darko Dukic¹, Brent McDonald^{1,*} and Ramón Spaaij^{1,2}

¹ Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living, Victoria University, Melbourne, VIC 8001, Australia;
E-Mails: darko.dukic2@vu.edu.au (D.D.), brent.mcdonald@vu.edu.au (B.M.), ramon.spaij@vu.edu.au (R.S.)

² Department of Sociology, University of Amsterdam, 1012 WX Amsterdam, The Netherlands

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 31 January 2017 | Accepted: 6 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Australian policy makers and funding organisations have relied heavily on sport as a vehicle for achieving the goals of social cohesion and social inclusion. The generally accepted premise that sport includes individuals in larger social contexts, and in doing so creates positive social outcomes, remains largely untested and uncontested. This article considers the ways in which playing in an asylum seeker football team, located in Melbourne, Australia, facilitates both inclusive and exclusive experiences for its participants. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, life histories, and policy analysis, this article identifies the often-ignored importance of a sporting habitus and physical capital in individuals' experiences of playing. The success or failure of the asylum seeker team to foster social inclusion is somewhat tenuous as the logic of competition can create conditions counter to those that would be recognised as inclusive. Further, such programmes are faced with sustainability problems, as they are heavily reliant on individuals within the organisation and community to "make things happen". However, we suggest that for many men, the asylum seeker team provides an important site for the development and appreciation of 'poly-cultural' capital that contributes to forms of resilience and the achievement of other indicators of social inclusion.

Keywords

asylum seeker; exclusion; football; inclusion; poly-cultural capital; refugee; sport

Issue

This article is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

In this article we focus on asylum seekers' experiences of social inclusion through their participation in an asylum seeker football team (henceforth referred to as the ASFT). In particular we aim to consider the individual and social conditions responsible for the various 'success stories' that emerge from the research. Central to the success narrative is the connection between the players and their lifelong engagement with football.

The ASFT was established as part of an initiative by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), which is an

independent, non-for-profit human rights organisation operating in the western suburbs of Melbourne, Australia. The ASRC was founded in 2001 in response to the lack of basic assistance asylum seekers living in the community were receiving. Initially a food bank, it extended its mission to include English language programmes, free legal services and advocacy, not to mention becoming a key platform in challenging the Australian government's asylum seeker policies. Since its inception, the charity has been growing from strength to strength, each year providing services for around 3,000 refugees and asylum seekers across 30 programmes on offer.

The ASFT is one of the programmes offered, originally initiated by a weekly gathering of ASRC members at a public garden space for a social game of football amongst themselves. After gaining considerable interest, ASRC members attempted to form a team to enter competitive tournaments and leagues. The ASRC provided a volunteer coach and a team was established in 2012. In 2015 the ASRC managed to secure a partnership with the Brimbank City Council (local government) and acquired a home ground for the football team for an indefinite period. The pitch is located in Albion and has a clubhouse, changing rooms as well as two regulation football fields.

The ASFT competes in an amateur, 'home and away' style football league governed by VicSoccer, a privately run organisation targeting amateur football clubs in Victoria and operates outside the jurisdiction of Football Federation Victoria, Football Federation Australia and FIFA. In the 2016 season, the team competed in VicSoccer's Men's North-West Division 1, with matches played weekly on Sundays throughout Autumn and Winter. The league comprised of eight teams from the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne encompassing a variety of socio-economic spaces and locations. For example, in 2016 the ASFT competed against PEGS (an all-boys team from a private school in Melbourne's North-West), University of Melbourne (one of Australia's highest rated universities with a number of international and domestic students in the team located in Melbourne's inner suburb of Carlton), AZAAD Club (a Punjabi Sikh backed community club located in Melbourne's outer northern suburbs), as well as a variety of other mono-ethnic community clubs.

Mindful of Collins and Haudenhuyse's (2015) and Spaaij, Magee and Jeanes's (2014) observations about the dimensions of social inclusion and sport, we are interested primarily in 'inclusion through sport'; that is, the ways in which sport might facilitate asylum seekers and refugees' capacity to engage with Australian communities more broadly. From the outset we recognise that sport as a site for inclusion is problematic and the framing of this research similarly excludes in that it focuses on men who possess a certain level of physical capacity and skill. There are important considerations regarding 'inclusion in sport', and we examine these briefly through the concepts of sporting habitus and physical capital. However, our argument is framed through a surplus, as opposed to a deficit, model. That is, we are interested in those who successfully participate in the ASFT. In particular, we have adopted Mila-Schaaf and Robinson's (2010) Bourdieu-inspired concept of poly-cultural capital. Mila-Schaaf and Robinson developed the concept of poly-cultural capital through their examination of 'successful' (in terms of education attainment, employment, health measures) Pacific Islanders in New Zealand society. Notably poly-cultural capital is demonstrated through the "maintenance of Pacific values, cultural pride, Pacific language fluency and acceptance from Pacific peoples and others" (Mila-Schaaf & Robinson, 2010, p. 14). McDon-

ald and Rodriguez (2014) have demonstrated how playing sport, in the case of Pacific Islanders rugby, may create a space for the accrual of poly-cultural capital.

Rather than the incorporation of a minority into an exclusive (majority) group, social inclusion in this article should be understood as the ability of individuals to participate in the community (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). There are many ways that one might participate in the community and our argument regarding the ASFT is that it provides a vital space where those, who possess the particular football habitus, can establish the necessary self-confidence, resilience, and social networks (hence poly-cultural capital) to engage with the community in a way that doesn't necessitate the abandonment of one identity for another. We recognise that 'community' is an elusive and contested term that may largely be devoid of meaning (Delanty, 2009). Yet, as will be shown in this article, the term carries considerable meaning in everyday practice, not least for those who seek to navigate life in a new country. In the context of this study, 'community' primarily refers to the geographic area in which members of the ASFT live—the outer suburbs of Melbourne specifically, and Australian society more broadly—but also to the social groups they identify with and feel a sense of belonging to.

In the remainder of this article we contextualise the relationship between social inclusion and sport in Australia especially in regard to policy and practice, before briefly outlining the ethnographic approach to the research. Following this we examine the 'levels of inclusion' operating in the ASFT, centering our focus on the importance of possessing a football habitus, after which we discuss the problematic issues of competition and sustainability. Finally, we conclude by exploring some of the 'success stories' and the ways in which football may have contributed to them.

2. Social Inclusion and Sport in Australia

As with many other industrial nations in the West, Australian policies and attitudes toward refugees and asylum seekers have become increasingly punitive, restrictive, and hostile over the past twenty years (Cameron, 2013; Clyne, 2005; Every & Augoustinos, 2007). The rhetoric of tough border control and detention ('turn back the boats'), threat to 'Australian values', and Islamophobia, has entered the political and media landscape, serving as a platform for not only right-wing political movements but also mainstream parties.

Since the new millennium, and arguably modelled on similar initiatives from the UK and Europe (e.g. Amara et al., 2004), both State and Federal governments have increasingly sought to use sport as a vehicle to assist in the integration and resettlement of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Cortis, 2009; Olliff, 2008; Spaaij, 2012, 2015). For example, the National Action Plan (NAP) to build on social cohesion, harmony and security (Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs,

2007), which was written in the context of increased fear of domestic terrorism, noted that to combat the increasing exclusion of “young members from some communities”, “more active participation in mainstream sporting, social, and cultural activities” should be encouraged to “lessen feelings of isolation and marginalisation” (p. 13). *The People of Australia: Australia’s Multicultural Policy* (Department of Social Services, 2011) similarly places sport as one of the five key initiatives or vehicles for achieving multiculturalism. The policy’s Multicultural Youth Sports Partnership Program aims to “create connections and involve youth from new and emerging communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including refugees and minor refugees), through sport and active recreation activities” (p. 8).

With the perceived value of sport participation dominating Australian sport and integration policies, National Sport Associations (NSAs), State Sport Associations (SSAs) and local government bodies were quick to adopt the governing logic, securing funding to run programmes and seeking to capitalise on the dual benefit of meeting strategic participation targets and accessing possible athletic resources, whilst assisting in building a healthy and cohesive multicultural society (Jeanes, O’Connor, & Alfrey, 2014). There is no denying that sport in Australia is a “key site of culture production and social prestige” (Spaaij, 2015, p. 303) and some research demonstrates that sports programmes aimed at newly arrived populations can be important platforms for social capital, identity building, feelings of belonging, leadership and pro-social behaviour to occur (see Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, 2007; Nathan et al., 2010, 2013; Palmer, 2009; Spaaij, 2012, 2015). However, whilst the rhetoric about the power of sport to act as a vehicle for social inclusion is strong, the evidence is largely anecdotal and there is often a conflict between policy and practice (Jeanes et al., 2014; Northcote & Casimiro, 2009; Spaaij, 2013). For example, Northcote and Casimiro (2009) critically evaluated the application of the NAP to find that newly arrived migrants have a clear preference to engage in sport initiatives that are fluid and informal than the rigid and structured organised competitive sport that predominate “mainstream” sporting culture. Further there exists tension between policy makers and those organisations charged to enact these policies. As Cortis (2009, p. 94) observes in her research on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women and sport:

Australian initiatives aimed at promoting diversity in sport have been largely aspirational and have taken a lower profile, lacking the legitimacy and co-ordination that a national social inclusion agenda, diversity compliance framework, or sports equity agency would provide.

National sporting bodies are risk averse and reluctant to invest on ‘minimal return’ (Cortis, 2009; Jeanes et al., 2014; Olliff, 2008). Therefore, their approach is mostly

a top-down, one-size-fits-all model which ultimately strengthens some of the barriers (e.g. lack of inclusive practices and accessible targeted programmes, cultural misunderstanding of gender expectations, lack of access to transport) faced by new arrivals (Olliff, 2008; Spaaij, 2013). Northcote and Casimiro (2009) and Spaaij (2012) both identified that, in practice, the outcome for refugees and newly arrived migrants rarely equates to the policy rhetoric and can instead further disengage and alienate some youth.

While sport is viewed to have ‘integrative power’, integration is a heavily contested term and the definition draws large significance when used in broader sport policy discourse (Jeanes et al., 2014; Spaaij, 2012; Walseth, 2006). Jeanes et al. (2014) and Spaaij (2012) point out that the modern and systematic definition of integration is a collaborative and reciprocal process on both the part of the host society and the migrant, whereby the newly arrived have “the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political activities while maintaining one’s cultural identity” (Spaaij, 2012, p. 1519). The question remains, therefore, what are the required conditions to ‘participate fully’? In most cases, sports organisations’ inclusion framework can best be defined as the absence of exclusive policy, as if to say “we’re an inclusive club, anyone is welcome to join and play”. This position is more assimilationist than the integration perspective mentioned above: the responsibility falls on the individual to “fit in to” the existing sport model. Further, what are the effects of fitting in? Does this open up opportunities for greater civic participation?

The ASFT presents a model of sport inclusion that overcomes many interpersonal and structural barriers. The ASRC provides the team with all the necessary training and playing equipment, inclusive facilities and spaces, and in some instances they provide credit on their public transport (Myki) cards for commuting to and from football matches. On given days the centre will also have some healthcare professionals available, such as general practitioners and physiotherapists to treat any ASRC members. Certain players from the team would feasibly have experienced more difficulties to play in their native land. For example, many of the team members talked about playing in Iran as schoolboys in their flip flops, on narrow streets and with plastic balls, and hence they relished the opportunity to play on full-sized, grassy football fields and in their football boots.

Therefore, rather than focus on the undeniable barriers that exist for refugees and asylum seekers in gaining inclusion in sport, this study sought to identify whether, and if so how, those that were included, that were playing, experienced social inclusion through sport. In a way, by focusing on the ASFT, we were looking at those ‘success stories’, which individually might seem anecdotal, but collectively provided some empiricism to when and why sport might contribute to inclusive experiences. The next section discusses the research methods used to elicit this empirical data.

3. Method

The data presented in this article was collected using an ethnographic approach (Madden, 2010). The primary author shared some common experiences with the ASFT members, namely that he had also once been a refugee (arriving in Australia in 1990) and had spent his formative years (both in the Balkans and in Australia) playing football on a daily basis, eventually making it to a semi-professional level of competition in Victoria, Australia. Utilising this physical capital (as a football player), he volunteered as an assistant coach and doubled up as an outfield player for the duration of the 2016 season. It is through the 'doing' that the primary author engages with the field, and as such the researcher's body and his playing capacity allowed for a type of "observant participation" (Wacquant, 2004). Further, as demonstrated in a field-note later on in this article, he literally becomes 'one of the boys' on game day, a position that opened a significant opportunity for reflexivity regarding being an asylum seeker and his own personal trajectory in the Balkans and Australia. This on-and-off-the-field involvement allowed him to (1) use the body as an instrument in collecting sensual data which lead to (2) establishing a cross-cultural intimacy and trust with the ASFT members allowing the researcher (3) to *learn from* team members' interactions, relationships thoughts and attitudes (Evers, 2010). The season lasted approximately six months, inclusive of warm-up and competitive fixtures, with one training and match held per week.

A detailed field-note journal was kept by the participating researcher. Recording the field began from week one, with a focus on the relationships, moments and actions that shaped the space. As an active participant, these notes also included the researcher's experiences and embodied responses to the field. Journal entries focused mainly on two regular team events, namely training (which was mostly done with just the team) and matches (often at away venues and in interaction with the opposing team). Notes were taken during other related interactions with the field, for example, social gatherings organised by the Centre, team meetings and occasional post-match dinners at restaurants organised by the players themselves. This included incidental conversations, small talk and other social interactions.

Furthermore, individual, semi-structured, interviews were conducted and digitally recorded. The interviews focused on the player's experiences and involvement in the ASFT as well as what playing football means to them. Staff and volunteers who were involved in administrative aspects of the team, but did not play, were also given the opportunity to provide their views and opinions. Their perspective provided a broader analysis of the team's value off the pitch and as a whole. In total, nine interviews (with two staff members and seven players), lasting between 30 minutes and 1 hour, were conducted. All interviews were transcribed and participants were anonymised. The data were organised using

thematic analysis and resultant themes emerged inductively, some of which we discuss below. The research for this project was approved by and complied with the requirements of Victoria University's ethics committee.

4. Levels of Inclusion

In exploring the characteristics and experiences that players in the ASFT had in common, it is possible to understand how playing in the team created conditions for inclusion into the community more broadly. It is important to note that not all experiences were positive or inclusive, that the sustainability of programmes such as this is tenuous, and that even within teams, such as the ASFT, there are varying levels of inclusion/exclusion. Nevertheless, we argue that the football experiences in the ASFT are centrally important in providing a social and physical space of belonging, or "safe space" (Spaaij & Schlenker, 2014), from which members developed the resilience and capacity to engage with other communities.

5. Football Habitus—Inclusion in the Team

Football had been and continues to be an important component of the embodied histories of the men in the ASFT. Talking about their memories of playing as children and growing up elicited animation and happiness. Football was regarded with fondness and produced feelings of nostalgia. Almost universally, football had occupied large periods of daily life and had been their priority recreational activity, as the following comments suggest:

Everyday. Do you know why? Because when I finished school we go straight out and play. Before we go home we go play football. (Mejsam, late 30s, Iran)

Every single day for hours!...When I was a teenager I would play six hours a day. Every day! (Milad, early 30s, Iran)

Two times a week for the school, and in the street, everyday. (Azizi, mid-20s, Iran)

Not surprisingly, the inadvertent by-product of so much time spent playing was literally the 'football habitus'. In other words, they could play, and in playing moved naturally below the level of conscious reflection (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Indeed, others recognised the possession of the football habitus as a form of physical capital (cf. Shilling, 2013). Being able to play, to pass, and to conceptualise the game has a form of value, which gives one easy access to the field of play. The field of play is simultaneously a physical and a social space, and the football habitus can overcome the potential for misrecognition arising from the diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds that refugees and asylum seekers have. So, whilst the day-to-day negotiation of life in a new country is often fraught with uncertainty and full of misunder-

standing, kicking the ball provided a space of familiarity, confidence and even freedom in the sense of movement and flow.

The 'football habitus' extends further than the physical action on the pitch. It is also expressed in the ability to talk about football with authenticity. Talking about football revolved around three major topics: European/English teams, domestic teams from one's home country, and the national team in relation to World Cups. Talking about football was also a central part of one's social interaction in the refugee and asylum seekers' home country. For example, Kigali from Rwanda explains to what extent his social experiences were tied with FC Barcelona, the football team he follows:

Yeah, that was also something that bound people together and that's when we used to catch up. If you want to catch up with your friend you say, "OK let's go and watch this game", and you meet somewhere and you have a coffee or something while you're watching the game and then you get up and you make the plan for the next game too.

Being able to talk about football in the context of the ASFT similarly recreated familiar social interactions. These interactions could be inclusive and exclusive. Thus, just as everyone could talk about FC Barcelona or Manchester United, conversations in Farsi about the domestic competition in Iran would limit one's capacity to engage.

For most of the members, playing football has been ever-present throughout their lives. With the exception of one, all the interviewees said they joined the team within months of arriving to Australia. Despite massive changes in their lives, for some, playing football has been the only consistent aspect. This is evident in their prioritisation of football even when they have "too many things on top of that".

When asked why he chose to play football in Australia, Fwayo, who arrived alone as a teenager eight years ago from Zambia, responded by saying:

I like soccer. It's my favourite sport and I needed something to occupy my free time, you know?...I needed to feel like I was doing something a bit constructive, something that I like and something that I enjoy.

Azizi, a man in his late twenties who had joined the team four years ago, had a similar response to the same question. He replied:

Because at the time I didn't have a job and everyday I would go to the ASRC for English classes, so I wanted to find a hobby for weekends....For me, living in Melbourne at first, I wasn't in the community and it was the worst days for me on the weekends, it was very boring. So the best thing to do on the weekends was to play football.

In the beginning, a lack of time or priority to play football was not a barrier for some members of the team. Azizi also spoke about initially feeling lonely and locking himself in his room in the government housing before he started the football programme. While some of them now had jobs and families, football still remained high in their priorities. The team manager Sam, who is an asylum seeker, had this to say about one of the players:

I feel amazed. They will have too many things on top of that, but always, for him or lots of other players, maybe they are not going to every training, but on Sunday they just say "ohh, I have to go to the match". This is their first priority. They don't think "today I can go somewhere else", no, they have to go to the match.

The combination of structural support offered by the ASRC and the football habitus of the members of the ASFT results in a programme that has a meaningful impact on the lives of these asylum seekers and refugees. The programme provides more than just a diversion from the liminal nature of day-to-day life. In many ways it becomes a space where resilience can be built (Johns, Grossman, & McDonald, 2014), where one can tap into various resources, and connect with others through an activity that literally comes as second nature.

6. Competition—Relationships of Power

As mentioned earlier, the ASFT play in a home and away seasonal competition. The success or failure of the ASFT to foster social inclusion is somewhat tenuous as the logic of competition can create conditions counter to those that would be recognised as inclusive. Every weekend the ASFT are forced to negotiate new power struggles against teams with varying dispositions towards asylum seekers. This is a fact not lost on some members of the ASFT. Mejsam, who hails from Iran and is in his late thirties, had this to say about why he continues to play football for the ASRC team:

(What) I want to show to people, is that refugee people is not dangerous people or somebody who come by boat. But my experience, I think it was two years ago or maybe more, we played with a team...that team is so young; 20, 23–24, all of them, and we won the game. But when the game finished all their players come and shake our hand, "we are so glad to play with you" and I ask "why?" and they said "we had a bad background uhh thinking about refugee people, we think refugee people are angry people and fighting". That time I'm so glad we show the culture and we are not dangerous.

This type of interaction suggests ways that sport might transform attitudes about asylum seekers and refugees and in doing so open opportunities to break down some of the barriers that create exclusion in other spaces in

society. However, these interactions are not always positive, and for every transformative moment there is another one where stereotypes and stigmas are reinforced. Regardless of whether the experience of competition is positive or negative, an “othering” occurs that the ASFT has little control over. Further, even in relatively “social” leagues, the priority to win is stronger in some teams than in others. Football, like most sports, often creates situations where aggression, violence, intimidation, and cheating are utilised as part of a tactical approach to winning at all costs. Often these types of tactic are intended to distract players from the game, and bait the opposition into reactions resulting in free kicks, or even yellow or red cards. The following is a field note from such a game:

Our opponents were particularly playing dirty and doing anything to provoke us, including cheap tackles and insults, both on and off the ball. They knew exactly what they were doing. Surprisingly the referee (who we had history with) was doing okay to manage it while still somehow being against us for all the important decisions. Still, he didn't seem nearly as bad as on previous occasions. Fifteen minutes into the second half, Mejsam got into a scuffle with one of their younger players while the ball was on the other side of the field. They had a hold of each other's shirts and I was worried a fight would break out. Again, this was very unusual. Mejsam is very mild mannered and always a true gentleman. To see him holding one of their younger player's shirts was baffling. Being the closest person to them, I sprinted to Mejsam's assistance and pushed the kid away from Mejsam in an attempt to break up a potential fight. As I stood between them, the referee adjudged retaliation on my part and showed me a straight red card. This was my first ever red card in my entire junior and senior career. I was stunned. Both teams' players now ran to where the incident occurred and a full-blown melee ensued. Everyone was now pushing and shoving, and as I walked off the field, another red was brandished to someone in the pack. Dariush and Ehsan had surrounded the referee and were shouting at him imposingly. I quickly ran back to try and restrain my teammates from doing anything stupid. The opposition continued to fuel the fire by pushing and insulting us even though we had stopped paying attention to them a long time ago and were now firmly focused on abusing the referee. We had left him with no choice as he called the game off. Some of the opposition's older players were still shouting insults at us and claiming the moral high ground as we walked off the field. It was incredible. This is what they were instigating the entire game and they were hell bent on making it happen.

What this field note demonstrates is the way in which competitive, mainstream sport is surely a problematic vehicle to achieve social inclusion (Northcote & Casimiro,

2009). Rich, Misener and Dubeau (2015) note in their analysis of a community cup in Canada, that successful inclusion is achieved through a variety of modifications (team size and make up, no goalies, smaller fields, one-off tournaments) to football intentionally away from the mainstream model. The sorts of aggressive interactions described above were not unusual. Frustrations, feeling hard done by the referee, even internal disagreements between teammates during matches (by-products of competition), all have the potential to derail the positive outcomes of playing. One may question the necessity of being part of a full competition season; however, it is the competition that many players held as important. The ASFT wanted to be part of the mainstream. In playing they had at least the opportunity to represent themselves in a broader public space. Further, even incidents like the one above had the effect of producing a sense of solidarity within the team and built stronger bonds between individuals from a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

7. Sustainability

The ASFT is designed specifically in the context of the needs and conditions faced by refugees and asylum seekers, yet exists within the format of mainstream competition sport. For the large part this has been a very successful programme, however due to its ‘bespoke’ nature it constantly faces issues of sustainability. This is primarily because it is heavily reliant on volunteers and individuals within the organisation and community to ‘make things happen’. The basic logistics of week-in-week-out matches, uniforms, laundry, managing team-sheets, marking the lines on the field, transport and injuries usually fall to a few individuals. Over the long winter there are weeks when there are barely enough players to field a team, and other weeks when there are so many players that ensuring everyone gets a fair time on the pitch is almost a political undertaking.

The knowledge of how to do these things is developed through experience and, as a result, if key individuals leave for some reason then that knowledge often goes with them. Unlike roles (president, secretary, treasurer, etc.) at mainstream clubs which are usually elected positions complete with job descriptions, ASFT positions are largely ad hoc. Further, based on the Australian model, mainstream clubs generally have active histories, and hence identity, maintained by the members with long-time connection to the club and the community in which it resides. The ASFT does not have access to this type of historical identity, and the resources (volunteers, memberships, finances) that come with it. These resources might also include forms of social and cultural capital that other clubs utilise in order to maximise their connections to local communities.

Perhaps the most significant role at the ASFT is the manager, especially as it is through this position that the ASFT communicates its needs to the ASRC. Unlike most

mainstream clubs, who operate as one organisation, the ASFT is part of a bigger organisation. Resources, both financial and physical, are available, but accessing them involves knowledge of who to ask at the higher organisational level. When procedural knowledge resides in individuals, then the success and sustainability of a programme such as the ASFT can suffer if individuals leave.

8. Success Stories: Poly-Cultural Capital

In spite of the potential problems raised in relation both to sustainability and the outcomes of competition, the ASFT is a successful vehicle through which asylum seekers and refugees experience forms of inclusion as demonstrated by individuals' participation in civic life. This participation takes various forms, for example undertaking further education (tertiary or technical), gaining employment, starting a business, getting a drivers licence, marrying, and something as simple as going out to dinner at a local restaurant with some teammates. Some players, based on their physical skill, moved on to play at more mainstream clubs, while others connected with clubs that had formed around ethnic identity. For example, several Iranian asylum seekers had moved on to play at an Iranian based club, and in doing so could connect to the Iranian diaspora in Melbourne, not only for football but more importantly resources, knowledge and support during their resettlement and search for employment.

These 'success stories', so to speak, revolve around two characteristics or themes. The first is social connectedness and the way the ASFT provides social interaction and support. The second is the way in which football facilitates the development of poly-cultural capital that strengthens elements of one's identity and contributes to the resilience and confidence required to engage with the uncertainty presented by the host country.

Social connectedness is experienced in a variety of ways and it is necessary to reiterate that that ASFT is only one of the many programmes offered by the ASRC. Programmes in themselves, however, do not create social connectedness. This connectedness comes about through what actually happens in these spaces. Football, by definition, is social because it requires one to engage with others. Creating opportunities for social connectedness is vitally important as recently arrived asylum seekers and refugees often experience intense isolation, uncertainty and loneliness. These conditions can be exacerbated by the long and unpredictable processing time for asylum seekers in Australia.¹ Many newly arrived asylum seekers face a lengthy period of simply 'waiting around'. As mentioned above, respondents from the football team stated participation in football was something they sought out in order to fill some of their free time and to provide them with routine.

The players' experience of playing in the team was also tied to routine escapism from their daily stressors.

Playing football allows them to temporarily 'switch-off' and be consumed by the 'here and now' of the game (Olliff, 2008). They can relax knowing they won't experience racism or aggression, whereas they may experience this in everyday life. Another aspect of social connectedness is seen in the formation of friendships, which carried on outside of the ASFT and the competition season.

Through the resultant social interactions the recently arrived players could connect with longer-term asylum seekers and get advice about processes, services and systems. The team manager, Sam, explains how he found the ASFT a useful resource:

I met lots of the people from different places and uhm...sometimes we would talk about our study and all of the things together as well and sometimes just like the extra help from all of the players from each other because we would talk about it and sometime we would have the sources all of the people need, maybe we can provide so just like a network. So sometime maybe someone looking for a job or someone think "oh I need a lift, [I'm] in I need something" so it's like exchange information...because everyone have a different experience of staying in Melbourne so we just try to help each other and, say, maybe I go through this process before and maybe I share the experience.

The second characteristic developed through playing with the ASFT is poly-cultural capital. Poly-cultural capital is a particular species of capital that migrants possess to successfully integrate and achieve in a new country. For Mila-Schaaf and Robinson (2010) this meant holding on to a strong sense of one's cultural identity (expressed through language, cultural practices, etc.) in the new country. We would argue that playing football offered something akin to poly-cultural capital for several reasons.

Firstly, possessing a football habitus, playing in the ASFT connected these men back to a previous identity in their home countries. We would argue that in this case football would have just as much poly-cultural capacity as would traditional dance or some other performative aspect of culture (McDonald & Rodriguez, 2014). In this way football is more than just a diversion from oppressive conditions; it offers a return to a younger, happier sense of being. That is, that youthful memories of playing football connected them to a sense of place that often predated the conditions which caused them to flee. Importantly this sense of self, as with many dominant sports, also coincides with ideas around appropriate masculinity. Seeking asylum can be a disempowering and emasculating experience (Jaji, 2009), thus in reconnecting with something that would be considered expressive of hegemonic masculinity our participants also reinstate their manliness.

¹ In 2014–15 the average processing time for refugee visas from application registration to the granting of a visa was 62.7 weeks. The average processing time for Special Humanitarian Programme visas was 64.9 weeks (Australian Government, 2016).

Secondly, playing football has poly-cultural capacity because of its ability to create resilience. Resilience is defined in this article as the capacity of individuals to cope with adverse life circumstances, which is constituted and enacted through the interactions between individuals and their environments (Teram & Ungar, 2009). Several interviewees mentioned altering their lifestyle for the better as they felt a responsibility to be the best they can for the greater good of the team. Fwayo, a member of the team for two years, said he noticed a considerable change in his attitude towards himself and others since he started playing for the ASFT:

Generally, a better quality of life, you know all the free time I had sometimes I'd find myself indulging in activities that I didn't really want to be involved in, you know, like having a drink on a weekday in the afternoon, which is very unproductive and in the longer run it will affect your health...its helped me realise like, how to be responsible, because being a part of the team makes me feel like I'm committed to doing something and I try as much as I can to be there at the appropriate time and stuff, which is a test for me, you know, in terms of having responsibilities.

Fwayo had acquired considerable football capital in his youth and hence reconnecting with football through the ASFT also reconnects him to his older identity. He has used this football programme as a platform—whether consciously or not—to improve other aspects of his life. Another respondent, Rahmadan, had echoed Fwayo's sentiments. He went on to say:

About myself, there is something really important that I was monitoring every week, when I was at work I was always trying to watch myself, look after myself to be ready for the next game. So, uhm, it protects me from adopting a new lifestyle, so in terms of thinking about spending late nights or smoking or like you know bad habits, that's protected me within these three years.

The third way that football provides opportunities for the accumulation of poly-cultural capital is the way the football habitus produces a type of fluency. Football also acts as a form of expression, almost in the sense of a form of language. This is not, however, clumsy and uncertain attempts to use English, rather it is more akin to speaking one's mother tongue. Hence, even asylum seekers from different linguistic backgrounds can communicate with and through the ball.

Having developed poly-cultural capital and social connections, the success stories from the ASFT demonstrate the potential of inclusion through sport. A key component of our definition of social inclusion is the notion of reciprocity. An example of this can be seen in Azizi, who, despite his busy schedule, volunteered as a coach and prioritised his availability around the team, in his words

to "give something back". After hearing Azizi's story, the CEO of Football Federation Victoria (FFV) waived Azizi's coaching course fee. In keeping with reciprocity, Azizi asked what he could do to pay the CEO back. Although there was no answer to this question, Azizi's response was running football training for the children at ASRC. The trainings began before the senior team's training session and would slightly overlap to half way through the senior team's practice. As a result, Azizi was able to attend both trainings while providing a type of "child care" service, allowing their parents to train. When the juniors' training concluded, Azizi would join the senior team and the children would simply continue playing while they waited for their fathers to finish their training. It did not take long before local children living in the area started to express interest in participating. After initially beginning with just a handful of children the trainings quickly swelled to in excess of twenty participants.

Azizi is in many ways paying back the CEO of FFV by generating an interest in football within his immediate community as well as contributing to friendships amongst children born in Melbourne and children who had arrived as asylum seekers or refugees. By 'giving back' Azizi is reciprocating to both the football community and the local community. This active participation and collaboration with his adopted society is an indication of the dynamic and creative ways inclusive practices that can evolve from something that initially starts with being able to play.

9. Conclusion

By foregrounding the barriers refugees and asylum seekers experience in sport and in other spheres of life, we, as researchers, tend to overlook and underplay their resilience and ability to overcome such barriers as they navigate life in a new country. In this article, we have sought to shift the analytical lens from a deficit model to a surplus, or asset-based, approach; that is, we were interested in what it is that we can learn from the stories and lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers who *do* participate in a sports programme. In doing so, this article provides much-needed empirical insight that allows for a more nuanced, empirically grounded and critical appraisal of the widely held assumption in sport policy that sport participation unequivocally assists in the resettlement process of asylum seekers and refugees. Our findings point to the problematic nature of competitive mainstream sport as a site or vehicle for achieving social inclusion; however, they also show that for some asylum seekers with a 'football habitus', programmes such as ASFT can provide a meaningful space in facilitating the development of poly-cultural capital, in turn strengthening their resilience, identity and civic participation.

Further, when it comes to achieving social inclusion through sport, we outline the dissociation between Australian policy rhetoric and practice and illustrate and reflect on this through the empirical examination of a foot-

ball programme that focuses on providing a safe and engaging space for its members. However, the programme can still elicit feelings of exclusion on occasion as the ASFT has little control over the ‘othering’ the team experiences, while more can also be done with regard to issues of sustainability. Nevertheless, the ASFT’s ‘success stories’ can be attributed to the ASRC’s ability to combat many of the structural and interpersonal barriers experienced by asylum seekers in sport participation, whilst the players’ ‘footballing habitus’ and poly-cultural capital should not go unrecognised in assisting them to participate and experience various forms of social inclusion in a new country.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Simon Reynolds and everyone involved with the ASRC Football Team for their unwavering support throughout the research process. Thanks also to the contributions of the two reviewers.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Amara, M., Aquilina, D., Argent, E., Betzer-Tayar, M., Green, M., Henry, I., . . . & Taylor, J. (2004). *The roles of sport and education in the social inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees: An evaluation of policy and practice in the UK*. Loughborough: Loughborough University.
- Australian Government. (2016). Country chapter: Australia. In *Refugee resettlement handbook and country chapters* (pp. 1–17). Geneva: UNHCR. Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html>
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Cameron, M. (2013) From “queue jumpers” to “absolute scum of the earth”: Refugee and organised criminal deviance in Australian asylum policy. *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 59(2), 241–259.
- Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues. (2007). *Playing for the future: The role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people to ‘settle well’ in Australia*. Melbourne: CMYI.
- Clyne, M. (2005). The use of exclusionary language to manipulate opinion: John Howard, asylum seekers and the reemergence of political incorrectness in Australia. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 4(2), 173–196.
- Collins, M., & Haudenhuysen, R. (2015). Social exclusion and austerity policies in England: The role of sports in a new area of social polarization and inequality? *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 5–18.
- Cortis, N. (2009). Social inclusion and sport: Culturally diverse women’s perspectives. *Australian Journal of Social Issues (Australian Council of Social Service)*, 44(1), 91–106.
- Delanty, G. (2009). *Community* (2nd. ed.). London: Routledge.
- Department of Social Services. (2011). *The people of Australia: Australia’s multicultural policy*. Canberra: Department of Social Services. Retrieved from https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/12_2013/people-of-australia-multicultural-policy-booklet_print.pdf
- Donnelly, P., & Coakley, J. (2002). *The role of recreation in promoting social inclusion*. Retrieved from http://laidlawfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/wpsosi_2002_december_the-role-of-recreation.pdf
- Evers, C. (2010). Intimacy, sport and young refugee men. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 3(1), 56–61.
- Every, D., & Augoustinos, M. (2007). Constructions of racism in the Australian parliamentary debates on asylum seekers. *Discourse and Society*, 18(4), 411–436.
- Jaji, R. (2009). Masculinity on unstable ground: Young refugee men in Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(2), 177–194.
- Jeanes, R., O’Connor, J., & Alfrey, L. (2014). Sport and the resettlement of young people from refugee backgrounds in Australia. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 39(6), 480–500.
- Johns, A., Grossman, M., & McDonald, K. (2014). ‘More than a game’: The impact of sport-based youth mentoring schemes on developing resilience toward violent extremism. *Social Inclusion*, 2(2), 57–70.
- Madden, R. (2010). *Being ethnographic: A guide to the theory and practice of ethnography*. London: Sage.
- McDonald, B., & Rodriguez, L. (2014). ‘It’s our meal ticket’: Pacific bodies, labour and mobility in Australia. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*, 3(3), 236–249.
- Mila-Schaaf, K., & Robinson, E. (2010). ‘Polycultural’ capital and educational achievement among NZ-born Pacific peoples. *Mai Review*, 1, 1–18.
- Ministerial Council on Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. (2007). *A national action plan to build on social cohesion, harmony and security*. Canberra: DIAC.
- Nathan, S., Bunde-Birouste, A., Evers, C., Kemp, L., MacKenzie, J., & Henley, R. (2010). Social cohesion through football: A quasi-experimental mixed methods design to evaluate a complex health promotion program. *BMC Public Health*, 10(1), 1–12. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-587
- Nathan, S., Kemp, L., Bunde-Birouste, A., MacKenzie, J., Evers, C., & Shwe, T. A. (2013). “We wouldn’t of made friends if we didn’t come to Football United”: The impacts of a football program on young people’s peer, prosocial and cross-cultural relationships. *BMC Public Health*, 13(1), 1–16. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-13-399

- Northcote, J., & Casimiro, S. (2009). A critical approach to evidence-based resettlement policy: Lessons learned from an Australian Muslim refugee sports program. *Tamara Journal of Critical Organisation Inquiry*, 8(1/2), 173–185.
- Olliff, L. (2008). Playing for the future: the role of sport and recreation in supporting refugee young people to ‘settle well’ in Australia. *Youth Studies Australia*, 27(1), 52–60.
- Palmer, C. (2009). Soccer and the politics of identity for young Muslim refugee women in South Australia. *Soccer & Society*, 10. doi:10.1080/14660970802472643
- Rich, K., Misener, L., & Dubeau, D. (2015) “Community Cup, we are a big family”: Examining social inclusion and acculturation of newcomers to Canada through a participatory sport event. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 129–141.
- Shilling, C. (2013). *The body and social theory* (3rd. ed.). London: Sage.
- Spaaij, R. (2012). Beyond the playing field: Experiences of sport, social capital, and integration among Somalis in Australia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(9), 1519–1538.
- Spaaij, R. (2013). Cultural diversity in community sport: An ethnographic inquiry of Somali Australians’ experiences. *Sport Management Review*, 16(1), 29–40.
- Spaaij, R. (2015). Refugee youth, belonging and community sport. *Leisure Studies*, 34(3), 303–318.
- Spaaij, R., Magee, J., & Jeanes, R. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion in global society*. London: Routledge.
- Spaaij, R., & Schulenkorf, N. (2014). Cultivating safe space: Lessons for sport-for-development projects and events. *Journal of Sport Management*, 28(6), 633–645.
- Teram, E., & Ungar, M. (2009). Not just the master discourse: A case for holistic case studies of youth resilience. In L. Liebenberg & M. Ungar (Eds.), *Researching resilience* (pp. 103–128). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Wacquant, L. (2004) *Body and soul: Notebooks of an apprentice boxer*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Walseth, K. (2006). Sport and belonging. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41(3/4), 447–464.

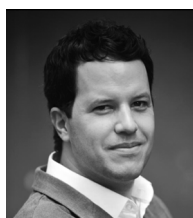
About the Authors



Darko Dukic graduated from Victoria University (VU) in Melbourne, Australia with a bachelor’s degree in Sport Science (Human Movement) and a major in Sociology in 2016. The following year he completed an Honours research project at VU investigating the integrative aspects of football participation for people seeking asylum. Darko’s academic interests are driven by his personal experiences of playing football as a refugee youth in Australia. Currently he is a sessional tutor at VU teaching Social Dimensions of Sport and Exercise.



Brent McDonald is a senior lecturer at Victoria University. His research interests include the sociology of sport and Japanese studies. His publications have focused largely on the experiences of Pacific Islander migration to Australia, Japanese education, and the (re)production of biological ‘race’. He is the author of *Sport in Society* (McGraw Hill, 2011, with Jay Coakley and Chris Hallinan).



Ramón Spaaij is a Professor at Victoria University and the University of Amsterdam. His research interests include the sociology of sport and the sociology of terrorism. His recent books include *Sport and Social Mobility: Crossing Boundaries* (Routledge, 2011); *Sport and Social Exclusion in Global Society* (Routledge, 2014, with Jonathan Magee and Ruth Jeanes); and *The Age of Lone Wolf Terrorism* (Columbia University Press, 2017, with Mark S. Hamm).

Article

Interculturalism and Physical Cultural Diversity in the Greater Toronto Area

Yuka Nakamura ^{1,*} and Peter Donnelly ²

¹ School of Kinesiology and Health Science, York University, Toronto, M3J 1P3, Canada; E-Mail: nakamura@yorku.ca

² Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, M5S 2W6, Canada;

E-Mail: peter.donnelly@utoronto.ca

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 30 January 2017 | Accepted: 20 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is one of the most multicultural communities in the world. Frequently, this description is based on ethnic, linguistic, and culinary diversity. Physical cultural diversity, such as different sports, martial arts, forms of dance, exercise systems, and other physical games and activities, remains ignored and understudied. Based on a living database of the GTA's physical cultural diversity, this study identifies the trajectories of the lifecycle of activities that have been introduced into the GTA's physical culture by immigrants. These pathways differ based on whether the activity is offered in a separate setting, where individuals may be participating with other immigrants of the same ethnocultural group, or mixed settings, where people are participating with people from outside of their ethnocultural group. We argue that the diversity and the lifecycle trajectories of physical cultural forms in the GTA serve as evidence of interculturalism and the contribution by immigrants to the social and cultural life of Canada.

Keywords

diversity; immigrants; interculturalism; physical culture; sport; Toronto

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

According to the 2011 National Household Survey, 20.6% of the population was born outside of Canada. Indeed, over 200 different ethnic groups are represented in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). In the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) alone, it is estimated that by 2031 approximately 75% of people living in the GTA will be immigrants or Canadian-born children of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2010). It is not surprising then that the GTA is viewed as one of the most multicultural communities in the world, with its ethnic, linguistic, and culinary diversity. Interestingly, with the exception of dance, physical cultural diversity is not often included in this list. Indeed, physical cultural diversity, such as different sports,

martial arts, forms of dance, exercise systems, and other physical games and activities, remains understudied.

The GTActivity study is the first attempt to document the diversity of physical culture in a large and extremely multicultural community. Based on this study, we identify the main trajectories of the lifecycle of activities that have been introduced by immigrants into the physical culture of the GTA. These pathways differ based on: whether the activity is offered in a separate setting, where individuals may be participating with other immigrants of the same ethnocultural group; or mixed settings, where people are participating with individuals outside of their ethnocultural group. We argue that the diversity and the lifecycle trajectories of physical cultural forms in the GTA shed light on the role of sport in promot-

ing multiculturalism, intercultural understanding, and social inclusion in its broadest sense—sport offers a way to contribute to the social and cultural life of Canada, and increases access to and participation in sport for all.

In Canada, social inclusion must be understood in relation to the Multiculturalism Act, the fundamental principles of which are that all citizens may maintain their identities; share and take pride in their cultural traditions and have a sense of belonging in the nation; and that all citizens should have the opportunity to participate in Canada's cultural and civic life, irrespective of ethnicity or ancestry. The Canadian Government calls this "inclusive citizenship" (Government of Canada, n.d.). It has been claimed though that multiculturalism has failed, and other terms, such as interculturalism, have been offered as an alternative. Interculturalism has multiple definitions, but fundamentally, emphasises dialogue and interaction between people who are different (e.g., Donnelly & Nakamura, 2006; Frisby, 2014; Henry, Amara, & Aquilina, 2007; Meer & Modood, 2012). We concur with Meer and Modood (2012) that interculturalism has valuable features, many of which are foundational to multiculturalism. Thus, in this paper we focus on the role of sport specifically to promote interculturalism, not as an alternative to, but as a form of multiculturalism.

2. Review of Literature

Research on the intersection of sport, physical activity, and ethnicity can be divided into four broad categories based on the general approach taken to understanding immigration and settlement processes. The first is the *assimilation* model and the related acculturation framework, whereby sport and physical activity are seen as vehicles for integration into the broader society (e.g., Allen, Drane, Byon, & Mohn; 2010; Donnelly & Day, 1981; Hofmann, 2008; Lee & Funk, 2011).

The second *approach* involves resistance to assimilation. This position argues that ethnic groups resist pressures to assimilate and maintain ethnic consciousness through sport (e.g., Allen et al., 2010; Krouwel, Boonstra, Duyvendak, & Veldboer, 2006; Ricatti & Klugman, 2013). This can be further divided into two sub-categories. On the one hand, ethnic identity may be primordial and sport and physical activity are used to maintain this identity in the face of assimilative pressures. On the other hand, ethnic consciousness may be a reaction to discrimination or other forms of marginalization; this identity is also known as reactive ethnicity.

The third category of research (*barriers model*) focuses on identifying barriers to full participation in physical culture. The barriers can be economic, or stereotypes held by sport providers (e.g., Taylor & Toohy, 1998; Toohy & Taylor, 1997). While important, this approach could have implicit assimilationist undertones or introduce a cultural deficit explanation, whereby it is assumed that the beliefs of the cultural group are the obstacles to sport participation.

There is a tendency in these three categories of research to view culture and identity as homogeneous and static. In contrast, the fourth category of research takes a more *dynamic* view of ethnic identity and recognizes the contextual, shifting, and *multiplicity of identity* (e.g., Burdsey, 2010; Erueti & Palmer, 2014; Hofmann, 2008; Nakamura, 2012; Raman, 2015; Ricatti & Klugman, 2013; Tirone, 2001). What becomes clear in this research is the agency and resourcefulness of ethnic groups to participate on their own terms, often in the face of ongoing racism (e.g., Nakamura, 2012; Thangaraj, 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Tirone, 2001; Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). One such example is participation in sport clubs that are organized along ethnic lines. These activities may be the traditions of a particular group, or they may be globalized and/or traditionally 'Canadian' sports organized by and for members of a specific group.

In fact, there is growing scholarly interest in these separate and mixed sport clubs (e.g., Chin, 2012; Nakamura, 2012; Thangaraj, 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Willms, 2010). Among this work, the literature examining European contexts such as Norway, Holland and Belgium (e.g., Theeboom, Schailée, & Nols, 2012; Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009; Walseth, 2016) frequently examine how much bridging and bonding forms of social capital (Putnam, 2000) are accrued through involvement in separate versus mixed clubs. While interesting, these cases offer just a snapshot of participation and ultimately take a functionalist approach, treating sport as a medium to achieve other goals. Limited value is placed on the experience of sport or on sport in and of itself. Furthermore, while there is recognition that these clubs are diverse internally, how the clubs and their membership change over time remains unknown. Therefore, this paper refines our understanding of participation in physical culture that is organized in mixed and separate settings in Canada by examining the diversity of physical culture practiced in the GTA, and identifying the lifecycle and patterns of participation in these different activities.

3. Methodology

This paper draws on data collected by undergraduate students enrolled in an upper year, university course directed by the second author. Student research teams were given an assignment that entails selecting a physical cultural activity practiced among the numerous ethnic groups within the GTA. They recruited and interviewed three key informants who participate in the activity and who identify with the ethnic group with which the activity is associated. The interviewees were asked if the activity is limited to the ethnic group, whether those outside of the ethnic group were recruited to participate, and their assessment of whether the activity was spreading beyond their particular ethnic community. Course work ethics approval was received from the university research ethics board for each year that the assignment was administered. Data have been collected

annually since 1998 with the exception of when the course was not offered. More systematic data collection began in 2016 with the launch of the GTActivity website (<https://gtactivity.ca>); research assistants have been collecting data with ethics approval from the University of Toronto research ethics board.

4. Results: Lifecycle of Physical Cultural Forms

Student researchers and research assistants have thus far (January, 2017) identified over 650 different physical cultural activities (some 300 of which are currently listed on <https://gtactivity.ca>). Based on the data collected, and supplemented with academic literature, we identify at least five trajectories for the forms of physical culture that have been introduced to and are practiced within the GTA by immigrant communities (see Table 1).

By generation, we are not referring to the generation of immigration (i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd generation immigrants). Rather, the term refers to the generation of participants (i.e., rookies, veterans, alumni). Following previous research on separate and mixed sport clubs, we have used, for the most part, the same terms to delineate the different trajectories. Separate participation refers to engagement in the activity with individuals who are of the same ethnic or cultural background, and/or that involvement in the activity remains within the community with which it is associated. Mixed refers to participation in an activity that goes beyond the ethnic or cultural community of origin. While we recognize that individuals are multifaceted and that even an ethnically exclusive and separate activity, can be inclusive of participants of diverse genders, social class backgrounds, language, and so on, for the purposes of this framework of the lifecycle of physical cultural activities, we are focusing specifically on opportunities that, in keeping with previous research, are separate and mixed in terms of ethnicity.

Not included in this framework are those activities that were *not* 'brought to' and/or *not* practiced by newcomers to Canada. This may be because the activities require specific equipment or particular spaces in which to participate. Other practices may be considered culturally

inappropriate. The following discussion provides details of and examples for each trajectory.

4.1. Separate Participation by First Generation of Players → Decline and Virtual Disappearance of the Sport

Examples of activities that were exclusively engaged in by one generation of players include hurling, pessapallo, korfbal, bandy, and eisstock. There are likely a number of reasons ranging from intentional exclusion to ethnic maintenance as previous research has noted. It may also be that there were sufficient numbers to engage in the activity or there was no commercial imperative to attract participation of others.

For various reasons, the sports cease to be meaningful to others, such that a second generation of players does not emerge. For example, these individuals may be more integrated and socialized into 'Canadian' physical culture through participation in schools and communities (Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Institute for Canadian Citizenship [ICC], 2014), or the first generation of players may have also embraced Canadian culture, such that they did not continue or attempt to pass on some specific cultural forms to others. There are certainly exceptions to this, such as racism and other barriers that preclude access to other sports (e.g., Doré, 2002; Thangaraj, 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Tirone, 2001), as well as the added complexity of feeling compelled to take up aspects of 'Canadian' physical culture (ICC, 2014). Some sports and games (including folk games) may survive, or only appear during family and community celebrations. Furthermore, the trajectory of a particular activity may be unique to the GTA, as eisstock has a number of participants in Kingston, approximately 265 km east of the GTA, and Kitchener, some 80 km west of the GTA.

4.2. Separate Participation by First Generation of Players → Decline and Virtual Disappearance of the Sport → Revival of Participation

Some activities become quite well established, decline for the reasons noted above, and are then revived by a

Table 1. Trajectories of physical culture in the GTA.

Generation of Players		
1 st	2 nd	New 1 st or 3 rd
Separate →	Decline and disappear	
Separate →	Decline and disappear →	Revival — Exclusive — Inclusive
Separate →	Mixed →	Mixed →
Mixed →	Mixed →	Mixed →
Mixed →	Semi-Mixed →	Semi-Mixed →

new generation of immigrants. For example, economic problems in Ireland in the mid 2000s led to a new wave of young Irish immigrants to the GTA, and to the revival of games that had declined (e.g., Gaelic football) or 'died out' in the GTA in the 1980s (e.g., hurling and camogie). Likewise, rugby league declined after the 1930s and 1940s, but has since experienced a revival from the 1980s onward. Other activities are declining in participation within the community, though they may experience a revival; these include korfbal, Korean folk dance, and Lithuanian folk dance. However, activities such as Balinese dance and kendo are both experiencing a decline among Indonesian- and Japanese-Canadians respectively, but have growing interest from outside of these communities. In the case of cricket, Joseph (2016) observed a decline in participation in cricket in the Caribbean community, but a simultaneous growth in South Asian communities, one that is influenced by a number of factors, including increasing migration of individuals from South Asian countries and the restrictions placed on migration from Caribbean nations.

4.3. Separate Participation by the First Generation → Inclusive Participation by Subsequent Generations of Players

A third trajectory involves separate participation (be it informally or codified into rules/regulations) that later becomes increasingly inclusive of people of different ethnic backgrounds. Examples include various martial arts (from China, Japan, Korea, and Brazil) and Chinese 9-man volleyball. Others may seek out the activities because they are seen as novel and meaningful. Or participants may reach out to other communities for various reasons. For example, there may be a rational attempt to improve the quality of a team, such as in the case of Chinese 9-man volleyball (Nakamura, 2009) or globalized sports such as soccer, rugby or cricket (e.g., Donnelly & Day, 1981). There may be commercial motivations, such as opening schools and teaching others, as in the case of capoeira (Joseph, 2005). Recruiting from other communities may be an attempt to ensure the survival of some of the activities noted in the previous trajectory (e.g., Gaelic football). Survival may also entail a strategy of inclusion where there are not enough potential players in the ethnic community in order to establish competitions. Australian Rules football in the GTA had previously required that a minimum number of players originally from Australia must be included on each team. Now, the rules require 16 of the 24 players be Canadian. It should be pointed out that even if sponsoring groups and team names continue to reflect particular ethnic affiliations, members might be drawn from different backgrounds. The North American Chinese Invitational Volleyball Tournament, for example, includes participation of non-Chinese players and even has codified rules listing the other groups that may participate (Nakamura, 2009), and the name of the championship tournament remains

unchanged. Karlis's (2015) study of a Greek ice hockey league based in Ottawa, Canada, showed that it was originally separate, with exclusive participation for people of Greek descent. However, due to changing demographics, teams found themselves unable to recruit enough players of Greek descent for a team or tournament, and thus, rules were relaxed to permit players who were associated with the Greek community by blood or by friendship. Thus, while the name remains unchanged and the league still privileges Greek ethnicity, participation is mixed.

4.4. Mixed Participation by First Generation and Beyond

Activities that were inclusive from their arrival in Canada include Aussie Rules football, kabaddi, and various martial arts and dance forms. The reasons given for this, based on interviews with GTA based clubs and teams, include the need for participants to ensure competitions (e.g., Aussie Rules football, as noted above); embracing the principles of multiculturalism and wishing to share a cultural activity with other Canadians (e.g., kabaddi); and for commercial purposes (e.g., some martial arts such as capoeira).

4.5. Mixed Participation by the First Generation → Semi-Mixed Participation

We identified a number of examples (both in the data and in the literature) where participation was originally mixed (i.e., primarily globalized sports such as soccer) and then became more separate, in that a parallel opportunity to participate forms and flourishes. This seems to occur for different, but sometimes connected reasons. Communities may develop the organizational capacity, infrastructural know-how (e.g., how to rent public recreational spaces, access referees and officials, and so on), and enough interested individuals within the community to organize their own activities, activities that they had previously accessed through mainstream, mixed clubs and organizations. There may also be related feelings of dissatisfaction with the available mixed organizations, and/or feelings of exclusion in, or from, those organizations. Further, the parallel organizations may be better able to accommodate the needs of a group. A Muslim soccer association in the GTA, for example, does not schedule games during the month of Ramadan when many of the participants are fasting.

It should be noted that the ethnocultural communities forming their own organizations are themselves not homogeneous. For example, a South Asian organization may include participants from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (all of which also have regional, linguistic and religious divisions), so there is still inclusion beyond a specific regional/linguistic/religious community. Indeed, even if a team, league or tournament is organized along ethnic lines, participation may facilitate crossing other boundaries, such as clan or locality (Spaaij, 2015) or fostering loyalties to other forms of community

such as hometown, nation or diaspora, as in the case of Chinese 9-man volleyball (Nakamura, 2016).

5. Discussion

The trajectories outlined above illustrate that the contexts in which people participate in various physical cultural forms change over time. Involvement may begin with playing, exercising or competing with people who are of the same ethnicity, in an activity that is closely tied to one's ethnic or cultural group. However, over time and in response to various circumstances (i.e., competitiveness, lack of players, commercial needs), this may change or expand. Thus, where in the first instance one might conclude that individuals are maintaining their ethnic identities and using physical culture to strengthen their communities, when participation changes to include individuals from outside of the community or to consist of other similar but nonetheless 'new' activities, then it becomes more complicated. The dynamic and multiple identity approach to the study of physical culture among ethnic groups is more flexible than previous frameworks because it can account for participation that is both in separate and mixed settings, without drawing conclusions about assimilation or ethnic maintenance.

Without discounting the role that physical culture may continue to play in building, maintaining, and protecting community, the more dynamic approach to understanding identity better reflects the reality of the lives, identities, and physical cultural practices of immigrants and ethnic and visible minority people in Canada. Many 'new Canadians' want to participate in aspects of 'Canadian' culture *and* to maintain aspects of their ethnic identities (ICC, 2014). For example, individuals may be involved in a number of sporting activities, such as baseball in the summer and ice hockey in the winter, or playing basketball and korfbal at their Dutch family picnic, or playing hockey in the winter and pessapallo with their Finnish community in the summer. As the results of this study suggest, involvement in a particular activity and with a specific group can shift over time, with the boundaries of participation expanding or shrinking for various reasons. It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess whether it is shifting identities that allow for greater flexibility in defining who may participate, or whether the shift to more mixed participation in response to external factors helps to foster more dynamic definitions of belonging. Nevertheless, the different trajectories and the changes in participation over time, are indicative of the instability of identity.

Interestingly, we did not discover any sports, in the literature or in interviews, that were organized on ethnoculturally exclusive lines for more than one generation or so, except for some private golf and curling clubs that historically based their membership on racial/ethnic and religious exclusion. Our data show, for instance, that for the most part, the activities that continue are ones that are mixed and inclusive of individuals who may not

necessarily identify with the activity's community of origin. This finding could be interpreted as successful integration or acculturation; however, decisions to expand definitions of who may participate, who belongs, who is a member, and so on, are influenced by social, cultural and/or other forces. How we participate in physical culture and the role that identity plays in these decisions, therefore, cannot be captured by a unidirectional journey that ends with integration, acculturation or assimilation. For instance, it is entirely possible that individuals may play the same sport for a separate, ethnic club *and* mixed, representative teams (e.g., soccer for an intercollegiate or provincial team); or play both mainstream *and* ethnically identified sports at competitive levels (e.g., volleyball and Chinese 9-man volleyball; wrestling and kabaddi). Such participation has been seen in previous research (e.g., Nakamura, 2009, 2016) but is not captured in studies that examine separate and mixed sport opportunities and their role in building social capital for participants (e.g., Theeboom et al., 2012; Vermeulen & Verweel, 2009; Walseth, 2016) because they are usually taking a snapshot of participation, and may not necessarily account for how participation and opportunities change over time. Indeed, Vermeulen and Verweel's (2009) conclusion that "both separate and mixed sport clubs create contexts for the formation of social networks, for the development of norms of reciprocity and the generation of social trust" (p. 1210), may reflect the fluidity of identity and the flexibility with which individuals seek out and organize physical cultural opportunities.

6. Conclusion

The main findings of this study are (1) a very diverse repertoire of physical cultural activities is currently being practiced in the GTA; (2) these activities have different life cycle patterns; and (3) the life cycles of participation in an activity may be influenced by social, cultural and other external factors. Together, these findings have implications for our understanding of social inclusion.

In a Canadian context, social inclusion is discussed predominantly in terms of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, multiculturalism has been criticized particularly with regard to the notion of celebrating difference. Specifically, in Canada: "Liberal multiculturalism has taken a 3-D approach—one that celebrates dance, dress, and dining, but fails to take into account the multiple dimensions of racial and social inequality" (Srivastava, 2007, p. 291). Furthermore, groups and their cultures are treated as unchanging and static, which in turn reinforces difference and Otherness. Indeed, one could argue that the diversity of physical cultural forms available in the GTA is precisely because celebrating these types of difference is far more palatable than other forms of difference, and this study could unintentionally reproduce this emphasis on and depoliticizing of difference.

Kymlicka (2010) acknowledges that 3D critiques of multiculturalism and that ethnocultural groups and their

traditions may be trivialized or marginalized. He also agrees that such othering should be resisted. However, Kymlicka (2010) rejects the claim that the 3D model of multiculturalism is an explicit purpose of multiculturalism policies, stating that multiculturalism “has never been exclusively, or even primarily, about inculcating such an ethos of cultural consumption” (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 99). Instead, multiculturalism policies have focused in part on constructing new forms of citizenship for immigrants (Kymlicka, 2010). Similarly, George Elliott Clarke argues that, “Canada is still not yet a truly egalitarian, multiracial and multicultural state. But multiculturalism, even in its liberal, statist guise, has been a positive step forward. It has served—and can serve—to expand the inclusive sense of the term *Canadian*” (2009, p. 5).

Sport, in particular, has played a role in ‘citizenization’ (Kymlicka, 2010) or citizen-building, with both empowering and disempowering effects and intentions. For example, sport and physical education have functioned as key vehicles for the production of robust and vital citizens who in turn reflect a likewise robust and vital nation (McNeill, Sproule, & Horton, 2003; Nakamura, 2012; Okay, 2003). Excelling at international sporting events affords an opportunity to display this symbolic power in a legitimate and sanctioned manner (Nakamura, 2012). While this citizenship- and nation-building capacity of sport has been mobilized for colonial and neocolonial endeavours that reinforce hierarchies and social exclusion, the potential for sport to promote citizenship, when defined in inclusive and transformative ways, offers a chance to promote the kind of citizenization that Kymlicka (2010) envisions. As Bakht suggests, “the ‘song and dance’ aspect of multiculturalism could have a profound effect on reshaping preconceived notions of difference” (2011, p. 7). Following Kymlicka’s (2010) lead, then, we suggest that the diverse forms of physical culture being practiced, are evidence of citizenization because ethnic groups are contributing to the fabric of Canadian society.

Sport is uniquely positioned to foster citizenization as a result of a widespread belief that it may serve as an instrument for social inclusion by crossing all borders and helping to bring people together. International policies and programs reflect this belief (see, for example, Becker et al., 2000; PMP & Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, 2004). Even the inaugural report produced by the ICC focused on the view of sport among newcomers and recent immigrants and the role that sport plays in their integration and inclusion (ICC, 2014). In fact, the ICC study demonstrates that recent immigrants identify ice hockey as a way to become Canadian because to know about hockey was framed as a way to gain acceptance. However, one participant went as far as to say that “if I am non-hockey, then I am nowhere” (ICC, 2014, p. 22), illustrating the value that is placed upon hockey in a Canadian context, and in turn, the lack of value (and relatedly, lack of resources, space, and opportunity) that may be given to other activities. This particular finding illustrates the complexity of social inclusion through sport because belong-

ing may be claimed and conferred (see also Spaaij, 2015) only for activities that align with and celebrate existing social norms. The meaning of participation in sport or any physical cultural practice is clearly shaped by the broader social context. This complexity and the ways in which people navigate, negotiate, and resist dominant physical cultural forms, and make room for their own diverse practices, is an area that requires additional research using qualitative methodologies such as ethnography to provide rich, narratives of the meanings of physical cultural participation, and its role in inclusion and belonging.

While participation in sport and physical culture should not be seen as a panacea, physical culture nonetheless, could be a way to promote liberal-democratic citizenship, and to transform relationships between minority groups and the state, and between members of different groups, as outlined by Kymlicka (2010). As Phillips, Athwal, Robinson and Harrison (2014) note, there is an increasing focus on everyday intercultural exchanges that occur at the local, neighbourhood level, interactions that may facilitate improved social relations. These encounters are usually centred around shared community- or neighbourhood-level concerns. Wenger (1998) argues that convergence around common interests and goals can lead to social interaction, cooperation, intercultural learning, and ultimately, the development of ‘communities of practice.’ Clearly, physical culture could serve as a point of convergence, and our data suggest that it has occurred to varying degrees. Furthermore, the diversity of physical cultural forms offers casual and structured opportunities, both of which have been found to potentially foster connections across different groups (Amas & Crosland, 2006, as cited by Phillips et al., 2014).

Whether a shared interest in a physical cultural form leads to sustained bridging capital is beyond the scope of this study. However, evidence that mixed physical culture opportunities are more sustainable suggests that this may be the case. Instead, we wish to highlight the importance of being able to add to the cultural and social life of Canada. This opportunity to contribute should be fostered and protected, for in doing so, interculturalism, or the exchange of ideas, dialogue across difference, and the synthesis of something new, becomes a real possibility.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the contributions of students who were enrolled in PE/KIN 3P03 at McMaster University and PHE 301 at the University of Toronto. The authors gratefully acknowledge a research contract with Multiculturalism Canada and Sport Canada that helped to fund an earlier phase of this research; and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Insight Grant # 862-2012-0003, funded through the *Sport Canada Sport Participation Research Initiative* that is supporting the current phase of this research. In addition to the authors,

the co-applicants and collaborators include P. Safai, B. Kidd, D. Burdsey, M. VanBottenburg, and T. Taylor.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

References

- Allen, J. T., Drane, D. D., Byon, K. K., & Mohn, R. S. (2010). Sport as a vehicle for socialization and maintenance of cultural identity: International students attending American universities. *Sport Management Review*, 13(4), 421–434.
- Bakht, N. (2011). Mere “song and dance”: Complicating the multicultural imperative in the arts. In M. Chazan, L. Helps, A. Stanley, & S. Thakar’s (Eds.), *Home and native land: Unsettling multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Becker, P., Brandes, H., Kilb, R., Opper, E., Stolz, H., Vestweber, K., . . . & Jeglitza, M. (2000). *European Union study on sport as a tool for the social integration of young people. Final report for the European Commission. No. 1999-0458/001-001 SVE-SVE4ET*. Retrieved from <http://www.isca-web.org/files/EU%20Documents/Sport%20as%20a%20Tool%20for%20Social%20Integration%20of%20young%20People.pdf>
- Burdsey, D. (2010). British Muslim experiences in English first-class cricket. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(3), 315–334.
- Chin, C. B. (2012). *Hoops, history and crossing over: Boundary making and community building in Japanese-American basketball leagues* (Unpublished dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.
- Clarke, G. E. (2009). *Multiculturalism and its (usual) discontents*. Canada Watch, Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University. Retrieved from <http://www.yorku.ca/robarts/projects/canada-watch/multicult/pdfs/Clarke.pdf>
- Doherty, A., & Taylor, T. (2007). Sport and physical recreation in the settlement of immigrant youth. *Leisure/Loisir*, 31(1), 27–55.
- Donnelly, P., & Day, R. D. (1981). Ethnic soccer clubs in London, Canada. A study in assimilation. *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 16(1), 37–52.
- Donnelly, P., & Nakamura, Y. (2006). *Sport and multiculturalism: A dialogue*. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Doré, A. (2002). Japanese-Canadian sports history in the Fraser Valley: Judo and baseball in the interwar years. *Journal of Sport History*, 29(3), 439–456.
- Erueti, B., & Palmer, F. R. (2014). Te Whariki Tuakiri (the identity mat): Maori elite athletes and the expression of ethno-cultural identity in global sport. *Sport in Society*, 17(8), 1061–1075.
- Frisby, W. (2014). Moving from multiculturalism to interculturalism through leisure. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 17(4), 354–358.
- Government of Canada. (n.d). Canadian multiculturalism: An inclusive citizenship. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/citizenship.asp>
- Henry, I., Amara, M., & Aquilina, D. (2007). Multiculturalism, interculturalism, assimilation and sports policy in Europe and their relationship to sports policy. In I. Henry & Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy (Eds.), *Transnational and comparative research in sport: Globalisation, governance and sport policy* (pp. 115–143). London: Routledge.
- Hofmann, A. R. (2008). Between ethnic separation and assimilation: German immigrants and their athletic endeavours in their New American home country. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 25(7), 993–1009.
- Institute for Canadian Citizenship. (2014). *Playing together: New citizens, sports and belonging*. Retrieved from <https://www.icc-icc.ca/en/insights/docs/sports/PlayingTogether%20Full%20Report.pdf>
- Joseph, J. (2005). *Capoeira in Canada: Brazilian martial art, cultural transformation, and the struggle for authenticity* (Unpublished Masters thesis). University of Toronto.
- Joseph, J. (2016). *Sport in the Black Atlantic: Cricket, Canada and the Caribbean diaspora*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Karlis, G. (2015). Sport and community building: The case of an ethnic community organization. *Loisir et Société/Society and Leisure*, 38(2), 239–248.
- Krouwel, A., Boonstra, N., Duyvendak, J. W., & Veldboer, L. (2006). A good sport? Research into the capacity of recreational sport to integrate Dutch minorities. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41(2), 165–180.
- Kymlicka, W. (2010). The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies. *International Social Science Journal*, 61(199), 97–112.
- Lee, Y., & Funk, D. C. (2011). Recreational sport participation and migrants’ acculturation. *Managing Leisure*, 16, 1–16.
- McNeill, M., Sproule, J., & Horton, P. (2003). The changing face of sport and physical education in post-colonial Singapore. *Sport, Education and Society*, 8(1), 35–56.
- Meer, N., & Modood, T. (2012). How does interculturalism contrast with multiculturalism? *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 33(2), 175–196.
- Nakamura, Y. (2009). *Boundaries of belonging: Overlapping loyalties and multiple attachments, a study of the North American Chinese Invitational Volleyball Tournament* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Toronto.
- Nakamura, Y. (2012). Playing in Chinatown: A critical discussion of the nation/sport/citizen triad. In J. Joseph, S. Darnell, & Y. Nakamura (Eds.), *Race and sport in Canada: Intersecting inequalities* (pp. 213–236).

- Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholar's Press, Inc.
- Nakamura, Y. (2016). Rethinking identity politics: The multiple attachments of an 'exclusive' sport organization. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 33(2), 146–155. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2015-0062>
- Okay, C. (2003). Sport and nation building: Gymnastics and sport in the Ottoman State and the Committee of Union and Progress, 1908-18. *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 20(1), 152–156.
- Phillips, D., Athwal, B., Robinson, D., & Harrison, M. (2014). Towards intercultural engagement: Building shared visions of neighbourhood and community in an era of new migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(1), 42–59.
- PMP, & Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy. (2004). *Studies on education and sport. Sport and multiculturalism. A final report*. Retrieved from <http://www.iscaweb.org/files/Sport%20and%20Multiculturalism%20EU%202004.pdf>
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Raman, P. (2015). 'It's because we're Indian, innit?' Cricket and the South Asia diaspora in post-war Britain. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 22(2), 215–229.
- Ricatti, F., & Klugman, M. (2013). 'Connected to something': Soccer and the transnational passions, memories and communities of Sydney's Italian migrants. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 30(5), 469–483.
- Spaij, R. (2015). Refugee youth, belonging and community sport. *Leisure Studies*, 34(3), 303–318.
- Srivastava, S. (2007). Troubles with anti-racist multiculturalism: The challenges of anti-racist and feminist activism. In S. Hier, & B. S. Bolaria (Eds.), *Race and racism in 21st century Canada: Continuity, complexity, and change* (pp. 291–311). Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- Statistics Canada. (2010). *Projections of the diversity of the Canadian population, 2006 to 2031*. Retrieved from www.statscan.gc.ca/pub/91-331-x2010001-eng.pdf
- Statistics Canada. (2016). Immigration and ethnocultural diversity in Canada. 2011 National household survey. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm>
- Taylor, T., & Toohey, K. (1998). Negotiating cultural diversity for women in sport: From assimilation to multiculturalism. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 1(1), 75–91.
- Thangaraj, S. (2013). Competing masculinities: South Asian American identity formation in Asian American basketball leagues. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 11(3), 243–255.
- Thangaraj, S. (2015a). *Desi hoop dreams: Pick up basketball and the making of Asian American masculinity*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Thangaraj, S. (2015b). 'Liting it up.' Indo-Pak basketball and finding the American-ness in South Asian American institutions. In C.R. King's (Ed.), *Asian American athletes in sport and society* (pp. 47–66). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Theeboom, M., & Schailée, H., & Nols, Z. (2012). Social capital development among ethnic minorities in mixed and separate sport clubs. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 4(1), 1–21.
- Tirone, S. (2001). Growing up within two cultural traditions: The lives and leisure of Canadian South Asian teens. In J. Anderson & L. Lawrence (Eds), *Gender issues in work and leisure* (pp. 67–74). London: Leisure Studies Association Publication.
- Tirone, S., & Pedlar, A. (2000). Understanding the leisure experience of a minority ethnic group: South Asian teens and young adults in Canada. *Society and Leisure*, 23(1), 145–169.
- Toohey, K., & Taylor, T. (1997). Sport provision for women of minority cultures in Australia: whose responsibility? *Women's Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, 6(2), 254–264.
- Vermeulen, J., & Verweel, P. (2009). Participation in sport: bonding and bridging as identity work. *Sport in Society*, 12(9), 1206–1219.
- Walseth, K. (2016). Sport within Muslim organizations in Norway: Ethnic segregated activities as arenas for integration. *Leisure Studies*, 35(1), 78–99.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Willms, N. (2010). *Japanese-American basketball: Constructing gender, ethnicity, and community* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Southern California.

About the Authors



Yuka Nakamura is an Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science (York University). She studies how race, class, and gender, impact people's identities and physical cultural experiences. Dr. Nakamura is especially interested in sport organized along ethnic, religious, or other 'exclusive' lines, the implications for community building, how terms of inclusion and membership are (re)defined, and how racism and other forms of oppression operate.



Peter Donnelly is Director of the Centre for Sport Policy Studies, and a Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, at the University of Toronto. He was Editor of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* (1990–94), and Acting-Editor of the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (2004–06); and he is the lead investigator of the project on which this article is based.

Article

A Part of and Apart from Sport: Practitioners' Experiences Coaching in Segregated Youth Sport

Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere^{*}, Jennifer Thai and Bethan Kingsley

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta, AB T6G 2H9, Edmonton, Canada;
E-Mails: ncavali@ualberta.ca (N.S.-C.), jen.thai@ualberta.ca (J.T.), bkingsle@ualberta.ca (B.K.)

^{*} Corresponding author

Submitted: 30 January 2017 | Accepted: 6 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Sport can present a site of exclusion for many youth who experience disability even when it has a focus on inclusion (Fitzgerald, 2009). While sport practitioners can play a critical role in creating inclusive environments, they frequently struggle to do so. As a consequence, the sport opportunities for young people who experience disability are often inadequate and inequitable. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of youth sport practitioners who teach and coach youth in primarily segregated settings. The overall goal was to gain a better understanding of how sport practitioners think about disability and sport within the context of their practices. Guided by the method of interpretive description, we interviewed 15 sport practitioners. Analysis of the data led to the overarching theme, 'a part of and apart from sport', highlighting the ways in which segregated youth sport was understood to be more or less inclusive/exclusive by sport practitioners. Within this overarching theme, four subthemes were drawn: a) authentic connections, b) diversity and adaptations, c) expectations same...but different, and d) (dis)ability and competitive sport. While highlighting the need for self-reflective and knowledgeable coaches, our findings also bring attention to the concepts of ability and ableism and their impacts on the sport opportunities of youth who experience disability. Our discussion highlights the need to question assumptions underlying segregated sport.

Keywords

adapted physical activity; coach; disability; exclusion, inclusion; segregation; sport; youth

Issue

This article is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Sport is an integral part of the composition of society, yet for young people who experience disability, it can represent a site of exclusion even when it has a focus on inclusion (Fitzgerald, 2009). Sport can in fact serve to both include and exclude youth who experience disability through a range of structural and socio-cultural factors (Goodwin & Peers, 2012). Inclusion and exclusion are not a binary but rather represent a spectrum of engagement or disengagement in and from sport (Macdonald, Pang, Knez, Nelson, & McCuaig, 2012). For example, exclusion can be a choice, reflecting a form of resistance

or it can be a process of othering when one is being excluded (Macdonald et al., 2012). Inclusion can represent a view of equal opportunity, a focus on social justice, or emphasis an individual's sense of belonging and acceptance (Fitzgerald & Jobling, 2009). In essence, both concepts capture a range of possibilities, which are further complicated when considered within a realm such as youth sport.

Just as inclusion and exclusion can be differently conceptualized, youth sport and the experiences produced therein are also diverse. This can in part be attributed to the goals of youth sport which can range from participatory, recreational, and educative to highly competi-

tive with a focus on elite development (DePauw, 2009; Fitzgerald, 2009). Youth sport is also undergirded by rarely questioned assumptions that it is inherently good and that through participation, youth will gain critical developmental benefits (Coakley, 2011). This logic is apparent when extended to youth who experience disability who are assumed to benefit through sport participation in a myriad of ways (e.g., physically, cognitively and socially) ultimately leading to greater inclusion in society (Smith, 2009). In her book, *Bringing Disability into Youth Sport*, Fitzgerald (2009) queries the goals of youth sport. In particular, she questions whether or not the goals of youth sport can in fact support the achievement of youth who experience disability. Fitzgerald draws attention to what she terms a fundamental contradiction between “understandings of ‘disability’ and ‘sport’ [in that] both emphasize physicality. However, sport is underpinned by precision in movement whereas disability often signifies deficiency” (p. 2). To better comprehend this contradiction, Fitzgerald calls for greater understanding of the experiences of youth who experience disability in sport and of the sport practitioners who teach and coach them.

Youth who experience disability have fewer opportunities to meaningfully take part in sport (Anderson, Wozencroft, & Bedini, 2008; Moran & Block, 2010). Research on the sport and recreation experiences of these youth are often permeated with accounts of feeling excluded due to the negative attitudes of others and lack of knowledge on the part of sport practitioners about disability and how to appropriately facilitate participation (e.g., Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Jones, 2003; Lee, Causgrove Dunn, & Holt, 2014; Tsai & Fung, 2009). Significant responsibility is placed on coaches when it comes to inclusion, yet little is known about their experiences and challenges in doing so (Spaaij, Magee, & Jeanes, 2014). Coaches have a critical influence on how youth who do and do not experience disability accept ability and disability differences, the potential of fighting discrimination based on ability, and promoting equality in sport (Dinold, Diketmüller, Grix, & Phillipots, 2013). Despite acknowledgement of the need for more research on the role of coaches in sport for people who experience disability, substantial attention has not been garnered in the literature (Tawse, Bloom, Sabiston, & Reid, 2012) and this is particularly the case for sport practitioners of youth who experience disability.

Any attempt to understand sport practitioners’ experiences coaching youth who experience disability must be foregrounded by an understanding of the varied contexts within which they coach and teach. Building from the work of Goodwin and Peers (2012), structurally we can consider three broad models or settings for inclusion in sport for youth who experience disability. The first setting is commonly referred to as disability sport, also known as parasport, and reflects sport contexts that are segregated. Segregated settings are typically comprised of only youth who experience disability, with or without similar impairments, and are designed to meet individ-

ual needs based on the presence of impairment. By contrast, mainstream settings tend to be those created for youth who do not experience disability but may include a few youth who do, thus the application of the term integrated when youth who experience disability are present. Integrated settings are not specifically designed to include youth who experience disability and while some may find inclusion within the mainstream, marginalization and exclusion are common. Lastly, alternative settings are described as contexts where innovative approaches are used to facilitate inclusion. An example is reverse integration, where youth who do and do not experience disability participate and compete with and against each other in sports originally designed for people with impairments such as, for example, wheelchair basketball (Goodwin & Peers, 2012).

Although segregated settings can provide opportunities for youth who experience disability to take part in recreational to elite level sport (e.g., Paralympics), to learn new skills, to experience a sense of belonging (Wynnyk & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2013), and to develop peer relationships and an athletic identity (Shapiro & Martin, 2010), there is ongoing criticism that promoting segregated sport is based on a false assumption that it is a “desirable and equitable” context for people who experience disability (Fay & Wolff, 2009). The philosophy of inclusion in which “all people are valued as unique contributing members of society and included” (DePauw & Doll-Tepper, 2000, p. 139) has been acknowledged in the sport world for some time, however, inclusion in sport appears to be far from the case for youth who experience disability. Despite the different inclusion models described, a limited range of meaningful sport participation contexts exist for these youth (Zwier et al., 2010) and segregated settings remain among the most commonly practiced (Goodwin & Peers, 2012).

2. Purpose

Debates and criticisms with regard to the types of sport settings available to youth who experience disability (e.g. segregated, integrated, reverse integrated) continue to permeate the literature on inclusive sport, as well as the everyday sport opportunities of these young people. Given this debate, the influential role of coaches in contributing to inclusive (and exclusive) sport environments, and concerns about the goals of youth sport as incommensurate with disability, in this study we examined sport practitioners’ experiences coaching youth who experience disability in segregated settings. How practitioners understand and experience sport and disability in and through coaching youth is critical to the type of experiences they can offer participants. What is it that sport practitioners who teach and coach in segregated settings think they afford youth and for what purpose? How do these experiences inform their understanding of disability and sport and how can gaining a better understanding of these experiences inform future, more inclusive,

coaching practices? The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore the experiences of youth sport practitioners who teach and coach youth in primarily segregated settings.

3. Method

In seeking “to discover associations, relationships and patterns within the phenomenon” to achieve a more profound understanding with “the potential to shift the angle of vision with which one customarily considers that phenomenon” (Thorne, 2008, p. 50), we engaged an interpretive description (ID) approach to our study. We used this approach to understand the perspectives of youth sport practitioners (i.e., coaches and instructors) who teach and coach youth who experience disability. ID supported the scaffolding of relevant disciplinary knowledge (that may or may not be theoretically driven) in order to address a critical issue and by way of the subjective human experience, “generate credible and defensible new knowledge in a form that will be meaningful and relevant to the applied practice context” (Thorne, 2008, p. 51). Essentially, ID is a methodology developed to address issues related to practice. In this regard it was a strong fit for our investigation into the coaching experiences of sport practitioners. Epistemologically then, ID studies acknowledge the world of human experience and reality as multiple and socially constructed (Thorne, 2008).

4. Participants

The study was approved by a university research ethics board. Fifteen sport practitioners (11 women, 4 men; mean age 31 years) who taught and coached in a variety of sports and programs (e.g., handball, soccer, baseball, sledge hockey,¹ rhythmic gymnastics, martial arts, swimming, and Special Olympics) in primarily segregated settings consented to take part. Several practitioners also had experiences coaching and teaching in integrated settings and the majority had experiences coaching in mainstream sport settings. All participants also indicated that mainstream sport had played a role in their lives growing up. The sport practitioners were purposefully sampled through parasport organizations, convenience sampling (i.e., they were known to the interviewer through sport and coaching circles), and snowballing (i.e., suggested by other participants through coaching connections) (Mayan, 2009). Ultimately, participants were selected on the basis that their coaching experiences were relevant to the research question and the assumption that they would therefore be rich informants on the topic of investigation. Participants were informed about the study by way of a recruitment letter describing the purpose of the study, nature of data collection, and information related to confidentiality. Participants were also afforded the opportunity to ask questions about

the study of both the interviewer and first author prior to consenting. On average, sport practitioners had been involved in coaching and teaching in a segregated setting for approximately 7 years, had acquired various levels of coach, teacher, and/or program-specific certification, and had post-secondary education. For three of the coaches, their experiences coaching segregated sport were tied to their full time employment (e.g., gymnastics coach). For the remainder, coaching was a volunteer position. One practitioner identified as experiencing disability. We have not provided a table cross-referencing pseudonyms and participant descriptions in order to maintain confidentiality, as several participants were known to each other.

5. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews, the primary source of data collected, were chosen in order to guide conversation relevant to the topic of interest but also support flexibility in allowing the interviews to unfold (Mayan, 2009). An interview guide was developed drawing on the disciplinary literature (Thorne, 2008) and was refined on the basis of two pilot interviews and through discussion among authors. Examples of interview questions included: “How did you become involved in coaching youth with disabilities?”, “What is your approach/philosophy to coaching in this program?”, “Can you tell me about some positive/negative experiences coaching in the program?”, “What kinds of barriers/facilitators do you experience in coaching this program?”, “What kinds of expectations do you have of the youth in the program?”, and “Can you share your thoughts about integrated versus segregated sport opportunities for youth with disabilities? Are there any particular strengths or drawbacks?” With the exception of one interview, performed by the first author, the interviews were conducted by the second author. Both interviewers had experience coaching youth sport and knowledge of varied sport settings for youth who experience disability. Interviews ranged in length from approximately 23 to 84 minutes and took place in locations selected by the participants (e.g., coffee shops, private office).

Immediately following each interview, the interviewers documented reflective notes. These notes outlined how the interviews progressed, any arising concerns, and initial impressions of the data (Mayan, 2009). The reflective notes also provided an opportunity to return to the interviews in a different way than afforded through transcribed text or audio recording, providing support and challenge to the data interpretation and greater data immersion (Thorne, 2008).

6. Analysis

In keeping with Thorne’s (2008) ID approach to establishing familiarity, analysis began with immersion in the

¹ Sledge hockey may be considered a reverse integrated sport. Within this article, it was primarily segregated however, a few examples of reverse integration are described.

data through the interview transcription, which was performed by the second author, and the reading and re-reading of transcripts and reflective notes. Immersion was accompanied by highlighting potentially relevant pieces of data and note taking. This was followed by the discovery of patterns and differences, which were then extended across cases to understand what relationships might exist within the data (Thorne, 2008). Within this process, we attempted to answer the questions of, “What is happening here?” and “What am I learning about this?” (Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997, p. 174). Discussions among authors and retracing analytic thinking (e.g., pieces to patterns to relationships), led to the determination of the study themes. This inductive approach to ‘sense-making’ (Thorne, 2008) also reflected Morse’s (1994) description of the cognitive processes of comprehending, synthesizing, theorizing, and recontextualizing.

7. Credibility

Credibility was sought in multiple ways consistent with ID and the study purpose. In addition to pilot testing interview questions for relevance and clarity, each participant provided feedback on their individual transcript. This led to major revisions of one transcript. These revisions comprised the removal of some information and clarification of other shared information in keeping with our ethical commitment to participant confidentiality. Through meetings and discussions among authors, the study processes were continually revisited and documented. The resulting audit trail afforded defensible retracing of study decisions and epistemological integrity (Mayan, 2009; Thorne, 2008). Finally, the corroboration of data sources (i.e., interviews and reflective notes) and the collaborative analysis and interpretation processes helped to establish an analytic logic and demonstrate an interpretive authority through the relevance of findings to the practice context (Thorne, 2008).

8. Findings

The overarching theme of this study was captured in the phrase ‘A part of and apart from sport’. Common across the interviews were descriptions of the ways in which youth who experience disability were included in (i.e., a part of) sport as well as the ways in which they were excluded (i.e., apart) from sport due to the nature of sport, disability, and taking part in a segregated setting. The overarching theme represents the lack of binary between the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. The overarching theme is apparent in the four sub-themes that highlight the ways in which practitioners experienced coaching and instructing youth who experience disability and how they viewed sport and different sport settings to be more or less inclusive and exclusive. The subthemes demonstrate the complex relationship that exists between (dis)ability and youth sport participation in general and in particu-

lar as it occurs within segregated sport. Pseudonyms have been used to protect participants’ identities.

9. Authentic Connections

The subtheme of Authentic Connections highlights practitioners valuing of segregated settings in affording critical opportunities for youth to develop a sense of community with other youth who also experience disability. At the same time, practitioners questioned the implications of segregated settings for social inclusion beyond the segregated sport context.

In describing the strengths of segregated programs for youth who experience disability, overwhelmingly practitioners articulated the importance of the “social environment to...make some new friends” (Paige), “to counter social isolation” (Jill), and “to come together as a group and feel...a sense of belonging” (Rick). More than just an opportunity to socialize, these settings afforded “opportunities [for youth] to create authentic relationships and friends within their own [disability] community,” said Michelle. Likewise Tanya elaborated, “some of their best friends are their sledge hockey teammates....They have some of the same issues with everyday life and they can relate to each other better than anyone.” As a result of the social component, some practitioners felt that an “inclusive environment still exist[ed]” (Jill) within segregated settings so long as it was “selective segregated programming...[and youth were] not forced to go into a program...because they have a disability” (Rick). Inclusive in this sense referred to the idea that “nobody’s left out” (Kevin).

The importance of finding connection through segregated programs also extended to the families of the youth. “A lot of my families...have become connected and they share resources, they share stories, and they sort of have someone to lean on and who are going through the same thing...” said Jill. Having a “place to come together and see that there are other families out there and just to build like their own social network and support group...” (Tom) was an important benefit for parents. These programs also led to unique experiences within families. As Tanya explained, “the chance for their parents to watch them [youth] at something is a really big motivator....They’re just like looking up in the stands...and so excited that finally there’s something where people can come and support them...that’s a big one that I think they get out of sledge hockey is that feeling of being included and being important.”

Despite the social value of the segregated programs, Jill explained there was still a “stigma of being in a separated class” and Jen wondered how segregated programs would lead to greater inclusion in society. While supportive of segregated programming, Christine explained that these programs did not counter the “archaic views about disability and [mis]understandings of disability that [continue to] exist.” She felt that “in integrated settings, children and youth...make friends...[and other youth] under-

stand that disability isn't as different as you might assume." Similarly, Paige felt that integrated settings could teach "some important" lessons about differences.

10. Diversity and Adaptations

The second subtheme, Diversity and Adaptations, speaks to the range of participant needs and abilities within the segregated programs and the central role practitioners played in creating adaptations to facilitate their engagement. Although adaptations were necessary, many practitioners struggled in their efforts to be inclusive. All coaches described working with youth with "a big spectrum" (Tanya) of different impairments because there were not enough programs in the community for youth "to have their own needs met," (Nadia). As Christine shared, "there's such a range in their skills and what they could do....I coach paraswimmers, each one is different." Similarly, Tanya explained, "you're working with some people who know all the skills...and you're working with some people who don't know very much." Within segregated settings, wide diversity was anticipated and accepted. This led to an environment in which "adapting...and having a lot of support," (Jen) was the norm. Paige described "having an individual approach to each person's progress" and Kevin explained how the segregated Tae Kwon Do program had a "more customizable timeline for progression and growth" than the non-segregated program. Specific examples of how practitioners provided adaptations included, "slowing the pace down...concentrating on simpler movements" (Tom), "setting realistic goals for their ability level" (Cora) and having "one-on-one or smaller groups" (Callie).

While all of the practitioners described needing to make adaptations in their programs, it was challenging for many of them. "It's hard to tailor a practice to fit everyone's needs and make sure they're all improving," shared Tanya, and James described how "you definitely challenge yourself to think outside the box." This was complicated by a lack of impairment specific knowledge. As Christine explained, "you don't know enough about that disability, or how to even go about teaching them." Kevin was candid with his response, he said, "I wonder a lot if I'm qualified to do what I'm doing," despite his years of experience, certifications, and positive feedback from families. Having "people who are trained" (Lana) and the support of parents (Jill) were essential resources for the practitioners in individualizing activities. Lastly, Callie shared the importance of consultation in offering adaptations. She said, "they [youth] know what they can and can't do and I think it's very important to ask them and not to make assumptions. To me it's very disrespectful to just assume that they can or can't do certain things."

11. Expectations...Same but Different

The subtheme of Expectations...Same but Different, reflects the practitioners deliberate efforts to be inclusive

in such a way that disability was not always at the forefront of the sport coaching and participation experience. In this way, practitioners held fast to the idea that the expectations they had for youth who experienced disability were not different from the expectations they would have of youth in mainstream programs. When describing their approach to coaching and teaching in the segregated programs, practitioners articulated similar philosophies to each other and to how they viewed mainstream youth sport. The most common expectations were for participants "to have fun and just try their best" (Cora). Additional expectations were well summarized by Allison who offered, "it's about growing, it's about honing some skills, physical skills and teamwork skills, sportsmanship skills..." A number of practitioners indicated their coaching and teaching philosophies were the same regardless of whether or not the program was segregated. As Callie explained,

I think the same [philosophy] as I have for any other students that I work with. So it's that you come and you try your hardest. You do everything that you can. You bring a positive attitude, you be respectful of yourself, you be respectful of your instructors, you be respectful of the people around you, and that you challenge yourself.

"I don't think my philosophy or approach changes," shared Tom. "I think what I teach and how I teach changes, but basically I'm still there to make sure the kids are having fun, being challenged, you know, getting...that feeling of accomplishment and community out of the program."

At the same time, some practitioners wondered if, "for some kids, it [segregated programming] doesn't push them hard enough" (Paige) and that "maybe it would not be challenging enough for some athletes" (Cora). When discussing drawbacks of segregated programs, Callie said, "sometimes we don't set our expectations high enough or we over-accommodate." Likewise, Christine found it difficult to know how much to push. She said, "I really struggled when I started coaching....He [the head coach] would tell me...you're not pushing them enough, you need to push them if they're going to develop." Nadia questioned the value of segregated settings given that "a lot of the things we're going to ask our participants in the future are going to have to be integrated.... It's not going to be set up always for them to succeed at their best [in] the real world." Concurrently, several practitioners indicated that taking part in the segregated program "could be used as a stepping stone to slowly branch off to integrated programs" (Jen), and to support "transition into community programs in an inclusive [integrated] setting" (Rick). Finally, Michelle saw value in having a diversity of sport settings. She shared, "if they're [youth] able to function in a regular [integrated] program, keep them there...but don't rule out...other opportunities [segre-

gated sport] because I don't think they're mutually exclusive, I think they can work together and they should work together.

12. Competitive Sport and (Dis)ability

The final subtheme draws attention to the nature of competition and the challenges it presented sport practitioners in their attempts to create inclusive sport environments. Importantly, when asked to clarify the competitive nature of their segregated programs, all but five practitioners indicated the focus was non-competitive or "totally non-competitive" (Paige). The focus on participation and development over winning, as highlighted in the following quote, was a critical component of the majority of the segregated programs, including the semi-competitive and competitive ones. "Everyone gets to be on the floor equal amount of time," said Nadia, "it's not about who is playing the best." Allison shared that in mainstream community programs, it "comes down to physical ability" and described how for one of the youth she coached, "being accepted onto the [segregated] team was a huge boost...[because] many of the kids with disabilities can't play in regular league because it's so competitive." This was further reinforced by Michelle who noted, "a lot of our athletes just can't keep up...in the mainstream program and they got to a point where they just couldn't, they got to an age where they couldn't keep up." At times, even when athletes were skilled, they encountered opposition within mainstream sport. Allison explained, "I have some really good athletes that are deaf and trying to get them into a community program is difficult."

Michelle described how Special Olympics offered a range of segregated programs (non-competitive to "very competitive") to meet different participant and parent motivations. Sledge hockey also provided a unique opportunity for youth who experienced disability to excel and compete. "These kids who are wheelchair users or...use crutches....Once they get on a sledge and play hockey, they're the fastest kids out there," said Tanya, "when we have able-bodied players come in and play against us, they just go circles around these able-bodied players and it's so nice for them to finally be excelling at something." At the same time, adaptations and meeting individual needs remained a critical part of the sledge hockey environment. "We worked to his ability level," Tanya said of one athlete who experienced very restricted movement, "we make sure that everyone has a place on the team." Similarly, Allison described how in the semi-competitive handball league, a player "couldn't catch a ball at all, but if it rolled, she was able to pick it up, so we found a defensive position for her and made her abilities work really well." While described as competitive in nature, as illustrated in the last few examples, participation was prioritized over winning within segregated sport settings.

13. Discussion

Rearticulating previous work in the field of inclusive sport, our findings emphasize the role of segregated settings in affording social connection, acceptance, and friendship among youth who experience disability and their families (Goodwin, Fitzpatrick, Thurmeier, & Hall, 2006; Shapiro & Martin, 2010; Wynnyk & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2013). Social inclusion in this regard was a particularly strong theme within the findings. Segregated programs were valued for the social inclusion afforded within them and they were also recognized by practitioners as necessary in order to meet the individual needs of youth participants. The significance of segregated settings in this regard is also supported by previous research (Goodwin et al., 2006; Wynnyk & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2013). However, practitioners also questioned and were critical of the potential for segregated settings to lead to broader inclusion in society. Practitioners also indicated a desire to be more knowledgeable about the nature of specific impairments and to better understand how to modify activities to meet the diversity of participant needs. These are not uncommon findings in inclusive sport research for young people who experience disability, as a lack of coaching expertise specific to disability and adaptations has been identified as a barrier (Jones, 2003; Kozub & Porretta, 1998; Tsai & Fung, 2009).

14. Considering Ability, (Dis)ability and Ableism in Sport

While several of the findings serve to reinforce what has previously been generated in the literature around inclusion and exclusion in and from sport for youth who experience disability in segregated sport, additional ways of thinking about and questioning sport practices within both mainstream and segregated sport are also afforded through the experiences of the practitioners in this study. One such example is the way in which ability continues to play a defining role for youth who experience disability in segregated sport and how it does so in similar, but perhaps more subtle, ways than in integrated mainstream sport. Ability can be a source of differentiation, separation, and comparison and influence the degree to which inclusion and exclusion in and from sport play out. According to Hay (2012), different conceptualizations of ability are critical to consider in youth sport as they can lead to the privileging and inclusion of some and the marginalization and exclusion of others. Hay offers several interpretations of how the concept of ability can impact the participation of youth in sport, two of which we consider here (see Hay, 2012, for more about the concept of ability). One understanding aligns closely with the ways in which sport is culturally practiced, emphasizing dominance, excellence, and comparison between people (Hay). In this first sense, ability is used to separate people into 'winners' and 'losers' and is in line with what typically occurs in competitive sport. This brings into

play, Fitzgerald's (2009) queries about the commensurability of the goals of youth sport and the achievement of youth who experience disability. Or, stated differently, the (mis)alignment between disability and sport.

Within our findings, the above understanding of ability, as dominance over others, informed practitioners' views that segregated settings were necessary to support the participation of youth with impairments who were unable to 'keep up' in mainstream competitive sport. Not keeping up was primarily attributed to a lack of physical ability, although practitioners also referred to the cognitive and social 'abilities' of youth. This resonates with Jones' (2003) study wherein competition was considered a significant barrier to inclusion in integrated sport for youth who experience disability. When the goals of youth sport are centered around competition (i.e., winning) underscored by a concept of ability that emphasizes dominance and excellence, integrated sport does not appear to work for most youth who experience disability, according to the practitioners in our study. In essence, this appeared to provide a primary justification for the need for segregated sport. However, even within segregated sport competition was eschewed. This was evidenced in practitioners' descriptions of the segregated settings in which they taught and coached as necessarily non-competitive. Practitioners who indicated their segregated programs were semi-competitive or competitive (e.g., sledge hockey) placed greater emphasis on skill development and ensuring all athletes had a valued place on the team. Essentially their goals were participatory. This interpretation offers support for the view that disability and sport, when underscored by a dominant conception of ability, are as Fitzgerald (2009) described, in "fundamental contradiction" (p. 2) with each other.

Another conception of ability offered by Hay (2012) is described "in a normative sense as competence, entailing the display and development of capacities that most people possess and that can support their participation in sport (e.g., the ability to run or walk or throw)" (p. 87). This second interpretation seems to align with the practitioners' coaching philosophies within the segregated sport settings and specifically their approach to providing individualized adaptations through the focus on developing skills. In comparison with the first explanation of ability, this second understanding appears more inclusive of diverse performances. Yet, in actuality, it is reliant on and advances the privileging of "normative abled(ness)" (Campbell, 2009) in sport because 'ability' is measured by the acquisition of capacities that "most people possess" (Hay, 2012, p. 87).

According to Campbell (2001), ableism is "a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produce a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability, then, is cast as a diminished state of being" (p. 44). This second articulation of ability both maintains and reinforces ableness. If normativity underlies the conception of ability in youth

sport generally and in segregated sport in particular, not only does it exclude the majority of youth who experience disability, who do not physically perform skills in normative ways (or at all), but it also excludes any youth whose ability is considered less than 'average'. In fact both conceptions of ability are exclusive and when promoted in youth sport lead to the marginalization of those deemed less able. While segregated sport may be positioned as resistant or in response to this type of marginalization, in actuality ableness also plays out in various ways as evidenced in sport practitioners' articulations around adaptations and expectations.

This interpretation was prominent when practitioners described segregated sport as an opportunity for youth who experience disability to develop and as a 'stepping stone' to mainstream sport settings. This potential outcome of segregated sport and other segregated contexts (e.g., segregated education), has long been disputed (Reid, 2003). This also brings into question whether or not segregated sport can be considered an "equitable" context for people who experience disability (Fay & Wolff, 2009) if in fact the goal is achievement in the mainstream or development in order to 'advance' to the mainstream. Previous work has been critical of how the play and leisure of disabled children has been promoted for the primary purposes of development and rehabilitation (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). This critique is also evident in mainstream youth sport literature, where development of youth through sport for the purpose of producing more productive citizens or better people is also questioned (Coakley, 2011). However, the focus on development for the purpose of achieving ableist norms or stated differently, gaining entry into the more valued mainstream sport setting reflects "a chief feature of an ableist viewpoint...that impairment (irrespective of 'type') is inherently negative which should, if the opportunity presents itself, be ameliorated..." (Campbell, 2008, p. 154). As Campbell suggests, impairment may be understood as a problem to be fixed. In the context of this study, one could argue that segregated sport becomes the mechanism by which some practitioners attempt to 'fix' participants so they might one day be 'able' enough to join the mainstream. Despite claims that disability sport has shifted away from a medical rehabilitative model (McPherson, Wheeler, & Foster, 2003) evidence to the contrary still exists. Furthermore, "the problem of exclusion continues to be located within the child and not the [leisure] environment or its practices" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 322). Although beyond the scope of our article, Hay's (2012) alternative discussion of a social construction of ability challenges the notion that exclusion is a problem of the individual but is "a complex process dependent upon the interactions of multiple factors" (p. 94).

Jespersen and McNamee (2009) call for a new way of understanding disability in sport, one that is not contingent on "deviation from 'normal' abilities" (p. 6). Diverging from comparative and normative conceptualizations

of ability brings possibility for considering differences in movement performance, not as deviant or less able, but as valued diversity. Within practitioners' descriptions of segregated sport, there is evidence that diversity in movement performance was valued and there was a desire and willingness on the part of practitioners to make sport an inclusive experience for youth who experience disability. At the same time, taken for granted assumptions of ableism continue to permeate and contribute to the justification and need for segregated sport settings due to the absence of other opportunities. In order to shift understandings of ability in youth sport in ways that support meaningful inclusion "more sustained attention to the ontological nature of disability" is required (Campbell, 2001, p. 42). Moreover, an understanding of ability as valued diversity in performance, as exemplified by individuals who use different forms of movement, can contribute to alternative ways of thinking about the purposes and possibilities of sport for all youth.

15. Limitations

We acknowledge several limitations to our study. While sport practitioners had experiences coaching and teaching in segregated settings, the nature of these settings and the participants within them were very diverse. On the one hand, this may well represent a particular kind of youth sport context, where different goals and abilities are present. On the other hand, this diversity presents challenges in terms of providing recommendations about how sport practitioners might better facilitate inclusion. Essentially, this study limitation rearticulates one of the ongoing challenges of facilitating inclusion, diversity. Another limitation to this study was the range of experiences practitioners had both within segregated settings and beyond them. While such differences offer richness in experience, it also limits the degree to which the study can speak to specific practices. Lastly, other forms of data, such as talking to youth coached by these practitioners would have added an additional interesting perspective.

16. Conclusion

In closing, Campbell (2008, as cited in Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013) "usefully reminds us that segregation should not be confused with separation. Campbell [also] sees separate spaces as providing opportunities for sanctuary—a space away from ableist values and assumptions and a place to recover from internalised oppression" (p. 321). At times, the segregated settings described in this study appeared to reflect opportunities for sanctuary through authentic connection, acceptance, and individualized adaptations. At other times, the settings described by practitioners seemed to reproduce certain ableist values and assumptions. It is critical that such spaces are not rendered compulsory for youth who experience disability due to a lack of other possibilities

(Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). As researchers and practitioners, we must ask ourselves 'what is the purpose of youth sport and of segregated sport in particular?' There is an ongoing need to question and reflect upon the assumption that segregated programs are (still) for the purpose of improving or intervening on young people with impairments so they may be more 'normal' (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). Enhancing the reflexive capacities of coaches (Hay, 2012), questioning ableist assumptions, and examining our contributions to furthering the ways in which disability and sport are constructed as contradictory are required. Further work is needed on how this can actually be accomplished.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the participants of our study for sharing their experiences and perspectives.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Anderson, D. M., Wozencroft, A., & Bedini, L. A. (2008). Adolescent girls' involvement in disability sport: A comparison of social support mechanisms. *Journal of Leisure Research, 40*, 183–207.
- Campbell, F. A. K. (2001). Inciting legal fictions: 'Disability's' date with ontology and the ableist body of the law. *Griffith Law Review, 10*(1), 42–62.
- Campbell, F. K. (2008). Exploring internalized ableism using critical race theory. *Disability & Society, 23*, 151–162. doi:10.1080/09687590701841190
- Campbell, F. K. (2009). *Contours of ableism: The production of disability and abledness*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9780230245181
- Coakley, J. (2011). Youth sports: What counts as "positive development?" *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 35*(3), 306–324. doi:10.1177/0193723511417311
- DePauw, K. P. (2009). Disability sport: Historical context. In H. Fitzgerald (Ed.), *Disability and youth sport* (pp. 24–38). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- DePauw, K. P., & Doll-Tepper, G. (2000). Toward progressive inclusion and acceptance: Myth or reality? The inclusion debate and bandwagon discourse. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 17*, 135–143. doi:10.1123/apaq.17.2.135
- Dinold, M., Diketmüller, R., Grix, J., & Phillpots, L. (2013). Managing diversity and European policy: Towards a typology for sport pedagogy. *European Journal of Sport Science, 23*(6), 689–696. doi:10.1080/17461391.2013.770925
- Fay, T., & Wolff, E. (2009). Disability in sport in the twenty-first century: Creating a new sport opportunity spectrum. *Boston University International Law Journal, 27*, 231–248.

- Fitzgerald, H. (2009). Bringing disability into youth sport. In H. Fitzgerald (Ed.), *Disability and youth sport* (pp. 1–8). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Fitzgerald, H., & Jobling, A. (2009). Future directions in disability and youth sport: Development, aspirations and research. In H. Fitzgerald (Ed.), *Disability and youth sport* (pp. 160–170). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Goodley, D., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2010). Emancipating play: Dis/abled children, development and deconstruction. *Disability & Society*, 25(4), 499–512. doi:10.1080/09687591003755914
- Goodwin, D. L., Fitzpatrick, D. A., Thurmeier, R., & Hall, C. (2006). The decision to join Special Olympics: Parent's perspectives. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 23, 163–183. doi:10.1123/apaq.23.2.163
- Goodwin, D. L., & Peers, D. (2012). Disability, sport and inclusion. In S. Dagkas & K. Armour (Eds.), *Inclusion and exclusion through youth sport* (pp. 186–202). London, UK: Routledge.
- Hay, P. J. (2012). Ability as an exclusionary concept in youth sport. In S. Dagkas & K. Armour (Eds.), *Inclusion and exclusion through youth sport* (pp. 87–99). London, UK: Routledge.
- Hodge, N., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2013). 'They never pass me the ball': Exposing ableism through the leisure experiences of disabled children, young people and their families. *Children's Geographies*, 11(3), 311–325. doi:10.1080/14733285.2013.812275
- Jespersen, E., & McNamee, M. (2009). Philosophy, adapted physical activity and dis/ability. In E. Jespersen, & M. McNamee (Eds.), *Ethics, dis/ability and sports* (pp. 1–10). Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Jones, D. B. (2003). "Denied from a lot of places": Barriers to participation in community recreation programs encountered by children with disabilities in Maine: Perspectives of parents. *Leisure/Loisir*, 28(1/2), 49–69. doi:10.1080/14927713.2003.9649939
- Kozub, F. M., & Porretta, D. L. (1998). Interscholastic coaches' attitudes toward integration of adolescents with disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 15, 328–344. doi:10.1123/apaq.15.4.328
- Lee, H., Causgrove Dunn, J., & Holt, N. L. (2014). Youth sport experiences of individuals with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 31, 343–361. doi:10.1123/apaq.2014-0142
- MacDonald, D., Pang, B., Knez, K., Nelson, A., & McCuaig, L. (2012). The will for inclusion: Bothering the inclusion/exclusion discourses of sport. In S. Dagkas & K. Armour (Eds.), *Inclusion and exclusion through youth sport* (pp. 9–23). London, UK: Routledge.
- Mayan, M. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- McPherson, G., Wheeler, G. D., & Foster, S. (2003). Socio-political influences on adapted physical activity. In R. D. Steadward, G. D. Wheeler, & E. J. Watkinson (Eds.), *Adapted physical activity* (pp. 75–98). Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press.
- Moran, T. E., & Block, M. E. (2010). Barriers to participation of children with disabilities in youth sport. *Teaching Exceptional Children Plus*, 6(3), 1–13.
- Morse, J. M. (1994). "Emerging from the data": The cognitive process of analysis in qualitative inquiry. In J. M. Morse (Ed.), *Critical issues in qualitative research methods* (pp. 23–43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Reid, G. (2003). Defining adapted physical activity. In R. D. Steadward, E. J. Watkinson, & G. D. Wheeler (Eds.), *Adapted physical activity* (pp.11–25). Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press.
- Shapiro, D. R., & Martin, J. J. (2010). Athletic identity, affect, and peer relations in youth athletes with physical disabilities. *Disability and Health Journal*, 3, 79–85. doi:10.1016/j.dhjo.2009.08.004
- Smith, A. (2009). Disability and inclusion policy towards physical education and youth sport. In H. Fitzgerald (Ed.), *Disability and youth sport* (pp. 24–38). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Spaaij, R. F. J., Magee, J., & Jeanes, R. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion in global society*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Tawse, J., Bloom, G. A., Sabiston, C. M., & Reid, G. (2012). The role of coaches in wheelchair rugby in the development of athletes with spinal cord injury. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 4(2), 206–225. doi:10.1080/2159676X.2012.685104
- Thorne, S. (2008). *Interpretive description*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Thorne, S., Kirkham, S. R., & MacDonald-Emes, J. (1997). Focus on qualitative methods. Interpretive description: A noncategorical qualitative alternative for developing nursing knowledge. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 20, 169–177. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1098-240X(199704)20:2<169::AID-NUR9>3.0.CO;2-I
- Tsai, E. H., & Fung, L. (2009). Parents' experiences and decisions on inclusive sport participation of their children with intellectual disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 26, 151–171. doi:10.1123/apaq.26.2.151
- Wynnyk, K., & Spencer-Cavaliere, N. (2013). Children's social relationships and motivation in sledge hockey. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 30, 299–316. doi:10.1123/apaq.30.4.299
- Zwier, J. N., Van Schie, P. E., Becher, J. G., Smits, D., Gorter, J. W., & Dallmeijer, A. J. (2010). Physical activity in young children with cerebral palsy. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 32, 1501–1508. doi:10.3109/09638288.2010.49701

About the Authors



Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta. Her primary areas of research and teaching include adapted physical activity and children's physical activity engagement. She is particularly interested in exploring inclusive participation in play, sport, and physical activity for children and youth and in finding creative ways to develop accessible and meaningful opportunities for young people to take part in these contexts.



Jennifer Thai (MSc) is a graduate of the kinesiology and occupational therapy programs at the University of Alberta. She currently works as an occupational therapist at the University of Alberta hospital where she supports her patients to participate in and regain independence in self-care and leisure activities. She continues to coach rhythmic gymnastics, working with recreational to national-level competitive gymnasts.



Bethan Kingsley (PhD) is a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP) at the University of Alberta. Bethan completed her PhD in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation. Her doctoral dissertation explored marginalizing practices in recreation for young people living with lower incomes.

Article

A New Model for Inclusive Sports? An Evaluation of Participants' Experiences of Mixed Ability Rugby

Martino Corazza ^{1,*} and Jen Dyer ²¹ International Mixed Ability Sports, Bradford Deaf Centre, Bradford, BD1 3RP, UK; E-Mail: m.corazza@mixedabilitiesports.org² Sustainability Research Institute, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK; E-Mail: j.dyer@leeds.ac.uk

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 6 February 2017 | Accepted: 6 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Sport has been recognised as a potential catalyst for social inclusion. The Mixed Ability Model represents an innovative approach to inclusive sport by encouraging disabled and non-disabled players to interact in a mainstream club environment. However, research around the impacts of the Model is currently lacking. This paper aims to contribute empirical data to this gap by evaluating participants' experiences of Mixed Ability Rugby and highlighting implications for future initiatives. Primary qualitative data were collected within two Mixed Ability Rugby teams in the UK and Italy through online questionnaires and focus groups. Data were analysed using Simplican et al.'s (2015) model of social inclusion. Data show that Mixed Ability Rugby has significant potential for achieving inclusionary outcomes. Positive social impacts, reported by all participants, regardless of (dis)ability, include enhanced social networks, an increase in social capital, personal development and fundamental perception shifts. Factors relevant to the Mixed Ability Model are identified that enhance these impacts and inclusionary outcomes. The mainstream setting was reportedly the most important, with further aspects including a supportive club environment and promotion of self-advocacy. A 'Wheel of Inclusion' is developed that provides a useful basis for evaluating current inclusive sport initiatives and for designing new ones.

Keywords

disability; inclusive sports; Mixed Ability Model; rugby; social inclusion; social networks; sport

Issue

This article is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Sport initiatives are increasingly being viewed and promoted as catalysts to achieving a range of non-sporting objectives variously labelled under sport for social change or development (Edwards, 2015; Levermore & Beacom, 2009), sport for peacebuilding and reconciliation (Rookwood & Palmer, 2011; Sugden, 2006) and sport for education, equality and inclusion (EC, 2010; Kelly, 2011). The UN recognises the vital role sport can play in enhancing personal and societal development (UN, 2015) and the EU has been at the forefront of promoting the use of sport in combating exclusion, inequal-

ities, racism and xenophobia (EC, 2010). As such the role of sport in promoting social inclusion has become a key focus in both research and international policy (Spaaij, Magee, & Jeanes, 2014). However, there are calls for empirical evidence to show how the design and structure of projects and initiatives impact on positive social outcomes (Rich, Misener, & Dubeau, 2015) and for community level research to develop localised theoretical frameworks to inform initiatives going forwards (Edwards, 2015). This research aims to contribute empirical evidence to these areas by analysing the implications of the Mixed Ability Model (hereafter MA Model) for inclusive sport through the evaluation of disabled and non-

disabled participants' experiences of Mixed Ability Rugby (hereafter MA Rugby) in the UK and Italy. The MA Model seeks to promote social inclusion through the integration of disabled players into a mainstream social sport setting in their local community, playing alongside non-disabled participants. This research answers calls for better understanding of participant experiences and perspectives of inclusive sport (Levermore, 2010; Rich et al., 2015) and in particular hearing the voices and viewpoints of people with disabilities (Wickman, 2015).

2. Sport and Inclusion

2.1. Sport and Disability

Participation in sport and physical activities has been reported to have positive impacts in achieving personal and societal benefits, leading to a plethora of policies and initiatives promoting sport (Armour, Sandford, & Duncombe, 2013; Bailey et al., 2009). In particular, these are targeted at underrepresented and traditionally marginalised groups. Disabled people fall into this category. In England, only 17% of disabled people aged 16+ participate in sport for 30 minutes a week compared to 36% of non-disabled people (Sport England, 2016) and in Italy the gap is even wider, with only 15% of disabled people participating compared to 42% of the non-disabled population (ISTAT, 2010).

Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities encourages and promotes 'the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels' (UN, 2006). However, the disability sports literature highlights a plethora of barriers remaining to this being achieved. Physical barriers are cited as lack of time, finances, carers/assistants, adequate infrastructure, transport and equipment (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; EFDS, 2012) and emotional barriers include feelings of stigmatisation and exposure to prejudice (Wilson, Jaques, Johnson, & Brotherton, 2016), lack of confidence and self-esteem, challenges around interpersonal communications and lack of awareness of opportunities and realistic role models (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; EFDS, 2012). In line with the social model of disability, inclusive sports seek to focus attention on removing these 'disabling barriers' through emphasising societal interventions which enable disabled people to fully participate in sport and the broader community (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; Swain, French, Barnes, & Thomas, 2014). This leads to a more nuanced approach to sport delivery which recognises the multi-faceted experiences of every participant.

A growing body of literature examines the factors impacting the inclusive nature of sports. Positive outcomes appear more likely when emphasis is placed on participants understanding the project rather than being passive recipients of instruction (Petitpas, Cornelius, Van Raalte, & Jones, 2005). Ensuring participants have roles and responsibilities, equal status and common goals also

appear important (Edwards, 2015) as does the promotion and facilitation of friendship development (EFDS, 2014; Van Asselt, Buchanan, & Peterson, 2015). In addition, encouraging participants to feel a sense of ownership within a sporting initiative has been found to optimise social inclusion (Darcy, Maxwell, Edwards, Onyx, & Sherker, 2014; Van Asselt et al., 2015) and therefore more inclusive outcomes are likely to arise when the development of the initiative is led by participants rather than being imposed (Wendel et al., 2009).

2.2. The Mixed Ability Model

The MA Model represents an innovative approach to inclusive sport by integrating disabled players into a mainstream sport setting whether as players or participating in other ways such as organisational or educational roles. The Model grew organically from a lack of provision for disabled participants to play full-contact rugby. Unlike most sports provision for disabled participants, classification and identification systems are not used and MA Rugby is governed by World Rugby Laws without adaptation and with only minor adjustments to take into account individual participant needs. The MA Model has been developed, and is being championed by, IMAS (International Mixed Ability Sports), a community interest company who support grassroots clubs in establishing MA Rugby teams and who have co-produced educational resources with the participants of MA Rugby. Through this approach, IMAS seek to increase sustainable participation in sport, break down barriers between non-disabled and disabled participants, address social exclusion and generate long-term positive change. However, research into the MA Model is currently lacking, as is broader research into inclusive sports which encourage disabled and non-disabled participants to play collaboratively in a mainstream environment.

2.3. Evaluating Social Inclusion

Much research has gone into trying to pin down the complex concept of social inclusion. Cobigo, Ouellette-Kuntz, Lysaght and Martin (2012, p. 76) suggest that social inclusion should encompass 'full and fair access to community-based resources and activities, having relationships with family, friends and acquaintances and having a sense of belonging to a group' as well as representing participation in mainstream society rather than just presence. Simpican et al. (2015, p. 22) suggest social inclusion is the dynamic interaction of two core life domains which encompass the 'structural and functional components behind social inclusion' (Figure 1). The Interpersonal Relationships domain takes into account the variety of relationships in a social network (Category), the structural components of these relationships, such as frequency, location, reciprocity and complexity (Structure), and the levels of emotional, informational and instrumental support they provide (Function). The Com-

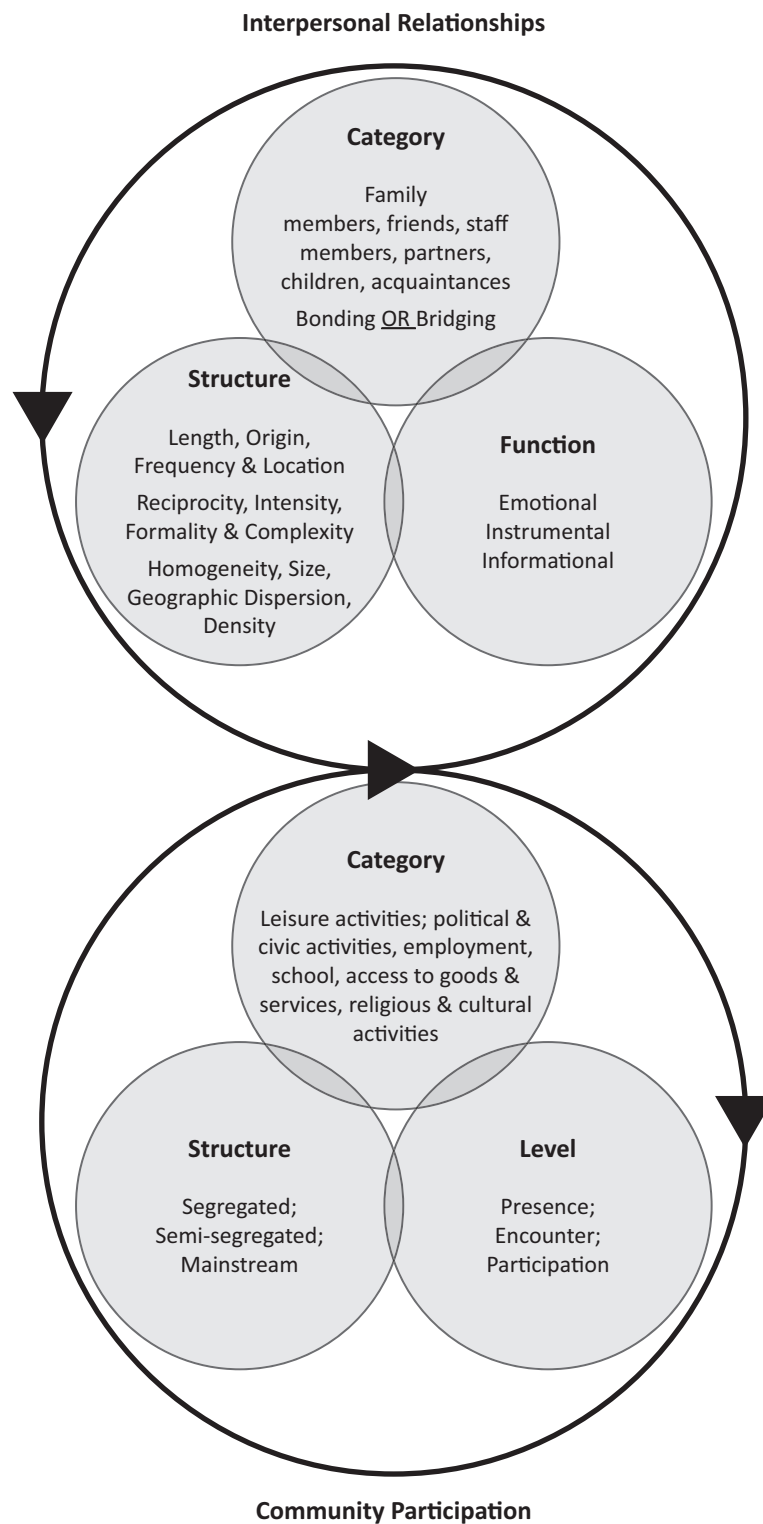


Figure 1. Simplican et al.'s (2015) model of social inclusion.

community Participation domain captures types of community activities participants are involved in such as sporting, civic and cultural (Category), the setting of these activities, whether segregated, semi-segregated or integrated (Structure) and the potential for interpersonal relationship development, whether presence, encounter or participation (Level). The arrows on the model show how the two domains overlap and 'mutually support'

each other. For example, increased participation in community activities may result in stronger and more diverse social networks and interpersonal relationships which may then result in further potential for community participation.

We explore the feedback within and between the two domains through the evaluation of participant experiences of MA Rugby, which sits within the Category

component of the Community Participation domain. In using the model, we seek to map the relationships between community involvement in sport and the other components such as the impact of participation on interpersonal relationships and social networks.

3. Research Design and Methods

In order to evaluate participants' experiences of MA Rugby, two case studies were chosen: Chivasso Rugby (Italy) and Bumble Bees RFC (UK). These clubs were purposively selected as having well-established MA Rugby teams founded in 2009, and working closely with IMAS to develop educational resources and awareness around the MA Model through qualified specialist tutors in each club. In the UK context, there is also an 'Inclusion in Rugby' class which meets each week and is co-funded by the Workers Educational Association. Data collection took place between March and June 2016. A semi-structured, online questionnaire was employed with non-disabled participants and others involved in MA Rugby, and supported focus groups were carried out with disabled participants in order to overcome potential barriers with IT and to allow time and support for articulation of their views.

The online questionnaire comprised 20 open questions. The questions were divided into: 1) respondent background and demographics, 2) personal experiences of MA Rugby and disability, 3) personal and community-level impacts of the MA Model and 4) exploring the characteristics of MA Rugby such as structure and setting. One focus group was held with 7 participants in each Club, allowing the gathering of individual in-depth answers, group discussions and general observations. The

focus groups were structured around the same questions as the online questionnaire.

3.1. Sampling

Participants were selected for the study according to three criteria: 1) currently registered with their MA Club, 2) over 17 years old and, 3) having at least one year experience of MA Rugby. There were 82 potential participants: 37 and 45 in the UK and Italy respectively. 38 participants volunteered to join the study and their key attributes are summarised in Table 1. Respondents were asked for their primary role within the Club as well as other roles they play. Primary roles (and their analysis code) included non-disabled players/facilitators (F), disabled players (P) volunteers (V), referees (R), Club doctor (D) and supporters (S) with additional roles including coaches, committee members, photographer and Team Manager. The respondent demographics reflect the prevalence of males given that National Governing Body rules state that females cannot play mixed gender, full-contact rugby.

3.2. Analysis

Respondents' questionnaire responses were downloaded into an excel document and assigned codes according to their country, primary role in their Club, gender and age (e.g. IFM55 would refer to a 55 year old male facilitator from Chivasso Rugby). Focus groups were transcribed and translated before both data sets were subjected to content analysis using a basic inductive method (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and then according to Simplican et al.'s (2015) model of social inclusion. Re-

Table 1. Summary of online questionnaire respondent demographics.

Characteristic	Details	Italy (19 respondents)	UK (19 respondents)
Gender	M	17	18
	F	2	1
Age	<18	2	0
	18–25	6	4
	26–35	2	6
	36–49	5	4
	50–64	4	4
	>65	0	1
Identify themselves as being disabled	Disabled	7	8
	Non-disabled	12	11
Years involved in MA Rugby	1–2	10	5
	3–5	6	10
	>5	3	4

curing themes were further interrogated and excerpts and quotes from questionnaires and focus groups were highlighted. This approach allowed for a broad narrative to emerge as well as providing enough detail for us to reflect the multi-faceted experiences of individual participants. The scope of this research did not allow for the thorough exploration of broader contextual factors, although note was taken where responses differed between the perspectives of participants from the different national case studies.

4. Results

Analysis of participant experiences revealed that MA Rugby had a broad range of positive impacts at the individual, Club and broader community-level. Data also highlighted dynamic relationships between the various components and domains of Simplician et al.'s (2015) model. With MA Rugby sitting within the Category component of the Community Participation domain, our data suggest that this component impacts on, in particular, the Category component of the Interpersonal Relationships domain. However, these impacts are facilitated and mediated by the other components of the model through the way MA Rugby is designed and organised.

4.1. Impacts of Mixed Ability Rugby

4.1.1. Social Networks and Capital

Respondents from both countries repeatedly identified that the biggest impacts of MA Rugby are developing new friendships, relationships and social networks. Bonding relationships were evident through teammates forging close friendships both on and off the rugby pitch. Respondents reported a sense of belonging and the word 'family' recurred 27 times:

...it's incredible because everyone is just himself, no one is afraid of being judged. It's like being a family. (IPM23)

There are only benefits for those who are part of it. It feels like being part of a new family. (UKFM53)

Participants from the UK emphasised even more clearly the value of bridging relationships between groups that would not traditionally meet and, in particular, between disabled and non-disabled participants:

[MA Rugby has impacted me] in a massively positive way...leading to many new friendships and relationships with people with and without disabilities. (UKSM51)

I have Asperger Syndrome. It's hard for me to communicate but now I'm part of a team and socialise in the bar after training and games. (UKPM41)

...for the vast majority it helps by including a whole new group of players, re-engaging former players and engaging the club with the community. (UKPM49)

This latter quote highlights the broad reach of MA Rugby. Participants reported getting involved through, for example, disabled family members, existing club members, work-related roles and service providers. Bridging relationships represented occasions for personal development amongst participants such as through external qualifications in coaching and paid employment and work experience through rugby contacts and through IMAS introductions and opportunities. Participants involved in the educational aspect of MA Rugby in particular, reported improved confidence, communication skills, professionalism and pride in their various roles as peer educators, Ambassadors and role models, teaching others how to play MA Rugby, creating and disseminating accessible National Governing Body resource packs and delivering co-produced equality awareness training. One facilitator summed up the reciprocal relationship between disabled and non-disabled participants:

Disabled players have become more confident in their own abilities and non-disabled players have become more confident in being with disabled people. (UKFM51)

4.1.2. Shift in Perceptions

The interaction between participants of MA Rugby was repeatedly revealed to have created a fundamental shift in perceptions among all participants. Many non-disabled participants reported an initial sense of curiosity, awkwardness and caution, as well as scepticism towards the MA Model, for example by confessing to not knowing 'how to interact with [disabled players]' (IFM55), and being 'not sure what to expect' (UKFM47). Many reported being apprehensive and one facilitator claimed he was worried about injuring disabled players (UKFM58). However, after being involved with the initiative, participants reported:

The biggest impact on me has been the change in my attitude to all people I come across now....I do not worry about whether I'm saying or doing the right thing....I see the person first. (UKFM49)

Disabled participants also reported undergoing perception shifts, both in the perception of non-disabled people, in particular through their interaction with facilitators, but also in self-perception:

The first time I joined the group, I thought of myself as different...I felt like out of context....And now, step by step, with my acquired new skills and abilities, I'm learning to realise that I can do more things than I thought. (IPM36)

4.2. Characteristics of MA Rugby

4.2.1. A Mainstream Setting

When asked about the characteristics of MA Rugby that led to these positive impacts, responses from disabled participants overwhelmingly focused on the mainstream setting, aligning to the Structure component of the Community Participation domain in Simplican et al.'s (2015) model. All focus group participants stated that they enjoy MA Rugby because it is 'simply rugby' and challenged the idea that disabled people shouldn't be allowed to take risks, get injured or play contact sports. Participants acknowledged the risk of injury as something that can happen in life and as a decision they are entitled to make:

Rugby is about tackles and physical contact. We want to play it as it is. We accept the risk. (IPM21)

Disabled participants felt their disabled status faded into a wider sense of equality and being part of a team when playing. Indeed UK participants rejected wearing bibs to make the opposition aware of their disability as would be the case in most integrated sport settings. Facilitators recognised the power of this self-advocacy:

When we first started playing we put [disabled people] in bibs. They wore them a couple of times and then took them off saying, 'I don't want to wear them, it makes me stand out. I don't want to stand out, I want to be a part of the team'. (UKFM60)

The mainstream setting was also reported to further the social benefits of participating through access to Club facilities such as the bar, creating a positive feedback loop with the development of social capital and networks and aligning with a level of community participation that actively promotes the development of interpersonal relationships (Simplican et al., 2015). Being full members of their Club also affords financial sustainability and means regular activities such as tours can be funded. One participant highlighted that he had been on tour twice without his 'staff' which had further increased his sense of independence.

4.2.2. A Supportive Environment

Respondents highlighted that the supportive nature of the mainstream club environment was crucial to maximising positive impacts for participants. Many respondents, both disabled and non-disabled, reported how welcome and valued they had felt in joining:

It is a unique experience. I felt welcomed and important despite never having played rugby before. (UKPM26)

For disabled players, this often contrasted markedly from previous experiences of sports clubs:

I supported my local [rugby league] team for years. They would not let me play. The only thing I could do was to carry water bottles. They were afraid I could get injured. Of course I can get injured, it's part of the game. And since I joined the Bumbles I have snapped my Achilles, done my ligaments and I still want to play. (UKPM37)

When I retired from powerlifting I went to my local rugby club. They say they didn't have any other disabled players and that they couldn't help me. (UKPM36)

Many non-disabled participants recalled being impressed with the atmosphere, the focus on showcasing *all* abilities and the sense of value placed on everyone:

...those with learning or physical difficulties were treated and respected (and teased!) in exactly the same way as anyone else in the club. (UKSM60)

This supportive atmosphere has also encouraged returners to rugby, for example after injury or having given the sport up when they were younger. One UK returner got involved through a client and subsequently introduced another three contacts to the Club. He reported:

I am more confident and relaxed about being accepted and integrated by the group, they all make me feel part of the team, and they teach me the joy of the game. (UKFM59)

Further supportive elements for disabled participants were identified as involving carers, parents and support organisations in Club activities as well as providing participants with reminder slips for times, dates and logistics of training sessions and matches.

4.2.3. Structural Components

The frequency and consistency of weekly training sessions and regular matches, aligning to the Structure component of the Interpersonal Relationship domain of Simplican et al.'s (2015) model, reportedly meant that relationships were constantly developed and organisation of logistics improved, leading to further increases in confidence and independence in disabled participants. The location of training and matches at mainstream clubs endorses these feelings of independence, belonging and acceptance in the community. UK respondents in particular, referred to the Club as being 'well-known' and 'well thought of' in the local community for their rugby and also their 'ambassadorial skills'. One Club doctor stated:

Playing the Bumble Bees has made [my local Club] better and reconnected them to the reasons they play rugby: The enjoyment and the values. (UKDM63)

4.3. Challenges of MA Rugby

Despite an overwhelmingly positive response from disabled and non-disabled respondents to participation in MA Rugby, there were also challenges raised. Two participants commented on the exclusion of females due to the mainstream nature of MA Rugby and adherence to World Rugby Laws and one female volunteer stated that she felt less involved in the social side given that there are fewer women to socialise with and much of the camaraderie is built on the pitch and in the changing rooms. These responses highlight the tension inherent in calling MA Rugby an inclusive sport when some groups are excluded. However, one participant commented:

So far [MA Rugby is] overwhelmingly male. But then again, so is mainstream rugby so I hesitate to criticise mixed ability alone for having a lack of opportunities for girls and women. (UKSM60)

Participants also highlighted that those with profound disabilities and in wheelchairs are thus far unable to play MA Rugby due to the terrain, although they are still encouraged to be involved in organisational and educational roles. Concerns were raised by Italian respondents over insurance issues as disabled participants are currently unable to be covered by the Italian Rugby National Governing Body as is the case in the UK. Respondents stated that this leaves disabled people vulnerable if they were to get seriously injured. In addition, some facilitators commented on the delicate balance between 'winning matches and not taking it all too seriously' (UKPM49) and one referee challenged the concept of keeping play fully inclusive:

I totally get the desire for all concerned for this to be wholly inclusive however....I am not entirely sure this is fully possible. (UKRM51)

5. Discussion

The analysis of participants' experiences show that MA Rugby meets the criteria of social inclusion put forward by Cobigo et al. (2012) in that it promotes full and fair access to community-based resources and activities, meaningful and reciprocal relationships and a sense of belonging and participation in mainstream community, despite some challenges being faced. Participants' experiences also highlight the dynamic nature of social inclusion, the interaction between individuals and context and also the interaction between Simplican et al.'s (2015) two core life domains of Interpersonal Relationships and Community Participation. The following sections explore the impacts of MA Rugby in relation to other research and the implications of our findings for future inclusive sport initiatives.

5.1. Impacts of MA Rugby

MA Rugby appears to have benefits for all participants regardless of (dis)ability, as well as others involved through, for example, volunteering and refereeing. This supports previous research suggesting that beneficiaries of social inclusion initiatives extend beyond those with disabilities and that social inclusion improves lives for all involved (Lyras & Peachey, 2011; Mahar, Cobigo, & Stuart, 2013; Simplican et al., 2015).

Expanded social networks are highlighted by participants as key benefits of MA Rugby, in particular through enhancing social capital. Putnam defines social capital as 'networks, norms and social trust that can facilitate co-ordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (1995, p. 66) and Collins expands this to suggest that personal social capital exists alongside communal social capital comprising individual skills and knowledge, self-confidence and supportive relationships (2004). Both are developed through MA Rugby. Other authors have identified 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital where bonding is localised and emphasises strong, multi-functional ties and bridging encourages personal and community development through extending ties beyond personal and immediate networks (Darcy et al., 2014; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 2001). Again the development of both is evident through MA Rugby, supporting previous assertions that interaction through sport can lead to deep friendships that extend beyond the sporting context (Tonts, 2005) as well as expanding immediate, personal networks (Darcy et al., 2014; Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, these data support the dynamic and reinforcing relationship between social capital and personal development. The increased participation in the community and more developed social networks lead to improved self-confidence and social skills as well as the potential for more opportunities for further personal development for all participants and, in particular, for participants with learning disabilities (Darcy et al., 2014; Lawson, 2005; Wilson et al., 2016).

Our findings also support claims that sport can cultivate friendships across groups who do not generally interact due to differences in, for example, ethnicity, age, gender and (dis)ability (Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008) and this can have broader implications in terms of shifting perceptions. SCOPE (2013, p. 14) highlighted that 'more everyday interactions...will increase understanding and acceptance of disabled people', and interaction between different groups is agreed to be a predictor of more positive attitudes (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). This could be particularly critical in Italy where CENSIS data show that disability is still perceived by two out of three Italians as limitation of movement or physical impairment, which renders those with learning disabilities non-existent (CENSIS, 2014).

Hewstone (2015) suggests that perception and attitude shifts are more likely to occur when participants are of equal status, when the context demands stereotypes are challenged and when cooperation is required by ev-

everyone involved, such as in a mainstream sports team context. Our findings reveal further contextual factors that impact whether broader benefits of sport initiatives aimed at inclusion across disabled and non-disabled participants are likely to be achieved. These are presented as a 'Wheel of Inclusion' in Figure 2. The following section details how the Wheel can be used to inform development of future sport initiatives with similar aims.

5.2. Implications for Future Inclusive Sports Initiatives

The Wheel of Inclusion comprises 8 sections, each of which correspond to a characteristic of sports initiatives which our data highlight as key to maximising benefits for all participants and to achieving broader social inclusion. The Wheel incorporates key, relevant terms from Simplican et al.'s (2015) model of inclusion as well as expanding on the model in the context of MA Rugby. Our data suggest that the key starting point of an inclu-

sive sport initiative is the club structure, reflected in 'setting', 'frequency' and 'membership status'. Within that, the club environment, reflected in 'supportive environment' and 'exchange' facilitates the inclusive nature of the initiative. The 'advocacy' and 'level' sections reflect the individual participant's role in promoting inclusion through how involved they become and all these sections link to whether the development of 'social networks' takes place.

Our data highlight that a mainstream setting for MA Rugby is key to maximising benefits from inclusive sports such as shifting perceptions, increased social capital and personal development. These findings support previous research emphasising the benefits of mainstream inclusion settings for those with disabilities (Bates & Davis, 2004) as well as for raising awareness about and challenging stigma attached to disability (Simplican et al., 2015). However, data highlight that mainstream settings also need to be supportive and welcoming in order to pro-

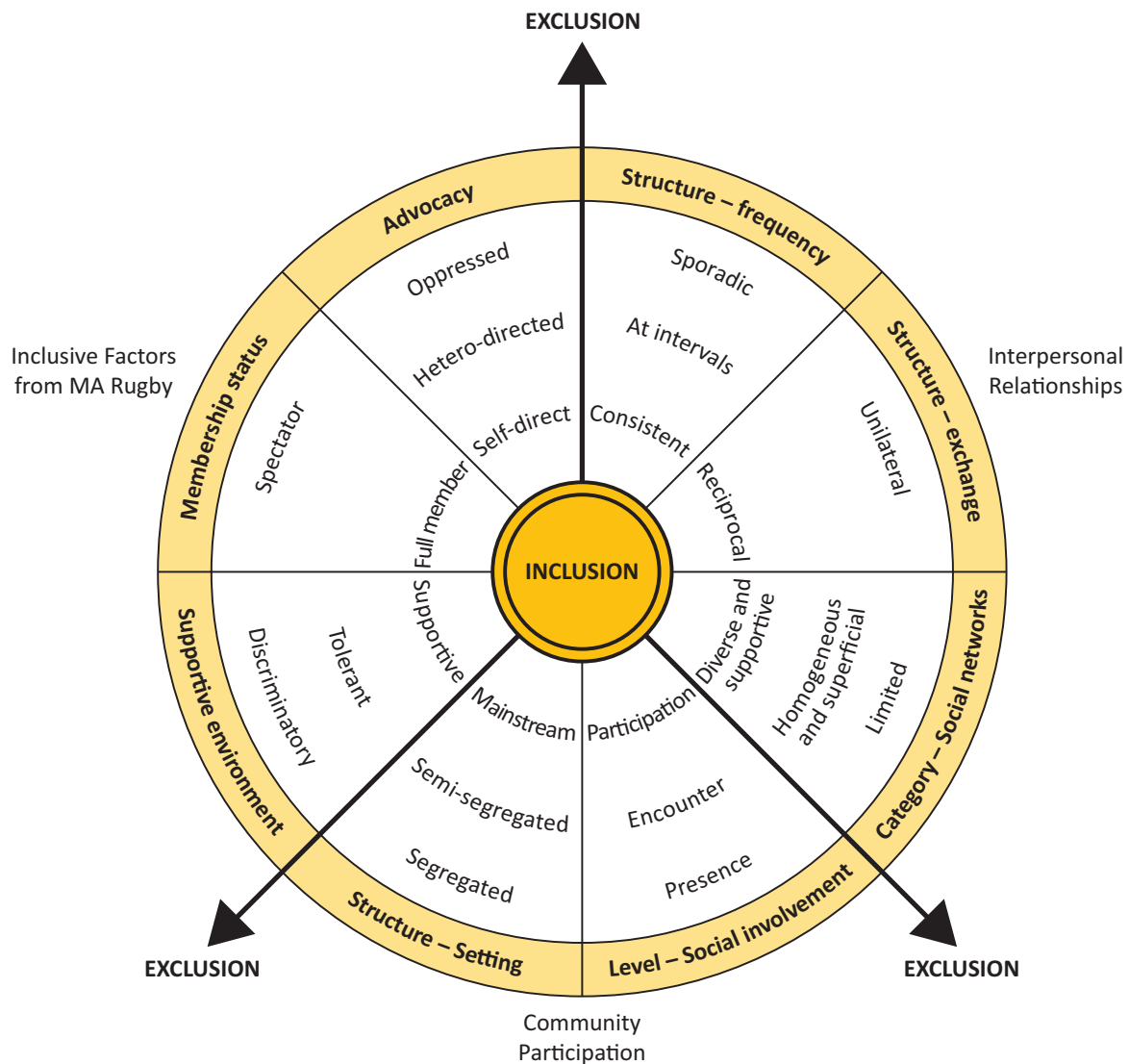


Figure 2. 'Wheel of Inclusion' incorporating key elements of Simplican et al.'s (2015) model of inclusion as well as expanding on the model in the context of MA Rugby.

vide the same sense of belonging and safety that proponents of segregated settings for disabled people emphasise as important (Hall, 2010). In providing a supportive environment, MA Rugby removes some of the key barriers to participating in sport such as exposure to prejudice (Wilson et al., 2016), inadequate support from coaches and assistants (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; Emerson, Hatton, Robertson, & Baines, 2014) and lack of disability awareness (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; EFDS, 2014). While having full membership of a Club and a mainstream Club location were reported by participants as having various benefits such as promoting equality, independence and sustainability, there could be concerns over whether this excludes some participants on the grounds of finance and transport issues, key barriers often cited as reducing participation in sports for many groups in society (Darcy & Dowse, 2013; EFDS, 2014).

A further important aspect of MA Rugby clearly emerged as the self-advocacy disabled participants have in choosing to assume risks for themselves. This choice appears critical in fostering a sense of belonging, equality and empowerment, which are highlighted in previous research as key to inclusive initiatives (Van Asselt et al., 2015; Wilson et al., 2016) and overlap with the Sport for Development, community capacity and independent living literature in suggesting that social justice is also key for inclusive outcomes (Edwards, 2015; Perske, 1972). More fundamentally, the challenge of dominant discourse around what disabled people can and can't do through self-advocacy and participation in full-contact rugby could have significant impacts on societal understanding of disability (Goodley, 1997).

6. Conclusions

Given the complex nature of social inclusion and the interactions between context and the multi-faceted experiences of participants, it is clear a 'one-size fits all' solution for fostering social inclusion through sport is not appropriate. However, the MA Model demonstrates potential for contributing to both personal, club and community-level inclusion through enhanced social networks, personal development and shifts in perception, attitudes and behaviours. The 'Wheel of Inclusion' has been developed through data from both disabled and non-disabled participants and we argue it could therefore provide a useful basis for evaluating current inclusive sport initiatives and for designing new ones, with new sections of the Wheel evolving as identified. A useful next step for research would be to apply the Wheel to inclusive sport initiatives focusing on other sports and other traditionally marginalised groups in society, as well as to females and to individuals who may find the MA Sport setting more appealing, such as those returning to sport or those looking for social outcomes rather than competition. In addition, it would be valuable to situate the Wheel in the broader socio-political context to analyse the impacts of broader factors on inclusionary outcomes.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank all participants for their contribution of time as well as their willingness to discuss their personal experiences of MA Rugby. We would also like to thank Dr. Angharad Beckett and Dr. Rachel Sandford for their input and guidance.

Conflict of Interests

Martino Corazza is the Founder and Director of IMAS.

References

- Armour, K., Sandford, R., & Duncombe, R. (2013). Positive youth development and physical activity/sport interventions: mechanisms leading to sustained impact. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18(3), 256–281.
- Bailey, R., Armour, K., Kirk, D., Jess, M., Pickup, I., . . . & BERA Physical Education. (2009). The educational benefits claimed for physical education and school sport: an academic review. *Research Papers in Education*, 24(1), 1–27.
- Bates, P., & Davis, F. A. (2004). Social capital, social inclusion and services for people with learning disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 19(3), 195–207.
- Brown, R., & Hewstone, M. (2005). An integrative theory of intergroup contact. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 37, 255–343.
- CENSIS. (2014). Diario della transizione/3. I disabili, i più diseguali nella crescita delle diseguaglianze sociali. Rome. Retrieved from http://www.censis.it/7?shadow_comunicato_stampa=120959
- Cobigo, V., Ouellette-Kuntz, H., Lysaght, R., & Martin, L. (2012). Shifting our conceptualization of social inclusion. *Stigma Research and Action*, 2(2), 75–84.
- Collins, M. (2004). Sport, physical activity and social exclusion. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 22(8), 727–740.
- Darcy, S., & Dowse, L. (2013). In search of a level playing field—The constraints and benefits of sport participation for people with intellectual disability. *Disability & Society*, 28(3), 393–407.
- Darcy, S., Maxwell, H., Edwards, M., Onyx, J., & Sherker, S. (2014). More than a sport and volunteer organisation: Investigating social capital development in a sporting organisation. *Sport Management Review*, 17(4), 395–406.
- EC. (2010). *European Disability Strategy 2010–2020*. European Commission. Retrieved from <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:en:PDF>
- Edwards, M. B. (2015). The role of sport in community capacity building: An examination of sport for development research and practice. *Sport Management Review*, 18(1), 6–19.
- EFDS. (2012). Understanding the barriers to participation in sport. Retrieved from: <http://www.lrsport.org/up>

- loads/understanding-barriers-to-participation-14.pdf EFDS. (2014). Talk to me: Understanding how to increase participation in sport and physical activity amongst disabled people in the UK. Retrieved from: www.efds.co.uk/assets/000/000/271/Talk_to_me_FINAL_original.doc?1462896025
- Emerson, E., Hatton, C., Robertson, J., & Baines, S. (2014). Perceptions of neighbourhood quality, social and civic participation and the self rated health of British adults with intellectual disability: Cross sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, *14*(1), 1252.
- Goodley, D. (1997). Locating self-advocacy in models of disability: Understanding disability in the support of self-advocates with learning difficulties. *Disability & Society*, *12*(3), 367–379. doi:10.1080/09687599727227
- Hall, E. (2010). Spaces of social inclusion and belonging for people with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, *54*(s1), 48–57.
- Hewstone, M. (2015). Consequences of diversity for social cohesion and prejudice: The missing dimension of intergroup contact. *Journal of Social Issues*, *71*(2), 417–438.
- ISTAT. (2010). La disabilità in Italia. Il quadro della statistica ufficiale. Rome. Retrieved from http://www3.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20100513_00/arg_09_37_la_disabilita_in_Italia.pdf
- Kelly, L. (2011). ‘Social inclusion’ through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, *31*(1), 126–150.
- Lawson, H. A. (2005). Empowering people, facilitating community development, and contributing to sustainable development: The social work of sport, exercise, and physical education programs. *Sport, Education and Society*, *10*(1), 135–160.
- Levermore, R. (2010). CSR for development through sport: Examining its potential and limitations. *Third World Quarterly*, *31*(2), 223–241.
- Levermore, R., & Beacom, A. (2009). *Sport and development: Mapping the field*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lyras, A., & Peachey, J. W. (2011). Integrating sport-for-development theory and praxis. *Sport Management Review*, *14*(4), 311–326.
- Mahar, A. L., Cobigo, V., & Stuart, H. (2013). Conceptualizing belonging. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, *35*(12), 1026–1032.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Perske, R. (1972). The dignity of risk and the MR. *Mental Retardation*, *10*(1), 24–27.
- Petitpas, A. J., Cornelius, A. E., Van Raalte, J. L., & Jones, T. (2005). A framework for planning youth sport programs that foster psychosocial development. *The Sport Psychologist*, *19*(1), 63–80.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling alone: America’s declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, *6*(1), 65–78.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). Bowling alone: America’s declining social capital. In L. Crothers & C. Lockhart (Eds.), *Culture and politics* (pp. 223–234). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rich, K. A., Misener, L., & Dubeau, D. (2015). “Community cup, we are a big family”: Examining social inclusion and acculturation of newcomers to Canada through a participatory sport event. *Social Inclusion*, *3*(3), 129–141.
- Rookwood, J., & Palmer, C. (2011). Invasion games in war-torn nations: Can football help to build peace? *Soccer & Society*, *12*(2), 184–200.
- SCOPE. (2013). Have the Paralympics improved the daily lives of disabled people? Retrieved from: <http://blog.scope.org.uk/2013/08/29/have-the-paralympics-improved-the-daily-lives-of-disabled-people>
- Simplican, S. C., Leader, G., Kosciulek, J., & Leahy, M. (2015). Defining social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: An ecological model of social networks and community participation. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *38*, 18–29.
- Skinner, J., Zakus, D. H., & Cowell, J. (2008). Development through sport: Building social capital in disadvantaged communities. *Sport Management Review*, *11*(3), 253–275.
- Spaaij, R., Magee, J., & Jeanes, R. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion in global society*. London: Routledge.
- Sport England. (2016). *Active people survey*. Retrieved from: https://www.sportengland.org/media/10745/1x30_overall_factsheet_aps10q2.pdf
- Sugden, J. (2006). Teaching and playing sport for conflict resolution and co-existence in Israel. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *41*(2), 221–240.
- Swain, F., French, S., Barnes, C., & Thomas, C. (2014). *Disabling barriers: Enabling environments* (3rd. ed.). London: Sage.
- Tonts, M. (2005). Competitive sport and social capital in rural Australia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *21*(2), 137–149.
- UN. (2006). *Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and optional protocol*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>
- UN. (2015). *Declaration of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25th September 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1
- Van Asselt, D., Buchanan, A., & Peterson, S. (2015). Enablers and barriers of social inclusion for young adults with intellectual disability: a multidimensional view. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, *40*(1), 37–48.
- Wendel, M. L., Burdine, J. N., McLeroy, K. R., Alaniz, A., Norton, B., & Felix, M. R. J. (2009). Community capacity: Theory and application. *Emerging Theories in Health Promotion Practice and Research*, *2*, 277–302.
- Wickman, K. (2015). Experiences and perceptions of young adults with physical disabilities on sports. *Social Inclusion*, *3*(3), 39–50.

Wilson, N. J., Jaques, H., Johnson, A., & Brotherton, M. L. (2016). From social exclusion to supported inclusion: Adults with intellectual disability discuss their lived experiences of a structured social group. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 1–12. doi:10.1111/jar.12275

Woolcock, M. (2001). The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes. *Canadian journal of policy research*, 2(1), 11–17.

About the Authors



Martino Corazza holds an MA in Disability Studies from the University of Leeds and is passionate about rugby and lifelong education. He has been working for many years in further and adult education as a specialist tutor, as well as in European projects aiming to promote international co-operation, active citizenship and personal development. Martino is the founder and Director of International Mixed Ability Sports (IMAS), a not for profit organisation promoting social inclusion through mainstream and non adapted sports.



Jen Dyer (PhD) is a Lecturer in Sustainability at the University of Leeds. Her research is interdisciplinary and focuses on using participatory methods to holistically evaluate initiatives in a variety of contexts and around a range of topics such as natural resource management, student engagement and, more recently, social inclusion. Jen prioritises engaging relevant stakeholders at all stages in her research in order to increase the relevance and impact of research findings.

Commentary

Sport and Social Inclusion: Evidence-Based Policy and Practice

Fred Coalter^{1,2}

¹ Carnegie School of Sport, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, LS1 3HE, UK; E-Mail: fredcoalter@hotmail.co.uk

² Department of Movement and Sport Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Submitted: 2 January 2017 | Accepted: 25 January 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

This commentary reflects on my experience of compiling the *Value of Sport Monitor*—an on-line resource of policy-relevant, research on the social impacts of sport—for eight years. The commentary critically evaluates the assumption of the *Value of Sport Monitor* that social science research in sport is cumulative and it explores sports interest groups' varying attitudes to the nature of evidence. It illustrates that widespread conceptual and methodological inconsistencies and weaknesses in research greatly reduce the ability to identify best practice and 'best buys' as a basis for policy. The commentary concludes by proposing that a way forward for research to contribute to policy and practice is via theory-based evaluation.

Keywords

evidence-based policy; methodological weaknesses, sports research; theory-based evaluation

Issue

This commentary is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

This commentary is based on my experience of compiling the *Value of Sport Monitor* between 2004 and 2012. This was funded by Sport England and UK Sport and was an on-line data base of English language policy-relevant sports research covering the following topics (viewed as covering most aspects of the amorphous notion of 'social inclusion'):

- Physical Fitness and Health
- Psychological Health and Well-being
- Crime Reduction and Community Safety
- Economic Impact and Regeneration of Local Communities
- Education and Life-long Learning
- Social Capacity and Cohesion
- Influences on Participation

A basic assumption of the monitor was that research in sport was cumulative. The task was to identify research which proved the claims that sport interest groups make about its contribution to the solution of public problems

and aspects of social inclusion. It also aimed to identify best practice or 'best buys' as guides for policy and practice—in terms of the 'New' Labour mantra, to identify 'what works'. It was also hoped that it would identify gaps in the research, thereby encouraging researchers to undertake work to fill the gaps. Consequently, the monitor was not a bibliography but consisted of narrative reviews and regular state-of-the-art summaries, identifying gaps in research.

The context for the establishment of the monitor was the 'New' Labour government's twin emphasis on social inclusion and evidence-based policy making. 'New' Labour's Third Way concerns with social inclusion, civic renewal, active citizenship and social capital were reinforced by an emphasis on joined-up government and a policy imperative that all areas of public investment contribute to strategic policy goals. This placed sport on a broader policy agenda because it was impossible for government departments, non-departmental public bodies (e.g., Sports Councils) and those in receipt of public funding to ignore it. Funding became increasingly dependent on an organisation's ability to illustrate its effective contribution to the social inclusion agenda.

For example, the 1999 white paper *Modernising Government* (Cabinet Office, 1999) stated ‘this Government expects more of policy makers...better use of evidence and research in policy making and better focus on policies that will deliver long term goals’.

In such circumstances the relatively untested claims of sport’s wider social contributions came under much closer scrutiny and robust research to inform evidence-based policy-making was in short supply. For example, in 2002 the ‘New’ Labour government’s sports strategy *Game Plan* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport & Strategy Unit, 2002, p. 79) stated that ‘the evidence base needs to be strengthened to enable policy-makers to construct and target effective interventions’. In a review of evidence of the socio-economic benefits of sport participation for the Conference Board of Canada, Bloom, Grant and Watt (2005, preface) concluded that ‘policy makers lack the evidence required to make informed policy decisions and to connect sport issues to other priorities’.

Such comments illustrate that another rationale for the Monitor was to add legitimacy to what was a relatively marginal policy area. For example, Houlihan and White (2002) argue that sports development has mostly been subordinate to much more powerful policy communities (e.g., health and education) and it has been a policy taker not policy maker. Consequently, it could be argued that the social inclusion agenda was a mixed blessing, simply reinforcing this status—a shift away from the social democratic welfare vision of ‘sport for all’ to a much more pragmatic emphasis on ‘sport for good’ and accountability. This was starkly illustrated by the Minister, Richard Caborn’s (2003) assertion that ‘we will not accept simplistic assertions that sport is good as sufficient reason to back sport’. The increased emphasis on evidence of effectiveness can also be viewed as part of the struggle to establish legitimacy in the eyes of other established policy fields (e.g., health; crime), dominated by high status professionals, with an assumed accumulated body of systematic and ‘scientific’ knowledge, who express scepticism about sport’s claims to funding related to their policy areas.

2. Interest Groups and Attitudes to Evidence

Nick Rowe (2005), the Research Officer at the Sports Council, identified three groups with an interest in the monitor. These were government, sporting organisations and academic researchers, each with different attitudes to the nature of evidence and proof.

2.1. Government: Truth and Utility

For Rowe (2005), government was looking for short-term definitive answers relating to the economy and effectiveness of policy-interventions. Government is characterised by polarised views and ‘evidence’ is evaluated as to the extent to which it supports and reinforces policy beliefs and current policy commitments. Weiss and Bu-

cuvalas (1980), in a series of 52 in-depth interviews with senior government officials to explore the usefulness of mental health research, found that decision-makers used a series of frames of reference to assess both the ‘truth’ and the ‘utility’ of social science research. Although the quality of the research was a major concern, Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980, p. 304) found that, ‘even more pervasive is the sense of conformity with what they already know—or believe they know’. Consequently, findings which reinforce beliefs and policies and are congruent with habits and tradition are more likely to be viewed as ‘useful’. This reflects Weiss’ (1993, p. 94) contention that evaluation is ‘a rational exercise that takes place in a political context’. In this world ‘evidence’ is more plural than research—values and ideology, habits and traditions, lobbyists, experience, expertise and judgement of officials and ministers all play their part in mediating and interpreting the value of research evidence. Weiss (1993, p. 96) emphasises the importance of political judgements in assessing research evidence by arguing that ‘a considerable amount of ineffectiveness may be tolerated if a program fits well with prevailing values, if it satisfies voters, or if it pays off political debts’.

In this regard Solesbury (2001) warns against the danger of academic researchers confusing research with evidence and believing that only academic research counts in policy and decision-making. Solesbury (2001, p. 9) argues that:

Public policy is developed and delivered through the use of power....There sometimes seems to be a tension between power and knowledge in the shaping of policy....Emphasising the role of power and authority at the expense of knowledge and expertise in public affairs seems cynical; emphasising the latter at the expense of the former seems naïve.

For these reasons, Weiss and Bucuvalas (1980) argue that there are very few ‘big bang’ moments in social policy, when a piece of research—a killer fact—overtakes years of accumulated policies and practices. Because of the political, bureaucratic and interest-ridden nature of organisational decision-making processes, there are few examples of direct and immediate influence of research on decisions. Consequently, the main purpose of the monitor for government was, where possible, to confirm policy commitments already made, or to provide civil servants and ministers with positive examples.

2.2. Sports Agencies: Making the Case

The second set of interest groups is sports agencies and organisations—whose aim is to promote public investment in sport. These are characterised as being lobbyists and enthusiasts with an a priori belief in the benefits of sport. This group of sports evangelists is interested in evidence to ‘make the case’ and has limited interest in research quality/ methodology. In such circumstances

evidence is often selective and less systematic—e.g., using single research studies to argue a case—with limited concern about the robustness and limits to generalisability of the chosen examples. The danger in ignoring issues of method is emphasised by Oakley, Gough, Oliver and Thomas (2005) who found that in general social science research, better designed studies were generally less likely to demonstrate effectiveness, with poorly designed studies producing over-optimistic results. In the area of sport, Etnier et al. (1997), reviewing the evidence relating to the relationship between physical activity and educational performance, found that the largest measured relationships are obtained from the weakest research designs and the weakest relationships are found in the most robust research designs.

It could be argued that the approach to evidence in sport reflects its ‘mythopoeic’ nature. Mythopoeic concepts tend to be ones whose demarcation criteria are not specific and this can be applied to the way that an overly-homogenised notion of ‘sport’ is used in policy debates and rhetoric. Such concepts are based on popular and idealistic ideas which are produced largely outside sociological analysis and which ‘isolates a particular relationship between variables to the exclusion of others and without a sound basis for doing so’ (Glasner, 1977, pp. 2–3). Such myths contain elements of truth—some sports programmes will inevitably produce positive outcomes. However, these elements become reified and distorted and ‘represent’ rather than reflect reality, standing for supposed, but largely unexamined, impacts and processes. The strength of such myths lies in their ‘ability to evoke vague and generalised images’ (Glasner, 1977, p. 1)—useful in the rhetoric of ‘sport’ policy and lobbying. As Long and Sanderson (2001) argue, such a belief in the positive possibilities of sport is maintained in the absence of robust confirming evidence—a mixture of belief and theory, professional and personal repertoires, political and organisational self-interest and ad hominem arguments permits the assumption of such outcomes.

This combination of evangelical belief in the mythopoeic power of sport and a desire for legitimating evidence raised significant issues for the role of negative findings in the monitor. An implicit, but mistaken, assumption underpinning the notion of cumulative evidence is that the research will largely illustrate positive outcomes and impacts. Given the diversity of contexts, programmes and participants it was inevitable that not all research reported positive outcomes and in some areas, such as crime, there were equal proportions of positive and negative findings. However, learning from failure poses dilemmas for a vulnerable policy area, which is under pressure to deliver short term outcomes in a relatively short window of opportunity. In such circumstances, public agencies may be reluctant to publish negative results. The potential significance of this is emphasised by Sibley and Etnier (2003, p. 253) who, in examining the relationship between physical activity and cognition in children, conclude that, ‘studies

with null results are often not published...which typically leads to a positively biased effect size being found for published studies’. Consequently, the inclusion of negative findings was the subject of much debate and such findings were included only where they contributed to our overall understanding of the issues, e.g., by explaining the causes of the failure of programmes to achieve their desired outcomes.

2.3. Academics

Rowe’s policy maker’s ideal type of this group is that academics are interested in the robustness of research design and methodology and concerned with issues of causality and theoretical explanations—concerns reinforced by the peer review process in journals. He also contends that academics are more likely to adopt a neutral ‘enlightenment’ approach, being more concerned with a critique of current policy and practice rather than a partisan, problem-solving approach. While this may be an over-generalisation, it is a position widely held in politics and by policy makers. For example, David Blunkett (2000, p. 15), a government minister, argued that:

Too much social science research is inward looking, too piecemeal rather than helping to build knowledge in a cumulative way....Issues for research are too supplier driven rather than focusing on the key issues of concern to policy makers, practitioners and the public at large.

Perhaps such perspectives explain the increasing employment of consultants in many areas of policy research (including sport), as they are perceived to be more pragmatic and user-friendly than academic researchers, who are often viewed as inflexible and naïve about client needs.

3. Weaknesses of Current Research

The needs of evidence-based policy making were not well-served because of the lack of a strong cumulative body of social science research evidence from which to inform sport policy and practice. This was explained by three broad factors: conceptual variety, methodological weaknesses and failure to address issues of sufficient conditions. It is important to note that, although this commentary concentrates on sports research, the weaknesses and limitations which will be highlighted are not confined to sport—evidence-based policy making has exposed widespread limitations in many areas of research, especially its ability to inform policy (Faulkner, Taylor, Ferrence, Munro, & Selby, 2006; Oakley et al., 2005). Davies (2004, p. 21) has stated that various research syntheses ‘have shown that there is often a lack of sound conclusive evidence even when there has been considerable research activity on some topic or problem’. Consequently, many of the issues raised in this commentary

relate to generic issues of social science research and its contribution to policy.

3.1. Conceptual Variety

Weiss (1993, p. 96) has argued that marginal policy fields seeking to establish their legitimacy may make ‘inflated promises [with] goals lacking the clarity and intellectual coherence that evaluation criteria should have’. In this regard, Harris and Adams (2016, p. 2) argue that, ‘many problems with which sport is charged with “fixing” are poorly defined, lack clarity and are resistant to clear and agreed solutions’. This lack of clarity is reflected in much of current social science research. Not surprisingly, there was more cumulative evidence in terms of outcome measurement in medical research, on physical and psychological health, where there is more conceptual consensus and agreement on approaches to measurement. Much available social science research exhibits a wide variety of frequently vague definitions of ‘sport’ and this often included physical activity. These varying definitions often ignored the wide variety of processes and participants’ experiences—e.g., rule-bound organised sport is different from the more general category of ‘physical activity’. For example, in a study of sport and character development the President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (2006) argued that it was not possible to generalise about sport because of the variety of rule structures, developmental stimuli, sporting cultures and micro-cultures and moral norms and the variety of individual experiences.

Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds and Smith (2017) in an integrative review of USA sport-based youth development literature found that only 55 percent of articles reported the specific sports being studied, only 10 percent reported the classification of sports being studied (i.e., team vs individual) and 35 percent treated sports participation as a single variable (i.e., participation /non-participation); much published research lacks detail of the nature, extent and duration of participation required to achieve certain outcomes—in Jones et al.’s (2017) study only 28 percent reported duration and 17 percent reported frequency; there was a wide variety of often disputed definitions of attitudinal and psychological outcomes and impacts (the resulting individual behavioural changes). For example, the varied measurements of educational performance greatly reduced validity and comparability— self-report, teacher evaluation, self-assessment and objective measurement. In much-researched areas there were vague and imprecise notions of ‘anti-social behaviour’, ‘at risk’ youth and ‘social cohesion’ and this raised issues of validity and reduced comparability and cumulative understanding. Much of the work on social cohesion was at a developmental stage and the definition and measurement of sport’s contribution to aspects of social cohesion and social capital present researchers with considerable methodological difficulties. The research in this area addressed is-

ues at various material and conceptual levels: large scale sports development programmes; the community impact of amateur and professional sports clubs; the role of sport and volunteering in developing pro-social behaviours and organisational cohesion; sport’s role in developing peer relationships and the meaning of sport for minority ethnic groups with differing attitudes to social and cultural integration. In terms of economic impact the variation in definitions and the variable data sources placed substantial limitations on comparisons in many areas—especially health-related savings and macro-economic impacts.

Such variety and lack of precision raise substantial issues of validity and comparability of research findings and substantially reduces the possibility of cumulative research understanding.

3.2. Methodological Issues

One effect of the enlightenment orientation is that the focus of much published research is the measurement of outcomes and the development of the methodology and the discipline—reinforced by the requirements of many journals and the peer review process. Such papers are of academic interest but it is very difficult to assess the practical relevance or lay accessibility of much of this type of research. The inclusion of necessary methodological caveats often undermines attempts to summarise the research for policy makers, as caveats can often outweigh evidence. However, many of the caveats are related to generic issues of method and could have been foreseen before the research was undertaken—cross-sectional designs; convenience sampling; self-selecting participants; no control groups; self-reporting; lack of control for intervening/confounding variables. A substantial number of academic articles finish with methodological caveats about the inherent limitations of the chosen methodology and such issues raise substantial questions of reliability. Further, there has been a dramatic increase in the volume of such research, reflecting the expansion of the publish-or-perish culture in universities. The pressure to publish has led to ‘salami-slicing’ and the failure to publish all relevant detail in one place. All this makes communication with policy makers and practitioners very difficult.

For example, in a review of correlates of physical activity of children and adolescents Sallis, Prochaska and Taylor (2000) looked at 108 studies which identified 40 variables for those aged 3–12 and 48 variables for the 13–18 age group—60 percent of the associations were statistically significant! The most notable result was a lack of consistency between the variables, with few variables consistent in all studies. The key constraints on the reviewed studies included:

- Low sample sizes
- Difficulties in measuring young people’s physical activity
- Differing sample characteristics

- Different analysis strategies: bi- and multivariate
- Cross-sectional studies

More generally, it is interesting to note how limited our understanding is of a most basic question—why do people participate in sport? Or, how do we achieve ‘sporting inclusion’? At the most basic level of understanding of the determinants of participation there is a lack of robust research evidence to inform policy and provision. For example, Biddle, O’Connell and Braithwaite (2011) in a review of quantitative systematic reviews concluded that ‘beyond age and gender, correlates are likely to have only small or small-to-moderate effects in isolation and may work best in interaction with other influences, although we are not close to identifying the *nature of these interactions*’.

Jackson, Howes, Gupta, Doyle and Waters (2005) undertook a systematic review entitled “Interventions Implemented through Sporting Organisations for Increasing Participation in Sport”, using restrictive selection criteria, including randomised and cluster controlled trials, quasi-randomised trials and controlled before-and-after studies. They could find no relevant studies and concluded that:

There is an absence of high quality evidence to support interventions designed and delivered by sporting organisations to increase participation in sport. Interventions funded and conducted in this area must be linked to a rigorous evaluation strategy in order to examine overall effectiveness, socio- demographic differentials in participation and cost-effectiveness of these strategies. (Jackson et al., 2005, p. 2)

Much is made of sports’ ability to contribute to the social and emotional well-being of ‘at-risk’ youth (although ‘at risk’ is rarely defined precisely). However, in a systematic review Lubans, Plotnikoff and Lubans (2012, p. 2) concluded that ‘the quality of existing studies is poor and has not improved since earlier reviews’. They state: ‘Due to the mixed findings and the high risk of bias, it is difficult to determine the efficacy of physical activity programmes for improving social and emotional well-being in at-risk youth’ (Lubans et al., 2012, p.2). Among their conclusions were:

- Physiological and psychosocial factors may explain the beneficial effects of physical activity programmes on social and emotional well-being in at-risk youth
- As none of the studies included long-term follow-ups (i.e., >12 months), it remains untested whether the benefits associated with participation in physical activity programmes are sustained once youth return to their daily routines

The reference to a lack of longitudinal research is also commented on by Jones et al. (2017), who found that only 5 percent of published USA sports studies included

a measure related to longer term youth development impacts. They suggest that analyses typically ‘end with short-term attitudinal outcomes which are often linked conceptually or theoretically with long term impacts, but seldom explored empirically’ (Jones et al., 2017, p. 15). In this regard, Morris, Sallybanks, Willis and Makkai (2003, p. 74) argue that after participation in programmes most participants will return to their previous environment and that; ‘a program on its own cannot effectively produce lasting changes in antisocial behaviour by young people—there is a need for continual care in the community that encourages maintenance of positive behavioural change.’ A major study of British rehabilitation programmes (Taylor, Crow, Irvine, & Nichols, 1999) concluded that evaluation was variable and that performance indicators ranged from the simple monitoring of attendance, via the use of anecdotal evidence to a few who estimated reconviction rates. Their conclusions illustrate many of our more general concerns with programme processes and mechanisms and methodological limitations and resulting policy dilemmas:

Programme managers...feel that quantitative indicators are insufficient to capture the essence of the outputs [and] that this reflects the difficulty of not only determining the significant variables but also measuring the precise effect they have....There is a problem finding qualitative evaluation techniques which are feasible with limited resources, but which adequately monitor the complex outcomes which most of the programmes aspire to. All programmes agree that physical activities do not by themselves reduce offending. All agree that there are personal and social development objectives that form part of a matrix of outcomes. These developments may, sooner or later, improve offending behaviour, but their impact is unpredictable in scale and timing. (Taylor et al., 1999, p. 50)

Another area in which a single variable intervention—sport—has been found to be problematic is the claims for the positive relationships between sports participation and improved educational performance. Grissom (2005) points to a widespread failure of experimental designs to find statistically significant differences between experimental and control subjects. He argues that this is due in part to the generic difficulty in raising academic achievement. It is very difficult to raise student achievement, beyond what might be expected, even when that is the specific focus. A study intended to affect achievement indirectly (i.e., via participation in PE and sport) encounters even more difficulty.

Shephard (1997, p. 115) illustrates the problems in assessing cause and effect as follows:

Even in studies where physically active students have had an unequivocal academic advantage over their sedentary peers, it is unclear whether intelligence led to success in sport, whether involvement in an ac-

tivity program enhanced academic performance, or whether both academic success and a predilection for physical activity are related to some third factor, such as a genetic characteristic that favors both academic and physical developments.

Grissom (2005) admits that the understanding of these issues will probably not be achieved via experimental or correlational designs and suggests that there is an urgent need for ‘naturalistic’ research to understand mechanisms and contribute to the building of theory.

3.3. Sufficient Conditions

The reference to the understanding of processes and mechanisms and how programmes are meant to work raises the third limitation of much existing published research—the failure to consider *sufficient conditions*. Participation in ‘sport’ (however defined) is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to obtain the supposed benefits. There is a lack of information about the various mechanisms, processes and experiences associated with participation. Patriksson (1995, p. 128) argues that:

Sport, like most activities, is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes. Questions like ‘what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?’ must be asked more often.

West and Crompton (2001), in a review of 21 North American outdoor recreation programmes aimed at reducing recidivism, found a widespread absence of clear statements of rationale and associated theory about the *presumed relationships* between participation, changed attitudes and changed behaviour (see also Collins, Henry, Houlihan, & Buller, 1999; Witt & Crompton, 1996). Bidle, Gorely and Stensel (2004, p. 689) in a review of school-based interventions to increase physical activity among young people, state ‘the extant literature did little to improve understanding of *what kinds of programmes or what aspects of programmes* bring about health gains or valued outcomes’.

Jones et al. (2017) found that only 18 percent of articles included information related to the logic or rationale of the programme under study. From this perspective, Jones et al. (2017, p. 14) raise a fundamental question about the limitations of much descriptive outcome-based research—‘without this information it is unclear if the evaluative criteria used by the researchers matched the programme model, or if the constructs being measured were an intended or unintended consequence of participation’.

Details of the ‘middle-range mechanisms’ (Pawson, 2006) of programmes are frequently missing, either for conceptual reasons—they are not part of the methodological approach to research—or due to the requirements of journals with their rather standardised ap-

proach to formats and limitations on word length. In this regard, Pawson (2001) notes the limitations of narrative reviews. The process of information extraction is necessarily selective and, as social interventions and associated processes are descriptively inexhaustible, few research reports, research reviews or academic articles (the main source of information) will contain all relevant information. In other words, this approach is almost wholly dependent on published material and the decisions of authors, editors and the funders of research about the significance of issues for inclusion.

This is not an issue confined to sports research. Thornton and Lee (2000) refer to a general ‘publication bias’ and Oakley et al. (2005, p. 12) report that because of ‘reporting deficiencies...applicability and generalisability were limited by scant information’. Commenting on the general condition of social science research and its contribution to policy making Davies (2004, p. 13) concluded that there is a very strong need for ‘more and better implementation studies that can identify the particular conditions under which successful implementation and delivery takes place, or fails to take place, as well as those conditions that are more generalisable’.

These concerns raise the issue of a widespread need to understand the *processes* of participation—the nature of participants’ experience and the programme *mechanisms* which explain any measured changes in values, attitudes or behaviour. This refers to the need to ‘de-centre’ (Crabbe, 2000) (or ‘de-mythologise’) sport to understand what sports, work for what subjects, in what conditions and why? This need is indicated by Coakley (1998) who views ‘sports as *sites* for socialisation experiences, not *causes* of socialisation outcomes’ and Hartmann (2003) who argues that ‘the success of any sports-based social intervention program is largely determined by the strength of its *non-sport components*’. For example, Sandford, Armour and Warmington (2006) concluded that, ‘*social relationships* experienced during involvement in physical activity programmes are the most significant factor in effecting behavioural change’. The need for such an understanding was emphasised by the conclusion of the literature review by the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (2007, p. 4) that ‘the evident benefits appear to be an indirect outcome of the context and social interaction that is possible in sport rather than a direct outcome of participating in sport’. Such perspectives reflect a growing realisation that sports on their own have difficulty in achieving the variety of desired outcomes. This is indicated by the growth of *sport plus* approaches, in which sports’ contributions are complemented and supported by a range of parallel initiatives (Coalter, 2007). In such circumstances sport is mostly a vitally important necessary, but not sufficient, condition.

4. Theory-Based Evaluation

The concern with programme mechanisms reflects a growing recognition of the need for theory-based eval-

uation (TBE) approaches. Weiss (1997, p. 520) argues that ‘the clearest call for theory based evaluation comes when prior evaluations show inconsistent results’—a situation which neatly sums up sports-related research.

The key idea of theory-based evaluation is that policy makers’ and programme providers’ beliefs and assumptions underpinning any intervention can be expressed in terms of a ‘programme theory’ or theory of change—a sequence of presumed causes and presumed effects (Weiss, 1997). Not only does this approach seek to describe actual mechanisms, but it ‘aims to surface the theoretical underpinnings of the program in advance and use the theories to help structure the evaluation’ (Weiss, 1997, p. 510). Weiss (1997, p. 510) argues that:

One of the main reasons for interest in TBE is the usual inability of even the most sophisticated experimental evaluation to explain what factors were responsible for the program’s success—or failure. Although evaluations based on random assignment to program and control groups give good estimates of program impact, they have little to say about *how or why* the impacts occurred.

The World Bank (2004, p. 10) argues that:

Theory-based evaluation...allows....an in-depth understanding of a working of the program or activity—the ‘program theory’ or ‘program logic’. In particular it need not assume simple linear cause-and-effect relationships....By mapping out the determining or causal factors judged important for success, and how they might interact, it can then be decided which steps should be monitored as the progress develops, to see how well they are in fact borne out. This allows the critical success factors to be identified.

Such an approach has major methodological implications as it seeks to specify the mechanisms by which change is, or is not, achieved and not simply identify the activities and characteristics associated with change. In such circumstances, Weiss (1997, p. 514) outlines the methodological implications as follows:

One of the hopes of the theories-of-change approach was to obviate control groups....Hope is that TBE can track the unfolding of events, step-by-step, and thus make causal attributions based on demonstrated links. If this were so, evaluation would not need randomized control groups to justify its claims about causality.

There is now a widespread acknowledgment of the need for an understanding of programme processes—the nature of participants’ experience and the *mechanisms* which explain any measured changes in values, attitudes or behaviour. We have limited understanding about what sports and sports’ *processes*, produce what

outcomes, for which *participants* and in what *circumstances*. Consequently, the programme theory approach does not offer the policy community a ‘best buy’ but ‘a tailored, “transferable theory”—(this programme theory works in these respects, for these subjects, in these kinds of situations)’ (Pawson, 2001, p. 4). As Weiss (1997, p. 518) explains ‘TBE...provides explanations—stories of means and ends—that communicate readily to policy makers and the public’.

In terms of the processes of evidence-based policy the attraction of theory-based approaches to evaluation is that they provide an opportunity to close the distance between academic research, policy makers and practitioners and to move beyond simple ‘political arithmetic’ and ‘partisan support’ and embrace an approach in which the ‘influence of research on policy occurs through the medium of ideas rather than of data’ (Pawson, 2006, p. 169). For example, Weiss (1980) argues that a theory-based approach entails a ‘conversation’ between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. As Bailey et al. (2009, p.31) suggest:

One of the key tasks for researchers is to work with programme developers and sponsors to analyse the outcomes for which they are hoping. More importantly, the analysis reveals assumptions (and micro-assumptions) that have been made about the ways in which programme activities will lead to intended outcomes. A theory of change approach to evaluation argues that this clarification process is valuable for all parties, particularly in making explicit powerful assumptions that may or may not be widely shared, understood or agreed.

Experience suggests that we may need to look lower down the intervention hierarchy and possibly find a more receptive audience among programme planners and managers—those with direct responsibility for delivering the inflated and often intellectually incoherent promises of policy makers. Of course, it could be argued that, to expose such inflated promises, it is necessary to engage with those who formulate them. However, where policymaking is dominated by political processes of opportunism, persuasion, negotiation, partnership building, the seeking of organisational and interest-group advantage and deeply embedded professional repertoires, entry is often difficult and usually confined to the ‘chosen few.’

However, the above issues are of vital practical importance to sports policy, provision, programme design and management. The conclusion from many of the areas considered in the monitor is that there is a need for better understanding of the *processes* of sports participation (mostly sport plus programmes) which lead, or do not lead, to desired policy outcomes (Jones et al., 2017). Such evaluations would seek to understand if failure to achieve desired outcomes was because of an inherently faulty programme theory, or poor and inconsistent im-

plementation. These issues relate not simply to attempts to advance academic knowledge, but also to improve practice and perhaps most importantly of all, to understand the strengths and limitations of the claims that can be made for 'sport' and 'social inclusion'—important issues for policy and practice.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of John Taylor (Stirling University) for his extensive contribution to the compilation of the Value of Sport Monitor.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

- Bailey, R., Armour, K., Kirk, D., Jess, M., Pickup, I., Sandford, R., & BERA Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy Special Interest Group. (2009). The educational benefits claimed for physical education and school sport: An academic review. *Research Papers in Education, 24*(1), 1–27.
- Biddle, S. J., Gorely, T., & Stensel, D. J. (2004). Health-enhancing physical activity and sedentary behaviour in children and adolescents. *Journal of sports sciences, 22*(8), 679–701.
- Biddle, S. J., O'Connell, S., & Braithwaite, R. E. (2011). Sedentary behaviour interventions in young people: A meta-analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine, 45*(11), 937–942.
- Bloom, M. R., Grant, M. W., & Watt, D. (2005). *Strengthening Canada: The socio-economic benefits of sport participation in Canada*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.
- Blunkett, D. (2000). Influence or irrelevance: can social science improve government. *Research Intelligence, 71*, 12–21.
- Cabinet Office. (1999). *Modernising government*. London: Cabinet Office.
- Caborn, R. (2003). Transcript of Richard Caborn's opening speech at CCPR 20. Retrieved from http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Minister_Speeches/Richard_Caborn/Richard_Caborn_Speech03.htm
- Coakley, J. (1998). *Sport in society: Issues and controversies* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A wider social role for sport: Who's keeping the score?* London: Routledge.
- Collins, M., Henry, I., Houlihan, B., & Buller, J. (1999). *Sport and social inclusion: A report to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy*. Loughborough: Loughborough University.
- Crabbe, T. (2000). A sporting chance? Using sport to tackle drug use and crime. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy, 7*(4), 381–391.
- Davies, P. (2004, February). Is evidence-based government possible. In *Fourth Annual Campbell Collaboration Colloquium* (Vol. 19).
- Department of Culture, Media and Sport, & Strategy Unit. (2002). *Game plan: A strategy for delivering government's sport and physical activity objectives*. London: Cabinet Office.
- Etnier, J. L., Salazar, W., Landers, D. M., Petruzzello, S. J., Han, M., & Nowell, P. (1997). The influence of physical fitness and exercise upon cognitive functioning: A meta-analysis. *Journal of sport and Exercise Psychology, 19*(3), 249–277.
- Faulkner, G., Taylor, A., Ferrence, R., Munro, S., & Selby, P. (2006). Exercise science and the development of evidence-based practice: A "better practices" framework. *European Journal of Sport Science, 6*(2), 117–126.
- Glasner, P. E. (1977). *The sociology of secularisation: A critique of a concept*. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Grissom, J. B. (2005). Physical fitness and academic achievement. *Journal of Exercise Physiology Online, 8*(1), 11–25.
- Harris, K., & Adams, A. (2016). Power and discourse in the politics of evidence in sport for development. *Sport Management Review, 19*(2), 97–106.
- Hartmann, D. (2003). Theorising sport as social intervention: A view from the grassroots. *Quest, 55*, 1118–1140.
- Houlihan, B., & White, A. (2002). *The politics of sports development: Development of sport or development through sport?* London: Routledge.
- Jackson, N. W., Howes, F. S., Gupta, S., Doyle, J. L., & Waters, E. (2005). Interventions implemented through sporting organisations for increasing participation in sport. *The Cochrane Library*.
- Jones, G. J., Edwards, M. B., Bocarro, J. N., Bunds, K. S., & Smith, J. W. (2017). An integrative review of sport-based youth development literature. *Sport in Society, 20*(1), 161–179.
- Long, J., & Sanderson, I. (2001). The social benefits of sport: Where's the proof? In C. Gratton & I. Henry (Eds.), *Sport in the city* (pp. 187–203). London: Routledge.
- Lubans, D. R., Plotnikoff, R. C., & Lubans, N. J. (2012). Review: A systematic review of the impact of physical activity programmes on social and emotional well-being in at-risk youth. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 17*(1), 2–13.
- Morris, L., Sallybanks, J., Willis, K., & Makkai, T. (2003). *Sport, physical activity and antisocial behaviour in youth*. Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Oakley, A., Gough, D., Oliver, S., & Thomas, J. (2005). The politics of evidence and methodology: lessons from the EPPI-Centre. *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice, 1*(1), 5–32.
- Patriksson, M. (1995). Scientific review Part 2. In *The significance of sport for society. Health, socialisation, economy: A scientific review* (Prepared for the 8th Conference of European Ministers responsible for

- Sport, Lisbon, 17–18 May 1995). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Press.
- Pawson, R. (2001). *Evidence based policy: 1. in search of a method* (Working Paper 3). London: Queen Mary University of London.
- Pawson, R. (2006). *Evidence-based policy: A realist perspective*. London: Sage.
- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. (2006). *Sports and character development*. (Research Digest Series, 7/1). Washington, DC: President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.
- Rowe, N. (2005). *The value of sport*. Paper presented at Raising the Stakes. The Fourth All Island Sports Development Conference, Naas Co Kildare, Ireland.
- Sallis, J. F., Prochaska, J. J., & Taylor, W. C. (2000). A review of correlates of physical activity of children and adolescents. *Medical Science of Sports and Exercise*, 32(5), 963–975.
- Sandford, R. A., Armour, K. M., & Warmington, P. C. (2006). Re-engaging disaffected youth through physical activity programmes. *British educational research journal*, 32(2), 251–271.
- Shephard, R. J. (1997). Curricular physical activity and academic performance. *Pediatric exercise science*, 9(2), 113–126.
- Sibley, B. A., & Etnier, J. L. (2003). The relationship between physical activity and cognition in children: A meta-analysis. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 15(3), 243–256.
- Solesbury, W. (2001). *Evidence based policy: Whence it came and where it's going* (ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice, Working Paper 1). London: University of London.
- Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group. (2007). *Literature reviews on sport for development and peace*. Toronto: Right to Play.
- Taylor, P., Crow, I., Irvine, D., & Nichols, G. (1999). *Demanding physical activity programmes for young offenders under probation supervision*. London: Home Office.
- Thornton, A., & Lee, P. (2000). Publication bias in meta-analysis: Its causes and consequences. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 53(2), 207–216.
- Weiss, C. H. (1980). Knowledge creep and decision accretion. *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilisation*, 1(3), 381–404.
- Weiss, C. H. (1993). Where politics and evaluation research meet. *Evaluation practice*, 14(1), 93–106.
- Weiss, C. H. (1997). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21(4), 501–524.
- Weiss, C. H., & Bucuvalas, M. J. (1980). Truth tests and utility tests: Decision-makers' frames of reference for social science research. *American Sociological Review*, 45, 302–313.
- West, S. T., & Crompton, J. L. (2001). A review of the impact of adventure programs on at-risk youth. *Journal of Park & Recreation Administration*, 19(2), 113–140.
- Witt, P. A., & Crompton, J. L. (Eds.). (1996). *Recreation programs that work for at-risk youth*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- World Bank. (2004). *Monitoring and evaluation: Some tools, methods and approaches*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

About the Author



Fred Coalter is visiting Professor of Sports Policy at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) and Leeds Beckett University. His published work includes *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* (Routledge, 2007) and *Sport-for-Development: What Game Are We Playing?* (Routledge, 2013). He was a member of the UK's Deputy Prime Minister's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Working Group on Sport and the Centre for Social Justice's Working Group on Sport and Social Regeneration. Currently, he is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Swiss Academy of Development.

Article

A Capability Approach to Understanding Sport for Social Inclusion: Agency, Structure and Organisations

Naofumi Suzuki

Graduate School of Social Sciences, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo 186-8601, Japan; E-Mail: naofumi.suzuki@r.hit-u.ac.jp

Submitted: 5 February 2017 | Accepted: 6 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Despite the global diffusion of the term social inclusion, as well as the use of sport to promote it, questions have been raised regarding the extent to which sport is able to contribute to transforming the exclusive nature of the social structure. The lack of analytical clarity of the concept has not helped to address these questions. This article proposes a conceptual framework based on Amartya Sen's capability approach, considering social exclusion as the denial of social relations that leads to serious deprivation of important capabilities. A person's capabilities could potentially be improved through micro-, meso-, and macro-level social processes. At the micro level, sport-based social inclusion programmes could offer such social relations to varying degrees, though sport's values are only relative to other leisure activities. The scale of impact depends primarily on the meso-level processes, in which the size and quality of each programme can be improved through organisational learning, and secondarily on the macro-level processes whereby the organisational population is institutionalised. It is argued that more research needs to be done on the meso and macro levels, as they are concerned with the ultimate potential of sport to facilitate structural transformation towards more socially inclusive society.

Keywords

capability approach; legitimation; social change; social inclusion; sport

Issue

This article is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

The last few decades have seen the global spread of the term 'social inclusion' as a desirable policy objective (World Bank, 2013). It first became prevalent in European social policy in the late 1990s and diffused globally in the 2000s. The use of sport for the purpose of social inclusion took a similar path, booming in the early 2000s in the United Kingdom (Collins, 2003; Crabbe et al., 2006; Nichols, 2007), before expanding to the Global South in the mid to late 2000s (Coalter, 2007; Spaaij, Magee, & Jeanes, 2014).

However, questions have been raised regarding the extent to which sport is able to be an effective vehicle for social inclusion. Much empirical research indicates that programmes using sport to promote social inclusion tend to benefit a limited number of participants on personal levels without changing the exclusive nature of the

social structure (Coalter, 2015; Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015; Kelly, 2010; Spaaij et al., 2014). However, few have systematically attempted to assess sport's potential for transforming the social structure.

Meanwhile, a number of commentators have argued that the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion are so vaguely defined that underlying political ideologies are blurred and analytical precision is lacking (Levitas, 1998; Sen, 2000; Silver, 1994). This vagueness has inevitably affected the quality of research to evaluate sport-based interventions, as the difference between sporting inclusion and social inclusion through sport has often not been clearly distinguished in scholarly analyses (Coalter, 2002; Long et al., 2002; Suzuki, 2005).

This article proposes a conceptual framework so as to achieve two objectives: firstly, to clarify the relationship between sporting and social inclusion, and secondly, to approach questions relating to sport's potential for

structural transformation. Amartya Sen's capability approach is its normative and analytical foundation. The core framework was first constructed for the first case study described below (Suzuki, 2005). Following this, the author then turned his attention to processes of organisational development, both at the levels of individual organisation (Suzuki, 2014) and of organisational population (Suzuki & Kurosu, 2012). This article intends to refine the framework incorporating these two levels.

This article resonates with Svensson and Levine's (2017) call for using Sen's capability approach as the normative framework to guide 'Sport for Development and Peace' (SDP) practice, policy and research. They argue that the capability approach, with its emphasis on people-centred, localised processes to increase the capabilities of the underprivileged, is useful for SDP stakeholders to relativise the role of sport in development and thus to avoid seeing sport as only having positive influences on development and peace-building. While the author fully agrees with this normative position, this article is intended to demonstrate that the capability approach could also be the foundation of a rigorous analytical framework, when it is coupled with established sociological theories. It is true that sport often divides society and functions as an exclusive instrument. The policy and practice of SDP have been also criticised for its over-optimism and hegemonic nature (Coalter, 2010). This article, therefore, is in part aimed at providing a framework to critically examine the potential of the SDP sector as a whole; to what extent can sport realistically be the vehicle of positive social transformation?

To substantiate the argument, reference is made to three case studies conducted separately during a twelve-year period. The first study was conducted between 2004 and 2005, investigating a sport-based programme aimed at helping young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Glasgow, Scotland (Suzuki, 2007). It was during the period when the then Labour government placed 'tackling social exclusion' at the heart of British social policy. In Scotland, Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs) were set up to address a range of issues relevant to urban deprivation. The programme was funded through one of them. Thus, the study was explicitly designed to consider whether and how sport might contribute to 'social inclusion' in that context.

The second study was to examine the process of organisational development of an SDP programme based in Lesotho (Suzuki, 2014). Although 'social inclusion' was not explicitly on its agenda, the similarity with the first project was evident in that it was aimed at assisting young Basotho suffering from poverty and deprivation. Originally launched as a programme offering HIV/AIDS education and life skills training using football, it has now evolved into an elite football club whose mission is to provide comprehensive assistance to young people in Lesotho.

The third study is currently in progress, using the style of action research, with the author being on the steering committee of a football-based homeless assistance pro-

gramme. The committee, established in 2015, is called the 'Sport for Social Inclusion Working Committee'. The core members had been running the football team set up by the Big Issue Foundation mainly for vendors of the Big Issue Japan since 2008. It is now looking to develop a network of social and youth work organisations centred on an inclusive football tournament called the Diversity Cup.

The following section first explains the conceptual framework based on Sen's understanding of social exclusion, followed by the analysis section which elaborates on the framework in relation to empirical evidence from the case studies. The final section summarises the overall argument and the merits of the capability approach to the study of sport for social inclusion.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. *Capability Approach and Social Exclusion/Inclusion*

Sen (2000), unimpressed by 'an indiscriminate listing of problems under the broad heading of "social exclusion" and...a lack of discipline in selection' (p. 2), contends that the concept should be understood in close relation to the more traditional literature of poverty and deprivation research. In his view, the usefulness of the term lies in its refocusing of people's attention to the relational features of poverty and deprivation. For Sen, social exclusion simply means failed social relations that lead to serious capability deprivation.

The notion of capability reflects Sen's normative position that a person's well-being should be assessed in terms of the extent of the freedom they have in leading their life (Sen, 1992, 1999). Given the diversity of human beings, equality in such variables as primary goods, resources, income and utility does not assure equality in achieved levels of well-being. Thus, the evaluation of human lives starts from identifying the elements that constitute one's well-being. Sen calls these elements 'functionings' or 'beings and doings'. A person converts their resources into a set of 'beings and doings'. Human beings vary in terms of the ability to convert the same amount of resources into functionings. Capabilities are concerned with this ability. To assure equality in achieved levels of functionings, resources may well need to be distributed unevenly. Moreover, even if two persons possess the same levels of capabilities, their resultant achieved functionings may differ. This is because each person possesses the freedom to choose from a bundle of achievable functionings. This freedom, for Sen, is of intrinsic importance to human lives. Capabilities, therefore, represent substantive freedom: the extent to which a person can choose a way of life from a bunch of realistically achievable alternatives. Despite the obvious technical difficulty in measuring capabilities—as opposed to achieved functionings—Sen insists that appraisals of human lives should be done on the level of capabilities.

Based on this understanding of poverty and deprivation, Sen (2000) elaborates on how relational features

play significant parts in capability deprivation. He argues that being excluded from social relations can 'be *constitutively a part* of capability deprivation as well as *instrumentally a cause* of diverse capability failures' (p. 5, emphasis original). Social relations are constitutively important if being excluded from them is seen as a loss on its own, whereas they are instrumentally important if exclusion from them results in deprivation in other aspects of life, if not in itself damaging. For example, Sen considers that 'taking part in the life of the community' can be of constitutive importance to one's life (p. 4). On the other hand, 'being excluded from the opportunity to be employed or to receive credit may lead to economic impoverishment that may, in turn, lead to other deprivations (such as undernourishment or homelessness)' (p. 5). He further illustrates how persistent unemployment can lead to various losses in life, including the unlearning of skills, limited freedom of decision, ill-health, psychological misery, damage to human relations, as well as gender and racial inequality.

While Sen makes it clear that relational features are important in understanding and analysing various types of capability deprivation, he gives no clear indication as to what 'social relations' exactly mean. Nor does his analysis include what 'social inclusion' might look like. This article, therefore, extends his argument in these directions by linking it with sociological theories. If Sen's formulation of social exclusion is simply reversed, social inclusion may be understood as enabling access to social relations which could lead to the resolution or alleviation of capability deprivation. However, the root cause of social exclusion often lies in the social structure, and it is not easy to overturn structural exclusion. Therefore, the effort towards social inclusion is almost a never-ending process. It starts by identifying the 'socially excluded', after which a structure to include them is gradually constructed. This article attempts to consider, in the case of sport-based social inclusion programmes, how far such humble efforts are able to reach. Hence, the aforementioned two objectives parallel with the following two questions: (1) how can 'participating in a sport-based programme' be understood as inclusion in social relations of constitutive or instrumental importance to a person's capabilities; and (2) to what extent can sport contribute to building a more inclusive social structure?

2.2. Nature of Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Three Case Studies

Before moving to the conceptual discussion, this subsection explains the nature of social exclusion that each of the three case studies has tackled, and what their respective effort towards social inclusion looked like. Despite the variety of issues and geographical contexts, the beneficiaries of these projects can be considered as being severely deprived of their capabilities due to dysfunctional social relations. In addition, all three case study projects used football as the central element of

their programmes to build supportive structures for the beneficiaries.

In the Scottish case, it was not only embedded in the context of then British urban policy conceptualising the multiple deprivations concentrated in post-industrial urban neighbourhoods as social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001), but also the deprivation experienced by young people in that particular locality was deeply affected by relational features. In addition to the fact that it was generally deemed that they were disadvantaged in accessing decent educational and employment opportunities as well as other public services, they were geographically divided along the boundaries of housing estates due to the so-called 'territorial youth gangs' (Kintrea & Suzuki, 2008). The main strategy for the case study project was to provide a range of opportunities for football and other diversionary leisure activities for those affected by territoriality, and then to signpost them to other opportunities leading to career development.

In the Basotho case, the main issue the case study project was tackling was the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and the resultant problems concerning AIDS orphans. Orphans tend to face a high risk of being excluded from families and becoming street children. In addition, the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS prevented young Basotho from taking a test as well as HIV/AIDS education. The project held a series of football tournaments coupled with HIV testing and football-based educational sessions so young people could be tested without being stigmatised. The project also accommodated a number of orphans and HIV positives as staff members. It has recently transformed its model to become an elite football club, competing in the Basotho premier league while providing training in business skills to young Basotho from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In the Japanese case, the project was started to enter a team for the Homeless World Cup in 2009, so as to provide an opportunity for the homeless to express themselves on an international stage as well as to gain self-confidence. Homelessness is one of the most severe manifestations of social exclusion, as those who are suffering from homelessness are frequently excluded from employment opportunities as well as kinship and friendship networks. The project initially placed an emphasis on connecting the players to employment opportunities, achieving some success, although it has now modified its approach to provide more long-term supportive relationships, which are expected to substitute the previously failed relationships with families and friends.

The following two subsections discuss how these separate processes towards a socially inclusive society can be theoretically formulated in relation to some sociological theories.

2.3. Agency, Structure and Capabilities

This subsection disentangles the personal and structural features of social exclusion and inclusion in relation to

the concept of capabilities, introducing the traditional sociological debate of agency versus structure. The debate could be summarised as the ‘contrast between an overarching “social structure” that determines our behaviour versus the ability of individuals to exercise their freedom in controlling their own actions’ (Johnson, 2008, p. 12). In line with Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, this article considers that it works in both ways.

A person’s capabilities are, indeed, determined by both agency and structure. A person’s personal abilities are converted into functionings when presented with adequate opportunities. A highly skilled football player is not capable of achieving a functioning of ‘playing football well’, unless there are other people who agree to play football with him, open space of adequate size available, and a spherical object that could be used as a football. Likewise, for a person to be ‘being employed’, the person not only needs to be adequately skilled but also have access to the labour market where that type of skill is in short supply.

A case can be made, however, that capability deprivation is more concerned with structure than agency, since there are plenty of instances where people with sufficient skills are denied opportunities due to personal attributes such as gender, race or social class. Moreover, people with disadvantaged backgrounds are often denied the opportunities to acquire basic skills in the first place. Thus, agency could have more freedom in choosing a way of life if the social structure is transformed to be more ‘socially inclusive’. The question is how this goal could be achieved in general, and by running sport-based inclusion programmes in particular.

Structuration theory holds that social structure is maintained by agency’s voluntary actions in accordance with the conventional values. But agency also has the power to transform social structure by accumulating innovative social actions. When these innovative social actions accumulate to a sufficient degree, they become an established institutional structure.

Provision of sport-based inclusion programmes can be understood as social actions by programme providers aimed at social transformation. On the one hand, they are designed to empower programme participants by providing a supportive structure within which they not only can improve their abilities but also find opportunities to make use of them. On the other hand, in their effort to gain the necessary resources to run their programmes, programme providers often challenge the conventional perception towards the issues they are trying to tackle. How they do this is elaborated in the analysis section.

2.4. Relevance of Sport-Based Social Relations and Process of Transformation towards Inclusive Society

Drawing from the existing literature, at least four types of social relations may be on offer when a sport-based programme is provided:

- First, it provides opportunities for face-to-face human interaction. This could be vital for those who are severely lacking such opportunities, both constitutively and instrumentally;
- Second, it could be an opportunity to be associated with a social group. Often, those who are suffering from severe exclusion, e.g. homelessness, do not have the primary group that they feel attached to. A sport-based community could function as a primary group for such people;
- Third, participation in a sport-based programme means that the person is part of a formal organisational structure. This not only means that he or she can enjoy a range of benefits resulting from membership, but also that he or she may be able to exert power to change the way the programme is run so that the structure it provides for the participants is more ‘socially inclusive’ (Coalter, 2007; Crabbe, 2005);
- Fourth, participants are presented with an opportunity to be part of a social network. The benefits of being linked to a social network, or social capital, depend on the nature of the network that the sport-based programme constructs. Potentially, it could provide both bonding and bridging capital for the participants. Good programmes often have strong bonding capital within the organisation while also being linked to broader organisational networks ensuring access to equally strong bridging capital (Coalter, 2013).

The purpose of this article is not to verify these separate potential mechanisms of social inclusion facilitated by a sport-based programme; the existing literature has already achieved this to varying degrees. Rather, it is concerned with the assessment of the potential: to what extent these mechanisms could accumulate to transform the exclusive nature of social structure?

To address this question, Johnson’s (2008) three-way classification of sociological analysis provides a useful foundation. Johnson argues for the need for there to be an approach which integrates micro-, meso-, and macro-level analyses to better understand the social world. The micro-level analysis focuses on ‘face-to-face interaction and personal relationships’, while the macro-level analysis focuses on ‘larger-scale social systems, including the overall society’ (p. 8). Between these extremes are ‘various intermediate or “meso” level structures or social formations’ (p. 9) through which micro and macro levels are linked to each other. Such meso-level social formations include organisations, along with communities, markets and socioeconomic classes.

This article applies this classification to the analysis of sport-based social inclusion programmes. The micro-level analysis would focus on the way the face-to-face interaction leads to social inclusion of programmes’ participants, through the above-mentioned four mechanisms. The majority of the existing literature has focused on this

level, and the knowledge has been accumulated in terms of the nature of effective programmes.

The meso-level analysis would focus on processes as to how an organisation transforms itself over time to become able to provide more 'socially inclusive' organisational structures. An organisation learns to improve itself so that it can accommodate many more of the 'socially excluded' (size), in the way that their extent of 'inclusion' be more profound (quality). The impact of a programme on social structure depends on its size multiplied by its quality. While the importance of these processes has been highlighted in the literature (Coalter, 2010; Crabbe, 2006), there still is much room for exploration.

The macro-level analysis would look at the process of development as a sector, or the organisational population. The number of organisations striving to use sport for the purpose of social change has been on the increase in the last few decades (Levermore & Beacom, 2009). When the number of a certain type of organisation reaches a certain level, it is deemed 'institutionalised' (Scott, 2014). As it moves towards institutionalisation, it inevitably interacts with, and transforms, the convention of the broader institution so that the growth of the sector is possible. Few studies have attempted to assess the potential at this level, though it ultimately determines the impact on the macro structure.

3. Analysis

This section analyses how three levels of analysis combine to enable the evaluation of sport's impact on structural transformation towards a more inclusive society. First, at the micro level, the types of functionings that could, or should, be included in the evaluation of a sport-based social inclusion programme are discussed. The discussion consists of both normative argument and empirical evidence from the three case studies. Then, at meso and macro levels, it is shown how the accumulation of improved capabilities at micro levels can lead to structural transformation through organisational learning and legitimisation.

3.1. Micro-Level Analysis

3.1.1. Constitutive Relevance of Participation

First, simply 'being connected' to social relations in itself is of constitutive relevance to one's life. From the viewpoint of the capability approach, the value of a sport-based programme in terms of this functioning is determined by its marginal value to one's capabilities. Among those who are labelled as being 'socially excluded', the relative severity of their deprivation in this sense may well vary significantly. In the case of the Scottish study, staff members often highlighted the fact that some of their participants were suffering from dysfunctional family environments, and the programme was to offer an alternative place where they could 'feel safe'. Similarly,

most staff members who were recruited locally in the Basotho case expressed their gratitude to the programme saying 'I am who I am, because of it', although they were reluctant to elaborate on how 'bad' their previous experiences had been. In the Japanese case, the members who experienced a spell of homelessness had often totally lost contact with their families and friends. Its football practice sessions, therefore, provided them with precious opportunities of simply 'being connected'. Hence, a sport-based programme could function as a primary group for those who would otherwise be extremely isolated.

3.1.2. 'Spending Time for Leisure'

Second, participating in a sport-based programme instrumentally opens up opportunities to improve capabilities in terms of other functionings. Three categories can be commonly identified. The first is concerned with the functioning of 'playing sport'. It would be too optimistic, however, to presume that 'playing a particular type of sport' is of constitutive importance to every individual. Rather, it would be more agreeable to think that 'playing a particular type of sport', or even 'playing sport in general', is only relevant through its contribution to the capabilities in terms of the functioning of 'spending time for leisure' (Suzuki, 2005). Given the diversity of interests in leisure, it is important to make a diverse range of leisure activities available so that levels of substantive freedom are as equal as possible. As with the discussion above, regarding the constitutive relevance of 'being connected', attention must be paid to relativity of deprivation in terms of this functioning.

The Scottish case was aware of this importance and had incrementally developed a broad range of 'fun' activities through consultation with participants, and the relative importance of football coaching, which had been their core service, decreased over time. Football attracted 'hundreds' of boys, but in Glasgow, opportunities for football were relatively abundant compared to other leisure activities, even in deprived neighbourhoods. It was perceived that girls were more deprived in terms of leisure opportunities. Thus, activities more suited for girls were constantly provided through the 'Friday drop-in' service. In contrast, the other two cases made deliberate decisions to stick to football, which was deemed central to their organisational identity. This may be justifiable as long as it has instrumental importance to the broadening of organisational structure so the capabilities of many more people could be more profoundly improved (as discussed below).

3.1.3. Physical and Psychological Well-Beings

The second category of important functionings is concerned with physical and psychological well-being. The evidence concerning physical and psychological benefits of sport-based programmes is relatively abundant in

the literature. Although the three studies involved no systematic measurement, much qualitative evidence indicated their participants enjoyed psychological benefits resulting from a sense of belonging as well as improvements in their self-esteem and confidence. In the Japanese case study, some also exhibited significant improvement in terms of their physical health, as consultation with the staff members had led to proper medical treatment. As with the latter example, because they are all inter-related, it is hard to disentangle what the instrumental effects of 'playing sport', 'spending time for leisure' or 'being connected' are. One thing for certain, is the fact that they occur simultaneously in the midst of social interactions facilitated by the programme.

3.1.4. Practical Benefits

The third category can be labelled as practical benefits. This category is broadly concerned with 'employability'. All three cases aspired to help their participants to access employment opportunities. Indeed, it is known that many good practices structure themselves to progressively provide opportunities for the participants to become employed within the programmes (Burnett, 2010). The Scottish and Basotho cases clearly had such structures in place. The Scottish case assisted their relatively senior participants (aged 16+) to get experience of volunteering, to acquire coaching qualifications, and to be paid as sessional and then part-time staff. In the Basotho case, approximately half of the 20+ staff members were locally recruited, with some being gradually promoted from occasional volunteers to paid staff, and then on to managerial positions. The Japanese case did not have such elaborate internal structures but had been through several changes in its approach to assisting participants to gain employment opportunities elsewhere (as revisited below). Again, the element of sport may or may not be of direct relevance; some of the positions are related to football or sport, but many others are more generic.

3.1.5. Sustainability as Necessary Condition

Finally, the interplay between constitutive and instrumental relevance of sport-based social relations is worth noting. For the above-mentioned benefits to accrue, a necessary condition is that the participants stay connected to these opportunities over a prolonged period of time. 'Being connected' should be permanent. One-off provision of leisure activities is not so much of an addition to leisure capabilities. Achieving improvement in psychological and physical well-being normally takes time. And progressive promotion of employment takes a matter of years. While it is necessary for the organisation to persist, it is also necessary for participants to demonstrate commitment to the programme. The elements of sport perhaps play a significant role here. In other words, the activities on offer probably need to be of significant constitutive value to the person to be 'in-

cluded'. The choice of a dominant sport such as football by the three cases may be justifiable in this regard.

3.2. Meso-Level Analysis

3.2.1. Size v. Quality

The micro-level processes of social inclusion within a sport-based programme occur at varying scales and with varying quality. One way of making the impact on structure greater is to improve on both fronts. However, this is more easily said than done. Organisations learn to do this in the process of sustaining and developing themselves.

In fact, general agreement in the literature is that size can often undermine quality (Crabbe et al., 2006; Nichols, 2007). A programme that attracts a large number of participants tends to be short-term and thus positive personal changes cannot be expected. On the other hand, a programme that provides continuous support for participants, and thus is more likely to make positive change, tends to be small in size. Crabbe et al. (2006) formulate this dichotomy as diversionary versus developmental approaches. As discussed above, the constitutive relevance of sport-based social relations should be permanent, and it takes multiple years for the instrumental relevance to materialise. This indicates the obvious superiority of the developmental approach over the simple diversionary approach. The question here, therefore, is how and to what extent an organisation employing a developmental approach could grow without losing quality.

The three cases illustrate such struggles. The Basotho case went for size first, employing an event-based approach borrowing a proven method of HIV/AIDS education and testing through football. It succeeded in graduating thousands of participants in the first few years, which led to instant recognition, and a number of best practice awards. However, it was soon learnt that it had stretched its resources too far to be able to continually monitor the graduates' progress. Thus, it refocused its strategy to restrict its geographical scope to the capital city Maseru and the surrounding areas. In contrast, the Japanese case struggled to gain sufficient numbers, with its members often leaving the programme after a couple of years. The programme now prioritises continuity of membership over size to support prolonged struggles of its beneficiaries in escaping homelessness. The Scottish case managed size and quality very well, balancing large-scale diversionary events as well as more focused, developmental approaches involving patient relationship building.

These varying experiences suggest that the relationship between size and quality is not a simple trade-off. A programme needs sustainability to improve its quality, and large size helps maintain the sustainability of resources, as funders tend to respond to numbers. Often, size goes with diversification, so as to accommodate the diversified needs of those who seemingly fall in the same category of 'exclusion' (see discussion above regarding

relative leisure deprivation of girls in the Scottish case). Diversification is important as it means that more choices are available for the beneficiaries, and thus they are better off in terms of capabilities.

3.2.2. Trajectories of Growth

The balancing of size and quality is influenced by communication at two distinct interfaces. One is between programme participants and the organisers of the programme. The other is between the organisation and the environment it is dependent on for its existence. At the first interface, programme organisers meet the ‘excluded’. The more they encounter their beneficiaries, the better they understand the issues they strive to tackle. At the second interface, programme organisers negotiate with potential providers of resources. In other words, they take actions to gain legitimacy of the programme (Scott, 2014). At both interfaces, programme organisers are engaged in a continual learning process.

As a result of such learning processes, programmes can go through very distinctive trajectories of transformation. The three cases each experienced several rounds of major transformation, adjusting to the needs of their respective beneficiaries, as well as what the environment demanded (Table 1). In fact, these demands often conflict with each other. Since an organisation is under the influence of institution, it could impose conventional values on its members. Meanwhile, an organisation could also represent an innovative set of values exhibited by its members (Scott, 2014). Legitimation may well be achieved relatively easily when it conforms to conventions, but as an agent for social change, challenging the exclusive conventions through negotiation is essential.

The experience of the Japanese case indicates how difficult it can be to balance the two. At first, the main purpose of the launch of the programme was to participate in the Homeless World Cup, which had already established itself at the global level. Most of the members who made to the tournament on two occasions (in 2009 and 2011) succeeded in getting employed shortly after the respective events. At that time, the programme organisers were motivated to press them in that direction,

with its football practice sessions valuing competitiveness and self-discipline. However, the jobs they got were hardly permanent, and many experienced increased levels of isolation and/or difficulty in building relationships with new work colleagues. As a result, the majority soon went back to being unemployed, of which only a few remained connected to the football programme. This experience, coupled with the fall in the number of participants, led to the decision to relax the atmosphere of regular practice sessions, and the Diversity Cup was invented. This is a five-a-side football tournament held twice a year, linking a range of other ‘social inclusion’ organisations, so that different types of ‘excluded’ people can interact with one another within a non-competitive, relaxed environment. Consequently, the programme is now able to provide more customised and prolonged support for each participant, without hurrying him/her into employment. Yet, this poses a new challenge with regard to legitimation, because allowing the homeless ‘just to play football’ does not align well with the dominant perception in Japan of seeing the homeless as ‘lazy free-riders’.

3.3. Macro-Level Analysis

The third level of analysis can be made on the macro level. While the meso-level analysis was directed at the process of organisational growth of each programme, this third level is concerned with the population of organisations. When a certain type of organisation grows in number, the effort for legitimation at organisational level accumulates to transform the conventional institution. The ‘organisational field’ is formed, and the type eventually becomes institutionalised (Johnson, 2008; Scott, 2014). This process is called legitimation at the level of organisational population.

Hannan and Freeman’s (1989) density dependence model explains the relationship between the population size, or density, and the speed of growth. When a new type of organisation is conceived, its population growth is slow at first. As the number increases, the type of organisation gains legitimacy and more resources become available, so the population growth rate accelerates. Fi-

Table 1. Programme transformation of three case studies.

Phase	Scottish case	Basotho case	Japanese case
I	Geographical expansion of football coaching programme	Event-based HIV/AIDS education and testing using established method	Participation in Homeless World Cup for positive life experience
II	Diversification of programme centred on Friday drop-in service	Geographically-focused implementation + development of original curriculum	Emphasis on employment and ‘independence’ of members
III	Increased focus on outward bound leisure activities	Competitive football club as social enterprise focusing on career development of youth	Focus on continuous relationship building + launch of Diversity Cup

nally, it slows down in the end, as the size of the organisation becomes saturated compared to the available resources and the competition between organisations intensifies. This results in either a plateau or decrease in its population.

This model indicates that there is a limit to the size of the population. This could be considered as the limit of structural change facilitated by sport-based social inclusion programmes. A study on this level is hard to conduct due to lack of reliable population data. Indeed, there are no statistics to definitively represent the population of organisations established for the purpose of sport for social inclusion. One approximate data set which one could use is the database of SDP organisations registered on the International Platform of Sport for Development. Far from being an exhaustive list of existing SDP organisations, it is arguably the most comprehensive. Using this database, Suzuki and Kurosu (2012) provide an estimate of the growth process of non-governmental organisations and argue that a pattern similar to the density dependence model was observed. Though it may be too premature to conclude it has reached a plateau already, it seemed certain that the legitimisation process occurred in the mid-2000s. It would be interesting to see how much room for population growth is left for SDP non-governmental organisations, of which, according to Sen's definition, the majority can be understood as sport for social inclusion programmes.

4. Conclusions

This article has argued that scholarly analyses of sport for social inclusion should be targeted at the levels of individual organisations as well as the population of organisations. This is because it would facilitate understanding of the extent to which sport can contribute to structural transformation towards a more socially inclusive society. Applying a capability approach, a comprehensive evaluation framework has been proposed to assess the impact that sport-based programmes might potentially make on social structure. While much literature has focused on the micro processes of inclusion through sport, it is argued that greater emphasis should be placed on meso- and macro-level analyses, as these are the levels where the conventional institution is challenged and transformed through the processes of legitimisation at organisational and population levels. This claim was substantiated by empirical evidence from case studies from three distinctively different cultural contexts.

The concept of capabilities has both analytical and normative implications. Understanding social inclusion as the process of resolving or alleviating capability deprivation derived from failed social relations provides a solid analytical foundation to approach both personal and structural changes towards social inclusion that sport could facilitate. A person's capabilities are dependent both on their personal abilities and on the openness of the social structure, but the social structure also deter-

mines the extent to which a person is able to improve their abilities. Sport-based social relations could function as supportive meso-structures to a varying degree. The quality, as well as scale, of social relations, improves through organisational learning, which happens on two fronts: by meeting the beneficiaries on the ground and through negotiating with the environment to gain organisational legitimacy.

The aggregation of such struggles results in legitimisation at the level of organisational population. The growth of population means institutionalisation of this particular type of practice, and thus a significant change in social structure. The number of sport-based social inclusion programmes has been on the increase during the last two decades, and legitimisation seems to have occurred. However, there is a risk associated with saturation of the organisational field, which might sooner or later affect the quality as well as quantity of sport-based social inclusion programmes. More scholarly effort, therefore, needs to be devoted to institutional analyses of organisations running sport-based social inclusion programmes.

The capability approach places a normative emphasis on substantive freedom. The value of sport-based social relations is relative to other equivalent social relations providing similar functions for the 'socially excluded'. Given the fact that 'playing a particular type of sport' is not universally constitutive of everyone's well-being, social exclusion persists if sport is the only route for social inclusion. A particular type of sport may be useful in gaining legitimacy in certain contexts. It should not be forgotten, however, that interest-based social relations can cause social division as well. Sport can also act as a carrier of exclusive social institution. One must be conscious of such ambivalent roles of sport in social inclusion and exclusion to appreciate its real value to society.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all informants of the three studies that this article draws on. I owe Sayato Nakata so much for the richness of data we were able to gather for the Japanese study, as well as for our earlier discussion on how to theorise organisational processes in relation to social inclusion. Finally, I am grateful for my cheerful and intelligent colleagues of the Sport for Social Inclusion Working Committee, for such special moments we have shared all along.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

- Burnett, C. (2010). Sport-for-development approaches in the South African Context: A case study analysis. *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 32(1), 29–42.

- Coalter, F. (2002). *Sport and community development: A manual* (SportsScotland Research Report No. 86). Edinburgh: SportsScotland.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A wider social role for sport: Who's keeping the score?* London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2010). The politics of sport-for-development: limited focus programmes and broad gauge problems? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(3), 295–314.
- Coalter, F. (2013). *Sport for development: What game are we playing?* London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2015). Sport-for-change: Some thoughts from a sceptic. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 19–23.
- Collins, M. F. (2003). *Sport and social exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, M., & Haudenhuyse, R. (2015). Social exclusion and austerity policies in England: The role of sports in a new area of social polarisation and inequality. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 5–18.
- Crabbe, T. (2005). 'Getting to know you': *Engagement and relationship building. First interim national positive futures case study research report*. London: Home Office.
- Crabbe, T. (2006). 'Going the distance': *Impact, journeys and distance travelled. Third interim national positive futures case study report*. London: Home Office.
- Crabbe, T., Bailey, G., Blackshow, T., Brown, A., Choak, C., Gidley, B., . . . & Woodhouse, D. (2006). *Knowing the score: Positive futures case study research: Final report*. London: Home Office.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Hannan, M. T., & Freeman, J. (1989). *Organizational ecology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Johnson, D. P. (2008). *Contemporary sociological theory: An integrated multi-level approach*. New York: Springer.
- Kelly, L. (2010). 'Social inclusion' through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126–150.
- Kintrea, K., & Suzuki, N. (2008). Too much cohesion? Young people's territoriality in Glasgow and Edinburgh. In J. Flint & D. Robinson (Eds.), *'Community' cohesion in crisis: New dimensions of diversity and difference* (pp. 199–218). Bristol: Policy Press.
- Levermore, R., & Beacom, A. (2009). Sport and development: Mapping the field. In R. Levermore & A. Beacom (Eds.), *Sport and international development* (pp. 1–25). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Levitas, R. (1998). *The inclusive society? Social exclusion and new labour*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Long, J., Welch, M., Bramham, P., Butterfield, J., Hylton, K., & Lloyd, E. (2002). *Count me in: The dimensions of social inclusion through culture and sport*. Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University.
- Nichols, G. (2007). *Sport and crime reduction: The role of sports in tackling youth crime*. London: Routledge.
- Scott, W. R. (2014). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas, interests, and identities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality reexamined*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, A. (2000). *Social exclusion: Concept, application, and scrutiny* (Social Development Paper No. 1). Manila: Asian Development Bank.
- Silver, H. (1994). Social exclusion and social solidarity: Three paradigms. *International Labour Review*, 133, 531–578.
- Social Exclusion Unit. (2001). *A new commitment to neighbourhood renewal: National strategy action plan*. London: HMSO.
- Spaaij, R., Magee, J., & Jeanes, R. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion in global society*. London: Routledge.
- Suzuki, N. (2005). Implications of Sen's capability approach for research into sport, social exclusion and young people. In K. Hylton, J. Long, & A. Flintoff (Eds.), *Evaluating sport and active leisure for young people* (pp. 3–21). Eastbourne: Leisure Studies Association.
- Suzuki, N. (2007). *Sport and neighbourhood regeneration: Exploring the mechanisms of social inclusion through sport* (PhD thesis). Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland.
- Suzuki, N. (2014, December). *Kick4Life as a case of the 'new breed' of sport-in-development organisation*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Symposium on International Development through Sport, Tokyo, Japan.
- Suzuki, N., & Kurosu, A. (2012, July). *Towards an ecological understanding of 'sport and development' movement using organisational database*. Paper presented at ISSA World Congress for the Sociology of Sport 2012, Glasgow, Scotland.
- Svensson, P. G., & Levine, J. (2017) Rethinking sport for development and peace: The capability approach. *Sport in Society*. doi:10.1080/17430437.2016.1269083
- World Bank. (2013). *Inclusion matters: The foundation for shared prosperity*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

About the Author



Naofumi Suzuki (PhD) is Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Social Sciences at Hitotsubashi University. His research interests include sport for development, urban and rural community regeneration, homelessness, social innovation, and social inclusion and exclusion. While mainly exploring the organisational processes of sport-based social inclusion programmes, he has also researched the social impact of sport-related urban development in relation to professional sport stadia in Europe and Japan, the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the 1998 Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, and the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Commentary

Complicating Gender, Sport, and Social Inclusion: The Case for Intersectionality

Gamal Abdel-Shehid ^{1,*} and Nathan Kalman-Lamb ²¹ School of Kinesiology and Health Science, York University, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3, Canada; E-Mail: gamal@yorku.ca² Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, Duke University, Durham, NC 27710, USA; E-Mail: nathan.kalman.lamb@duke.edu

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 6 April 2017 | Accepted: 20 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

The following opinion piece concerns a reading of the work of Angela Davis and its application to the research on sport and social inclusion. It has the following aims: first, we use her work to argue that racism, as constituted via economics, helps to construct gender; second, we suggest that research on sport and social inclusion would do well to consider the work of Davis in forming a more complex reading of what it means to invite the participation—or inclusion—of women and girls in sport, both racialized and non-racialized.

Keywords

class; gender; race; social inclusion; slavery; sport

Issue

This commentary is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

The following opinion piece concerns a reading of the work of Angela Davis and its application to the research on sport and social inclusion. It has the following aims: first, we use her work to argue that racism, as constituted via economics, helps to construct gender; second, we suggest that research on sport and social inclusion would do well to consider the work of Davis in forming a more complex reading of what it means to invite the participation—or inclusion—of women and girls in sport, both racialized and non-racialized.

In making such an argument, we avoid the normal trend of reading identity in singular fashion—i.e., divorced from other identity categories. (e.g., gender, race). In doing so, we call for a more sustained discussion of the economy and processes of racialization to a discussion of gender. This approach has been referred

to elsewhere as intersectionality¹ and is in keeping with the general argument in *Out of Left Field* (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2011), where we argued that both sport and identity sport should be read intersectionally—that is *within* broader social structures.

This argument challenges the pervasive reading of sport as a distinct, even unique, social sphere bracketed from society at large. It suggests that a re-reading of “gender and sport” with an eye on racialization and economics offers a significantly richer reading. As such, this argument has significant implications for our understanding of social inclusion with respect to gender and sport, both past and present.

2. Angela Davis as Intersectional Theorist

A brief look at Davis’s contribution and its potential ramifications for the study of social inclusion will be of use

¹ While there is much literature on this term currently, we note that it was Patricia Hill Collins who elaborated this term in her work *Black Feminist Thought* (2000). Our reading of the concept is quite different from that of Hill Collins, since she chooses a more Afrocentric approach, whereas ours, borrowing from Davis, is informed by a historical materialist understanding of “race” and therefore gender.

here². We do this with the full knowledge that she has not written about sport and has not been cited in work pertaining to sport history or sociology, much less the emerging field of sport and social inclusion. Davis was and is a noted feminist scholar and political activist. It is a little known fact that she studied with Herbert Marcuse in Boston and completed her doctoral work under the supervision of Theodor Adorno in Germany. This would in part explain her orientation towards Marxism and dialectics more broadly as a framework to understand social phenomena such as race and gender.

Her particular contribution, especially in *Women, Race and Class* (Davis, 1983) is to suggest that not only is the idea of race connected to the economic needs of plantation slavery and its aftermath, but that normative ideas of gender were produced in the same context. That is, at the very birthplace of white ideas about gender, what has been called the ideology of femininity was not possible without the backdrop and the subsequent “de-gendering” of enslaved, in this case, Black women (and men). In other words, racialized and gendered categories of identity were interwoven and also highly dependent on the surrounding economic context.

Davis’ implicit argument, something we make explicit here, is that enslaved people were not only written out of the category human, they were simultaneously written out of the category of gender. This is not to say that there were not forms of sexual differentiation, but it is to say that understanding such differentiation as having specific social attributes, which is what we have come to know as “gender” did not apply to enslaved people. In other words, gender was a concept reserved for whites, both men and women.

For example, during plantation slavery in the United States, Davis notes there was no belief that slave women and slave men should do different tasks.³ Since the goal of slavery was to obtain the maximum profit possible, there was little labour that enslaved women were not required to do. As such, the economic value of enslaved Black women was equal to or greater than that of Black men. As Davis writes (1983, p. 10): “Slaveowning industrialists used men, women and children alike, and when planters and farmers hired out their slaves, they found women and children in as great demand as men.”⁴

In addition to this, Black women in slavery, as Davis points out, suffered a special form of persecution, known as sexual torture, or rape. She writes (1983, p. 7):

As females, slave women were inherently vulnerable to all forms of sexual coercion. If the most violent punishments of men consisted of floggings and mutilations, women were flogged and mutilated, as well as raped.

This practice of sexual torture, as Davis notes, was not in any way about sexual desire. Rather, it was intimately tied to the mode of production and the slaveholder’s attempts to establish and maintain economic superiority. Davis says as much when she notes that “the special abuses inflicted on women thus facilitated the ruthless economic exploitation of their labour,” (1983, p. 7). In addition to establishing economic control over enslaved women, one of the effects of such a practice was to render Black women outside of the bounds of normal, socially constructed (i.e., white) gender and sexuality. By maintaining Black women at the level of beasts, forms of economic exploitation were much easier to pursue. This is why Davis can make what seems to be an odd claim on the surface, which is that “Racism draws its strength from sexual coercion.”

3. Ramifications for the Study of Gender, Sport, and Social Inclusion

This of course has significant ramifications for the study of women’s athletics in the early twentieth century and into the present. For, after all, is not the question of the social inclusion of women in sport in part the story of not being permitted access to the realm of masculinity that is sport? This problem is turned on its head if we acknowledge that histories of slavery and racialization have figured Black women as essentially physical, active, labouring subjects. In other words, the very construction of *women’s* sport in its engenderment as women’s sport is in and of itself exclusionary both based on its inherent denial of the legitimacy concomitant with men’s sport (seen as sport proper) and on a fundamentally white iteration of gender that posits a stark distinction between the masculine and feminine in the realm of physicality.

In *Out of Left Field* (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2011), we included Davis because we noted that the historical studies which look at turn-of-the century women’s and men’s sport contain an insufficient understanding of the intersections of the various identity categories and the emergence of these identity categories on economic processes. This is still true in the historical literature. Thus, for example, while there is some literature on women’s athletics at the turn of the century, including the work of Susan Cahn (2015), Vertinsky and Captain (1998) and Captain (1991), it seems to us that these histories are limited in that they fail to account for the intersection of gender, race and economics. Rather, they read the details of history as somewhat independent of socio-economic processes. For example, in Gwendolyn Captain’s (1991) essay “Enter Ladies and Gentlemen of Color” some attention is paid to the ways in which early Black women in sport attempted to carve out a certain

² A more detailed treatment of Davis’ contribution is found in *Out of Left Field*, chapters 6 and 8.

³ Davis notes that this also applied to white women during slavery.

⁴ Davis (1983, p. 10), citing Karl Marx, notes that white women’s labour was used in very similar ways in the 1800s in England, where “women are still occasionally used instead of horses for hauling canal boats, because the labour required to produce horses and machines is an accurately known quantity, while that required to maintain the women of surplus population is below all calculation [i.e., far less expensive.]”

modicum of respectability. Yet a reading of Davis (1983) shows that this very attempt to enter into respectability was a *reaction* to the disparaging tropes about Black women and men which emerged in slavery and the post-slavery period, also known as Reconstruction. Moreover, while the essay “More Myth than History” (Vertinsky & Captain, 1998) is a very valuable piece of scholarship on the ways that Black women in sport have been represented throughout the course of the twentieth century, it pays no attention to the way economics past and present influence such representations. Our focus, on the other hand, is to expose the terrain that enabled the idea of women’s athletics in the first place in order that the analysis by Vertinsky and Captain can be used to study white women athletes also. This is because we are arguing that identity is formed not only through difference, but more crucially via economic processes.

As in the past, this contribution also has significant ramifications for the study of sport and social inclusion in the present. As such, we made a similar argument to this effect in our piece on *Bend it Like Beckham* (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2015), where we noted that to celebrate the film as an example of the inclusion of South Asian women in soccer is to ignore the very exclusionary practices of the mode of production and its highly liberal (“inclusive”) variant, multiculturalism. In that essay, we noted the economic (as opposed to cultural) nature of multiculturalism and read the film not only as an example of what Giardina calls “stylized hybridity,” but also as a celebration of assimilation which has deep roots in the economic, both in Britain and Canada. Thus, while we do not wish to discount or dismiss the heroic contribution individual women have made in sport, we maintain our emphasis on the terrain that enabled such contributions. Without a focus on structure as at least in part co-constitutive, it would be impossible for historians or sociologists of social inclusion to note how women’s sport has emerged and why it has taken certain forms both in the past and present.

4. Conclusion

All of this is to underscore the importance of economically intersectional analysis for the study of women’s ath-

letics in the early twentieth century and beyond. Namely, it forces us to consider what we have argued elsewhere (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2011, 2015), which is that as long as racism and economic inequality persists, a more intersectional or radical understanding of the concept of gender inclusion in sport would be helpful. This is because normative (white) ideas of gender break down in a racialized framework. Thus, a greater attention to intersectional readings of race, gender, and economic formation would ask us to remain attentive to who is being included in sport and what that inclusion accomplishes.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Abdel-Shehid, G., & Kalman-Lamb, N. (2011). *Out of left field: Social inequality and sports*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Books.
- Abdel-Shehid, G., & Kalman-Lamb, N. (2015). Multiculturalism, gender, and *Bend it Like Beckham*. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 142–152.
- Cahn, S. (2015). *Coming on strong: Gender and sexuality in women’s sport*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Captain, G. (1991). Enter ladies and gentlemen of color: Gender, sport, and the ideal of African American manhood and womanhood during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Journal of Sport History*, 18(1), 81–102.
- Davis, A. (1983). *Women, race and class*. New York: Vintage.
- Hill Collins, P. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.
- Vertinsky, P., & Captain, G. (1998). More myth than history: American culture and representations of the Black female’s athletic ability. *Journal of Sport History*, 25(3), 532–561.

About the Authors



Gamal Abdel-Shehid is Associate Professor in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science at York University where he teaches courses on sport and social inequality/justice as well as courses on the nature of mind and consciousness. He is also appointed to (and past Director) of the Graduate Programme in Social and Political Thought where he regularly teaches the Frantz Fanon Seminar. He is the author of two books: *Who Da Man? Black Masculinities and Sporting Cultures* and (with Nathan Kalman-Lamb) *Out of Left Field: Social Inequality and Sports*.



Nathan Kalman-Lamb is a Lecturing Fellow in the Thompson Writing Program at Duke University where he teaches on social inequality and sports. He is the co-author (with Gamal Abdel-Shehid) of *Out of Left Field: Social Inequality and Sports* and has published on multiculturalism, race, and sport in journals such as *Topia*, *Social Identities*, and *Social Inclusion*.

Article

Peer- and Coach-Created Motivational Climates in Youth Sport: Implications for Positive Youth Development of Disadvantaged Girls

Hebe Schailleé^{1,*}, Marc Theeboom¹ and Jelle Van Cauwenberg^{2,3}

¹ Department of Movement and Sport Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium;
E-Mails: hebe.schaillee@vub.be (H.S.), marc.theeboom@vub.be (M.T.)

² Department of Public Health, Ghent University, 9000 Ghent, Belgium; E-Mail: jelle.vancauwenberg@ugent.be

³ Fund for Scientific Research Flanders (FWO), 1000 Brussels, Belgium

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 25 January 2017 | Accepted: 29 March 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

The relationship between coach- and peer-created motivational climates and Positive Youth Development is largely unexplored. This is especially true for the latter and in particular with regard to disadvantaged girls. The present study was designed to examine the relationships between perceived coach- and peer-created climates and reported developmental gains among disadvantaged girls participating in sports programmes, and to determine whether these relationships were moderated by personal characteristics. Two hundred young women aged between 12 and 22 completed a questionnaire which included the ‘Youth Experience Survey for Sport’ (MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012), the ‘Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports’ (Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2008), the ‘Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire’ (Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005), and questions regarding participants’ socio-economic characteristics. Multilevel regression analyses were performed to take into account the hierarchical data structure. The analysis revealed that a mastery-oriented coach climate is a very strong predictor of perceived Positive Youth Development. This is based on both the number of developmental domains on which it had a significant impact and the explained variance based on the PRV values of the multi-level models. Unlike previous research on disadvantaged youth in general and disadvantaged girls in particular, the observed interaction effects did not show that disadvantaged girls necessarily gain more from their involvement in organised activities such as sport.

Keywords

coach; disadvantaged girls; motivational climate; peers; Positive Youth Development; sport

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Organised leisure time activities, such as youth sport, are contexts in which young people can acquire important skills and competencies and which can therefore contribute to Positive Youth Development. Youth sport is an increasingly popular organised leisure time activity for girls in Flanders and Western European countries (Duda & Ntoumanis, 2005; Scheerder, Taks, Vanreusel, & Ren-son, 2005). In recent years, there has been an increase

in the number of organised sport programmes that offer participation opportunities for disadvantaged girls, a group of youngsters which is often marginalised in sport (e.g., Sabo & Veliz, 2008). Several researchers even assume this group gains more from their involvement in organised sport than affluent youngsters (Gould, Flett, & Lauer, 2012). For example, Blomfield and Barber (2010) found that adolescents from low socio-economic schools derived more benefits (e.g., self-worth) from their participation in activities such as sport than their peers from

high socio-economic schools. Researchers evaluating programmes which are aimed at disadvantaged youth in general emphasise the fact that mere participation in sport does not automatically foster Positive Youth Development (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012). It seems that certain conditions or mechanisms have an influence on the relationship between participation in sport and perceived developmental outcomes. Given that a positive psychological climate is considered a prerequisite for facilitating developmental outcomes in organised sport (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012), the promotion of aspects related to such an environment deserves attention. According to Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (SDT) (2000), there are three different fundamental psychological needs which, when fulfilled, activate an individual's innate tendencies towards development. These needs are a sense of belonging, autonomy, and perceived competence. Although all three psychological needs are necessary, the relative impact of each factor may vary depending on the functional significance of the situation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Several researchers have emphasised that perceived competence has a greater impact on youth development than the two other fundamental psychological needs in all forms of physical activity (e.g., Ntoumanis, 2001). However, the degree to which perceptions of competence are fulfilled depends, after an individual's own goal structures, on the motivational climate created by significant others (Ames, 1992a).

1.1. Motivational Climate

Central to the psychological concept of a motivational climate are the normative influences and evaluative standards of significant others. This psychological concept is situated in goal perspective theory, which holds that there are two conceptions of competence operating in achievement-related activities such as sport: a mastery motivational climate that encourages effort, task mastery, and individual improvement; and a performance motivational climate that fosters social comparison and emphasises normative ability (Ames, 1992a). Research into youth sport with regard to these two conceptions of competence has predominantly examined athletes' perceptions of the coach-created climate (Duda & Balaguer, 2007). There is extensive evidence in the domain of youth sport demonstrating that perceptions of a mastery-involving climate is related to more adaptive motivational outcomes, whereas perceptions of a performance-involving climate correspond to more negative motivational outcomes (e.g., Biddle, 2001). Researchers found that athletes' perceptions of a mastery climate were positively related to the ability to use self-referenced sources of competence information (Halliburton & Weiss, 2002), adaptive sources of sport confidence (Magyar & Feltz, 2003), perceptions of competence (Weiss, Amorose, & Wilko, 2009) and the use of effort (Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2006). Furthermore, several studies found that the more coaches created

a mastery-oriented environment, the more youth sport participants derived enjoyment from their participation (Cumming, Smoll, Smith, & Grossbard, 2007; MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2011; Weiss et al., 2009). Another important finding is that perceptions of a mastery-oriented climate were positively associated to an athlete's satisfaction with the coach and match results (Cumming et al., 2007). Alternatively, perceptions of a performance-oriented climate were related to negative experiences such as peer conflict (Ommundsen, Roberts, Lemyre, & Miller, 2005), negative perceptions of the coach (Smith, Fry, Ethington, & Li, 2005), and increased anxiety (Pensgaard & Roberts, 2002). Overall, these studies suggest that a mastery-oriented climate is beneficial for young people's continued motivation to participate in sport, whereas a performance-oriented climate may negatively affect youth participation.

Initially, researchers in the domain of youth sport mainly focused on the coach-created motivational climate, while the potential of peers to transmit task-involving and ego-involving motivational cues remained largely overlooked (Ntoumanis, Taylor, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2012). A limited number of researchers argued that peers are also important contributors in creating a motivational climate in organised youth sport programmes (e.g., Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005). In recent years however, some researchers (e.g., Ntoumanis et al., 2012) have explored the influence of peer-created motivational climates in sport contexts. Vazou and colleagues (2006) found that perceptions of a mastery-involving peer climate were related to more enjoyment and physical self-worth. There is also empirical evidence indicating a relationship between perceptions of a mastery-involving peer climate and positive motivational, affective, and behavioural patterns (Murcia, de San Roman, Galindo, Alonso, & Gonzalez-Cutre, 2008), adaptive outcomes (e.g., moral attitudes, behavioural investment) (Ntoumanis et al., 2012), and lower burnout perceptions (Smith, Gustafsson, & Hassmén, 2010). While some studies reported that perceptions of a performance-involving peer climate were associated with negative outcomes such as greater levels of gamesmanship and cheating (e.g., Ntoumanis et al., 2012), other researchers did not find such significant negative relationships (e.g., Murcia et al., 2008). Although there is no consensus about the impact of a performance-involving peer climate, these studies provide evidence for the fact that assessing the coach-created motivational climate is not sufficient when examining the role of the psychological environment in youth sport, as peers can also be an important source of influence.

1.2. Motivational Climate and Positive Youth Development

Aforementioned studies have explored the relationship between the coach- and peer-created motivational climate and youngsters' continued motivation to partici-

pate in sport. To date, there are only two published studies that have explored the relationship between motivational climate and perceived Positive Youth Development (i.e., domains of learning experiences). While researchers in the Positive Youth Development domain have used different theoretical approaches to explore the developmental potential of organised sport, both studies used Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen's (2003) domains of learning experiences to assess and evaluate the effects associated with organised participation in sport. MacDonald et al. (2011), in a sample of 510 participants in team sports, found that positive developmental experiences concerning personal and social skills, goal setting, and initiative were most strongly predicted by a mastery-oriented coach climate. Similarly, using a sample of 239 underserved participants in youth sport, Gould et al. (2012) found that a mastery-oriented coach climate was associated with positive developmental experiences. Gould et al. (2012) reported that, based on the schools that these youths attended, the participants involved in this study had an average likelihood of 52% ($SD = 25.9$) of being eligible for the federally funded free and reduced lunch intended for children below the poverty line. Both studies also found that a performance-oriented coach climate predicted negative experiences. These recent studies show that perceptions of a coach-created motivational climate are useful in predicting the perceived Positive Youth Development of participants in youth sport. What is not well understood yet is the relative importance of the coach-created and peer-created motivational climates on the perceived Positive Youth Development of youth in general, and disadvantaged girls in particular.

1.3. Disadvantaged Girls

According to Ntoumanis, Vazou, and Duda (2007), it is of practical importance to examine whether perceptions of the motivational climate created by significant others in a sport context vary as a function of individual factors. Some individual level variables that have already been investigated are sex and age (Ntoumanis et al., 2007). Focusing specifically on disadvantaged girls, rather than on disadvantaged youth in general, is important because research shows that girls and boys experience sport differently across a number of constructs (e.g., win orientation, parent's belief in their child's abilities, amount of recognition) (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Gould & Carson, 2011). This often results in different developmental experiences (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Gould and Carson (2011), for example, examined the links between coaching behaviours (e.g., positive and negative coaching rapport) and young athletes' perceived developmental experiences (e.g., effort). While positive coaching strategies were related to athletes' perceived developmental experiences, these relationships were significantly stronger for girls. The results of Gould and Carson's study (2011) clearly showed that female and male par-

ticipants experienced similar coaching strategies differently and that this can result in diverse developmental impacts. To date, however, there has been no research that has examined variations among Positive Youth Development with regard to specific characteristics of disadvantaged girls in the domain of sport. Disadvantaged girls are defined as individuals who are underserved in the domain of youth sport due to participation barriers (e.g., economic, cultural, or linguistic barriers). Researchers indicated that disadvantaged girls in the domain of youth sport often have a migrant background, are in low/short educational tracks (i.e., technical/vocational secondary school programmes), and grow up in single parent households (Sabo & Veliz, 2008; Smith et al., 2007).

This group's low participation level in organised sport is of further concern as empirical evidence indicates that disadvantaged young people in general derive more benefits from their participation in organised activities than affluent youth (Blomfield & Barber, 2010). The underlying notion for this assumption relates to the fact that Positive Youth Development in disadvantaged populations is less likely to occur for reasons linked to the communities in which these young people live (i.e., fewer resources that foster Positive Youth Development) (Gould et al., 2012). It is therefore assumed that, if disadvantaged youth engage in a developmentally appropriate context, they will derive more benefits than their affluent peers. Theoretically, there is one fundamental psychological need (i.e., perceived competence) which is most likely to be related to developmental gains participants derive from their participation in sport (Ntoumanis, 2001). The motivational climate created by significant others can, in part, lead to an increase or decrease in perceptions of competence within a sport context (Ames, 1992a). To date, however, there has been only one published study that explored the relationship between the coach-created motivational climate and Positive Youth Development among disadvantaged young people (Gould et al., 2012). This study was framed around the coach-created motivational climate, while the potential of the peer-created motivational climate to predict Positive Youth Development remained unexplored. Thus, with regard to young people underserved in the domain of sport, it is still unknown whether the peer-created motivational climate relates to Positive Youth Development. Moreover, generalisations about the developmental potential of sport are unhelpful because, in comparison to affluent girls, disadvantaged girls participate in a limited number of sport activities. Sport activities that appeared to be popular in an organised leisure time context for disadvantaged girls are full-contact martial arts (Elling, 2012) and urban dance styles (Beaulac, Kristjansson, & Calhoun, 2011). Various facts may explain the popularity of these activities: they are valued within these youngsters' subcultures; they are related to girls' orientation towards their bodies; they are often low cost and require limited equipment (Elling, 2012; Hancock, Lyras, & Ha, 2013; Hellison & Georgiadis, 1992; Nakeyshaey, 2005).

2. Study

The current study was conducted in Flanders (the northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium) and investigated the relationships between perceptions of both the coach-created motivational climate and the largely unexplored peer-created motivational climate and Positive Youth Development. Moreover, this study aimed to examine whether these relationships were moderated by the individual characteristics of participants. The following hypotheses were formulated based on earlier research related to the developmental impact of the motivational climate in youth sport (MacDonald et al., 2011) and research indicating a greater positive impact of organised sport on disadvantaged youth (Blomfield & Barber, 2010):

- Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between a coach- and peer-created mastery-involving climate and positive developmental experiences.
- Hypothesis 2: Individual characteristics of disadvantaged girls—migration background, low educational track, non-intact family—will moderate the relationship between developmental gains and perceptions of the coach- and peer-created motivational climates.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Participants were recruited within existing sport programmes that target disadvantaged girls. Both urban

and martial arts initiatives were selected for the specificity of the targeted group and the degree of accessibility. Coaches and coordinators of sport programmes described whether their programmes reached disadvantaged girls (i.e., the target group) and the extent to which the programmes specifically served these girls (i.e., the degree of accessibility). A total of 56 sport programmes in Flanders were contacted for this study. The sampling criteria related to the programmes' target groups and their actual degree of accessibility, and resulted in a selection of 15 sport programmes in Flanders. Some programmes were not selected for this study because they did not meet the above-mentioned selection criteria or were not reaching girls. In the present study, data were collected from 200 female respondents. The response rate in this study was very high (99% (200/202 = .99)). The sample included 142 (71.0%) urban dance and 58 (29.0%) martial arts participants. 51.4% of the participants who were in secondary education ($n = 183$, 16 primary education, 1 missing) were on a low educational track (i.e., technical or vocational secondary education). 20.1% of the participants that provided information regarding their migration background ($n = 189$, 11 missing) were born abroad with most of them of Moroccan, Polish, Turkish or Italian descent. There were several reasons for choosing to use nationality and not ethnicity but the main reason was a practical one, namely that several girls (especially the younger ones) were not able to provide the relevant information to take their ethnicity into account (such as the birthplace of their parents, whether or not they belong to second or third generation). 13.1% of the participants lived in a non-intact family (i.e., not with both their biological parents) ($n = 199$, 1 missing) with the majority of them (76.9%) living with their

Table 1. Additional descriptive statistics of the sample ($N = 200$).

Variables		<i>n</i>	%
Migration background ^a	Belgian	151	79.9
	Born abroad	38	20.1
Secondary school programme ^b	Academic ^d	89	48.6
	Applied	94	51.4
	Technical	51	54.3
	Vocational	43	45.7
Family structure ^c	Both biological parents	173	86.9
	Non-intact family	26	13.1
	Mother	20	76.9
	Father	2	7.7
	Grandmother	1	3.8
	Orphanage	2	7.7
	Independently under supervision	1	3.8
Type of sport	Urban dance	142	71.0
	Martial arts	58	29.0

Notes: ^a $n = 189$, 11 missing values; ^b $n = 183$, 16 primary education, 1 missing value; ^c $n = 199$, 1 missing value; ^d "Academic" refers to the general six-year high school programme and is contrasted to the technical and vocational high school programmes, available for high school education in Flanders.

mother. The others were living variously with their father ($n = 2$), in an orphanage ($n = 2$), with their grandmother ($n = 1$) or independently under supervision ($n = 1$). Additional descriptive statistics of the sample are displayed in Table 1.

3.2. Measures

A socio-demographic survey, the Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports (MCSYS; Smith, Cumming, & Smoll, 2008), and the Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire (PeerMCYSQ; Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005) were used to assess the independent variables. The Youth Experience Survey for Sports (YES-S; MacDonald, Côté, Eys, & Deakin, 2012) was used to assess the dependent variables.

3.2.1. Socio-Demographic Survey

Age, sex, nationality, educational level, and household structure were also assessed. Nationality was determined based on a child's place of birth and dummy coded into Belgians (coded 0) and participants with a migrant background (coded 1). Educational levels were assessed using a 7-point scale ranging from primary to tertiary education. The 7-point scale consisted of the following response options: (1) primary or elementary education, (2) general or academic secondary education, (3) artistic secondary education, (4) technical secondary education, (5) vocational secondary education, (6) higher education (non-university or university), (7) I don't know. Participants were classified into high (i.e., academic) versus low (i.e., applied) educational tracks depending on their secondary school programme. We opted for a dichotomous categorisation wherein we compared students in academic tracks with students in all other secondary tracks taken together. The data were dummy coded into academic secondary education (coded 0) and applied secondary education (coded 1). Household structure was assessed using a 4-point scale (i.e., living with both biological parents, with one biological parent or alternately with both, with a guardian, in an orphanage). In addition, participants were given the opportunity to mention any other situation in which they lived. These data were dummy coded into intact family (i.e., with both biological parents) (coded 0) and non-intact family (coded 1). The survey also assessed the respondents' frequency of sport participation, their level of sport experience, and their involvement in organised non-sport activities. The frequency of sport participation was assessed using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (not every week) to 4 (at least 3 times a week). These data were dummy coded into not every week (coded 0) and at least once a week (coded 1). The level of sport experience was assessed using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (less than one year) to 4 (more than five years). These data were dummy coded into less than one year (coded 0) and at least one year (coded 1). Participation in organised non-sport

activities during leisure time was assessed using four categories based on existing research (e.g., Hansen & Larson, 2007; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). These included: performance and fine arts, academic activities, faith-based and service activities, community and vocational clubs. If a specific activity was not listed in a category, the participant could type in the name of the activity. In addition, each questionnaire received a code related to the sport programme. This was necessary to perform the multilevel analyses, which enabled adjustment for specific group-level socio-economic variables (i.e., percentage of respondents in a sport team, who were born abroad, followed applied secondary education, and lived in a non-intact family situation). In a previous study (Schaillée, Theeboom, & Van Cauwenberg, 2015), these were shown to be significantly related to the dependent variable (i.e., perceived Positive Youth Development).

3.2.2. Motivational Climate Scale for Youth Sports

The MCSYS (Smith et al., 2008) was constructed to assess the coach-created motivational climate. It is comprised of twelve items that are summarized into two factors: a mastery motivational climate and a performance motivational climate. Six items are mastery-initiating (e.g., the coach made players feel good when they improved a skill) and the remaining six items are performance-initiating (e.g., the coach spent less time with players who weren't as good). Participants responded to a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true). In the present study, mastery and performance subscales showed good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .713 and .688, respectively.

3.2.3. Peer Motivational Climate in Youth Sport Questionnaire

The PeerMCYSQ (Ntoumanis & Vazou, 2005) was used to assess the peer-created motivational climate. It includes 21 items which fall within two higher order factors: a mastery motivational climate including twelve items (e.g., "In this team/training group, most athletes...": "...work together to improve the skills they do not do well") and a performance motivational climate including nine items (e.g., "...try to do better than their teammates"). Participants responded to a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In the present study, we used the scores for the specific subscales (e.g., improvement) rather than those related to the global mastery and performance motivational climates because this could provide us with insights into the specific subscales that predict developmental experiences among disadvantaged girls. The use of the specific subscales (e.g., improvement) was based on existing research conducted by Vazou and colleagues (2006). Reliability analyses of the subscales in the current study produced Cronbach Alpha values between .639 and .808.

3.2.4. Youth Experience survey for Sports

The YES-S (MacDonald et al., 2012) was constructed to assess the positive and negative developmental experiences occurring in the domain of sport. It comprises five subscales (four positive ones and one negative one) and 37 items that fall within these scales. These include: personal and social skills (e.g., “I became better at giving feedback”), cognitive skills (e.g., “This activity increased my desire to stay in school”), goal setting (e.g., “I observed how others solved problems and learned from them”), initiative (e.g., “I learned to focus my attention”), and negative experiences (e.g., “I was treated differently because of my gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation”). For each item, participants used a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (yes, definitely) to describe the extent to which they felt a given experience characterised their involvement in sport. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the different subscales of the YES-S were between .667 and .846.

Since no validated Dutch versions exist of the MCSYS, the PeerMCYSQ or the YES-S, a forward and back translation method was used. These questionnaires were translated from English to Dutch by bilingual Dutch and English speakers, retranslated, and modified by researchers when necessary.

3.3. Procedures

Coach(es) and/or youth worker(s) from the sport programmes were not present during the completion of the questionnaires but they did provide assistance for the organisation of the survey. At least one week before the completion of the questionnaires, minors (i.e., girls up to 18 years old) received a letter for their parents or legal guardian, which, amongst other things, explained the purpose of the study and highlighted the possibility of refraining from participation. Passive consent forms were also used for the girls older than 18. Parents and coaches were informed about the purpose of the study before giving the survey to the participants. Respondents were also informed about the purpose of the study and were told that participation was voluntary and that their information would not be shared with members of the coaching staff or parents. During the completion of the questionnaires researchers provided assistance in completing the survey (i.e., explaining the Likert scales, etc.) and ensured that each participant completed her questionnaire without being influenced by her peers. Several items were also formulated in a simplified way (in italics under the original question) or included additional information. The selection of these items was based on a preliminary study involving eight young adolescent girls (aged between 10 and 12) from different socio-economic backgrounds. On average the completion of the questionnaires took between 20 and 30 minutes.

3.4. Data Analysis

To account for the hierarchical data structure (participants clustered within sport clubs), multilevel regression analyses were performed using MLwiN 2.30. For the outcomes ‘personal and social skills’, ‘cognitive skills’, ‘goal setting’, and ‘initiative’, multilevel linear regression analyses were performed (Steele, 2008). The normal distribution of these outcomes was confirmed by their skewness and kurtosis values and visual inspection of their Q-Q plots. A stepwise approach was followed to construct a final model for each outcome. First, a basic model was constructed including age and type of sport. Second, four separate models were constructed including a ‘motivational climate variable’, an ‘individual socio-economic variable’, and the interaction between these two. This was performed separately for each ‘motivational climate variable’. Level of significance was determined at 0.05 for main effects and 0.10 for interaction effects. Third, all significant main and interaction effects observed in the previous step were combined into one model. This model was optimized by deleting non-significant variables that did not improve the model fit. Fourth, this model was adjusted for the ‘group-level socio-economic variables (i.e., percentage of respondents in a sport team that were born abroad, that followed applied secondary education, and that lived in a non-intact family situation) and individual socio-economic variables’, which were shown by a previous study (Schailleé et al., 2015) to be significantly related to the outcome variable. The results of this model are presented in Table 3. Significance of individual parameters was tested by Chi-squared tests. Since the outcome ‘negative experiences’ was heavily positively skewed, this variable was dichotomized around its median (= 1.20). Values equal to or lower than the median were coded ‘1’ (no negative experiences) and values above the median were coded ‘0’ (negative experiences). Multilevel logistic regression analyses were performed to analyse the odds of there being no negative experiences reported. The same stepwise approach as described above was followed to construct the final model. For the logistic regression analyses, parameter estimates were obtained via Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) procedures (burn-in length = 5,000 and monitoring chain length = 50,000) (Brown, 2012). To facilitate interpretation, significant interaction effects were illustrated using MLwiN’s customized prediction function (Rasbash, Charlton, Jones, & Pillinger, 2009).

Since the level of involvement in sport appeared to be related to ‘initiative’ experiences during exploratory analyses, all analyses for ‘initiative’ were adjusted for the level of sport involvement. The level of significance was determined at 0.05. The proportional reduction in variance statistic (PRV), which represents both the explained total variance and the variance at the participant and team levels through the inclusion of an independent variable, was calculated and used to illustrate the local effect

size of significant relationships (Peugh, 2010). For significant interaction effects, we calculated the PRV for the inclusion of the two main effects and the interaction effect. The variance explained by the overall final model was also calculated and can be smaller than the sum of the explained variances of the predictors (Peugh, 2010).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics and internal consistency estimates for the main dependent, independent, and control variables. Ratings for positive developmental experiences were relatively high ($M = 2.90$, with a maximum score of 4) and ratings for negative experiences were low ($M = 1.31$). The highest positive subscale scores were found for initiative ($M = 3.37$), followed by personal and social skills ($M = 2.90$), goal setting ($M = 2.70$), and cognitive skills ($M = 2.14$). The coach-created climate in which these sport activities took place was mainly mastery oriented ($M = 4.05$, with a maximum score of 5), and ratings for the coach-created performance climate were low ($M = 1.69$). Participants also indicated that peers within their team mainly initiated a mastery-involving climate ($M = 5.13$, with a maximum score of 7) and ratings for the peer-created performance-involving climate were relatively low ($M = 3.34$). The

highest mastery-involving subscale scores were found for improvement ($M = 5.26$), followed by effort ($M = 5.07$) and relatedness/support ($M = 5.03$). The average number of participants within each programme was 14 (ranging between 6 and 27) ($M = 14.30$, $SD = 8.77$). Participants' ages were between 12 and 22 years ($M = 15.47$, $SD = 2.15$). All respondents attended their programme a minimum of once a week ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .79$) and had practised their sport for at least one year ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.21$).

4.2. Relationships between Perceived Motivational Climate and Positive Youth Development

Table 3 summarizes the results of the multilevel regression analysis.¹

For initiative, 5.7% of the variance was explained by the team level. The remaining 94.3% of the total variance regarding initiative could be attributed to differences between participants. We found a significant main effect for mastery coach-created climate. The perceptions of a mastery coach-created climate were significantly positively related to initiative: a one-unit increase in mastery coach-created climate was related to an increase in initiative of 0.33 ($SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$) on a 4-point Likert scale. In addition, the analysis revealed a significant interaction effect ($b = -0.11$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = 0.07$) between the participants' nationality and improvement.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for dependent, independent, and control variables (reliability values, means, and standard deviations) ($N = 200$).

Variables		α	M	SD
Dependent variables	YES-S Positive experiences	.852	2.90	.45
	Cognitive skills	.724	2.14	.71
	Goal setting	.746	2.70	.68
	Initiative	.667	3.37	.54
	YES-S Negative experiences	.846	1.31	.43
Independent variables	Coach-created mastery initiating climate	.713	4.05	.66
	Coach-created performance initiating climate	.713	1.69	.65
	Peer-created mastery involving climate	.915	5.13	1.25
	Improvement	.791	5.26	1.38
	Relatedness support	.657	5.03	1.36
	Effort	.808	5.07	1.35
	Peer-created performance-involving climate	.791	3.34	1.26
	Intra-team competition and ability	.639	3.80	1.25
	Intra-team conflict	.807	2.87	1.68
Control variables	Age		15.47	2.15
	Frequency of participation (times/week)		2.99	.79
	Duration of participation (years)		2.69	1.21

Notes: YES-S: Likert scale anchors between 1–4; MCSYS: Likert scale anchors between 1–5; PeerMCSYS: Likert scale anchors between 1–7; α = Cronbach Alpha values; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation.

¹ Multilevel modelling takes into account the different levels in a hierarchical sample (i.e., group and participant level), by separating the variance attributable to these different levels. This technique was used to examine the relationships between the coach- and peer-created motivational climates and the reported experiences of participants.

Table 3. Results of the regression model predicting positive developmental experiences.

Positive YES-S Subscales	Significant predictors	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>p</i>	% Variance explained by null model		% Variance explained by predictor			Variances in final model ¹		% Variance explained by model		
				Participant level	Team level	Participant level	Team level	Total	Participant level σ^2 (<i>SE</i>)	Team level σ^2 (<i>SE</i>)	Participant level	Team level	Total
Initiative	Intercept			94.3	5.7				0.19 (0.02)	0.00 (0.00)	32.0	100.0	35.9
	Mastery coach-created climate	0.33 (0.06)	< 0.001*			16.4	0.0	16.4					
	Improvement Individual level nationality (ref = Belgian)	0.10 (0.04)	0.007*			13.7	100.0	14.1					
	Improvement * individual level nationality	−0.11 (0.06)	0.07										
Personal and Social Skills	Intercept			91.9	8.1				0.13 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	30.9	70.6	34.1
	Mastery coach-created climate	0.29 (0.04)	< 0.001*			18.8	62.3	22.1					
Cognitive Skills	Intercept			85.4	14.6				0.35 (0.04)	0.00 (0.00)	19.9	100.0	31.6
	Mastery coach-created climate	0.21 (0.07)	0.003*			4.4	0.0	4.4					
	Performance coach-created climate	0.24 (0.06)	< 0.001*			7.9	0.0	7.9					
	Intra-team conflict	0.06 (0.03)	0.03*			5.1	0.0	5.1					
Goal Setting	Intercept			94.3	5.7				0.34 (0.04)	0.00 (0.00)	24.2	100.0	28.2
	Mastery coach-created climate	0.22 (0.08)	0.005*			4.8	0.0	4.8					
	Effort	0.02 (0.04)	0.59										

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ¹ The multilevel model was a random intercept model.

This implies that the relationships between the improvement variable and initiative differed according to participant’s nationality (see Figure 1).

Among Belgian participants, improvement was significantly positively related to initiative experiences. A one-unit increase in improvement was related to an increase in initiative of 0.10 ($SE = 0.04, p = 0.007$) on a 4-point Likert scale. Among participants with a migrant background, no significant relationship ($b = -0.01, SE = 0.05, p = 0.83$) was found between improvement and initiative experiences. The overall model for initiative explained all (100.0%) of the variance at the group level and 32.0% of the variance at the individual level. Overall, 35.9% of the variance in initiative experiences was explained.

For personal and social skills, 8.1% of the total variance appeared to be explained at the team level. The analysis showed a significant positive relationship between a mastery coach-created climate and personal and social skills. The overall model explained 70.6% of the variance at the group level and 30.9% of the variance at the individual level. Overall, 34.1% of the variance in personal and social skills was explained.

For cognitive skills, 14.6% of the total variance was explained at the team level. The analysis showed significant positive relationships for mastery coach-created climate, performance coach-created climate, and intra-team conflict. The overall model for cognitive skills explained all (100.0%) of the variance at the group level and 19.9% of the variance at the individual level. Overall, 31.6% of the variance in cognitive skills was explained.

For goal setting, 5.7% of the total variance was explained at the team level. The analysis showed a significant positive relationship between a mastery coach-created climate and goal setting. The overall model for goal setting explained all (100.0%) of the variance at the team level and 24.2% of the variance at the individual level. Overall, 28.2% of the variance in goal setting was explained.

The analysis regarding negative experiences shown in Table 4 revealed a significant interaction effect ($b = -0.96, SE = 0.43, p = 0.03$) between the respondents’ family structure and effort. This significant interaction effect is illustrated in Figure 2.

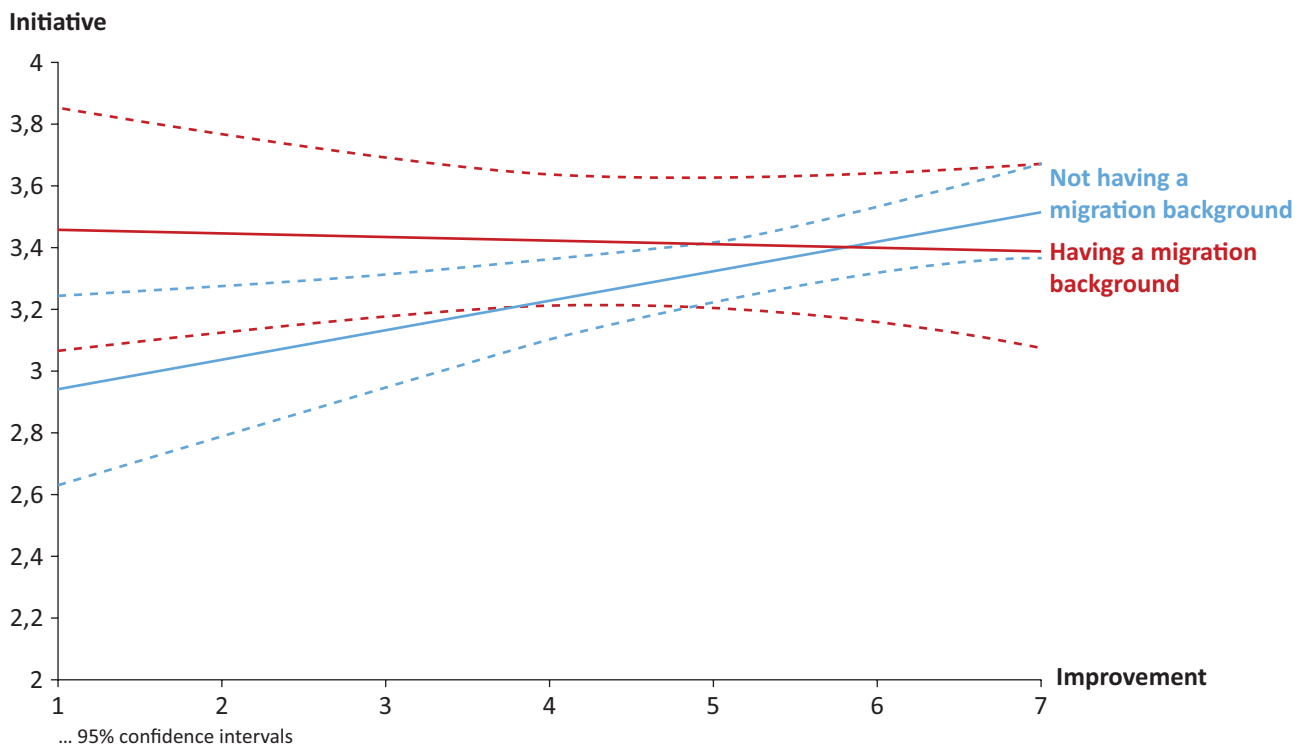


Figure 1. Interaction effect for initiative between the respondents’ migration background and level of improvement.

Table 4. Results of the regression model predicting negative experiences.

Negative YES-S Subscale	Significant predictors	<i>b</i> (<i>SE</i>)	<i>p</i>
Negative experiences	Mastery coach-created climate	-0.18 (0.39)	0.64
	Individual secondary education (ref = academic)	-0.69 (-0.40)	0.08
	Mastery coach-created climate * individual educational level	1.17 (0.63)	0.06
	Effort	0.23 (0.19)	0.21
	Individual family structure (ref = intact family)	-0.46 (0.75)	0.54
	Effort * individual family structure	-0.96 (0.43)	0.03

Probability of not reporting
Negative experiences

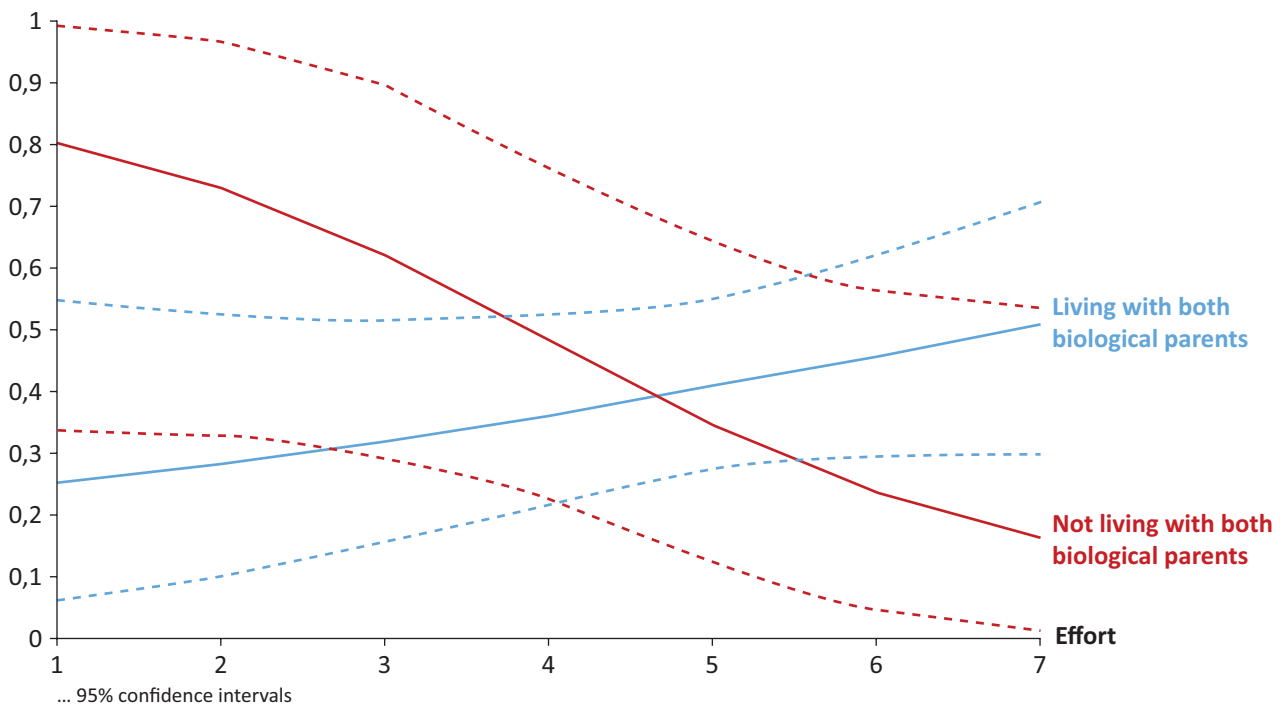


Figure 2. Interaction effect for the probability of not reporting negative experiences between respondents' family structure and the level of effort.

Among participants from an intact family, effort was not significantly related to the probability of reporting negative experiences ($b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.19$, $p = 0.21$). Among participants from a non-intact family, effort was significantly negatively related to the probability of reporting negative experiences ($b = -0.70$, $SE = 0.36$, $p = 0.02$). This implies that among participants from a non-intact family, a one-unit increase in effort was related to a 2.00 times ($= 1/(\text{exponent } -0.70)$) lower odds of not reporting negative experiences. In other words, among participants from a non-intact family, higher levels of effort were related to higher odds of reporting negative experiences.

5. Discussion

This study was designed to examine the relationship between coach- and peer-created motivational climates and the self-reported developmental gains that disadvantaged girls derive from their participation in organised sport. It was also set up to investigate whether the effects of these relationships were moderated by participants' individual characteristics (i.e., participants' family structures, educational levels and migration backgrounds).

In the context of this paper, it was assumed that relationships exist between coach- and peer-created mastery-involving climates and positive developmental experiences. The main effects found in this study confirm this hypothesis in part. The results of this study showed that the more coaches create a mastery-oriented climate,

the more likely it is that positive developmental gains will result. This is consistent with previous research related to the motivational climate of young people involved in organised sport in general (Smith et al., 2007) and disadvantaged youngsters in particular (Gould et al., 2012). The results of this study also concur with previous work of Gould and Carson (2011) reporting that coaching actions and behaviours have an important influence on the personal and social development of young people, independently of their socio-economic background. Epstein's TARGET structure is a powerful tool that could help coaches create and enhance the perception that the psychological environment in youth sport is mastery oriented (Epstein, 1989). Based on Epstein's (1989) work, Ames (1992b) identified six teaching structures for achievement situations which include task, authority, recognition, grouping, evaluation, and time structures (TARGET). These structures influence the motivational climate of a situation and each one is presented alongside a set of guidelines which aid in fostering a mastery climate. The TARGET model has also been adapted to a sports environment by Treasure (1993) and has proven to be a very useful framework, which can be manipulated by coaches to influence the perception of a mastery climate (Hasan, 2011). Mediation analysis could indicate to what extent the TARGET structures mediate the relations between the coach-created climate and the developmental experiences of youth. Such an approach would provide us with more insight into the power of the coach to instigate developmental processes among youth sport partic-

ipants. Some of the relationships between Positive Youth Development and motivational climate appeared to be, however, more complex than initially thought. Our findings indicated that a peer-created (i.e., intra-team conflict perception scores) and, to a greater extent, a coach-created performance climate were both positive contributors to the development of cognitive skills. These results indicate two important things. Firstly, assessing the coach-created motivational climate is not sufficient when examining the motivational environment in youth sport, as peers can also be an important source of influence. Secondly, a perceived performance-oriented climate can also have a positive influence on sport participants' developmental gains. Although most previous work indicated that mastery climates were related to positive emotional and cognitive development and performance climates to negative development (e.g., Duda & Balaguer, 2007), there are some recent studies by MacDonald et al. (2011) and Gould et al. (2012) which also found that coach-created performance climates can have a slight positive impact on the perceived Positive Youth Development of youth sport participants. Gould et al. (2012) argued that this could be a result of a mixed coaching climate in which coaches facilitate high levels of mastery-orientation and low levels of performance-orientation.

Besides the aforementioned relationships, it was also assumed that the individual characteristics of disadvantaged girls—migration background, low educational track, non-intact family—would moderate the effect of the relationship between developmental gains and perceptions of the coach- and peer-created motivational climate. However, the interaction effects found in this study did not confirm this hypothesis. Our results showed that higher improvement peer climate perception scores were associated with significantly higher scores for personal initiative among Belgian respondents. This interaction effect indicates that girls with no migrant background benefit more from specific mastery-oriented cues of peers (i.e., related to improvement) than girls with a migrant background. With the achievement goal theory in mind, we might suggest that individuals' own goal orientations could explain this result. In other words, these girls' perceived motivational climate was related to their own goal orientations. This assumption is based on work done by Roberts and Ommundsen (1996) examining the relationship between motivational climate and the goal orientations of sport participants. They pointed out that sport participants with a high task orientation perceived the motivational climate as mastery-oriented, whereas ego-oriented individuals perceived the motivational climate as performance oriented. Another important result that deserves attention is the interaction effect found between the respondent's family structure and the effort peer climate perception scores. What should be underlined is the fact that these specific mastery-oriented cues of peers (i.e., related to effort) could hinder the perceived Positive Youth Development

of girls from non-intact families because such cues appeared to increase the chance of reporting negative experiences among these young people. The most likely explanation for this result is that if situational cues (i.e., cues related to the peer-created motivational climate) are not strong enough, then dispositional orientations may not be overridden. This speculation is in line with research done by Dweck and Leggett (1988). They found that one of the two constructs (i.e., an individual's own dispositional goal orientation and perceived situational goal structure) may override the other if it is strong enough. However, participants' ego orientation could also be higher due to peers' mastery-oriented cues. It could be that mastery orientation in peers may encourage participants to try harder but that girls (most likely children and young adolescents) who have not yet developed personal theories of achievement and strong goal orientations do not clearly differentiate between trying to learn and develop personal skills, and trying to achieve outcome-oriented goals.

In practical terms, the way to foster a coach- and peer-created climate high in mastery-orientation and low in performance-orientation does not seem to be obvious. There are, at least, two practical aspects that could hinder such a motivational climate in an organised sport context. In relation to the coach-created climate, we would like to indicate that the out-of-school club structure in Flanders largely depends upon volunteer coaches with a range of motivational orientations. In addition, it has to be indicated that a high percentage of these coaches do not have pedagogical qualifications. An interesting question, raised by Gould et al. (2012), is whether or to what degree those volunteer coaches who adopt a performance-oriented or mixed coaching climate are capable and willing to change to a high mastery climate. In relation to the peer-created climate, it has to be indicated that several influencing factors exist. The peer-created climate might, for example, develop from the achievement goal dispositions of a few dominant sport participants in a team (Carr, Weigand, & Jones, 2000). However, if some of these dominant sport participants decide to leave their team during the season or are replaced by new players who are even more dominant, this may have a positive or negative impact on the mastery-involving peer climate. Other researchers suggested that the peer- and coach-created climates do not operate independently from each other (Carcia-Calvo et al., 2014; Ntoumanis, Vazou, & Duda, 2007). They suggested that the peer-created climate is to some extent an indirect outcome of the coach-created climate. However, to the best of our knowledge this relationship has yet to be empirically determined.

It is interesting to note that our respondents did not have many negative experiences. This finding should not be underestimated, in particular for disadvantaged girls, because there is research evidence indicating that young people who experience an accumulation of negative experiences in different societal institutions (e.g., educa-

tion) are more likely to become depressed, misuse substances, and engage in other dangerous behaviour (Chassin et al., 2004). We also have interesting results relating to the type of benefits that our respondents derived from their participation in sport. They perceived initiative, personal and social skills, and goal setting as the benefits they most often derived from their participation in sport. The two last factors may prove to be very valuable because experiences in these domains of learning can also foster positive effects in other facets of young people's lives (Gould et al., 2012). There is, however, a broad consensus among researchers that life skills, defined as the skills that are required to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life (Hodge & Danish, 1999), are not necessarily transferred into other social settings. It has been suggested that an essential part of the process of coaching life skills is making young people aware of both the skills they learn in the context of sport and the possibilities they have of using those acquired skills in other life domains (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1990).

Furthermore, our study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, although self-reporting has been regarded as a good method of assessing girls' experiences in sport activities, this methodology also has several limitations (e.g., social desirability). Future research in this area would do well to assess objective markers (e.g., observation instruments) of motivational climate and Positive Youth Development. Secondly, we looked at girls involved in urban dance and martial arts programmes. Although the analysis was adjusted for this variable, we have indicated elsewhere (Schailée, Theeboom, & Van Cauwenberg, 2015) that practising two different sports could offer distinct social contexts (e.g., the broader social system of an urban dance team) and opportunities for socialisation (e.g., the greater amount of one-on-one quality time of a martial arts participant). Thus, the generalisation of our findings to population samples should be made with caution. Thirdly, the findings of this study are based on correlational data at one single point in time and do not allow for conclusions of direction or cause. Future studies could further explore the relevant causal relationships by using longitudinal data. Fourthly, we had substantial age differences in our sample (i.e., 10 years). Although we adjusted our analyses for age, this does not rule out that the experiences of a 12-year-old are probably different from those of a 22-year-old in the same motivational climate. There is, for example, empirical evidence showing that older athletes (14–17 years old) perceive more ego-oriented cues than younger athletes (12–13 years old), who reported mixed perceptions of the dominant motivational cues (Vazou et al., 2006). According to the achievement goal theory, older adolescents experience greater cognitive maturation and are therefore able to perceive more ego-oriented cues in the environment (Nicholls, 1989). We might expect older sport participants to report less Positive Youth Development in a mainly ego-oriented climate compared to younger athletes. However, if such

differences among age categories with respect to ego-oriented cues and perceived Positive Youth Development exist in organised youth sport programmes has yet to be empirically determined.

A major challenge for this study was to determine the extent to which the respondents fitted the description of 'disadvantaged youth'. There are two reasons for this: (1) while commonly used, the term 'disadvantaged youth' is vague, and (2) consequently hard to measure. In addition, there are a number of related terms used, both in the literature and in policy documents, such as 'youth-at-risk', 'disconnected youth', 'socially excluded youth', 'disaffected youth', or 'socially vulnerable youth' (e.g., Bendit & Stokes, 2003). Most of these terms share a common notion: they refer in essence to young people with fewer opportunities to thrive or develop the positive characteristics that mark a healthy young person and are therefore in a 'disadvantaged' position (Butts, Bazemore, & Meroe, 2010). Vettenburg (1998) referred to the concept of 'social vulnerability' by considering this disadvantage as a result of an accumulation of negative interactional processes with society institutions such as school, the labour market, health care, and police. This theory of social vulnerability describes how both structural factors (i.e., family income, housing quality, and neighbourhood status) and cultural factors (i.e., peer pressure and influences, attitudes towards school and education) influence some youngsters' situation. Walgrave (1992) indicated that it is intrinsically difficult to define young people in vulnerable situations because they constitute a heterogeneous group (just like all young people). Haudenhuyse (2012) noted more recently that a social-vulnerability scale has not yet been developed. He also questioned the usefulness of such a scale because determining an individual's social vulnerability is related to processes (e.g., assessment of negative experiences related to stigmatisation) that are dependent on the context in which they take place. He therefore suggested that a more appropriate procedure would be to examine the characteristics of young people in socially vulnerable situations. One of the most frequently mentioned features here relates to the socio-economic status of the family which includes: (a) parents' educational level, (b) parents' occupational level, and (c) the total income of the family (Currie, Elton, Todd, & Platt, 1997; Ensminger et al., 2000; Hupkens, Knibbe, & Drop, 2000; Lien, Friestad, & Klepp, 2001; Vereecken, Maes, & De Bacquer, 2004). Pilot testing however showed that we could not include these variables in our sample as many of the younger girls were not able to provide information of their family's socio-economic status. Other researchers reported similar limitations (e.g., West, Sweeting, & Speed, 2001). We therefore looked for alternative measures to determine the extent to which participants fitted the description of our study's target group. These measures related to a number of characteristics that have been investigated very extensively in relation to disadvantaged youth: these relate to migration background, low/short educational

tracks (i.e., technical/vocational secondary school programmes), and single parent household structure (Sabo & Veliz, 2008; Scheerder, Taks, & Lagae, 2007; Smith, Thurston, Green, & Lamb, 2007). In addition, we made use of the insights provided by conversations we had with coordinators and other key witnesses (e.g., coaches, youth workers). They assured us that the majority of the participants in their programmes were in a situation of social vulnerability (migration background, limited comprehension of Dutch, school fatigue, amongst others) and/or challenging family situations (e.g., single parent households, low income, low educational tracks of parents and other family members), and often did not participate in other organised leisure activities.

6. Conclusion

It is essential to return to our central question of whether both coach-created and peer-created motivational climates can affect the perceived Positive Youth Development of disadvantaged girls in organised sport programmes. This is a relevant question as a large body of research shows that coaches and peers can both be important sources of influence (Carcia-Calvo et al., 2014). To date there have been, however, only a very limited number of studies that examine the joint role of the coach- and peer-created motivational climates in sport (e.g., Ntoumanis et al., 2012). The present study is the first one that looks at the roles of both the coach- and peer-created motivational climates in predicting Positive Youth Development in youth sport participants in general, and disadvantaged girls in particular. Taken together, the results of this study indicate that a mastery-oriented coach climate is a very strong predictor of perceived Positive Youth Development, based on the number of developmental domains on which it had a significant impact and the explained variance based on the PRV values of the multi-level models. Although it has been suggested that such group-aggregated perceptions of the overall team climate are important (Papaioannou, Marsh, & Theodorakis, 2004), such analyses have rarely been conducted (an exception is Ntoumanis et al., 2012). Furthermore, the present results for the interaction effects indicate that girls from a non-intact family and those with a migration background appeared to be less positively influenced by peer climate predictor variables than their peers from an intact family and those without a migration background. Unlike previous research on disadvantaged youth in general (e.g., Blomfield & Barber, 2010) and disadvantaged girls in particular (Schaillée et al., 2015), the observed interaction effects have not shown that disadvantaged girls necessarily gain more from their involvement in organised activities (such as sport). Future research that employs qualitative methods (e.g., interviews) could be conducted to ascertain if girls from a non-intact family and with a migration background are consistently less positively influenced by the climate created by their peers and if so, why.

It should also be recognised that the coach- and peer-created motivational climates examined here only represent a small subset of the variables which are related to sport programmes and likely to affect developmental gains. The statistical models of our study show that about 28.2–35.9% of the variance in the different development domains are linked to the variables included in our statistical models (e.g., motivational climate, type of sport, group composition, etc.). When the total variance explained by the statistical models in this study is compared with the results of a previous study (Schaillée et al., 2015) which included the same population sample and variables except for the motivational climate, it seems that about 1.3–20.6% additional variance is explained in the different development domains (respectively cognitive skills and initiative). It should also be noted that there is still a large number of these positive experiences that must be explained by other variables. As mentioned in a previous study, one specific factor (e.g., group composition) is likely to be part of a complex web working with other contextual variables to foster Positive Youth Development in a sport context (Schaillée et al., 2015). However, differences related to initiative, cognitive skills, and goal setting cannot be further explained by other contextual factors at the team level. Conversely, such differences in other domains of learning (i.e., personal and social skills) can still be explained at least in part by other aspects which may differ at the team level. Although the social and psychological climate is multidimensional (i.e., it is a setting in which all social and psychological factors help to shape perceptions of what is valued), this research has been narrow, focusing mainly on one dimension, namely the motivational climate. Future research could focus on another dimension simultaneously. This dimension could be related to social and relational aspects of that environment which has been theoretically termed the caring climate (Newton et al., 2007).

Despite its limitations, we believe that this study makes a contribution to the literature by examining the concurrent predictive effects of the coach- and peer-created motivational climate on perceived Positive Youth Development in disadvantaged girls at two different levels of analysis (i.e., the individual level and group level). Future research in the domain of Positive Youth Development could build upon this study by incorporating measures of coach- and peer-created climates and examining whether differences exist between coaches' and peers' reports of the motivational climate they create and the athletes' perceptions of these climates. This research approach would be valuable because similar research in school physical education has indicated large discrepancies between students' and teachers' reports of the motivational climate created by the teacher (Taylor & Ntoumanis, 2007). However, if such discrepancies with respect to coach- and peer-created climates exist in organised youth sport programmes has yet to be empirically determined (Carcia-Calvo et al., 2014).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Ames, C. (1992a). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 84*(3), 261–271.
- Ames, C. (1992b). Achievement goals and the classroom motivational climate. In J. Meece & D. Schunck (Eds.), *Students perceptions in the classroom: Causes and consequences* (pp. 327–348). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Beaulac, J., Kristjansson, E., & Calhoun, M. (2011). ‘Bigger than Hip-Hop?’ Impact of community-based physical activity program on youth living in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Canada. *Journal of Youth Studies, 14*(8), 961–974.
- Bendit, R., & Stokes, D. (2003). ‘Disadvantage’: Transition policies between social construction and the needs of vulnerable youth. In A. López Blasco, W. McNeish, & A. Walther (Eds.), *Young people and contradictions of inclusion: Towards integrated transition policies in Europe* (pp. 261–283). Bristol: Policy Press.
- Biddle, S. (2001). Enhancing motivation in physical education. In G. C. Roberts (Ed.), *Advances in motivation in sport and exercise* (pp. 101–127). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Blomfield, C., & Barber, B. (2010). Australian adolescent’s extracurricular activity participation and positive development: Is the relationship mediated by peers? *Australian Journal of Educational Developmental Psychology, 10*, 108–122.
- Brown, W. (2012). *MCMC Estimation in MLwiN version 2.25*. Centre for Multilevel Modelling, University of Bristol. Retrieved from <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmm/software/mlwin/download/mcmc-print.pdf>
- Butts, J., Bazemore, G., & Meroe, A. (2010). Positive youth justice: *Framing justice interventions using the concepts of Positive Youth Development*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice.
- Carcia-Calvo, T., Leo, F., Gonzalez-Ponce, I., Sanchez-Miguel, P., Mouratidis, A., & Ntoumanis, N. (2014). Perceived coach-created and peer-created motivational climate and their associations with team cohesion and athlete satisfaction: Evidence from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Sport Sciences, 32*(18), 1738–1750.
- Carr, S., Weigand, D., & Jones, J. (2000). The relative influence of parents, peers, and sporting heroes on goal orientations of children and adolescents in sport. *Journal of Sport Pedagogy, 6*(2), 34–55.
- Chassin, L., Husson, A., Barrera, M., Molina, B., Tim, R., & Ritter, J. (2004). Adolescent substance use. In R. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 665–696). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Cumming, S., Smoll, F., Smith, R., & Grossbard, J. (2007). Is winning everything? The relative contribution of motivational climate and won-lost percentage in youth sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 19*(3), 322–336.
- Currie, C. E., Elton, R. A., Todd, J., & Platt, S. (1997). Indicators of socio-economic status for adolescents: The WHO health behaviour in school-aged children survey. *Health Education Research, 12*(3), 385–397.
- Danish, S., Petitpas, A., & Hale, B. (1990). Sport as a context for developing competence. In T. Gullotta, G. Adams, & R. Monteymar (Eds.), *Developing social competency in adolescence* (pp. 169–194). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Duda, J., & Balaguer, I. (2007). The coach-created motivational climate. In D. Lavalee & S. Jowett (Eds.), *Social psychology of sport* (pp. 117–143). Champagne, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Duda, J., & Ntoumanis, N. (2005). After-school sport for children: Implications of a task-involving motivational climate. In J. Mahoney, R. Larson, & J. Eccles (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts of development: Extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp. 311–330). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Dweck, C., & Leggett, E. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review, 95*(2), 256–273.
- Dworkin, J., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2003). Adolescents’ accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*(1), 17–26.
- Elling, A. (2012). Sport: Ook een vrouwenzaak [Sport: Also a women’s thing]. *Raffia, 3*, 3–6.
- Ensminger, M. E., Forrest, C. B., Riley, A. W., Kang, M., Green, B. F., Starfield, B., & Ryan, S. A. (2000). The validity of measures of socio-economic status of adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 15*(3), 392–419.
- Epstein, J. (1989). Family structures and student motivation: A developmental perspective. In C. Ames & R. Ames (Eds.), *Research on motivation in education* (Vol. 3, pp. 259–295). New York: Academic Press.
- Fredricks, J., & Eccles, J. (2005). Extracurricular involvement and adolescent adjustment: Impact of duration, number of activities, and breadth of participation. *Applied Developmental Science, 10*(3), 132–146.
- Gould, D., & Carson, S. (2011). Young athletes’ perceptions of the relationship between coaching behaviors and developmental experiences. *International Journal of Coaching Science, 5*(2), 3–29.
- Gould, D., Flett, R., & Lauer, L. (2012). The relationship between psychosocial developmental and the sports climate experienced by underserved youth. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 13*(1), 80–87.
- Hancock, M., Lyras, A., & Ha, J. (2013). Sport for development programs for girls and women: A global assessment. *Journal of Sport for Development, 1*(1), 2013.
- Hansen, D., & Larson, R. (2007). Amplifiers of developmental and negative experiences in organized activities: Dosage, motivation, lead roles, and adult-youth

- ratios. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 28(4), 360–374.
- Hassan, M. (2011). *Developing a mastery motivational climate in sports coaching* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Wales, UK: University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.
- Haudenhuyse, R. (2012). *The potential of sports for socially vulnerable youth* (Doctoral dissertation). VUB Press: Brussels.
- Haudenhuyse, R., Theeboom, M., & Coalter, F. (2012). The potential of sports-based social interventions for vulnerable youth: Implications for sport coaches and youth workers. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(4), 437–454.
- Hellison, D., & Georgiadis, N. (1992). Basketball as a vehicle for teaching values. *Strategies*, 4(1), 1–4.
- Hodge, K., & Danish, S. (1999). Promoting life skills for adolescent males through sport. In A. Horne, & M. Kiselica (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling boys and adolescent males: A practitioner's guide* (pp. 55–71). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hupkens, C. L. H., Knibbe, R. A., & Drop, M. J. (2000). Social class differences in food consumption. *European Journal of Public Health*, 10(2), 108–113.
- Larson, R., Hansen, D., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(5), 849–863.
- Lien, N., Friestad, C., & Klepp, K.-I. (2001). Adolescents' proxy reports of parents' socioeconomic status: How valid are they? *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 55(10), 731–737.
- MacDonald, D., Côté, J., Eys, M., & Deakin, J. (2011). The role of enjoyment and motivational climate in relation to the personal development of team sport athletes. *The Sport Psychologist*, 25(1), 32–46.
- MacDonald, D., Côté, J., Eys, M., & Deakin, J. (2012). Psychometric properties of the youth experience survey with young athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13(3), 332–340.
- Magyar, T., & Feltz, D. (2003). The influence of dispositional and situational tendencies on adolescent girls' sport confidence sources. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 4(2), 175–190.
- Murcia, J., de San Roman, M., Galindo, C., Alonso, N., & Gonzalez-Cutre, D. (2008). Peers' influence on exercise enjoyment: A self-determination approach. *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, 7(1), 23–31.
- Nakeyshaey, M. T. (2005). Exploring Hip-Hop therapy with high risk youth. *Praxis*, 5, 30–36.
- Newton, M., Fry, M., Watson, D., Gano-Overway, L., Kim, M., Magyar, M., & Guivernau, M. (2007). Psychometric properties of the Caring Climate Scale in a physical activity setting. *Revista de Psicología del Deporte*, 16(1), 67–84.
- Nicholls, J. (1989). *The competitive ethos and democratic education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ntoumanis, N. (2001). Empirical links between achievement goal theory and self-determination theory in sport. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 19(6), 397–409.
- Ntoumanis, N., & Vazou, S. (2005). Peer motivational climate in youth sport: Measurement development. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 27(4), 432–455.
- Ntoumanis, N., Taylor, I. M., & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, C. (2012). A longitudinal examination of coach and peer motivational climates in youth sport: Implications for moral attitudes, well-being, and behavioral investment. *Developmental Psychology*, 48(1), 213–223.
- Ntoumanis, N., Vazou, S., & Duda, J. (2007). Peer-created motivational climate. In S. Jowett, & D. Lavallee (Eds.), *Social psychology in sport* (pp. 145–156). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Ommundsen, Y., Roberts, G., Lemyre, P., & Miller, B. (2005). Peer relationships in adolescent competitive soccer: Associations to perceived motivational climate, achievement goals and perfectionism. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 23(9), 977–989.
- Papaioannou, A., Marsh, H., & Theodorakis, Y. (2004). A multilevel approach to motivational climate in physical education and sport settings: An individual or a group level construct? *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 26(1), 90–118.
- Pensgaard, A., & Roberts, G. (2002). Elite athletes' experiences of the motivational climate: The coach matters. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 12(1), 54–59.
- Peugh, J. (2010). A practical guide to multilevel modeling. *Journal of School Psychology*, 48(1), 85–112.
- Rasbash, J., Charlton, C., Jones, K., & Pillinger, R. (2009). *Manual supplement for MLwiN Version 2.14*. Centre for Multilevel Modeling, University of Bristol. Retrieved from <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmm/software/mlwin/download/supplement-print.pdf>
- Roberts, G., & Ommundsen, Y. (1996). Effect of goal orientation on achievement beliefs, cognition and strategies in team sport. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine Science and Sport*, 6(1), 46–56.
- Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.
- Sabo, D., & Veliz, P. (2008). *Go out and play: Youth sports in America*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sports Foundation.
- Schaillée, H., Theeboom, M., & Van Cauwenberg, J. (2015). What makes a difference for disadvantaged girls? Investigating the interplay between group composition and Positive Youth Development in sport. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 51–66.
- Scheerder, J., Taks, M., & Lagae, W. (2007). Teenage girls' participation in sports. An intergenerational analysis of socio-cultural predictor variables. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 4(2), 133–150.
- Scheerder, J., Taks, M., Vanreusel, B., & Renson, R. (2005). Social Changes in youth sports participation styles

- 1969–1999: The case of Flanders (Belgium). *Sport, Education, & Society*, 10(3), 321–341.
- Smith, A., Gustafsson, H., & Hassmén, P. (2010). Peer motivational climate and burnout perceptions of adolescent athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 11(6), 453–460.
- Smith, A., Thurston, M., Green, K., & Lamb, K. (2007). Young people's participation in extracurricular physical education: A study of 15–16 year olds in North-West England and North-East Wales. *European Physical Education Review*, 13(3), 339–368.
- Smith, R., Cumming, S., & Smoll, F. (2008). Development and validation of the Motivational Climate Scale for youth sports. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 20(1), 116–136.
- Smith, S., Fry, M., Ethington, C., & Li, Y. (2005). The effect of female athletes' perceptions of their coaches' behaviors on their perceptions of the motivational climate. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17(2), 170–177.
- Steele, F. (2008). *Module 5: Introduction to Multilevel Modelling MLwiN Practicals*. Centre for Multilevel Modelling, University of Bristol. Retrieved from <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmm/learning/module-samples/5-practicals-mlwin-sample.pdf>
- Taylor, I., & Ntoumanis, N. (2007). Teacher motivational strategies and student self-determination in physical education. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(4), 747–760.
- Treasure, D. C. (1993). *A social-cognitive approach to understanding children's achievement behavior, cognitions, and affect in competitive sport* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois: Urbana-Champaign.
- Vazou, S., Ntoumanis, N., & Duda, J. (2006). Predicting young athletes' motivational indices as a function of their perceptions of the coach- and peer-created climate. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 7(2), 215–233.
- Vereecken, C. A., Maes, L., & De Bacquer, D. (2004). The influence of parental occupation and the pupils' educational level on lifestyle behaviors among adolescents in Belgium. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 34(4), 330–338.
- Vettenburg, N. (1998). Juvenile delinquency and culture characteristics of the family. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 10(3), 193–209.
- Walgrave, L. (1992). Maatschappelijke kwetsbaarheid van jongeren als opdracht [Social vulnerability of youth as an assignment]. In P. De Knop & L. Walgrave (Eds.), *Sport als Integratie. Kansen voor maatschappelijk kwetsbare jongeren [Sport as integration: Chances for social vulnerable youth]* (pp. 19-36). Brussel: Koningboudewijnstichting.
- Weiss, M., Amorose, A., & Wilko, A. (2009). Coaching behaviors, motivational climate, and psychosocial outcomes among female adolescent athletes. *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 21(4), 475–492.
- West, P., Sweeting, H., & Speed, E. (2001). We really do know what you do: A comparison of reports from 11 year olds and their parents in respect of parental economic activity and occupation. *Sociology*, 35(2), 539–559.

About the Authors



Hebe Schailleé works as a post-doctoral researcher at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium. Hebe is a member of the 'Sport and Society' research group. She has a special interest in the analysis of positive developmental outcomes that young people in general and disadvantaged youth in particular derive from their participation in organised sport. Her work focuses mainly on girls and women. She is currently a member of the research team of the CATCH (Community sports for AT-risk youth: innovative strategies for improving personal development, health and soCial coHesion) project.



Marc Theeboom works as a full professor at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy and the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium. He is chair of the research group 'Sport and Society'. His research primarily focuses on educational and policy-related aspects of (youth) sport in general and specific target groups in particular. He has a special interest in the analysis and evaluation of 'sport development' programmes in which sport is regarded as a social instrument and a means of community development.



Jelle van Cauwenberg works as a post-doctoral researcher at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of the Universiteit Gent. His research primarily focuses on environmental determinants of physical activity and e-bike use among older adults. He is also involved in projects concerning sedentary behaviour, active transportation in children and adults, and sport participation of disadvantaged youth.

Article

Conditions for Successfully Increasing Disadvantaged Adolescents' Engagement in and Development through Volunteering in Community Sport

Evi Buelens ^{1,*}, Marc Theeboom ¹, Jikkemien Vertonghen ¹ and Kristine De Martelaer ^{2,3}

¹ Research group Sport & Society, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; E-Mails: evi.buelens@vub.be (E.B.), marc.theeboom@vub.be (M.T.), jikkemien.vertonghen@vub.be (J.V.)

² Research Group of Motor Skills and Didactics, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; E-Mail: kdmartel@vub.be

³ Division of Education, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Utrecht University, 3512 JE Utrecht, The Netherlands

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 31 January 2017 | Accepted: 20 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

A considerable number of adolescents in Western societies live in socially vulnerable situations. Approaches to improve this situation ultimately aim to make institutional changes through a focus on individual development. With regard to the latter, there have been high expectations regarding sport volunteering's contribution to human capital development. Nevertheless, little understanding of the underlying conditions for, and possible outcomes of sport volunteering exists. This study's aim was twofold: (1) to assess the conditions necessary to develop the human capital of disadvantaged adolescents through volunteering in community sport, and (2) to assess to what extent human capital can be developed. A qualitative research design was used to attain deeper insight into these conditions within eight community sport programs in Flanders (Northern Dutch-speaking region of Belgium), a setting that is not often used for youth developmental practices. Data were collected on repeated occasions over the course of each program through qualitative methods with local sport services and social partner organizations (N = 26) and participating adolescents (N = 26). Inductive analysis identified two categories of necessary conditions, (1) valuing and recognizing adolescents, and (2) informal and experiential learning. Results further showed the achievement of two types of perceived human capital developmental outcome (i.e., personal and interpersonal competences) through the fulfilment of these conditions. Findings also showed that although two of these programs made use of a more critical pedagogical approach to youth development by encouraging participants, not only to reflect on, but also to critically take part in the transformation of their own position within society; critical youth empowerment was not reached in the majority of the programs.

Keywords

community sport; disadvantaged adolescents; human capital; volunteering

Issue

This article is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

1.1. Disadvantaged Adolescents

15.4% of adolescents in the European Union (EU) between the age of 15 and 29 years, live in a problematic

situation (Eurofound, 2012) often characterized by a lack of engagement with any form of employment, education or training (i.e., NEET), resulting in higher chances to live or risk ending up living in socially vulnerable situations. Different disadvantages are emphasized by the EU, both on individual (e.g., social exclusion, poor men-

tal and physical education) as well as on societal and economical levels (Eurofound, 2012). Besides, research has stressed that non- and low-educated adolescents have fewer chances in the labor market and higher chances of ending up in poverty (Dierckx, Coene, Van Haarlem, & Raeymaekers, 2013; Sourbron & Herremans, 2013). In more general terms, this group of adolescents has been labeled, amongst other things, as being underserved, at-risk, disadvantaged, marginalized or deprived, which frequently emphasizes the individual causes of their problematic situation (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012).

To improve adolescents' vulnerable situations, two strategies have been emphasized. The first strategy relates to causes at the individual level, and therefore assumes adolescents should be changed, rather than the environments in which they live (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Examples are the deficit perspective (i.e., problem-driven approach, reduction in negative behaviors of 'at-risk youths') by Damon (2004) or the positive youth development approach (i.e., assets-driven approach, investment in youths' capabilities) by Benson (2006) and Lerner et al. (2005). However, researchers have also attributed societal structures as reproducers and maintainers of these social inequalities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Vetterburg (1998) recognizes that the ideas and conceptualizations which underpin these societal structures and social arrangements are the sources of exclusionary and discriminatory processes. Her social vulnerability theory (1998), heavily drawing on Hirschi's (2009) social bonding theory and Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, states that the situation of these adolescents is characterized by distorted and disconnected relations with society's institutions (e.g., education, labour market, unemployment service, health care). By its very nature, social vulnerability is about interactional processes, the progressive accumulation of negative experiences among adolescents within these institutions and the lower level of benefits which those institutions provide for the target group relative to their less vulnerable counterparts. (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, Nols, & Coussée, 2013b; Vetterburg, 1998). Consequently, apart from an approach at the individual level to counter adolescents' socially vulnerable situations, there is a need for another strategy that primarily relates to working towards structural changes at institutional levels (Coakley, 2011; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Nols, 2013a; Kelly, 2011; Vetterburg, 1998). This involves, for example, rebuilding strong community-based social institutions, and re-establishing the resource base of young peoples' communities (Coakley, 2011). It also relates to increasing access to socio-economic resources, such as family income, education and employment, housing quality and neighbourhood status (Haudenhuyse et al., 2013a). In this respect, some researchers argue that development at the individual level might cause changes at the institutional level (Gin-

wright & Cammarota, 2002; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). According to Hartmann and Kwauk (2011), adolescents therefore need to be empowered to critically take part in the transformation of not only their own experiences of society, but also of society itself. As a consequence, different researchers argue for the investment in the human capital of socially vulnerable adolescents.

1.2. Human Capital

Human capital is a concept that long has been viewed as the knowledge, skills, and capacities of an individual to perform in the labour market (Becker, 1964). Therefore, the concept has been mainly regarded within the human resources management and economic literature and has been often presented as school and labour market competences (Schultz, 1961). In recent years, however, an increasing number of researchers are viewing this topic with a wider perspective and are focusing on a broader notion of human capital (Krauss, Hamzah, Suandi, & Tamam, 2007). This shift is also reflected in the evolution of the definition used by the OECD towards 'the knowledge, skills, competences and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being. Besides specific cognitive skills and explicit knowledge, a broader notion of human capital also encompasses non-cognitive skills and attributes which contribute to the well-being of a person (OECD, 2001, p. 18). However, due to different exclusionary mechanisms, through common strategies such as formal education and on-the-job-training, disadvantaged adolescents can invest in their human capital, albeit to a lesser extent than their less vulnerable counterparts (Bynner, 2005; Spaaij, 2009; Vetterburg, 1998, 2011). Consequently, different programs are organized in leisure settings, aimed at vulnerable adolescents' development (Coalter, 2012; Gambone & Arbretton, 1997; Witt & Crompton, 1997) since they are believed to provide opportunities to develop adolescents' human capital (Glover & Hemingway, 2005). Interventions mostly focus on the development of competences and the provision of learning experiences by attempting to increase adolescents' sense of responsibility and involvement (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; McLaughlin, 2000; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, & Foster, 1998). Additionally, Dworkin and colleagues (2003) suggested that, at least at the high school age, leaders' focus might be better directed, not at teaching adolescents, but at helping them to teach themselves, since adolescents reported to see themselves as agents of their own human capital development.

1.3. Role of Volunteering in Sport

Literature reports that investment in human capital can be fostered by putting adolescents in situations where they can learn and take up responsibilities (Kay & Bradbury, 2009). In this respect, volunteering has been men-

tioned as a method by which people can invest in their own human capital by acquiring organizational, leadership, speaking and writing skills (Day & Devlin, 1998; Smith, 2010). According to Wilson (2000, p. 125) 'volunteering means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization. This does not preclude volunteers from benefiting from their work'. Hogan and Owen (2000), furthermore, indicated that volunteering is discursively positioned as a key form of active citizenship since public service sector provision is progressively being replaced by a greater role for volunteers. In addition, according to Risler and Holosko (2009), volunteering can also contribute to the development of empowerment. The multi-level construct of empowerment is consistent with experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and is described by many authors (e.g., Rappaport, 1987; Van Regenmortel, 2002, 2009; Zimmerman, 2000). According to Van Regenmortel (2002, 2009), empowerment looks from an insider's perspective, at amongst other things, the fact that an individual can also learn from their own experiences. Although this focuses on the individual level (and therefore seems to imply personal causes of vulnerability), critical youth empowerment however, emphasises the potential of individuals to strengthen their ability to understand the broader power structures within which they are contained (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006). According to Jennings and Green (1999), the aim of critical youth empowerment is to support and foster adolescents' contributions to positive community development and socio-political change, resulting in adolescents who are critical citizens, actively participating in the day-to-day building of stronger, more equitable communities. In this respect, Jennings and colleagues (2006) described six key dimensions of critical youth empowerment: (1) a welcoming, safe environment, (2) meaningful participation and engagement, (3) equitable power-sharing between youths and adults, (4) engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes, (5) participation in socio-political processes to affect change, and (6) integrated individual and community-level empowerment.

Sport, as one of the most popular leisure pastimes among adolescents (Vanhouette, 2007), is thereby seen as an interesting setting to offer possibilities for volunteering (Kay & Bradbury, 2009). It is believed that sport can provide rich contexts for reaching out to disadvantaged adolescents (Crabbé, 2006; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012, 2013a; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Spaaij, 2009) as well as developmental opportunities for this group, such as personal and social competences and community building (Coalter, 2007; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). Haudenhuyse and Theeboom (2012) even argued that in the context of the social vulnerability theory, sport is viewed as a tool to alleviate the distorted relationships of adolescents, and alleviate the believed outcomes (i.e., human capital) they produce. However, in order for sport and volunteering to be used as developmental opportunities for this group,

there is an issue of accessibility. In addition to their low level of involvement in organized sports in general (Haudenhuyse et al., 2013a), there is also an underrepresentation of the target group among volunteers in sport and youth sports volunteering training programs (Eley & Kirk, 2002; Kay & Bradbury, 2009). In fact, this is hardly surprising given that education, income and social networks are considered to be the most consistent predictors of volunteering (e.g., Koning Boudewijnstichting, 2015; Penner, 2002; Taylor, Panagoulas, & Nichols, 2012; Wilson, 2000). Consequently, this has resulted in the provision of alternative formats to reach out to disadvantaged adolescents. It is interesting that most of these alternatives were initially provided by 'non-sport' actors including community centres, youth welfare work, and social organizations (Theeboom, Haudenhuyse, & De Knop, 2010). It is only in more recent times that the sport sector has become more involved as well (mostly through community sport organizations aimed at reaching and engaging the 'hard to reach').

1.4. Community Sport

As indicated by Hylton and Totten (2008), the concept of community sports originally arose out of the realization that traditional participation patterns were dominated by advantaged sections of the population and therefore an alternative approach was needed. For example, in Flanders, Belgium's northern Dutch speaking region, like in other Western European countries, specific community sport initiatives have been set up by local governments to better reach the 'hard to reach' (Marlier, Cardon, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Willem, 2014; Theeboom & De Maesschalck, 2006). It mainly consists of (low threshold) sport initiatives and programs set up through partnerships between various local actors, such as local (municipal) sport services, welfare organizations, schools and—to a lesser extent—sport clubs (Theeboom et al., 2010). Community sport provision is described as an approach characterized by: (1) being demand-driven and adjusted according to the specific target group's needs, (2) having structural collaboration between various actors, (3) the use of a variety of organizational formats, (4) emphasis on a broader sport notion, and (5) the use of infrastructural facilities in a creative way (Theeboom et al., 2010). Pouw and Daniels (2001) made a distinction between three models of community sport in The Netherlands: (1) 'participation', with sport being a goal for the whole population in a specific neighbourhood, (2) 'target group', where sport is regarded both as a goal and a means and aimed at a variety of specific groups, and (3) 'integral', characterized solely as being instances where sport is a means for socially deprived groups in specific neighbourhoods. As we will focus on developmental opportunities for adolescents in socially vulnerable situations, community sport will be regarded from an 'integral' model perspective for the remainder of this article, as it is the model adopted by the organizations which were investigated.

1.5. High Expectations, Limited Insights

It is interesting to note that, while there is a growing number of community sport programs that focus on the developmental potential of sport for adolescents in socially vulnerable situations, at the same time, there is an increase in the number of researchers who question this potential (e.g., Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2007; Darnell, 2007, 2010; Guest, 2009; Kidd, 2008; Levermore, 2008). *Firstly*, according to Hartmann and Kwauk (2011), sport for development initiatives all too frequently rely on a dominant developmental vision, which they criticize. They labelled this vision as reproductive because sport essentially reproduces established social relations. It is used to develop socially vulnerable adolescents to satisfy prevailing standards and to become 'acceptable' to a mainstream society. Coalter (2013) furthermore, argued that most of these programs regard disadvantaged adolescents as 'deficient' and therefore in need of an intervention. As a result, some have called for an alternative and more critical approach to sport-based youth developmental programs (Darnell, 2010). Scholars have labelled these critical approaches to youth development for example as 'interventionist' (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011), 'social justice youth development' (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Iwasaki, 2015) or 'critical youth empowerment' (Jennings et al., 2006) thereby heavily relying on Freire's (1993) 'praxis'—the reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (1993). *Secondly*, different researchers question the high 'developmental' expectations that are attributed to sport engagement and the lack of a critical perspective on sport's actual value (Giulianotti, 2004). With regard to Vettenburg's social vulnerability theory (1998), sport is believed to have the potential to positively influence the cultural 'hard-to-measure' factors that are associated with young people's social vulnerabilities (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Skille, 2014). Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) however, indicated that there is limited empirical evidence for several positive functions of sport and sport for development programs. In this respect, Coalter (2011) pointed to the lack of monitoring and evaluation work on specific sport for development practices and to the lack of clear objectives. He specifically argued that program organizers often lack clearly formulated objectives about how sport interventions can contribute to achieving certain outcomes and the mechanisms through which these outcomes can be attained. By referring to Patricksson (1995), Coalter (2007) thereby argued that insight is lacking in two types of conditions. The first type, 'necessary conditions', refers to those conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to reach and attract disadvantaged adolescents. Coakley (2011) however, stated that 'by itself, the act of sport participation among young people leads to no regularly identifiable development outcomes' (p. 309). Therefore, a second type (i.e., 'sufficient conditions') needs to be fulfilled as well. Sufficient conditions refers to the nature of processes and the various organizational and pro-

gram components that lead to the achievement of desired outcomes (Coalter, 2001).

1.6. Study

In recent years, while addressing the second challenge, a limited number of studies have tried to gain a deeper insight into the sufficient conditions of sport for development programs for disadvantaged adolescents (Coalter, 2012; Gould & Carson, 2008; Sandford, Armour, & Warmington, 2006; Spaaij, 2012). For example, Draper and Coalter (2016) stated that one of the critical success factors relates to the quality of social relationships developed during a program. Other research has also stressed the importance of social relationships (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004; Gambone & Arbreton, 1997; Lerner et al., 2005; Strachan, Côté, & Deakin, 2011). Draper and Coalter (2016) however, also referred to the need for greater clarity regarding the conditions through which sport can contribute to personal development, as well as the context in which this development is likely to take place, and with whom it would occur. It is noteworthy that, to date, most of the existing studies have looked at specific programs provided by 'non-sport' actors (e.g., community centres, youth welfare work, social and humanitarian organizations). There is, however, to date, limited insight into programs that are initiated in more 'traditional' sport structures (i.e., municipal community sport services and traditional sport clubs) and specifically aimed at increasing the engagement of disadvantaged adolescents. Greater insight is needed since Theeboom and colleagues (2010) indicated that, in more recent years, the traditional sport sector has increased contact with children and adolescents living in socially vulnerable situations (mostly through community sport organizations supported by local authorities). Within this respect, insight is needed firstly on the conditions needed to engage adolescents in vulnerable situations in sport volunteering, and secondly, on the degree to which human capital may be developed by this engagement (Kay & Bradbury, 2009). There is, to date, limited empirical evidence indicating a direct causal relationship between volunteering in sport and human capital development or any other beneficial social outcome for adolescents in vulnerable situations. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to: study (1) the sufficient conditions to reach development in human capital of disadvantaged adolescents through volunteering in community sport, and (2) achieved human capital developmental outcomes.

2. Method

Consequently, in this study, eight different community sport programs in different Flemish cities and municipalities were investigated. These were all part of the 'Street Action' project. This project was included in the study based on (1) its specific aim to empower and

develop disadvantaged adolescents through volunteering in a community sport setting, and (2) the possibility to include a wide variety of practices in the study (i.e., large versus small cities, experienced versus inexperienced, different approaches). Within the investigated practices, volunteering concerned predominantly organizational tasks, and guidance and/or coaching of young children. The Street Action project was organized by the umbrella organization of Flemish local sport services (ISB vzw) and financed by the Coca-Cola Foundation (between 2012–2014). The main funding came from a private commercial partner, making it unique in Flanders. A funding prerequisite for each individual program was the coordination by the municipal community sport service and the collaboration with one or more social partners (e.g., youth welfare work, social or youth service). As a result, the organizers of each program included both a sport and social partner organization. The aims of Street Action were to increase the sport participation of disadvantaged adolescents and promote sustainable volunteering in sport among 12 to 18-year-olds in disadvantaged situations. ‘Ownership’ could be seen as one of the main themes. For this, adolescents were encouraged to become regularly involved in the organization of the community sport offered in their own neighbourhood in order to ‘become empowered’. The study analysed the first eight ‘pilot’ programs (2012–onward) which allowed ISB to get more insight into critical success factors to be taken into account during the second phase of Street Action, which included another 15 municipalities (2013–onward).

A qualitative research design was used to collect data among program organizers and participants on three occasions during the course of each program. Similar to other researchers who investigated the experiences of socially vulnerable adolescents and sport interventions (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012), an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was used. IPA is an approach to qualitative analysis with the aim to explore in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA is concerned with trying to understand lived experience and with how participants themselves make sense of their experiences. This approach allowed us to analyze and understand the data from the perspectives and experiences of both disadvantaged adolescents and organizers, relating to the shared phenomenon of organizing and volunteering in community sport (i.e., Street Action programs). This in order to explore their lived experiences of how they make sense and value these and how they make sense of the underlying conditions. IPA requires the researchers to collect detailed, reflective, first-person accounts from research participants. Most typically, this is in the form of a semi-structured, one-to-one interview (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Other forms of data that can sometimes be used for IPA include written accounts (Smith, 1996), focus groups (Palmer, 2010), and observations (Smith et al., 2009). In the present study,

data triangulation occurred by including semi-structured in-depth interviews with open questions, focus groups, and observations. An interview schedule was developed consisting of different kinds of questions (with reference to Smith et al., 2009). With regard to the focus group, these question types included, amongst others: descriptive (e.g., ‘what do you do as a volunteer here’); narrative (e.g., ‘can you tell me about how you came to volunteer here/why you still volunteer?’); evaluative (e.g., ‘how do you feel when you are volunteering?’ Do you have the feeling that volunteering is good/bad for you?); circular (e.g., ‘how do you think your peers think about how you function as a volunteer?’); comparative (e.g., ‘how do you think about what you would be doing in life when you were not volunteering?’); prompts (e.g., ‘can you tell me a bit more what you mean by that?’); probes (e.g., ‘what do you mean by that?’). Central to the interviews was a focus on the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. In practice, probing allowed the interviewer to ask follow-up questions in order to obtain more and deeper information (e.g., why? How? What do you mean by that? Can you tell me more about that? Can you tell me what you were thinking? How did you feel?). In addition, during this data-gathering process, the interviewer avoided posing over-emphatic, manipulative and leading questions. In further interviews, participants were also involved with preliminary findings concerning the previous interviews. Observations and document analysis (plan of action, yearly reports, objectives, expectations) were executed to help contextualize the interview data in order to understand and analyze the context where the authors were gathering data within the right perspective and to compare the spoken and written with approximations in practice. Both adolescents and professionals were observed during their functioning as (and mentoring of) volunteers. Finally, a round table discussion was organized with sport partners of the programs to reflect upon our findings. In total, in the eight pilot programs 26 organizers were interviewed via 53 interviews (i.e., individuals were interviewed more than once and sometimes two or more organizers in each occasion in each program were interviewed). The interviews lasted between 35 and 70 minutes. Data collection among participants was through four focus groups (two groups of participating adolescents and two groups of organizing adolescents). In sum, 26 adolescents ($M = 13.8$, $SD = 2.14$), were involved. Smithson (2000) indicated that focus groups can be especially useful for discussing views of disadvantaged or minority groups. The interviews and focus groups were both conducted by the first author, in a familiar, safe and reasonably quiet room, chosen by the interviewees.

Data-analysis was performed in distinct different stages. *First*, all interviews were tape-recorded and, following a verbatim transcription, analysed inductively afterwards. *Second*, the first author immersed herself in the original data by reading and re-reading the first written transcripts several times, starting immediately after

the transcription of the interview. While reading the text, she attempted to suspend presuppositions and judgments in order to focus on what was actually present in the transcript data (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). This involved the practice of ‘bracketing’ (Husserl, 1970), namely the suspense of critical judgement and a temporary refusal of critical engagement which could bring in the researcher’s own assumptions and experience (Larkin & Thompson, 2012). *Third*, in order to develop an organized, detailed, plausible and transparent account of the meaning of the data, themes, (i.e., ‘patterns of meaning in the data’) were identified. These were drawn from a detailed, line-by-line analysis of the data, namely ‘codes’ or segments of text that were comprehensible by themselves, that contained one specific idea, episode, or piece of information (Tesch, 1990), thereby emphasizing convergence and divergence, commonality and nuance (Smith et al., 2009). Based on this open coding, general domains of the sufficient conditions for, and perceived outcomes of organizing and volunteering in community sport were identified. The initial coding was discussed with the second author and codes with a similar meaning were then grouped together leading to two main categories of sufficient conditions and two main types of perceived human capital developmental outcomes. This dialogue between researchers, the coded data and their knowledge about what it might mean for participants to have these concerns in this context, according to Smith et al. (2009), lead, in turn, to the development of a more interpretative account. A computer software program, Nvivo 10, was used to assist with the coding and sorting of the data. *Fourth*, the relationships between the different themes were incorporated within a structure and organized in a format which allowed coded data to be traced right through the analysis—from the initial codes on the transcript, through initial clustering and thematic development, to the final structure of themes. Researchers attempted to provide an overall structure to the analysis by relating the identified themes into ‘clusters’ or concepts. We arrived at a group of themes and to identify super-ordinate categories that suggest a hierarchical relationship between them. These super-ordinate categories were needed to be able to offer a framework for addressing the research aims from the perspective and experience of the interviewees (Haudenhuyse et al., 2013a). The coherence and plausibility of the interpretation were strengthened by discussion with the third author. *Fifth*, after reading and developing a scheme applied to the first transcript, we used this list of themes obtained from the first interviews to identify further instances of these themes in subsequent interviews. At the same time, we were also alert to the possibility of new themes which, in the event of their appearance, were tested against earlier data. With regard to the analysis of the focus groups we incorporated the advice of Smith (2004, pp. 50–51), who conducting focus groups within an IPA perspective, to ‘parse’ transcripts at least twice; once for group patterns and dynamics, and subsequently,

for ideographic accounts. It was important that participants were able to discuss their own personal experiences in sufficient detail.

3. Results

3.1. Necessary Conditions

As already stated, the purpose of the present study was: (1) to gain insight into the sufficient conditions (i.e., the nature of processes and the various organizational and program components that lead to the achievement of desired outcomes; Coalter, 2001) needed to achieve human capital development of disadvantaged adolescents through volunteering in community sport, and (2) to assess to what extent human capital can be developed. Since it has been indicated that reaching and retaining disadvantaged adolescents constitutes the first condition for working with them towards broader developmental and societal outcomes, it is worthwhile to concentrate on this aspect first. The analysis showed that, despite its aim and the high expectations towards reaching the ‘hard to reach’, not all community sport programs succeeded in attracting adolescents, let alone to attracting them to become involved as volunteers. One program stopped after one year because of limited or non-participation of adolescents. To some extent, five other programs were able to attract and retain disadvantaged adolescents as engaged sport participants. However, those adolescents that they were able to attract, could not be encouraged to take up volunteering. Most of the programs experienced similar difficulties. Results showed these community sport programs struggled with different necessary conditions. More specifically these related, amongst others, to (1) setting up a top-down program without prior involvement of the target group, (2) lacking clearly defined goals of the program, (3) limited knowledge of the target group and how to address them. Other necessary conditions related to (1) difficulties in lowering thresholds, (2) difficulties in informing parents, (3) absence of role models, (4) low involvement of coaches, (5) programs not being part of an integral and coordinated policy strategy, (6) no extended length of programs, sustainability clubs, (7) professional support: resolving organizational or structural difficulties and, as a result, no time to focus on social aims. Noteworthy in this respect is that the remainder of the present article will primarily describe the findings of two of the programs that were able to achieve this volunteer engagement from adolescents. Although we will mainly focus on these two ‘successful’ programs, we will also report on some of the findings of the unsuccessful ones. As pointed out by Coalter (2007), there is often a reluctance to publish negative results of social interventions. However, learning from failure can also provide useful insights. For example, it turned out that the main reason why these programs were not able to go beyond these above described necessary conditions (i.e., to attract and

retain adolescents as mere participants), was simply because they did not fully recognize that they are distinct from sufficient conditions, which are needed to provide developmental opportunities through volunteering.

We will now turn to the most important findings with regard to the sufficient conditions for, and human capital developmental outcomes of, sport volunteering. Researchers' analysis resulted in two categories of sufficient conditions needed for sport volunteering: (1) valuing and recognizing adolescents, and (2) informal and experiential learning, as well as two types of perceived human capital outcomes: (1) personal, and (2) interpersonal competences. Results are presented thematically, below, and are occasionally illustrated using raw data (i.e., quotes).

3.2. Valuing and Recognizing Adolescents

This first category included the following four aspects: (a) bottom-up approach, (b) personal involvement, (c) reinforcing environment, and (d) official recognition. These aspects are explained in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1. Bottom Up Approach

According to the organizers of the two good practices, it is important to involve adolescents from the start and to let them have a say in the design and organization of the program. This resulted in an increased motivation and interest among the participating adolescents. One of these practices started with a top down approach, but changed along the way as they experienced it was not effective. A street worker described this:

The local sport service, community sport service, youth service and culture service, until now it is still a top-down programming and that's making some things really difficult. They ask me to encourage my adolescents to take part in their activities. But this is not working if the program is not tailored to the needs of the adolescents themselves.

According to the adolescents, developing a bond of trust between themselves, as well as between them and providers was considered as an important bottom-up condition to get them involved. An important sufficient condition in this respect is that disadvantaged adolescents should experience appreciation simply for who they are and what they want. A prevention worker emphasized the importance for those adolescents to experience that their needs are being heard and are taken seriously. Another prevention worker (1) recounted, "The contribution of the adolescents is very important, if they don't stand behind it, then it doesn't work. So, put the adolescents central and don't force them with things they don't want".

This can be illustrated by the experiences in another Street Action program which started with a top down

approach, assuming that adolescents would already be interested in taking up responsibilities and volunteering. Although several adolescents started the program, none of them were actually intrinsically motivated. Rather than taking part because of their personal interest and motivation, they merely wanted to please the youth worker. As a result, the adolescents left soon and the whole program was canceled.

3.2.2. Personal Involvement

Findings also showed the importance of allowing adolescents to help to fulfill their own needs. Program providers pointed out the importance of offering opportunities where adolescents can help to change things by themselves, such as by taking responsibilities as a volunteer, by being a coach or animator, or by organizing activities for children and their peers. One of the street workers stated:

You see, some adolescents, they never participated in a youth movement or the like, but still, their leadership skills appear. And for instance at school, for some adolescents, things are getting worse, while here you see them giving structure to little children. Then it surprises you a bit that they have all these skills because of your own prejudices you sometimes have with regard to these adolescents.

Another street worker added that for different participants the program facilitated their intrinsic motivation for participating in an animator course in order to take up responsibilities.

The strength of this program? That's already tangible at this moment [start of the program]. Five adolescents already said to me loud and clear that they want to participate in an animator course as soon as possible. That's incredible. That's the first time that those adolescents are willing to take up responsibilities in one of our activities.

A related condition to this is the creation of a setting where contributions and actions of the adolescents as volunteers can change things in their own neighbourhoods in order to make them feel like they are making meaningful contributions to society in general and their own neighbourhoods in particular (e.g., organization of (sport) activities in their own neighbourhoods for other disadvantaged children and adolescents).

3.2.3. Reinforcing Environment

Experiencing appreciation and recognition from peers, children, parents and other people within the neighborhood is regarded as another important sufficient condition. Adolescent Y stated:

My parents are favorable to the fact that I volunteer. In our family, we also have an autistic person and since I am an animator and have a certificate I work more with him and babysit on him.

It is always nice to start with your friends, but, like now, we also got to know other people. For example, without knowing it, there were other animators and we were standing together on the square. Suddenly we had a bond and they told us we were sociable....Immediately we had a bond.

Furthermore, this relates to the acquisition of, and experiencing of having, standing in the neighborhood.

When you walk in the neighborhood you see the little children pointing at you and telling their moms 'look, that is someone from the playground' and that is always nice. (Adolescent Y)

According to the adolescents, positive reinforcement is an important condition for a learning environment. Results further showed that being recognized by others in their environment also related to adolescents' sense of belonging to a group. This was encouraged in the programs by providing opportunities for positive interdependence between the participating adolescents. For example, the programs in both municipalities were designed in such a way that when a participant would step out, the program had to stop. Through creating cooperative learning situations (Grineski, 1996), the active involvement of all participants was therefore essential. Adolescents needed each other in order to learn and reach their goals because each of them was given specific responsibilities. In this respect, adolescents were encouraged to make a positive choice (i.e., adherence to the program in order that all adolescents could finish the trajectory). This situation allowed adolescents to experience the feeling of being important, which in turn had a positive influence on their sustained engagement. Adolescent B stated:

That was one of the advantages, because we were all friends and if one of us decided to stop, the whole trajectory would stop. So, even though you considered about stopping, nobody would actually do because you knew stopping means that everybody has to stop.

3.2.4. Official Recognition

Social partners also underlined the importance of rewarding participating adolescents with an official certificate of their competence development through volunteering. For example, 'animator in youth work'. According to the youth work organization, official recognition is very important for adolescents in vulnerable situations as recognition at school is lacking for most of them. The relevance was also stressed by organizing a developmental trajectory within official institutions, such as munic-

ipal (youth or sport) services. It allows adolescents to get in touch in a positive way with these structures. According to the program organizers and adolescents, this is often lacking in other contexts (e.g., school, community). Adolescent B corroborated this finding by explaining the reason he started the program: "Why I started this course? It holds many advantages and it is a way to spend my spare time. Now I can finally do things in the municipality which in the past were not possible, such as working on the playground." adolescent Y added that:

Since Street Action, I became an animator. I work on the municipality playground and organize activities for the youth service. This resulted from Street Action. [Researcher: and what's the difference with the past, why via Street Action?]. Because we got the chance, we just got the chance.

3.3. Non-Formal and Experiential Learning

The second category of conditions relates to the process of non-formal and experiential learning through a practice-based approach. It includes (1) taking responsibilities gradually and learning by doing, and (2) professional and interactive guidance.

3.3.1. Taking Responsibilities Gradually and Learning by Doing

Our results showed the importance of providing experiences of success through volunteering as well as the importance of there being a gradual take up of responsibilities, thereby increasing adolescents' engagement at their own pace.

You have to think ahead, think about a structure. Which is the next dose they need in a manner of speaking, and how are we going to offer that to them? We also need this for ourselves, to be careful not to go too fast because our expectations are often too high. If you determine achievable goals in specific periods, then you know, OK, I can't ask for more, because those were our goals we put forward and we discussed it with the adolescents. You need structure, both for the participants as well as for the organizers. (Community sport worker 1)

In addition, learning opportunities were provided by directly linking theory to practice (e.g., involvement as an apprentice within an animator formation course). It is worth pointing out that the two successful programs were both collaborating with a youth welfare work organization in order to develop their program in a more systematic way. A key sufficient condition here was the organization of a specific youth animator training course for the target group which consisted of 60 hours of training (over 8 consecutive days) and was followed by an apprenticeship of 60 hours. During and after this course,

adolescents were actively encouraged to take on responsibilities in the design and provision of the community sport offer and were guided by one or more professionals from the local sport and/or social partners and the youth work organization.

The animator course is absolutely a good base, I think the theory is sufficient and the rest is growing and learning by doing, is experiencing by doing, by standing in the field. (Community sport worker 1)

Another youth worker (2) recounted:

We wanted to offer them a training in order to strengthen them in taking responsibilities and actually the youth animator course fitted the best with what they were going to do within Street Action, because it goes beyond sport....By giving them an animation course, we are also offering them different opportunities [e.g., group binding activities].

In contrast, in one of the unsuccessful projects, nothing was done to stimulate adolescents to take up responsibilities gradually. More specifically, they provided, for example, a shuttle service from the youth center to the sports center and did nothing to stimulate the adolescents to organize transportation for themselves, such as biking to the center. As a result, adolescents expected a ready-made leisure activity where everything was done for them, rather than be responsible and motivated themselves. Furthermore, the program organizers also indicated that the responsibilities must be commensurate with the capabilities of the adolescents. In other words, responsibilities and voluntary tasks must be challenging, but at the same time achievable.

Besides, it was argued that programs need to think in advance how they can encourage interested adolescents to integrate into the organizations after the project has ended (e.g., as a community sport coach or youth animator). In this respect, according to a program organizer, the project has to be part of an integral and coordinated policy strategy. Emphasizing this point, one of the district managers stated:

In the past, different projects for vulnerable groups were organized in our city. But they were always short term and with this target group that's difficult. Then you involve them during a short period, and then it stops and nothing else is organized, or a new project has started, with other counselors, again building up confidence and that's really difficult with this target group ... From a district management perspective, I think we need to evolve to such partnerships (e.g., community sport service and social partners)....It's just a matter to work integral and involve expertise from different domains. As district management, we need to evolve to become coordinators of big projects.

3.3.2. Professional and Interactive Guidance

According to the respondents, it became clear that involving professionals from other sectors with specific expertise in dealing with disadvantaged adolescents such as community sport, youth (welfare) work or street work was one of the most important factors leading to successful programs. Different program organizers argued that the implementation of this type of expertise and competences is essential to create a bond of trust and to construct supportive relationships of equality. It allowed the creation of a safe and challenging environment where adolescents can be themselves; unafraid of making mistakes, receiving individual attention and getting the chance to resolve mistakes, in order to develop themselves. Additionally, there is an emphasis on frequent feedback and reflection throughout the course of the program, as was indicated by one of the community sport workers interviewed:

It is important in the course to learn how to stand in front of a group and giving the adolescents constant feedback. After each activity, there is a short moment of evaluation with the coaches. Often I start with asking them how they feel about it. I think it's important that they learn to assess themselves, that they wonder "did I do well or wrong"...and that we discuss together. (Community sport worker 1)

Another worker with expertise recounted:

During the project, we asked them regularly on an informal way what they think of the activities and their performance, but we also organized different individual evaluations to give them the chance to give their opinion and to give them feedback with regard to their competences. I think they really appreciate this support. (Prevention worker 1)

Adolescent A added:

When we did something wrong, they go about it in a different way [in comparison with school] and we calmed down. So, yeah, it is difficult to explain, but they handled us in such a specific way, that we remained calm.

Although involving specialists in youth programming seems a very logical condition, in some of the projects they did not see the need for implementing specific expertise and knowledge. As a consequence, they did not succeed in retaining disadvantaged adolescents in their program. For instance, according to a member of staff responsible for the local sport service of one municipality, their project failed because although, at first, a bond had been created between adolescents and a sport promoter, once this sport promoter stopped due to a lack of time, the adolescents dropped out of the project as there were no means to replace her.

Another sufficient condition is that the youth work guidance approach used in both successful Street Action programs included the use of different character roles to be played by the adolescents which related to being a volunteer. Each character portrayed different competences. These competences included either being a friend (e.g., respect, support, handling differences), a clown (e.g., entertaining, motivating, valuing), a guide (e.g., taking leadership, making oneself understood, managing a group, being a role model), a referee (e.g., taking responsibility, setting boundaries, being consistent, handling conflicts), builder (e.g., organizing, cooperating, taking initiative, being independent) and an inventor (e.g., being creative, being flexible, adapting oneself to unexpected circumstances). The approach was seen by the adolescents as very useful and educational and helped them to better understand the different roles a coach has to play. The roles were the thread throughout the whole training course and apprenticeship. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own competences according to these roles. The adolescents indicated that this increased their insight into themselves. Adolescent Y stated:

We got a booklet, with tips and different games and an evaluation form and at the end of the week we evaluated the things where we are good at, the things that went worse, and what were the next steps. So we were redirected. In this booklet, our strengths were listed, as well as our points of improvement, where we needed to work on.

Adolescent B added:

You are learning from your own mistakes. When you do something wrong, there is always somebody who can point you "if you do it in another way, that will be much easier."

This practice-based approach of the program was highly appreciated by the participants.

Yes, we laughed a lot. They were nice people and they taught us. How would I say? It was not a piece of paper and a ball pen, but we got different tasks and from this, the theory followed and that was well done. (Adolescent Y)

When school was the same as this training, I would love to go to school. (Adolescent B)

The adolescents, however, were critical of the use of specific terms (such as a 'course') as it created negative expectations of a school setting.

Course and apprenticeship, these are big words. When you think about a course, you think about a book that you have to learn by heart and then an ap-

prenticeship and certificate... I would call it animator training or something like that. (Adolescent Y)

The course involves games etc. At the beginning, we thought we would get theoretical lessons, sheets of paper etc. But no, we did games and that was fun. Learning by playing. (Adolescent E)

3.4. Perceived Human Capital Developmental Outcomes

Adolescents and program organizers also reported a variety of outcomes of adolescents' involvement in the programs. Among others, these related to (perceived) behavioral changes. Through their involvement as volunteers in the programs, adolescents indicated that they (1) had started taking more initiative and felt more responsible, (2) had taken up social responsibilities, (3) had taken command of the project by taking the initiative to motivate others to become involved as well, (4) had been able to expand their network. This is clarified with the following quotes:

At a given moment during the project, the adolescents had to perform a presentation for the mayor and aldermen. Where formerly they had never visited the town hall, now they just performed their presentation. (Street worker 1)

The first day by the start of the trajectory, there was one adolescent. Finally, that number became 3. Then the adolescents started calling their friends all day long and the day after 9 participants showed up. So, in fact, the adolescents had a huge contribution in that. We appreciated that they showed engagement, because from that moment on we knew they were really willing to start the trajectory. Because when they don't want to take part, they would not be that devoted. (Sport promotor 1)

The successful programs also resulted in adolescents highlighting positive experiences with official institutions. A street worker summarized this as follows.

I noticed an increased initiative and responsibility of some adolescents. If you see, starting their own youth centre involves many different forms and protocols and as a result many adolescents dropped out. But what I have seen now, is because of their training within Street Action, the adolescents start taking more responsibilities within the Street Action program and start experiencing that taking the step to the town hall and their youth centre is easier to do. (Street worker 1)

Other perceived human capital outcomes by the adolescents were related to the fact that, through their involvement as a volunteer in the programs, adolescents indicated that they: (1) had become even more motivated for taking these responsibilities, (2) had more positive

self-image, higher self-efficacy and self-esteem, (3) felt more respected in their neighbourhood (from friends, parents, others), (4) experienced recognition from different municipal services and institutions, (5) had fun with friends, (6) developed other social and personal competences (e.g., taking more personal and social responsibility), (7) experienced success, (8) learnt that success does not happen by itself, but can be made, and (9) experienced positive emotions linked to success. These findings were endorsed by the program organizers. This is clarified with the following quotes:

Adolescents taking more responsibilities is positive for their self-development, discovering that they are also able to have more capabilities than was assumed at that time. For example, an adolescent who is not doing very well at school, but turned out to be one of our best coaches and even took engagement in other activities and projects in the municipality. At the beginning, he was just somebody who went to school and hung around on the streets and never succeeded at school. Now he is an active volunteer in the municipality. Now he has to realize for himself, "I'm able to do something, I have my skills". (Street worker 1)

We once organized a meeting in the town hall, and at first I thought it would be too difficult for them. But in fact the adolescents reacted in a very positive way and appreciated it to be taken seriously and that we were concerned about how they felt and how things went. (Prevention worker 1)

You learn to be less aggressive, you have to keep control of yourself towards little children....You learn how to work together, you learn to be sociable....We also learned how to improvise, during our trajectory. We had to perform a play without thinking in advance. You got your task and you had to invent a drama immediately and you can only learning that by doing. (adolescent Y)

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was twofold: (1) to assess the conditions necessary to development the human capital of disadvantaged adolescents through volunteering in community sport, and (2) to assess to what extent human capital can be developed. The need for this study was prompted by the current, limited, empirical evidence concerning sport volunteering's potential for human capital developmental of vulnerable adolescents and the underlying conditions required for such a development.

4.1. (Sufficient) Conditions

It has been indicated that reaching and retaining disadvantaged adolescents constitutes the first necessary

condition for working with them towards broader developmental and societal outcomes (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Patricksson, 1995). While this seems like a very logical first step, the present study in community sport programs confirms that this is a challenging objective. With regard to community sport programs, however, this is a remarkable finding as different authors (e.g., Marlier et al., 2014; Theeboom & De Maesschalck, 2006) have indicated that community sports have been specifically set up to reach the 'hard to reach'. In the eight pilot projects it became clear that a majority ($n = 6$) of the programs experienced difficulties in meeting different necessary conditions, and as such, to attract and retain disadvantaged adolescents as mere participants. More specifically, these related to similar findings in other sport and youth work contexts (Buelens, Theeboom, Vertonghen, & De Martelaer, 2015; Coalter, 2007; Gambone & Arbretton, 1997) and included amongst others (1) setting up a top-down program without prior involvement of the target group, (2) lacking clearly defined goals of the program, (3) difficulties in lowering thresholds, and (4) programs not being part of an integral and coordinated policy strategy. In addition, it turned out that the main reason why these programs were not able to go beyond these necessary conditions, was simply because they did not fully recognize that they are distinct from sufficient conditions, which are needed to provide developmental opportunities through volunteering. This means that they were primarily assuming that organizing sport activities for their target group would be sufficient to engage them in volunteering and as a result develop them. It can be concluded that the Street Action pilot programs which adopted such dominant approach, were characterized by higher levels of failure in terms of attracting adolescents as volunteers and their development, even though some of them were able to engage disadvantaged adolescents to a certain extent in the community sport as participants. This point of view concurs with the often taken for granted belief or storyline that positive developmental outcomes may be attributed merely to participation in sport. For example, Green (2008) argued that: "the belief that sport builds character is so ingrained that neither providers nor participants feel it necessary to do anything more than to provide opportunities. The benefits are thought to accrue to participants merely as a function of the opportunity" (p. 132). However, similar to what has been reported by others, results showed that attracting adolescents and organizing sport activities for them is not sufficient to enable developmental opportunities. Research has just begun to unravel these sufficient conditions (Coalter, 2012; Draper & Coalter, 2016; Sandford et al., 2006; Spaaij, 2012; Spaaij & Jeanes, 2013). The present study contributes, to a certain extent, to the insight into the sufficient conditions for programs that are initiated in more 'traditional' sport structures (i.e., municipal community sport services). These structures have, at least in Flanders, no real track record in focusing on this type of adolescent, let alone do they have experi-

ence in using sport from a youth development perspective. Based on the findings within two programs, inductive analysis identified two categories of sufficient conditions, being (1) valuing and recognizing adolescents, and (2) non-formal and experiential learning. The first category included four aspects: (a) bottom-up approach, (b) personal involvement, (c) reinforcing environment, and (d) official recognition. The second category included (1) taking responsibilities gradually and learning by doing, and (2) professional and interactive guidance.

4.2. Generalization of Conditions and their Interrelatedness

Similar necessary and sufficient conditions were identified in the different pilot programs, emphasized by the different actors involved. These conditions, furthermore, confirm research in specific sport for development programs (Coalter, 2012; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012; Schailée, 2016; Spaaij, 2012) and youth work (Coussée, Roets, & De Bie, 2009; Gambone & Arbretton, 1997; Hurley & Treacy, 1993; Jones & Deutsch, 2010; Witt & Crompton, 1997). For example, the European Commission (2014) summarized four categories of specific key feature methods used by youth work: (1) non-formal and informal learning, (2) participatory and/or experiential pedagogy, (3) relationship-based activities (learning as a social activity with others), (4) mentoring and/or peer support. Gradually involving adolescents from an early age to ascertain a commitment with the organisation when they grow older is an approach often used in traditional youth work (i.e., scouting, Coussée et al., 2009) and youth development programs (Dworkin et al., 2003; McLaughlin, 2000; Roth et al., 1998). In addition, researchers' own previous research related to disadvantaged adolescents' volunteering in sport, showed similar conditions in practices both inside (sport clubs) and outside (youth work) primarily traditional sport settings. Findings stressed the importance of establishing good relationships with the target group and striving for their maximal involvement in all aspects of the programs (Buelens et al., 2015; Buelens, Theeboom, Vertonghen, & De Martelaer, in review). This means a generalization can be made for different practices in different contexts and confirms previous research of Pawson (2001) stating that there is generalization and specificity in different social practices at the same time, which he referred to as a 'tailored transferable theory' (i.e., "this program theory works in these respects, for these subjects, in these kinds of situations", Pawson, 2001, p. 4). In this respect, he argued a shift in the analysis and understanding of social intervention programs from 'families of programs' to 'families of mechanisms' is needed (Pawson, 2006). From the present research it also has become clear that different conditions underlying the two identified categories of sufficient conditions are interrelated. Adolescents can develop their human capital through non-formal and experiential learning which can be facilitated when they

feel valued and recognized. Besides, adolescents' active involvement is also interrelated with the strengthening of their sense of belonging. They also expressed feelings of confidence and being respected which is interrelated with perceptions of equality.

In addition, from the present research, it can also be concluded that a gray area exists when it comes to retaining disadvantaged adolescents in sport. This can be illustrated with the comparison of recent research on sport club participation among disadvantaged adolescents in Flanders. In that study, Haudenhuyse et al. (2013b) categorized some conditions as 'necessary' that in the present study are described as 'sufficient'. After all, retaining adolescents of this target group often requires conditions in which they feel a sense of belonging, which in turn can be provided by creating opportunities to be actively involved, in other words, by complying with sufficient conditions. On the contrary, various studies (e.g., Day & Devlin, 1998; Smith, 2010) reported different conditions that were perceived to be sufficient, such as retaining adolescents in sport and facilitating professional support. However, findings in the present study revealed that although those conditions are very important, they cannot always be labeled as sufficient.

Furthermore, findings of the present study showed that most sport professionals of the local sport authorities involved were not well trained to work towards specific developmental aims. As noted in most of the investigated practices, there was a distinct need to have the support of professionals in youth development to deal with these issues. Within the two 'successful' practices, expertise regarding the provision of sufficient conditions for human capital development of the target group through volunteering in sport was largely found in youth work. This provides evidence that the abovementioned similarities within the identified sufficient conditions are rooted in the fact that these practices rely on systematic approaches and tools from youth work. This comes as no surprise, given the fact that adolescents (and their development) can be regarded as the primary goal of youth work. This is in contrast with youth sport contexts which often emphasize sport participation and performance. Furthermore, because of structural and logistical challenges a majority of pilot programs were facing, the youth professionals involved in those programs could not prioritize this type of work. In this respect, questions can be asked regarding whether traditional sport settings actually provide the best setting for a critical empowerment approach, not only because pursuing developmental goals, for a long time has not been the primary mission of traditional sport settings, but also because sport professionals often are not trained for developing social relationships, the strength of which has been identified as largely determining the success of sport-based social interventions Hartmann (2003). Theeboom et al. (2010) argued that it is already a major challenge for sport policy, in general, to focus on engaging adolescents in vulnerable situations.

However, youth work, as such, cannot be viewed as ‘the holy grail’ for (critical) youth development since, despite its expertise regarding youth development, it is not accessible to all young people (Coussée, 2006; Smits, 2004). Although different youth-work initiatives targeting socially vulnerable adolescents exist, it has been noted that attempts to reach these groups did not lead to the desired effects or even generated counterproductive ones (Coussée, 2008; Coussée et al., 2009). Pease (2002) argued that it is crucial for both marginalized and non-marginalized adolescents to come in contact with alternative discourses and for new people to be able to produce new knowledge and more ‘alternative and free ways of living’. In addition, according to Coussée and colleagues (2009) cross-connections that search for new communalities between young people on a thematic base (e.g., in the sphere of sport), may broaden perspectives without losing youth work’s safe environment. Since one of the advantages of sport and sport for development practices is that they often seem to be more capable than other socio-cultural activities in attracting young people independently of their socio-economic background (Crabbé, 2006; Feinstein, Bynner, & Duckworth, 2006; Haudenhuyse et al., 2013a; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Spaaij, 2009; Vanhoutte, 2007), sport is viewed by many as primarily an activity attracting many adolescents, including disadvantaged adolescents. This might suggest that sport is nothing more than a hook. However, in this respect, there is a need to investigate specific additional benefits linked to youth involvement in sport. After all, it provides a good setting in which participants can, among other things, learn by doing and through (resolving) their own mistakes; it provides a setting where responsibilities can be given and active involvement can be encouraged more easily than in other settings, such as in school and labor market. It is far more feasible to involve a young member to be an assistant coach in sport, than to give him or her, for example, the status of ‘assistant school teacher’. In this respect, the present study highlighted the potential of collaborating efforts between the sector of sport and youth work. The authors have reported elsewhere that, to date, this collaboration between both sectors in Flanders is, in most cases, sorely lacking (Buelens et al., 2015). In this context, we might suggest thinking about a new type of organizational format which combines both traditions as an important practical implication. A concept that shows resemblance to what became known in Germany in the early 1980’s as ‘sportliche sozialarbeit’ (sport social work). In this respect, it is worthwhile to investigate what is needed to introduce this type of alternative format in which relevant features of sport (e.g., interactions with significant others on different levels) and youth work (e.g., focus on the individual instead of their (athletic) performance) can come together.

Consequently, the question is whether the sport sector should incorporate more youth work-related strategies or whether youth work should make use of sport

as an activity in which they implement their specific approaches. It is yet to be seen which is the most feasible direction. Further research is needed. In this respect, the present study emphasizes the idea that volunteering can be seen as a key method as it facilitates the interactions of disadvantaged adolescents with significant others. Findings indicated that the quality of social relationships developed during a program, one of the critical success factors of development programs for disadvantaged adolescents (Draper & Coalter, 2016), can be facilitated through volunteering. First, adolescents could learn both from and with each other as well as from providers and coaches during their apprenticeships. Second, the disadvantaged adolescents were in the position to learn from guiding younger children. This corresponds with findings from Brunelle, Danish and Forneris (2007) that teaching life skills to younger children is a socially responsible activity that also enables adolescents to gain a sense of competence and self-efficacy. In addition, the relationships adolescents could have formed with the younger children may have further contributed to their ability to have concern for others. Third, adolescents learned through interactions with other (older) volunteers, the board, parents, and children. This is in line with Omoto and Snyder (1990) who suggest, in their volunteer process model, that engaging in a volunteer experience gives adolescents an experiential opportunity to learn about themselves and make attributions and assumptions about their roles as helpers. This was further confirmed by findings in the two programs where adolescents learned consciously through their role as ‘animators’.

4.3. Human Capital Developmental Outcomes and Critical Empowerment

Results also showed the achievement of two types of perceived human capital developmental outcomes through fulfilling the abovementioned sufficient conditions. Thereby, disadvantaged adolescents’ human capital is seen as the development of a broad set of resources. Adolescents indicated to develop both personal (e.g., taking initiative, taking personal responsibility) as well as interpersonal competences (e.g., working together, communication, dealing with feedback).

As indicated in the introduction, apart from a strategy to tackle social vulnerability on an individual level, another strategy relates to working towards structural changes at an institutional level (Coakley, 2011; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012, 2013a; Kelly, 2011; Vettenburg, 1998). Needless to say, this is not an easy thing to do. It goes well beyond the scope of most programs working with disadvantaged adolescents. It requires an integrated approach to implement measures and to set up initiatives with other relevant policy areas (e.g., education, welfare, youth,)—each with their own specific knowledge, experiences and expertise—to break out of the vicious circle of poverty, problematic welfare and low educational achievement of an increasing number of young

people. It also relates to what others have labeled as critical approaches of youth development (i.e., Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Iwasaki, 2015). The assumption is that these type of approaches can empower participants to not only understand existing social hierarchy, power relations, and social inequalities, but also to critically take part in the transformation of their own position within society (i.e., by becoming critical individuals). In the introduction, the authors described the six key dimensions of critical youth empowerment (Jennings et al., 2006). From the present study it became clear that the underlying sufficient conditions of the two successful practices did not facilitate all of these dimensions, however, the first three certainly did. And to some extent, initial steps towards participation in socio-political processes were made as well as in some programs adolescents were invited in the town hall to express their ideas (dimension 4, engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes). The fact that the programs were organized within municipal institutions is relevant and in line with findings of Iwasaki (2015) who stated that:

the strategic use of youth leadership with the support of community partners/stakeholders seems essential to facilitate social/systems changes in order to more effectively inspire and support marginalized youths who are at high-risk of a variety of life challenges. The power of youth in mobilizing systems/social changes should not be underestimated. (p. 11)

By focusing on becoming involved as a volunteer, the two programs incorporating a systematic approach seem to implicitly aim for a more critical approach to youth development. Although not all types of volunteering can be referred to as critical, the fact that participants were encouraged to be actively involved from the onset of the programs under study, shows their intention to motivate adolescents to take control and to change things themselves. The successful programs started from adolescents' needs and allowed them to come in contact with official institutions in a positive way. In addition, by allowing adolescents to organize their own activities in the programs (e.g., organizing (sport) activities in their own neighbourhood for other disadvantaged children and adolescents), a setting was created where they experienced that through their involvement as a volunteer they could change things in their own neighbourhoods and even feel that they were making a meaningful contribution to society in general. And by making use of self-reflection techniques among adolescents (e.g., through visualization of their own competences), they were able to critically reflect on their own situation and to progress. However, improving adolescents' vulnerable situation is no individual responsibility (Vettenburg, 1998). The present study offers evidence to call for realism with regard to critical empowerment expectations that adolescents can be emancipated to affect ruling social hi-

erarchy and power relations by themselves (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). As became clear throughout the study, for the more radical changes of critical youth empowerment (dimensions 5 and 6; 5: participation in socio-political processes to affect change, and 6: integrated individual- and community-level empowerment) radical changes are needed at the institutional level. Future research is needed to investigate how society's institutions can facilitate the provision of equal developmental opportunities for disadvantaged adolescents. Furthermore, by interpreting these findings and conclusions, caution is also warranted since only two programs managed to attract disadvantaged adolescents which could be a clear indication of exclusionary processes. This means critical youth empowerment was not reached in six out of the eight programs and one can wonder if these adolescents became even more vulnerable when the programs failed to keep them engaged.

4.4. Limitations and Other Future Research Directions

Although the present study delivers insight in the sufficient conditions underlying volunteering in community sport programs and related human capital outcomes for disadvantaged adolescents, our findings are based on only two community programs. This implies the identified categories need to be studied in future research. In this regard, using other research approaches might be useful. In the present study, researchers used an IPA approach for data collection and analysis as the aim was understanding the lived experiences from both a provider's and a participant's perspective and with how interviewees themselves make sense of their experiences. However, other research approaches, such as a realist synthesis (Herens, Wagemakers, Vaandrager, van Ophem, & Koelen, 2016) focussing on a more structured and systematic evaluation might generate additional insights. In addition, assigning (community) sport programs to a theoretical concept and then systematically carrying out an analysis of topics deductively derived from the present study and other current research would also be feasible. In addition, it also might be useful for future research to use the same strategy of interviewing and focus groups for investigating different specific forms of capital.

The focus of the present study has mainly been on the perspectives of those providing and supporting opportunities for volunteering in community sport and those partaking in it (i.e., mentoring relationships). However, such processes always take place in relation to different contexts. Community sport programs for adolescents should never lose sight of the social, political and/or organizational setting in which these interventions take place. Societal institutions, such as schools, the labor market, and the family context were not directly studied in this study. This is a limitation since societal institutions are the major maintainers and regenerators of social vulnerability and as a result, their impact on the lives of adolescents is of immeasurable significance (e.g.,

Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Padoan, 2010). In the present study information about such key institutions was mainly indirectly obtained from the perspectives of adolescents and professionals. But a further elaboration of these interactions is needed in further research. And although it was not within the scope of the present study, it would be interesting to see to what extent all these experiences as a volunteer in community sport can have an impact on these adolescents' choices they make in their lives in general, as well as on the change in opportunities they might get in relation to social networks, education, and work. Besides, in the present study, we only included adolescents who were actively involved and those who were organizing and supporting the different programs. As a result, dropouts were not included, which might have led to a distorted positive image regarding our findings. A critique shared by others, such as Hartmann and Kwauk (2011). It would be worthwhile to learn from the views and experiences of those who did not want to participate or are not participating any longer. In addition, looking at sport-developmental programs for adolescents should never lose sight of maturation effects nor disregard the social, political and/or organizational setting in which these interventions take place. Finally, even though, in the present study focus groups were explicitly chosen for their advantages with regard to disadvantaged adolescents (Smithson, 2000), several dangers of conducting focus groups with vulnerable groups also exist. Therefore, it might be useful for future research to conduct semi-structured interviews with disadvantaged adolescents as well.

Acknowledgements

Funding for this research was provided by ISB vzw. The authors would like to thank the participating youngsters and organizers in this study. They also want to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article as well as Dr. Reinhard Haudenhuyse for his valuable advice.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*.
- Becker, G. (1964). *Human capital national bureau of economic research*. New York.
- Benson, P. L. (2006). *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brunelle, J., Danish, S. J., & Forneris, T. (2007). The impact of a sport-based life skill program on adolescent prosocial values. *Applied developmental science, 11*(1), 43–55.
- Buelens, E., Theeboom, M., Vertonghen, J., & De Martelaer, K. (2015). Socially vulnerable youths and volunteering in sport. Analysing a Brussels training programme for young football coaches. *Social Inclusion, 3*(3), 82–97.
- Buelens, E., Theeboom, M., Vertonghen, J., & De Martelaer, K. (in review). Volunteering of socially vulnerable youths in Flemish sport clubs. Investigating conditions and perceived human capital developmental outcomes.
- Bynner, J. (2005). Rethinking the youth phase of the life-course: The case for emerging adulthood? *Journal of Youth Studies, 8*(4), 367–384.
- Catalano, R. F., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A., Lonczak, H. S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). Positive youth development in the United States: research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 591*, 98–124.
- Coakley, J. (2011). Youth sports: What counts as “positive development”? *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 35*(3), 306–324.
- Coalter, F. (2001). *Realising the potential. The case for cultural services: Sport*. London Local Government Association.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A wider social role for sport: Who's keeping the score?* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2011). Sport development's contribution to social policy objectives. The difficult relationship between politics and evidence. In B. Houlihan & M. Green (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of sports development* (1st ed., pp. 561–578). London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2012). “There is loads of relationships here”: Developing a programme theory for sport-for-change programmes. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 48*(5), 594–612.
- Coalter, F. (2013). *Sport for development: What game are we playing?* (1st ed.). London: Routledge.
- Coussée, F. (2006). *De pedagogiek van het jeugdwerk*. Academia Press.
- Coussée, F. (2008). *A century of youth work policy*. Academia Press.
- Coussée, F., Roets, G., & De Bie, M. (2009). Empowering the powerful: Challenging hidden processes of marginalization in youth work policy and practice in Belgium. *Critical Social Policy, 29*(3), 421–442. doi:10.1177/0261018309105178
- Crabbé, T. (2006). Reaching the ‘hard to reach’: Engagement, relationship building and social control in sport based social inclusion work. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing, 2*(1/2), 27–40.
- Damon, W. (2004). What is positive youth development? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 591*, 13–24.
- Darnell, S. C. (2007). Playing with race: Right to play and the production of whiteness in “development through sport”. *Sport in Society, 10*(4), 560–579.
- Darnell, S. C. (2010). Power, politics and “sport for devel-

- opment and peace”: Investigating the utility of sport for international development. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27(1), 54–75.
- Day, K., & Devlin, R. A. (1998). The payoff to work without pay: Volunteer work as an investment in human capital. *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 31(5), 1179–1191.
- Dierckx, D., Coene, J., Van Haarlem, A., & Raeymaekers, P. (2013). *Armoede en sociale uitsluiting. Jaarboek 2013* [Poverty and social exclusion. 2013 annual] (1st ed.). Leuven: Acco.
- Draper, C. E., & Coalter, F. (2016). “There’s just something about this club. It’s been my family.” An analysis of the experiences of youth in a South African sport-for-development programme. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 51(1), 44–60.
- Dworkin, J. B., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2003). Adolescents’ accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32(1), 17–26. doi:10.1023/A:1021076222321
- Eley, D., & Kirk, D. (2002). Developing citizenship through sport: The impact of a sport-based volunteer programme on young sport leaders. *Sport, Education and Society*, 7(2), 151–166.
- Eurofound. (2012). *NEETs—Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission. (2014). *Working with young people: The value of youth work in the European Union*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf
- Feinstein, L., Bynner, J., & Duckworth, K. (2006). Young people’s leisure contexts and their relation to adult outcomes. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(3), 305–327.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Rev. ed.). New York: Continuum, 1970.
- Gambone, M. A., & Arbreton, A. J. (1997). *Safe havens: The contributions of youth organizations to healthy adolescent development*.
- Ginwright, S., & Cammarota, J. (2002). New terrain in youth development: The promise of a social justice approach. *Social Justice*, 29, 82–95.
- Giulianotti, R. (2004). Human rights, globalization and sentimental education: The case of sport. *Sport in Society*, 7(3), 355–369.
- Glover, T. D., & Hemingway, J. L. (2005). Locating leisure in the social capital literature. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 34(4), 387–401.
- Gould, D., & Carson, S. (2008). Life skills development through sport: Current status and future directions. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 1(1), 58–78.
- Green, C. (2008). Sport as an agent for social and personal change. In V. Girginov (Ed.), *Management of Sports Development* (pp. 129–146). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Grineski, S. (1996). *Cooperative learning in physical education*. Human Kinetics Publishers.
- Guest, A. M. (2009). The diffusion of development-through-sport: Analysing the history and practice of the Olympic Movement’s grassroots outreach to Africa. *Sport in Society*, 12(10), 1336–1352.
- Hartmann, D. (2003). Theorizing sport as social intervention: A view from the grassroots. *Quest*, 55, 118–140.
- Hartmann, D., & Kwauk, K. (2011). Sport and development: An overview, critique, and reconstruction. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 35(3), 284–305.
- Haudenhuysse, R., & Theeboom, M. (2012). *The potential of sports for socially vulnerable youth*. VUB Press.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Coalter, F. (2012). The potential of sports-based social interventions for vulnerable youth: Implications for sport coaches and youth workers. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(4), 437–454.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Nols, Z. (2013a). Sports-based interventions for socially vulnerable youth: Towards well-defined interventions with easy-to-follow outcomes? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(4), 471–484.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., Nols, Z., & Coussée, F. (2013b). *Wij Sporten Mee. Verkennend onderzoek naar de rol van sportclubs in het leven van maatschappelijk kwetsbare jongeren*. Demos.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Skille, E. A. (2014). Towards understanding the potential of sports-based practices for socially vulnerable youth. *Sport in Society*, 17(2), 139–156.
- Hellison, D., & Walsh, D. (2002). Responsibility-based youth programs evaluation: Investigating the investigations. *Quest*, 54(4), 292–307.
- Herens, M., Wagemakers, A., Vaandrager, L., van Ophem, J., & Koelen, M. (2016). Contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes that matter in Dutch community-based physical activity programs targeting socially vulnerable groups. *Evaluation & the Health Professions*, 0163278716652940.
- Hirschi, T. (2009). *Causes of delinquency*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Hogan, D., & Owen, D. (2000). Social capital, active citizenship and political equality in Australia. In I. Winter (Ed.), *Social capital and public policy in Australia* (pp. 74–104). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- Hurley, L., & Treacy, D. (1993). *Models of youth work: A sociological framework*. Dublin: Irish Youth Work Press.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy*. Northwestern University Press.
- Hylton, K., & Totten, M. (2008). Community sports development. In K. Hylton & P. Braham (Eds.), *Sports development, policy, process and Practice* (pp. 17–77). London: Routledge.
- Iwasaki, Y. (2015). The role of youth engagement in positive youth development and social justice youth de-

- velopment for high-risk, marginalised youth. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 1–12.
- Jennings, L. B., & Green, J. L. (1999). Locating democratizing and transformative practices within classroom discourse. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 34(2), i–iv.
- Jennings, L. B., Parra-Medina, D. M., Hilfinger-Messias, D. K., & McLoughlin, K. (2006). Toward a critical social theory of youth empowerment. *Journal of Community Practice*, 14(1/2), 31–55.
- Jones, N., & Deutsch, N. (2010). Relational strategies in after-school settings: How staff-youth relationships support positive development. *Youth and Society*, 43(4), 1381–1406.
- Kay, T., & Bradbury, S. (2009). Youth sport volunteering: Developing social capital? *Sport, Education and Society*, 14(1), 121–140.
- Kay, T., & Spaaij, R. (2012). The mediating effects of family on sport in international development contexts. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(1), 77–94.
- Kelly, L. (2011). ‘Social inclusion’ through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126–150.
- Kidd, B. (2008). A new social movement: Sport for development and peace. *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 370–380.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Koning Boudewijnstichting. (2015). *Het vrijwilligerswerk in België. Kerncijfers* [Voluntary work in Belgium. Core figures]. Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting.
- Krauss, S. E., Hamzah, A., Suandi, T., & Tamam, E. (2007). Focusing on the ‘human’ in human capital: Positive youth development as a foundation for maximising human capital investment. *Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 5(2), 9–20.
- Larkin, M., & Thompson, A. R. (2012). Interpretative phenomenological analysis in mental health and psychotherapy research. In *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 99–116). Chichester, UK: Wiley & Sons.
- Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., . . . & von Eye, A. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of Positive Youth Development. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17–71.
- Levermore, R. (2008). Sport: A new engine of development? *Progress in Development Studies*, 8(2), 183–190.
- Marlier, M., Cardon, G., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., & Willem, A. (2014). A capacity building approach to increase sports participation in disadvantaged urban communities: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of Urban Health*, 91(6), 1114–1128.
- McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development*. Washington, DC: Public Education Network.
- OECD. (2001). *The well-being of nations. The role of human and social capital*. Paris: OECD.
- Omoto, A. M., & Snyder, M. (1990). Basic research in action volunteerism and society’s response to AIDS. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 16(1), 152–165.
- Padoan, P. (2010). A family affair: Intergenerational social mobility across OECD countries. In *Economic policy reforms: Going for growth 2010* (pp. 181–198). Paris: OECD.
- Palmer, P. J. (2010). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher’s life*. Chichester, UK: Wiley & Sons.
- Patricksson, G. (1995). *The significance of sport for society—Health, socialization, economy: A scientific review*. Scientific Review part 2. Strasbourg. Council of Europe Press.
- Pawson, R. (2001). *Evidence based policy: vol. II. The promise of ‘realist synthesis’*. London: University of London.
- Pawson, R. (2006). *Evidence-based policy: A realist perspective* (1st ed.). London: Sage.
- Pease, B. (2002) Rethinking empowerment: A postmodern reappraisal for emancipatory practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 32(2), 135–147.
- Penner, L. A. (2002). Dispositional and organizational influences on sustained volunteerism: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(3), 447–467. doi:10.1111/15404560.00270
- Pouw, D., & Daniels, C. (2001). *Sportbuurtwerk in Nederland. Verleden, heden en toekomst* [Neighbourhood sport in The Netherlands. Past, present and future]. Arnhem: Nederlands instituut voor Sport en Bewegen.
- Rappaport, J. (1987). Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15(2), 121–148. doi:10.1007/BF00919275
- Risler, E. A., & Holosko, M. J. (2009). Blueprint for a Youth Empowerment Model (YEM) through volunteerism. In E. S. C. Liu, M. J. Holosko, & T. Wing Loa (Eds), *Youth empowerment and volunteerism. Principles, policies and practices* (1st ed., pp. 57–81). Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press.
- Roth, J., Brooks-Gunn, J., Murray, L., & Foster, W. (1998). Promoting healthy adolescents: Synthesis of youth development program evaluations. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 8(4), 423–459. 10.1207/s15327795jra0804_2
- Sandford, R. A., Armour, K. M., & Warmington, P. C. (2006). Re-engaging disaffected youth through physical activity programmes. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(2), 251–271.
- Schaillée, H. (2016). *More than just a game? The potential of sport programmes to foster positive youth de-*

- velopment among diasadvantaged girls (PhD Dissertation). Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium.
- Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review*, 1–17.
- Smith, J. A. (1996). Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 11(2), 261–271.
- Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1(1), 39–54.
- Smith, V. (2010). Enhancing employability: Human, cultural, and social capital in an era of turbulent unpredictability. *Human Relations*, 63(2), 279–300.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London: Sage.
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 53–79). London: Sage.
- Smithson, J. (2000). Using and analysing focus groups: limitations and possibilities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(2), 103–119.
- Smits, W. (2004). *Bewegen in de sociale, vrijetijds- en culturele ruimte. Eindverslag van het programma beleidsgericht onderzoek 'Maatschappelijke participatie van jongeren'* [Acting in social, leisure and cultural areas. End report of the program policy oriented research 'Social participation of adolescents']. Brussels: VUB/TOR.
- Sourbron, M., & Herremans, W. (2013). *Jeugdwerkloosheid in Europa: Vlaanderen in een Europees regionaal vergelijkend perspectief* [Youth unemployment in Europe: Flanders within a European regional comparative perspective]. Leuven: Steunpunt Werk en Sociale Economie.
- Spaaij, R. (2009). Sport as a vehicle for social mobility and regulation of disadvantaged urban youth: Lessons from Rotterdam. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 44(2/3), 247–264.
- Spaaij, R. (2012). Building social and cultural capital among young people in disadvantaged communities: Lessons from a Brazilian sport-based intervention program. *Sport, Education and Society*, 17, 77–95.
- Spaaij, R., & Jeanes, R. (2013). Education for social change? A Freirean critique of sport for development and peace. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 18(4), 442–457.
- Strachan, L., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2011). A new view: Exploring positive youth development in elite sport contexts. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise, and Health*, 3, 9–32.
- Taylor, P. D., Panagoulas, T., & Nichols, G. (2012). Determinants of sports volunteering and sports volunteer time in England. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 4(2), 201–220. doi:10.1080/19406940.2012.656679
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research analysis types and software tools* (1st ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Theeboom, M., Haudenhuyse, R., & De Knop, P. (2010). Community sports development for socially deprived groups: A wider role for the commercial sports sector? A look at the Flemish situation. *Sport in Society*, 13(9), 1392–1410.
- Theeboom, M., & de Maesschalck, P. (2006). *Sporten om de hoek: Een brede kijk op buurtsport in Vlaanderen* [Sport around the corner: a broad view on community sport in Flanders]. Vlaams Instituut voor Sportbeheer en Recreatie beleid.
- Van Regenmortel, T. (2002). Empowerment en Maatzorg. Een krachtgerichte psychologische kijk op armoede [Empowerment and tailored care. A powerful psychological approach of poverty]. In J. Vranken, K. De Boyser, D. Geldof, & G. Van Menxel (Eds.), *Armoede en Sociale Uitsluiting, Jaarboek 2002* (1st ed., pp. 71–84). Leuven/leusden: Acco.
- Van Regenmortel, T. (2009). Empowerment als uitdagend kader voor sociale inclusie en moderne zorg [Empowerment as a challenging framework for social inclusion and modern care]. *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice*, 18(4), pp. 22–42.
- Vanhoutte, B. (2007). Doe je mee? Jongeren en participatie aan het verenigingsleven [Are you in? Youth and participation in leisure associations]. In N. Vetteburg, M. Elchardus, & L. Walgrave (Eds.), *Jongeren in cijfers en letters. Bevindingen uit de JOP-monitor 1* [Youngsters in numbers and letters. Findings from JOP-monitor 1], (1st ed., pp. 175–187). Leuven: Lannoo.
- Vetteburg, N. (1998). Juvenile delinquency and the cultural characteristics of the family. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 10(3), 193–210.
- Vetteburg, N. (2011). Jongeren, maatschappelijke kwetsbaarheid en emancipatorisch Jeugdwerk [Youngsters, social vulnerability and emancipatory youth work. In F. Coussée & C. Mathijssen (Eds.), *Uit de marge van het jeugdbeleid. Werken met maatschappelijk kwetsbare jeugd* (1st ed., pp. 25–38). Leuven: Acco.
- Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 215–240.
- Witt, P. A., & Crompton, J. L. (1997). The protective factors framework: A key to programming for benefits and evaluating for results. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 15(3), 1–18.
- Zimmerman, M. A. (2000). Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational and community levels of analysis. In J. Rappaport & E. Seidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology* (1st ed., pp. 43–63). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

About the Authors



Evi Buelens works as a postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium (VUB). She is a member of the 'Sport and Society' research group. In September 2016, Evi achieved her PhD in Physical Education and Movement Sciences. Her PhD-study is entitled: 'Exploring the developmental role of volunteering in sport for youngsters in socially vulnerable situations'. Evi's research primarily focuses on volunteering, (critical) youth development, necessary and sufficient conditions, sport, disadvantaged youth and valorisation.



Marc Theeboom works as a full professor at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy and the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium (VUB). He is chair of the 'Sport and Society' research group. His research primarily focuses on educational and policy-related aspects of (youth) sport in general and specific target groups in particular (e.g. socially deprived youth, ethnic minorities, elderly). He has a special interest in the analysis and evaluation of 'sport development' programmes in which sport is regarded as a social instrument and a means of community development ('sport-plus').



Jikkemien Vertonghen works as a professor at the Department of Movement and Sport Sciences (Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy) of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium. In April 2011, Jikkemien received her PhD in Physical Education and Movement Sciences, in which she analyzed contextual factors in youth martial arts practice. Jikkemien's research is related to youth sports in general and martial arts practice in particular. She has a special interest in the analysis of sport programs in which sport is used as a tool to work with specific target groups towards personal, social and community development.



Kristine De Martelaer achieved her PhD in Physical Education through research on youth-centred organised swimming. Since December 2001, she has been a professor at the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). She is president of the International Centre for Ethics in Sport (ICES) and has the special Chair "Pedagogy of Physical education", embedded in the division of Education of the faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences of Utrecht University (since 2015). She currently teaches sport history & philosophy, didactics, PE curriculum development, and basic life support (BLS). Her research topics are within sport pedagogy: fundamental movement skills of young children, competences of PE teachers and voluntary youth coaches, didactical approaches of responsibility-based teaching, ethics in sport, water safety and basic life support (BLS).

Article

Exploring the Sports Experiences of Socially Vulnerable Youth

Sabina Super *, Carlijn Q. Wentink, Kirsten T. Verkooijen and Maria A. Koelen

Department of Social Sciences, Wageningen University, 6700 EW Wageningen, The Netherlands;
E-Mails: sabina.super@wur.nl (S.S.), carlijn.wentink@wur.nl (C.Q.W.), kirsten.verkooijen@wur.nl (K.T.V.),
maria.koelen@wur.nl (M.A.K.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 24 January 2017 | Accepted: 10 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Sports participation is considered beneficial for the development of socially vulnerable youth, not only in terms of physical health but also in terms of cognitive, social and emotional health. Despite the strong belief that sports clubs offer a setting for positive youth development, there is limited knowledge about how socially vulnerable youths experience their participation in these clubs. Interviews were conducted with 22 socially vulnerable youths that play a sport at a local sports club. An inductive content analysis was conducted and three themes were discovered that are included in the positive and negative sports experiences: the extent to which the youths experienced visibility of their skills, the extent to which the youths felt confident while playing their sport, and the extent to which the youths felt that sport was a challenge they liked to take on. More importantly, there was a fragile balance within each of the themes and the sports coaches played an important role in installing and maintaining a supportive environment in which the youths could have meaningful, consistent and balanced sports experiences. It is not self-evident that for socially vulnerable youth sports experiences are positive and supporting.

Keywords

health development; salutogenesis; socially vulnerable youth; sports coach; sports participation

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

The attention that policymakers give to sport as a tool for the personal development of socially vulnerable youth is growing, as researchers argue that the sports setting holds potential for enhancing physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). Policymakers and health professionals more and more aim to increase the sports participation rates of young people because they consider that the sports setting is a place where young people can be engaged in meaningful activities and where they can have positive experiences of support and appreciation (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, Nols, & Coussée, 2014). In addition, sports participation has often been linked to the

development of life skills that can be used in different societal domains (Gould & Carson, 2008; Hayden et al., 2015). Finally, research has suggested that young people can develop coping abilities through their participation in sport (Tamminen & Holt, 2012), which they can use in dealing with everyday life challenges. With these ideas in mind, increasing the sports participation of socially vulnerable youth may be a promising way to strengthen their personal development, also because the sports participation rates of socially vulnerable youth are lower than for their average peers (Vandermeerschen, Vos, & Scheerder, 2015).

In order to understand how socially vulnerable youth may benefit from their participation in sport it is important to investigate how they experience playing a sport

(Haudenhuyse et al., 2014). Research into sports experiences has often been conducted in athlete samples (Bruner, Hall, & Côté, 2011; Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015a). These studies demonstrate that young athletes experience a diversity of developmental experiences as well as negative experiences related to various stressors in the sports setting. Although studies in this area have offered valuable insights, they do not necessarily inform us on how *socially vulnerable youth* experience sport participation. In fact, very little research has been conducted regarding the sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth. Socially vulnerable youth are characterised as having an accumulated amount of negative experiences with the societal institutions in their lives, which often leads to distorted relationships with those institutions and social disconnectness (Vettenburg, 1998). These negative experiences with institutions can relate to the family domain (e.g., the parents have financial problems or youths experience domestic violence), to the school domain (e.g., youths are bullied at school), to the judicial system (e.g., after drug use or after a crime) or to the community (e.g., living in a bad neighbourhood with high crime rates). As a result of these negative experiences, socially vulnerable youth are often confronted with feelings of incompetence and rejection. For these youths, sports participation is seen as a tool that can alleviate some of the distorted relationships, when they have positive and supporting experiences within the sports domain, in contrast to the negative experiences they have in other societal domains (Haudenhuyse et al., 2014). Yet, the negative experiences of socially vulnerable youth with the societal institutions in their life may also translate to the sports setting and may influence how they experience their participation in sport. Previous research has shown that the social conditions, such as the sports climate, in the sports setting are important for creating positive experiences and reaching positive outcomes, and that the sports coach is a key-player in creating these social conditions (Cronin & Allen, 2015; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012). However, in the traditional club-based sports setting of many Western countries, many young people sport at local sports clubs that are run by volunteer sports coaches with limited or no formal coaching training. As such, these sports coaches may not always be able to create optimal social conditions. Consequently, given the vulnerable nature of socially vulnerable youth going to local sport clubs, there is reason to believe that these youths' sports experiences may not always be positive.

In recent years, researchers have begun to recognise that research into sports experiences of young people have paid little attention to understanding how they themselves experience their sports participation (Harrist & Witt, 2015; Holt, Tamminen, Tink, & Black, 2009). Recognising that including the views of these young people in research is essential (Strachan & Davies, 2014), several researchers have begun to explore the sports ex-

periences of vulnerable young people. A study amongst young people with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) showed that the symptoms of ADHD hampered the sports experiences of the participants, for example because they faced difficult interpersonal relationships with sports coaches or peers (Lee, Dunn, & Holt, 2014). The authors conclude that the sports experiences are complex as the participants also reported benefits from their sports participation. Draper and Coalter (2016) studied the experiences of young males from a deprived South-African community participating in a soccer and life-skills program. They found that the sense of family, safety and belonging were mentioned as the aspects of the program that supported positive development of its participants. The importance of relationships in creating positive experiences has also been emphasised in a study including socially vulnerable youth going to Belgium sports clubs (Haudenhuyse et al., 2014). Given the small number of studies on this topic, this article aims to contribute to existing research by investigating the positive and negative sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth participating in local sports clubs.

1.1. The Current Study

In the Netherlands, where the research for this study has been conducted, 10 percent of the youth population received care from youth care organisations because they experience problems in growing up (CBS, 2016). Youth care organisations are increasingly organising care within the youths' close environment and in collaboration with the youths' social network, to prevent that youths receive more expensive and specialised health care. The care that youths receive is specifically adapted to their needs, their abilities, and the environment in which they live in. As the local sports club is one of the pedagogical settings that potentially can support youths in their personal development, the Dutch Ministry of Health, Well-being and Sport (VWS, 2011) aims to increase sports participation rates of young people, not only to improve their health, but also to reach wider social and educational outcomes. To enable all youths to join a local sports club, The Youth Sports Fund has been created to offer financial support for membership fees and the purchase of sports cloths and materials (Jansma & Maks, 2014). As more and more socially vulnerable youth join local sports clubs (Jansma & Maks, 2014), it is relevant to study how these youths experience their participation in sport.

This study is part of the research project Youth, Care and Sport, that has been set up to study the role of sport in improving the life prospects of socially vulnerable youth (Super, Hermens, Verkooijen, & Koelen, 2014). The research project aims to 1) understand the relationship between sports participation and youth developmental outcomes; 2) explore how socially vulnerable youth experience their participation in sport and the value they derive from sports participation in a socially vulnerable

childhood; 3) examine how community sports coaches can create optimal social conditions for the personal development of socially vulnerable youth; and 4) examine the elements of successful and enduring partnerships between youth care organisations and sports organisations. The research project takes a salutogenic approach, that focuses on the main questions ‘What creates health?’ (Antonovsky, 1979). According to Antonovsky (1979), people are confronted with stressors in their daily lives defined as ‘a demand made by the internal or external environment of an organism that upsets its homeostasis’ (p. 72). In the salutogenic model of health, stressors can be pathogenic (i.e., negative) but they can also be salutogenic (i.e., positive). Whether stressors become either pathogenic or salutogenic depends on the resources people have available to meet the demands of everyday life and people’s ability to deal with stressors, referred to as sense of coherence. Sense of coherence consists of three components (Antonovsky, 1979): the extent to which people experience the world as consistent and structured (comprehensibility); the extent to which people feel that there are resources available to meet the demands of everyday life (manageability); and the extent to which people feel that dealing with the stressors of everyday life is worthy of investment and engagement (meaningfulness). People with a stronger sense of coherence consider stressors more as a meaningful challenge rather than as a threat and, hence, they are better able to select effective coping strategies, resolving tension in a health promoting manner. Previous studies have found a positive association between sports participation and sense of coherence (Ahola et al., 2012; Honkinen, Suominen, Välimaa, Helenius, & Rautava, 2005), suggesting that the sports setting may provide opportunities for strengthening the sense of coherence as young people are engaged with various stressors and challenges in a meaningful activity. Taking a salutogenic perspective, we aim to better understand the positive and negative sports experiences of socially vulnerable youths participating in local sports clubs.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants and Procedure

Open interviews were conducted with socially vulnerable youth to elude narratives about the youths’ sports experiences (Haden & Hoffman, 2013). The interviews were conducted with 22 socially vulnerable youths (13 male, 9 female) that participated in local sports clubs. The youths differed in the extent to which they could be labelled as socially vulnerable, ranging from youths living in deprived communities to youths with severe learning or behavioural problems. The youths were contacted via four organisations that work with socially vulnerable youth: two secondary special education schools for young people with severe behavioural or learning problems, one youth care organisation, and one sports club in

a socially deprived community. Youth professionals were asked to invite youths to participate in the study based on three inclusion criteria:

1. The youths are between 10 and 18 years old;
2. The youths are socially vulnerable according to Vetenburg’s (1998) definition;
3. The youths are member of a sports club or a fitness club.

The youth professionals were informed about the definition of social vulnerability. As the youth professionals had a thorough understanding of the youths’ problems, and thus the nature of their vulnerability, they were considered well able to categorise youths accordingly. The researchers were not informed about the exact nature of the youths’ problems for ethical reasons. First of all, medical information falls under the client confidentiality agreement between medical staff and clients and, therefore, the researchers could not be informed about the youths’ medical background by the youth professionals. In addition, to assure that the youths would feel safe during the interviews, no questions were asked about the youths’ vulnerable nature. Information about the participating youths can be found in Table 1.

During the interviews, the researchers took into account several ethical considerations in accordance with general ethical guidelines for behavioural and social research as approved by the review board of the Wageningen School of Social Sciences. Via the contact organisation, the researchers informed the youths and their parents about the purpose and set-up of the interview. The parents were asked to inform the contact organisation if they did not want their child to participate in the study. None of the parents disagreed to their child’s participation. In addition, the interviewers ascertained that the youths understood that they had the right to leave the study at any point in time without giving a reason, that the interviews would be tape-recorded, and that confidentiality was guaranteed. The interviews were conducted at the participants’ chosen location, preferably in the sports environment or another safe environment for the youths. Two researchers (SS and CW) each conducted half of the interviews. All youths received a gift voucher after the interview of 10 euros for an online warehouse.

2.2. Interview Guide

The interview guide was based on previous studies in the area of young people’s sports experiences regarding the topics that are important in the sports setting (for example, Jakobsson, 2012; Tjomsland et al., 2015). The interviews started with background questions about the youths’ sports participation in the past and present, and their motivation for starting to engage in sport (e.g., Why did you chose to play this sport?). These questions were followed by open questions covering several topics such as their experience with their coaches (e.g., Can you tell

Table 1. Detailed information about the youths.

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Current sport
Celia	12	female	hockey
Dacey	14	female	gymnastics, horse riding
Tamara	16	female	dancing
Ian	11	male	hockey
Leon	15	male	mountain biking
Carl	16	male	fitness
Becky	13	female	hockey
Harris	15	male	soccer
Matt	16	male	taekwondo
Paul	15	male	American football, fitness
Nathan	13	male	hockey
Ferdi	16	male	fitness
Carin	16	female	fitness
Kaspar	15	male	basketball
Rachel	15	female	dancing
Gabriel	16	male	cycling, badminton
Joyce	16	female	walking
Jack	16	male	soccer
Sanaa	13	female	soccer, hockey
Vernon	16	male	hockey
Daphne	16	female	fitness
Joey	17	male	Thai boxing

me about your coach or trainer?), their peers (e.g., What are the people in your team like?), the exercises (e.g., Can you tell me what a regular training looks like?), and (when relevant) competitions (e.g., Can you tell me about the first match you ever played?). The open questions ensured that the youths could share their experiences as they were relevant for them. The interviewer tried to probe for a deeper understanding of the experiences by asking more detailed questions about the experiences.

The interviewers conducted three pilot interviews with youths to evaluate the interview guide. The pilot interviews gave rise to several questions about the suitability of the guide for interviewing socially vulnerable youth. The second step then was to contact a youth professional to discuss the interview guide and strategies to interview socially vulnerable youth. The opportunities to create a safe interviewing climate were also discussed with this youth professional. Consequent to this meeting, the interviewers chose not to use a sheet of paper with interview questions and called the interviews a 'short chat.' It was felt that the use of the term 'interview' and the sheet of interview questions might resemble the characteristics of a therapeutic session and that this could diminish the youths' sense of safety. As a result of the open approach, the interviews varied in terms of duration, depth, and content. The interviews lasted between 10 and 26 minutes. Since the experiences of the youths were very diverse, also in the relatively shorter interviews, all the interviews were considered informative and were taken into account when analysing the data and writing up the

results. Some children were better able to express themselves than others, and therefore some interviews were more informative than others.

2.3. Data Analysis

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and, thereafter, analysed using software for qualitative data analysis (Atlas.ti). Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to guarantee anonymity. An inductive content analysis was conducted to explore the sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth following the guidelines by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). The transcripts were read back and forth by two researchers (SS and CW) to create an initial understanding of the way the youths talked about sports. In the second step, the first author (SS) created initial data-driven codes guided by the main question: Which topics are present in the positive and negative sports experiences? The first author (SS) created a codebook based on the first round of coding, after which the second author (CW) coded all the interviews. The coding was compared between the two authors and was almost identical. Any discrepancies in coding were discussed until agreement was reached. In the third phase, categories were formed by grouping the topics that were present in the positive and negative sports experiences. Although the analysis was inductive in nature, it is important to mention that this study is part of a research project that is inspired by the salutogenic model of health and the work of Antonovsky (1979). The saluto-

genic model of health was not used to form initial codes, but it did steer the researchers towards considering that stressors can be both pathogenic (negative) and salutogenic (positive) also depending on the youths' resources and their ability to use these resources to deal with the stressors. As such, themes were formed that covered a specific topic in the sports experiences that was mentioned in positive and negative accounts. In the final step, the first author (SS) created a draft report of the interview results that was critically reviewed and compared with the original data by the remaining authors.

3. Results

The youths in the interviews described a large diversity in motivation for their sports participation. Having fun was one of the most cited reasons to join a sports club, as well as having fun in getting better in your sports discipline. Yet, also negative accounts were present in the youths' stories. In this section we describe the diversity of the youths' sports experiences. Within each theme we first describe the positive experiences relating to the topic and then the negative experiences.

3.1. Theme 1: Seeing Your Own Skills

One source of positive experiences that was frequently mentioned related to the youths' increased understanding of the game and the strategies to improve performance. This was not necessarily related to competition and winning, but also to mastery and improved (sports) skills. Sanaa described how she enjoyed that her new hockey team improved after learning to work together:

Sanaa: It [losing a match] came because we didn't know each other that well. And we didn't know what we were good at. And how you can pass the ball to each other. So we had to learn a lot. And that's when we started working together more and it is going much better now.

In this respect, it is interesting to mention that the youths were very well able to describe the skills they possessed in the sports setting. These were not only sport-technical skills such as ball-handling or shooting techniques, but also broader life skills such as keeping focus, keeping an overview in games, communication skills, and team-work skills. Nathan appreciated playing in competition against various teams, as this helped him to recognise his competencies, stating: 'Yes, then you know what your qualities are.' Most youths were also very well able to describe what they could do to improve the skills that they did not sufficiently possess. The strategies they described were manifold, such as persevering with exercises, asking the sports coach questions, sparring with people who were better than themselves, and asking friends for help. Dacey described her various strategies to learn new gymnastic elements:

Dacey: I just practice on a trampoline and then I will just practice what I have to do. Or I can ask my friends if they can help me, or I will do it in a swimming pool.

In the youths' stories, the sports coaches often played an important role in establishing the visibility of skills. Harris discussed his position on the soccer field and how he, with the help of his sports coach, was able to identify his competencies and weaknesses as a number 10 player:

Harris: In the number 10 position, you need to be able to keep a good overview because you have to look over the field... to whom you should pass the ball. Because you don't want to pass the ball to someone that is offside.

Interviewer: Is that something that you are good at, keeping an overview?

Harris: Yes, I'm good at keeping an overview... but I talk too little. I usually keep my mouth shut and then the sports coach says... you should talk more.

On the other hand, for some youths, the visibility of skills in the sports setting and the ways to develop them were not so clear. Some youths expressed that they did not know how to develop certain skills, stating that it was something that 'goes automatically'. In some instances, the lack of knowing how to develop certain skills could lead to negative experiences. Celia got angry during a hockey training because she tried and failed a number of times in trying to hit a backhand. Asking her what made her so angry, she replied: 'That I can't do it. Even though you keep on trying, I just won't get it'. To Celia, the strategy of 'persevering with exercises' did not help her in learning a new skill.

3.2. Theme 2: Being Confident in One's Sport

The stories shared by the youths often incorporated references to (a lack of) confidence, for example in being able to improve their performance or to learn to master new things. The confidence in being able to improve is closely related to the previous theme of being able to see your strengths and weaknesses. However, this theme addresses a broader notion of having confidence beyond mere 'understanding of skills and strategies'. The confidence that the youths expressed in their sport could relate to the individual player (i.e., confidence in having the ability to improve and learn new things), to the sports coach (i.e., the confidence that the sports coach will help to overcome barriers by giving advice and support), and to the team (i.e., the confidence that the team will support the individual to take on new challenges). This confidence was important for the youths to be committed to the sport, the exercises, and competition. Some youths felt confident about being able to learn new things or to take a next step in their level of sport. Tamara, for exam-

ple, described how she always trusted her talent even though things were sometimes difficult:

Tamara: Well I'm not a quick learner, I'm not fast in picking things up. But if it actually concerns something that I really enjoy doing, then all of a sudden I can do it. For example, if we learn a new [dance] routine...last week...we practised the routine once and I immediately knew the new routine off the top of my head. I guess that you would need some sort of talent to do that.

Other positive accounts related to the confidence and support youths received from their peers. Some youths indicated that the team atmosphere was supportive and positive, which helped them in taking new steps or in persevering when things got tough. Jack, for example, described a situation during a match in which he lost the ball and where his peers coached him in a supportive way. This also increased his confidence that next time he would do it better:

Jack: Yes, they [other team players] will coach me in a positive way. Because when they will coach me in a negative way, this will also negatively affect the match.

Interviewer: And what does that mean, coaching you in a positive way? What do they say or do?

Jack: Then they will say... that next time it will be better if I do it this way or that way. That it doesn't matter, because next time I will get it right.

The sports coach played an important role in establishing this confidence. The youths mentioned the sports coach not only as a source of sport-technical knowledge and advice, but also as a source of constant support. Dacey competed in a gymnastics exercise and felt supported by her sports coach, knowing that he was there to help her whenever she lost track in the routine:

Dacey: But I do really try to do it off the top of my head, but if I forget something then I will look at him [the sports coach]...and then he knows too...if she forgets something then I will do this and this.

Nonetheless, a quarter of the youths also demonstrated a lack of confidence while participating in sport. Several participants felt that there were occasions when they felt unable to master an exercise or a skill, and this could lead to feelings of incapability and uncontrollability. The lack of confidence for some youths arose in comparison to the other players on the team. As Sanaa explained, the difference in level among players reduced her confidence when she compared herself with higher level players:

Sanaa: I don't have much self-confidence when playing hockey. Because I think it's kind of difficult. Espe-

cially if you look at the others...they are playing on a higher level. Because I'm only playing on level 2, and some people play on level 4.

Experiencing a lack of confidence or having a sense of uncontrollability could also reduce the youths' willingness to continue in the sport or to keep on trying, as Dacey explained when talking about horse riding:

Dacey: Horse-riding is fun, but every now and then I have to gallop. I can do it, but...the problem is that when I gallop, I get really stressed...because I'm afraid that I will fall off. I can always just cling on so I do not fall off. So yeah, I don't really like that....And when I don't like it, then I won't do it.

3.3. Theme 3: Sport as a Nice Challenge

For many players, the sports settings offered them challenges with which they liked to deal. This was closely linked to the enjoyment that some of the youths experienced when they saw that they were improving in their sport. For example, Carl described how breaking his personal record in weightlifting motivated him to improve continuously:

Interviewer: And can you try to describe what makes fitness so much fun?

Carl: Every time you go...sometimes you can break your own record in kilos. And then you are completely happy. And then you are stuck on that [the record] for a few weeks and then you break your own record again. It's just fun...that you can lift more, that's the most fun.

The lack of a challenge was often perceived as boring and could reduce the motivation to participate in the sports activities. This was often visible when the youths compared their sports activities with the physical education classes in school, which they labelled as boring because they did not need to give their absolute best during these classes. Paul, for example, states:

Interviewer: And well, here at school you play sport as well, right? Physical education classes...how do you like those?

Paul: They are kind of boring.

Interviewer: What makes them boring?

Paul: Well I think the exercises are a bit childish compared to what I do myself [American football].

This theme of 'sport as a nice challenge?' relates strongly to the previous two themes, but it adds a motivational component. Many youths placed a great emphasis on

getting the best out of themselves, on making sure that they would do whatever it takes to improve, and on persevering even if they failed the first time. Rachel, for example, stated: 'If you really want to do something, then you have to put in effort.' This value of perseverance was shared by many of the youths, and often they also expected others to live up to this value, especially when they played a team sport. Harris clearly described how perseverance was an important value in his soccer team:

Harris: We are sometimes nagging about things in our team. Sometimes there is a guy in our team ehm... well he is a rather good player, but he plays the ball too much. Sometimes he does too much and then the ball is snatched away, and then he has to set things right again. Then we all do our best to set things right again. And then there is someone in our team that messes things up again. That is annoying.

Negative sports experiences were also reported with regards to this value of perseverance, for example when youths felt annoyed when other team players were unable to demonstrate the same perseverance. Following up on the previous quote, Harris talked about how his team responded negatively to those players who did not demonstrate this value:

Interviewer: How does your team respond in those cases?

Harris: Yes... what are you doing?! Go and run!! What are you doing?! Yelling a bit...like...look at what you are doing! We will lose the match because of this!

The group pressure to get the best out of yourself could be a source of negative sports experiences as well. Although most youths shared the value of perseverance, some felt incompetent in demonstrating this perseverance during the exercises, and this could lead to feelings of rejection and isolation. Competition was especially a setting where these negative sports experiences could arise. Leon's reason for quitting soccer related to the feeling of being rejected in competitions:

Leon: When I was little, I played soccer. But I quit playing soccer because...the other children thought I was a bad soccer player and they didn't want to pass the ball to me. Then I was thinking...I will just quit if they don't want to pass the ball to me.

Similarly, Tamara talked about her dance group in which a few dancers had less experience in dancing and competitions. She indicated that she sometimes felt annoyed when these inexperienced dancers joined the competitions:

Tamara: I get that you join us, just for the dancing....But that you join the competition, you shouldn't do that. You will embarrass the entire group.

The sports coach again played an important role within this theme. The sports coach could create a positive environment in which youths were encouraged to work together and support each other in taking on new challenges, such as competitions. However, in an anecdote shared by Harris, the sports coach negatively contributed to such challenges. Harris described the response of his sports coach when the team was arguing with one of its players because the player did not demonstrate the value of perseverance:

Interviewer: And your trainer? What does he do in those cases?

Harris: My trainer is yelling. We are sitting in the dressing room and you can already tell by his face...he walks around a little and then suddenly he starts yelling. Guys, you need to try harder! Do not lose! Because this is our final match and then...it will all go wrong...then he gets really angry.

4. Discussion

In this study we aimed to explore positive and negative sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth. Three themes were discovered that were included in the youths' experiences: the extent to which they experienced visibility of their skills, the extent to which they felt confident while playing their sport, and the extent to which they felt sport was a nice challenge that they liked to take on. There seemed to be a fragile balance within each of these themes and the sports coach was often identified as a key-player in tipping the balance towards positive sports experiences.

The youths reported many positive sports experiences and expressed to enjoy themselves while playing a sport. These positive experiences could originate from different sources: in experiencing visibility of their skills, in being confident while playing a sport, and in engaging in challenges. These results show similarities with the existing literature on fun, enjoyment and sources of motivation in youth sport (Jakobsson, 2012; Tjomsland et al., 2015; Weinberg et al., 2000; Weiss & Smith, 2002). Tjomsland et al. (2015) found that enjoyment of youth soccer players was related to being with friends, collaborating with team mates, choosing to play the sport, having a supportive coach, and learning new skills and demonstrating mastery of them. Similarly, Jakobsson (2012) interviewed sporting teenagers and found that fun arose in terms of experiencing learning and development, challenging oneself in competition and being involved and engaged with others. As these studies show similarities with our results, it seems that the sources of positive and negative experiences are quite similar for vulnerable and non-vulnerable youths. This is perhaps not surprising, but what is important to add is that, for socially vulnerable youth, the challenges in the sports settings may contain elements that reflect some of the struggles

they encounter in everyday life (Andrews & Andrews, 2003; Vettenburg, 1998). For example, sports activities in the secure unit studied by Andrews and Andrews (2003) could exacerbate the youths' anxiety of social comparison, which they were already struggling with in everyday life. In other words, the youths' experiences in everyday life may translate to the sports setting and, as such, can colour their sports experiences. For socially vulnerable youth it is, therefore, important to consider the fragile balance within each of these themes as this influences the extent to which these youths report positive and negative sports experiences. The sports coach is crucial in installing and maintaining a balance in training groups when it comes to these aspects but at the same time is confronted with the imbedded culture of sport to focus on competition, excelling, and individualism (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Super, Verkooijen, & Koelen, 2016). It is important for sports coaches to create a supportive environment in which youths can experience feelings of success and acceptance (Haudenhuyse et al., 2014; Super et al., 2016).

The three themes that have been identified in this study are closely interconnected. The visibility of skills and the strategies to develop skills (theme 1) is one source of having confidence in one's sport (theme 2). For example, knowing how you can learn a new technique in gymnastics can give confidence in one's sport. Similarly, seeing sport as an interesting challenge (theme 3) builds on the visibility of skills (theme 1) and the confidence in one's sport (theme 2). In this respect it was found that competition was something that youths could enjoy, especially when they felt they had the skills to play well and when they felt confident in their sport. Moreover, seeing sport as a nice challenge (theme 3) may be an important motivator for youths to take on new challenges in the sports setting, which in turn can improve the visibility of skills (theme 1). It is not the purpose of this study to create an order in the importance of the themes, nor to say anything about the sequence in which these experiences may take place. The interconnectedness of the various themes does show that youths may enter a positive or negative vicious circle depending on the extent to which they can be moved towards seeing their skills, having confidence in playing their sport and seeing sport as a nice challenge.

Adding to the complexity, the current study also shows that the elements that can contribute to positive experiences and enjoyment at the same time can contribute to negative experiences and feelings of rejection and isolation. For example, in some instances taking on a challenge was mentioned in positive accounts, whereas in other instances being challenged was described as a negative experience. According to the salutogenic model of health, stressors in themselves are neither negative nor positive (i.e., pathogenic or salutogenic), but depending on people's response towards the stressor, people may move in a negative pathway towards 'unease' and reduced well-being or in a positive pathway towards 'ease' and improved well-being (Antonovsky, 1979). In

the case of taking on a challenge, youths that are able and have the resources to deal with the challenge would likely report positive experiences, whereas youths in a similar situation without the ability and the resources to deal with the challenge would likely report negative experiences. The process of dealing with stressors, or as Antonovsky (1979) called it, tension management, results in life experiences that are characterised by a certain degree of overload-underload balance, consistency and socially-valued decision-making. These life experiences in return may strengthen or weaken the sense of coherence; people's capacity to deal with stressors in a health-promoting way. It is thus the combined effect of stressors, resources and people's ability to deal with stressors that results in a salutogenic or pathogenic movement (Vinje, Langeland, & Bull, 2017). A clear example of a resource in the sports setting is the sports coach. The sports coach can help youths in dealing with a challenge by giving tips on how to handle a specific situation. In this way, the sports coach can assist in creating meaningful, consistent, and balanced experiences during training sessions as these characteristics are known to facilitate learning experiences and to strengthen sense of coherence. In contrast, if these conditions are absent, the sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth are likely to turn pathogenic and possibly lead to breakdown (Antonovsky, 1979). For those youths that the sports setting presents numerous stressors for which they do not have sufficient resources available nor the ability to use the resources to deal with these stressors, the sports experiences may be negative and may push them further down the negative spiral of vulnerability. A study by Super et al. (2016) amongst community sports coaches showed how sports coaches can create optimal conditions for life-skill development from a salutogenic perspective. The sports coaches tried to create meaningful sporting experiences, because these were considered a precondition for engagement and learning. They specifically focused on creating little moments of success and on making sure that the youths felt they belonged to a group (Super et al., 2016). The coaching actions that these sports coaches employed to create little moments of success (i.e., meaningfulness) were directed at making sure that the youths understood 'how things work' (i.e., comprehensibility) and giving them the opportunity to experience mastery (i.e., manageability). Coaching actions directed at comprehensibility were for example to structure the training sessions and to ask questions instead of instructing youths. An example of a coaching action that was directed at manageability was to provide youths with several options to deal with a sports-related challenge and allowing youths to find out which option works best. Hence, these coaching actions could help youths by increasing the visibility of their skills, by strengthening their confidence in their sport, and by engaging youths in manageable challenges.

Several authors have argued that, in order to understand how extra-curricular and community-based activ-

ities, such as sports, may contribute to the personal development of young people, we need to study how youth experience these activities (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Nols, 2013). A large amount of research has been conducted on the developmental outcomes of sports participation for young people (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2009; Hansen et al., 2003; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015a). The results of these studies demonstrate a variety of positive outcomes, such as improved social skills, team-work skills, and self-esteem (Holt, Tink, Mandigo, & Fox, 2008; Kendellen & Camiré, 2015b). However, it is important to make a distinction between sports *experiences*, which refer to positive or negative experiences of sport, and the developmental *outcomes* of those specific experiences. Even though it has been pointed out that naturally occurring sport experiences can promote development and growth (Turnnidge, Côté, & Hancock, 2014), there is very limited understanding of how sports experiences relate to these outcomes (Hansen et al., 2003; Haudenhuyse et al., 2013). This study has tried to shed a light on this important question by investigating the sports experiences of socially vulnerable youth from a salutogenic perspective. Unfortunately, based on the current data, we were unable to delve into the link between sports experiences and developmental outcomes, as the interviewees were unable to reflect on the developmental outcomes of their sports participation. Future research could try to examine the link between sports experiences and developmental outcomes in greater detail.

4.1. Study Limitations

The current study is not without limitations. First of all, because of ethical reasons, the selection of youths for this study was based on the youth professionals' assessment of the socially vulnerable nature of the youths. Youth professionals, that purposively selected youths for this study, were informed about the inclusion criteria and Vettenburg's definition of social vulnerability. Because these youth professionals had detailed knowledge about the youths' problems and backgrounds, they were best able to select youths that met the inclusion criterion of being socially vulnerable. As a result of using Vettenburg's definition of social vulnerability, the youths that are included in the study represent a heterogeneous group, including children with problem behaviour, with alcohol or drug problems or coming from problematised families. Previous research has suggested that subgroups of socially vulnerable youth may have very different sports experiences (Lee et al., 2014). However, based on the interviews, we are not able to draw any conclusions about these differences as we were unable to gather information about the problems of the participants. This limitation arises from some of the conflicting goals that a researcher may be confronted with when conducting research among vulnerable youth groups (Allen, 2002). It is possible that those youths that were most at-risk

were not selected by the youth professionals for this study. In addition, because of the selection criterion that the participants should be a member of a local sports or fitness club, we interviewed youths that currently, at least to some extent, attach importance to their participation in sport. These participants might differ from those socially vulnerable youths that are attach less importance to their participation in sport and from those that dropped out of sports. Therefore, we have to refrain from generalising the findings of this study to socially vulnerable youth in general, and specifically to those most at-risk. Further research could involve an adult sample to reflect back on their socially vulnerable childhood in order to investigate the sports experiences in close relation to everyday-life experiences.

Secondly, the interviews were conducted in the form of a casual conversation about how the youths experienced their participation in sport. As the interviewers did not use a sheet of interview questions, questions could be raised about the chosen methodology and the reliability of the results. For example, the order of the questions and the depth in which the various topics were discussed differed in the interviews. This means that in some interviews several topics were discussed more thoroughly than in other interviews, also depending on the youths' willingness and capacity to reflect on a topic. Moreover, as the participating youths may be less inclined or willing to talk about negative experiences, we have to be careful in assuming that the youths' sports experiences were mostly positive. However, the interviewers considered the informal nature of the interviews a strength as it allowed greater insights into the experiences of the youths in their own words than a formal interview and it increased the opportunity to create a safe interviewing climate.

Thirdly, sports participation rates of socially vulnerable youth are lower than of their non-vulnerable peers (Vandermeersch et al., 2015). Research has demonstrated that socio-economic variables such as household income and parental education are important predictors of children's sports participation (Vandermeersch et al., 2015; Vella, Cliff, & Okely, 2014). Also parental support is important, especially for children of a lower age. As a result, it was a challenge to find socially vulnerable youths that actually participated regularly in sport and belonged to a local sports club. Consequently, the sample represents a select group of young people that perhaps differ from other socially vulnerable youths that dropped-out of sport.

5. Conclusion

Socially vulnerable youths described their sports experiences in relation to three themes: the extent to which they experienced visibility of their skills, the extent to which they felt confident while playing their sport, and the extent to which they felt sport was a challenge they liked to take. There was a fragile balance within each of the themes that made the sports experiences either

positive or negative for socially vulnerable youths and the sports coach played an important role in tipping the balance towards positive experiences. Depending on the ability of the sports coach to create meaningful, consistent, and balanced experiences, the youths may benefit from sports participation even beyond the sports setting.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by NWO, the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research, under grant number: 328-98-007.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

References

- Ahola, A. J., Mikkilä, V., Saraheimo, M., Wadén, J., Mäkimattila, S., Forsblom, C., . . . Groop, P. H. (2012). Sense of coherence, food selection and leisure time physical activity in type 1 diabetes. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 40*(7), 621–628.
- Allen, D. (2002). Research involving vulnerable young people: A discussion of ethical and methodological concerns. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy, 9*(3), 275–283.
- Andrews, J. P., & Andrews, G. J. (2003). Life in a secure unit: The rehabilitation of young people through the use of sport. *Social Science and Medicine, 56*(3), 531–550.
- Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, stress and coping*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bruner, M. W., Hall, J., & Côté, J. (2011). Influence of sport type and interdependence on the developmental experiences of youth male athletes. *European Journal of Sport Science, 11*(2), 131–142.
- CBS. (2016). *Jeugdhulp 2015*. Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.
- Cronin, L. D., & Allen, J. B. (2015). Developmental experiences and well-being in sport: The importance of the coaching climate. *Sport Psychologist, 29*(1), 62–71.
- Draper, C. E., & Coalter, F. (2016). “There’s just something about this club. It’s been my family.” An analysis of the experiences of youth in a South African sport-for-development programme. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 51*(1), 44–60.
- Dworkin, J. B., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2003). Adolescents’ accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32*(1), 17–26.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*(1), 107–115.
- Fraser-Thomas, J. L., & Côté, J. (2009). Understanding adolescents’ positive and negative developmental experiences in sport. *Sport Psychologist, 23*(1), 3–23.
- Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 10*(1), 19–40.
- Gould, D., & Carson, S. (2008). Life skills development through sport: Current status and future directions. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 1*(1), 58–78.
- Haden, C. A., & Hoffman, P. C. (2013). Cracking the code: Using personal narratives in research. *Journal of Cognition and Development, 14*(3), 361–375.
- Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., & Dworkin, J. B. (2003). What adolescents learn in organized youth activities: A survey of self-reported developmental experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 13*(1), 25–55.
- Harrist, C. J., & Witt, P. A. (2015). Calling the screens: Self-reported developmental outcomes in competitive basketball. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 30*(6), 751–778.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Coalter, F. (2012). The potential of sports-based social interventions for vulnerable youth: Implications for sport coaches and youth workers. *Journal of Youth Studies, 15*(4), 437–454.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Nols, Z. (2013). Sports-based interventions for socially vulnerable youth: Towards well-defined interventions with easy-to-follow outcomes? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 48*(4), 471–484.
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., Nols, Z., & Coussée, F. (2014). Socially vulnerable young people in Flemish sports clubs: Investigating youth experiences. *European Physical Education Review, 20*(2), 179–198.
- Hayden, L. A., Whitley, M. A., Cook, A. L., Dumais, A., Silva, M., & Scherer, A. (2015). An exploration of life skill development through sport in three international high schools. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 7*(5), 759–775.
- Holt, N. L., Tamminen, K. A., Tink, L. N., & Black, D. E. (2009). An interpretive analysis of life skills associated with sport participation. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise, 1*(2), 160–175.
- Holt, N. L., Tink, L. N., Mandigo, J. L., & Fox, K. R. (2008). Do youth learn life skills through their involvement in high school sport? A case study. *Canadian Journal of Education, 31*(2), 281–304.
- Honkinen, P. L. K., Suominen, S. B., Välimaa, R. S., Helenius, H. Y., & Rautava, P. T. (2005). Factors associated with perceived health among 12-year-old school children. Relevance of physical exercise and sense of coherence. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 33*(1), 35–41.
- Jakobsson, B. T. (2012). What makes teenagers continue? A salutogenic approach to understanding youth participation in Swedish club sports. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 19*(3), 239–252.
- Jansma, K., & Maks, M. (2014). Businessplan. Ambities en Strategie 2014-2017. Retrieved 31 October, 2016,

from https://www.jeugdsportfonds.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/09/Businessplan_Jeugdsportfonds_2014-2017.pdf

- Kendellen, K., & Camiré, M. (2015a). Examining former athletes' developmental experiences in high school sport. *SAGE Open*, 5(4).
- Kendellen, K., & Camiré, M. (2015b). Examining the life skill development and transfer experiences of former high school athletes. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*.
- Lee, H., Dunn, J. C., & Holt, N. L. (2014). Youth sport experiences of individuals with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 31(4), 343–361.
- Strachan, L., & Davies, K. (2014). Click! Using photo elicitation to explore youth experiences and positive youth development in sport. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 7(2), 170–191.
- Super, S., Hermens, N., Verkooijen, K. T., & Koelen, M. (2014). Enhancing life prospects of socially vulnerable youth through sport participation: A mixed methods study. *BMC Public Health*, 14.
- Super, S., Verkooijen, K. T., & Koelen, M. (2016). The role of community sports coaches in creating optimal social conditions for life skill development and transferability – a salutogenic perspective. *Sport, Education and Society*.
- Tamminen, K. A., & Holt, N. L. (2012). Adolescent athletes' learning about coping and the roles of parents and coaches. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13(1), 69–79.
- Tjomsland, H. E., Larsen, T., Holsen, I., Ronglan, L. T., Samdal, O., & Wold, B. (2015). Enjoyment in youth soccer: Its portrayals among 12- to 14-year-olds. *Soccer and Society*, 17(6), 827–842.
- Turnnidge, J., Côté, J., & Hancock, D. J. (2014). Positive youth development from sport to life: Explicit or implicit transfer? *Quest*, 66(2), 203–217.
- Vandermeersch, H., Vos, S., & Scheerder, J. (2015). Who's joining the club? Participation of socially vulnerable children and adolescents in club-organised sports. *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(8), 941–958.
- Vella, S. A., Cliff, D. P., & Okely, A. D. (2014). Socio-ecological predictors of participation and dropout in organised sports during childhood. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 11(1).
- Vettenburg, N. (1998). Juvenile delinquency and the cultural characteristics of the family. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 3, 193–209.
- Vinje, H. F., Langeland, E., & Bull, T. (2017). Aaron Antonovsky's Development of Salutogenesis, 1979 to 1994. In M. B. Mittelmark, S. Sagy, M. Eriksson, G. Bauer, J. Pelikan, B. Lindström, & G. A. Espnes (Eds.), *The Handbook of Salutogenesis* (pp. 25–40): Springer Open.
- VWS. (2011). *Programma sport en bewegen in de buurt*. The Netherlands: Ministry of Health, Well-being and Sport.
- Weinberg, R., Tenenbaum, G., McKenzie, A., Jackson, S., Anshel, M., Grove, R., & Fogarty, G. (2000). Motivation for youth participation in sport and physical activity: Relationships to culture, self-reported activity levels, and gender. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 31(3), 321–346.
- Weiss, M. R., & Smith, A. L. (2002). Friendship quality in youth sport: Relationship to age, gender, and motivation variables. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 24(4), 420–437.

About the Authors



Sabina Super is a PhD researcher at the Health and Society Group of Wageningen University. Her research adopts a salutogenic perspective to understand *if* and *how* sport contributes to the personal development of young people. In addition, she focuses on the question how community sports coaches can create optimal social conditions for life skill development.



Carlijn Wentink (MSc) is a lecturer and researcher at the Health and Society Group of Wageningen University. Her main focus is on health development in the relationship between people and their built and natural environment, from a social science perspective. Most of her work is inspired by an EcoHealth approach, systems thinking and salutogenesis. Additionally, she works on better designed teaching and learning by working on innovation in education.



Kirsten Verkooijen is assistant professor at the Health and Society Group of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. She studied Health Sciences with the two specializations Health Education and Health Promotion and Mental Health Sciences at Maastricht University. Hereafter she did her PhD on Identity and health risk behaviour in adolescence at the University of Southern Denmark. Her current research deals with implicit and explicit cognition, social influence, motivation and identity development with a special focus on sport and exercise behaviour.



Maria Koelen is Professor and Head of the Health and Society Group of Wageningen University. She has special interest in the social, natural and built environment of health and its interaction with lifestyle, health development and quality of life. Most of her research is based on salutogenesis and the life course perspective.

Article

Urban Sport-for-Development Initiatives and Young People in Socially Vulnerable Situations: Investigating the ‘Deficit Model’

Zeno Nols *, Rein Haudenhuyse and Marc Theeboom

Sport & Society Research Unit, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; E-Mails: zeno.nols@vub.be (Z.N.), reinhard.haudenhuyse@vub.be (R. H.), marc.theeboom@vub.be (M.T.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 29 January 2017 | Accepted: 25 March 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Critical scholars have indicated that the assumptions underlying most sport-for-development (SFD) initiatives tend to align with a ‘deficit model’ of youth: young people from disadvantaged areas are uniformly deficient and in need of development, which can be achieved through sport (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013). In this article, we investigated these assumptions within six urban SFD initiatives that work with young people in socially vulnerable situations in a ‘first’ world nation, Belgium. We conducted a survey at two moments in time amongst 14- to 25-year-old participants in order to test two assumptions: i) ‘participants are deficient and in need of development’; and ii) ‘participation in SFD initiatives leads to positive personal development’. We operationalised ‘development’ as the commonly used outcomes of perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem. These are ‘household words’ both inside and outside SFD research, practice, and policy and carry the assumption that boosting them will by itself foster positive outcomes. The findings refute the supposition that young people from disadvantaged urban areas are uniformly in need of more perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem and show that there is no simple and predictable change in participants’ ‘development’. We suggest that, in designing and researching programs, SFD stakeholders start from an open-ended bottom-up approach which is tailored to the actual life situations of young people and their individual differences and consider more interpersonal and critical conceptualisations of ‘development’.

Keywords

deficit model; disadvantaged communities; self-efficacy; self-esteem; sport; sport-for-development, urban areas; youth

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

In communities with low living standards, it is increasingly thought that sport can reach a large number of people and that it can be used as a vehicle to address a variety of social challenges such as poverty, as well as achieve non-sport development objectives (Haudenhuyse & Theeboom, 2015; Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016). In recent years, however, the assumed potential of sport-for-development (SFD) initiatives to achieve broader social change has been the subject of considerable academic scrutiny (Schulenkorf et al., 2016; Darnell,

Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes, & Hayhurst, 2016; Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds, & Smith, 2016). One key issue within SFD highlighted by critical scholars is that many SFD policies and initiatives are imbued with paternalistic values and neoliberal philosophies that emphasise the need for individual responsibility and treat young people as problems to be solved (i.e., with flawed attitudes or displaying ‘anti-social’ behaviour) (Coakley, 2011; Darnell, 2012; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011; Rossi & Jeanes, 2016). Scholars underlined how the assumptions underlying most SFD initiatives tend to align with a ‘deficit model’, which assumes that young people from

disadvantaged areas are uniformly deficient and in need of development (Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2013). This approach, described as ‘narrow empowerment’ (Lawson, 2005), highlights individual deficits while distracting attention from deficiencies within the social system that tend to make young people socially vulnerable in the first place (e.g., poverty, social inequalities) (Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Nols, 2012b; Kelly, 2011; Weiss, 1997a). Furthermore, presumptions within SFD concerning individual deficits are seldom based on a systematic diagnosis of young people’s social conditions and needs. According to Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman (2004), it is common for social programs to be based on faulty assumptions about both the nature and extent of the problem they address and the needs of the target population they intend to serve. This occurs because of an insufficient initial diagnosis, selective exposure or the reliance on stereotypes. These programs may have little prospect of achieving their intended effects. Thus, a systematic assessment of both young people’s assumed needs and developmental change through sport can indicate which of the assumptions that lie behind the deficit model are faulty.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the assumptions underlying a deficit model of youth within six urban SFD initiatives that work with young people living in socially vulnerable situations and disadvantaged communities in Belgium (specifically, Flanders—the northern part of Belgium—and Brussels). The aim is to highlight some of the dangers of deploying a deficit model of youth within SFD policy, practice, and research.

Regarding ‘development’, various scholars stated that the term is intriguingly vague, has a contentious and contested character, and is complicated, poly-vocal, and open to several interpretations (Black, 2010; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Kruse, 2006). Consequently, the term ‘sport-for-development’ has been defined in reference to individual, community, and societal levels, as well as in reference to several outcomes (Coakley, 2011; Schulenkorf et al., 2016). This wide array of definitions initiated calls for more conceptual and theoretical clarity within SFD (Schulenkorf & Spaaij, 2016). In designing the research strategy for this study, our challenge was to explore which conception of ‘development’ was most dominant within SFD research, practice, and policy. We found that, in most SFD programs, ‘development’ is not defined in terms of the need for social justice, collective empowerment and action, or transformative social change at a community or institutional level (Coakley, 2011; Darnell, 2010; Hayhurst, Wilson, & Frisby, 2010; Lawson, 2005). Instead, ‘development’ is mostly defined as an individual process in which socialisation experiences will produce the attributes needed to increase young people’s life chances (Coakley, 2011, 2016; Darnell, 2012; Schulenkorf et al., 2016). Such an individual-focused approach is often selectively or uncritically embraced by many who fund, manage, and staff SFD initiatives, as is shown by references to so-called ‘heartfelt narratives’ (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011) and a vision of

‘development’ as linear and measurable in a quantitative way (Coalter, 2013; Harris & Adams, 2015; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012b; Kay, 2012; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014). Therefore, in communities with low living standards and a high degree of poverty, SFD initiatives tend to focus on fostering life skills in areas such as: self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem; decision-making; leadership; public speaking; human rights, gender attitudes, and prevention of sexual violence; and knowledge about health (Coalter & Taylor, 2010; Mwaanga & Prince, 2016; Spaaij, Oxford, & Jeanes, 2016). Within a deficit model, the importance of self-confidence, -efficacy, and -esteem is stressed in terms of overcoming barriers, making choices, and improving one’s life chances (Coakley, 2011; Coalter & Taylor, 2010; Mwaanga & Prince, 2016; Spaaij et al., 2016). Despite the critique of ‘neoliberal understandings’, these are the most commonly used outcomes in research within sport-based youth development literature (i.e., self-confidence and self-esteem) (Jones et al., 2016; Schulenkorf et al., 2016). Also, outside of SFD, in other youth development contexts, the concept of self-esteem, for instance, has become a ‘household word’ on the assumption that boosting it will by itself foster positive outcomes, although evidence for such an assumption has not been found (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Mruk, 2013). Unfortunately, a large number of SFD practitioners and scholars within sport-based youth development contexts find it difficult to resist thinking in terms of a deficit model, thereby aligning themselves with the dominant managerialist or political rhetoric, and potentially harming young people and their self-image (Cooper, 2012; Kennelly, 2016).

Although SFD programs tend to emphasise individual deficits selectively and overstate the developmental benefits of sport, this is less often empirically and critically investigated, making analysis of this type valuable in complementing the theoretical critiques (Darnell, 2015). One of the exceptions to the scarcity of research on this theme is the work of critical scholar Fred Coalter (2013; Coalter & Taylor, 2010), who studied the assumptions underlying the deficit model in the Global South (specifically, India and Kenya) via a quantitative pre- and post-research design, which allowed him to *measure* ‘needs’—operationalised as a lack of perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem—and ‘impact’. Coalter showed that participants were not uniformly deficient and that the programs had no simple and predictable impact. In their integrated literature review, Schulenkorf and his colleagues (2016) indicated that the majority of SFD projects are carried out in the ‘Global South’ and that research has largely focused on the community level, where qualitative approaches are dominant. For that reason, we placed our research focus on participants’ needs and outcomes in the ‘Global North’ (Belgium) and opted for a quantitative research design similar to Coalter’s. However, there are important distinctions between our study and Coalter’s work. Firstly, Belgium is a wholly different socioeconomic and cultural context to India or Kenya. In 2014, the HDI of

Belgium was 0,890 (21th/188; ‘very high HD’) compared to 0,609 (130th/188; ‘medium HD’) and 0,548 (145th/188; ‘low HD’) for India and Kenya respectively (UNDP, 2017). Secondly, we took additional background variables of participants into account, some of which can be regarded as proxy-indicators of social vulnerability, and conducted more elaborate and different analyses.

We administered a survey at two moments in time amongst 14- to 25-year-old participants of SFD initiatives in order to test two assumptions within the deficit model: i) ‘participants are deficient and in need of development’; and ii) ‘participation in SFD initiatives leads to positive personal development’. In line with the above literature, we operationalised ‘development’ as the commonly used outcomes of perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem within research, practice, and policy. In line with the dominant assumptions in SFD, these simple hypotheses were formulated:

- Hypothesis 1: participants have low perceived self-efficacy;
- Hypothesis 2: participants have low self-esteem;
- Hypothesis 3: participation in the initiatives leads to an increase of perceived self-efficacy between the first (T1) and the second (T2) administration;
- Hypothesis 4: participation in the initiatives leads to an increase of self-esteem between T1 and T2.

After outlining the methods and reporting the results, we aimed to contribute to the academic debate on the deficit model and formulated practical implications for SFD stakeholders (i.e., needs assessment, understanding program mechanisms and context, conceptualisation of ‘development’). Finally, we briefly suggest some concrete theoretical pathways which go beyond the deficit model and which can inform, guide, and clarify the field of SFD in the future.

2. Methods

2.1. Initiatives

The data were collected at six SFD initiatives located in three disadvantaged, super-diverse urban areas in Belgium (Brussels, Antwerp and Genk). These three cities all have areas with a high degree of poverty and hardship, school drop-out rates, unemployment, and a lack of sustainable facilities and opportunities. ‘Super-diversity’ is an urban reality in which citizens are characterised by a complex layering of and interaction between variables such as countries of origin, nationalities, languages, cultures, religions, statuses, and social positions (Vertovec, 2007). Thus, the term should not be misunderstood as ‘ethnic-cultural diversity’. The degree of super-diversity in Belgium is highest in Brussels, Antwerp and Genk. It is within this context that the initiatives were selected using the following criteria: (1) having a track record in working with young people in socially vulner-

able situations; and (2) explicitly mentioning working on young people’s development. The initiatives are *Antwerp Wolf Pack Basketball*, *Brussels Boxing Academy*, *Brussels Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Academy*, ‘*Boxing Up*’ (Opboksen, Genk), *City Pirates Football Club* (Antwerp), and *Kras Sport* (futsal, Antwerp). These initiatives are relatively open access, but with a targeting, outreach approach designed to attract young people from the area. They can be regarded as ‘sport-plus’ (Coalter, 2007) clubs whose primary focus is to use sport as a tool to achieve social development outcomes. They are relatively large initiatives and some of them have hundreds of participants.

2.2. Participants and Recruitment

The study population comprised boys and girls that are active in the selected initiatives and are between 14 and 25 years old. Due to the vulnerable nature of the population, attention was given to obtaining a passive informed consent from young people and their parents. This recruitment approach was agreed with staff members.

2.3. The Survey

Prior to the survey, the initiatives outlined a theory of change in several focus groups. Their theories of change helped us to focus our research attention and resources on key aspects (and key outcomes) of the initiatives’ programs (Weiss, 1997a). The formulated key outcomes were “*having self-esteem*” (worthy beliefs about oneself) and “*believing in their own ability*” (or self-confidence/perceived self-efficacy). As discussed previously, these concepts of self-confidence/efficacy and self-esteem are also commonly used in research within sport-based youth development literature (Jones et al., 2016; Schulenkorf et al., 2016). Existing scales were used to measure perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem. Such scales are likely to be more valid and reliable than newly crafted ones and allow a comparison of the distribution of responses in specific populations (Weiss, 1997b). The survey was administered to the young people at two moments in time: at the start of the sporting season (T1; October 2015) and at the end (T2; May 2016). To take the multilingual context into account, the survey was drafted in Dutch, French, and English via the back-translation method. After piloting, the survey was completed by the participants in small groups with the first author available for clarification.

2.3.1. Perceived Self-Efficacy

Perceived self-efficacy can be defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). This concept influences thought patterns which relate to *initiative*, as well as the *effort* people will put into a particular activity, the extent to which they will *persevere* when facing ob-

stacles, and their resilience when they face adversity (Pajares, 1996). To measure it, the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) (Sherer et al., 1982), modified by Bosscher, Smit and Kempen (1997), was used. Although self-efficacy theory emphasises task-specificity, various experiences of failures and success in different domains of functioning may generate more generalised beliefs of self-efficacy that have explanatory value as well (Bosscher & Smit, 1998). Thus, general perceived self-efficacy is akin to ‘self-confidence’. The GSES has acceptable psychometric qualities (Bosscher et al., 1997; Bosscher & Smit, 1998). In this study, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) of this scale was 0.775, which is acceptable (> 0.70).

2.3.2. Self-Esteem

According to Mruk (2013, p. 27) “self-esteem is the lived status of one’s competence at dealing with the challenges of living in a worthy way over time”. The factor of competence has the conceptual room to accommodate such things as Bandura’s (1986) notion of self-efficacy (Mruk, 2013). To measure self-esteem, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used (Franck, De Raedt, Barbez, & Rosseel, 2008; Rosenberg, 1965; Vallieres & Vallerand, 1990). Whereas, in recent literature, a distinction is made between a ‘state’ versus a ‘trait’ form of self-esteem, the original RSES was designed to assess a person’s *global* trait-like self-esteem. The RSES has acceptable psychometric qualities (Franck et al., 2008; Rosenberg, 1965; Vallieres & Vallerand, 1990). In this study, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) of this scale was 0.701, which is acceptable (> 0.70).

2.3.3. Socio-Demographic and Sport Indicators

Socio-demographic indicators were included in the survey such as: sex; age; country of birth; school trajectory (e.g., year repetition, suspension); family situation (e.g., spoken language at home, country of birth of (grand)mother); questions about perceived financial home situation; and concerns about their own future. Some of these indicators were used as proxy-indicators of social vulnerability (e.g., year repetition, school suspension, difficult financial home situation). According to Vettenburg’s (1998) framework of social vulnerability, year repetition and suspension *can* be important indicators of a socially vulnerable trajectory and *can* be predictive for further school and labour market trajectories. Sport-related indicators were also included (e.g., sport frequency, length of membership).

3. Results

3.1. Participant Profile

The first administration (T1) was conducted amongst 288 young people of which 82.6% were boys (238 boys) and 17.4% were girls (50 girls) (Table 1). Because of a short-

age of participants aged over 14 years old at Antwerp Wolf Pack Basketball, it was decided to lower the age group at this initiative to 12 years old ($n = 14$). Also at City Pirates Football Club, one team (U14) had several 13-year-old players ($n = 20$) who were also questioned. For these younger people (12–13 year olds), the researcher ensured that extra attention was given in advance to clarify the questions. Investigating participants’ characteristics showed that the participants were, in general, a very ethnic-culturally diverse, multilingual group of young people.

The proxy-indicators of social vulnerability were analysed to investigate to what degree the initiatives reached young people living in socially vulnerable situations. Firstly, more than half (54.0%; $n = 150$) of the participants had repeated a school year at least once. This is a relatively high number since research shows that, at the age of 15, in Flanders, ‘only’ 27% of the students repeated their year at least once compared to 47% in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, while the OECD mean was 13% (Oproep Voor een Democratische School, 2014). Secondly, there was the high percentage of school suspension (19.2%), with 10.9% of the young people suspended twice or more. Furthermore, the sport coaches confirmed that many of their participants did indeed find themselves in socially vulnerable situations.

For the second administration (T2), due to temporary injuries, players’ movements (to other initiatives or within the initiative), and other (unknown) reasons, there was a drop-out rate of 44.4% ($n = 128$). Therefore, the second administration (T2) was conducted amongst 160 young people of which 85.6% were boys (137 boys) and 14.4% were girls (23 girls). A comparison between those participants that dropped out and those that completed the survey twice showed that drop-outs have a significantly higher age ($p = 0.018$) and have been suspended significantly more often ($p < 0.001$). Drop-outs did not differ significantly with regard to perceived self-efficacy ($p = 0.615$), self-esteem ($p = 0.672$), financial home situation ($p = 0.075$), sex ($p = 0.135$), year repetition ($p = 0.061$), or length of membership ($p = 0.066$).

3.2. Investigating the Deficit Model

Investigating the deficit model, implicitly or explicitly present in much SFD rhetoric, we found that the young people in the initiatives were not uniformly deficient and in need of development (i.e., low perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem). In general, the average score on perceived self-efficacy ($n = 288$) was 25.18 on a maximum of 36, with a standard deviation of 5.247 (Table 2). The range of the perceived self-efficacy scores was 33, with a minimum score of 3 and a maximum of 36. Perceived self-efficacy scores between 20 and 30 are considered normal. The data showed that 33 young people had a score under 20 (representing low scores), while 44 young people had a score above 30 (representing high scores). The skewness of the perceived self-efficacy

Table 1. Participants' characteristics and proxy-indicators of social vulnerability.

	All SFD initiatives
Respondents	100% (n = 288)
Boys	82.6% (n = 238)
Girls	17.4% (n = 50)
Mean age	16.50 (SD 3.30)
First year at the club	44.5% (n = 126)
Two years at the club	16.3% (n = 46)
Three years at the club	9.5% (n = 27)
Four years at the club	4.9% (n = 14)
More than four years at the club	24.7% (n = 70)
Practice sport once a week (at the club)	15.8% (n = 44)
Practice sport twice a week	21.1% (n = 59)
Practice sport three times a week	26.2% (n = 73)
Practice sport four times a week	23.7% (n = 66)
Practice sport more than four times a week	13.3% (n = 37)
Belgian nationality	69.8% (n = 201)
Non-Belgian nationality	30.2% (n = 87)
Roots in migration (3 generations)	85.8% (n = 247)
No roots in migration	14.2% (n = 41)
Newcomers (< 5 years) in Belgium	10.1% (n = 29)
More than 5 years in Belgium	18.1% (n = 52)
Living in Belgium all my life	71.9% (n = 207)
At least speaking Dutch and/or French at home	86.1% (n = 248)
Speaking (an)other language(s) at home	13.9% (n = 40)
Still at school	81.1% (n = 227)
In further education	10.4% (n = 29)
Working	7.2% (n = 20)
Looking for work	1.4% (n = 4)
Primary school	3.5% (n = 8)
General school	44.5% (n = 101)
Technical school	24.7% (n = 56)
Vocational school	25.6% (n = 58)
Special needs school	1.8% (n = 4)
Repeated year	54.0% (n = 150)
Ever been suspended	19.2% (n = 53)
Easy financial home situation	52.5% (n = 143)
Rather easy financial home situation	31.1% (n = 85)
Rather difficult financial home situation	12.5% (n = 34)
Difficult financial home situation	4.0% (n = 11)

Table 2. Mean scores T1.

	Mean	Std. Dev	Min-max (range)	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived self-efficacy (0–36)	25.18	5.25	3–36 (33)	–0.603	1.049
Self-esteem (0–30)	21.69	3.99	8–30 (22)	–0.333	0.491

scores was -0.603 (small left skew) and the kurtosis (peakedness) was 1.049 (mesokurtic, but slightly thinner). Using additional testing with P-P Plots, Q-Q Plots, and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test ($p > 0.05$), it could be said that the scores for perceived self-efficacy

are normally distributed (Figure 1). These results refute hypothesis 1 which states that participants have low perceived self-efficacy.

In general, the average score for self-esteem ($n = 288$) was 21.69 on a maximum of 30, with a stan-

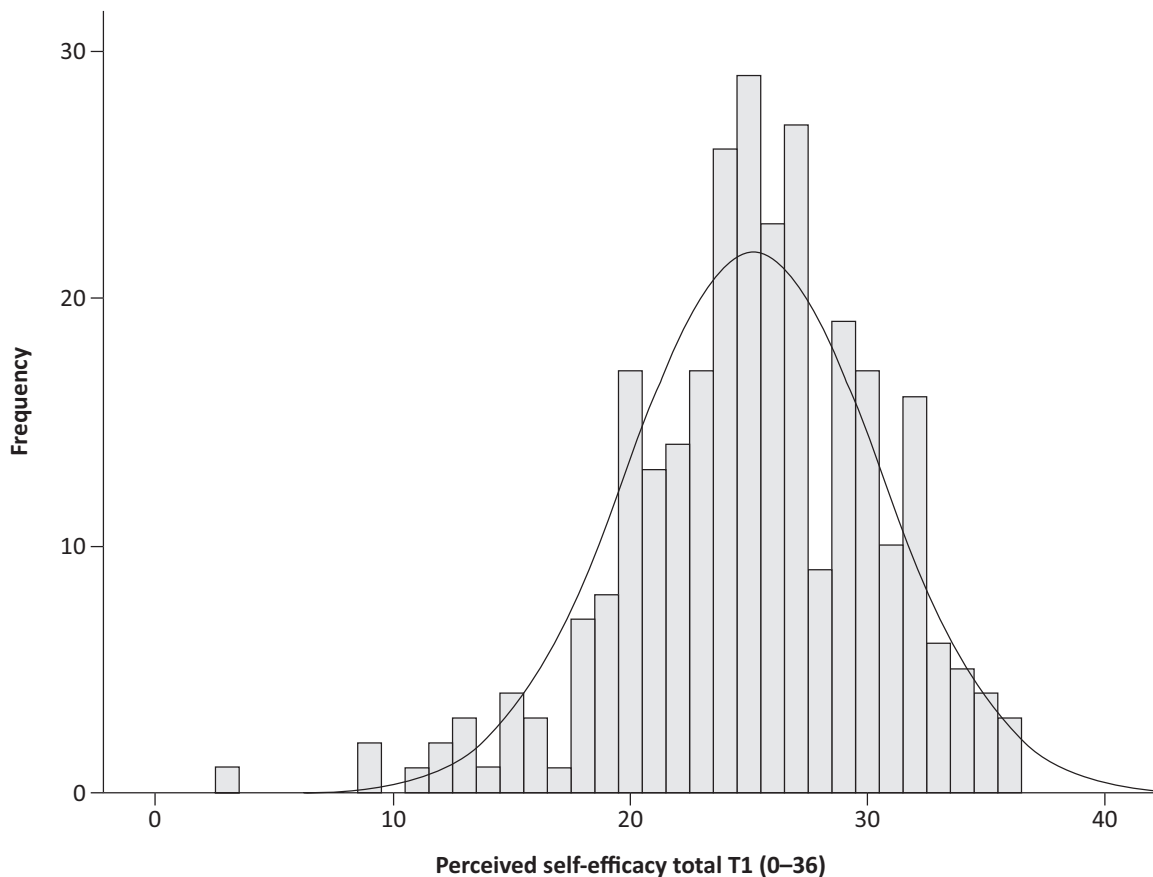


Figure 1. Perceived self-efficacy total at T1.

standard deviation of 3.986 (Table 2). The range of the self-esteem scores was 22, with a minimum score of 8 and a maximum of 30. Self-esteem scores between 15 and 25 are considered “normal”. The data showed that 11 young people had a score under 15 (representing low scores), while 53 young people had a score above 25 (representing high scores). The skewness of the self-esteem scores was -0.333 (very small left skew) and the kurtosis was 0.491 (normal mesokurtic). Using additional testing with P-P Plots, Q-Q Plots, and One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test ($p > 0.05$), it could be said that the scores for self-esteem were normally distributed (Figure 2). These results refute hypothesis 2 which states that participants have low self-esteem.

3.3. Testing Differences

The parametric one way ANOVA test ($n = 288$) indicated a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) in perceived self-efficacy scores with boys (25.70) scoring higher than girls (22.70). A similar difference was found in self-esteem scores, with boys (22.08) scoring higher ($p < 0.001$) than girls (19.84). Furthermore, there was a significant difference ($n = 288$; $p = 0.009$) in the perceived self-efficacy scores between those who speak a language at home which is not Dutch or French (23.18) and those who speak at least Dutch or French at home (25.50). Such a difference was not found for self-esteem ($p = 0.978$).

There was also a significant difference ($n = 4282$; $p < 0.001$) in self-esteem with regard to concerns about their own future: young people who sometimes to very often have concerns about their own future scored lower (21.13) than those who have no concerns (22.99). Such a difference was not found for perceived self-efficacy ($p = 0.070$).

In the entire group, there were no significant differences found for perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem with regard to age ($p = 0.928$ and $p = 0.949$ respectively), year repetition (i.e., repeated a year at school or not) ($p = 0.053$ and $p = 0.122$), suspension (i.e., suspended or not) ($p = 0.969$ and $p = 0.806$), length of membership (i.e., been a member one year to more than 4 years) ($p = 0.416$ and $p = 0.162$), sport frequency (i.e., practice sport once to more than 4 times a week) (0.419 and 0.801), financial home situation (i.e., easy to difficult) ($p = 0.077$ and $p = 0.838$), and time living in Belgium (i.e., been in Belgium for more than 5 years or not) ($p = 0.155$ and 0.404).

3.4. Investigating Developmental Changes

Paired-samples t-tests (Table 3) showed no significant difference in perceived self-efficacy ($p = 0.791$) and self-esteem ($p = 0.885$) between T1 and T2. However, when we split the group into participants who increased their scores on the one hand and those who showed a de-

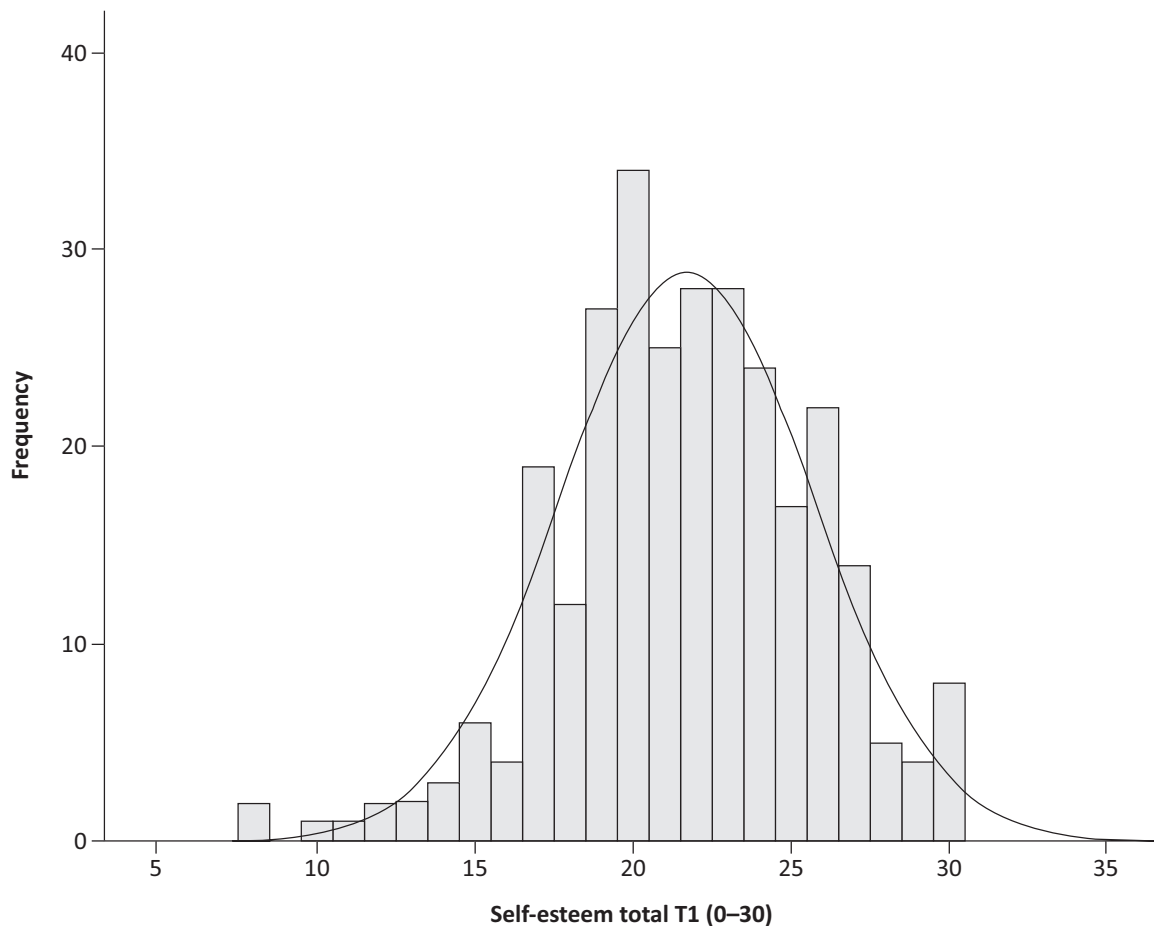


Figure 2. Self-esteem total at T1.

Table 3. Developmental changes.

	Mean T1	Mean T2	Difference (T2-T1)	t	p
Perceived self-efficacy (total) (n = 160)	25.22	25.12	-0.100	0.265	0.791
Self-esteem (total) (n = 160)	21.83	21.78	-0.044	0.144	0.885
Perceived self-efficacy (increases) (n = 61)	22.67	27.10	4.426	-8.853	0.000
Perceived self-efficacy (decreases) (n = 77)	27.12	23.40	-3.714	13.550	0.000
Self-esteem (increases) (n = 64)	20.33	23.91	3.578	-12.591	0.000
Self-esteem (decreases) (n = 73)	23.40	20.16	-3.233	11.289	0.000

crease in scores on the other, significant changes were found for both perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem (p-values all below 0.001). These increases and decreases thus cancel each other out in total, but do represent two separate meaningful trends (see next section ‘beyond averages’).

3.4.1. Beyond Averages

Just as the young people cannot be regarded as uniformly deficient or of low perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem, the changes between T1 and T2 were varied and certainly not uni-directional. There were high levels of adjustment of scores between the two administrations of the survey (86.2% for perceived self-efficacy and 85.6% for the self-esteem scores). For perceived self-efficacy,

38.1% (n = 61) of the participants had an increase in their score while 48.1% (n = 77) had a decrease in their score. There were also participants who had no changes in their perceived self-efficacy (13.8%; n = 22). For self-esteem, 40% (n = 64) of the participants had an increase in their score while 45.6% (n = 73) had a decrease in their score. There were also participants that had no changes in their self-esteem (14.4%; n = 23).

A scattergram represents these individual changes visually (see Figure 3). A horizontal line was placed where the difference between T1 and T2 was 0. A vertical line was placed on the mean score of T1. Each dot represents an individual respondent’s score and the degree to which their score (i.e., perceived self-efficacy, self-esteem) changed between the two survey administrations (i.e., T1 and T2). The top left and bottom right

quadrants could be seen as the most interesting when investigating developmental changes. A scatter dot is plotted with the y-axis representing the *difference* between the first and second administration (i.e., increase or decrease) and the x-axis representing the individual *result* on the first survey score (i.e., T1).

Before score <i>below average</i> and then <i>increased</i>	Before score <i>above average</i> and then <i>increased</i>
Before score <i>below average</i> and then <i>decreased</i>	Before score <i>above average</i> and then <i>decreased</i>

Figure 3. Guide to reading the scattergrams.

For perceived self-efficacy, 23,13% had a score below the average on the first administration and their score on the second administrations indicated an increased perceived self-efficacy (top left quadrant). 31,25% of the young people had a score above the average on the first adminis-

tration and the scores on the second administration indicated a decreased perceived self-efficacy (bottom right quadrant) (Figure 4).

For self-esteem, 25% had a score below the average on the first administration and their score of the second administrations indicated an increased self-esteem (top left quadrant). 26,25% of the young people had a score above the average on the first administration and their scores on the second administration indicated a decreased self-esteem (bottom right quadrant) (Figure 5).

In other words, the diverse groups of participants were affected in a variety of ways and this varied between the initiatives. The hypotheses that all participants indicate an increase of their perceived self-efficacy (hypothesis 3) and self-esteem (hypothesis 4) between the first (T1) and the second (T2) administrations can be rejected.

4. Discussion

The purpose of our study was to systematically analyse two assumptions within the individual-centred deficit model of youth: i) ‘participants are deficient and in need of development’; and ii) ‘participation in SFD initiatives leads to positive personal development’. Before discussing the key issues, we want to stress that measuring developmental change in social sciences is conceptu-

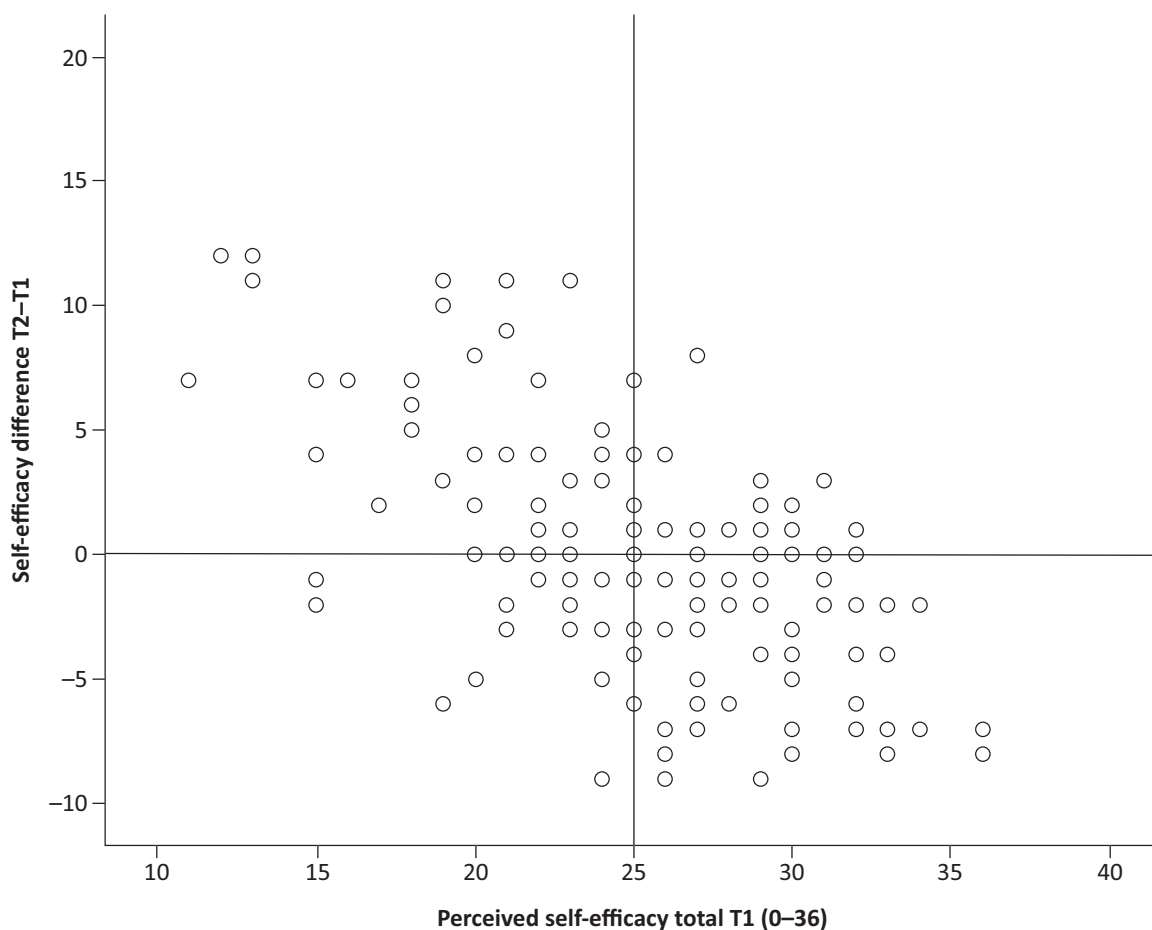


Figure 4. Scattergram of individual perceived self-efficacy changes.

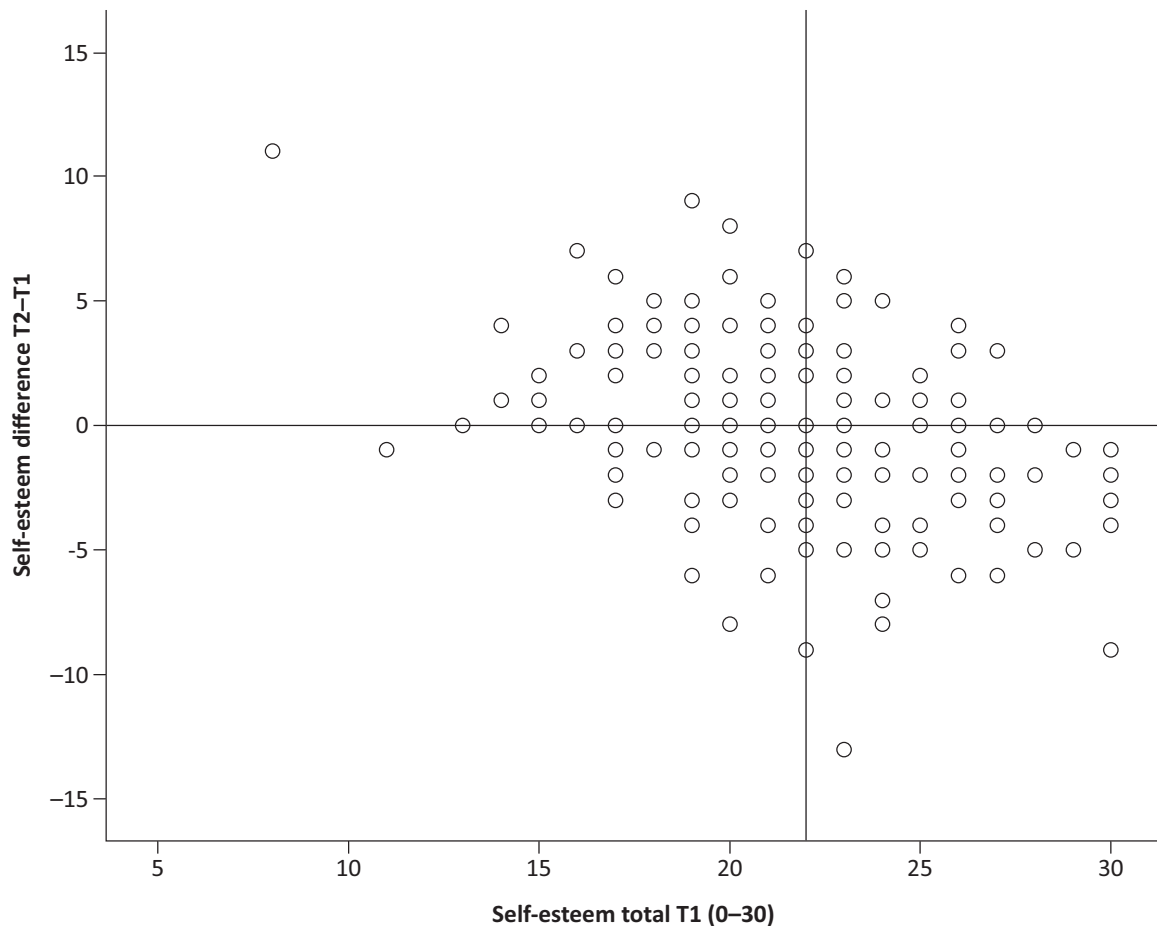


Figure 5. Scattergrams of individual self-esteem changes.

ally and methodologically challenging, which makes the interpretation of data tricky. Several limitations to this study’s research design should be taken into account. Firstly, participation in the initiatives was voluntary and participants who took part are likely to have a reasonable degree of perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem. As a result, young people that are in the most vulnerable situations might not participate in these initiatives, even if they set up a targeting, outreach approach. Still, our data sources indicated that the investigated SFD initiatives attract a large number of young people who find themselves in socially vulnerable situations. Secondly, any changes that might be revealed in the data are not necessarily the result of participation in the initiatives. In social sciences, it is difficult to isolate the ‘sport’ or ‘program’ effect from other contextual influences (e.g., family, peers, school, public space) and from more general developmental changes young people might undergo. Thirdly, when developmental changes do appear, it usually happens slowly and in very slight ways. Since we do not know if and how soon the expected developmental change is likely to appear, a time span of 6 to 8 months might be relatively short (Spaaij et al., 2016).

Despite these limitations, the data raise questions about the assumptions underpinning most SFD rhetoric. The first key issue is that young people from disad-

vantaged neighbourhoods cannot be regarded as *uniformly* deficient in relation to the assumed deficits of perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem. Not *all* participants had low perceived self-efficacy and low self-esteem. On the contrary, there was a normal distribution of self-evaluations, comparable to other populations (Bosscher et al., 1997; Schmitt & Allik, 2005). Groups of young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods include some with relatively high self-evaluations, some with low self-evaluations, and most with scores somewhere in the middle. The results refute the assumption that most young people living in disadvantaged communities need more perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem and, as such, warn against over-generalising about personal developmental needs. These results confirm the previous findings of research conducted in the Global South (Coalter, 2013; Coalter & Taylor, 2010). Our analysis in disadvantaged urban areas of the Global North (Belgium) also showed that there were no significant differences for perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem regarding age, year repetition, suspension, length of membership, sport frequency, financial home situation, or length of time living in Belgium. There were, however, significant differences between boys (higher) and girls for both concepts. Further, those who speak a language at home which is not Dutch or French scored significantly lower

on perceived self-efficacy than those who speak at least Dutch or French at home. Also, young people who sometimes to very often have concerns about their own future scored significantly lower on self-esteem than those who have no such concerns. As Rossi and his colleagues (2004) stated, there are hardly any social problems that can be easily and convincingly described in terms of simple and unambiguous characteristics of the individuals experiencing those problems. Therefore, the first implication for SFD stakeholders designing and researching SFD programs is to pay more attention to the needs assessment of young people by starting with an open-ended bottom-up approach that is tailored to the actual life situations of young people and their individual differences, instead of relying on pre-defined, abstract ideas (Cooper, 2012; Giulianotti, Hognestad, & Spaaij, 2016; Haudenhuyse et al., 2012b; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012a).

The second key issue is that the outcomes measured amongst participants were varied and certainly not unidirectional (i.e., there were increases, decreases, or even no change). There was no simple and predictable change in young people's 'development', as might be expected on the basis of previous research (Coalter, 2013; Coalter & Taylor, 2010). Evidently, starting from the inaccurate assumption that young people are *uniformly* deficient, it may be expected that hardly any positive change (i.e., increase) would occur for participants with already high self-evaluations. The overall picture is that many participants with lower than average self-evaluations improved their score and many with initially higher than average self-evaluations showed a decrease. This tendency might be influenced by the statistical phenomenon of 'regression to the mean'. Such decreases should not necessarily be seen as a negative outcome. It may reflect a more considered approach to the completion of the survey on the second administration, or an adjustment to healthier levels (e.g., less narcissistic or anti-social self-esteem (Mruk, 2013)) due to a practical experience or social relationships inside or outside the initiative. Likewise, for participants that had no changes in their self-evaluation, such status-quo should not necessarily be seen as a negative outcome or as evidence that SFD does not work. It might be that a participant developed lower levels of perceived self-efficacy and/or self-esteem outside the SFD initiative but developed higher levels inside the initiative. It might have been the other way around, although the latter participant is likely to quit the initiative for that reason (i.e., drop out). To think that all young people are deficient and participation in SFD initiatives automatically change self-beliefs in a 'positive' sense would ignore the complexity of social change. Therefore, the second implication for SFD stakeholders is to try to *understand* 'how or why a programme works, for whom, in what circumstances' and concentrate their 'fire' on vital program mechanisms and the contexts in which they operate for various groups of participants (Pawson, 2006). In line with this, Kay (2012) stated that it is questionable whether 'robust' levels of knowledge are achiev-

able, and suggested that other types of knowledge (i.e., qualitative, 'understanding') may be more appropriate, valid and obtainable. According to Jeanes and Lindsey (2014), more nuanced and subtle 'understandings' are likely to enhance practice and contribute to the recognition of SFD as a more mature field that can contribute to a broader development effort.

The third key issue is that even if some young people could benefit from higher perceived self-efficacy or self-esteem levels—or any other individual-focused concept (e.g., resilience, a part of self-efficacy, or leadership)—and even if participation in SFD initiatives *did* lead to an improvement in those levels, it remains essential to question what these outcomes are, whose interests they serve, and how they are related to young people's life chances or social vulnerability (Coalter, 2013; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011; Jeanes & Lindsey, 2014; Spaaij et al., 2016). Critical scholars have argued that de-contextualised and atheoretical analyses of the role of sport in development are not only simplistic and inaccurate in ascribing socially transformative abilities to sport, but also obscure the *contingent nature* of achieving outcomes and the *broader context* of development politics on the community, urban, national and/or international levels (e.g., power, ideology, welfare system) (Coalter, 2013; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011). A narrow approach to development which overemphasises individual agency and distracts from such broader contextual issues will reproduce vulnerability despite any 'targeted intervention' (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012b; Kelly, 2011; Lawson, 2005; Weiss, 1997a). Nevertheless, SFD initiatives aimed at young people in socially vulnerable situations can be valuable in the sense that participation *may possibly help some* of the young people to have more self-confidence and self-esteem and, in turn, stand 'stronger' in mainstream society and its mainstream institutions. It might be asked if this should be the core social mission of SFD initiatives. Therefore, the third implication for SFD stakeholders may be to employ fewer intrapersonal and more interpersonal and critical conceptualisations of 'development' (e.g., supportive networks), which might be more valuable and beneficial when working with young people in socially vulnerable situations, as they take actual needs as a starting point.

5. Conclusion

We suggest that, if SFD stakeholders want to help young people in socially vulnerable situations, when designing and researching programs, priority should be given to disengaging from the dominant individual-centred deficit model of youth. There should be engagement in an open-ended bottom-up approach that critically assesses young people's needs by addressing their actual life situations and individual differences, and that considers more interpersonal and critical conceptualisations of 'development' (Haudenhuyse et al., 2012b). However, taking into account the broader context of social exclusion

and development politics (Coalter, 2013; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011), together with the impact of the current austerity climate in several 'first' world nations (Parnell, Spracklen, & Millward, 2016), the future participation in mainstream society of young people in socially vulnerable situations is likely to be less than successful if broader societal change (e.g., in education or poverty reduction policies) does not occur at the same time (Hayhurst, Giles, & Wright, 2016). Critical theories at the crossroads of sociology, pedagogy, and development studies (e.g., Freire's critical pedagogy or Sen's capability approach) might serve as valuable alternative pathways which lead beyond the dominant, symbolically violent assumptions that are present within contemporary society and therefore also in SFD. Such critical theories can inform and guide research designs, data collection, analyses, and interpretations and, in turn, contribute to the conceptual and theoretical clarity that the field of SFD has been welcoming for quite some time.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful for the collaboration from Antwerp Wolf Pack Basketball, Brussels Boxing Academy, Brussels Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Academy, 'Boxing Up' (Opboksen), City Pirates Football Club, and Kras Sport in sharing their viewpoints and advice for this study. They would also like to acknowledge the invaluable advice received from Dr. Fred Coalter, Dr. Ramon Spaaij, Dr. Veerle Vyncke, Dr. An Nuytiens and Drs. Pieter Debog-nies. They wish to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers at Cogitatio Press for their comments on earlier versions of this article. The first author would like to thank Tine D'aes. Above all, the authors are grateful to the young people who participate in this ongoing study and share their experiences, thoughts, and time.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4(1), 1–44.
- Black, D. (2010). The ambiguities of development: Implications for 'development through sport'. *Sport in Society*, 13(1), 121–129. doi:10.1080/17430430903377938
- Bosscher, R., & Smit, J. (1998). Confirmatory factor analysis of the General Self-Efficacy Scale. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 36(3), 339–343.
- Bosscher, R., Smit, J., & Kempen, G. (1997). Algemene competentieverwachtingen bij ouderen. Een onderzoek naar de psychometrische kenmerken van de Algemene Competentieschaal (ALCOS). *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor de Psychologie*, 52, 239–248.
- Coakley, J. (2011). Youth sports: What counts as "positive development?". *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 35(3), 306–324.
- Coakley, J. (2016). Positive Youth Development through sport. Myths, beliefs and realities. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), *Positive Youth Development in sport*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A wider social role for sport: Who's keeping the score?* London, UK: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2013). *Sport for Development. What game are we playing?* London, UK: Routledge.
- Coalter, F., & Taylor, J. (2010). Sport-for-development impact study: A research initiative funded by Comic Relief and UK Sport and managed by International Development through Sport. Stirling, UK: University of Stirling.
- Cooper, C. (2012). Imagining 'radical' youth work possibilities—Challenging the 'symbolic violence' within the mainstream tradition in contemporary state-led youth work practice in England. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(1), 53–71. doi:10.1080/13676261.2011.618489
- Darnell, S. C. (2010). Sport, race, and bio-politics: Encounters with difference in "Sport for Development and Peace" internships. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 34, 396–417.
- Darnell, S. C. (2012). *Sport for development and peace: A critical sociology*. London, UK: A&C Black.
- Darnell, S. C. (2015). Sport for development: What game are we playing? *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 7(2), 315–317. doi:10.1080/19406940.2013.856335
- Darnell, S. C., & Hayhurst, L. M. (2011). Sport for decolonization exploring a new praxis of sport for development. *Progress in Development Studies*, 11(3), 183–196.
- Darnell, S. C., Chawansky, M., Marchesseault, D., Holmes, M., & Hayhurst, L. (2016). The state of play: Critical sociological insights into recent 'Sport for Development and Peace' research. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 1–19. doi:10.1177/1012690216646762
- Franck, E., De Raedt, R., Barbez, C., & Rosseel, Y. (2008). Psychometric properties of the Dutch Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *Psychologica Belgica*, 48(1), 25–35.
- Giulianotti, R., Hognestad, H., & Spaaij, R. (2016). Sport for development and peace: Power, politics, and patronage. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 1(13), 129–141. doi:10.1080/24704067.2016.1231926
- Harris, K., & Adams, A. (2015). Power and discourse in the politics of evidence in sport for development. *Sport Management Review*. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2015.05.001

- Hartmann, D., & Kwauk, C. (2011). Sport and development: An Overview, critique, and reconstruction. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 35*, 284–305. doi:10.1177/0193723511416986
- Haudenhuysse, R., & Theeboom, M. (2015). Introduction to the special issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Critical Analyses and Future Challenges”. *Social Inclusion, 3*(3), 1–4. doi:10.17645/si.v3i3.381
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Coalter, F. (2012a). The potential of sports-based social interventions for vulnerable youth: Implications for sport coaches and youth workers. *Journal of Youth Studies*. doi:10.1080/13676261.2012.663895
- Haudenhuysse, R., Theeboom, M., & Nols, Z. (2012b). Sports-based interventions for socially vulnerable youth: Towards well-defined interventions with easy-to-follow outcomes? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. doi:10.1177/1012690212448002
- Hayhurst, L. M. C., Giles, A., & Wright, I. (2016). Biopedagogies and Indigenous knowledge: Examining sport for development and peace for urban Indigenous young women in Canada and Australia. *Sport, Education and Society, 21*(4), 549–569. doi:10.1080/13573322.2015.1110132
- Hayhurst, L., Wilson, B., & Frisby, W. (2010). Navigating neoliberal networks: Transnational Internet platforms in Sport for Development and Peace. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 46*(3), 315–329.
- Jeanes, R., & Lindsey, I. (2014). Where’s the “evidence?” Reflecting on monitoring and evaluation within Sport-for-Development. In K. Young & C. Okada (Eds.), *Sport, social development and peace (research in the sociology of sport, volume 8)* (pp. 197–217). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Jones, G., Edwards, M., Bocarro, N., Bunds, K., & Smith, J. (2016). An integrative review of sport-based youth development literature. *Sport in Society*. doi:10.1080/17430437.2015.1124569
- Kay, T. (2012). Accounting for legacy: Monitoring and evaluation in sport in development relationships. *Sport in Society, 16*(6), 888–904.
- Kelly, L. (2011). Social inclusion through sports based interventions? *Critical Social Policy, 31*(1), 126–150.
- Kennelly, J. (2016). Symbolic violence and the Olympic Games: Low income youth, social legacy commitments, and urban exclusion in Olympic host cities. *Journal of Youth Studies*. doi:10.1080/13676261.2016.1206868
- Kruse, S. E. (2006). *Review of kicking AIDS out. Is sport an effective tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS?* Oslo, Norway: NORAD.
- Lawson, A. (2005). Empowering people, facilitating community development, and contributing to sustainable development: The social work of sport, exercise, and physical education programs. *Sport, Education and Society, 10*(1), 135–160.
- Mruk, C. (2013). *Self-esteem and positive psychology. Research, theory and practice*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Mwaanga, O., & Prince, S. (2016). Negotiating a liberative pedagogy in sport development and peace: understanding consciousness raising through the Go Sisters programme in Zambia. *Sport, Education and Society, 21*(4), 588–604. doi:10.1080/13573322.2015.1101374
- Oproep Voor een Democratische School. (2014). *PISA 2012 ontsluit: De naakte cijfers. Waarom zijn België en Frankrijk de kampioenen van sociale ongelijkheid in het onderwijs?* Brussels, Belgium: Studiedienst OVDS.
- Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs and mathematical problem-solving of gifted students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 21*, 325–344.
- Parnell, D., Spracklen, K., & Millward, P. (2016). Special Issue Introduction: Sport management issues in an era of austerity. *European Sport Management Quarterly*. doi:10.1080/16184742.2016.1257552
- Pawson, R. (2006). *Evidence-based policy: A realist perspective*. London, UK: Sage.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rossi, T., & Jeanes, R. (2016). Education, pedagogy and sport for development: Addressing seldom asked questions. *Sport, Education and Society, 21*(4), 483–494. doi:10.1080/13573322.2016.1160373
- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation. A systematic approach*. London, UK: Sage Publishing.
- Schmitt, D. P., & Allik, J. (2005). Simultaneous administration of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in 53 nations: exploring the universal and culture-specific features of global self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*(4), 623–642.
- Schulenkorf, N., Sherry, E., & Rowe, K. (2016). Sport for Development: An integrated literature review. *Journal of Sport Management, 30*(1), 22–39. doi:10.1123/jsm.2014-0263
- Schulenkorf, N., & Spaaij, R. (2016). Commentary: Reflections on theory building in Sport for Development and peace. *International Journal for Sport Management and Marketing, 16*(1/2), 71–77.
- Sherer, M., Maddux, J. E., Mercandante, B., Prentice-Dunn, S., Jacobs, B., & Rogers, R. W. (1982). The Self-Efficacy Scale: Construction and validation. *Psychological Reports, 51*(2), 663–671.
- Spaaij, R., Oxford, S., & Jeanes, R. (2016). Transforming communities through sport? Critical pedagogy and sport for development. *Sport, Education and Society, 21*(4), 570–587. doi:10.1080/13573322.2015.1082127
- UNDP. (2017). *Human Development Report 2015*. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf
- Vallieres, E., & Vallerand, R. (1990). Traduction et validation Canadienne-Française de l'échelle de l'estime de soi de Rosenberg. *International Journal of Psychology, 25*(2), 305–316.

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054.

Vettenburg, N. (1998). Juvenile delinquency and the cultural characteristics of the family. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 10(3), 193–210.

Weiss, C. (1997a). *Evaluation methods for studying programs and policies*. London, UK: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Weiss, C. (1997b). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21(4), 501–524. doi:10.1177/0193841X9702100405

About the Authors



Zeno Nols has a Master's degree in Sociology. He holds an additional Postgraduate degree in Sport Management. In 2014, Zeno started his PhD, in which he critically investigates the value of sport for young people in precarious situations within super-diverse urban contexts. He focuses on the underlying pedagogies and the impact of six urban sport-for-development initiatives. Zeno is also involved in other research projects regarding specific themes (e.g., migration, detention, employment).



Reinhard Haudenhuyse holds Master's degrees in Physical Education and in Conflict and Development, both from Ghent University. In 2012 he received his PhD in Physical Education and Movement Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He currently works as a part-time professor and post-doctoral researcher at the Sport and Society Research Unit and the Interdisciplinary Research Group Voicing At-Risk Youth at Vrije Universiteit Brussel.



Marc Theeboom holds a PhD in Physical Education and a Master's degree in Leisure Studies. He works as a full professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He is chair of the "Sport and Society" Research Group and of the Department of Sport Policy and Management. Since 2010, Marc has been the promoter-coordinator of the Flemish Policy Research Centre for Sports (Steunpunt Sport). His research primarily focuses on policy-related and pedagogical aspects of sport in general, as well as in relation to specific target groups in particular. Since 2016, Marc has been co-promoter of the large-scale interdisciplinary 'CATCH' research program ("Community sports for AT-risk youth: innovative strategies for improving personal development, health and soCial cohesion").

Article

The Inclusion Conundrum: A Critical Account of Youth and Gender Issues Within and Beyond Sport for Development and Peace Interventions

Holly Collison ^{1,*}, Simon Darnell ², Richard Giulianotti ^{1,3} and P. David Howe ¹

¹ School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, LE11 3TU, UK;
E-Mails: h.collison@lboro.ac.uk (H.C.), r.giulianotti@lboro.ac.uk (R.G.), p.d.howe@lboro.ac.uk (P.D.H.)

² Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON M5S 2W6, Canada;
E-Mail: simon.darnell@utoronto.ca

³ Faculty of Humanities, Sports and Educational Science, University College of Southeast Norway, 3800 Bo, Norway

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 30 January 2017 | Accepted: 20 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

The sport for development and peace (SDP) sector is made up of various development-focused policies and programs that seek to engage, stabilise, empower and create social and economic change. SDP projects, most often run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), have been implemented in regions enduring physical conflicts, health pandemics, major gender divisions and other social crises that have a great impact on youth. In this context, sport has been accorded the difficult task of facilitating greater access for marginal, vulnerable or community groups whilst positively contributing to the attainment of diverse development objectives. While the ‘where’ and ‘why’ of SDP has been largely accounted for, the attention in this article is on the ‘who’ of SDP in relation to the notion of inclusion. Drawing on extensive research conducted in Jamaica, Kosovo, Rwanda and Sri Lanka, the idea of SDP as an inclusionary practice is critically investigated. While SDP may ‘give voice’ to participants, especially to individuals with athletic ability or sporting interests, the extent to which this creates social contexts that are fundamentally inclusive remains open to discussion. In this sense, while targeting populations, groups or individuals remains an attractive strategy to achieve specific goals, for example youth empowerment or gender equality, empirical assessments complicate the presumption that SDP programming leads to inclusion, particularly at a larger societal level. The article considers a matrix of inclusion criteria, potential outcomes, and the tensions arising between targeted SDP programming and the often-exclusionary dimensions of sport more broadly, with a focus on youth and gender issues.

Keywords

gender; NGOs; sport for development and peace; volunteers; youth

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

The United Nations Office for Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) has been very clear on their priorities and development mandate. Wilfried Lemke, United Nations (UN) Special Advisor on Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) has stated on numerous occasions his ambitions to use sport as a vehicle to address conflict resolution, gender equality, the development of Africa, in-

clusion of persons with disabilities, and youth development (Peace and Sport, 2016). Social inclusion is central to such goals and has been strongly aligned to the newly established UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The same connections to sport have been made by fellow UN offices including the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO, recently stated that “Sport is a powerful vehicle for social inclusion, gender equality and

youth empowerment, with benefits that are felt far beyond the stadiums” (United Nations, 2016). It is from this level of advocacy that large numbers of NGOs, sports federations, national governments, charitable organisations and local groups adopt sports based programming to achieve their aims. The SDP movement (Beutler, 2008; Kidd, 2008) has thus evolved over the last fifteen years and has become a recognised sector at both the policy level and for those who focus on achieving stability, peace, education and inclusion within post-conflict and developing nations.

The idea of inclusion and sport can be aligned to the conceptual lens provided within the notion of sport and social capital. The social significance of inclusion and sport and indeed social capital is connected to social networks, civic norms, social integration, community structures and civic participation (see Nicholson & Hoye, 2008). Referring to Donnelly (1996) and Freiler (2001), Bailey (2005, p. 76) provides a series of connected dimensions of social inclusion:

Spatial: Social inclusion related to proximity and the closing of social and economic distances.

Relational: Social inclusion is defined in terms of a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Functional: Social inclusion relates to the enhancement of knowledge, skills and understandings.

Power: Social inclusion assumes a change in the locus of control.

The concept of social inclusion can therefore be deconstructed by a series of social, economic, cultural and emotional dimensions. Such dimensions will now be demonstrated via an empirical account of SDP operating within 4 research sites. This article examines differing models of SDP in relation to social inclusion and reflects upon the outcomes and challenges connected to youth and gender. The roles participants adopt as athletes and volunteers and the socio-cultural identities of participants with regards to ethnicity, crime and violence, and social status and ageing will be discussed. This account empirically highlights several challenges central to the concept of inclusion within SDP programming and participation. Many of these challenges are known to both academics and practitioners however, the purpose of this article is to empirically examine such barriers that threaten the attainment of diversity in SDP. This article should be considered as an empirically driven account that documents and contextualises such challenges, its purpose is not to guide practitioners but to demonstrate wide ranging issues.

2. Methods

The article draws upon research undertaken by the authors as part of a comparative, transnational investi-

gation of the SDP sector. Prior to fieldwork full ethical clearance was granted by the funder and our academic institutions internal ethics committees. All organisations, individuals and participants were fully informed of our projects objectives and we provided additional information via the projects website and pamphlet. Fieldwork was conducted in Jamaica, Kosovo, Rwanda and Sri Lanka¹ and broadly focused on three substantive areas of SDP programming: the promotion and securing of human rights, the rights and needs of people with disabilities, and the mobilization of sport towards peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Each researcher made a minimum of 2 fieldwork trips to their allocated location(s), a minimum of 4 weeks was spent in total in each research site.

The majority of data was collected through ethnographic fieldwork, deploying the classic qualitative research methods of participant observation, semi-structured and focus group interviews (Eriksen, 2001; Van Maanen, 2011). The majority of focus group sessions involved the participants of SDP projects, this was deemed appropriate when spending time with predominantly young populations. Focus group sessions were not always planned, in some of our locations we were invited to conferences, staff meetings or official offices and focus group interviews organically occurred. We deployed numerous methodological approaches on the ground, in one location we were able to participate fully in the delivery of an SDP programming via a volunteer role, in another location we were asked to adopt a consultancy role to develop new ideas and this allowed for enhanced access to both programming and operational spaces. As academics with knowledge and experience of SDP we could apply our skills if requested whilst simultaneously demonstrating our desires to gain a better understanding of the environments in which we were located. At the same time, the limits to our local knowledge and customs were sometimes revealed, to the amusement of our study groups. In this sense, our research was inspired by Eriksen who has stated, “No matter which role one takes on in the field—most ethnographers are probably partly expert, partly clown” (2001, p. 25). Our abilities in the field to gain our own sense of inclusion depended on our abilities to balance both roles as expert and researcher.

Within our varying methodological pursuits as interviewers, observers, volunteers, coaches and experts, we considered SDP from multiple organizational and social layers. We observed and interviewed participant populations, NGO personnel, implementers involved in trans-national partnerships, local and foreign volunteers, sports coaches and ministerial officials and policy makers. We did not limit ourselves in the field and allowed the research to organically evolve in each location (see Collison, Giulianotti, Howe, & Darnell, 2016). We estimate that a total of 100 formal interviews were

¹ All of the research sites were selected based upon SDP activity in relation to the project focuses and their national identities as either post-conflict, reporting high levels of urban violence or classed as ‘developing’.

conducted,² in addition to participant observations and informal dialogue exchange. The pursuit of comparative data analysis has been a continuous task for the research team. Standardized interview questions were agreed prior to field visits and this allowed for consistency and direct comparative analysis, however, all of the locations provided methodological contrasts, cultural diversity and broadly speaking contrasting priorities, challenges and approaches. Therefore, the process of data analysis has been a significant task. Researchers produced a fieldwork report after each visit, the researchers communicate virtually on a regular basis to discuss specific topics and share their experiences and insights, the research group also meet for specific data analysis meetings. This has been a process of continuous dialogue and analysis that has evolved over a 24-month period. For this article, we draw upon our experiences within each of these locations and consider the often-contradictory strategies for targeting specific populations within SDP programming and their effects on social inclusion.

3. Youth and Gender: The Need for Clarification

SDP is driven by the idea that sport can socially benefit the lives of the poor, vulnerable, volatile and those who lack opportunities for social, formal and health education. Due to such focuses, most NGOs, local groups and stakeholders align their programming to specific social goals for specific populations. The process of targeting specific groups then brings into question the idea of social inclusion within and beyond the boundaries of SDP. Youth and girls and women are two of the primary targets for SDP and are central to many of the SDGs as well as the goals of many developing and post-conflict nations. Although girls and young women may be considered part of the youth category and indeed intersect, the literature review which follows directs the reader to a social definition of youth-hood and one which considers the term as almost exclusively male, therefore provoking the need to consider youth and girls and women as two separate social identities. This article will consider male youth and girls and women in isolation to demonstrate differing socio-cultural positions, experiences and access to SDP programming. Before our empirical commentary, it is important to consider the potentially problematic terms of youth and gender.

The term youth is highly contested in two distinct ways, first due to the tension between chronological ageing and the process of maturation as gained through cultural systems and social pathways (Honwana, 2012). Many scholars who have considered youth identity and youth cultures present diverse discussions relating to social systems, culture, traditional rites of passage, economy, national security, politics, institutional structures, law and customs to name but a few (Durham, 2000;

Evans-Pritchard, 1969). In line with Bayart's (1993) theorisation, generational categories such as youth are part of a struggle for influence, power and authority within almost every society. Therefore, the consideration of youth raises predicaments, tensions and contrasting ideas connected to identity, membership and social inclusion and mobility. As a result, a social definition of youth aligning to specific cultural contexts is more appropriate and insightful than broad age-based indicators. Second, youth tends to present itself as a masculine term; Bucholtz considers "youth culture to be a male preserve by definition and the primary purpose of such terminology is to work out issues of masculinity" (2002, p. 537; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005). There is a strong link between the fragile nature of young men unable to acquire power or agency which is defined through their youth status. Masculinity therefore is a source of opportunity to assert power which derives from the body and not social mobility (Groes-Green, 2009). With these important distinctions in place we can proceed with the stance that youth is a complex social category or a life phase which tends to describe and position males most often.

As our contextual and empirical understandings of youth developed within our research locations, the notion of gender and its position within SDP raised many questions. If the consideration of youth centred around issues of masculinity and was dominated by male populations, did gender related goals and practices refer directly to women? And how was this managed within SDP environments and beyond? Saavedra observes that "In the world of sport-in-development, 'gender' is usually only invoked when referring to the involvement of girls and women" (2012, p. 128). Acknowledging that sport is engulfed in gendered dimensions is not a new claim, however. When considering the everyday workings and norms of the SDP sector, this presents a need for deeper thought and enquiry. Kay claims, "Sport is a prime site to challenge gender ideology, and it is therefore a particularly valuable area for encouraging involvement by the most disempowered women" (quoted in Collins & Kay, 2003, p. 97). As with youth, there is a need to adopt a commitment to interpreting deeper understandings through the lens of local populations and their social structures. Gender dimensions and the participation of women requires an understanding of culturally defined social processes, power structures, local politics and cultural norms relating to education, employment and relationships (Brady, 1998). Given these issues, the experiences of women and girls has become an important topic within several case studies of SDP (Chawansky & Schlenker, 2015; Hayhurst, 2013; Jeanes & Magee, 2013). Such investigations have enabled nuanced and clearer understandings of the role and potential of women and girls to effect change and challenge norms that may restrict access and acceptance within social structures and educational pathways. Fixed narratives of specific groups

² The project officially ends in June 2017, the research team continue to analyse data and pursue comparative analysis. Therefore, the authors of this article are still collating interview data and are at this time unable to provide an accurate numerical break down of interviews given within each location.

therefore need to be challenged and this becomes especially important when examining the 'who' of SDP and its inclusionary effects. This literature review highlights that although girls and young women fall into the youth category, socially and empirically there are distinct social definitions that isolate girls and women and male youth populations. We now turn to examples of practice, approach and the management of SDP programs that explore the complexities of social inclusion within SDP.

4. Sri Lanka: Athletes

Eight weeks of fieldwork was conducted in Sri Lanka during two in-country visits between January and October of 2015. One NGO was the central feature of the fieldwork, this was due to the scale of their activities throughout the country and the diversity of sports used within their approach. The organization advocated for numerous models of delivery inclusive of the development of athletes, competitive pathways, elite coaching programs delivered by international guests, supporting school activities and hosting an annual national cricket tournament with the focus of ethnic and regional integration. The research methodology incorporated formal interviews, participant observations, focus group interviews with participants and coaches and the delivery of netball coaching sessions as a strategy to integrate with the women and girls who participated in the program.

In Sri Lanka, the backdrop to many NGO programmes is thirty years of ethnic division, conflict, social tension and the economic and infrastructure disparity between rural and urban communities (Moorcraft, 2012). One NGO we engaged with based its identity on empowering rural communities and villages. Despite the diverse education, skills training, health facilities and infrastructure support the organisation offered, it was its sporting agenda that dominated many of their large events, drew international guests and attracted donor support. Youth and girls were the primary participants of their SDP projects which focused on cricket and netball, but badminton, chess, karate, table tennis, volleyball and swimming were offered as alternative sporting pursuits. Sport took on two distinct roles, firstly as a competitive structure that focused on skill development, competition and performance. Secondly, sport was used as a tool to develop practical life skills like swimming, and personal development skills like leadership, communication and engaging with others from different regions, ethnicities and religions. The national cricket team was a source of evidence of how sport can be an example of an institution that operates in the absence of ethnic and religious prejudice within Sri Lanka. Founders of the organisation described sport as the driving force behind much of what they had achieved and acquired, and it was the process of developing athletes that provided much prestige and awareness of the work they were doing.

Cricket was the sport par excellence within the NGO and its programming structures reflected a club system

with participation age bands of U13, U15, U17 through to senior male and female teams. Due to the ethnic spatial divisions in Sri Lanka, the level of access available to differing ethnic populations was largely based on the location of the SDP event or activity. The organization's impressive facilities were based in the south which is predominantly Sinhalese, yet there were examples of talented cricketers from the North, occupied by a majority Tamil population, who had been given the opportunity to join the organization's teams in the south. From this it is clear that SDP gave athletes in Sri Lanka the opportunity to be included in the more advanced club structures being implemented by a national NGO. Athletes certainly dominated the sporting spaces and this was visible through the coaching regimes, the professional way they trained, the emphasis placed on performance and the openness regarding expectations to win and progress through competitive pathways. This approach to sport within the organisation was evident both through the practice of cricket and netball. As with the boys and the smaller number of girls who played cricket, the girls netball team was also expected to perform, and individuals were expected to be selected during national trials.

Athletes were the dominant population given opportunities by this NGO in Sri Lanka, and this was reflective of the approach to cricket and to a lesser extent netball within the country. Those who showed interest but were less skilled could have training opportunities but the focus was the performance and this was potentially ostracising to many. Within this performance structure, age was an indicator for placing players; social maturation was never a consideration in their practices but neither were the social realities of their lives outside of SDP. Poverty, racial divide or social challenges were not openly discussed and were not part of the sporting programme. When asked why this was, one employee responded "it's like driving a car and looking behind you, you'll crash. We don't discuss the past we focus on the future". This philosophy was evident throughout their programming; by playing sport athletes would develop not only their skills but the personal characteristics associated with good sportsmanship, fair play and a peaceful existence.

Those who succeeded were aware of their potential for economic mobility, many of the coaches and the foundations trustees were former elite cricketers or involved in the business management of elite cricket. Such role models highlighted the gains to be made. Those who were not athletes would need to discover such personal and economic development elsewhere. There is a clear connection here to be made using the afore mentioned Freiler (2001) dimensions of social inclusion, in the Sri Lankan context, economic mobility (spatial), belonging to a team and social acceptance as a potential elite or successful athlete (rational), may lead to both a change in the locus of control and therefore *power* which results in social mobility and inclusion within society. For the few who may achieve the goal of professionalism, this model of SDP serves a significant purpose, however this may be

at the detriment of those who do not reach such levels or those who are excluded from the pathway altogether. Participation maybe intended to develop personal development characteristics broadly associated with sport but achievement and financial potential are valued and more closely connected to inclusion within society and within SDP models within Sri Lanka.

5. Kosovo: Volunteers and Ethnicity

Kosovo is a post-conflict, contested state located in the western Balkan region of Europe. In Kosovo, there are two main SDP NGOs which have different goals, structures, modes of delivery, and 'ways into' their locations of activity. One NGO was exclusively focused on promoting stronger cross-cultural relations and understanding; the other was focused on this goal, as well as others, such as promoting the social inclusion of girls, people with disabilities, and those with substance addictions. The two NGOs have different strategies, which include running multi-game activities nationally throughout the year and hosting large-scale football events for children mainly during the summer. 'Youth' within the context of Kosovo might refer more accurately to teenage participants on intervention programmes, and the volunteers who take on roles of 'animators' or 'coaches' during the activities. Both NGOs have local volunteer structures in place. For one NGO, the volunteers are relatively young (usually aged around 15–24); tend to reflect the ethnic composition of their local area; feature a good mix of males and females; and, have almost always entered initially as participants before moving on to become volunteers.

A key issue was mobilizing young people to become civic actors and leaders. One long-term NGO official highlighted to us that making young people more socially active in community and public activities was an important result for them. An issue to bear in mind is that both NGOs relied substantially on local youth populations as volunteers to put on sessions and to do the day to day work. In one NGO, most of these volunteers were young, motivated, and either looking to or having reasonable qualifications that in Western European contexts would otherwise have secured them with reliable white-collar employment. The economic situation is much more problematic with high levels of poverty, unemployment and visa restrictions on travelling into the European Union. In the other NGO, volunteers tended to be already involved with sport clubs which delivered the sessions. Local NGO officials and volunteers recognized that there were clear limits on the extent to which volunteers could be asked to conduct activities. We were present when one international NGO official, who had flown in to visit and to observe activities in Kosovo, suggested to local volunteers that more sessions could be put on to keep unemployed young people entertained; a local volunteer responded that these activities were already taking up a good deal of the free and holiday time, as well as some money, that was available to the volunteers.

The young volunteers that we spoke with largely emphasized the same factors behind their participation. These included their dual enjoyment, of working with children, and of the sports and games that they were leading. They also highlighted the new skills and capabilities that they learned from the NGOs; in some cases, such as physical education students or those looking to set up their own NGOs, these skills were viewed as being of direct benefit for their education or work. At the same time, several of these young people emphasized the difficulty of translating these employability skills into secure, long-term employment, due to the economic weaknesses of Kosovo and the strong belief that many jobs and educational openings were filled through 'social capital' ties including corrupt practices.

As with the Sri Lankan example, in Kosovo ethnicity is a significant factor in terms of SDP participation opportunities and social inclusion outside of sporting space. Participants in the activities of both NGOs largely reflected the ethnic or national make-up of the local populations, mainly divided along Albanian and Serbian lines. Thus, activities in mainly Albanian municipalities attracted mainly Albanian participants, while the same applied to sessions in Serbian enclaves. Despite their inter-cultural focus, both NGOs reported that it could be difficult to draw one group across into the demarcated spaces of the other. The risk in Kosovo inevitably centred on the post-conflict situation and relations between Albanians, Serbs and other small minorities notably Roma. So, whilst sport was positioned as a tool to challenge ethnic divisions within Kosovo, the restrictions in practice placed upon location, language, embedded prejudice and capacity often brought the notion of social inclusion into question.

6. Jamaica: Citizenship and Creating Safe Spaces

Fieldwork was undertaken in Kingston in May of 2015 and 2016, with two weeks spent in-country on each occasion. Ethnographic data was collected primarily through observations and interviews; focus groups with program participants were conducted where appropriate. Over the course of the two field visits, some 40 interviews were conducted as well as three focus groups. In addition, a series of observations were made of SDP activity. Four organizations based in Kingston constituted the bulk of the research focus. We made initial contact with these organizations through international SDP funders and policy makers. The Kingston-based organizations were non-governmental, and operating with charitable support—both financial and curricular—from corporate foundations or international SDP organizations.

In Jamaica, the issue of urban violence, crime and gun violence is the foundation for many locally organized community projects, as well as formal international NGOs working with a sports mandate. The concept of using sport as a tool for education, social rehabilitation and the creation of safe spaces is not a new movement or phenomenon in Jamaica but in recent years the sec-

tor had grown due to the possibilities brought by international interest, access to funds and the potential to create platforms to share best practice models and build sustainable programs. Arguably, sport for development in Jamaica is used as a tool for both prevention and cure within the context of crime and violence. The approach of two separate SDP organizations demonstrates this whilst also highlighting those that fit into the identities of vulnerable, potentially volatile or as Honwana and De Boeck claim 'Makers and Breakers' of a society (2005).

In a case study report of crime in Jamaica it was reported that "99% of murders were committed by males between 1997–2005, and over half of these were aged 25 years or younger" (Gray, 2007, p. 17). These statistics align to the feelings on the ground that young males or youth are the perpetrators or most likely to participate in crime and continue the cycles of violence within Kingston. One approach to this societal issue was the construction of citizenship amongst youth through sport and in particular football. The notion of community and indeed service to ones' community is important to the establishment of this organization that was founded upon Christian ideals. With a legacy of political violence and social tension, the concept of community is one which provides significant appeal to local populations. Through the participation of football, youth players are encouraged to become citizens who think beyond their individual needs, both as team members but also as members of their community. The leader of the organization places great emphasis on the mental, spiritual and physical development gains to be had by participating in football and being part of the organization. Through this approach, citizenship and the notion of community is in some ways symbolically constructed through participation but also demonstrated through their commitment to their team and the area in which they live. Whether such values are carried from the playing field is questionable but the players willingly separate themselves from such behaviors via the organization and football.

In line with the urban crime figures in Jamaica, women and children are far more likely to become victims of criminality and exposed to violence. One organization in Kingston prioritized the needs of children who had been identified and selected as vulnerable. Sport was part of the strategy attached to creating a safe space that was removed from the violent realities of the society around them. As such, sport had a significant pull and represented an activity that was fun, operated in the absence of structure and allowed for care free, safe physical pursuits. This form of selection and referral system could not allow for broader inclusion criteria's when the objective was focused towards nurturing, protecting and building a sense of resilience amongst a population identified as the most at risk. SDP in this context operated with the intention of insulating, and therefore also excluding, due to the fragile and volatile nature of the society it operated within.

These examples demonstrate a gender dynamic to the approach and targeted recipient population of SDP

programs. This reflects both the social conditions on the ground and the gender norms attached to crime and violence. SDP and sport has for many years had a role to play in Kingston when attempting to tackle cycles of violence and indeed its consequences. The SDP sector in Jamaica highlights the role aligned to sport for both prevention and cure and the various forms that selection and targeting can take to enroll those deemed either vulnerable or volatile. The lack of social inclusion in this context is quite deliberate and part of the overarching strategy to manage safe spaces and or encourage the development of youths as citizens.

7. Rwanda: Where Are the Girls?

Rwanda's tragic history of genocide sets the foundation for many social development projects and NGO curriculums that have emerged over the last two decades (Uvin, 1998). Whilst genocide provides a historical context, many NGOs focus on the issues of poverty, gender equity, health and personal development skills. Such development themes fit within the national agenda for progress and stability and importantly are supported by the state. In 2015, a member of the research team volunteered with an international SDP organization that implemented a multi themed curriculum in partnership with a local Rwandan NGO, and that specifically focused on football as a tool for social change. Both organizations positioned gender equity and female participation as one of their priorities. The question that lingered throughout the time on the football fields was, "where are the girls?"

Between July 2015 and June 2016, 6 weeks of fieldwork was conducted within 3 districts of Rwanda. Initial contact prior to fieldwork was made with an international 'Sport for Social Impact' organization who implemented their model of SDP with local organizations and groups via a curriculum. It was agreed that a volunteer role would be adopted by the researcher for the purpose of integration and following the dynamic and participatory ethos of the organization. Data collected was gained through the lived experience of implementing a SDP program, focus group interviews with participants, participant's observations, staff meetings prior to and post on-the-field sessions and formal interviews with local stakeholders. For both the local and international organizations, targeting or selecting specific groups or populations was not part of the participation criteria. Access to the 'Football for Social Impact' programme was free, open and welcoming to all. Naturally many of those who attended had an interest in football as players, coaches, teachers or those that just enjoyed having the opportunity to be within a football environment. There were no age or social barriers based on participation and children, youths, adults, elders, and women were all encouraged to join the sessions. Inclusion was a priority during this four-week national SDP program. The approach to the gender equity section of the curriculum was one of dynamic dialogue and practical demonstrations through

football, and many of the conditioned games sparked passionate debates. A favourite was the introduction of games focused around the skill set of former Nigerian female footballer Perpetua Nkwocha; the idea of replicating the skills of a female footballer was uncomfortable for some and during one discussion she was compared to 'looking like and playing like a man'. This in many ways was the reaction that the implementers were seeking as it offered the opportunity to challenge such views and draw a debate amongst the group. This kind of debate centred around female athletes and provided insights into the contextual gender norms experienced within the location, and would then facilitate further dialogue that could be challenged.

The relative absence of girls and women within the program was visible. The women who did attend were very proactive in their communities as coaches and the majority were skilled players but had few opportunities to play due to the male dominated competitive leagues. During focus group sessions with the recipients of the program, the issue of low numbers of girls and women was discussed. The responses given were consistent amongst the groups and indeed the same during interviews with high level sports officials. Body image was a significant concern both in terms of developing "masculine body types" as well as the concern to "not be able to attract a husband if she is playing like a man". In addition to this, young girls and women had specific domestic roles to fulfil from a young age and this was also given as a reason why many young girls enjoy playing sports and exercising at school despite a significant drop off after graduating from high school. Some of the girls also recognised the lack of female sporting role models and the fact that "there is no history of us succeeding in sport, now that Team Rwanda and the cyclists are doing well more boys want to ride to be like them but the girls do not try because no girls are there already".

The lack of legacy of female sport in Rwanda is clearly a hurdle to the participation levels within SDP programming (Meier & Saavedra, 2009). The dominant male groups involved were quick to recognise the role of women in powerful positions in government and the strength of the women in their homes, but when it came to sport they felt that girls and women generally were not interested, were needed elsewhere or were 'lazy'. Their opinions of female athletes were often negative and highlighted the challenges and boundaries faced by those who may well have had a desire to participate. In the absence of equally mixed groups, those who participated were clearly challenged in their views and their norms were questioned. So, despite the inclusionary ethos of the SDP program, the challenge was embedded in the notion of sport and participation away from the confines of SDP.

8. Discussion

The purpose of this article has been to contextualise and empirically examine a number of approaches and chal-

lenges within the implementation of SDP projects within diverse national contexts. Youth and women have been at the centre of this analysis and the case studies have supported the initial statements that youth and SDP have complex gender dimensions. Youth are often described as marginal, passive, stuck or waiting within their social position (Sommers, 2012; Vigh, 2006). Yet for some, their roles and progression within SDP as athletes (Sri Lanka), volunteers and young leaders (Kosovo) show the dynamic nature of youth within differing social positions. Youth are the dominant recipient population of SDP and this research has highlighted the relative absence of girls and women within SDP spaces in some of our locations. This is reflective of either the cultural and social norms on the ground that create boundaries for access or the notion of sport as a masculine construct that crosses over into development practices. The representation of women in SDP has been present at the operational levels or through the narratives of those who are the exception, making their experiences within and beyond SDP all the more impressive. The female coaches developing their social impact strategies in Rwanda were quick to recognise their struggles for young girls to participate, "In Rwanda, girls like to play but they have no older girls to look to. When they get a little bit older they do other things, or stay in the home to help family, even worse they think boys will not like them if they play sport. Girls and women are left behind, there are too few of us". For women, social inclusion through SDP still has some way to go; we might suggest that it is through the lens of local populations and the work of local leaders that this may be challenged.

This article has demonstrated that at times the initial hurdle for local populations to gain access and participate within SDP is fitting into a social, skilled or at-risk category. In this regard, the alignment between NGO strategy and the needs on the ground is crucial to the idea of inclusion, 'success' and broader impact. The case studies have highlighted the need, within specific models of SDP, to target set populations to create safe spaces and achieve specific aims. In Jamaica for example exclusion cannot lend itself to social inclusion but focused inclusion serves to protect and build resilience. In contrast, in Sri Lanka, selection based on talent and the development of athletes can be isolating to those who do not meet the standards, but participation can produce opportunities for ethnic integration and inclusion rarely seen outside of sport.

What has become clear within this contextual account are the dimensions aligned to social inclusion within differing national contexts. Referring back to Freiler (2001), the notion of social and economic distances (spatial), experiencing a sense of belonging or acceptance (rational), the enhancement of knowledge, skills, or understanding (functional) and a change in the locus of control (power), can all be aligned to the social challenges faced by youth and women and girls and highlights not only the barriers to inclusion, both within society and within SDP programmes, but the potential gains

to be experienced through participation. The realities on the ground suggest that such dimensions of inclusion are experienced by the few and not the majority, inclusion questionably becomes an opportunity for those already with a sense of agency, the talented and the targeted.

Acknowledgements

Funding Acknowledgement: ESRC (Award Number: ES/L002191/1).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Bailey, R. (2005). Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport and social inclusion. *Educational Review*, 57(1), 71–90.
- Bayart, J. F. (1993). *The State in Africa: The politics of the belly*. London: Longman.
- Beutler, I. (2008). Sport serving development and peace: Achieving the goals of the United Nations through sport. *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 359–369.
- Brady, M. (1998). Laying the foundation for girls' healthy futures: Can sports play a role? *Studies in Family Planning*, 29(1), 79–82.
- Bucholtz, M. (2002). Youth and cultural practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 525–552.
- Collins, M. F., & Kay, T. (2003). *Sport and social exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Collison, H., Giulianotti, R., Howe, P. D., & Darnell, S. (2016). The methodological dance: Critical reflections on conducting a cross-cultural comparative research project on 'Sport for Development and Peace'. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 8(5), 413–423.
- Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. (2005). Reflections on youth: From the past to the postcolony. In A. Honwana & F. De Boeck (Eds.), *Makers and breakers: Children & youth in Postcolonial Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Donnelly, P. (1996). Approaches to social inequality in the sociology of sport. *Quest*, 48, 221–242.
- Durham, D. (2000). Youth and the social imagination in Africa: Introductions to part 1 & 2. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 73(3), 113–120.
- Eriksen, T. H. (2001). *Small places, large issues. An introduction to social and cultural anthropology* (2nd ed.). London: Pluto.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1969). *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Freiler, C. (2001). From experiences of exclusion to a vision of inclusion: What needs to change? Retrieved from www.ccsd.ca/subsites/inclusion/bp/cf2.htm
- Gray, S. (2007). *Trends in urban crime and violence in Kingston, Jamaica*. Retrieved from http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/GRHS.2007.CaseStudy.Crime_.Kingston.pdf
- Groes-Green, C. (2009). Hegemonic and subordinated masculinities: Class, violence and sexual performance among young Mozambican men. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 18(4), 286–304.
- Hayhurst, L. M. (2013). Girls as the 'new' agents of social change? Exploring the 'girl effect' through sport, gender and development programs in Uganda. *Sociological Research Online*, 18(2), 8.
- Hayhurst, L. M., Kay, T., & Chawansky, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Beyond sport for development and peace: Transnational perspectives on theory, policy and practice* (Vol. 53). London: Routledge.
- Honwana, A. (2012). *The time of youth: Work, social change, and politics in Africa*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- Honwana, A., & De Boeck, F. (2005). *Makers & breakers: Children and youth in postcolonial Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Jeanes, R., & Magee, J. (2013). Promoting gender empowerment through sport? Exploring the Experiences of Zambian female footballers. In *Global sport-for-development* (pp. 134–154). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Kidd, B. (2008). A new social movement: Sport for development and peace. *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 370–380.
- Meier, M., & Saavedra, M. (2009). Esther Phiri and the Moutawakel effect in Zambia: An analysis of the use of female role models in sport-for-development. *Sport in Society*, 12(9), 1158–1176.
- Moorcraft, P. L. (2012). *Total destruction of the Tamil Tigers: The rare victory of Sri Lanka's long war*. South Yorkshire: Pen & Swords.
- Nicholson, M., & Hoyer, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Sport and social capital*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Peace and Sport. (2016). Promoting the United Nations values through sport. Retrieved from <http://www.peace-sport.org/opinion/promoting-the-united-nations-values-through-sport>
- Saavedra, M. (2012). Dilemmas and opportunities in gender and sport-in-development. In R. Levermore & A. Beacom (Eds.), *Sport and international development*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sommers, M. (2012). *Stuck: Rwandan youth and the struggle for adulthood*. Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press.
- United Nations. (2016). Sport plays essential role in advancing 2030 development agenda. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53620#.WDXqPqx77ml>
- Uvin, P. (1998). *Aiding violence: The development enterprise in Rwanda*. Kumarian Press.
- Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Vigh, H. (2006). Social death and violent life chances. In *Navigating youth—generating adulthood: Social becoming in an African context*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

About the Authors



Holly Collison is a Research Associate in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Science at Loughborough University. Holly is an Anthropologist with extensive fieldwork experience in West Africa, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. Previous research has focused on urban youth, notions of community, status and identity and post-conflict development, specifically the use of football in sport for development and peace interventions. Her book, *Youth and Sport for Development and Peace: The Seduction of Football in Liberia* was published in 2016 by Palgrave Macmillan.



Simon C. Darnell is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education at the University of Toronto. His research focuses on the relationship between sport and international development, the development implications of sports mega-events, and the place of social activism in the culture of sport. He is the author of *Sport for Development and Peace: A Critical Sociology* and co-author of *Sport and Social Movements: From the Global to the Local* (both published by Bloomsbury Academic).



Richard Giulianotti is Professor of Sociology at Loughborough University, UK, and also Professor II at the University of Southeast Norway. His main research interests are in the fields of sport, globalization, development and peace, sport mega-events, crime and deviance, cultural identities, and qualitative methods. He is author of the books *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game* (1999), *Sport: A Critical Sociology* (2005, fully revised 2015), *Ethics, Money and Sport* (with A.J. Walsh, 2007), *Globalization and Football* (with R. Robertson, 2009), and *Policing the 2012 London Olympics* (with G. Armstrong and D. Hobbs, 2016).



P. David Howe is Reader in the Social Anthropology of Sport in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University. David is a leading figure in socio-cultural analysis of Paralympic sport and holds a visiting professorship at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium and an adjunct Professorship at Queen's University, Canada. Trained as a medical anthropologist, he is the author of *Sport, Professionalism and Pain: Ethnographies of Injury and Risk* (Routledge, 2004) and *The Cultural Politics of the Paralympic Movement: Through the Anthropological Lens* (Routledge, 2008).

Article

Football for Inclusion: Examining the Pedagogic Rationalities and the Technologies of Solidarity of a Sports-Based Intervention in Sweden

David Ekholm * and Magnus Dahlstedt

Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Linköping University, 58183 Linköping, Sweden; E-Mails: david.ekholm@liu.se (D.E.), magnus.dahlstedt@liu.se (M.D.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 12 December 2016 | Accepted: 6 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

Sports practices have been emphasised in social policy as a means of responding to social problems. In this article we analyse a sports-based social intervention performed in a “socially vulnerable” area in Sweden. We examine the formation of includable citizens in this project, based on interviews with representatives involved in the project. The material is analysed from a governmentality perspective, focusing on how problems and solutions are constructed as being constitutive of each other. The focus of the analysis is on social solidarity and inclusion as contemporary challenges, and how sport, specifically football, is highlighted as a way of creating social solidarity through a pedagogic rationality—football as a means of fostering citizens according to specific ideals of solidarity and inclusion. The formation of solidarity appears not as a mutual process whereby an integrated social collective is created, but rather as a process whereby those affected by exclusion are given the opportunity to individually adapt to a set of Swedish norms, and to linguistic and cultural skills, as a means of reaching the “inside”. Inclusion seems to be possible as long as the “excluded” adapt to the “inside”, which is made possible by the sports-based pedagogy. In conclusion, social problems and social tensions are spatially located in “the Area” of “the City”, whose social policy, of which this sports-based intervention is a part, maintains rather than reforms the social order that creates these very tensions.

Keywords

football; pedagogy; segregation; social inclusion; solidarity; sport

Issue

This article is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

At the forefront of the ongoing political debate are the challenges created due to an increase in segregation. Inequality, alienation, and exclusion are some of the concepts used to describe the tensions and conflicts arising, and in turn threatening, community and social cohesion. This debate highlights the role of welfare state interventions when it comes to taking action against conflict, tensions, and social problems—the *problem of solidarity*.

In recent decades, there has been a broad repertoire of innovative strategies and activities emerging to com-

bat these problems. For example, civil society has been highlighted as an arena with great potential for creating inclusion (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2011). One example of the mobilisation of civil society is the mobilisation of sport as an arena to meet a variety of social problems (Ekholm, 2017a). Seemingly new strategies to meet the challenges emerging from social policy address a classic question of the theory and practice of the welfare state: how can *conflicts* be counteracted and social *solidarity* created? In turn, this question follows on from the pedagogic rationality of such interventions (Philp, 1979), i.e., how the creation of solidarity is based on the notion of inclusion and the fostering of includable citizens.

In this article, we focus on social solidarity as a contemporary challenge, and how sport, specifically football, is highlighted as a way of creating social solidarity. We will look at a sports-based social intervention, primarily focusing on fostering children into good citizens: *Football for Inclusion* (the Activity), performed in a “socially vulnerable” area (the Area), in a Swedish city (the City). The aim of the article is to analyse (1) how the problems this intervention is intended to address are constructed, (2) how social solidarity is formed as a solution to these problems, and (3) how and with which ideals the targeted individuals and families are made includable, i.e., how they are fostered according to certain norms of social inclusion and participation.

Football for Inclusion was started in 2014 by two football associations, with the objective of “using organised football to improve young people’s social and language skills and work towards inclusion in Swedish society”. The aim of the Activity is also to “get children and young people to get active during their leisure time”, to create “an understanding of rules and types of work”, and to “stimulate friendship between young people from different cultures”. The sports activities, consisting of organised football, are aimed at school children in one of the City’s most socially and economically vulnerable areas, with a high proportion of inhabitants from migrant backgrounds. Approximately 200 school children aged 8–12 years old participated in the activities during and after school hours. The activities were led on-site by four sports-leaders (described here as the *Organiser*, the *Sports leader*, *Sports coach 1*, and *Sports coach 2*). *Football for Inclusion* is run as a community-based programme by local sports and football associations in collaboration with schools and recreation centres, and is financed by a range of public, private, and civil society actors in partnership. The Activity is designed as a sports-based intervention using sport as a vehicle to promote social inclusion. In this sense, *Football for Inclusion* is neither a football club nor is it affiliated with the local football federation (although, for instance, the *Initiator* is a representative of the managing association’s board of directors).

2. Analytical Perspective

The analysis is inspired by a governmentality approach that focuses on the relation between problem and solution (Bacchi, 2009; Foucault, 2004), and particularly by Donzelot’s (1979, 1988, 1991) approach to problems and solutions which identifies the welfare state as a means of creating social solidarity. We analyse the tensions and conflicts that are articulated, and the boundaries and lines of conflict that are created through a specific intervention—football as a means of inclusion. It is this particular interweaving of problem and solution that Donzelot (1988, 1991) takes as his starting point in analysing the genealogy and tasks of the welfare state, where the focus is on *technologies of solidarity*.

According to Donzelot (1991), it was through the emergence of the welfare state in the early 1900s that social fragmentation, tensions, and conflicts arising from capitalism could be met with interventions of social solidarity. The provision of welfare aimed at producing solidarity between individuals and classes, thus constituting an alternative to the social mindsets dominating the late 1800s of liberalism (competition between free individuals) and Marxism (class struggle). Accordingly, the ambition was “breaking down antagonistic attitudes, it aims at the gradual realisation of a consensus society” (Donzelot, 1991, p. 174). Here, the lines of conflict threatening solidarity, drawn primarily on the basis of socio-economic conditions, needed to be combated.

The welfare state could intervene by means of *technologies of solidarity*. Firstly, by technologies that guaranteed individuals collective insurance and protection against risks (*technologies of insurance*), and secondly, technologies that guaranteed social rights (*technologies of rights*). Here, interventions were made in people’s everyday lives by protective legislation and productive services, aimed at compensating for the socio-economic inequalities produced by the capitalist economy (Donzelot, 1988, 1991). These technologies aim at fostering individuals and establishing certain norms in the population, thus drawing boundaries between the normal and the deviant. The technologies further aim to change the deviant and in this way the social state can intervene in the lives of families and individuals (Donzelot, 1979). The technologies also aim at providing for the most vulnerable people in society, as vulnerability creates fragmentation and conflict. Together, the technologies give a particular meaning to “the social”, as the collective form of solidarity. Governing from the social point of view, perhaps finds its clearest form in the Swedish, social-democratic welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990). However, social policy based on state-centred insurance and risk protection, as well as publicly funded and publicly organised service provision, is currently transforming into more advanced liberal forms of governing welfare (Larsson, Letell, & Thörn, 2012).

The problems in the social policy landscape of today in a way illustrate this problem of solidarity. The question is still how the welfare state can manage to create solidarity and how fostering the population according to certain norms can be arranged. From this point of view, it is possible to examine in more detail the creation of solidarity, the establishment of norms, and the fostering of includable citizens.

3. Method and Material

The analysis is based on interviews with the representatives and leaders of *Football for Inclusion*. In all, seven interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim. The *Initiator* represents the boards of the participating associations. He has a substantial network of contacts in the municipality, not only among politicians and officials, but also

in trade and industry. The *Organiser* is a qualified sports teacher with a broad experience of management assignments within the sports movement. He is responsible for developing an activity plan. The *Sports leader* has many years of experience in the sports movement, and is also a trained pre-school teacher. *Sports coach 1*, who describes herself as a “girl and immigrant who plays football and is studying to be a teacher”, and *Sports coach 2* both help to lead the sports activities. The *Headmaster* is responsible for contact and communication between the school and the sporting Activity. The *Municipal representative* is an official in the municipal administration and is responsible for the administration’s contribution to the project. The interviews were based on the respondents’ own descriptions of *Football for Inclusion*, its activities, and its strategic objectives. The interviews were led with the support of a thematic interview guide which had a focus on the Activity’s objectives, its approach, the concept of football as a means of change, and the respective respondents’ own roles. *Football for Inclusion* is selected as an object of observation as it serves as an innovative intervention focusing on the social inclusion of children and youth, arranged in a public-private partnership. In this sense, it represents a form of intervention that is becoming more common in Swedish municipal welfare provision.

In the analysis, the empirical material was interpreted within the framework of the theoretical perspective on problem–solution and conflict–solidarity described previously. Thus, we have interpreted the respondents’ statements on *Football for Inclusion*, and on the potential of football to promote inclusion, as problem statements and constructions of solutions—particularly regarding how problems are described in terms of conflict, and how the proposed solutions are aimed at inclusion and solidarity. Here, the focus of our analysis has been on the technologies of solidarity and on fostering children to equip themselves with the skills deemed necessary for social inclusion. During the process of interpretation, the respondents’ statements were divided into *problems* and *solutions*. By focusing on how these were interwoven, we were then able to further analyse the understanding of conflict and solidarity, of outside and inside, chaos and order, structuring the discourses about the Area, the families and individuals living there, football and its potential (and meaning) for social change.

4. Social Inclusion and the Role of Sport

Previously, Sweden was known for its economic equality and its low levels of poverty. However, in the last decade, segregation and inequalities have rapidly increased in Sweden, creating intensified urban polarisation. In disadvantaged areas throughout Sweden, the interrelated effects of spatial separation, marginalisation in the labour market, and territorial stigmatisation produce social, economic as well as educational inequalities, affecting children and youth in particular (Bunar & Sernhede, 2013). Together with a sharp increase in immigration to Swe-

den in recent years (Dahlstedt & Neergaard, 2016), these processes of urban polarisation have been manifested in sharper ethno-cultural divisions in the Swedish urban landscape (Gustafsson, Katz, & Österberg, 2016). More and more, the deprived areas of the urban landscape have been characterised by high levels of migrant populations (Andersson, 2013). For several decades, public debate in Sweden has focused on multi-ethnic suburbs as sites of “otherness”, with a continuing focus on the conflicts, deviations, and problems which the areas create in the form of culture clashes, gang rivalry, drugs, poor school performance, and vandalism (Dahlstedt, 2005; Pripp, 2002). In this context, suburban youth is seen as both the source of conflict and the possible solution for creating solidarity (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2011). Here, sport has been politically assessed as a means of social inclusion (e.g., Government Offices, 2015). In Sweden, expectations of sport practices contributing to social objectives have recently been more explicit (Fahlén & Stenling, 2016; Norberg, 2011). Sport contributing to social objectives is not a new idea: in the early 1900s, the sports movement was mobilised, with the ideal of diligence and participation, to encourage children and young people to get active, and to highlight sport as a means of developing democratic ideals and creating solidarity by overcoming class conflicts (Norberg, 2011). In this line of thought, practices using sport as an explicit vehicle for promoting social objectives are emerging today in Sweden (Ekholm, 2016), most notably by focusing on social inclusion. Such sports-based interventions are nowadays a common feature globally, targeting youths “at risk” of social exclusion. To mention just a few, the sports-based interventions examined in previous research are: Positive Futures in the UK (Kelly, 2011), the Sport Steward Program in the Netherlands (Spaaij, 2009), DGI Playground in Denmark (Agergaard, Michelsen la Cour, & Treumer Gregersen, 2015), and the Community Cup in Canada (Rich, Misener, & Dubeau, 2015).

Research studies on sport for social objectives have noted that such practices could contribute to individual resources such as enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence (e.g. Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Lawson, 2005), as well as contribute to community development and social relations (e.g., Coalter, 2007). At the same time, research spotlights that sport cannot target the fundamental conditions that create segregation and conflict in society (cf. Coakley, 2011; Coalter, 2015; Ekholm, 2016; Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). With specific reference to sport as a means of inclusion, some problematic aspects regarding its potential have been identified. It is important to highlight the risk of inclusion in a sports context being seen as synonymous with adaptation (assimilation) to specific norms and to the pre-defined ideals of the majority, creating stereotypes of these groups, maintaining hierarchies, and excluding racialised groups (e.g., Forde, Lee, Mills, & Frisby, 2015; Hylton, 2011; Long, Hylton, & Spracklen, 2014; Spaaij et al., 2016). Furthermore, different types of inclusion

have been identified, involving both the strengthening of bonds within groups, and thereby creating stronger boundaries against other groups (*exclusive bonding*), as well as the creation of bridging contacts *between* different groups (*inclusive bridging*) (Coakley, 2011). The explicit goal of inclusion is usually the latter, i.e., to establish contacts *between* different groups. At the same time, experiences indicate that at the practical level, inclusion is often a matter of creating cohesion *within* specific groups (Coakley, 2011). In addition, there is often a strong belief that participating in sports can lead to social mobility (Coakley, 2002, 2011). However, such hopes have often proven to be significantly exaggerated (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij, 2009). Using sport to create conditions for social mobility is instead described as quite a naïve dream (Coakley, 2002) which not only conceals the complex causes of the problems and the socio-economic inequalities that create vulnerability, but can also legitimise the use of sport as a way of controlling children and young people in vulnerable positions (cf. Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011; Spaaij, 2009).

5. Analysis

The following analysis begins with a presentation of the way in which the various *problems* that are created due to these tensions and conflicts are described by those who are involved in the Activity. The Area and its inhabitants—in terms of *families* and *youth individuals*—are primarily described on the basis of three recurring discourses: weakness, conflict, and “otherness”. The solutions initiated in response to these problems are then presented, with a particular focus on football and its potential for social change based on two main technologies: *association-likeness* and *fostering*. Together, these technologies form specific subjects, as well as the arenas where such subjects may be formed, as a means of creating solidarity.

5.1. Problem: The Problem Area

The City is described by all respondents as divided. In the description of the divided city, an urban landscape emerges that is divided into diametrically different areas—inside and outside, characterised by order or chaos, normality or otherness, strength or weakness. In this urban landscape, the Area is consistently described as a “weak” place, inhabited by immigrants and the unemployed. In turn, this “weakness” is described as a hotbed for the occurrence of social problems and escalating conflicts. For instance, when describing the aim of the Activity, the Initiator takes a classic philanthropic rationality as a point of departure and emphasises the responsibility of the strong in society to look after the weak:

In the Area, one of the *weak* areas of the City, the intention is to *take care of* children from the first, second, and third generation of immigrants, along with

children who have parents who do not have an immigrant background, and thus find a better way of creating friendship, mates, understanding of different cultures....You have most of the immigrants in this area. The average income is significantly lower than in the other areas... Unemployment is much more common in these areas....The *strong* areas are the areas with single-family houses....There, the average income is 20 per cent higher than the average in the City. There, you have children with parents who can help them in school.

In the *Initiator’s* quote, there is a clear line drawn between the strong and the weak areas of the City. The Area is described as weak because the people who live there are immigrants, unemployed, have low incomes, and low levels of education. Thus, a hierarchical relation is constructed between the strong and the weak in the City, in which the strong are in a privileged position but, for that very reason, have a responsibility to “take care of” the weak.

Furthermore, the situation in the Area is described as chaotic. Unless something is done about it, the situation is at risk of deteriorating and posing a threat to solidarity and cohesion in the City as a whole. Thus, among the descriptions, there is a strong undercurrent of *risk*:

This is what we think we must try to avoid. And there, the aim is to start right from the first class so that the children will not end up in these criminal gangs, but in the world of sports instead, or preferably within the social world, where people integrate with those who come from other areas.

In this description, the emergence of gangs, violence, and criminality constitutes an alarming symptom of a society in chaos and almost in societal collapse, where the conflicts arising in the City’s peripheral areas start tearing the social body apart and disrupting its internal forms of solidarity. In this quote, the *Initiator* tells us that there are already signs that such a negative development is on the way. The account facilitates—and actively proposes—various interventions in order to counteract, and preferably to prevent, such a negative development and chaotic future. In the *Initiator’s* account, the Area is referred to as being characterised by chaos, exclusion, otherness, and weakness, as well as being exposed to serious risks and dangers. The threats portrayed in this scenario are highly destructive. Football, and civil society at large, is presented as an alternative to such a scenario.

5.2. Problem: Family Problems

In the stories about the Area’s weakness, the weakness is repeatedly related to families, and particularly to parents. In these stories, children, parents, and families of the Area emerge as the bearers of its weakness in the sense that they lack some of the resources, abilities,

and skills necessary to be able to function in society. In turn, this means that the families and the adolescents run the risk of ending up “excluded”, as described by the Headmaster:

It is not the case that these pupils lack knowledge, but they perhaps lack a way of expressing their knowledge, i.e., the Swedish language. And that is the main thing we try and teach them from the start....It is easier to counteract segregation or exclusion if you go about doing so earlier on, of course. The older you are, the tougher it is, partly because of the language to some extent, but also maybe just to keep up in Swedish schools and get the grades required to continue on to higher education and so on. School has already gone by for their parents and it is clear that it will be difficult for them....It is one thing that leads to alienation, of course.

In this quote, the parents are described as being in a position where they find it hard to give the children the support they need to “keep up” at school and to “get the grades required to continue on to higher education”. The Swedish language is described as an obstacle for both children and parents, but particularly for those who have come to Sweden at an older age, including the parents, for whom “school has already gone by”. On the basis of such a problematisation, there is a hope that the Activity can compensate for the parents’ difficulties, particularly by functioning as a place where children can learn Swedish, something that is described as being difficult for them to do in their home environment.

5.3. Problem: Individuals of Exclusion

In the interviews, there is a recurring discourse that describes the people living in the Area as part of the problem of exclusion by actively differentiating themselves from the “Swedes”. Such differentiation is expressed particularly in relation to the way in which different groups participate in organisations of civil society. One recurring line of argument is that “immigrants”, mainly by organising themselves into their “own” associations, are differentiating themselves from “Swedes”. Accordingly, “immigrants” are described as establishing associations that strengthen the bonds within their own community, while excluding them from the rest of society.

Here, a particular form of solidarity emerges which differs from the inclusive kind of solidarity that is seen as desirable: one that includes different groups, and transcends the borders between inside and outside (i.e., *inclusive bridging*, Coakley, 2011). The kind of solidarity taking shape among the groups living in the Area, however, is based on the principle of sameness and community. In this case, the bonds are strengthened primarily within the group (i.e., *exclusive bonding*, Coakley, 2011). Such inward-looking community-formation is described as further deepening the dynamics of exclusion which

then threatens societal solidarity, not just in the City but also in society as a whole. The *Initiator* is one of those who highlights the dangers of such inward-looking community-formation in the Area:

The young people in that association have a very narrow background. They come from an area in South America [and are part of the Chilean association]. They generally speak Spanish during their training sessions and so on. Or if you take Syrians or...Balkans. This is a big problem in [the City] but also throughout Sweden.

One main problem here is that those living in the Area enclose themselves in “their” own associations. As a consequence, they are gradually disconnected from the surrounding society. In the quote above, language emerges as an important symbol for the rationality of exclusion. With the young people in the Area organising themselves into separate associations where they can—or actually should—speak languages other than Swedish, the boundaries between the inside and the outside are recreated and even strengthened. In this description, the line between the inside and the outside is primarily drawn on ethno-cultural grounds, between Swedishness and otherness.

To summarise the findings so far, the prevalent discourse on the problems identified in the interviews highlights a number of inadequacies of the Area, the individuals (the children), and the families (the children and their parents). These inadequacies are described as a hotbed for the development of a number of tensions, conflicts, and social problems, including crime and the formation of gangs, which pose a threat to solidarity in the City as well as to society as a whole. In this discourse, the Area is described as an area of exclusion where the boundaries are drawn between inside and outside, normality and otherness, strong and weak, and order and chaos. Accordingly, the problems are located in the Area, where individuals as well as the families living there emerge as the source of the problems, the locus of the conflicts, and in need of interventions that will create inclusion and solidarity. In contrast to the Area, the surrounding Swedish society appears as a pre-defined normality.

5.4. Solution: Association-Likeness

Within the frames of this particular problematisation, *some* solutions are made possible and reasonable, while *others* are put into the background and appear unreasonable or even impossible. On the basis of such discourse, football emerges as a solution to the identified problem of exclusion.

The Activity takes the form of a meeting place for different actors, but it also takes the form of a place where people and different groups in society can meet. This particular meeting place is not an association, and is not organised like a football association in the strict sense of

the word. Rather, it takes the form of an association-like place, where children and parents can be introduced to the associational way of life in civil society. Participating in football, and thus being introduced to civil society in this particular association-like place, means that children can be fostered in a desirable way.

According to such rationality, *Football for Inclusion* is portrayed as a bridge between the outside—life in the Area—and the inside—represented by Swedish civil society. Here, participation in civil society, and in this particular form of a sports association, is described as a crucial part of the children's participation in Swedish society as a whole. The primary aim is to "help" and "guide" the children from the outside to the inside. In the words of the *Sports leader*:

People say that the biggest and best recreation centre is the sports complex. People meet there. There are rules to follow. You have to learn the rules. It's good to be busy. If you have recreation centres where you are close to one another, where people can meet...otherwise you might do other things that are not as good.

The recreation centre metaphor is telling as it explicitly describes the Activity as a pedagogic arena in which the participants are fostered in specific ways and according to specific norms. In this arena, the boundaries and tensions of society can be overcome by fostering and diversion. So what is it, then, that the children who are to be fostered will gain by participating in football?

5.5. Solution: Fostering

First and foremost, there are three objectives of fostering that recur in the interviews: fostering for friendship, for diligence, and for adaptation. In all the stories a specific citizen-subject appears. The different fostering technologies initiated under the auspices of football are facilitated by the specific discourse on the problems outlined above. On the basis of this discourse, the children are seen as being in need of fostering to become part of and to embrace the rules and norms of the societal community.

In the interviews, the metaphor of the game functions as a way of understanding how society and life in general work, and thereby also the way in which fostering ought to take place. In this game, the children acquire the skills deemed important for inclusion. Here, a strong focus is put on the importance of fostering team players. As the *Organiser* points out, this is why friendship and the capacity to cooperate are emphasised as important guiding principles in the Activity.

It is arranged in a slightly different way from the traditional association sport...the guiding principles are ball games, football games and enjoyment of exercise. Maybe some technique. It must be *friendship and collaboration* which drive everything.

In order to become a good team player, children need to conform to the rules of the game. Here, the norm of friendship is strongly related to the norm of diligence: *to behave*. Football offers a clear pedagogic rationale: it is a game played out on a playing field with a set of rules. It lasts for a specific time, but it can also be called off. *Sports coach 1* describes how calling it off is a technique of teaching the children how to behave:

Sometimes a palaver has arisen, full on. That is when we have stopped the game and made everyone go and sit down. Then we have sat and talked—about how to behave, about how you should behave towards others and stuff like that. You either *behave* or have to sit and talk [laughs]. We've stopped a fair few times and just sat and talked about *how to behave*, what to do, what it is to be part of a team and stuff like that.

The game has clear rules. There is no space for compromise. The rules are to be followed. Accordingly, the children are taught to become diligent. Social abilities are an important part of the rules of the game, i.e. the capacity to be part of a broader social context, to cooperate with others and, not least, cooperate with others who are different. As the *Sports leader* summarises it:

Rules and types of work...it's very good for there are certain rules you have to abide by....The aim is to develop their social and linguistic skills....We assess swearing and things like that by stopping the game and discussing with them. The social aspect is important. They're forced to cooperate with one another and mix.

Mixing is the key, as fostering aims at breaking the introspection among the children and replacing it with extrospection (outward observation) towards the surrounding society, its expectations, norms, and values. Here, the norm of diligence relates to another norm, that of adaptation. The *Initiator* explicitly talks in terms of adaptation when he describes the prospects of the Activity:

If you do not take them in hand in the world of football, gangs will form....The idea is to find a social way of trying to prevent that. If you lower the ages you deal with, the idea is to see whether you can avoid problems in this area, everything from graffiti to destruction and the theft of bicycles....It would be wonderful if it were also possible to get them to better *adapt* to *Swedish society* and have more success at school.

Success requires early interventions and this is exactly why participation in football can be seen as a potential means of progress. Under the auspices of football, opportunities are offered to encourage children to adapt to Swedish society. In the interviews, for example with the *Organiser*, the rules of the game are regularly related to specific values, defined in terms of Swedish-ness:

So, this activity is a method of integrating and functioning in a good way. There are some *Swedish traditions* when it comes to organisation and rules, yes...how you behave.

Here, encouraging diligence is synonymous with “Swedish traditions”. Thus, fostering becomes an adaptation to Swedish-ness. The important pedagogic challenge is how to develop a desire among the children to integrate, to develop a will to move from the outside, and to adapt to the order of the inside.

Thus, with sport as a means, a range of technologies of fostering and solidarity are initiated, making the Area, its children and the parents, reachable and includable. These technologies are facilitated by collaboration between a number of actors; collaboration that is based on community and solidarity through the creation of an association-like arena in which an appropriate and normal way of living can be fostered and can take shape. In the Activity, these technologies of fostering solidarity—in relation to the boundaries, tensions, and potential conflicts that threaten solidarity—may be arranged and put into use.

6. Conclusion

The problems identified among those involved in the Activity consist of frictions and conflicts created by segregation, and by the boundaries between those who are on the inside and those who are on the outside. Here, football is presented as a productive means of creating solidarity. Boundaries are drawn between inside and outside, normal and foreign, strong and weak, and order and chaos. The problems and conflicts in the City are essentially located in the Area, and the inhabitants are portrayed as the source of the problems and the causes of the conflicts.

The technologies that target the children also reach out to the parents, involving and stimulating them to want to become a part of society as insiders. By the creation of an inclusive arena where something referred to as specifically Swedish is arranged, like an association, people who are excluded can have the opportunity to learn and adapt to the values and abilities described as crucial in order to become part of Swedish society. Thus, *Football for Inclusion* appears to be a way in which the welfare state can reach out to the Area, with the ambition of incorporating those on the “outside” into the “inside” by changing their conduct. This is crucial in order to understand the kind of solidarity created, which is different compared with the kind of solidarity outlined previously in the article. This form of intervention differs from the normalising measures described regarding the lines of conflict that are to be overcome and the kind of solidarity that is to be created. The historical lines of conflict, to which solidarity was a solution, were based on socio-economic divisions—the *class struggle* or *individual competition*. The objective of the kind of solidarity contem-

plated was to even out and compensate for unequal living conditions through social interventions—to *dissolve socio-economic* divisions and stifle class conflict by creating a cohesive social collective and a sense of solidarity.

In this sports-based intervention, there are different lines of conflict appearing as well as a different way of dealing with these conflicts. Firstly, the lines of conflict are interpreted primarily along *socio-cultural* lines. The excluded—the foreign, weak, and disordered—are described as ethno-culturally different from Swedish society. Here, the division is drawn between the inside and the outside, where the outsiders are defined in terms of “ethno-cultural otherness”. Secondly, the technologies of solidarity that are facilitated are primarily based on *maintaining* the division between inside and outside. The aim is not to dissolve this division, but rather to recognise it. The ambition is to equip individuals and families on the outside with the ability to cross the border and enter the inside. For those picking up the “right” values and adapting to the dominant concepts of inclusion, the path to inclusion appears as a journey in an already established landscape. Instead of the division between inside and outside being dissolved, it is maintained, but at the same time it is overcome by the individuals and the families in the Area adapting to the normality of the inside (Swedish-ness). Here, adaptation to the norms and behaviours of the “inside” emerge as a dominant technology of solidarity. The divisions in the social body are not to be dissolved, but rather to be maintained, yet at the same time to be overcome by adaptation. The emphasis on the individualisation of social problems and the adaptation to current norms has been an ever-present issue, widely dealt with in research on social work and social policy interventions (i.e., Parton, 1996; Webb, 2006). Particularly, individualisation and adaptation are recurring concerns in the research into sports-based interventions, in the Swedish (Ekholm, 2017b) as well as in a range of other welfare states (i.e., Kelly, 2011; Rich et al., 2015).

The *Football for Inclusion* sports-based intervention sets out to deal with conflicts without comprehensive reform or questioning boundaries. It is the Area, the families and the individuals who, as it were, end up on the wrong side of the boundaries—and who thereby represent the lack of and the problem of solidarity—who are attributed the position of “excluded” and who are problematised and made subjects of social change. Such an approach to conflicts and to establishing order rather than reform raises questions about the welfare state’s focus on the rationality of solidarity. On the basis of the intervention on which we have focused in this article, it may be possible to discuss the contours of a greater reconstitution of social policy: of how the welfare state deals with social problems, not only in Sweden but in other countries as well, i.e., by maintaining boundaries and order in combination with pedagogics for adaptation and cultural normalisation. Addressing such questions is important for further research and has implications for both policy and practice.

Acknowledgements

The article is based on research conducted by the support of the Swedish Research Council for Sport Science. The authors want to thank Caroline Ellefsen Hansen, Alexander Sparr and Elin Törnros for their contributions in the data collection.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Agergaard, S., Michelsen la Cour, A., & Treumer Gregersen, M. (2015). Politicisation of migrant leisure: A public and civil intervention involving organised sport. *Leisure Studies*, 35(2), 200–214.
- Andersson, R. (2013). Reproducing and reshaping residential segregation in Stockholm. *Geografiska annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 95(2), 163–187.
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Frenchs Forest: Pearson.
- Bunar, N., & Sernhede, O. (Eds.). (2013). *Skolan och ojämlikhetens urbana geografi*. Gothenburg: Daidalos.
- Coakley, J. (2002). Using sports to control deviance and violence among youths: Let's be critical and cautious. In M. Gatz, M. A. Messner, & S. J. Ball-Rokeach (Eds.), *Paradoxes of youth and sport* (pp. 13–30). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Coakley, J. (2011). Youth sports: What counts as “positive development”. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 35(3), 306–324.
- Coalter, F. (2007). *A wider social role for sport: Who's keeping the score?* London: Routledge.
- Coalter, F. (2015). Sport-for-change: Some thoughts from a sceptic. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 19–23.
- Dahlstedt, M. (2005). *Reserverad demokrati*. Umeå: Boréa.
- Dahlstedt, M., & Hertzberg, F. (2011). *Skola i samverkan*. Malmö: Gleerups.
- Dahlstedt, M., & Neergaard, A. (2016). Crisis of solidarity? Changing welfare and migration regimes in Sweden. *Critical Sociology*. doi:10.1177/0896920516675204
- Donzelot, J. (1979). *The policing of families*. London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Donzelot, J. (1988). The promotion of the social. *Economy and Society*, 17(3), 395–427.
- Donzelot, J. (1991). The mobilization of society. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 169–180). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ekhholm, D. (2016). *Sport as a means of responding to social problems: Rationales of government, welfare and social change* (PhD dissertation). Department of Social and Welfare Studies, Linköping University.
- Ekhholm, D. (2017a). Mobilising the sport-based community: The construction of social work through rationales of advanced liberalism. *Nordic Social Work Research*. doi:10.1080/2156857X.2017.1310127
- Ekhholm, D. (2017b). Sport-based risk management: Shaping motivated, responsible and self-governing citizen subjects. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 14(1), 60–78.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *Three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fahlén, J., & Stenling, C. (2016). Sport policy in Sweden. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 8, 1–17.
- Forde, S. D., Lee, D. S., Mills, C., & Frisby, W. (2015). Moving towards social inclusion: Manager and staff perspectives on an award winning community sport and recreation program for immigrants. *Sport Management Review*, 18, 126–138.
- Foucault, M. (2004). Polemics, politics, and problematizations. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 380–391). London: Penguin Books.
- Fraser-Thomas, J., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 10(1), 19–40.
- Government Offices. (2015). *Ökat anslag till idrottsrörelsen i kommande vårproposition*. Press release, 14 April 2015.
- Gustafsson, B., Katz, K., & Österberg, T. (2016). Residential segregation from generation to generation: Intergenerational association in socio-spatial context among visible minorities and the majority population in metropolitan Sweden. *Population, Space and Place*. doi:10.1002/psp.2028
- Hartmann, D., & Kwauk, C. (2011). Sport and development: An overview, critique, and reconstruction. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 35(3), 284–305.
- Hylton, K. (2011). Sport and social integration. In B. Houlihan, & M. Green (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of sports development* (pp. 100–113). London: Routledge.
- Kelly, L. (2011). “Social inclusion” through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126–150.
- Larsson, B., Letell, M., & Thörn, H. (2012). Transformations of the Swedish welfare state: Social engineering, governance and governmentality: An introduction. In B. Larsson, M. Letell, & H. Thörn (Eds.), *Transformations of the Swedish welfare state* (pp. 3–22). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Lawson, H. A. (2005). Empowering people, facilitating community development, and contributing to sustainable development: The social work of sport, exercise and physical education programs. *Sport, Education and Society*, 10(1), 135–160.
- Long, J., Hylton, K., & Spracklen, K. (2014). Whiteness, blackness and settlement: Leisure and integration of new migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(11), 1779–1797.
- Norberg, J. R. (2011). A contract reconsidered? Changes in the Swedish state's relation to the sports move-

- ment. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 3, 311–325.
- Parton, N. (Ed.). (1996). *Social theory, social change and social work*. London: Routledge.
- Philp, M. (1979). Notes on the form of knowledge in social work. *The Sociological Review*, 27(1), 83–111.
- Pripp, O. (2002). Mediabilder och levd erfarenhet. In I. Ramberg & O. Pripp (Eds.), *Fittja, världen och vardagen* (pp. 41–72). Botkyrka: Mångkulturellt centrum.
- Rich, K., Misener, L., & Dubeau, D. (2015). “Community Cup, we are a big family”: Examining social inclusion and acculturation of newcomers to Canada through a participatory sport event. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 129–141.
- Spaaij, R. (2009) Sport as a vehicle for social mobility and regulation of disadvantaged urban youth: Lessons from Rotterdam. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 44(2/3), 247–264.
- Spaaij, R., Magee, J., Farquharson, K., Gorman, S., Jeanes, R., Lusher, D., & Storr, R. (2016). Diversity work in community sport organizations: Commitment, resistance and institutional change. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. doi:10.1177/1012690216654296
- Webb, S. A. (2006). *Social work in a risk society: Social and political perspectives*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

About the Authors



David Ekholm is a researcher and lecturer at Linköping University. Ekholm’s main research interests are in the sociology of social work and social policy in relation to contemporary welfare state transformations. Here, he has a particular focus on youth interventions aiming for social inclusion. Ekholm’s research are characterised by a variety of constructionist and critical approaches.



Magnus Dahlstedt is Professor in Social Work at Linköping University. Dahlstedt’s main research interests are the politics of inclusion/exclusion, citizenship and democracy. Currently, his research is mainly oriented towards the formation of citizenship in the context of the multi-ethnic city. Dahlstedt has published several books, among others *The Confessing Society: Foucault, Confession and Practices of Lifelong Learning*, co-authored with Andreas Fejes (Routledge, 2013), and *International Migration and Ethnic Relations: Critical Perspectives*, co-edited with Anders Neergaard (Routledge, 2015).

Article

Policing the Void: Recreation, Social Inclusion and the Baltimore Police Athletic League

Jacob J. Bustad ^{1,*} and David L. Andrews ²¹ Department of Kinesiology, Towson University, 21252 Towson, USA; E-Mail: jbustad@towson.edu² Department of Kinesiology, University of Maryland, College Park, 20742 College Park, USA; E-Mail: dla@umd.edu

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 3 February 2017 | Accepted: 20 April 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

In this article, we explore the relationship between public recreation policy and planning and the transformation of urban governance in the context of the Police Athletic League centers in Baltimore, Maryland. In light of contemporary discussions of the role of youth programs for sport and physical activity within post-industrial cities, the origination, development, and eventual demise of Baltimore's network of Police Activity League centers is an instructive, if disheartening, saga. It illustrates the social and political rationales mobilized in justifying recreation policy and programming, the framing of sport and physical activity as preventative measures towards crime and juvenile delinquency, and the precarity of such initiatives given the efficiency-driven orthodoxies of neoliberal urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989). This analysis emphasizes how the PAL centers were designed to 'fill the void' left by a declining system of public recreation, thereby providing an example of a recreation program as part of the "social problems industry" (Pitter & Andrews 1997).

Keywords

neoliberalism; police; physical activity; recreation; social problems industry; sport; urban

Issue

This article is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

In May 1996, officials from different agencies and departments—including the Mayor's Office, the city's department of recreation and parks, and the police department—gathered to announce the latest development in the restructuring of Baltimore's public recreation centers: the opening of several Police Athletic League centers (PALs). Over the previous 40 years, the city had invested both capital and programming funds towards an extensive network of centers operated by the public recreation department. However, the PALs program offered a different model of recreation: uncoupled from the previous approach to urban recreation based on publicly-derived funding and support, the PALs were delivered utilizing a public-private partnership model of governance. In this mode, urban communities became

evermore underserved in regard to decreased public recreation programs and facilities. As such, recreation provision became one of myriad expressions of race and class inequality, created by neoliberal processes of devolution and privatization within U.S. cities. In this article, the authors demonstrate that the PAL program should be understood as a particular form of neoliberal intervention within urban communities, one that has had specific impacts for the policy and planning of recreation in Baltimore. The authors therefore adopt a contextual approach to studying urban governance via the "articulation" (Slack, 1996) of policy and planning through various political, economic, and social forces. This approach utilizes a critical discourse analysis of over 500 documents related to the Baltimore PAL program, including official meeting minutes, planning and organizational documentation, and annual and long-term reports from the city's

recreation department, as well as other sources of recreation discourse: community organization flyers, recreation programming forms, and media reports.

Rather than focusing on the provision of recreation experiences and opportunities as a means of enriching lives, the underlying assumptions behind the PAL program mobilized recreation as a vehicle for intervening into, and thereby looking to manage, the lives and bodies of those always already perceived to be “at-risk” (not only to themselves but, more importantly, to the wider Baltimore population living within a climate of historically entrenched racialized fears and anxieties). In this mode, Baltimore’s PAL program demonstrates one example of sports-based interventions that are designed to change individual behaviors, urban spaces, and social interactions between communities and policing organizations (Kelly, 2013), particularly in regard to “hard to reach” (Crabbe, 2007) populations within cities. Further, the PALs were also a “microcosm of American liberal social policy” (Hartmann, 2016, p. 73), since their very development, and ultimate demise, was inextricably linked to the shifting conditions and dynamics of neoliberal urban governance. Originated as an innovative public-private alternative to the perceived inefficiencies of the publicly-funded recreational model, the inevitable fiscal crises that punctuate neoliberalism’s modus operandi—and create legitimizing states of exception (Ong, 2006)—precipitated the inevitable dismantling of the PALs program as the neoliberal urban project revealed its inherent unsustainability in the early 2000s. Driven by the fear-mongering and self-interest driven logics of what Edsall (2012) dubbed the “age of austerity”, exponents of neoliberal urban governance orthodoxies were pathologically compelled to trim the excesses of public service provision and programming. Following Spaaij (2009), neoliberal sport-based intervention programs therefore have often included the potential for social cohesion and individual opportunity, but are simultaneously “aimed at generating social order in disadvantaged inner-city neighbourhoods” both in the United States and Europe (p. 252).

Although this article is focused on Baltimore’s Police Athletic League program, it would be remiss not to provide a brief contextualization of the PAL more generally. The roots of the PAL can be traced to the reformist paternalism of the early-1900s, specifically various initiatives by the New York Police which sought to use various forms of recreation to encourage good citizenship among the city’s mass ranks of impoverished youth, and nurture a positive relationship between this group and the New York Police Department (PAL, 2015). By the early 1930s, the social and economic turmoil created by the Depression—and most pertinently the perceived threat of rising rates of juvenile delinquency—intensified the focus on youth recreation programs as a mechanism for crime prevention. Hence, the NYPD Crime Prevention Bureau formed the Junior Police Athletic League in 1932, which was reorganized into the Police Athletic League in

1936 (PAL, 2015). From its early twentieth century New York City origins, PAL programs have spread throughout the U.S., oftentimes shifting programmatic structure and focus as dictated by changing urban realities, and associated policy priorities (i.e. the *War on Poverty* in the 1960s, the *War on Drugs* in the 1980s, the *War on Terror* in the 2000s, and the *War on Obesity* in the 2010s).

Nonetheless, and belying the residual influence of its socially reformist beginnings, the PAL program at its institutional core movement continues to mobilize physical recreation (play, games, and sport) as a vehicle for building positive character traits. The program therefore utilizes recreation as a means for the adoption of values which would, it is assumed, assimilate potentially deviant poor urban youth into the social mainstream (Wilson, 1994). PALs today are a vivid institutional exemplar of what Pitter and Andrews (1997) referred to as the “social problems industry”: a complex and diverse formation of publicly and privately-funded, for-profit and not-for-profit, recreation-based crime prevention and public safety programs designed to “serve”—or perhaps more accurately regulate, discipline, or police—America’s historically underserved urban poor. Within the contemporary social problems industry context, “at-risk urban youth” is a racialized euphemism for demonized Black bodies and characteristics, whose pathologized deviance renders them as being “at-risk” to themselves, to their communities, and—inflaming more political purchase—to mainstream (read: White) American society more generally (Cole, 1996). Programs within more affluent suburban metropolitan spaces tend to be justified through their *provision* of physical recreation experiences—and anticipated physical, psychological, and social benefits—to suburban (read: deserving) youth (Pitter & Andrews, 1997).

While doubtless realizing many of these outcomes, programs such as the PALs explicitly targeting the problematized urban poor are never far removed from what populist conservative thinking considers to be such program’s *raison d’être*: using physical recreation *interventions* as means of “controlling and/or containing populations...seen as either ‘at-risk’ or socially disruptive” (Hartmann, 2012, p. 1011). However, while its disciplining logic has been unwavering, the very structure and delivery of the various components of the social problems industry is contingent upon the shifting ideologies and policies of urban governance. Hence, as we demonstrate within this discussion, Baltimore’s PAL centers ultimately became soldiers of fortune to the mode of neoliberal urban entrepreneurialism that increasingly dominated the governance of U.S. cities, such as Baltimore, from the 1980s onwards (Harvey, 1989). Below we detail the emergence of the social problems industry and the relationship between recreation and social inclusion in the late 20th century, before analyzing the scale and scope of the PAL program as a particular form of intervention that had specific impacts on recreation policy and planning in Baltimore.

2. Recreation, Social Inclusion and the ‘Social Problems Industry’

By the early 1960s the postwar economic surge in the U.S. had largely come to a halt, resulting in a growing social inequality within many American cities, as realized through economically-driven racial segregation and the “white flight” of suburbanization (Harrington, 1962). In this context, the inner city increasingly referred not only to the core of the city, but also to the minority and predominately black populations inhabiting urban spaces challenged by the intensifying struggles of joblessness, decaying infrastructure, and criminality (Sugrue, 1996). As Corburn suggests, the 1960s thus signaled the advent of the ‘urban crisis’ within American politics, policy and planning, as cities were commonly viewed as the locus of social problems linked to economic inequality and racial and ethnic divisions (2009, p. 54). Recreation spaces, facilities and programs were also included in this policy and research focus on urban America, as evidenced by the growing disparities in the amount and condition of facilities and programming between different areas of the city and suburbs. In this context, the “inner city” increasingly referred not only to the core of the city but also to the minority and predominately black populations of these areas—and the struggles of joblessness, decaying infrastructure and the stigmatization of the urban underclass were disproportionately endured by these populations (Sugrue, 1996). Further, recreation became an increasingly crucial aspect in terms of serving as a progressive means of building community, and improving the quality of life in urban neighborhoods, leading to an “era of growth” for public recreation in Baltimore and other American cities in terms of funding, programming, and facilities (Deppe, 1986).

However, this era was followed by larger shifts in the politics and modes of governance of American cities, and these shifts were to have particular and important effects on the formation and implementation of urban recreation policy, and within the operation of city recreation departments. As Biles (2011, p. 202) explains, the processes of federal and state “disinvestment” in urban centers meant that by the late 1970s and into the 1980s, many American cities and their citizens were essentially left to “fend for themselves” in comparison to the peak of social services funding and programming, especially in regard to federal programs and policies. The changes to these rationales resulted in Baltimore’s recreation system being reconstructed with unprecedented financial and political support, but also left this same system in a state of nearly permanent struggle in regard to operations, staffing and maintenance once this support had waned. In short, the 1970s signaled the “high-water mark”, or period of peak support and implementation, and subsequent gradual decline of public recreation as an essential social service for citizens of Baltimore and other American cities.

Following Harvey (1989), the shifts within the governance of Baltimore during the 1970s evidence a larger

transformation in the methods and ideologies of American urban governance, specifically in the differing approaches towards operating and administering city services signaled by a shift from “urban managerialism” to “urban entrepreneurialism”. Intertwined with the processes of deindustrialization and suburbanization that changed the city’s population level, economic potential and demographic makeup, Harvey’s (1989) analysis marks the transition away from the “managerial” Keynesian model of social service provision via public funding and support, and toward “entrepreneurial” strategies centered on inter-urban competition for tourism and consumption, often driven by attempts to re-imagine specific areas of the city as hubs of capital growth and economic redevelopment. In Baltimore, this reorientation of the aims and models of urban governance was constituted primarily through the renewed emphases on economic redevelopment projects, and the concurrent de-prioritization and reduction of public services, including recreation. Thus, on the one hand, Baltimore engaged in the processes of privatization and public-private partnerships in order to complete tourist-focused projects such as the Inner Harbor, professional baseball (Camden Yards) and football (M& T Bank Stadium) stadia projects, and Baltimore Convention Center, among others, as part of a “renaissance” strategy that aimed to promote the city’s downtown area as a center of consumption and entertainment (Harvey, 2001). On the other hand, this focus on downtown development occurred simultaneously with the retrenchment of social services and decline in population and housing for many of the city’s neighborhoods. By the late 1990s, these processes had constituted the formation of what Levine (2000) recognized as the ‘three Baltimores’ of 1) the suburbs, 2) downtown and the Inner Harbor, and 3) the multitude of underserved neighborhoods, as the city and region were increasingly characterized by both racial and class inequalities and different realities in regards to economic and social opportunity (p. 140).

Meanwhile as Deppe (1986) explains, in many American cities by the mid-1980s “recreation as an end to itself was totally unsalable” in regards to local, state, and federal government policies (p. 34). In part, this was due to the severe changes in demographics for many deindustrializing cities like Baltimore, as urban populations were increasingly characterized by economic and social disparities. The impacts of suburbanization, especially in regard to social stratification along racial and classed lines, reshaped Baltimore as a post-industrial city that was losing both economic opportunities and parts of its population at the same time that federal and state governments disassembled social service policies and programs (Durr, 2003; Levine, 2000). This meant that as many American urban centers were increasingly characterized by “a deteriorated economy, an inability to provide needed services, political indifference from state and federal authorities, and a forecast of increasing concentration of local poverty,” recreation programs and

funding were increasingly less a priority, and more a persistent thorn in the side of municipal governments faced by other seemingly more pressing issues (Shivers, 1981, p. 44). An efficiency-driven entrepreneurial approach to public recreation would also develop within this era, as the city worked to support existing and potential new partnerships in relation to special facilities, while also attempting to sustain a decreasing number of often inadequately staffed and poorly maintained neighborhood-based facilities.

As primary aspects of the formation of public recreation governance in this period, the partnership model and necessity of a solution for the declining system of neighborhood-based recreation facilities converged in the form of an effort at restructuring the department, and the general administration and provision of recreation services in Baltimore. This resulted in the reinvention and expansion of PAL recreation centers, which utilized the neighborhood-based model of recreation facilities but were staffed and programmed by city police officers rather than public recreation personnel. The PALs program had been operating in other cities, including New York and Philadelphia, for several decades before being implemented in Baltimore, and while Baltimore's police had previously had limited youth-directed programming, it wasn't until 1995 that the PALs program was officially developed and implemented in the city, in part as the personal project of police Commissioner Thomas Frazier ("Police fill rec center void", 1996). Specifically, the PALs initiative was a response to the "link between juvenile delinquency and inadequate youth programs" in many of Baltimore's communities, especially in the context of the "glaring inadequacy of city recreation centers in some neighborhoods that need them most" ("Police fill rec center void", 1996). These developments reflect the impact of neoliberal urban governance on black communities in Baltimore, as many of the neighborhoods in which the first 10 PAL centers had been organized were already facing issues in regard to recreation facility closures and decreases to staffing and programming. The turn to the PAL program and facilities therefore signals the formation of an alternative to recreation services administered by and through a city recreation department.

On the one hand, the partnership model was deployed in regard to both an "inter-agency" partnership between recreation facilities and police staff, as well as in relation to the primary funding of the PAL centers through non-profit grants and private donations ("Police fill rec center void", 1996). On the other hand, the PAL centers also directly incorporated the rationale of volunteerism—specifically in the context of decreased funding and support for neighborhood-based recreation services and facilities—by supporting volunteer efforts at the centers through community engagement. Thus, the initial strategy was to implement a PAL center in each of the city's 29 police districts over the next several years, each of which would be funded entirely by grants and

donations, and staffed by at least one full-time police officer at each center, "with other roles filled by volunteers" ("Police fill rec center void", 1996).

However, aside from serving as another example of the processes of privatization and devolution, the PALs initiative also signals another intersection of Baltimore's public recreation governance and broader political and social restructuring of the period. The implementation of the PAL centers points to the development of another aspect of privatization in the shift from the support and funding of recreation services through government resources and programs, to the provision and administration of recreation primarily through private, non-profit and volunteer-based facilities and services. That is, this analysis recognizes that the PAL centers and strategy represent the re-emergence of the "prevention" rationale for urban recreation services, as the PAL approach was based on the re-prioritizing of recreation as an especially efficient deterrent for juvenile delinquency and general community disassociation in city neighborhoods. While the prevention rationale had been central to the approach towards urban recreation that centered on recreation as a particular 'intervention' for and within urban communities, the structure and organization of the recreation-based interventions of public-private recreation in the 1990s differed from previous models. As Hartmann (2001, p. 340) notes, the re-emergence of recreation as "prevention" and as "intervention" in the 1990s was marked by two inter-related developments. First, an increase in the scope, scale and number of public-private partnerships within public recreation departments and organizations; and second, the focus of many of these partnerships on the perceived relationships between neighborhood-based recreation programs and community stability, safety, and social inclusion.

The partnership model was implemented in varying degrees and towards different goals in relation to Baltimore's recreation system throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with the PALs program being an example of a multi-partner "partnership" that incorporated the process of privatization by effectively removing recreation services from the city-operated and funded department and transferring this service to an arrangement of public, private and non-profit organizations. However, the PAL centers also demonstrate the relationship between the partnership model and the re-emergence of the prevention and interventionist rationales as a primary justification for the support and funding of neighborhood-based recreation programs, as the program was organized with the direct goal and purpose of reducing crime and juvenile delinquency, in particular in poorer communities. Commissioner Frazier explained the PALs strategy was appropriate for Baltimore as a city characterized by the social polarization of "haves and have-nots", and conditions that were "a recipe for civil disorder," as PAL centers were sites where the police could directly intervene into the lives of children and adolescents and provide an alternative to delinquent and criminal activities (as

quoted in Hermann, 1996). In Frazier's view, the PAL sites were in a better position to offer recreation services as the program depended on private and non-profit funding rather than the city budget, and the centers served as opportunities to build "social capital" with youth and within communities, constituting the police as not only law enforcement but as "part of the social fabric of the city" (Hermann, 1996). The PALs program thus signals a re-articulation of the prevention and interventionist rationales for recreation services in this period, uncoupled from the previous formation and approach of urban recreation based in government funding and support, and instead linked specifically to the partnership model of public-private recreation. Further, the PALs qualify as one aspect of "social problems industry" (Pitter & Andrews, 1997) that emerged within the context of American cities in the 1990s, often in response to the descaling and decline of public social services.

In light of the decline of public recreation services and facilities, many communities, families and individuals instead were faced with two alternatives in regards to recreation provision: the private, fee-based model that was not accessible or affordable for all city residents; or, the "new brand of social welfare" in the form of neighborhood-based recreation through private and non-profit organizations and programming that were often premised on the rationale of recreation as a method of preventing social ills (Pitter & Andrews, 1997, p. 86). However, and in contrast to the 'universalist' approach included within the formation of urban recreation that sought to implement recreation programming for all city residents, the "social problems" organizations of the 1990s also most often incorporated the rationales of "prevention" and "intervention" into recreation programming that was specifically organized towards children and young adults, including the popular and controversial "midnight basketball" programs that were developed in many American cities during this period (Hartmann, 2001, p. 99). The PAL centers also were organized around these ideas, as each center included a "midnight" or evening basketball league for young adult males as part of its programming, which was most often limited to children and adolescents during the afternoon and evening operating hours (Matthews, 1997a). As Hartmann (2001) notes, these programs may allow for forms of social inclusion to develop between participants; however, and as we emphasize in the following section, the PALs program in Baltimore can be primarily recognized as a specific form of urban neoliberalization. Following Kelly (2011), neoliberal interventions involving sport and physical activity often emphasize individual social behaviors and "deficits", and serve to discount structural inequalities including the reduction of public services (p. 145).

3. Neoliberalization and the PALs in Baltimore

Following Peck and Tickell (2002), neoliberal policy changes and initiatives are often interconnected to the

rolling-back of public services within urban spaces, and yet are differentiated by particular rationales and logics. Roll-back neoliberalization signaled the wider transformation of American urban governance in regard to the erosion and dismantling of the Keynesian approach of an earlier generation. Roll-out neoliberalization emerged from this ideological shift, in the form of localized policies and initiatives that sought to construct an alternative form of social service delivery and provision, simultaneously addressing the "recurrent failures...of deregulation and marketization" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 43) strategies that unerringly arose. Thus, as Brenner and Theodore (2002) illustrate, roll-out neoliberalization developed in relation to the "immanent contradictions and crisis tendencies" of neoliberal policy itself, as cities invoked other neoliberal strategies in an attempt to engage with the realities of disinvestment and privatization (p. 34). The transformation of urban policy within roll-back neoliberalization effectively created the break for alternate approaches to urban governance, often in the form of other neoliberal policy strategies that were enacted, or "rolled-out", in order to address the shortcomings and tensions of the rolling-back and dismantling of a previous form of governance.

The incorporation and implementation of the PALs program in Baltimore signals one aspect of the refigured approach to recreation; established rationales for recreation re-emerged, but were most often incorporated into the neoliberal processes of privatization, devolution and volunteerism, rather than as a premise for funding and supporting a city-operated public recreation agency. The PALs initiative represents a key element and force in the restructuring of recreation center policy within roll-out neoliberalization, as the department sought to supplement community and non-profit partnerships with a different type of recreation service, aimed at the youth population in particular "problem" neighborhoods. Within the PAL program, city police officers were assigned to "active participation...as role models, mentors, and caring adults for young people," and tasked with developing programming specifically designed for ages 7 through 17 that offered "a combined focus on character development, academic enrichment, arts and cultural activities, and athletics" (Subhas & Chandra, 2004). Operating under the program's motto, "Giving kids in our toughest neighborhoods a chance to succeed", the PAL program sought to display "how law enforcement personnel can have an impact on youth by fostering academic excellence, civic responsibility, creativity, self-regulation, and social values" (Subhas & Chandra, 2004). The initial implementation of the program had immediate effects on the city's recreation system, as several of the first 10 PAL centers were recreation centers that had been closed or were threatened with imminent closure due to budget cuts ("Police fill rec center void", 1996).

The PALs program, like other private and non-profit recreation programs focused on neighborhood-based

crime prevention outcomes, had several advantages over public recreation departments, primarily in regard to the differences in funding and support. While PAL centers attracted tax-exempt donations and grants from local and regional non-profit foundations, the city public recreation department was reliant on continually decreasing budgets and grant-funding opportunities. In July 1996, this “special advantage” meant that while the department was facing an additional \$2 million budget shortfall, and the possibility of further facility closures and staff layoffs, the PALs program expanded to 11 sites that were all former city recreation centers, and was receiving over \$200,000 annually in donations and grant funding for equipment and other facilities. This included a former 7-Eleven on in northeast Baltimore that was offered to the city for \$1 by the non-profit MACHT foundation, with the understanding that it would developed as a PAL site (Hermann, 1996).

The growth and support of the PALs program, while an example of the shifts to private and non-profit “partners” in the place of public recreation provision, also meant that the department was positioned as being inefficiently administered. Later that year—and in addition to forewarning further budget cuts—Mayor Schmoke assembled a 12-person “task force” to examine how the department could address these inefficiencies, by implementing increased user fees, the sale of parkland, and conversion of vacant land towards generating revenue that could help the department “pay more of its own way” (Matthews, 1996). While the “task force” model of recreation planning and policy would emerge again in Baltimore nearly fifteen years later, Schmoke’s utilization of this model signaled the necessity of alternative solutions to public recreation governance within the unfolding neoliberal climate. As the department’s attempts to maintain a “universalist” mission and vision of public recreation faltered (largely due to the reduction in the levels of resources and funding that had made the mission possible), the corollary was a visibly broken recreation system. As Schmoke indicated in announcing his task force, if the current trends of “downsizing” and “consolidation of services” continued, the department would also continue to “dwindle to a level that is unacceptable” (Matthews, 1996). Thus, along with being viewed as a more viable alternative and better-equipped competitor to the department’s recreation centers, PAL sites were often used to explain the inefficiencies of the department and its inability to effectively restructure recreation provision.

The deprioritization of public recreation as a city agency and service provider throughout the 1980s and 1990s symbolized the “slow death” of public recreation in the city, especially in comparison to the earlier generation of federally-subsidized support for recreation initiatives. Budget cuts and subsequent reductions to facilities, staff and programs meant that by 2000, Baltimore’s recreation centers had decreased from over 130 to less than 70, over 80 of the city’s playgrounds were consid-

ered unsafe, and one maintenance worker was responsible for over 100 acres of city parks (Farrey, 2008, p. 232). However, these changes also normalized neoliberalizing strategies that proved impactful beyond the public recreation realm. First, the highly visible inter-agency transfer of recreation services from the city’s public recreation department to the PAL administration and budget encouraged the further devolution of public services in favor of market alternatives (Tennberg, Vola, Espiritu, Schwenke Fors, & Ejdemo, 2014). Second, modeled after a similar initiative in several other cities including New York and Philadelphia, the PALs also serve as a form of what Peck and Tickell (2002, p. 391) refer to as “interjurisdictional policy transfer”, in which city governments share and incorporate particular elements of neoliberal policy restructuring across different locations. In this mode, the PAL program popularized the social problems industry ethos, in which recreational opportunities were directly correlated with patterns of juvenile delinquency and viewed as a tool that could address the effects and consequences of social inequality. In seeking to adopt some of the same principles in forming the PAL program in Baltimore, Police Commissioner Frazier asserted that the program sought to build “social capital” between officers and neighborhood youth, especially in the context of the city’s socioeconomic environment of “haves and have-nots” (Hermann, 1996). As a form of interventionist policy that was effectively shared by multiple American cities, the PAL program therefore evidences a lack of concern for local conditions, and instead emphasizes a universal understanding of sport as a cure for a variety of social problems, rather than a focus on the particular forces that “might lead to desired outcomes for some participants or some organizations in *certain circumstances*” (Coalter, 2010, p. 311).

In August 1997, the contrasting realities of the city’s recreation centers and PAL centers—with recreation facilities facing annual budget reductions, and the possibility of partial or full closures, while PAL centers continued to see increased private and non-profit funding and political support—were evidenced in Mayor Schmoke’s plan to expand the PAL program to another 10 centers, all of which were operating as city recreation facilities at the time of the plan’s announcement (Matthews, 1997b). The decision to simultaneously and directly increase the number of PALs, while reducing recreation centers, provoked tensions regarding the roles and purposes of each of the agencies involved, including criticism regarding the role of staff and a lack of recreation training by police officers charged with operating the PAL centers. However, while a community volunteer at the Robert C. Marshall center in west Baltimore (one of the centers designated for transfer to the PAL program) would describe the plan as “one of the worst mistakes they can possibly make”, the overriding rationale for the transfer of the 10 facilities was provided by the Mayor who stated it would allow the city to “likely get through the year without closing any recreation centers” (Matthews, 1997b). The final

plan would involve not only the immediate transfer of the 10 centers, but also the establishing of at least one PAL center in each of the city's 29 police districts, as the PAL program was again framed as a potential solution to both the issues of a declining public recreation system and the "problems based" context of many urban communities (Subhas & Chandra, 2004). As a form of rolled-out recreation, the devolution of services and facilities from the city's recreation department to the PALs program serves as an example of a policy initiative designed and deployed specifically towards addressing the conditions of rolled-back urban neoliberalization.

Despite public support for the PALs in the intervening years that saw the number of centers expanded to 27 locations by 2000, the program had long faced financial struggles, and Mayor Martin O'Malley was subsequently forced to close several centers in his first two years in office (Craig, 2000). Then in 2003, after the non-profit organization that operated the PAL centers announced that they were no longer financially capable of managing the program, O'Malley transferred control of the remaining 18 PALs to the police department (Wilber, 2003). Thereafter, the program endured several years of financial shortfalls. The citywide budget cuts in 2009 ultimately made the operation of the PAL centers unfeasible for a police department facing its own fiscal challenges. The demise of the PAL program also had immediate consequences for city recreation centers, as the transfer of facilities from the recreation department to the PALs program that had occurred in the mid and late 1990s was essentially reversed (Hermann, 2009). Further, in order to meet budget expectations, the department planned to close two recreation centers of its own, lay off several staff positions, and reduce hours at several centers to "after school only"—the negative public reaction to these planned closures and reductions in services was evident in the dozens of letters and emails that the department received, mostly in protest of the transfers and closures of PAL centers (Hermann, 2009).

In response, the final implementation of the strategy to address the future of neighborhood recreation centers saw 12 of the PALs re-incorporated into the system of city recreation centers, with a single center closing and the others transferred to schools or non-profit groups already operating in the facility (Hermann, 2009). However, the transfer of these facilities to the control of the recreation department was not accompanied by an increase to the operating budget of the department, meaning that recreation center staff and services were tasked with an increased number of facilities, on a still-shrinking budget. In many ways, the re-addition of the former PAL sites to the network of recreation centers represented a window into the city's fiscal and administrative crisis: the reabsorption of facilities and services into a system defined by years of declining budgets and support only served to aggravate existing problems in relation to recreation staffing, programming, and maintenance.

4. Conclusions

An analysis of the PALs in Baltimore is also relevant to wider discussions regarding the uneven development of post-industrial cities, as well as the linkages between urban recreation and the goals and practices of social inclusion (Collins, 2014). However, and as this article demonstrates, the shifting relations between public recreation, urban policy and planning, and issues of social inclusion within Baltimore have special importance in the local context; they have often emerged in the wake of tragic events, including the violence following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 and the death of Baltimore resident Freddie Gray while in police custody in 2015 (Efelbein, Nix & Hollowak, 2011; Reutter, 2015).

Within this context, the deprioritization of public recreation—and, within the Baltimore context, the demise of the PALs and continued disinvestment in public recreation—were inevitabilities. The provision of recreation for Baltimore's continually underserved urban populations markedly declined in the period post-2009, a situation brought to the public's attention in the aftermath of the 2015 violence in Baltimore ignited by the unlawful killing of Freddie Gray, wherein some of the city's youth took to the streets in protest. While perhaps not easily attributable to the demise of public recreation within the city, many local politicians asserted this position. For instance, city councilman Bill Henry condemned the decades-long underfunding of public services aimed at improving the lives of young black citizens, including after-school programs, libraries, and recreation centers (Reutter, 2015). In Henry's words, the city's youth no longer attend recreation centers in the numbers they did previously because "They are in awful shape because we haven't put any money in them in any serious amounts for a quarter of a century" (quoted in Reutter, 2015). Tellingly, Henry continued—underscoring the shift toward carceral initiatives indicative of urban governance within the state of exception of neoliberal austerity—"the city has 'purposely disinvested' in young people 'in favor of investing in catching and caging them'" (quoted in Reutter, 2015).

Many scholars have recognized the impact of urban neoliberalization on communities of color, specifically in relation to social inequality and economic opportunity (Wacquant, 2009), as well as in regard to the connections between reduced social support and increased levels of mass incarceration (Alexander, 2012). In his recent, and vivid, contextualization of the Midnight Basketball League, Hartmann (2016, p. 73) refers to this expression of the *social problems industry* as an "example of neoliberal paternalism and the new carceral state, a microcosm of American neoliberal social policy and racialized political culture." As we have demonstrated within this brief discussion, Baltimore's PALs can be considered in precisely the same vein. They emerged and developed out of the conflation of paternalistic and punitive attitudes toward Baltimore's underserved urban populace, which

effectively demonized the very population they were attempting to serve. Despite the unquestionably laudable intentions of many of those working within the PAL program, its very institutional structure and philosophy positioned the urban populace (rather than the broader forces and relations responsible for challenging urban conditions) as an a priori problem that needed to be addressed. In Baltimore and other American cities, issues related to the social (dis)investment in young people of color have been the primary concern of emergent political and social movements, including Black Lives Matter, and the incorporation of these issues into the activism of community organizations holds some promise for a restructured approach to interventionist policies and programs. However, and as we have demonstrated, within the context of the urban neoliberalization of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Baltimore PAL program was often rooted in assumptions regarding the role of recreation in the process of improving the social inclusion of spatially, social, and economically marginalized groups. This analysis therefore suggests that the very real limits of recreation policy need to be taken into account when designing and implementing future interventions, lest we fail to learn from the experiences—and thereby repeat the mistakes—of the not too distant past.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank the University of Maryland, Department of Kinesiology for the research support provided through the David H. Clarke Doctoral Fellowship.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

- Alexander, M. (2012). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press.
- Biles, R. (2011). *The fate of cities: Urban America and the Federal Government, 1945–2000*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2002). Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism'. *Antipode*, 34(3), 349–379.
- Coalter, F. (2010). The politics of sport-for-development: Limited focus programmes and broad gauge problems? *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(3), 295–314.
- Cole, C. L. (1996). American Jordan: P.L.A.Y., consensus, and punishment. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 13(4), 366–397.
- Collins, M. (2014). *Sport and social exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Corburn, J. (2009). *Toward the healthy city: People, places, and politics of urban planning*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Crabbe, T. (2007). Reaching the 'hard to reach': Engagement, relationship building and social control in sport based social inclusion work. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(1/2), 27–40.
- Craig, T. (2000, February 16). Officials, community scramble to save PAL: Mayor forms task force to plan how to staff nine youth centers. *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Deppe, T. R. (1986). New federalism—The great federal switch and its effects upon municipal parks and recreation. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 4(1), 43–52.
- Durr, K. D. (2003). *Behind the backlash: White working-class politics in Baltimore, 1940–1980*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Edsall, T. B. (2012). *The age of austerity: How scarcity will remake American politics* (1st. ed.). New York: Doubleday.
- Elfenbein, J., Nix, E., & Hollowak, T. (2011). *Baltimore '68: Riots and rebirth in an American city*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Farrey, T. (2008). *Game on: The all-American race to make champions of our children*. Bristol, CT: ESPN.
- Harrington, M. (1962). *The other America: Poverty in America*. New York: MacMillan.
- Hartmann, D. (2001). Notes on midnight basketball and the cultural politics of recreation, race, and at-risk urban youth. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 25(4), 339–371.
- Hartmann, D. (2012). Beyond the sporting boundary: The racial significance of sport through midnight basketball. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(6), 1007–1022.
- Hartmann, D. (2016). *Midnight basketball: Race, sports, and neoliberal social policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler*, 71(1), 3–17.
- Harvey, D. (2001). *Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography*. London: Routledge.
- Hermann, P. (1996, July 1). Police recreation program blooms as the city's fades: PALs' success leads to criticism of efforts of parks department. *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Hermann, P. (2009, March 19). 'Great day' for city kids brings 2 PAL closings. *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Kelly, L. (2011). 'Social inclusion' through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126–150.
- Kelly, L. (2013). Sports-based interventions and the local governance of youth crime and antisocial behavior. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 37(3), 261–283.
- Levine, M. V. (2000). 'A third world city in the first world': Social exclusion, racial inequality, and sustainable development in Baltimore. In R. E. S. Mario Polese (Ed.), *The social sustainability of cities: Diversity and the management of change*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Matthews, R. (1996, November 12). Youth program woes spur study: Recreation centers face budget crunch. *The Baltimore Sun*.

- Matthews, R. (1997a, May 27). City recreation program has faded fast: Once hailed, agency loses staff, centers: more cuts looming. *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Matthews, R. (1997b, August 7). Schmoke to give Police Athletic League control of 10 more city recreation centers; Change in Baltimore goes into effect Oct. 1. *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Ong, A. (2006). *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- PAL. (2015). History. Retrieved from <http://www.palnyc.org/history>
- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380–404.
- Pitter, R., & Andrews, D. L. (1997). Serving America's underserved youth: Reflections on sport and recreation in an emerging social problems industry. *Quest*, 49(1), 85–99.
- Police fil rec center void; Helping out: Officers assigned to run recreation programs keeping kids out of trouble. (1996, May 10). *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Reutter, M. (2015, May 4). Closing rec centers and slashing youth programs were root causes of riot, councilman asserts. Retrieved from baltimorebrew.com
- Shivers, J., & Halpers, J. (1981). *The crisis in urban recreational services*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh-Dickinson University Press.
- Slack, J. D. (1996). The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies. In D. Morley & K. Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in Cultural Studies*, 112–127.
- Spaaij, R. (2009). Sport as a vehicle for social mobility and regulation of disadvantaged urban youth lessons from Rotterdam. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 44(2/3), 247–264.
- Subhas, N., & Chandra, A. (2004). *Baltimore City Police Athletic League assessment study*. Baltimore: Center for Adolescent Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.
- Sugrue, T.J. (1996). *The Origins of the urban crisis: Race and inequality in postwar Detroit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tennberg, M., Vola, J., Espiritu, A., Schwenke Fors, B., & Ejdemo, T. (2014). Neoliberal governance, sustainable development and local communities in the Barents Region. *Barents Studies*, 1(1), 41–71.
- Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of social insecurity*. Duke University Press.
- Wilber, D.Q. (2003, May 1). City police taking over PAL operations. *The Baltimore Sun*.
- Wilson, J. (1994). *Playing by the rules: Sport, society and the state*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.

About the Authors



Jacob J. Bustad is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at Towson University, Towson, MD, USA. He has published research centered on urbanization, sport and physical activity, specifically focusing on sport and urban development in Baltimore, Maryland. His research and teaching interests also include sport and globalization, and urban governance and physical activity opportunities and disparities.



David L. Andrews is Professor of Physical Cultural Studies in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD, USA. His publications include *The Blackwell Companion to Sport* (edited with Ben Carrington, 2013, Blackwell), *Sport and Neoliberalism: Politics, Consumption, and Culture* (edited with Michael Silk, 2012, Temple University Press), and *The Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies* (edited with Michael Silk and Holly Thorpe, 2017, Routledge).

Book Review

Our Sports Clubs: The Sport-for-All Dream in Crisis? Book Review of Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis. By Robert Putnam. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015, 400 pp.; ISBN: 1476769893.

Reinhard Haudenhuyse

Sport & Society Research Unit, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; E-Mail: reinhard.haudenhuyse@vub.ac.be

Submitted: 22 December 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

This review investigates the potential implications of Putnam's recent book *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* for the field of social sport sciences. The main themes in Putnam's *Our Kids* are class segregation and the widening 'opportunity' gap between the 'have' and 'have nots' in American society. The question can and needs to be asked: what the impact of class-based segregation has been on 'our sport clubs'? Furthermore, Putnam also discusses the importance and unequal provision of Extracurricular activities. Putnam sees such activities as contexts for developing social skills, a sense of civic engagement and even for generating upward mobility. An important advantage of such activities is, according to Putnam, the exposure to caring adults outside the family, who can often serve as valuable mentors. However, throughout the book, Putnam uses a rather judgmental and moralizing language when talking about the parents of the 'have nots'. The lesson that sport researchers can learn from this is to be sensitive and critical to moralizing approaches and deficiency discourses regarding the inclusion *in* and *through* sport of children and youth living in poverty.

Keywords

elite; inequality; social class; sport

Issue

This book review is part of the issue "Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research", edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

It was as if the poor kids had weights attached to their feet that grew heavier and heavier with each step up the ladder. (Putnam, 2015, p. 188)

1. Class Segregation and Scissor Graphs

Putnam's *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* had an enormous impact on sport academics and policymakers alike. In this article, I review the potential implications of Putnam's latest book *Our Kids* for the field of social sport sciences.

The main themes in Putnam's *Our Kids* are class segregation and the widening opportunity gap between the 'have' and 'have nots' in American society. Throughout the book, this gap is visually illustrated by scissor-shaped charts showing how the gap has and is widening in multiple domains in relation to family, parenting, school-

ing and community. Putnam's motivation for writing *Our Kids* is mainly to give voice to the 'have nots'. Putnam puts the life stories of rich and poor families at the center of the book. He uses what can be described as an ethnographic-inspired narrative approach, with the aim of generating life histories. These narratives illustrate the differences in opportunities and constraints of children and their families in relation to growing up. In total, 107 young adults and their parents were interviewed on multiple research sites in the United States. *Our Kids* also uses online research strategies. For example, Facebook was used in order to keep track of the working class young adults whose lives and housing situations often rapidly changed:

Watching them post and interact on Facebook also gave us deeper information than a single interview

could, and with their permission we used their updates and posts in our analysis. (Putnam, 2015, p. 269)

The stories in *Our Kids* vividly illustrate how growing up has changed over the last few decades and how the opportunity gap has widened and deepened along class lines. Putnam argues that ‘economically successful’ people and their children have less to no idea how the ‘other side’ lives, with the consequence that such people might be less empathetic to the plight of the less privileged. Precisely because of growing class segregation, writing up such stories is, according to Putnam, necessary as it will help to reduce this gap in perceptions. On a more personal note, Putnam confesses that his assumptions were quite different before he embarked on the research of *Our Kids*: “If I and my classmates could climb the ladder, I assumed, so could kids from modest backgrounds today. Having finished this research, I know better.” (Putnam, 2015, p. 230).

2. ‘Our Sport Clubs’

Putnam writes that the economic gap has been accompanied by growing de facto segregation of Americans along class lines. Putnam describes such class-based residential polarization as a kind of incipient class apartheid:

...class segregation across America has been growing for decades, so fewer affluent kids live in poor neighborhoods, and fewer poor kids live in rich neighborhoods....Does the character of the neighborhood where kids grow up have an effect on their future prospects, apart from their individual characteristics?....The question is whether growing up in a poor neighborhood imposes any additional handicaps. (Putnam, 2015, p. 217)

The question can be asked what the impact of class-based segregation has been on ‘our sport clubs’? Can we see the same class-apartheid in our sport clubs? Or is sport, through its assumed leveling playing field, somehow able to withstand such class-based dynamics? And if there is a class-based apartheid, what is the personal and societal impact in relation to young people and their families (both advantaged and disadvantaged) regarding their participating and non-participation in sport (e.g., the impact of non-exposure to people outside one’s own socioeconomic class)? This issue needs to be addressed if the social and economic transformation of neighborhoods, as Putnam repeatedly visualized by scissor charts and illustrated by real-life stories, has had a societal footprint on sport clubs. How do sport clubs fare in the face of intensified social class segregation in domains such as education, health, community and work? In relation to schools, Putnam asks if schools in America today are widening or reducing the growing gaps between have and have-not kids, or do they have little impact? The same question can be reiterated for sport clubs: are they

widening the gap or are they just ‘innocent bystanders’? Such questions need to be addressed, as they have too often remained peripheral amongst sport researchers.

3. Mentoring

Involvement in organized, adult-supervised leisure activities has been associated with positive developmental outcomes for youth (e.g., Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Feinstein, Bynner, & Duckworth, 2006). Putnam sees such activities as contexts for developing social skills (e.g., work habits, self-discipline, teamwork, leadership), a sense of civic engagement and even for generating upward mobility. Moreover, according to Putnam, an important advantage of such activities is the exposure to caring adults outside the family, such as coaches and other adult supervisors who can often serve as valuable mentors:

Mentoring can make a measurable difference in kids’ lives, but we also saw that formal mentoring programs have so far barely begun to close the enormous class gap in access to informal mentoring....To be sure, serious mentoring requires serious training, careful quality control, and above all, stability. Mentoring works best as the by-product of a connection that rests on some shared interest. (Putnam, 2015, p. 259)

Interesting in the above citation is the distinction Putnam makes between formal and informal mentoring. This might be a potentially interesting line for sport researchers. For example: are coaches seen as playing a mentoring role and what are the optimal conditions and underlying processes of successful mentoring relationships in terms of generating positive developmental outcomes? We should, however, be careful in overestimating the feasibility of ‘mentoring children out of poverty’, as this risks legitimating a reductive analysis of complex processes by highlighting individual deficits of both the parents and children, and de-emphasising structural inequalities (Kelly, 2011).

4. Unequal Leisure Opportunities and Outcomes

A substantial class gap seems to be equally present in organized leisure activities. What is more, Putnam illustrates that schools and communities with substantially more less-affluent kids have less ability to provide Extracurricular or organized leisure opportunities, and furthermore lack youth-specific infrastructure and services. Money seems to matter. Putnam (2015, p. 167) formulates that in most cases the growing class gap in parental engagement, such as with their children’s organized sport participation, is due less to lack of motivation than to economic and cultural obstacles. In *Our Kids*, Putnam refers to several high-quality experimental studies showing that giving poor families money can improve the academic and social performance of their children. Similar experimental settings could be set up in which

communities or families are given money and where outcomes are controlled and measured in terms of organized leisure participation and positive youth developmental outcomes. However, such experimental designs seem overly ambitious (and expensive). Perhaps it would be more feasible to use quasi-experimental research designs to investigate the impact of ending or introducing pay-to-play for extracurricular activities.

5. Moralizing Discourse

Throughout the book, and especially in the chapter on parenting, Putnam uses a rather judgmental and moralizing language when talking about the parents of the have nots. Two fragments illustrate this:

...“good parenting” has become time-consuming and expensive....Parents at all levels of society now aspire to intensive parenting, but, as we shall see, the less educated and less affluent among them have been less able to put those ideals in practice (p. 118)

Family dining is no panacea for child development, but it is one indicator of the subtle but powerful investments that parents make in their kids (or fail to make). (p. 123)

Whereas the narratives in *Our Kids* might be rich, in the chapter on parenting, the evidence-base is rather thin. Some of Putnam’s proposals such as daily reading to children, coaching poor parents through house visits and family dining run the danger of decontextualizing structural causes of poverty. Furthermore, they seem to put the blame on parents for the poverty of their children. Putnam’s multiple references regarding brain development research further ignores the critical literature—both in terms of the scientific robustness and generalizability of the evidence—that has been written on the so-called ‘hard evidence’ of brain development research in relation to poverty (e.g., Edwards, Gillies, & Horsley, 2015; MacVarish, Lee, & Lowe, 2015). MacVarish et al. (2015), for example, argue that targeting families deemed incapable or incompetent of adequately developing their children’s brains places parents at the center of the policy stage but at the same time demotes and marginalizes them as parents and human beings. This runs the risk of permanent removal from birth families (i.e., rescuing the child) and undermining the possibility of spontaneous relationships of love and care (MacVarish et al., 2015). Similarly, Edwards et al. (2015) argue that in such a discourse, success in life is un-problematically correlated with brain structure and intelligence. And the solution to poverty would then be to make people smarter, so their children can ‘think themselves out of their predicament’ (p. 184). Edwards et al. (2015) elaborate that within such a discourse poor parents are seen as architects of their children’s poverty and deprivation. This point is illustrated in the following excerpt from *Our Kids*:

Cognitive stimulation by parents is essential for optimal learning. Children who grow up with parents who listen and talk with them frequently develop more advanced language skills than kids whose parents rarely engage them in conversation (as happened with Stephanie, who explained, “We ain’t got time for all that talk-about-our-day stuff”). The brain, in short, develops as a social organ, not an isolated computer. (Putnam, 2015, p. 110)

6. Magic Bullets

To be fair, Putnam recognizes the limitations of brain-development inspired interventions. At the end of the chapter on parenting, he acknowledges that although correlations between parental social class, parenting practices and child outcomes might have been established, most of the studies are not able to prove any causality. Putnam furthermore writes that maternal deprivation (i.e., poor nutrition, inadequate health care, exposure to environmental risks from bad housing) can have powerful long-term effects on children’s intellectual and emotional development. In his words: “Even ideal parenting cannot compensate for all the ill effects of poverty on children.” (Putnam, 2015, p. 134). However, such remarks almost read as a footnote of the chapter on parenting. The lesson that sport researchers can learn from this is to be sensitive and critical to moralizing approaches and deficiency discourses regarding the inclusion *in* and *through* sport of children living in poverty. As mentioned above, research failing to incorporate wider structural dimensions risks legitimating a reductive analysis of complex processes (Kelly, 2011). To rephrase: even ideal coaching cannot compensate for all the ill effects of poverty on children. Sport offers no magic bullets in relation to combatting issues of social exclusion, poverty and inequality. Putnam states that the only ‘magical bullet’ being able to counter social-class segregation and the dire outcomes for children and societies it brings with it, is the sustained economic revival for low-paid workers. In his final chapter, Putnam (2015) summarizes the key message of his book and the importance of addressing the widening socio-economic gap:

This is not the first time in our national history that widening socio-economic gaps have threatened our economy, our democracy, and our values. The specific responses we have pursued to successfully overcome these challenges and restore opportunity have varied in detail, but underlying them all was a commitment to invest in other people’s children. And underlying that commitment was a deeper sense that those kids too, were our kids. (p. 261)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Daniel Roe (Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences) for his valuable feedback on this text.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Edwards, R., Gillies, V., & Horsley, N. (2015). Brain science and early years policy: Hopeful ethos or 'cruel

optimism'? *Critical Social Policy*, 35(2), 167–187.

Feinstein, L., Bynner, J., & Duckworth, K. (2006). Young people's leisure contexts and their relation to adult outcomes. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(3), 305–327.

Kelly, L. (2011). 'Social inclusion' through sports-based interventions? *Critical Social Policy*, 31(1), 126–150.

Macvarish, J., Lee, E., & Lowe, P. (2015). Neuroscience and family policy: What becomes of the parent? *Critical Social Policy*, 0261018315574019.

Putnam, R. (2015). *Our kids. The American dream in crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

About the Author



Reinhard Haudenhuyse holds Master's degrees in Physical Education and in Conflict and Development, both from Ghent University. In 2012 he received his PhD in Physical Education and Movement Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He currently works as a part-time professor and post-doctoral researcher at the Sport and Society Research Unit and the Interdisciplinary Research Group Voicing At-Risk Youth at Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Corrigendum

Corrigendum: What Makes a Difference for Disadvantaged Girls? Investigating the Interplay between Group Composition and Positive Youth Development in Sport

Hebe Schaillée ^{1,*}, Marc Theeboom ¹ and Jelle Van Cauwenberg ^{2,3,4}

¹ Department of Movement and Sport Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1050 Brussels, Belgium;

E-Mails: hebe.schaillée@vub.be (H.S.), marc.theeboom@vub.be (M.T.)

² Department of Public Health, Ghent University, 9000 Ghent, Belgium; E-Mail: jelle.vancauwenberg@ugent.be

³ Department of Human Biometry and Biomechanics, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

⁴ Fund for Scientific Research Flanders (FWO), 1000 Brussels, Belgium

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 24 May 2017 | Published: 29 June 2017

Abstract

This is a corrigendum to the article “What makes a difference for disadvantaged girls? Investigating the interplay between group composition and positive youth development in sport”, authored by Hebe Schaillée, Marc Theeboom and Jelle Van Cauwenberg, and published in *Social Inclusion*, 3(3).

Keywords

disadvantaged girls; group composition; peers; positive youth development; sport

Issue

This corrigendum is part of the issue “Sport for Social Inclusion: Questioning Policy, Practice and Research”, edited by Reinhard Haudenhuyse (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).

© 2017 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

The published version of this article (Schaillée, Theeboom, & Van Cauwenberg, 2015) contained an error in the presentation of the age range of the sample (see pages 51, 54 and 62). The actual age range of the participant sample was 12–22. This error does not influence the results of this study as all analyses were adjusted for the variable related to participants’ age, nor does it affect our conclusion that the substantial age differences in the sample are a limitation of the study. Although we controlled for participants’ age, it cannot be ruled out that the experiences of a 12-year-old female participant may be different from those of a 22-year-old in the same group.

The authors take full responsibility for this misidentification of the actual age range of the participants in this article. We thank the second reviewer of the subsequent article, entitled ‘Peer- and coach-created motivational cli-

mates in youth sport: Implications for positive youth development of disadvantaged girls” (Schaillée, Theeboom, & Van Cauwenberg, 2017), for inadvertently pointing out the error.

References

- Schaillée, H, Theeboom, M., & Van Cauwenberg, J. (2015). What makes a difference for disadvantaged girls? Investigating the interplay between group composition and positive youth development in sport. *Social Inclusion*, 3(3), 51–66.
- Schaillée, H, Theeboom, M., & Van Cauwenberg, J. (2017). Peer- and coach-created motivational climates in youth sport: implications for positive youth development of disadvantaged girls. *Social Inclusion*, 5(2), 163–178.

Social Inclusion (ISSN: 2183-2803)

Social Inclusion is a peer-reviewed open access journal which provides academics and policy-makers with a forum to discuss and promote a more socially inclusive society.

The journal encourages researchers to publish their results on topics concerning social and cultural cohesiveness, marginalized social groups, social stratification, minority-majority interaction, cultural diversity, national identity, and core-periphery relations, while making significant contributions to the understanding and enhancement of social inclusion worldwide.

www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion